The localization of caste politics in Uttar Pradesh after Mandal and Mandir : reconfiguration of identity politics and party-elite linkages

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Chapter 1. Introduction

On March 15 of the year 2012, Akhilesh Yadav, son of former Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party founder and President Mulayam Singh Yadav, became Uttar Pradesh's twentieth Chief Minister, with a single majority of seats in the State Assembly. He succeeded the leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party, Mayawati, who five years earlier also came to power on her own, securing a narrow majority of seats in the State Assembly with 30.4% of vote share. These two elections were remarkable for a series of reasons.

First, they marked the end of a long period of governmental instability in Uttar Pradesh, caused by the fragmentation of the electorate and the state's party system, and by the inability of parties to work together in alliances or coalitions. No party had won a single majority of seats since 1985.

Second, these majorities were obtained through mobilization strategies that in appearance and discourse transcended traditional caste affiliations or antagonisms, through campaigns that focused on programmatic and general interest issues. This contrasted again with the preceding decades, marked by deep caste antagonisms as parties sought to mobilize their respective core support bases.

Third, the parties responsible for these inclusive strategies are precisely those often held responsible for the fragmentation of the political space, through narrow caste-based party politics and mobilization.

For decades, the state of Uttar Pradesh has been synonymous with what many consider the ailments of India's democracy: fragmentation, caste-entrenched politics, the criminalization of the political class, poverty and violence. Many of the stereotypes associated with Indian politics at large come from depictions of Uttar Pradesh politics, a state that weighs considerably on national politics, owing to its demographic strength, its representation in national assemblies[1], and its historical role as the cradle of India's liberation movement (Kudaisya 2006).

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[1] The State of Uttar Pradesh currently sends 80 representatives to the Lok Sabha (lower House of Parliament), and 31 representatives to the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House),. Eight out of a total of

Through the 1990s, the State of Uttar Pradesh embodied the story of chronic instability that also marked national politics. In less than ten years, four state elections were held. Eight governments unsuccessfully attempted to rule the state, at times in coalitions or as minority governments. President's Rule had to be declared on three occasions due to hung verdicts or the inability of political leaders to form coalitions, or govern together. The period was also marked by a context of social and political violence, economic slowdown (Singh 2009), a sharp reduction of public expenditures (Kohli 2012) and the sustained fall of the state's ranking in national socio-economic development indicators. Uttar Pradesh ranks among the lowest states in India on all human development indicators, be it the infant and child mortality rate[2], the sex ratio[3], illiteracy[4], or poverty and poverty reduction ratio[5] (Mehrotra 2011). The parties in power and their leaders are often seen as an aggravating factor, if not a causal factor, of this dire situation.

1.1. Statement of the problem

This dissertation proposes to examine the continuities and discontinuities in electoral politics in the state of Uttar Pradesh, in the period that followed what is commonly called the Mandal and Mandir phases. The early 1990s represented a turning point in Northern Indian politics, with the rise of backward political forces, riding on the demand for reservations in public jobs and higher education institutions for the Other Backward Classes (OBC), with the rise of a Dalit party – the Bahujan Samaj Party – born from a low-caste civil servants' union, and with the ascension to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party that rode on a wave of religious mobilization and violence, which culminated in the destruction of the Babri Masjid in December 1992, in Ayodhya. The period also corresponds with the beginning of the liberalization of the Indian economy, with the introduction of the first wave of economic reforms in June 1991.

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fifteen Prime Ministers have come from Uttar Pradesh. The current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, though from Gujarat and had also won in its Vadorara constituency, ultimately retained Varanasi, in Uttar Pradesh, as his constituency.

[2] 50 per thousand, according to the erstwhile Planning Commission of India, in 2013.

[3] 888 women per thousand men, according to the erstwhile Planning Commission of India, in 2011.

[4] 70% in 2011, four points below the national average, with a 20 percentage gap between men and women.

[5] 37.7 percent of the population was estimated to be under the poverty line by the Planning Commission in 2011.

This particular moment in India's history also corresponds with the culmination of deep-rooted processes of political transformation, marked by the mobilization of lower and backward castes, the fragmentation of the party system, the decline of the Congress Party and the rise of regional political forces. Both in academic literature and popular discourse, a narrative emerged, equating the rise of the backwards with the rise of regional parties, and the decline of the Congress with the decline of the traditional upper-caste-dominated social order (Hasan 1993, 1998, Jaffrelot 2003a). Thus, Uttar Pradesh has been and remains a privileged ground for those who study processes of democratization in India.

This has been largely understood and analysed as a process of political empowerment of social groups through political representation. Groups that were previously excluded from and/or under-represented in the political sphere gradually supported political parties of their own with the aim of obtaining both a fair share of representation as well as access to public resources. In this process – characterised by Rajni Kothari in 1990 as the "great secular upsurge" (Kothari 1990) and some years later, by Yogendra Yadav, as the "second democratic upsurge" (Yadav 2000) – caste has been seen as the favoured vehicle of political mobilisation.

Today, two narratives dominate the characterization of Uttar Pradesh politics. The first one, essentially journalistic, consists on underscoring of the prevalence and predominance of caste as a factor shaping electoral outcome, be it within parties' strategies or voters' motivations. This narrative is sustained by the continued performance of so-called caste-based regional parties and by the prevalence of caste in the imaginary of electoral politics in this state. The anthropological literature on Uttar Pradesh politics, in particular, insists on the prevalence of caste (Jeffrey 2001, 2002, Michelutti 2007).

The second narrative, on the other hand, focuses on the capacity of dominant parties to mobilize beyond their traditional support base – Yadavs and Muslims for the Samajwadi Party, Dalits for the BSP, upper castes for the BJP – and gather support across the caste spectrum (Gupta and Kumar 2007, Pai 2013, Verma 2007b, Verma 2014b). This is often seen and interpreted as a sign of maturing of the electorate, driven more by issues or economic voting rather than by ascriptive identities. A close look at recent political

transformations shows that the situation is more complex than it appears and that both narratives suffer from serious limitations.

It is true that the parties that are currently dominating the political scene are precisely those that have succeeded in opening their doors to candidates belonging to groups they might have initially opposed. The BSP's 2007 victory is largely credited to its ability to attract a significant portion of the Brahmin vote. In 2012, the Samajwadi distributed its tickets across the caste spectrum, at the cost of diluting its OBC base but with the reward of gaining a majority of seats in the state assembly. The parties that rose through the process of the electorate's fragmentation and divisive caste-based electoral strategies are slowly transforming themselves into catch-all parties.

As a consequence, the overall share of OBC representation in the State Assembly has been on the decline after a peak in 1993[6]. The decline of the upper castes, noted in previous contributions (Hasan 1998, Zerinini 2009), has stabilized and the share of representation of upper-caste candidates and representatives within the so-called low-caste or backward-caste parties has been on the rise. In other words, the link between the rise of backward classes and the rise of the so-called backward parties is not so straightforward.

This evolution does not mean, however, that the ties between caste and electoral politics have ruptured. Extensive fieldwork conducted during and between two state elections (2007 and 2012) revealed that caste remains a central variable in defining parties' strategic choice, less in terms of political discourse than in political practices at the time of elections. It remains a major factor in the selection of candidates and parties do take into account the local balance of power and the relative numbers of each caste group as the chief among other variables. The emphasis on caste by parties has, in turn, an impact on voters' choice, since parties' decisions determine or shape the 'supply' of candidates, thus creating or negating opportunities for voters to 'vote their caste'.

What matters more than ideology or parties' identity inclinations is context. Sub-regional trends in the social composition of the State Assembly reveal substantial variations that challenge any discourse or intellectual construction based on aggregate political trends. In

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[6] The share of representation of OBCs in the State Assembly dipped from 35.4% of the seats in 1993 to 25% in 2012.

several important sub-regions of the state, the domination of upper castes has remained fairly unchallenged even as the number of low-caste and backward-caste parties rose. These sub-regions tend to be the areas that have experienced the least economic transformation or diversification of their rural economy, such as Central UP (Awadh), and the Northeast. Other sub-regions in the West (Western UP, Rohilkhand, Doab), that have seen more economic change, have also experienced more pronounced political churning in recent years[7].

This shows the need to contextualize the relationship between caste and politics at the right level, which can't be an aggregate one. A large part of the literature on identity or caste politics focuses on the caste variable of MPs and MLAs alone, disconnected from other variables constituting their sociological profile. This has been its main limitation.

The primary aim of this dissertation is to examine what has happened to caste – as a vehicle of political mobilization – over the past twenty-five years, and notably how does caste relates to – and indeed competes – with other tropes of mobilization such as religion and class. What becomes of backward politics when so-called backward parties open their doors to non-backward individuals and groups? Is the case for the newfound inclusiveness of parties compelling, exaggerated, or disingenuous? Shouldn't we integrate the caste factor with other relevant variables, such as the economic background of individuals contesting elections?

Backward politics and the often concomitant rise of regional parties is one of India's major post-Independence political event, a deep-rooted process of fragmentation of the electorate along caste and community lines that sought to oppose the domination of the Congress Party from the outside at both the state and at the central levels. The literature on the rise of regional parties has focused essentially on the identity dynamics at work – caste mobilization, contestation of traditional social orders and traditional elites – and on the impact of pre-liberalization economic transformation, such as the Zamindari Abolition

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[7] There are examples of cross-state comparisons (Jenkins 2004, Pai 2000b) but few have examined intra-state variations. This is important since the variations that may be observed within states whose populations often compare to the size of large democratic countries may arguably be such that the narrative of their trajectory stands defeated, or in need of serious nuancing or amending.

Act or the Green Revolution. Few have examined the transformation of politics after Mandal and Mandir from the vantage point of political actors[8].

In order to do so, I examine the evolving sociological profile of candidates and elected representatives in recent elections. I also attempt to 'connect' the caste variable with other socio-demographic and socio-economic variables collected through fieldwork and interviews over the years, to examine the claim that politics in Uttar Pradesh has gone 'beyond caste'.

This analysis needs to be contextualized with the evolution of parties' electoral strategies and representational outcomes. I examine the evolution of various political trends at the state and sub-regional levels, on the basis of a unique dataset combining election results and socio-demographic variables on elected representatives (from 1962 to the present) and on candidates (from 1991 to the present). From this empirical base, I study and compare the trajectory of Uttar Pradesh' main parties, those who have dominated or are dominating the state's political scene over the period considered in this project.

Finally, the question of the transformation of the sociological profile of candidates and elected representatives need to be contextualized at the level of local contests, i.e. the constituency level, where the constraints of competitive local politics weigh the most on the candidates' shoulders.

The combination of these broad research directions will enable me to demonstrate that the growing inclusive character of caste-based parties does not mean that caste has receded, or ceased to matter, as a vehicle of political mobilization, but that to the contrary, inclusiveness is built through the localization of caste mobilization strategies, with parties distributing tickets and candidates forging local alliances according to local caste circumstances.

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[8] One of the most recent and remarkable contribution in this subject is Jeffrey Witsoe's *Caste Versus Development*, about the operations of lower-caste politics at the local and sub-regional level in Bihar (Witsoe 2013).

1.2. Findings and main arguments

I find that state-level narratives on caste – or horizontal forms of caste-base mobilization – today operate less to the benefit of local arrangements, negotiations, and transactions between groups and individuals embedded in specific socio-economic contexts. In the process, caste becomes further entrenched in electoral politics but in a less transversal manner. I find that parties seek to forge local alliances – in which caste plays a crucial role – while mobilizing across constituencies on the bases of generalist tropes cutting across caste or sectarian divisions, such as development or a broad definition of equity or social justice.

Further, I also find that while caste remains deeply entrenched in local political competition, it does not operate as an isolated factor. The fieldwork I conducted during and between the 2007, 2009 and 2012 elections in various parts of the state and the prosopography of candidates over the period reveal that while caste continues to matter locally, it does so in connection with other socio-economic variables, such as the inscription of party organizations and candidates in local socio-economic networks. More specifically, I find that state-based parties tend to recruit their candidates among groups and individuals who control or exert an influence over the local political economy of their constituencies or on a larger scale, contributing to the integration of local political and economic elites.

This is revealed by the fact that while there is through time a gradual heterogeneisation of representation on the basis of caste over time – through the assertion of backward and lower-caste groups – there is also a concomitant process of homogenization of representation on the basis of class within the main contesting parties. As parties turn to local elites, they recruit more candidates hailing from a local business or industry background, and less from professions that used to be over-represented in the Assembly, such as farmers or liberal professions. Furthermore, I find that the two dominant state-based parties – the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party - tend to recruit their candidates from the same sociological pool of local elite groups and individuals.

My main explanation for these developments is twofold. First, political competition comes with a set of constraints, or rules – both formal and informal – that weigh on parties and

candidates[9]. In order to be successful, candidates need resources, a strong party ticket and the capacity to mobilize numbers both within and outside their caste or community. Some of the constraints of political life in Uttar Pradesh tend to filter out aspiring candidates at the entry-level - candidates who cannot afford the cost of entry into the electoral fray – and at the exit – the many incumbent MLAs who fail to be elected for a second or third term, or are not even given the chance to re-run in the first place.

The second explanation is that parties have adapted themselves to these constraints – by picking "winnable" candidates from certain backgrounds and, for instance, by requiring candidates to fund their own campaigns. In doing so, they have contributed to increasing the systemic constraints that weigh on candidates.

In short, the constraints of electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh – a high cost of entry, a competitive political arena and short political life expectancy – all serve to affect on who aspires to contest, who gets chosen by parties to run, who runs successfully, and who may last in politics for more than a term or two. Parties and the set of electoral rules and practices under which they operate create both incentives and advantages for candidates from certain socio-economic backgrounds, shaping in turn the sociological profile of elected assemblies.

The idea that caste is enmeshed with economic considerations is not a new idea. Scholars of the Congress era have shown how Congress candidates tended to win thanks to a combination of high-caste status and land ownership (Brass 1964b, 1980a, 1984b, Weiner 1967)[10]. As the state's economy changed – in particular the rural economy – so did the social and economic bases upon which political power rests or from which it can be derived. Land no longer matters the way it did. The inscription of candidates and local party organizations within local networks that control or have influence over local economic institutions is critical to their chances of success in the political arena. The

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[9] Borrowed from F.G. Bailey's expression, from *Stratagems and Spoils*, in which he states that the arena of political competition is defined by a set of rules – legal, customary or conventional – that weigh on political actors, who must abide by those rules in order to be competitive (Bailey 1969).

[10] These two authors also note that there were more factors to the Congress' supremacy than these two factors. The legacy of being the party that led India to Independence and the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru also played major part in the continuing success of the Congress Party.

changing profile of members of the Legislative Assembly – more heterogeneous in terms of caste but more homogeneous in terms of class – is an indicator of these transformations.

The story that unfolds is that after a phase of silent revolution, which saw a gradual transfer of power from the upper caste elites to various subaltern groups (Jaffrelot 2003b), politics in Uttar Pradesh is now being dominated by local socio-economic elites, endowed with the attributes that help winning elections. The main difference with the past is that the social identity of these local socio-economic elites tends to cut across caste, even if we see a resurgence of upper-caste representation in recent years.

This leads me to a reflection on the ultimate aim or purpose of state electoral politics, from the vantage points of political actors. It is usually assumed that representation is the aim of political mobilizations, the will to obtain a 'fair share' of representation, access to public goods and political influence. The literature on Dalit mobilization in particular stresses on the emancipatory nature of caste politicization, electoral mobilization and, ultimately, the acquisition of power.

But viewed from the political players' perspective, the picture changes as the purpose of electoral competition tends to have less to do with representation and more to do with exerting control over individuals, groups and territories. From the vantage point of local elites, the aim of electoral politics is territorial control. Democratic participation, representation, party politics are tools that enable them to retain, develop and defend their local status, social position and privileges.

One could argue that political institutions are bound to be captured by some form of elite – the Congress system being an archetypal example of this phenomenon. But there are at least two important differences in the current configuration, compared to the past.

The first is that these 'new elites' are drawn from far more diverse groups than before. They are not confined to a specific type of castes, even if some congruence between some castes and the local elites remains.

The second difference is that these new elites are not aligned with specific parties. In fact, they have been known to shift their allegiance between parties easily and make for a cut-throat political stage.

State elections in Uttar Pradesh are highly competitive. This competitiveness is not only reflected in the alternating governments– no party has succeeded in winning two consecutive elections since 1989 – but also the high turnover of representatives in each election (an average of 51% turnover over the same period, with a marked increase in the last two elections) as well as intense vying within parties and social groups for positions of power. The increase in the number of aspiring candidates, the phenomenon of pre-electoral competition, parties' practices for candidate nomination, and, at times, the auctioning of tickets have also created conditions for the emergence of a political market wherein parties pick candidates mainly according to their caste and economic profiles.

In this story of political transformation, two parties stand out: the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Founded in October 1992, the Samajwadi Party is the largest single party in Uttar Pradesh and heir to the state's socialist tradition, whose exemplars are Ram Manohar Lohia and Chaudhary Charan Singh. Under the stewardship of its founder and leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav, the party evolved from a broad-based socialist formation into a caste-based party known to represent and champion the interests of a particular group, the Yadavs.

The Samajwadi Party emerged in the early 1990s as the main beneficiary of the Mandal mobilization, succeeding in rallying its Yadav base and attracting the support of voters who sought to dislodge the Congress Party and other anti-reservation political forces. At the same time, it also emerged as the defender of the state's Muslim minority. In the context of the Babri Masjid demolition and the rise of the BJP, Muslims turned to the SP for protection, which no other party was either willing or able to provide. The alliance of backward classes and Muslims proved formidable and enabled the party to rule the state on three occasions, from 1993 to 1995, from 2002 to 2007, and since March 2012 to the present. As of March 2016, the Samajwadi Party has been in power for a total of nine years[11].

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[11] Or above ten years, if one includes the 1989 Janata Dal government, led by Mulayam Singh Yadav.

The Samajwadi Party also embodies the brand of muscular politics characteristic of the region. Its leader Mulayam Singh Yadav literally started his career from the wrestling pits of Etah district[12]. Similar to other state-based parties in other parts of the country[13], the SP forged an image of itself as a party of action, capable of 'getting things done', even through violent means when necessary.

In popular view, the Samajwadi Party embodies everything that ails the state of Uttar Pradesh. It is usually the first party quoted in any conversation about the criminalization of politics, as their rule is associated with disturbed law and order, arbitrariness, unsavory political figures and proximity with criminal elements. Their rough political style, with a taste for the rustic and local idioms, is easily shunned by the urban elites who see in the Samajwadi Party an incarnation of their nightmare of a polity dominated by plebeians.

The other party that stands out is the Bahujan Samaj Party, a party created by Kanshi Ram in 1984 and meant to be the vehicle and instrument of political empowerment of the state's most underprivileged social groups, the Dalits. The party grew by consolidating its support among Dalits through a fiery caste-based rhetoric and the denunciation of social injustices. It scaled the zenith of power by forging alliances with parties and including candidates who belonged to the very groups it denounced, at least, in its initial phase of ascension. The BSP now recruits its candidates within the same elite pool of its main rival, the Samajwadi Party, though with some marked differences.

Both parties have benefited from a series of transformations that have occurred in the post-liberalization period: the diversification of the rural economy, the penetration of market forces in rural areas, urbanization, the development of local industries, as well as some amount of social mobility among subaltern groups (Kapur et al. 2010). These transformations have not only contributed to the emergence of new elites but have also transformed the economic base from which political power can be derived. Those who control local economic capital can potentially derive political capital from it. The success of the Samajwadi Party lies principally in its ability to co-opt such individuals and groups

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[12] He was inducted into politics by Natthu Singh, a close aide of Chaudhary Charan Singh, who was looking for a strongman capable of reinvigorating the Samyukta Socialist Party organization.
[13] See (Hansen 2001) for a remarkable study of the development of the Shiv Sena in Mumbai.

who derive political influence from their social position and economic assets. These individuals and groups often seek to expand the social and economic control they exert over certain territories through participation in democratic politics. By selecting their candidates among them, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party have contributed over the past two decades to a process of integrating local political and economic elites.

Over the past twenty-five years, both national parties – the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – have markedly declined. The Congress ceased to be a relevant political force from the mid-1990s onwards and the BJP has fallen back on its erstwhile urban strongholds, after a period of strength in the 1990s. Both parties have suffered in the 2000s from a disconnect with the new elites of the state, and have retained a pronounced upper-caste bias in their organization.

1.3. Approaches to Elections Studies

There is a long tradition of studies of elections and electoral politics in India[14]. Instead of presenting a comprehensive overview of the evolution of the discipline, I will briefly present the main approaches that have been used to study electoral politics in India, namely: the case study method, surveys, quantitative methods, mixed methods and political anthropology.

Case studies and ecological analysis

Earlier studies of Indian elections originally consisted of local field studies, mostly conducted by American scholars and scholars from the University of Delhi. These were local-level accounts of elections, or the contextualization of general or parliamentary elections on the scale of a locality or a constituency. Fifteen of these original field studies, conducted during the 1967 General Elections and the 1971 Parliamentary elections, were compiled in 2007 by A.M. Shah (Srinivas and Shah 2007). These field studies focused on

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[14] Summaries of election studies can be found with Kondo (2007), Palshikar (2007), Lama-Rewal (2009) and Kumar and Rai (2013). A broader view on the intellectual history of the study of Indian politics can be found in the Oxford Companion to Indian Politics (Rudolph and Rudolph 2010).

narratives on the conduct of elections and on the socio-political history of these constituencies, social divisions and factional politics, underlining the necessity to understand the broader context in which elections take place. The outlook was very much sociological and anthropological, relying on interviews and participant observation.

This approach was criticized for its localism and for its failure to provide broad explanations to political transformations (Palshikar 2007). From there, the literature took two distinct directions. Some scholars pursued the case study approach by giving it a comparative turn while others turned to survey methods.

Myron Weiner developed a case study methodology in his work on the Congress Party in five districts (Weiner 1967), in which he sought to understand what motivated people to join the Congress Party after Independence and how the party organized itself to sustain its domination. His comparative fieldwork enabled him to unravel the clientelistic / patronage nature of the relationship between the party and voters, and underline the critical necessity for the party to address its constituents' grievances and assist them in the settlement of local disputes. He pursued this method in his account of the 1977 General Election (Weiner 1978), based on fieldwork and interviews conducted in various cities across the country. Following his example, many would subsequently publish single-election monographs (Kumar 1997).

That literature on elections was enriched by a series of classic monographs on parties at the national level, as also monographs on particular states: on the Congress (Brass 1964a, Kochanek 1968), the Jan Sangh (Baxter 1971, Jhangiani 1967), the socialist parties (Burger and University of California Berkeley. Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies. 1969), the Communist parties (Field and Franda 1974, Franda 1971) and the Swatantra Party (Erdman 1967). These contributions focused on parties' ideologies, internal organization and electoral strategies.

Between 1974 and 1977, Myron Weiner and John Osgood Field co-edited four volumes on electoral politics in Indian states (Barnett 1975, Field and Franda 1974, Field and Weiner 1977, 1975), the outcome of an Indian Election Data Project that had started under the impetus of Myron Weiner at MIT in 1968. These volumes included contributions on a series of transversal questions, such as the relationship between electoral behaviour and

some aspects of modernization, such as the Green Revolution, the impact of migration and urbanization. They also included monographic studies of left parties in West Bengal, on the performance of women candidates in state elections, comparisons of electoral politics between various kinds of backward areas, in former directly administered colonial territories and former princely states. Other essays focused on the study of regional variations of political trends, the role of various cleavages – religious, caste, ideological, urban-rural, factional alignments – in the shaping of political preferences and electoral outcomes. These studies sought to combine election results with census and other socio-economic data. As such, they defined the research agenda on contemporary Indian politics for decades. The guiding principle behind these studies was the importance of "proximity variables", such as ethnic concentrations, topography, the presence or absence of non-farm economic activities or industrialization.

Though steered from the United States, these studies were coordinated by various Indian university departments (notably the University of Rajasthan, under Iqbal Narain)[15], and around the newly created Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), under the direction of Rajni Kothari, who himself contributed landmark studies on the Congress parties, the role of caste in politics, and the particular political trajectory of India's democracy (Kothari 1970b, a). One of Kothari's contributions was to ground his analysis in empirical evidence – a scarce resource in his time – coupled with the departure from the more normative Marxist approach that was in vogue in that period.

One of the contributors of the Indian Election Data project, Paul Brass, developed and formalized the case study method by adding what he called the "ecological analysis", or a systematic study of the correlation between electoral demographic and socio-economic data with political phenomena, such as turnout, party performance and voters' preferences (Banerjee, 2009: 20). The merit of this approach was that it was mindful of contexts and studied socio-political variables in connection with each other, and not separately. It also had the advantage of not relying on a single source of information but to compare various sources and note discrepancies in official data. This recommendation would prove essential to any relevant study of the role of caste in politics, for instance. Brass pursued this method in subsequent studies of North Indian politics. His collection of

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[15] I thank Philip K. Oldenburg for reminding me of the importance of these departments.

essays in the 1980s (Brass 1984a, 1985) include several constituency or locality-level studies or electoral politics. Brass justifies the selection of constituencies as illustrating "*different aspects of the main social conflicts that have been prominent in UP politics*". The selection is thus made on the basis of exemplarity and not randomness. The same principle guided his work on communal riots, in which he compared the trajectories of the cities of Aligarh and Meerut (Brass 2004). His later work would focus more on events, incidents and individual portraits, such as the portrait of a local BJP hero in Kanpur, or an incident of rape in Daphnala, as starting points for deeper reflections on political authority and violence (Brass 1997b).

Another proponent of the ecological method was Harry Blair, a scholar working on the state of Bihar. In his book on electoral politics in India and Bangladesh, Blair randomly selected constituencies and conducted interviews with voters, political actors and local bureaucrats, underlining among other findings the impact of the presence or absence of members of local dominant castes at the polling station (Blair 1979). He was also part of the scholars who used advanced statistics for the first time to study these correlations[16].

Yet, the necessity to grasp political processes on a larger scale led scholars to develop the survey method.

Survey and quantitative methods

Political surveys had been in existence in India since the 1950s. Eric da Costa, an economist turned journalist, is credited with having conducted the earliest opinion surveys in India. He founded the Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO) in 1956, modeled after the American Institute of Public Opinion, created by Gallup at Princeton in 1935 (Kumar and Rai 2013). There were other contributions that emanated from the private sector but the first scientific election surveys were conducted by the CSDS. The first National Election Survey (NES) was conducted in 1967 by Rajni Kothari, Ramashray Roy and Bashiruddin Ahmed. Roy and Kothari had both studied at the University of Michigan, where they learned survey methods. They sought to apply these methods in

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[16] Another example would be Bruce Bueno de Mesquita's dissertation on strategies of opposition parties in coalition governments at the state level in India.

India upon their return. The aim of the NES was to map and measure the voting behaviour, opinion and attitudes of Indian voters and explain electoral outcomes[17].

Sanjay Kumar and Praveen Rai explain the merits and the limitations of these first surveys, which were conducted for the 1971 and 1980 elections, which were then interrupted for a period of over fifteen years[18].

The resurgence of survey in the 1990s took place initially outside the walls of academic institutions. Another economist turned journalist, Prannoy Roy, trained in the United Kingdom, sought to apply survey methods in India and back his media coverage of elections with data, starting with the 1984 elections[19]. Along with David Butler, Roy was in charge of a popular regular publication based on election surveys called "*India decides*" (Butler, Lahiri, and Roy 1995), which he later converted into a television format, after the establishment of the news channel NDTV, in 1998 (Tawa Lama-Rewal 2009). At the same time, the CSDS revived its data unit, under the direction of Yogendra Yadav. The National Election Survey series was restored and the CSDS built a nation-wide network of scholars and partners – Lokniti – to cover every general and state election. The findings of these surveys would eventually make their way into popular academic publications, such as the Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), and other journals. Their monopolistic position in this field made them the quasi-sole provider of survey data to scholars, in particular data scientists. NES data have provided the empirical backbone of many studies conducted on elections, notably the book series co-edited by Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace, books on caste and politics such as the *Rise of the Plebeians* (Jaffrelot and Kumar 2009), or Christophe Jaffrelot's *Silent Revolution* (Jaffrelot 2003b). Lokniti scholars and their colleagues would contribute to numerous volumes on elections and state politics (Chatterjee 1997, Gould and Ganguly 1993, Palshikar, Suri, and Yadav 2014, Vora and Palshikar 2004, Wallace and Roy 2003).

In recent years, the discipline, particularly outside India, has followed the quantitative turn that political science in general has taken. Statistical regressions and natural experiments have become common tools and methods used to explore aspects of electoral

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[17] Kumar and Rai, ibid., p.21.
[18] Ibid.
[19] See (Oldenburg 1988).

politics, particularly work conducted with an evaluative purpose, on the learning effect of women's reservations (Bhavnani 2009), the effects of caste bias on state governance (Acharya, Roemer, and Somanathan 2015) or the study of the incumbency effect in state elections (Uppal 2009, 2011, Uppal and Baskaran 2014). In the Indian context, these contributions are often made by economists trained in these methodologies, contrary to political scientists who have tended to remain aloof from quantitative methods.

The anthropology of democracy

Lastly, there has recently been a return to the ethnographic method, under the label of anthropology of democracy. With the exception of figures like Harold Gould, F.G. Bailey and Adrian Mayer, anthropologists have traditionally stayed away from the study of elections and democratic processes, considered to be the turf of political scientists. For a long time, there was a division of labour between political scientists, who studied large political processes, electoral outcomes and institutions, sociologists, who studied politically assertive and marginalized social groups, and anthropologists, who concentrated on everyday local politics, issues of violence or patronage, and democratic rituals[20].

There used to be a tradition of anthropological work on the political in South Asia. One of its pioneering figures, British anthropologist Frederick George Bailey, produced a body of work on politics based on his extensive fieldwork conducted in Bisipara, a village in Orissa, and in various other parts of this state in the late 1950s. His best-known contributions are an analysis of the rules, both formal and informal, regulating political competition (Bailey 1969), the need of keeping enemies in politics (Bailey 1998), and the inevitable association of deceit and moral breakouts with political leadership (Bailey 1988, 1991). The common thread of his work has been to consider political practices as they are, disconnected from moral or normative considerations.

Yet, for all its value, the profile of the discipline dipped considerably in the following decade, to be revived in the early 2000s (Spencer 2007). A 2002 essay written by Julia

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[20] There were again exceptions, in the form of cross-disciplinary studies of politics, such as the two volumes edited by Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao (Frankel, Frankel, and Rao 1990, Frankel and Rao 1989), or political work that was sociologically inscribed in urban (Oldenburg 1974) and rural settings (Retzlaff 1962, 1959).

Paley, from the University of Pennsylvania, in the Annual Review of Anthropology provides a review of the field as well as serves as a manifesto for the renewed interest of anthropologists in democratic processes and institutions (Paley 2002). This approach, according to Paley,

> "*...bring[s] to the study of democracy an examination of local meanings, circulating discourses, multiple contestations and changing forms of power that is rare in the scholarly literature on democratic transitions, which has largely focused on political institutions and formal regime shifts*"[21].

Anthropologists underscore that the meaning of concepts such as democracy, equality or citizenship is contextual and that consequently, these contextualized meanings must be investigated, paying particular attention to the language used to describe these notions. Beyond the study of meaning, anthropological approaches focus on practices and their intersection with meaning, or, in Paley's words, what is *done* with meaning (Paley 2008) – (Paley's emphasis).

Another common understanding of this approach consists of saying that anthropologists explore the 'why' of politics, while political scientists and pollsters focus on the 'what' of politics. Why do Indians vote? Why do poorer voters tend to vote more than the more affluent ones? Why do people vote knowingly for tainted candidates? They tend to be less interested in formal aspects of democracy or the explanation of electoral outcome, and more interested in matters of substance of politics.

Mukulika Banerjee's "*Why India Votes?*" is a landmark contribution to the study of democracy in South Asia, not so much for her anthropological outlook but for the fact that she and her collaborators convincingly reconcile the local gaze of the ethnographic method with the necessity of comparison, to build a general argument on why people vote in the first place. Banerjee avoids some of the common limitations and traps of her discipline – localism, resistance to comparison – by combining several methods: ethnographic, comparative and quantitative. The methodology debate, opposing quantitative and qualitative methods, often leads to sterile parochial confrontations or to

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[21] Paley, ibid., p.1.

celebratory yet unspecified calls for methodological unity. 'Why India votes?' for once gives the convincing demonstration that not only can varied methods coexist within the framework of particular research but that they can actually produce an outcome larger than their individual contributions, mutually enriching the material collected and its analysis.

One collection particularly stands out for its contribution to the field. Routledge's collection *Exploring the Political in South Asia*, edited by Mukulika Banerjee has so far produced ten volumes on caste and politics (Michelutti 2008, Still 2014), state politics (Raghavan and Manor 2009), crime (Sanchez 2016), and the meanings and practices of power and influence in South Asia (Price and Ruud 2010). It also includes the Rise of Plebeians, in the continuation of which this dissertation is located.

What I retain from this body of work is the necessity to focus on practices, on what political actors do, and not on the verification of whether their acts conform to what their formal status mandates them to do in the first place. For the purposes of this dissertation, it was imperative to consider the 'actual job description' of politicians[22], defined both by politicians' self-perception of their job duties and requirements and by voters' notions of what their representatives should be doing, rather than seek to verify whether their actions correspond with or fit the mould of their formal institutional mandate. Studies that aim at establishing whether practices conform to formal norms are bound to disappoint with their nearly systematic negative responses or irrelevant findings.

It is also necessary to contextualize political practices at their most relevant level of observation, which tends to be local. An election signifies more than the act of choosing a representative. There are material and intangible considerations at stake, related to the balance of power between individuals and groups. Local political competition is embedded within a context of transforming local configurations of domination and subordination – or power relations – between groups.

The third element of interest is that it is possible to 'scale up' ethnographic findings through comparison or multi-site fieldwork. A large part of our fieldwork has consisted of

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[22] I borrow this expression from a conversation with Philip Oldenburg.

observing and asking questions on the distribution of local power and political influence in different locations, and to compare notes on varied configurations of the distribution of power and influence.

Some of the most relevant and interesting contributions to Indian electoral politics have been based on mixed methodologies, at the crossroads of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Survey data is used as an empirical back-up for more in-depth studies of aspects of electoral politics, such as the meaning of the act of voting (Ahuja and Chhibber 2010), the interconnections between caste and class in electoral behaviour (Jaffrelot 2015a), the political behaviour of minorities (Heath, Verniers, and Kumar 2015), the role of gender in political participation (Deshpande 2004) and, of course, the large body of literature on the explanation of electoral outcome in general and assembly elections.

1.4. Methodology

This dissertation employs a mix of methodological approaches., consisting in using empirical data and descriptive statistics to draw a context of political action – what I call the systemic rules of political engagements – as well as to study the evolution of the state assembly's members' profile.

The content of this dissertation also draws from extensive fieldwork conducted over six years across the state of Uttar Pradesh, between 2007 and 2012. The first exploratory fieldwork was conducted in Lucknow and various constituencies in Eastern Uttar Pradesh during the months of March and April 2007, before and after the state 14th state Assembly election. Subsequently, regular visits to Lucknow, the state's capital enabled me to build the empirical base of much of the analyses conducted in this dissertation. Other rounds of fieldwork were conducted before and after the 2009 General elections and around the 2012 State Elections, across constituencies in Western Uttar Pradesh and Central Uttar Pradesh.

The method used has been essentially based on semi-directive interviews with local political leaders, candidates, party campaigners, academics and local political observers. I have tried, through my fieldwork, to pay attention to context, demography, social rivalries,

factionalism, as well as the political economy of constituencies. Extensive semi-directed interviews also proved far more effective and richer than pre-established questionnaires, or even following a fixed pro-forma.

The fieldwork also aimed at locating politicians within their local contexts, identify the types of networks to which they belong and from which they draw their resources and influence. Fieldwork conducted in constituencies was guided by the two broad questions, 'who exerts political influence here and how is power distributed?'; and how has this evolved through time?

The empirical base of this dissertation is composed of building three datasets, two of which are unique. The first dataset consists of the digitization and the expansion of publicly available ECI (Election Commission of India) reports, which provide fairly detailed information on General and State election results. These reports have been digitized[23], cleansed and expanded with the addition of new variables, such as sub-regions, the matching of Assembly and Parliamentary seats and some socio-demographic variables drawn from the Indian decadal census for the most recent year.

The second dataset pertains to the sociological profile of Members of the Legislative Assembly (from 1962 to 2012) and candidates (comprehensively for the years 2007 and 2012). Various variables, such as occupation, education, individual information on career and family background, were collected through the Who's who, or biographical notices published by the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha library. These volumes have been translated and digitized. This Who's Who data was verified, and augmented with caste data through fieldwork and interviews with candidates and representatives, local journalists, party workers and other political observers. Interviews were conducted in individual residences, party offices, on the campaign trail and at times in vehicles, train stations, dhabas and all kinds of hotels, ranging from dodgy to fancy.

There has been a rigorous effort to include candidates' data into the datasets and analysis as far as possible. Any study of elected representatives should include unsuccessful contestants as well, since little can be said of one if it is not compared with the other. Most

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[23] Francesca Jensenius provided a reformatted ECI data until the year 2007. Data cleaning and addition of new variables was done by the author.

studies on representation have focused on elected representatives and not on candidates, essentially due to the lack of data on the latter. Understanding how parties win or lose elections requires that we understand who contests in the first place and under what kind of constraints.

The third dataset undertakes the coding of individual political trajectories, that is, the attribution of a unique identification number for every candidate having contested State Assembly elections (73,480 entries from 1951 to 2012). Names of individual candidates have been matched, both manually and with the help of a fuzzy name-matching script. This enabled the coding of individual career trajectories (how many times listed individuals contested and the result), the status of contestants (re-running or incumbent candidates, ex-MLAs or maiden contestants), of 'turncoat' candidates (candidates shifting party affiliations between two elections) and of 'migrating' candidates (candidates contesting from different constituencies through time). This dataset provides the measure of individual incumbency, or the capacity of an elected representative to be re-elected or elected more than once, which is an indicator of electoral volatility.

This dissertation rests essentially on the prosopography of political actors – candidates and elected representatives. The datasets assembled for this dissertation are essentially meant to provide an empirical bedrock to what is essentially a qualitative analysis of political practices.

I contend that the data itself does not contain answers to the many questions it helps to raise and formulate, and that qualitative fieldwork and the observation of local political practices can and should be contextualized and tested against the backdrop of empirical data, both in time and space.

This dissertation builds on previous contributions of scholars who worked on the sociological profile of representatives in India (Jaffrelot and Kumar 2009, Jayal 2006). It aims not only to 'update' these studies by incorporating data on recent elections, but also to expand these approaches by including new variables and by contextualizing this data through comparative localized qualitative fieldwork, therefore drawing a new framework of analysis for the study of political representation.

Before I get into context, it is necessary to evoke the questions that have been raised by scholars about politics in Uttar Pradesh and examine some of the responses that they have offered.

1.5. Literature review

Reviewing the literature on Uttar Pradesh politics is not an easy task since it is not cohesively organized under a regional denomination, the way Punjab studies or Tamil studies are, for example. This is largely due to the fact that Uttar Pradesh, despite its centrality in Indian politics and the public's imagination, is rarely seen as a cohesive regional entity. The state does not have a specific language of its own. It is divided into groups and communities that often find more commonalities with their cross-border counterparts than an attachment with the state as a whole.

It is revealing that Uttar Pradesh does not have regionalist parties, but regional, or state-based parties that do not articulate a particular notion of regional identity. Rather, these parties seek to identify with particular segments of the state's population, or refer to a broader, national register, as is the case for the Congress and the BJP. Further, the denomination of "heartland", often used to describe Uttar Pradesh, also lends a vague character to this space, as well as a geographical connotation that has not been conducive to the emergence of a binding or overarching regional identity[24].

Besides, the paucity of public universities throughout the state has meant that regional academic productions, in the forms of journals such as the Uttar Pradesh Journal of Political Science, or the Uttar Pradesh Journal of Social Science Research, have failed to make a mark beyond the boundaries of the state and its regional universities[25]. This has not always been the case. The state of Uttar Pradesh used to have universities of great standing in Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi or Agra[26]. These institutions have suffered from

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[24] This lack of a cohesive regional identity for UP is illustrated by the fact that the Samajwadi Party's branch in Mumbai presents itself as the party of the *Uttar Bhartiyans* (North Indians), an acception that generally covers the North Indian hindiphone sphere.

[25] A notable exception to this sad state of affairs is Prof. A.K. Verma, Professor of Politcal Science at Christ College, Kanpur, and state coordinator of the Lokniti network.

[26] In 2013, T.N. Madan published a history of Sociology at the University of Lucknow (Reddy and Haragopal 1985).

decades of under-funding, politicization and general neglect, a dire situation well described in Craig Jeffries' books on youth and education in Western Uttar Pradesh (Bakshi, Chawla, and Shah 2015)[27].

What we find instead are various periods and streams of scholarly work based on fieldwork conducted in Uttar Pradesh. The presentation of the literature that follows does not aim to be comprehensive but to offer a diachronic analysis of some the main questions that have been raised (mostly) by political scientists as well as to give an overview of the answers they have proposed and the debates that these answers have generated. This exercise is also limited to the post-Independence literature, which corresponds with the date of the emergence of political science as a discipline in India (Rudolph and Rudolph 2010, 561).

The early literature: party politics and the fragility of Congress' dominance

The early literature on U.P. politics tends to focus on state-specific political questions, such as factionalism within the Congress Party (Brass 1965, 1984a, 1985), and the rise of opposition parties (Baxter 1971, Burger 1969). In 1969, Ralph C. Meyer completed the first prosopographical study of Uttar Pradesh's political elite, gathering data on the sociological profile of U.P. MLAs from 1952 to 1962. Most of these early contributions either focus on parties and state-level politics, with some exceptions, such as Ralph H. Retzlaff, who studied decision making processes in a Western U.P. village (Retzlaff 1959, 1962), or Robert S. Robin who wrote on elite formation in three Panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh, before and after Independence (Robins 1967). Harold Gould's early work on caste politics was based on fieldwork conducted in Uttar Pradesh, notably in Lucknow and Faizabad (Gould 1963, 1969).

Given its demographic and political importance, Uttar Pradesh also occupies a large space in literature dealing with national politics and national political processes. One example is the study of Muslim political elites by Theodore P. Wright Jr., in which U.P. Muslims figure prominently (Wright Jr. 1964, 1966), and he highlights the elite character of Muslim

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[27] The Rudolphs had already described, in 1969, how universities located in the Heartland suffered from less funding and attention than their earlier counterparts located on coasts, or in the Rimland (Kapur et al. 2010).

representatives, who, religion apart, share more social characteristics with their elected Hindu counterparts than with their own brethren (Wright Jr. 1964, 267).

The aforementioned state-specific studies were written on the basis of fieldwork conducted mostly in the early 1960s, at a time when the Congress domination was at its peak. All of them, however, point to some contradictions or vulnerabilities in this dominant system. In his study of factional politics in the Congress, Brass analyzes how the Congress domination depends on its embeddedness in local economic and social environments, particularly by controlling local political and economic institutions through the co-optation of locally dominant rural communities[28]. He also uncovers how the Congress domination rests on local alliance of dominant groups, rather than on elite capture from a single upper caste (i.e. the Brahmins). He further shows that the capacity of the Congress party to retain power also depends on its ability to maintain the cohesion of its local branches, or to deal with the disintegrative impact of factionalism[29]. He argues that internal factionalism is more significant than inter-party competition for explaining variations in the Congress vote.

In her comparative study of the Congress Party in U.P. and its nascent opposition, Burger identifies five sources of the Congress' vulnerability: ideological clarity and purpose, personnel in organization, the difficulties of governing, particularly in relation to the bureaucracy, the inability to meet voters' expectations, and the party's growing identification with specific elite groups [30]. While she recognizes that the social composition of the Congress leadership remains frozen in the social groups that were initially mobilized (traditional upper castes elites), she also points at the ability of the party to open its doors to other groups locally when the old configuration led them to lose seats[31].

By following the trajectory and performance of the Jana Sangh in municipal elections in the late 1950s, Baxter shows how quickly the Congress started losing ground to the Hindu right in urban seats, notably in the 1959 elections in which it lost all the major cities,

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28 Op. cit., p. 229.
29 Ibid., p. 239.
30 Op. Cit., p. 264-265.
31 Op. Cit., p. 271.

including Lucknow[32]. He shows the process through which a former core support base of the Congress Party – the upper castes – split their votes between parties according to their local interests.

In his study of the profile of the U.P. Assembly, Meyer perceives early changes in the economic profile of elected representatives, warning in his conclusion that if the interlocking of economic and political power could bring some stability to the political system, it could also well be to the detriment of the poor and at the cost of a dysfunctional economic growth, due to the aversion of these elites to redistributing wealth (Meyer 1969, 350).

Finally, Robin's studies of Panchayat elections from 1946 to 1961 indicate that "*status as a traditional leader, being literate below the high school level, enjoying high caste status, and having a non-agricultural occupation are all positive recruitment factors at the nominating level*"[33], and that political conflicts are sorted during the phase of nomination and not at the time of the election (which sees a large number of Panchayat leaders elected unopposed), which shows how local democratic processes can be subject to elite capture.

Most authors of this period emphasize the importance of popular participation and social mobilization, and explain how party politics hampers the transformative aspirations of these movements. Meyer in particular underlines how the socialist parties, especially, remain biased towards the upper caste in their organization.

There is also an interest, post-Independence, in some of the transformative policies implemented by the first state governments, notably land reforms (Mayer 1958, Metcalf 1967, Neale 1962). Many of these contributions were made by former or active civil servants, and sometimes by politicians themselves – a trend that would later disappear[34]. Most of these studies, conducted either at the village level or at the district level, would

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[32] Op. Cit., p. 180-181.

[33] Ibid., p. 29.

[34] Charan Singh's writing on agriculture, land reforms and social relations are a case in point. See (Singh 1947, 1959, 1964). Another useful source is Ram Manohar Lohia's complete writings, edited by Mastram Kapoor (Lohia and Kapoor 2011).

pinpoint the crucial role of local democratic institutions and processes in the implementation of public schemes and economic policies.

Identities, parties' recomposition and the study of agrarian change

Paul Brass remains the main figure of studies on U.P. politics through the 1970s and 1980s. The crystallization of group-based political demands in the period inspired Brass to explore the role of language and religion in the formation of group identities. In his 1974 book, Brass proposes a constructivist reading of identity formation by underscoring the role of political elites, who mobilize on the basis of selected symbols of group identity (Brass 1974). Comparing the trajectories of three political movements in North India – the Maithili movement in Bihar, the political differentiation of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh, and the formation of a Sikh Punjabi linguistic state in Punjab – Brass examines the conditions under which linguistic and religious political movements succeed or fail, and posits the central role of small elites in the formation of collective identities. Successful movements are those in which political elites effectively mobilize on the basis of a particular symbol (language or religion) while subsuming other symbols (caste, region, state), under it.

Thus, political parties and social movements are not merely the extension of parochial or communal popular demands, but they also shape these demands by reinforcing divisive social cleavages[35]. They are central to the formation and channeling of group identities. This is important in the context of a polity where political elites claim to attend to 'primordial' needs of pre-existing political communities[36].

In the following decade, Brass shifts his attention from the Congress to the socialist opposition, which leads him to explore the connections between agrarian change and the emergence of a new divided political family, grounded in the small and middle-landowning peasant classes (Brass 1984a, 1985). The two volumes published in 1984 and 1985, *Castes, Factions and Party in Indian Politics*, contain his contributions on the interconnection between caste mobilization, inter and intra-party dynamics, and broad

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35 Op. Cit., p. 41.
36 See the politicization of the Yadavs in (Michelutti 2008).

socio-economic change in Uttar Pradesh over twenty years. While the first volume contains a number of comparative studies on electoral and legislative politics as well as national politics, most of the two volumes' contributions are based on the case of Uttar Pradesh, where he traces the roots of political instability in parties' lack of internal discipline, the weakness of their organizations outside the legislature, the opportunism and careerism of political leaders, and the lack of institutionalized support in the electorate (Brass 1984a). Here again we find traces of his political elite-focused constructivist approach, a constant reminder of the primacy of politics in the construction of political and social movements.

In various chapters, he underlines the specificity of Indian electoral politics, notably the decoupling of the principles guiding national or state-level politics, where parties and leaders in power pursue a modernist developmentalist agenda, and local politics, that remains embedded in local structures of authorities. While the state and the national government seek to reform the country, local congress cadres are more preoccupied with the protection of their interests, through land control, access to local resources, and voice concerns about inter-caste and inter-communal relations that the leadership of the party would wish away (Brass 1984a, 5). Thus, the linkages between local and state politics are marked by contradictions, which eventually translate into factionalism and divisions.

While Brass stresses more on party politics than social transformations, he acknowledges that the rise and fall of parties is also connected to deeper social movements. Chaudhary Charan Singh's ascension to power in 1967 and 1970 – both mandates aborted by President's Rule – signaled not only the possibility of consolidation of the socialist camp, but also the consolidation of the middle peasantry, which had undergone profound changes (Brass 1980a, b).

These changes were in large part consequences of land reforms and transformations of the rural economy. In this period, various authors examined the impact of the abolition of the Zamindari system and of the introduction of the tenancy reforms and land ceiling laws (Hasan 1989, Metcalf 1967, Neale 1970, Oldenburg 1987, Pai 1986). Sudha Pai in particular studied agrarian relations in four districts in Eastern U.P. in the early 1980s. She examined the condition of traditional upper caste landlords, the structure and types of tenancy and land size, the position of the landless class and the issue of bonded labour.

Her choice of terrain was not conventional since most of the earlier (and subsequent) studies on agrarian transformations had been conducted in areas that were relatively more prosperous and that had been exposed to the Green Revolution (the Western regions). In her first book, she proposes a typology of landowners, breaking down the broad and vague category of farmer into four main agrarian classes: big landowners, both self-cultivators and rentiers; medium landowners, both self-cultivators and share-croppers; petty land-owners; and landless peasants[37]. Her fieldwork revealed that the class of big landowners succeeded in preserving much of their past assets, despite various waves of land reform, which meant that they could maintain much of their past influence. Caste divisions among the middle peasantry and landless farmers acted as a hurdle to their organization as a class[38].

An interesting feature of her work is her reluctance to make sweeping categorizations of social transformations. While she initially attempted to see whether feudalism continued to prevail over expanding capitalistic modes of rural production, the diversity of situations and the over-determination of local contexts over caste and class relations prevented her from providing a straight answer to the question[39]. She also acknowledged that caste configurations varied literally from village to village.

In 1989, Zoya Hasan addressed similar questions in the context of Western Uttar Pradesh (Hasan 1989). She proceeds to a broad historical overview of the evolution of agrarian relations, from the mid-nineteenth century to Independence, and then examines the social and political impact of land reforms and agrarian change in the post-Independence context. In so doing, she articulates more explicitly than Pai the political consequences of agrarian transformations, that is to say, the consolidation of a new class of rich peasants external to the Congress-affiliated traditional patronage networks. She also describes how dominant local groups succeed in concentrating the gains from the 'new agrarian strategy' of the 1960s and 1970s, "*while the condition of the small peasants worsened because of their inability to meet the increasing costs of production*"[40].

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[37] Ibid., p. 119.
[38] Ibid., p. 131.
[39] Ibid., p. 128.
[40] Op. Cit., p. 164.

In Western U.P., agrarian reforms and the Green Revolution contributed to the emergence of a politicized elite segment of the peasantry, who gradually gained control over local democratic institutions through class-based mobilization and money power, a fact observable in other Indian states, such as Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka or Tamil Nadu[41]. In Northern India, the rich and middle peasantry was historically anti-Congress, as it was considered to be dominated by and biased towards the upper castes[42].

This anti-Congressism translated into a massive support for Charan Singh's Bharatiya Lok Dal, a party overtly dedicated to their representation and the defense of their interests. This consolidation behind the Lok Dal was initially a Western UP phenomenon. As Pai shows, the rich landowning classes in Eastern UP cut across the upper castes and some dominant OBCs.

Various articles and contributions enrich this literature with case studies, which tend to document how reforms and policies get subverted once they pass through the filter of the local contexts of social domination (Singh 1974, Singh 1976, Subas 1984). In a similar vein, Oldenburg, in his study of the impact of the land consolidation policy of the 1960s (*chakbandi*), analyzes how the implementation of rural transformation schemes induces a culture and practices of corruption, particularly through the emergence of a professional class of intermediaries (Oldenburg 1987)[43].

The politics of the 1960s and 1970s is well summarized in a richly documented contribution to Iqbal Narain's volume on state politics in India, by Saraswati Srivastava, a lecturer in Politics at Benares Hindu University (Srivastava 1976).

New research directions in the mid-1990s

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[41] See Anthony Carter (Carter 1974) for a study of elite politics in rural Maharashtra or Pranab Bardhan (Bardhan 1982), for a broader overview.

[42] Ibid., p. 165.

[43] One of the earlier contributions on the subject of land consolidation was made by Joseph Elder (Elder 1962).

The late 1980s and early 1990s constituted a major turning point in U.P. politics, with the decline of the Congress, the rise of the BJP and the Hindu right and the political assertion of Dalits through the BSP, and of segments of the backward classes through the Janata Dal and, post-1993, the Samajwadi Party. Electoral competition intensifies and turns more violent, as the state sinks into political instability and financial crisis. The literature on U.P. politics reflects these developments and branches out in four main directions or field of studies: identity politics and the rise of the lower castes, the rise of the Hindu right, political violence (Brass 1997b, 2003, 2006, Wilkinson 2006, Wilkinson 2013), and the study of patronage and clientelism (Chandra 2000, 2004a, c).

A number of authors contributed to several of these academic streams, which clearly overlapped with each other. The 1990s contributions would initially adhere only to facts and events, and would give way in the 2000s to several exercises in formalizing the explanations put forward into more general arguments about Indian politics. In other words, the events of the early 1990s generated a whole set of new questions that would frame the subsequent study of U.P. politics.

Lower caste politics

The rise of Dalit politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s spurred a renewed interest for the study of caste politics and in particular the rise of lower caste parties. Various historical accounts are available regarding the rise of the BSP (Duncan 1997, 1999, Hasan 1998, Jaffrelot 2003b, Mendelsohn 1993, Mendelsohn and Vicziany 1998, Pai 1997, 1999). There is little to find on the travails of the Republican Party of India (RPI), Ambedkar's formation which contested a number of seats in Uttar Pradesh in the late 1960s (they won 10 seats in the 1967 elections, mostly in Doab and Western Uttar Pradesh)[44].

These accounts do not differ very much from each other and offer a picture that fit well with Paul Brass' constructivist approach, as they describe how a small Dalit bureaucratic elite proceeded to create a movement and a party that contributed to the politicization of

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[44] Angela Burger, in her study of the Congress opposition in Uttar Pradesh, does not mention the RPI.

vast segments of the state's Dalit population. Many of these contributions also underline the fact that the gains thereby obtained have been largely symbolic and that the BSP did little to structurally alter the state of exploitation and exclusion most Dalits are still reeling under.

Ian Duncan for example underlines that the BSP's rise has been essentially based on caste appeal, and not on campaigns based on material issues affecting Dalits (Duncan 1999). As a result, while the insistence on social oppression and exclusion helped the BSP to forge a Dalit political identity, it also prevented it from building a broad electoral support base among the rural poor, beyond its Dalit core.

Others have been less severe with the BSP and have studied in detail how the party proceeded to divert the state machinery to work in favour of the Dalits once they were in power through a politics of transfers and public job nominations (Jaffrelot 2003b) or through a clientelistic diversion of public resources towards the Scheduled Castes (Chandra 2004c). In *The Silent Revolution*, Jaffrelot describes in detail the transformation of a backward castes' civil services union into a political party. Both Chandra and Jaffrelot insist on the importance of reservations in the forming of a small but politicized and mobilized middle-class educated elite among the Dalits. Jaffrelot and I would later on detail how the party expanded its base by opening its doors to non-Dalit groups, discarding the notion of the BSP as an exclusive Dalit party (Jaffrelot 2010a, Jaffrelot and Verniers 2012).

The rise of the Hindu nationalist movement

Similarly, the rise of the BJP put to the fore the question of ethno-religious nationalism and cultural mobilization. The Ayodhya movement – or the quest for the re-appropriation of a mosque allegedly built on the birthplace of Ram – has been widely covered and analyzed as the culmination of a long process of development of the Hindu nationalist movement (Hansen 1999, Hansen and Jaffrelot 2001, Hasan 1994, 1998, Jaffrelot 1996, Parikh 1993, Zavos 2000). These contributions examine the emergence, the ideological foundations as well as the changing support base of the Hindu nationalist movement.

Zavos, Hansen, and Jaffrelot in particular offer three different readings of the sources of the movement, which complement rather than contradict each other.

"[Jaffrelot] *explains the current dominant position of the Hindu nationalists as the result of decades of systematic [...] organizational work and imaginative political strategies*" (Hansen 1999, 4). Zavos examines the historical and ideological foundations of the Hindu nationalist movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and bases his analysis on a more historical and cultural base. Hansen focuses the bulk of his analysis on the re-emergence of the BJP and affiliate organizations in the 1980s. Hansen and Jaffrelot then analyze the politics of the BJP in the 1990s and the political consequences of the Babri Masjid demolition. Similarly to Zavos, Hansen's main argument locates the origins of Hindu nationalism not specifically in the political or religious domain but in the realm of public culture[45]. All three recognize that the purpose or aim of the Hindu nationalist movement is to effectuate social change, to "*transform Indian public culture into a sovereign, disciplined national culture rooted in what is claimed to be a superior ancient Hindu past, and to impose a corporatist and disciplined social organization upon society*"[46]. Political power – and therefore the BJP – is seen as an instrument to achieve these goals, and not as an end in itself.

The experience of the BJP's power in Uttar Pradesh and at the Centre in the late 1990s and early 2000s would see the party adapt its posture and try to adopt a more "mainstream figure", notably through the vernacularization of its nationalistic discourse (Narayan 2006), a shift from overt to covert forms of religious mobilizations (Van Dyke 1997), and a shift of its political discourse towards more consensual themes, such as governance and development (Zerinini-Brotel 1998, Adeney and Sáez 2005).

The literature on Hindu nationalism is not U.P.-specific but given the importance of the state in national politics and the fact that many of the major events that have marked its history have occurred there explain why the two levels of analysis – national and regional – are often treated as interchangeable.

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[45] Op. Cit., p.4.
[46] Ibid., p. 4.

Backward Classes Politics

Backward-class politics constitutes the third part of the political triptych that defines U.P. politics in the 1990s. This literature is divided into four main themes: the transformation of kisan politics into caste politics, quota politics and the Mandal affair, party politics and the rise of OBC representation in the Assembly, and the 'backwardization' of other parties.

The first theme refers to a period of political turmoil that saw the socialist family – or *Janata Parivar* – dislocate into various political formations based on distinct social bases. The split of the Janata Dal into the SP and the RLD in the early 1990s signaled the end of kisan politics – understood as a politics of the representation of a broad spectrum of backward castes, spanning from the Scheduled Castes to the dominant OBCs – and the advent of caste-based mobilizations.

Here again, Jaffrelot provides the most comprehensive overview, detailing the historical and sociological processes that led to the politicization of backward castes initially as a broad social category, defined essentially in terms of class and occupation (Kisan) to caste-based forms of political mobilization, around the issue of quotas (Jaffrelot 2000a, b, 2003b). While his unit of analysis is the Hindi belt (North Indian Hindi-speaking states), Uttar Pradesh occupies a central place in his analysis. He demonstrates how quota politics, which initially emerged from the farmer's movement, initially complemented Kisan politics but at the turn of the 1990s unleashed a process of caste polarization that substituted caste as a vehicle of political mobilization to the broad category of backward, or Kisan[47].

The caste politics literature of the 1990s stresses particularly on party and caste alignments through the articulation of caste and party identities and the defence of caste-based interests. Little attention is paid to the heterogeneity of castes – even caste groups. In recent years however, various scholars have brought elements of caste differentiation to the analysis, using diverse methods and reaching various interpretations.

Zerinini looks at the differentiated trajectories of caste within caste groups using jati as the unit of analysis. She has shown empirically how specific dominant OBC castes have

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[47] Op. Cit., p. 343.

benefited from the backward movement and how lower OBCs remain under-represented in the State Assembly. (Zerinini 2009).

In an original contribution to the caste literature in Uttar Pradesh, Sunit Singh, an Allahabad-based scholar, looks at castes as internally stratified entities, in which a nucleus composed of prosperous and dominant members holds key positions within their caste network (Singh, 2002: 179). The members of this nucleus are comparatively privileged in terms of education, share in services, business, landholding, etc. The remaining members of the caste are situated at different points on different orbits around the nucleus, the distance being the reflection of their relative economic strength. Singh conducted a survey and created focus groups to estimate the size, or the level of influence concentrated among broad caste groups. He finds that both SC and OBC castes tend to have a small nucleus and a large periphery, indicating a strong concentration of power within these castes. This is consistent with the literature on the creamy layer, which indicates that reservations have contributed to the emergence of a small elite within targeted groups, who tend to seize the lion's share of the benefits of quotas and political influence.

Following the advent of simple majorities and the rise of 'rainbow coalitions', some authors contest the centrality of caste in electoral mobilization processes. Pai developed a moderate view on what she calls "post-identity" politics, or a process of complexification of the determinants of vote, in which caste continues to play a role but alongside other factors (Pai 2013). Others, less nuanced, have come to state that caste plays a minor role in electoral choice and the determination of electoral outcomes, in the face of the multiplicity of intervening factors and the local heterogeneity of social groups (Gupta 2016, Gupta and Kumar 2007).

Finally, more recently, Jaffrelot has used CSDS survey data to break down caste support for party by class, and observed a positive relationship between the upper segments of the backward castes and the BJP. This would indicate that in recent years, at least, a class cleavage cuts across caste divisions and affects how voters cast their votes.

The literature of the 1990s culminated in one of the last efforts to provide a cohesive overview of the major political processes at work during this crucial decade (Hasan 1998).

In "*Quest for Power*" Zoya Hasan has sought to describe and analyze how a new political order has emerged from the mobilization of various forms of identities, how the intertwining of religious and caste mobilizations created a political space dominated by the Hindu right and state-based parties, precipitating the decline of the Congress Party. In order to do so, she juxtaposes four chapters dealing with the decline of the Congress, a reformulation of the political consequences of agrarian change, backward-class mobilizations and the struggle around Ayodhya. These four streams of political transformation are revealing of three deep transformations of the political order in Uttar Pradesh: increasing inter-group conflicts over control of government, a growing disjuncture between increasing political equality and persistent socio-economic inequalities and the legitimization and institutionalization of identities – both caste and religious – as the bases for political mobilization[48]. The book however stopsthe short of offering a comprehensive overview of political changes in UP, since it barely mentions Dalit politics.

The academic streams that I just described have been complemented by the electoral analysis produced by various scholars, who have chronicled and analyzed successive elections, generally focusing on party strategies and electoral behaviour. Post-1996, the CSDS-Lokniti surveys enriched these contributions with systematic survey data (Parmar 1996, Shankar 1996, Amaresh 1997, Anirudh 1997, Brass 1997a, Duncan 1997, Pai 1998b, a)[49].

One of the first limitations of this literature is that it tends to overstate the reality (or simplify the complexity) of caste-party alignments, easily assuming the equation between parties' proclaimed identities and the social composition of their electoral base. Zoya Hasan's *Quest for Power* is an illustration of this limitation. Available CSDS survey data reveals that few castes vote cohesively for a specific party (see chapter 2) and that few parties survive with the support of a single social group (see chapter 4).

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[48] Op. Cit., p. 235-236.
[49] The main contributor to this literature in the 2000s is A.K. Verma, the resident Lokniti correspondant and U.P. scholar, based at Christ College, Kanpur. See among others (Verma 2002a, 2003, 2004b, 2005a, 2006, 2007b, a, 2012b, 2014a).

A second limitation is that most of these party-centric contributions tend to be based on a macro-analysis of state politics. Few have paid attention to internal disparities – notably the spatial. There is also little discussion about how these transformations translate into local political practices. The role of crime and violence in the assertion of political dominance at the local level is rarely mentioned in this literature[50].

The political economy of Uttar Pradesh

But the main limitation of the 'Mandal and Mandir' literatures is the absence of the third major factor of social and political change: the market. Barring a few exceptions, the literature on backward politics and religious mobilizations tends to focus essentially on political and social factors – the role of political actors and parties – and inter-caste dynamics. Contrary to the previous literature that examined the relations between economic transformations and social and political change[51], this literature almost completely discards economic factors from the analysis.

Although there is debate over whether the post-1991 liberalization policies have benefited the poor in India's backward states[52], it is generally agreed that recent economic transformations and the trajectory of India's growth have increased inequalities (Thorat and Dubey 2012), as well as regional and intra-regional disparities (Suryanarayana 2009, Chakraborty 2010, Dubey 2010, Thorat and Dubey 2012, Singh et al. 2014, Bakshi, Chawla, and Shah 2015). Liberalization has sharpened inequalities not just between but also within groups. These inequalities – particularly within dominant groups, such as the Jats in Haryana or the Patidars in Gujarat – have been the source of much of the caste-based violence in Northern India in recent years.

There have been a number of empirically grounded contributions by political economists, political scientists and anthropologists shedding light on the connections between the economy (including land), caste and politics.

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[50] See Lucia Michelutti's review of Jaffrelot's *Silent Revolution* (Michelutti 2004).

[51] One can mention Francine Frankel's work on the political impact of agrarian modernization and the Green Revolution in particular (Frankel 1969, 1971).

[52] For an optimistic account on the effect of the improvement of material conditions on caste-based discriminations, see (Kapur et al. 2010)

Lieten and Srivastava conducted fieldwork throughout the 1990s in three districts – Muzaffarnagar (West), Rae Bareli (Awadh) and Jaunpur, in the East (Lieten and Srivastava 1999). They discuss variations in types of agriculture, land ownership patterns, asset status, educational and occupational status between castes. As far as land ownership is concerned, they make two observations. The first is that the leading land-owning castes are those that traditionally held superior rights in these regions (Jats in Muzaffarnagar, Brahmins and Thakurs in Jaunpur, upper-caste Hindus and Muslims in Rae Bareli)[53]. But they also observe a great deal of inter-panchayat variations, due to recent social and economic transformations. Similarly, they observe that social dominance remains largely perceived by their respondents in terms of caste dynamics[54]. They conclude that at the local (Panchayat) levels, patterns of dominance are resilient[55], and also note that when caste dominance is challenged, the dominant groups are likely to to resort to violence to maintain their position.

Jens Lerche conducted fieldwork in 1993 in villages in Muzaffarnagar and Jaunpur districts (Lerche 1999). He, too, shows the transformation of labour relations – due to the development of agricultural technology (tubewells and mechanization) – have loosened the exploitative relation of dependency that tied landless labourers to largely upper-caste or dominant OBCs landowners[56]. He connects the rise of the BSP to the political agency that rural landless labourers have gained from breaking the chains of economic dependency (Lerche 1999, 213).

Despite these changes, these scholars, and others, have also illustrated how dominant groups have maintained or expanded their influence by controlling local state institutions (Jeffrey 2003, Lindberg and Madsen 2003, Pai and Singh 1997, Singh 1992).

While these contributions link economic transformations to social and political change, others have examined the impact of political transformations on developmental policies and outcomes. One general argument is that focus on caste-based politics and policies

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[53] Op. Cit., pp. 110-111.
[54] Ibid., p. 131.
[55] Ibid., p. 139.
[56] Op. Cit., p. 190.

designed to please specific caste segments of the electorate (or implemented to that effect) have led successive governments to neglect some of the basic functions of the state welfare machinery, leading to low investments in the health and education sector, and to a general deterioration of public services (Jeffery, Jeffrey, and Lerche 2014). The 2010 Planning Commission Report recognized that centrally sponsored schemes had not substantially alleviated poverty in Uttar Pradesh (Planning Commission 2010).

In 2007, Sudha Pai co-edited a volume that sought to take stock of the more recent transformations that had taken place in Uttar Pradesh with regard to identity politics and political mobilizations, as well as matters of governance and macro-economic reforms (Pai 2007). While the volume contains useful contributions on parties and identity politics, as well as the depressed macro-economic trajectory of the state, it does not bind these questions together and falls short of offering a new analytical framework that addresses the interconnections between social, political and economic change in the post-liberalization period.

There are other 'holes' in the literature, such as the study of public institutions or the political sociology of the bureaucracy. Akhil Gupta did propose a reading of the functioning of the state (Gupta 2012), in which he asserts that the central feature of the functioning of the local bureaucracy is arbitrariness, rather than corruption.

There is also a literature on Panchayati Raj, which I am not quoting here, which usually focuses on aspects of delivery or outcomes, but rarely on the political processes affecting their composition and functioning.

The anthropological critique and contribution to the Uttar Pradesh politics literature

While there is a relative consensus on the description of political events and processes in U.P., there are divergences on their significance and interpretation. The rise of the BSP in particular has given way to the hope that in the violent political context of the early 1990s, there was at least one political party dedicated to the emancipation of India's poorest citizens. The rise of backward classes is also associated with a period that saw increased participation from the lower segments of the electorate, what Yogendra Yadav termed as

the 'second democratic upsurge' (Yadav 2000). Many scholars at the turn of the Millennium agreed that Indian politics was becoming more inclusive and participatory (Sheth 1996, Weiner 1997, Yadav 1996a, b, 2000).

In recent years, political anthropologists and sociologists have questioned the interpretative framework of political change in U.P. inherited from the 1990s literature. These authors have raised doubts, particularly about the emancipatory potential of lower-caste politics by conducting local ethnographies of the processes through which these 'new' low-caste politicians actually emerged (Jeffrey 2001, 2002, Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2008a, Kumar 2014, 2016). They have criticized the interpretation of political scientists who see in the rise of the BSP both the signal and the vector of deep grassroot-level lower-caste political assertion, through access to local resources, power networks and cultural emancipation (Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2008a, 1371-75). While they do not deny their politicization nor the importance of symbolic victories, they point out that political change in the post-liberalization context has "tended to bolster the position of dominant sections of society" (Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2008a, 1371).

In their study of new Dalit politicians in Bijnor district, Jeffery and Jeffrey show that the rise of the BSP has contributed to the emergence of a new class of skillful Dalit politicians, although "*the rise of lower-caste parties has not resulted in increased leverage and political power for Dalits on the ground*"[57], as has been the case in South India. They also note that the rise of the OBCs mostly benefited their upper sections as well as the Jats, who could further enhance their control over landholding and their influence over local government bodies,through their alignment with the Samajwadi Party[58].

They have asserted further that the emergence of 'backward politicians' cannot be interpreted in isolation as the by-product of deep and organized caste-based social movement, or be seen as the spearhead of emancipatory transformative politics. These new politicians emerge from a political milieu and context that are deeply embedded within local socio-economic contexts, which are marked by harsh competitiveness, crime, violence and corruption, as well as the absence of prospects for the youth besides politics (Jeffrey 2010b, Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2008b).

[57] Op. cit., p. 1390.
[58] Ibid., p. 1369.

Corruption and violence emerge as two registers widely used by dominant groups to preserve their social status and control over local territories, as well as to counter the assertion of subaltern groups. Craig Jeffrey showed how many rich farmers in rural Meerut district maintain their position by colluding with local state officials (Jeffrey 2002). Earlier on, he made an important contribution when he argued that the reproduction of social inequalities remained mediated by caste and the phenomenon of caste dominance, in connection with other axes of power, such as class (Jeffrey 2001).

What emerges from this literature is a portrayal of a polity undergoing deep transformations but not necessarily headed in a single direction. In his ethnography of the rural economy, Satendra Kumar shows how the diversification of the rural economy has lead to a more horizontal political competition, or the emergence of a highly competitive environment between contending caste groups (Kumar 2014, 2016).

It is to be noted that these contributions are almost exclusively based on fieldwork conducted in Western U.P., in districts adjacent to Delhi, or in adjacent Rohilkhand, two sub-regions comparatively more dynamic and prosperous than the rest of the state. More comparative ethnographies across the state are needed if one were to generalize their conclusions at the state level.

The U.P. Literature in the 2000s: the triple tropes of violence, identity, and patronage.

Most of the literature described so far consists in descriptive and analytical account of political processes and transformations. Barring the contributions of Paul Brass on the analysis of ethnic violence (see below), few have attempted to link their empirical work to larger theoretical issues. Post-2000, a series of scholars have used the work they conducted in Uttar Pradesh or on Uttar Pradesh to build general arguments about either Indian politics and/or broader theoretical academic debates, on the issues of violence and crime, identity politics and patronage.

Political violence and the criminalization of politics.

The issue of violence in U.P. politics isn't a new debate, even though Rudolph notes that it took a long time for political scientists to address the issue of post-Partition political violence (Rudolph and Rudolph 2010, 571). The state of Uttar Pradesh has seen many episodes of communal violence after Independence, particularly in the 1980s, when cities such as Meerut, Aligarh and Moradabad, were regularly hit by large-scale pogroms and riots[59]. In the late 1980s, the *Ram Janmabhoomi* issue accentuated communal tensions and violence across the state, which peaked in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition.

In the early 2000s, three authors – Wilkinson, Varshney and Brass – proposed three different interpretations on the causes of communal violence. Wilkinson details the electoral incentives that lead parties in power to prevent the spread of communal violence or incite it, stating that communal violence is not an issue of state capacity (Wilkinson 2004, 2005, Wilkinson 2006). Varshney argues that communal violence can be prevented when inter-religious local associative ties pre-exist, quashing communal sparks before they flare into conflagrations (Varshney 1996, 2001).

While Wilkinson and Varshney use a common dataset compiling the occurrence of riots in India (Varshney and Wilkinson 2006), Brass bases his analysis on extensive fieldwork conducted in Aligarh and Meerut, over a period of twenty years. The three authors are concerned chiefly with inter-religious violence occurring in cities in the specific context of political competition.

In *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in India* (Brass 2003), based on extensive fieldwork conducted in the city of Aligarh, Brass formalizes some of the arguments that he had developed in his earlier ethnography of riot cases in Uttar Pradesh (Brass 1997b). He seeks to understand, among others, why riots persist, what accounts for variations in time and space, and who stands to gain from routinized communal violence. The planning required to organize communal riots and the institutionalization and banalization of communal violence in every day life are part of what he calls an institutionalized riot system (IRS), which sets a context propitious to the activation of social tensions into violence in periods of mobilization or at the time of elections (Brass 2004, 4839).

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[59] For a detailed account and description of communal riots in post-Independence Uttar Pradesh, see (Galonnier and Graff 2013).

While sparkling a vivid intellectual debate, these contributions have their limitations, particularly in the case of Varshney and Wilkinson, who base their analysis on a common dataset coding instances of communal riots (only when involving fatalities), traced from a single source (the national edition of the English daily The Times of India)[60]. Brass in particular has criticized Varshney's argument on the grounds that inter-religious civic ties cannot stand in the face of the political will to create communal violence (Brass 2004).

Brass and Wilkinson both agree on the political origin of communal violence. While their respective works focus on cities, there is also plenty of evidence pointing to the fact that rural areas are also subjected to frequent communal eruptions. Badri Narayan refers to this when he describes what he refers to as a 'phenomenon of small riots' (Narayan 2014), or the occurrence of episodes of small-scale communal violence at short and repeated intervals, which nurture a climate of constant tension between religious communities. In 2014, police data compiled for an Indian Express investigation showed that in the ten weeks that followed the 2014 General Elections, 605 communal incidents took place, mostly in rural areas. Two-thirds of these incidents took place in or around constituencies tabled to go for a bye-election, after the election of their MLAs to the Lok Sabha (Suresh 2014a). The investigation further revealed that the triggers of violence were often banal neighborhood issues inflated at the behest of local politicians (Suresh 2014b).

This literature however tends to focus on a particular type of violence – inter-religious – at the cost of scrutiny on other forms of routinized violence, notably caste-based. There is plenty of evidence that U.P.'s daily life is marked by pervasive social tensions and violence, domestic or caste-based. My own fieldwork in Lucknow was frequently interrupted by the imposition of curfews in situations of street violence that seldom attracted national media attention. During the fieldwork conducted in Western U.P. in the fall of 2012, I seldom encountered villages that did not have a recent history of violence and murder, linked to family disputes, caste feuds or conflicts over land. Factional politics within dominant communities or between (and at times within) dominant local political families also lead to frequent clashes and acts of violence.

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[60] This explains why their data list essentially riots occuring in cities.

Social and economic change affects the balance of power between castes. The assertion of lower castes is often locally met with violence, perpetrated by members of dominant local groups that seek to maintain their dominance (Jodhka 2015).

Further, the question of ties between politics and violence is further complicated by the social legitimacy that a number of criminal politicians enjoy. Two recent contributions have underlined the depth of the nexus between violence and electoral politics and the social legitimacy attached to it.

In his 2012 dissertation and in prior publications, Milan Vaishnav has laid down the motives that push voters and parties to choose candidates with a publicly known criminal record (Vaishnav 2011, 2012). Voters may rationally choose to support such candidates as they are perceived to be more credible protectors of group-based interests. Parties are also incentivised to field 'tainted' candidates because the resources they possess – both financial and criminal – give them a competitive advantage over 'clean' or 'cleaner' opponents.

Using a more anthropological standpoint, Michelutti describes and analyses how the self-presentation of politicians and their campaigning style is imbued with violent masculine references, and why some segments of the electorate respond positively to the tropes of 'muscular politics' (Michelutti 2010, 2014).

Party-voters linkages, or the tropes of patronage and clientelism

The second theme of the post-2000 literature deals with party-voters linkages. Much of the literature on that subject defines the relation between parties, politicians and voters as transactional, that is to say based on the exchange of commoditized goods between holders of positions of power and voters, who have their support to offer in exchange of those goods, or the promise of the distribution of those goods. The literature on patronage and clientelism shows the forms these transactions have taken and the conditions under

which patronage or clientelism operate (Brass 1964b, Chandra 2004c, 2009, Cox and McCubbins 1986, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, Piliavsky 2014)[61].

During the first two decades after Independence, the Congress' domination rested on the systemic patronage of local notables and on the organization of exchange of votes against benefits within the framework of local traditional forms of authority (Singh 2002). Brass called patronage, alongside factionalism and administration, the 'substance' of Congress power (Brass, 1964: 212).

With the Congress' domination challenged, patronage and clientelism increased due to the higher competitiveness of the party system (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Candidates and parties compete for votes on the basis of their ability to meet the demands and expectations of voters, which in turn creates a context of competitive patronage, in which parties and candidates attempt to outdo each other with the promise of or the actual redistribution of resources. The greater availability of resources – public and private – after liberalization increased further the scope for patronage. As Wilkinson puts it, the cost of clientelism is increasing[62].

In the Indian context, clientelistic relations are often organized, or mediated, through caste. Castes work as interest groups and thus offer individuals the opportunity to weigh collectively in their negotiation with powermongers who prefer to engage with collective entities, such as castes or caste blocks, rather than a heterogeneous group of individuals.

In *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*, Kanchan Chandra argues that, in patronage democracies, local clientelistic networks prevail over policies or other possible determinants of electoral behaviour, since voters are under information constraints (Chandra 2004b). The elusiveness of 'state-led development' also encourages voters to turn to local patronage networks rather than expect benefits from state policies. Chandra also underlines that

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[61] These authors use the terms "clientelism" and "patronage" interchangeably. It designates a particular mode of exchange, or contractual relation between voters and politicians, characterized by the personalization of the relation (direct exchanges), the exchange of particular goods (resources versus electoral support) and dependent from control mechanisms. For a complete definition, see (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, 7-23). Patronage is usually contrasted with "programmatic politics", which are supposed to be framed regardless of specific individual interests.

[62] Op. Cit., p.112.

elections in India have become subjected to auctions or trade of public services against the support of segments of the electorate (Chandra 2004a). Voters thus form their political choices according to the material benefits they expect to derive from the act of voting (Kothari 1964, 1974)[63].

The depiction of India as a 'patronage democracy' has been criticized on several accounts, notably for its generalized 'blanket' character, and for its exaggeration of the effectiveness of patronage networks in securing votes.

A clientelistic relation implies the existence of a direct exchange, or a direct relationship between the patron and the client (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, 10). Ahuja and Chhibber point that politicians cannot possibly reach every voter in their constituency (Ahuja and Chhibber 2010). They also find that different categories of voters entertain differentiated expectations from their representatives and that "*a substantial chunk of the voters in India vote without any tangible expectation in terms of improved access to state services or private benefit*" [64]. This supports Mukulika Banerjee's finding that poor voters participate more in elections because of their attachment to the act of voting, before even the question of choice arises. For poor rural voters, the act of voting represents a valuable and tangible experience of political and social equality, a consideration that prevails over material benefits (Banerjee 2014). Much of the literature on patronage democracy assumes that "*there is a uniformity in the relationship of the State to its citizens and, furthermore, that all citizens view their relationship with the State similarly*" (Banerjee 2014, 2).

Similarly, many groups find themselves excluded de facto from patronage networks, particularly, the lower castes and minorities. There is also a myriad of small, dispersed castes that do not weigh much politically and therefore do not appear in the configurations of various social alliances designed by parties and candidates.

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[63] She, however, moderates this view by stating that the increase of the welfare state capacities have reduced the centrality and role of intermediaries in providing access to social benefits. Access to these social benefits, however, remains unequal and subject to various forms of corruption and extortion practices.

[64] op.cit.. p.6.

Furthermore, critiques of the patronage democracy argument underline that politicians are not the sole mediators between voters and the State and that most voters have to deal directly with the local administration in their day-to-day life. As such, politicians' credibility is low and so is the faith in their capacity to deliver on their promises (Banerjee 2014, 6).

Other scholars have argued that the traditional patronage linkages do not operate as they used to in a liberalized economy, which has created more avenues for upward social mobility (Jenkins 2005, Manor 2010). Jenkins and Manor point out that maintaining patronage networks does not prevent incumbents from losing elections. Structurally, it is probably not possible to meet every request or expectation in constituencies that count over a million inhabitants on an average. As Bailey noted in the 1950s in Orissa, candidates are individuals who have limited means at their disposal with which to gain their ends (Bailey, 2001: 35).

Other critiques point at the contradiction between the necessity of redistributing goods and the imperative of preying on one's constituency in order to raise sufficient funds to enter and last in politics.

These critiques do not deny the existence of patronage networks as such, but cast doubts over their effectiveness in determining electoral outcomes or even the individual fates of politicians. In such an environment of rampant rivalry, there is little, if not no control on how individual voters will behave inside the polling booth. As Ahuja and Chhibber put it: "*Patronage networks do exist, but the consumers of the services of such networks are limited in number*"[65].

Recent contributions underline the fact that patronage linkages have the effect of maintaining existing patterns of social domination, despite democratization. In an ethnographic article on the 2009 State elections in Andhra Pradesh, Carolyn Elliott notes that upper castes have been able to retain their political influence through the clientelistic redistribution of welfare and patronage benefits to marginalized segments of the electorate (Elliott 2011). Similarly, Tariq Thachil demonstrates how the BJP made inroads

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[65] Ibid., p.6.

among subaltern groups in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh by organizing and operating social services targeted at these groups (Thachil 2014). The expansion of clientelistic networks is also a way for parties to extend their support base by focusing on specific populations beyond their core support base.

From the perspective of politicians, forging and maintaining patronage networks is an essential means to build and retain electoral support. In his survey of MLAs across five states, Chopra finds that 47% of U.P. MLAs define their main role as attending to their constituents and working on the development of their constituency, before working for their party (21%) or working on the development of the state as a whole (22%). Not a single MLA surveyed (67 in total) mentioned Assembly work (Chopra, 1996:151).

Finally, the notion of clientelism usually implies a relationship that is not only transactional but also asymmetrical. Patrons and clients do not stand on a foot of equality. Evidence from the ground often points to the contrary. Local groups of voters tend to negotiate with several candidates wooing them for electoral support, in a sort of competitive bidding game. In his survey of 408 villages across Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Anirudh Krishna finds that the spread of education, the increased political competition and the expansion of state rural expenditure have contributed to disconnect intermediation from closed kinship ties (Krishna 2003). As a consequence, patronage networks are far from being stable. In fact, they are quite fluid.

I agree with Chhibber and Ahuja's assessment of the limited impact of direct clientelistic networks (particularly in the case of Lok Sabha elections, in which voters per constituency are counted in millions). But I would add that clientelistic networks continue to be of primordial importance for candidates and elected representatives, since they represent the main way through which they can relate with their constituents. My experience in U.P. indicates that, while patronage networks may not be sufficient to win an election, they are nonetheless a necessary condition to be competitive. In a way, building patronage networks – and developing a capacity of redistribution – is part of the price that an aspiring candidate must pay in order to be able to win a seat.

These three tropes – violence, identity and patronage do not exhaust the range of questions that have been asked, or that can be asked about Uttar Pradesh politics. But

they constitute the three main academic frameworks under which U.P. state politics has been studied.

These frameworks need to be re-visited or updated. Much of the recent literature is still focused on the politics of the 1990s, or uses the politics of the 1990s as a grid to analyze contemporary UP politics. Few have attempted to formulate or adapt their analytical framework to the more recent period, or paid attention to sub-regional variations.

1.6. Overview of dissertation

This dissertation has been divided into six chapters. In this first introductory chapter, I have described the main arguments that will unfold in the subsequent chapters, and provided a description of the methods followed to investigate the underlying questions.

Chapter 2 provides a political and political economy context to the questions raised in this dissertation. It sketches in broad terms the main lines of transformation of the state's politics, of its party system, of the trajectory of its main political actors, while paying attention other broad transformations in the state's political economy. This chapter focuses on sub-regional variations, a theme that continues in subsequent parts.

Chapter 3 deals with the evolution of the profession of politics and the changing conditions of electoral competition in Uttar Pradesh. The main argument in this section is that the rules of political engagement – to borrow F.G. Bailey's expression – have a filtering impact on who aspires to contest and who gets to win. Some of these rules are induced by the electoral system itself, by the overall competitiveness of electoral politics and by some specific features of electoral competition, party politics, and by voters' expectations and behaviour. They create a universe of constraints and pressures that weigh on candidates and parties. Thereafter, it examines how the literature on Uttar Pradesh politics has sought to make sense of these transformations, by reviewing some of the major questions that have been raised and some of the answers that have been advanced by scholars.

Chapter 4 makes a quantitative examination of the evolution of the sociological composition of the state assembly. This chapter aims at criticizing aggregative head counting approaches, opting, instead, to dissect data into various levels of observation: jati-wise, party-wise, candidate-wise, as well as sub-regional variations. It looks at other available data on the socio-economic profile of MLAs, notably education and occupation, to conclude on the merits and limitations of this approach.

Chapter 5 aims at contextualizing the question of the changing profile of MLAs at a more relevant level of observation. Any work on the role of caste in politics should focus on a qualitative assessment of how caste exerts and manifests itself in the most tangible manner, which is locally. In this dissertation, local essentially means constituency-level observation, although necessarily conducted in various locations within constituencies.

Chapter 6 aims to explain why a similar broad context of social, political, and economic change has resulted in varied trajectories for different parties. This has been done by comparing the performance of the four main parties over the past twenty to twenty-five years and by comparing their evolution, in terms of organization, electoral strategy and relation with the new elites of the states. Parties in India – especially regional parties – are reputed to be weak organizations headed by strong individuals. Many insist on the organizational, institutional weaknesses of parties, on the hyper-centralization of power within their organizations, on the lack of internal democracy (Chhibber, Jensenius, and Suryanarayan 2014). While this is largely true, regional parties also tend to exert power and influence outside the realm of their formal organizations, developing and at times controlling formal and informal ties with networks of individuals, groups and institutions who in their own right and domains exert some form of influence. Parties must be analyzed as part of larger formal and informal networks, which cover institutions, political families or the local domination of particular groups over particular territories. The fieldwork has been attentive to how parties build their networks, both local and supra-local.

The second part of chapter 6 serves as conclusion and offers an analytical framework that characterizes state electoral politics, its transformations, and what electoral and partisan practices reveal about the polity at large. In particular, it reflects on the changing place of

caste in state electoral politics and on the meaning of these transformations for the emancipatory promise of backward-class mobilization.

The days of horizontal mobilization of backward castes – excluding Dalits – may be behind us for the time being, owing to the localization and marketization of electoral politics and the evolutions of parties' electoral strategies, but it does not mean that caste has disappeared altogether as a vehicle of mobilization. In fact, caste gets reconfigured once more by the workings of electoral politics, in the sense that it is subsumed under local political economic contexts. In this sense, it confirms Sudipto Kaviraj's statement that elections in India have "*constantly reconfirmed ordinary people's community orientation instead of undermining it*"[66]. The local entrenchment of caste politics affects in turn how parties and candidates conduct themselves, frame strategies, and ultimately approach the electorate.

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[66] See S. Kaviraj's contribution to F. Frankel, R. Bhargava, Z. Hasan and B. Arora, *Transforming India. Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*: "Democracy and Inequality", Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 89-119.

Part. I – Decoding Uttar Pradesh Politics

The state of Uttar Pradesh occupies a particular place in national politics, owing to its demography (199.8 million inhabitants, 16.5 per cent of India's population)[67] and the place it occupies in the national political imaginary. Eight of India's fourteen Prime Minister have come from this state[68], which currently sends 80 parliamentarians to the Lok Sabha (14.7 per cent of the total seats of the Lower House) and 31 to the Rajya Sabha (12.6 per cent of the seats of the Upper House).

Beyond its demographic size and political weight, Uttar Pradesh holds particular importance since the main fault lines of Indian politics manifest themselves in this state, often in explicit and exacerbated forms. The state's recent politics has been profoundly marked by religious and lower-caste mobilizations, which have led to the rise of the BJP and state-based parties. It is in Uttar Pradesh that a Dalit woman became Chief Minister on four occasions, at the head of India's most successful Dalit party, the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Some of the major political events that have taken place in Uttar Pradesh have had nation-wide repercussions, such as the upper caste anti-reservations protests in the early 1990s or the destruction of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, on 6 December 1992.

The state is often imagined as a "heartland", either on a linguistic (Hindi and Urdu), religious or historical basis. The state is also the site of many events and locations that have marked India's liberation's gest, from the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny to the Independence movement. It holds particular significance for Muslims as well as for practicing Hindus[69].

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[67] Source: Census 2011. Uttar Pradesh's population grew by 20.23 per cent since the previous Census, in 2001.

[68] As noted earlier, the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, chose to retain the Varanasi seat, having also successfully contested from Vadodara, Gujarat.

[69] In *Region, Nation, 'Heartland'*, Gyanesh Kudaisya deconstructs this notion of UP as a heartland and disintguishes five ways in which the state as been defined and imagined as India's heartland: a British colonial definition of the 'model province', as the site of the freedom struggle by the nationalist movement, as a powerhouse of Muslim politics, until the Partition, as a Hindu heartland or battleground for Hindutva forces, and finally as the repository of a 'composite culture, another post-colonial construction in tune with the Congress project of national community building (Bailey 2001).

For Muslims, there is a concentration of many sites of national importance in the state: the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), the Darul Uloom Islamic School of Deoband, the Nadwa Seminary in Lucknow, the Shibli College of Azamgarh, the Ghazi Miyan Dargah in Bahraich and the well-known Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The notion of heartland that can be criticized as an ex-ante historical and political construction but it keeps nonetheless saliency in public imaginaries (Jha 2010).

In socio-economic terms, the state of Uttar Pradesh ranks at the bottom of most indicators of the human development index and is known, alongside Bihar, as one of India's most backward states. Its population is mainly rural – 77.7 per cent in the 2011 Census), with high concentration of poverty – 29.4 per cent of the population was officially below the poverty line in 2011[70]. In 2011, the literacy rate stood at 67.68 per cent[71], more than six per cent lower than the national average. In the period of 2006-2010, the average life expectancy was 62.7 years, nearly four years below the national average, and nearly twelve years lower than India's best performing state, Kerala. Gender disparities are prevalent in most of these indicators. Twenty percentage points separate men and women in literacy. Among children below six, there were 902 girls for a thousand boys in 2011[72].

Despite the prevalence of poverty, the state has undergone deep economic transformations over the past twenty-five years, particularly its rural economy. The state's GDP ranks second in the country, at 6.8 lakh crores rupees[73], but its per capita

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[70] Against a national average at 25.7 per cent. The number of BPL persons in rural and urban areas is respectively 30.41 per cent and 26.06 per cent. Source: Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 289, dated 11.07.2014. The measurement of poverty in India is subject to intense debate. For a nuanced yet critical assessment of poverty measurement methods, see (Kudaisya 2006).

[71] For the UP population above seven years of age, and with a ten per cent gap between rural literacy (65.46 per cent) and urban literacy (75.14 per cent). Male and female literacy also varies greatly (77.28 per cent against 57.18 per cent). The gender gap is nearly 23% in rural areas (76.33 per cent against 53.65 per cent) and 11 per cent in urban areas (80.45 per cent against 69.22 per cent. See Census 2011).

[72] The overall sex ratio has improved since the previous census, but not among the youngest population, which is a source of concern. The sex ratio is more skewed in urban areas (885) than in rural areas (918), for this age bracket. Overall, the state ranks 26th in India.

[73] About 90 billion Euros.

income was only 29,785 rupees in 2011, ranked 31st in India, just ahead of the state of Bihar[74].

Although UP's rural economy has become diversified, the process has not taken place uniformly across the territory. Intra-regional disparities have grown, particularly due to a faster pace of growth and development in Western Uttar Pradesh and parts of Doab, the state's most urbanized sub-regions. Industrialization has stagnated over the past decade, growth being pulled by the tertiary sector, agro-business and construction-related activities.

The state's public life is considered as being vastly criminalized, marked by lawlessness and impunity for perpetrators of violence. Parties are seen as sheltering perpetrators of violence, who themselves often contest elections (Vaishnav 2011).

The state's politics also remains dominated by caste, not the least in popular imaginary. Alongside its neighbour, Bihar, with whom it shares many of the abovementioned features, Uttar Pradesh's politics is perhaps more explicitly shaped by caste and caste mobilizations than any other state, where the caste calculus tends to be concealed behind ideological or regionalist discourses[75].

Inter-party competition has been and remains the meeting point and point of conflict for socio-economic transformations. The fate of national parties often plays out in Uttar Pradesh. Its regional parties are important for the balance of national coalitions, although its two main regional parties, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, have not participated in government coalitions at the Centre[76]. In other words, Uttar Pradesh has been and remains an epicenter for many of the phenomena that have marked national politics. This is not to say that these phenomena did not manifest themselves elsewhere, but that they are all found in this particular state, often in exacerbated forms.

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[74] Calculated at constant cost. Source: Reserve Bank of India.

[75] Prerna Singh has argued that the lack of regional identity and the politicization of social divisions in U.P. have contributed to poor outcomes in matters of social development and policies (Singh 2015). Others have argued that the identification of the U.P. with the nation led to the neglect of state-level developmental issues (Zerinini-Brotel 1998).

[76] With the exception of the soicalists in the Janata Party coalition in 1977.

Chapter 2 – Uttar Pradesh politics: a historical overview

This section traces the four phases of transformation of the party system in Uttar Pradesh and gives an account of the intra- and inter-party dynamics that have contributed to changes in the configuration of political competition in Uttar Pradesh. The second part of this chapter further details the spatial dimension of these transformations.

2.1. The four phases of Uttar Pradesh's party system: from dominance to fragmentation

The evolution of the party system in Uttar Pradesh is classically divided into four phases. The first phase is a period of the Congress' domination of a fragmented multi-partisan scene, from the first elections in 1951 to the mid-1960s, followed by a second phase of that sees the rise of opposition forces. This phase, which also witnessed the Congress being split and coalition governments emerging in various states, particularly in the 1967 elections, culminated in the imposition of the Emergency and the installation of the first non-Congress state government in Uttar Pradesh, in 1977.

The third phase, through the 1980s, sees the return of the Congress to power, and the rise of three parties: the BJP, the BSP and various socialist formations. This phase paved the way for a fourth phase, that of of four-part division of the party system through the 1990s, a phase further marked by caste and religious polarization. The fourth phase is also a phase of chronic governmental instability, as the distribution of votes among the four parties prevented any of them from forming a government on their own, and the intense inter-party rivalry and social polarization that mark electoral competition doomed all coalitions to failure.

The situation stabilizes in the 2000s, as the national parties decline and the regional parties shed their traditional upper castes antagonism to embrace more inclusive discourses and electoral strategies.

2.1.1. Congress domination and the rise of the opposition[77]

The Congress Party ruled Uttar Pradesh virtually unchallenged in the state's first two elections, in 1951 and 1957. It won 90 per cent of the seats with 47.9 per cent of the votes in 1951, and 66.5 per cent of the seats with 42.4 per cent of the votes in 1957, in a multi-partisan and fragmented party system. In the 1960s, it succeeded in obtaining single majorities of seats with around a third of the votes[78]. The success of the Congress Party lay in its capacity to incorporate political competition within its ranks, and to draw its support from traditionally dominant upper caste groups as well as from the marginalized segments of the population – the lower castes and the Muslims. What connected these groups to the party was its ability to include the local traditional notabilities into patronage networks and use them in turn to mobilize poorer voters (Kochanek 1966, 1968, Kothari 1964, 1967).

The second phase starts in the mid-1960s, when various socio-political oppositional movements emerge and start coordinating their efforts in order to challenge the Congress' dominant position (Brass 1980a, b, 1981, Duncan 1988). The opposition remained polarized through the 1960s between various brands of socialist parties that had emerged as breakaway factions of the Congress in the late 1950s and early 1960s; the Jana Sangh, a Hindu nationalist party that had emerged from the RSS (Baxter 1971); and the Republican Party of India, a branch of Ambedkar's Maharashtra-based RPI, which had a short-lived existence in Northern India. The Communists also had some presence in Uttar Pradesh, particularly in the east, in districts adjacent to Bihar, as well as in Bundelkhand.

There were other political formations in the opposition, who initially did well but quickly faded the moment large alliances started to emerge. Among those parties was the Swatantra Party, founded in 1959 by C. Rajagopalachari, a figure of the liberation

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[77] I have drawn heavily in this section from Paul Brass's various meticulous accounts of these events (Himanshu 2010).

[78] This dissertation presents state election results starting from 1962, and not 1952. The reason for this is that the first two elections followed a dual/triple-member constituency system, in which reserved seats for Scheduled Castes and for Scheduled Tribe candidates were added to existing seats, rather than attributed separately. In the Election Commission's statistical reports, the results obtained by these various candidates in similar seats are undifferentiated, which makes the task of building electoral timeline very difficult. On the question of dual/triple-member constituencies, see (Brass 1980a, b, 1984a, 1985, 2011).

movement, India's last Governor-General and a former Congressman. It was conceived as a right-wing, or non-leftist alternative to the Congress Party. The Swatantra Party leaders took on themselves the task to merge various anti-Congress forces within its fold – such as S.K.D. Paliwal's Independent Progressive Legislature Party (IPLP), a group of independent legislators standing between the Left and the Hindu right – and to advocate for opposition unity (Erdman 1967). They could not, however, break the stranglehold of factionalism and rival ambitions that divided the socialist camp. Subsequently, its numbers dwindled after two good performances in the 1962 and 1967 elections[79].

The dysfunctional rise of the socialists

The socialists represented the main opposition to the Congress in the 1960s and early 1970s, but their divisions prevented them from effectively challenging the Congress' supremacy in the state assembly. They remained divided until the founding of the Bharatiya Lok Dal by Charan Singh in 1974. Prior to that, various streams of socialist parties competed against the Congress but in a scattered manner. There had been various attempts at merging the various socialist factions in the state, but they failed due to ineffective leadership and the success of the Congress Party in co-opting socialist cadres. The Uttar Pradesh socialists also belonged to national formations, which were divided nationally, on doctrinal matters and over disagreements on alliance strategies[80]. These national lines of fractures translated into state-level rifts.

The socialists in Northern India had initially emerged as a faction of the Congress Party – the Congress Socialist Party – created by Jay Prakash Narayan and Narendra Deva in Patna in 1934. Its aims were to mobilize the lower peasantry against landlordism, to promote equitable land reforms (Jaffrelot 2003b, 253) as well as the socialization of basic industries. It broke away from the Congress in 1948, year of the creation of the Socialist

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[79] The Swatantra was also crippled by the fact that it rapidly lost its two main figures. S.K. Paliwal left the party – as did Raja Raghavendra Pratap Singh of Manakpur in 1964.

[80] By then the quest for socialist unity was already on the wane. The first breakaway from the Congress took place in 1948, led by Ashok Mehta and Ram Manohar Lohia. They formed the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) three years later. Subsequent to its defeat in 1952, the KMPP merged with three other socialist formations to form the Praja Socialist Party, which Lohia quickly left. For an account of the motives behind this split and the context of the SSP's emergence, see (Schoenfeld 1965).

Party (SP). The SP became the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) in 1954, after a merger with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) of J.B. Kripalani, another disgruntled ex-Congressman. The PSP was led by its General Secretary, Ram Manohar Lohia, one of the rising figures among the socialists leaders. Within two years, the PSP split twice, the first time at the initiative of Ram Manohar Lohia himself who, alongside Madhu Limaye, left the PSP in 1955 to form a new Socialist Party[81]. The second split took place in 1962, after the expulsion of Ashok Mehta, who was held responsible for the large number of defections of socialist cadres to the Congress.

The defeat of the socialists in the 1962 elections led their leaders to work towards the unification of their camps. The rise of the Jana Sangh and a new alliance between the Congress and the Communists left them with no choice but to join hands (Schoenfeld 1965).

They formed the Samyukta ("*United*") Socialist Party (SSP) in June 1964[82]. The new alliance proved weak, being devoid of common minimum views on leadership and electoral strategy. The SSP split within a year, over the issue of Lohia's leadership of the party, its systematic anti-Congress position and of its readiness to ally with anyone who would help him defeat the Congress (including the Jana Sangh). Those who had opposed Lohia left the SSP to reform the PSP, leaving the SSP as the main socialist formation in the state[83]. Lohia remained at the head of the SSP until his death in 1967.

The dismal performance of the PSP and the SSP in the 1969 state elections (they won three and thirty-thee seats respectively) and in the 1971 Lok Sabha elections (in which

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[81] There had been incidents in Kerala, leading a PSP government to shoot at protesters in a demonstration. Lohia and Limaye also opposed the idea of an electoral alliance with the Congress, which was mooted by Ashok Mehta following the Awadi declaration of the Congress, which set socialism as the goal of political transformation in India, and the bases of a platform to bring together the Congress and the socialists (McMillan 2000, Singer 2012).

[82] The Samyukta Socialist Party ('United Socialist Party') was formed in 1964 through a split in the Praja Socialist Party. Both formations were reunited as the Socialist Party in 1972. George Fernandes led the party for three years.

[83] Brass, ibid., 161.

they respectively won two and three seats), again brought the agenda of unity to the fore.

Figure 2.1 Main parties' vote share in the Uttar
Pradesh State Assembly, 1962-2012
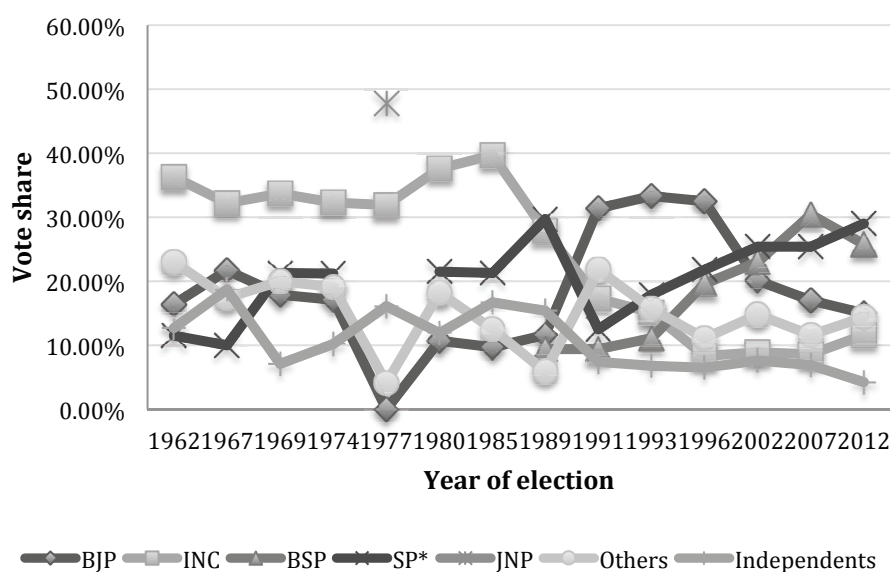
Source: Adapted from ECI reports.

* Includes the main branch of the socialist tradition: SSP,PSP, BKD, JNP(SC), LKD, JD, JP, SP

Figure 2.2 Main parties' seat share in the Uttar Pradesh
State Assembly, 1962-2012
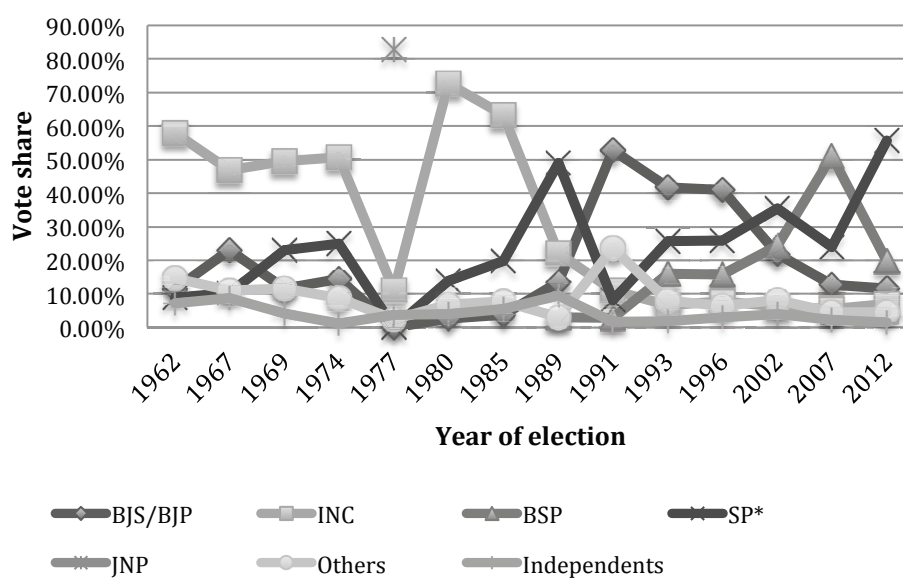
Source: Adapted from ECI reports.

* Includes the main branch of the socialist tradition: SSP,PSP, BKD, JNP(SC), LKD, JD, JP, SP.

Further, a fresh split in the Congress Party provided new opportunities for alliances. The Congress (O)[84], was formed after Indira Gandhi's creation of the Congress (R) [85], following her own expulsion from the Congress in November 1969. It was led nationally by Kamaraj and Morarji Desai, and in Uttar Pradesh by C.B. Gupta, a former Chief Minister.

On August 9, 1971, a new Socialist Party was formed, with the merger of the PSP, the SSP and three other splinter groups, under the leadership of Karpuri Thakur, a socialist figure from Bihar and former chairman of the SSP, and with Madhu Dandavate, ex-PSP, as General Secretary.

Once again, the alliance failed. Both parties were internally divided over the opportunity to ally with the Congress (O), which was led by the more conservative elements of the formerly united Congress Party. Internal rivalries also took precedence over the pledge of unity. Within a year, Raj Narain created his own party in Uttar Pradesh after having been temporarily expelled over a Rajya Sabha ticket nomination[86]. So did Karpuri Thakur himself, in 1972, in a last bid to foster socialist unity.

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[84] (O) for 'Organization'.
[85] (R) stands for 'requisitionist'.
[86] See Brass, ibid., pp. 163-167.

Table 2.1 *Performance of socialist parties and their successors in Uttar Pradesh, 1952-2012*[87]

Year of election	Party	Contested	Won	Vote share (%)	Vote share in seats where contested (%)
1952	SOP	349	20	12.03	13.63
1957	KMPP	268	1	5.7	8.23
	PSP	261	44	14.47	22.79
1962	SOC	273	24	8.21	12.74
	PSP	288	38	11.52	17.34
1967	PSP	167	11	4.09	10.7
	SSP	254	44	9.97	16.86
1969	PSP	92	3	1.72	7.89
	SSP	258	33	7.82	12.86
1974	BKD	396	106	21.22	22.53
	SOP	226	5	2.9	5.4
1977	JNP*	422	352	47.76	48.04
1980	JNP	2	0	0.01	2.06
	JNP(JP)	239	4	2.89	5.16
	JNP(SC)**	399	59	21.51	22.7
	JNP (SR)***	302	4	4.17	5.78
	LKD	4	0	0.27	24.46
1985	JP	311	20	5.6	7.6
	LD	385	84	21.43	23.56
1989	JD	356	208	29.71	35.27
	JNP(JP)	119	1	0.74	2.66
	LKD(B)	204	2	1.19	2.48
1991	JD	374	92	18.84	21.05
	JP	399	34	12.52	13.13
	LKD	107	0	0.35	1.38
1993	JD	377	27	12.33	13.76
	JP	298	1	0.52	0.74
	SP	256	109	17.94	29.48
1996	JD	54	7	2.56	19.99
	JP	31	0	0.13	1.8
	SP	281	110	21.8	32.12
2002	JP	23	1	0.27	4.51
	RLD	38	14	2.48	26.82
	SP	390	143	25.37	26.27
2007	RLD	254	10	3.7	5.76
	SP	393	97	25.43	26.07
2012	RLD	46	9	2.33	20.05
	SP	401	224	29.13	29.29

Source: Adapted from ECI data.
* Candidates from the Jana Sangh and various Congress breakaway factions included.
** Charan Singh's faction.
*** Raj Narain's faction.

[87] Minor factions and Janata Parivar parties from other states have been ignored.

Consolidation behind Charan Singh's BKD

These main streams of the socialist parties finally joined the umbrella of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD), established by Chaudhary Charan Singh, in 1974. Charan Singh, a former Minister in various cabinets of C.B. Gupta, was a Jat leader and political spokesperson of the middle peasantry[88]. A minister in the Cabinets of three Congress Chief Ministers, he defected from the party in 1967 to form his own formation – the Bharatiya Kranti Dal[89] – as well as the first non-Congress government in Uttar Pradesh, a broad coalition of opposition parties in which the Jana Sangh represented 42 per cent of the strength in the Assembly (Kashyap 1969, 144)[90]. The Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD or 'United Legislative Party') government lasted a mere eleven months, torn by its members' rival ambitions and contradictory policy views. Charan Singh resigned in February 1968 and President's Rule was imposed for a full year. The SVD experiment was indeed a 'coalition of opposites' as it was popularly termed, but it was also a landmark event with national repercussions. If the Congress could be defeated in India's largest state – and one of its historic strongholds – it could also be defeated in national politics.

C.B. Gupta made a comeback in the 1969 state elections, missing the simple majority of seats by a bare 0.35 per cent of the votes[91]. The socialists reached a total of 31.3 per cent of the vote share, barely two points behind the Congress, but still in dispersed order. The BKD became the second party, with 21.3 per cent of the votes and 98 seats. The Jana

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[88] Charan Singh had a career in the Congress Party that spanned over 45 years. His main political feats were the introduction of major agrarian reforms, pushing towards a commercialized architecture. He was instrumental in the introduction and implementation of the 1952 Zamindari Abolition Act, an ambitious land reform which, although partially flawed, did lead to substantial land redistribution and the empowerment of the lower and middle peasantry. He is also remembered for the *Chakbandi* (land consolidation), a policy that helped landowners to consolidate their property by swapping discontinuous holdings. On the life of Charan Singh, see Paul Brass' definitive three-volume biography (Brass 1984a, 160).

[89] Initially called the Jana Congress.

[90] In the 1967 state elections, the Congress fell short of a majority for the first time, with 46.8 per cent of the seats, for 32.2 per cent of the votes. The outgoing Chief Minister, C.B. Gupta, rallied support from outside the party but was thwarted after nineteen days by Charan Singh's defection, who took the opportunity to seize power at the head of an alternative coalition. The SVD included the Jana Sangh, the SSP, Charan Singh's BKD, the two communist parties, the PSP, the Swatantra Party, the Republican Party and 22 independent MLAs.

[91] He formed his government with the support of a few independent MLAs and the Swatantra Party, which was reduced to five members in the state assembly.

Sangh, which was the second party in the Assembly in 1967, lost 3.7 per cent of the votes, which translated into a loss of nearly half their seats (from 98 to 49).

Bruised by his defeat, Charan Singh concentrated his efforts – with little success – on building a national coalition, and expanding his party's reach beyond the borders of Uttar Pradesh. C.B. Gupta's government fell eight days ahead of its first anniversary, due to the split between the Congress (O) and the Congress (R). C.B. Gupta lost 139 MLAs and half of his cabinet to the Congress (R), under the leadership of Kamlapati Tripathi. C.B. Gupta's decision to remain with the old Congress cost him his Chief Ministership as well as his political career. With the support of Indira Gandhi, Charan Singh was sworn in as Chief Minister for the second time, in April 1970.

The relationship between Charan Singh and Indira Gandhi grew sour, as the latter had envisaged a merger of the BKD with the Congress, and the substitution of Tripathi by Charan Singh as Chief Minister (Brass, 2014, 58-75). The Congress withdrew its support, all Congress ministers resigned, leaving Charan Singh in a situation similar to the one in 1967, when he himself defected from the government. President's Rule followed for a period of 17 days. The Congress, however, did not have the strength in the Assembly to form a government and had to make way for a new formulation of the SVD government, based this time on an alliance between Charan Singh and C.B. Gupta. Unable to decide on who among them should lead, they picked a third weak candidate, Tribhuvana Narayana Singh, who was an outsider to both formations. The SVD coalition was completed with the support of the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra Party and the SSP, but collapsed once again after the landslide victory of the Congress in the 1971 General elections (the Congress won 73 out of 85 seats in Uttar Pradesh alone). The BKD returned just the one seat.

After initially contemplating a tripartite alliance with the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra, Charan Singh's BKD entered into an alliance with the SSP as well as with the Muslim Majslis, a Muslim micro-party led by Dr Abdul Jaleel Faridi, a medical doctor from a well-to-do Muslim family of Lucknow. The BKD then merged with the Swatantra Party, ahead of the 1974 assembly elections. Charan Singh's party turned into the Bharatiya Lok Dal

(BLD) and merged with Raj Narain's SSP, as well as with a few other micro-parties[92]. The BLD's core was organized around Charan Singh, who hed the West of the State through his following among the Jats, and a triumvirate of socialists – Raj Narain, Chandrajit Yadav and Chandra Shekhar – who were based in the East[93].

Despite this consolidation of opposition parties, the Congress won the 1974 elections by the skin of its teeth (50.7 per cent of the seats for 31.9 per cent of the votes). H.N. Bahuguna, who had been appointed Chief Minister after Tripathi's forced resignation, was reconfirmed in his position.

The BLD emerged as the second political force in the state, with Charan Singh's former BKD occupying the majority of the space within this new alliance. Unlike the SVD coalition, the parties that joined the BLD did so by exhaustion, after being reduced to tatters in successive polls. The opposition landscape remained divided between three clusters: the socialists, the Jana Sangh, and the Congress (O), which was reduced to ten seats in the 1974 elections.

Unity in Emergency

Indira Gandhi provided them the cause and the opportunity to form a new alliance by declaring a state of Emergency, on the 25th of June 1975. The three opposition formations joined hands to defeat Indira Gandhi in the 1977 elections, under the common banner of the Janata Party[94]. The alliance won 82.8% of the seats with a combined vote share of

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[92] Including the Utkal Congress, the Uttar Pradesh branch of Biju Patnaik's dissident Congress faction in Orissa.

[93] Raj Narain contested from Rajgarh in 1974, and lost. Chandrajit Yadav was a Lok Sabha MP from Azamgarh and a former Congress General Secretary and Minister for Steel and Mines in the Indira Gandhi Cabinet. Chandra Shekhar was a Lohiaite based in Ballia, a former PSP cadre who served in the Rajya Sabha between 1962 and 1967. He joined the Congress in the middle of his term, in 1964, but later went on to oppose Indira Gandhi, which earned him a jail term during the Emergency. He would become the President of the Janata Party in 1977 and briefly serve as Prime Minister, after the resignation of V.P. Singh.

[94] They were also joined by Congress for Democracy (CFD), another Congress splinter group led by Jagjivan Ram, H.N. Bahuguna, the former Orissa Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy, among others. The CFD merged with the Janata Party on May 5, 1977. Subsequently, in 1979, Jagjivan

47.76 per cent, while the Congress lost nearly 80 per cent of its seats (from 215 to 47) while maintaining its overall vote share (31.9 per cent against 32.3 per cent).

The 1977 elections mark the end of the second phase of the party system, which is a long and complex phase of recomposition of the anti-Congress opposition. The consolidation of the socialist camp proved to be long and difficult, marked by many failures and a chronic incapacity to actually build a socialist platform. The PSP and the SSP failed to forge the alliance of backward classes their ideology had pushed to build. Ineffective leadership and permanent factionalism crippled their efforts at working together. National divisions also permeated into state politics, complicating matters further. At the ground level, factionalism and the political personnel's lack of ideology, or its willingness to trade ideology for opportunism, meant that the ranks of the socialist parties were frequently depleted, and they had to renew their candidates during almost every election[95].

Besides, the sociological composition of the socialist parties – predominantly upper castes and among them predominantly Brahmins – ultimately prevented them from connecting with the bases they sought to mobilize. The mounting rejection of the Congress in the late 1960s and 1970s, which came from the backward classes, was a rejection of the upper-caste dominated social order. Clearly, they were on the wrong side[96].

Lastly, Indira Gandhi pre-empted their ideology by taking a socialist and populist turn after the 1969 split, thus cutting the ground from under their feet, (Fickett 1973).

Ram broke ties with the alliance, taking along with him a number of his supporters. He founded the Congress (J) – 'J' for Jagjivan – which retained a small presence and then disappeared.

[95] Subhash Kashyap estimates that the PSP lost two-thirds of its cadres to the Congress by 1964, and another half before the 1971 Lok Sabha elections (Brass 2011).

[96] This was particularly true about the leadership. Ram Manohar Lohia was a Bania, Acharya Narendra Dev a Khatri, Jayprakash Narayan a Kayasth, and so forth. Lewis P. Ficket Jr. estimates that 75 per cent of the PSP national party leadership was from the upper caste (50 per cent Brahmin). The party organization contained only 12.5 per cent of lower castes, a mere five per cent of Dalits, and almost no Muslims (Kashyap 1969, 295-296).

Table 2.2 *Caste Group Representation among Socialist Parties, 1952-1962*

	1952	**1957**	**1962**
UC	13 (48.15%)	32 (48.48%)	30 (52.63%)
OBC	5 (18.52%)	23 (34.85%)	19 (33.33%)
SC	8 (29.63%)	9 (13.64%)	6 (10.53%)
Muslims	1 (3.7%)	2 (3.03%)	2 (3.51%)
N	27 (100%)	76 (100%)	57 (100%)

* 1957 and 1962 combine both the Socialist Party and the PSP[97].
Source: Adapted from (Meyer 1969, 175-178).

The party that emerged victorious – Charan Singh's BKD – happened to be the party that had the least upper-caste bias. Charan Singh had formed the BKD as a front for middle and backward castes, or as a front of middle and small landowners, who were largely excluded from the Congress' social coalition of upper castes, Dalits and minorities. The BKD articulated a broad discourse of social justice, championing the interests of the small and middle peasantry (Brass 1980a)[98]. Although there were limits to the BLD's alliance of backward classes as Charan Singh never made much of an overture towards the Dalits, it would remain for the second then the main political force in Uttar Pradesh for a long time.

The BKD's experience, however, would be short lived. Tensions with the Jana Sangh at both the central and state levels led to divisions among the socialists, precipitating the departure of Charan Singh – then Union Home Minister – on April 9, 1978. The socialist bloc again split into various parties, the main two being led by Charan Singh and another by Raj Narain, after his own expulsion from the Union Cabinet on grounds of indiscipline[99].

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[97] An examination of the socialist candidates in the 1962 elections reveals that the ratio of tickets distributed to upper caste candidates was slightly below 48%. A quarter of the tickets were distributed among OBCs, 20% among SC candidates and around 7% among Muslim candidates.

[98] Although it was very much an Uttar Pradesh party, the BKD was established as an 'All-India' party, in a meeting in Delhi on April 9, 1967, which several Chief Ministers and non-Congress party leaders attended. Its first chairman was Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar (Brass, 2014, 37).

[99] Raj Narain had openly criticized two of his colleagues from the Cabinet, L.K. Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, for having participated in an RSS rally in Delhi.

A few months later, the Central government lost its majority and Morarji Desai had to tender his resignation on July 15, 1978, making way for Charan Singh to take over, with the initial outside support of Congress. Unable to obtain a majority in Parliament, he, too, resigned on August 20 of the same year. The divisions and the collapse of the Janata coalition at the Centre paved the way for the resurgence of the Congress at the Centre and in the state. In the 1980 UP state elections, Charan Singh could save only 59 seats[100]. Throughout the 1980s, as Paul Brass noted, '*the only electorally significant struggle in UP as a whole has become that between the Congress and the Lok Dal*' (Brass 1986, 664). [Brass, 1986: 665].

2.1.2. Parting of alliances and parties' recomposition in the 1980s

The third phase starts soon after the restoration of democracy by the Janata coalition. This phase was marked by the return of the Congress Party and the decaying of its organization (Pai 2000b), the rebirth of the Jana Sangh as the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980, the reconfiguration of the socialist camp, which led to a temporary consolidation around Charan Singh before a new phase of division appeared after his death. The 1980s were also marked by the birth of a new political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, which succeeded in mobilizing a section of the Dalits voters by providing them with a party of their own, for the first time since the virtual demise of the RPI in the late 1960s.

The Janata Party experiment, to use Madhu Limaye's expression, did not last long. The failure of the socialists, the *sanghis* and the ex-Congress to maintain their coalition at the Centre, the resurgence of Indira Gandhi on the national stage and the tenure of a lacklustre Chief Minister in Uttar Pradesh[101] paved the way for a triumphal return of the Congress as early as 1980. At the head of a fractured party, it was in Uttar Pradesh that she won her party's most thumping victory in twenty-two years, bagging 72.7 per cent of

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[100] The Congress (I) won 309 seats out of 425, with 37.65% of vote share.

[101] Ram Naresh Yadav was designated Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1977. A provincial lawyer and a political novice, he had owed his nomination to being the least threatening consensus candidate of the Janata coalition (Kohli 1987, 197). He was quickly replaced by Banarsi Das, after a year and a half in office.

the seats with 37.65 per cent of the votes. Once again, a fragmented opposition enabled the Congress Party to convert a minority of votes into a majority of seats.

The socialists, who also emerged bitter and divided from the Janata experiment, broke up into four variants of the Janata Party[102]. The leader of its main component, Charan Singh, had been sworn in as Prime Minister in July 1979, at the head of a brittle coalition that depended on the outside support of the Congress Party. That support did not last, forcing Charan Singh to resign and call for fresh elections after a month in office. The tearing down of the Janata coalition, the mishandling of Indira Gandhi's arrest prior to this, her re-election in a by-election in 1978[103], the death of Jayprakash Narayan in October 1979, prepared the ground for Indira Gandhi's triumphal return in the 1980 General elections. The various components of the Janata coalition contested on their own, undercutting each other against their common enemy. At the national level, the Congress won 353 seats with 42.7 per cent of the popular vote. The Lok Dal, renamed in these elections Janata Party (Secular – Charan Singh), won 41 seats (essentially in Western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Punjab) with 9.4 per cent of the votes, ten more seats than the residual Janata Party, which had twice the number of voters than Charan Singh's faction.

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[102] The JNP (JP) was a breakaway faction that had some presence in the East and North-East, the JNP(SC), 'SC' for 'Secular-Charan Singh' suppported Charan Singh, the JNP(SR), 'SR' for 'Secular-Raj Narain', under the leadership of Raj Narain, and a residual JNP who only contested in two seats and won none. There was also a Lok Dal that contested the 1980 election. It wasa four-man operation, which quickly disappeared and had no relation with Charan Singh's Lok Dal.

[103] She had won a by-election in Chikmaglur, in Karnataka, in November 1978, thanks to Congress MP D.B. Chandre Gowda, who vacated his seat so she could contest. She won despite the split of the Congress (R) into the Congress (I) – for Indira – and the Congress (U) – for Devaraj Urs, the then Karnataka Chief Minister, a year earlier.

Table 2.3 *Performance of main parties in the 1980 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections*

	Contested	Won	Forfeited Deposit	Vote share	Vote share in seats contested
BJP	400	11	283	10.76%	11.50%
CPI	155	7	134	3.55%	9.75%
CPM	18	0	14	0.47%	10.36%
INC(I)	424	309	10	37.65%	37.76%
INC(U)	339	13	290	6.38%	7.99%
JNP	2	0	2	0.01%	2.06%
JNP(JP)	239	4	219	2.89%	5.16%
JNP(SC)	399	59	156	21.51%	22.70%
JNP(SR)	302	4	276	4.17%	5.78%
LKD	4	0	0	0.27%	24.46%
Others	60	1	58	0.45%	
Ind.	2267	17	2212	11.87%	12.01%
Total		425		100%	

Source: Adapted from ECI reports.

The years that followed the 1980 elections were years of the re-composition of parties and the emergence of new political forces. While the Congress dominated the decade, its organization suffered from the centralized control exerted by the High Command of the party. The 1980s were a period of organizational decay for the Congress (Pai 2000b), under the authoritarian rules of Indira Gandhi at the Centre, of V.P. Singh in Uttar Pradesh between 1980 and 1982, and under the mismanagement of weak chief ministers in the second half of the decade (Stone 1988)[104].

During her last years in power, Indira Gandhi had made a strategy to appoint weak chief ministers in Congress-ruled states, and to dismiss chief ministers in states ruled by opposition parties, through the imposition of President's Rule (Art. 356 of the Constitution)[105]. In 1980 alone, President's rule was declared on ten different occasions.

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[104] The dismissal of V.P. Singh in July 1982 and his replacement by the Speaker, Sripati Misra, a man devoid of any following of his own, marked the beginning of the abovementioned phase of weak Congress chief ministers. Typically, the announcement of his appointment was made in Delhi and he could not choose most members of his Cabinet (Fickett 1973).
[105] With 10 impositions, Uttar Pradesh ranks fourth among states in India, preceded by Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, two states with a history of insurrection and civil unrest, and Puducherry.

Figure 2.3 Imposition of President's Rule in India, 1949-2015
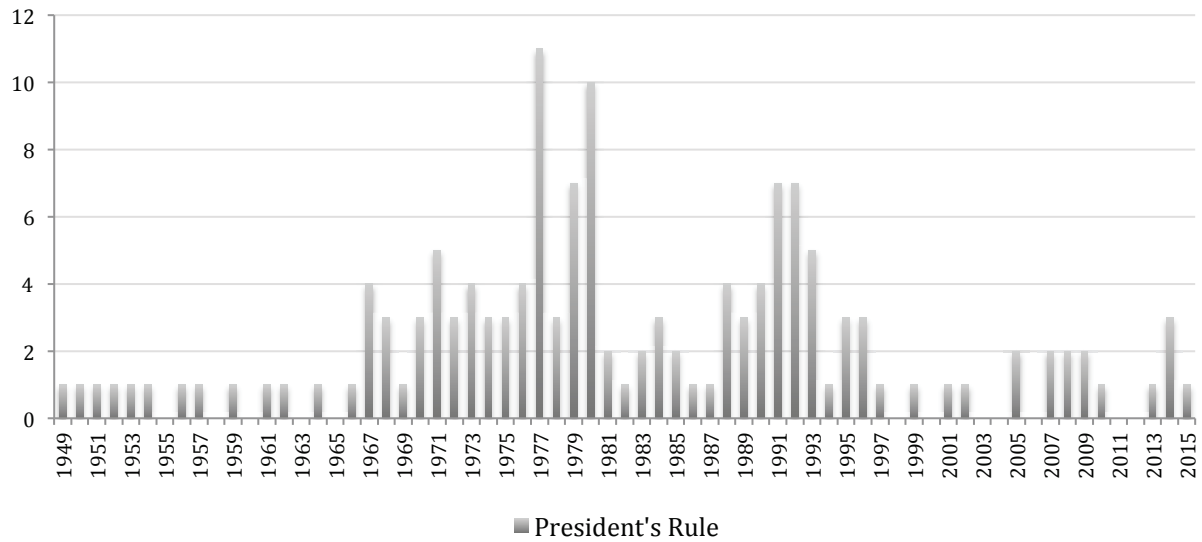
Source: compiled by author.

Figure 2.4 State distribution of President's Rule, 1949-2015
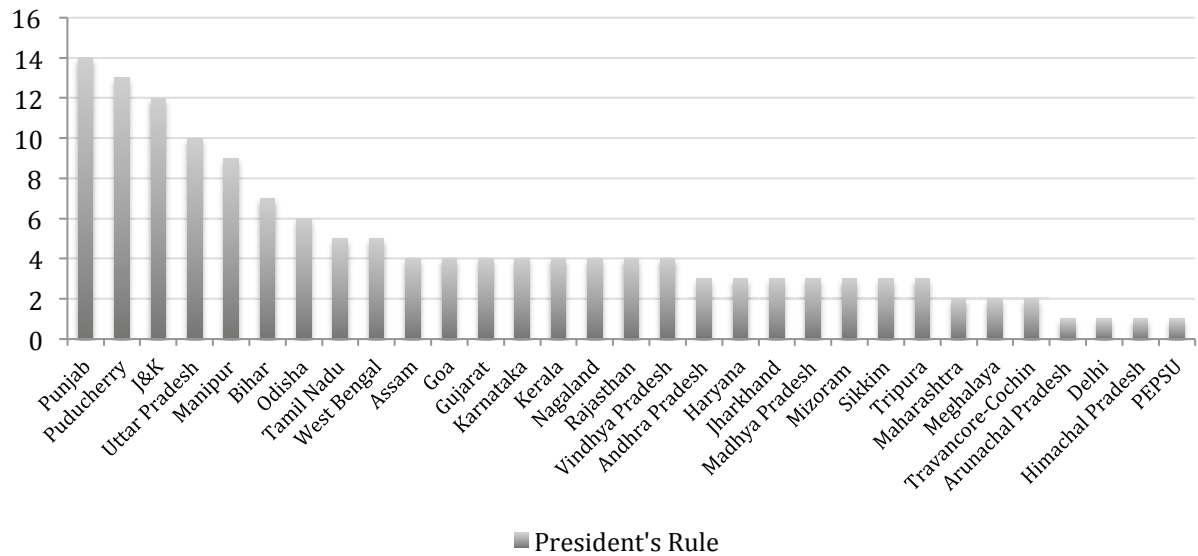
Source: compiled by author.

These interventions from above created havoc in the organization, disturbing established patronage networks and the balance of power between regional bosses of the party. It also generated a high turnover within the party's cadre, as many incumbent MLAs and MPs were denied tickets or were simply expelled. Many defected to other parties. In 1989, 57 Congress candidates, including 43 sitting MLAs and 10 ex-MLAs, abandoned the party to join the newly formed Janata Dal (see section 3.1.6 on turncoats). Despite this turmoil,

the Congress nonetheless succeeded in retaining power, owing to the weaknesses and divisions among its opponents.

In 1980, V.P. Singh became Chief Minister[106]. His tenure was marked by a significant rise of criminal violence and by deadly communal violence in the state, which he sought to address with a firm response. So much so that the unleashing of the PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary), a sort of special police force known for their brutality, fuelled civil unrest instead of calming down the situation (Chawla 2014). At times, they took part in riots themselves or 'looked the other way' while riots were taking place, notably in Meerut, Aligarh (Brass 2004) and Moradabad (Engineer 1984). The situation deteriorated to the point that V.P. Singh's own brother, C.S.P. Singh, a judge of the Allahabad High Court, was murdered along with his nine-year-old son by dacoits in March 1982, while returning from a hunting party. Barely a month later, the massacre by distinct gangs of ten Yadavs in Kanpur district and six Dalits in Mainpuri led him to resign (Mustafa 1995, 52). Indira Gandhi took advantage of V.P. Singh's resignation to appoint a series of weak and pliable chief ministers – Sripati Mishra, N.D. Tiwari and Vir Bahadur Singh, successively.

After the Emergency, the BLD re-emerged as the Congress' strongest opponent. The other components of the Janata Parivar – the Congress (O) and the SSP – disappeared while most of their members were absorbed in the BLD. On the eve of the 1984 elections, Charan Singh formed yet another party, the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party (DMKP), through a merger with H.N. Bahuguna's Socialist Front and the National Socialist Party. Its newly appointed head of the UP unit was a man named Mulayam Singh Yadav, a Yadav leader from Etawah, whom Charan Singh had recruited for his mobilization and organisational abilities in the late 1960s. The party was launched on the 20th of October 1984. Eleven days later, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her bodyguards. The DMKP was swept away by the pro-Congress wave that followed Indira Gandhi's death. Charan Singh could only save his seat in Baghpat, and another one, in Etah district, in the general elections.

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[106] V.P. Singh was born in 1931 in a Rajput zamindari family, formerly ruling the Kingdom of Manda. He won his first election in 1969 in Soraon and then proceeded to win a Lok Sabha seat in Phulpur, Jawaharlal Nehru's old constituency. He would serve five terms in the Lok Sabha, two from Allahabad and two from Fatehpur. He was appointed Deputy Minister for Commerce in Indira Gandhi's Cabinet and served as Minister for Commerce during the Emergency. For a political biography of V.P. Singh, see (Stone 1988).

Power grab in the Lok Dal

The mid-1980s were a period of transition for the Lok Dal. Since the early 1980s, Charan Singh had gradually been withdrawing from active politics. He had entrusted the task of leading the anti-V.P. Singh agitation campaign to Mulayam and made him Leader of the Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha. In 1985, Mulayam Singh took over the organization and led the Lok Dal's campaign, winning 84 seats with 21.43% of vote share.

On January 10, 1987, Ajit Singh dislodged Mulayam from the post of Leader of the Opposition, with the support of the Congress. Mulayam retaliated by creating the Krantikari Morcha, a new parliamentary alliance gathering the Janata Party with the two communist parties and three minor formations[107].

Charan Singh passed away on May 29, 1987. Mere days after his demise, the Lok Dal split into the Lok Dal (A), a faction led by his son Ajit, and the Lok Dal (B), led by H.N. Bahuguna. After siding briefly with Bahuguna, Mulayam Singh left to form the Janata Dal (JD). The JD underwent some upheavals initially but, ultimately, Mulayam prevailed over all the other splinter groups of the Lok Dal. His faction commanded the largest share of the Lok Dal's political base among the leading middle status agricultural castes in UP, the Yadavs figuring predominantly among them (Brass 2011). The core supporters of Ajit Singh – the Jats – were geographically confined to a few districts of Western UP. Moreover, Mulayam Singh's superior manegerial skills also helped him to retain much of the Lok Dal's organizational strength.

On September 1987, Mulayam launched from the town of Akbarpur the Kranti Rath (the "Revolution Procession"), a procession in which he demanded the implementation of the Mandal report, as well as promoted several pro-farmer measures, such as the indexation of agriculture wages to the price index, a loan waiver for farmers. The Kranti Rath was meant to be a demonstration of strength to the Congress as well as to its rivals from the Lok Dal. It was also meant to be an opportunity to rally the Yadavs to his cause. The procession started from Akbarpur and then proceeded through the three parliamentary segments of Kannauj, Mainpuri and Etawah, three Yadav strongholds and constituencies

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[107] The Janwadi Party, the Sanjay Vichar Manch and the Congress (J)).

that Mulayam Singh Yadav and his family would subsequently hold. The *rath* ended in Jaswantnagar, where Mulayam had won his first election, in 1967[108].

While Mulayam toured the plains of Doab, the Lok Dal became embroiled in a battle for leadership at the national level, the Devi Lal faction of Haryana clashing with H.N. Bahuguna, then national President of the Party. Bahuguna's weakened position in Uttar Pradesh helped Devi Lal to prevail. He supported the decision to merge the Lok Dal – including its U.P. branch and Mulayam's Janata Party (then called Samajwadi Janata Party) with V.P. Singh's Jan Morcha, an anti-corruption / anti-Rajiv Gandhi movement that had become the base for the formation of a large nation-wide coalition of regional parties, which would lead to the formation of the National Front government in 1989[109]. The merger of the various factions of the Lok Dal with the Jan Morcha on 11 October 1988 led to the creation of the Janata Dal. The merger gave Mulayam the opportunity to prevail over his rivals in Uttar Pradesh, and to become chief minister after the 1989 election. The Congress lost 11 per cent of vote share and 65 per cent of its seats. The two remaining splinter factions of the Lok Dal – the JNP (JP) and the Lok Dal (B) –obtained one and two seats respectively, with less than two per cent of the votes combined.

The rebirth of the Jana Sangh

The Jana Sangh, which had joined the Janata Party coalition, refounded itself as the Bharatiya Janata Party in April 1980. It contested the 1980 assembly elections under this name and obtained a punishing result. Compared to the 1974 elections, the rightwing party's vote share dropped by 7 per cent, reducing it to 11 seats in the assembly. It got

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[108] A second rath followed the first one, this time on Ajit Singh's own turf in Western Uttar Pradesh. This was meant to symbolically capture the legacy of Charan Singh and divide the support base of Ajit Singh in his own stronghold.

[109] After his resignation as Defence Minister in 1991, V.P. Singh created a 'people's platform' – the Jan Morcha – alongside Arif Mohammad Khan and Arun Nehru, aimed at campaigning against Rajiv Gandhi in particular and against corruption in general. This 'non-political' platform had the very political objective to gather the opposition. It enjoyed the non-Congress stalwarts such as Jyoti Basu in West Bengal, Ramakrishna Hegde in Karnataka, and even L.K. Advani, from the BJP. On the creation and development of the Jan Morcha, see (Mustafa 1995). On the formation of the National Front, see (Mustafa 1995, 89-103).

through the 1985 and 1989 elections with about half of the support base that it had in 1967.

Under the impetus of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the saffron party attempted to develop a more moderate approach, broaden its support base and justify the rupture with the Jana Sangh legacy (Hansen 1999, 158). While the strategy worked in assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan – where the RSS networks were strong – it failed in the 'cow belt' states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh[110].

In Uttar Pradesh, they remained below the bar of twelve per cent of the popular vote for three consecutive elections. As a result, towards the end of the decade, the party adopted a more aggressive mobilization strategy based on religious appeal as an attempt to consolidate its support base initially among the upper castes (Hansen 1999, Jaffrelot 1996, 2010c, Zavos, Wyatt, and Hewitt 2004).

It also violently opposed the campaign to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission's report – effectively expanding the quota regime in public employment and educational institutions by 27%, by including the OBCs – and led a vast mobilization campaign for reclaiming of the supposed birthplace of Ram, which culminated in the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, on the 6th of December 1992.

Emergence of the Bahujan Samaj Party

Finally, around the same period, a new political force developed. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), created by Kanshi Ram in 1984, emerged from the ranks of the Backward and Minority Castes Employees Federation (BAMCEF), a union consisting mostly of Dalit government employees, and more specifically from the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4)[111]. BAMCEF's agitation wing was created by Kanshi Ram in 1982 in order to mobilize Dalits through cycle rallies and mass mobilization campaigns (Jaoul 2010).

After leaving the Congress, Dalit voters never really had an attractive alternative to support. The BJP was consolidating its upper-caste vote base and did not pay much

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[110] Hansen, ibid., p.158.

[111] 'C*ommittee for the struggle of the Dalits and exploited communities*'

attention to lower castes – at least initially. The socialists and the Charan Singh faction never cared much for Dalits, despite their egalitarian rhetoric. Most Dalits worked as daily wage farm labourers for the landowning castes that formed the core of the socialists' support base. Their interests were often at odds.

The BSP emerged as the alternative for Dalits, who could finally support a party of their own[112]. The BSP grew by mobilizing a core of Dalit voters. It gathered 9.4 per cent of the votes in its first participation in a state election, earning it 13 seats. Later on, the BSP would seek to expand its base to other lower castes and minorities, and gain power by forging governmental alliances.

From Kisan politics to caste-based politics

The 1980s are a key decade to understand contemporary political transformations and dynamics. At the national level, this decade saw the peak of various farmers' movements and that of their political counterparts, as well as the beginning of their downfall, due to their political and ideological divisions (Bentall and Corbridge 1996, Frankel, Frankel, and Rao 1990, Frankel and Rao 1989, Varshney 1995). In Uttar Pradesh, as in other Northern Indian states, these divisions caused a rapid succession of mergers and splits of parties, leading to a reconfiguration of the party system as well as an evolution of the way political interests crystallize and translate into political mobilization. Political leaders and factions competing for power within the Janata Parivar gradually turned to caste and identity as the main trope for political mobilization, rather than appealing to a broad category of backward classes or Kisan identity.

In reality, no party is mobilized solely on the basis of one factor; rather, they seek to appeal to voters through various political and semantic registers. As Bruce Graham noted, political interests in Uttar Pradesh always expressed themselves on a variety of registers: land interests, class interests, caste interests, religious interests and some sectional interests (Graham 1993, 189). This variety of interests was reflected in the factional

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[112] The Republican Party of India was largely limited to Western Uttar Pradesh, and its cadre were too close to the Congress to develop a distinct identity (Ruparelia 2015, Chapter 5).

composition of the Janata Parivar, which was made of various components animated by divergent and often contradicting interests.

Splits and mergers in the socialist camp traditionally took place on account of personal rivalries between leaders, fed by divergences on matters of strategy and ideology. Somewhat abstract doctrinal debates often led to rifts between leaders, rifts that translated into splits (Fickett 1973, 829). During the 1980s, splits took place on the issue of party control and power as well as caste[113]. Charan Singh's Lok Dal split not only between contending political figures, but between contending political figures that represented – and where supported by – different castes: the Jats with Ajit Singh, the Yadavs with Mulayam. The new generation of political leaders within the Janata Parivar fought for power within the state and within their political family, banking on the support of their castes, articulating a discourse of social justice and equity around specific ascriptive identities, leaving aside in practice the socialists' ambition to rally the backward classes against the upper castes. The resurgence of the debate over the extension of the reservation system to Other Backward Classes in the 1980s served as a crystallizer for caste-based mobilizations[114]. As a result, the upper-caste bias that marked the sociological composition of the socialist formations of the 1960s and 1970s waned to give way to a higher representation of OBCs.

These transformations made way for the fourth phase of the overhaul of the party system in the 1990s, a new political configuration that emerged through the juxtaposition of religion-based and caste-based mobilizations (Hasan 1993, 1998, Jaffrelot 2003b, Pai 2000b).

Three parties - the BJP, the BSP and the SP – surged while the Congress collapsed, electorally, and organizationally.

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[113] What remained common between the two periods was the overdetermination of the divisions between the various factions and components of the Janata Dal at the national level.

[114] For a detailed history of reservations in India and a comprehensive contemporary assessment, see (Pai 1994, 309).

Table 2.4 *Caste Group Representation among Socialist Parties, 1980-1991*

	1980	**1985**	**1989**	**1991**
UC	16 (25.4%)	28 (26.92%)	75 (35.89%)	31 (24.60%)
OBC	24 (38.10%)	33 (31.73%)	67 (32.06%)	51 (40.48%)
SC	11 (17.46%)	29 (27.88%)	52 (24.88%)	29 (23.02%)
Muslims	9 (14.29%)	14 (13.46%)	13 (6.22%)	14 (11.11%)
Unidentified	3 (4.76%)		2 (0.96%)	
N	43 (100%)	104 (100%)	209 (100%)	125 (100%)

Source: Author's fieldwork.

The 1990s would be a decade of structural instability[115], marked by the inability of parties to win majorities on their own. This forced them to enter into a regime of dysfunctional coalitions, which would plunge the state of Uttar Pradesh into chronic instability and recurrent periods of President's Rule.

2.1.3. Communal and Caste polarization and dysfunctional coalition politics in the 1990s

Three parties have been in power, either on their own or in coalitions, in the period that followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid. The BJP ruled the state continuously for four years and 169 days, with three different chief ministers[116]. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) ruled for seven years and sixteen days under four Mayawati-led governments (two in coalition with the BJP, one with the Samajwadi Party).

Before the 2012 State Assembly elections, the Samajwadi Party (SP) ruled the state for five years and seventy-three days, under Mulayam Singh Yadav. During the same period,

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[115] During that decade, only the BJP succeeded to win a majority of seats, in 1991.
[116] Kalyan Singh (21 September 1997 – 12 November 1999), Ram Prakash Gupta (12 November 1999 – 28 October 2000) and Rajnath Singh (28 October 2000 - 8 March 2002)

President's Rule was declared on three occasions, for a total period of two years and two hundred and eight days.

The birth of the Samajwadi Party

The Samajwadi Party was formally created on the 4th of October 1992. It emerged as the victorious faction from the fratricidal struggle between the claimants for the political succession of Charan Singh after his death in 1987. Its leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav, a prominent political figure both among his caste – the Yadavs – and the state's socialists, succeeded in capturing Charan Singh's legacy and built a party dominated by the elite segments of the state's backward classes[117].

The party claims the dual legacy of Ram Manohar Lohia – as ideological founding father – and Chaudhary Charan Singh – as tutelary political figure. Both had advocated that a socialist political formation should aim at forming an alliance of the rural middle and low peasantry, alongside Dalits and Muslims, to be able to defeat a Congress Party largely dominated by the upper castes. In Lohia's view, such an alliance was also an alliance of caste and class, an opportunity to practise political equality among backward and marginalized groups, preparing the advent of a more just society.

That alliance, as seen, would prove difficult to set up due to feuds within the various factions and branches of the socialist movement as well as antagonism between upwardly mobile and assertive segments of the OBCs and other lower peasant castes. The more prosperous Jats in Western UP, for instance, and the lower peasant castes of Eastern UP could not set up a common platform (Verma 2004a, 1509). Besides, neither were these

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[117] Many of the small parties or residual parties from earlier coalitions – such as the Bhartiya Kisan Kamgar Party (BKKP), launched by Ajit Singh in September 1996, with the support of the Jat leader Mahendra Singh Tikait, the Janata Dal, the Lok Dal (Bahuguna) – gradually disappeared or became localized phenomenons, indicating the increased polarization of voters' preferences between the four main parties. Some local parties have subsisted, such as Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal in Western Uttar Pradesh. New local parties have carved out a modicum of space for themselves, such as the Apna Dal, straddling the border between lower Doab and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. These local parties subsist on account of the demographic concentration of their core support base – Jats for the RLD, Lodhs for the Apna Dal – a support that has been eroding over recent years.

two groups fundamentally committed to building alliances with Dalits, which limited the expansion of their electoral bases.

Mulayam had emerged as the winner in the 1989 elections. However, he was in a weak position. First, he prevailed over Ajit Singh for the leadership of the Janata Dal state Legislature Party – a prelude to his appointment as Chief Minister – by a thin margin[118]. As a result, his own majority still contained elements faithful to his rival – 56 of the 206 Janata Dal MLAs were reportedly devoted to Ajit Singh, who felt he had been cheated of the chief ministership. They could topple the government down at any time. To make matters worse, Ajit Singh used his proximity to the Jat leader Mahendra Singh Tikait, President of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), a farmer's union dominated by the Jats in Western U.P., to stir agitation against the government, and lead a rebellion of Janata Dal MLAs from Western Uttar Pradesh (Fickett 1993, 92).

The second major challenge that Mulayam's government faced was the intensification of the Hindu nationalists' campaign for the Ram Temple. Mulayam found himself at odds with his own ally, V.P. Singh, then Prime Minister, whose government depended from the BJP's support. A turning point in Mulayam Singh's career took place on October 30, 1990, when he ordered the police to fire at *kar sevaks* who had gathered at Ayodhya, threatening to destroy the Babri mosque. More violence took place on November 2. Sixteen *sevaks* died and many were injured. That decision cost him the election in 1991 but earned him the staunch support of Muslim voters, who would provide him a second core support base in subsequent elections. Mulayam had already made a name for himself in the early 1990s among the state's largest minority, by opposing V.P. Singh's violent repression of criminality, which caused many casualties among Muslims[119]. The Ayodhya incident gave him a status of protector of minorities that no one else could claim at that time in Uttar Pradesh[120].

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[118] Dilip Awasthi, journalist with India Today, estimated the margin to be of 11 votes, out of 212 legislators (Galanter 1984, McMillan 2005).

[119] The PAC has been accused of condoning, if not helping, with the Moradabad riots of 1980, in which hundreds of Muslims died.

[120] Mulayam Singh Yadav is not the only political figure who emerged as a 'muslim protector' in this troubled period. In Bihar, Laloo Prasad Yadav's shot to fame when he arrested L.K. Advani, preventing him and his Rath Yatra to enter U.P.

Following the October 30 incident, the BJP withdrew its support to V.P. Singh at the Centre, precipitating his downfall. Following that, the national Janata Party split and in Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam followed Chandra Shekhar's faction. The latter renamed his splinter group the Samajwadi Janata Party, before he became Prime Minister. After the split, Mulayam's government became dependent from the Congress' support, the same way Chandra Shekhar's minority government depended from the Congress at the Centre.

Hounded by internal divisions and weakened by the fall of the government at the Centre, Mulayam tendered his resignation on April 4, 1991. He went to the poll under the Janata Party banner, while a faction led by V.P. Singh contested as Janata Dal. The campaign was marked by violence (crude bombs were hurled in front of Mulayam Singh's residence on April 24, injuring number of his security staff), by an outbreak of communal incidents[121], and by the death of Rajiv Gandhi, during the campaign for the General elections.

In the 1991 General elections that followed, the Congress failed to obtained a majority. The BJP emerged as the second party with 120 seats and 20 per cent of the popular vote. V.P. Singh's Janata Dal was reduced to 59 seats (31 in Bihar and 22 in Uttar Pradesh) and Mulayam's Janata Party to five[122].

In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP gained nearly twenty per cent of vote share and obtained for the first time a single majority in the Assembly (221 seats), leading to the formation of the first Kalyan Singh government. The Congress' seat share was cut by half (from 94 to 46). V.P. Singh's Janata Dal came third with 92 seats and 18.8 per cent of the vote. Mulayam's faction obtained only 34 seats.

Parties' splits tend to create havoc with local organization. District organizations get dissolved and often split on the bases of caste factions. The process of polarization among backwards (including the Jats) in Western U.P. can be traced to that period.

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[121] The elections could not take place in six constituencies, all in Western Uttar Pradesh, due to the communal violence: Agota, Hastinapur, Kharkauda, Kithore, Meerut, and Meerut Cantonment.
[122] Four in Uttar Pradesh, including Chandra Shekhar, and H.D. Deve Gowda, in Karnataka.

Table 2.5 *Vote share and Seat difference in the 1989*
and 1991 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections

	Vote share			Seats		
	1989	**1991**	**Swing**	**1989**	**1991**	**Swing**
BJP	11.61	31.45	19.84	57	221	164
INC	27.9	17.32	-10.58	94	46	-48
BSP	9.41	9.44	0.03	13	12	-1
JD	29.71	18.84	-10.87	208	92	-116
JP		12.52			34	
Ind.	15.46	7.44	-8.02	40	7	-33
Others	5.91	2.99	-2.91	13	7	-6
	100			425	419	

Source: adapted from ECI reports.

The tenure of Kalyan Singh was marked by various kinds of violent agitation movements. On one hand, the communal violence that had brought him to power did not subside. In fact, it intensified. For one, the Hindu militants saw the advent of a BJP government in Lucknow as an opportunity to reach their goal – the building of a Ram temple in Ayodhya – and secondly, the stakes of the movement went far beyond the scope of state politics. As Zoya Hasan points, "*the demolition of the Babri Masjid was the culmination of a mass movement intended to promote religiously grounded nationalism*". (Hasan 1998, 189).

The movement also marked a new stage in the caste polarization of the electorate. The BJP consolidated its support among the upper caste through its opposition to reservations and through the tropes of religious nationalism. These tropes also enabled it to dent into the OBC vote, by mobilizing lower OBC voters such as Lodhs, Kurmis, Sainis and Kushwahas, who were in frequent local conflict of interests with the Yadavs. The distribution of tickets to lower OBC candidates and the projection of Kalyan Singh – a Lodh – as figurehead of the party served as bait and incentives for the lower OBC to support the BJP. Other OBC figures within the party, such as Uma Bharti (also a Lodh) and Vinay Katiyar (a Kurmi), also contributed to the expansion of the vote base of the BJP.

In the midst of all this, Mulayam distanced himself from his ally Chandra Shekhar, on the basis of a disagreement over the Mandal agitation. A Rajput from Ballia, Chandra Shekhar was too dependent from the upper caste vote to forcefully support the implementation of the Mandal Report's recommendation. On the 29 September 1992, the SJP legislature groups splits in two. Mulayam abandoned Chandra Shekhar to form his own party, the Samajwadi Party[123]. The SP was launched in Lucknow, in presence of several socialist leaders from across the country. Soon after, he announces an alliance with the BSP for the upcoming state elections. It developed a strategy of distancing vis-à-vis the BJP, in order to consolidate its support among Muslims, and sought to re-create Charan Singh's old AJGAR social alliance (Ahirs, Jats, Gujjars and Rajputs) through targeted caste mobilization (Pai 1994, 302).

The 1990s: A succession of dysfunctional coalitions

Through the 1990s, the relationship between parties and party leaders was characterized by intense acrimony, both between and within alliances. Electoral outcomes were so fragmented that parties had to depend from defections from rival parties to secure short and unstable majorities[124].

The State Assembly of Uttar Pradesh was dissolved the day the Babri Masjid fell, as President's rule was immediately declared. A year later, in December 1993, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party came together in a coalition, preventing the BJP's return to power. Mulayam and Kanshi Ram had hold regular talks ever since the former lost his Chief Ministership. This alliance was consonant with the socialist objective of creating a broad alliance of backwards, spanning from he dominant OBCs to the Dalits.

The 1993 verdict came in as a surprise. The BJP's momentum with the Ayodhya movement came to a halt, as the party lost a significant number of seats (although maintained a stable vote share). The Congress registered its worst ever performance, with

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[123] Since he had lost the Prime Ministership, in April 1991, Chandra Shekhar lost most of his influence. Mulayam departed from a spent force.

[124] The four BJP governments between June 1991 and March 2002 depended upon defectors from the Congress and other parties (Awasthi 1989).

28 seats in the assembly. The rival components of the Janata Parivar were also routed as many of its members defected to other parties, notably to Mulayam's newly created Samajwadi Party. They would never recover from the defeat, leaving the entire space of the Janata Parivar to the SP, minus the few pockets faithful to Ajit Singh's RLD.

The BSP and the SP were the only met gainers of these elections, although the BJP remained the first party, with 177 seats. The BSP multiplied its number of seats by more than five (from 11 to 67) with a slight increase in vote share, and the SP tripled its presence in the assembly (from 34 to 109) with a 5.4 positive swing[125].

However, the coalition quickly came under strain as cases of atrocities committed against Dalits shot up through the state. BSP office holders and leaders felt undermined by their SP counterparts and the relationship between Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati, considered by the latter as a political novice, grew estranged. Mayawati broke the alliance in May 1995, by forming a counter-coalition with the BJP, who offered her the post of Chief Minister[126]. In the BSP's view, the alliance with the BJP was a mean to reconstruct the erstwhile successful Congress' coalition of extremes. The BSP would gather the support of the Dalits and the Muslims, distribute tickets across the lower OBCs, while the BJP consolidated the upper caste vote (Pai 2009).

The arrangement with the BJP lasted only 137 days, the BJP pulling out its support ahead of the 1996 Lok Sabha elections. After another yearlong period of President's Rule, both parties brokered a new alliance, under the promise that the Chief Ministerial post would rotate between the two parties on a six-monthly basis[127]. It eventually did but the coalition fell once again, on account of the bad relationship between Mayawati and the

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[125] On the detail of the 1993 elections see (Duncan 1997).

[126] Mulayam Singh Yadav attempted to counter the breach of alliance by attempting to break down the BSP, coercing or luring some of its MLAs to defect in his favour. He succeeded to get fifteen BSP legislators to defect but fell short of the number of twenty-three required (a third of the BSP's strength in the Assembly) to avoid the anti-defection law. On June 2, five additional BSP legislators were forcibly removed from their guest house, where Mayawati was consulting her ranks, and coerced into joining a breakaway faction of the BSP led by Raj Bahadur, who had signed a pledge of allegiance to Mulayam.

[127] The agreement also included parity in the Cabinet, the Speaker post for the BJP and a top party leaders bipartisan panel to monitor the coalition.

newly re-installed Chief Minister Kalyan Singh. The latter succeeded to maintain its government by engineering defections from various parties, including the BSP, the Congress and the Janata Dal. He and the then BJP President Rajnath Singh used their caste appeal to attract legislators from opposition parties, rewarding them with ministerial berths. Factionalism within the BJP ultimately led to the dismissal of Kalyan Singh in November 1999, and his replacement by an ageing Ram Prakash Gupta, himself quickly replaced by Rajnath Singh.

The 2002 State elections produced once again a hung Assembly, the Samajwadi Party came out ahead with 143 seats, the Bahujan Samaj Party second with 98 seats and the Bhartiya Janata Party third with 88 seats[128]. The incapacity of the SP to find coalition partners outside the BSP and the BJP led these two parties to tie up for a third time. The rallying of Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal and of a number of small parties and independents enabled them to obtain a majority in the Lower House. Once again, the two partners grew apart and the Mayawati-led government fell in August 2003, when the Rashtriya Lok Dal withdrew its support to the Mayawati led government, with the blessings of the BJP.

Ajit Singh, then also a Union Minister in the second National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre, shifted his support to the Samajwadi Party, who thus wrestled power by cobbling together a coalition of small parties, the remains of the Congress Party, seven independents and thirteen defectors from the BSP[129]. The third Mulayam Singh Yadav's government lasted until the end of the term and was succeeded, for the first time since 1991, by a single party majority government, led by Mayawati.

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[128] The BJP had a pre-poll alliance with eight parties: Rashtriya Lok Dal (Ajit Singh), Janata Dal-United, Lok Jan shakti Party, the Samata Party, Maneka Gandhi's Shakti Dal, Amarmani Tripathi's Lok Tantrik Congress, the Lok Parivartan Party (R K Chaudhari and Berkhoo Ram Verma) and the Kisan Mazdoor Bahujan Samaj Party (Chaudhari Narendra Singh). The BJP also supported three independent candidates – Raghuraj Pratap Singh, alias Raja Bhaiya (Kunda), Ram Nath Saroj (Bihar) and Pappu Jaiswal (Pipraich). In Pai (2002b).

[129] The Samajwadi Party formed the government in 2003 with 142 seats, with the support of Congress (16 seats), the Rashtriya Lok Dal (14 seats), the Rashtriya Kranti Party (2 seats), the CPI-CPM (2 seats), smaller parties and Independents (19) and 13 defectors from the Bahujan Samaj Party, for a total of 208 seats.

2.1.4. The limits of caste polarization: Post-identity politics?

Inter-party acrimony and intra-party factionalism were not the only two reasons behind the inability of parties to form stable governments. The four-part division of the electoral scene also stemmed from the fact that each party devised electoral strategies that targeted specific and fundamentally narrow segments of the electorate, at the exclusion of the majority of voters who did not belong to those segments. To render is in a simplistic manner, the BJP targeted the upper castes and the lower backward castes through its religious mobilization, conducted on the ground by the RSS. The BSP sought to consolidate its support among Dalits by antagonizing the upper castes and the OBCs. The Samajwadi party sought to achieve a similar goal by favoring its Yadav base, while wooing Muslims who had lent their support to Mulayam after the Ayodhya incident. The Congress, deprived of a core support base of its own, further declined.

In reality, electoral behaviour was more complex and did not follow this simplistic four-part division of the political space. None of these aforementioned social categories vote for any specific party en bloc. Parties' support bases among various groups keep changing over time and over space (see Table 2.6 and section 2.2.1). Some castes do cluster around specific parties, providing them with a core support base. But even these core caste-party alignments are quite fluid. The BJP succeeded in consolidating the support from the upper caste in the early 1990s but that support quickly eroded, to the benefit of other parties. The effect of the religious appeal of the BJP's campaign did not last and upper castes votes got rapidly divided among various parties.

It is often said that upper castes in U.P. do not belong to any party and vote strategically according to local configurations, with the aim of maximizing their representation in the Assembly. It is particularly true for the Thakurs, who through the 2000s split their vote more and more between the BJP and the SP. It is also necessary to keep in mind that only a few castes participate in these large caste-party alignments. Most castes are either too small or too geographically dispersed to constitute effective blocs of voters, beyond specific constituencies or districts. If we add the known upper castes to the official state list of OBC and SC castes, and if we compare that list to the caste composition of the state

assembly over time, one can see that around 40 per cent of castes in Uttar Pradesh never had any representation in the state assembly.

Table 2.6 *Caste and community-based party preferences in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, 1996-2012*[130]

	Congress				BJP			
	1996	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**	**1996**	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**
Brahmins	4.00%	26.50%	18.70%	12.90%	**70.70%**	**48.70%**	**39.10%**	**37.80%**
Rajputs	4.50%	9.70%	9.40%	13.30%	**74.80%**	**45.70%**	**43.50%**	**29.40%**
Vaishyas	3.70%	12.10%	9.80%	20.90%	**81.10%**	**48.30%**	**44.60%**	**41.80%**
Others Ucs	2.30%	22.40%	12.00%	12.90%	**78%**	**44.80%**	**39.30%**	**16.90%**
Jats	6.50%		2.70%	10.60%	31.80%	9.10%	21.10%	6.80%
Yadav	6.60%	4.70%	4.10%	4.30%	5.40%	5.20%	3.90%	9.30%
Kurmis/Koeris	6.20%				41.40%			
Other OBCs	5.70%	7.10%	7.90%	12.60%	47.30%	27.10%	19.00%	18.90%
Jatavs	14.30%	4.00%	2.10%	4.50%	5.30%	2.00%	3.00%	4.70%
Other SCs	12.50%	9.00%	5.10%	13.60%	7.90%	11.40%	10.50%	8.20%
STs	9.10%				54.50%			
Muslims	12.20%	10.00%	14.10%	18.00%	1.90%	1.70%	2.40%	6.60%
Others	6.30%	4.30%	12.40%	9.10%	36.80%	13.00%	13.70%	15.60%
Total	8.10%	32.10%	20.10%	22.40%	17.30%	8.80%	19/7%	22.80%

	BSP				SP			
	1996	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**	**1996**	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**
Brahmins	3.70%	6.00%	16.70%	19.00%	5.50%	2.60%	10.30%	18.80%
Rajputs	5.30%	4.80%	11.90%	13.60%	1.90%	8.10%	20.60%	25.50%
Vaishyas	4.90%	3.40%	13.60%	14.90%	3.70%	15.50%	12.00%	11.90%
Others Ucs	1.20%	5.20%	12.00%	17.10%	5.80%	13.80%	14.90%	14.10%
Jats	0.90%		12.30%	15.90%		4.50%	11.10%	6.80%
Yadav	3.30%	5.20%	7.70%	10.70%	**60.70%**	**70.80%**	**72.50%**	**65.80%**
Kurmis/Koeris	11.70%				31.40%			
Other OBCs	14.50%	19.20%	26.50%	18.80%	15.90%	17.60%	19.60%	29.30%
Jatavs	**64.90%**	**78.50%**	**84.80%**	**61.90%**	6.00%	1.60%	3.50%	14.70%
Other SCs	**60.60%**	**55.10%**	**55.00%**	**47.90%**	9.90%	14.40%	13.60%	18.50%
STs	9.10%							
Muslims	**12.30%**	**9.70%**	**17.60%**	**30.40%**	**48.00%**	**53.00%**	**47.70%**	**39.40%**
Others	20.10%	13.00%	29.20%	23.40%	14.60%	13.00%	23.00%	30.60%
Total	24.70%	24.00%	8.60%	17.00%	30.40%	25.40%	18.60%	11.60%

Source: CSDS/Lokniti NES Data.

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[130] Data based on surveys conducted by Lokniti. The N for the four surveys are, chronologically: 5592, 2058, 9530, and 6614.

The notion of core support base however should not be discarded. Parties articulate their discourse and policies around the specific interests of their core support base – in the form of subsidies or loan waivers for farmers, housing schemes for Scheduled Castes, and so forth. Further, the control of local democratic institutions, such as district Panchayats (or *Zilla Parishads*) or cooperatives, is often exerted through local caste-based patronage networks, in which the alignments between specific castes and specific parties often determine how public resources are allocated.

As a consequence, the focalization of parties on specific groups limited their ability to expand their support base across groups, as the mobilization of a core support group on the basis of identity or religious affiliation often has the effect of alienating the support from other groups.

This trend would continue through the 1990s towards the end of which parties started to change their tone and implement less exclusive electoral strategies. Until then, electoral strategies of parties aimed at consolidating a core support group and seek representation from other groups in areas where their core group wasn't demographically strong enough. In the fourth phase, parties seek to transfer the votes of their core support base towards candidates belonging to other groups, in order to create winning local social coalitions, including in constituencies where their core support base is strong.

The systematic failure of coalitions led the two regional parties to broaden their social base by wooing each other's bases and by distributing tickets across castes and communities (see chapter 4). They changed their discourse from caste-base appeal to a more generalist discourse on social justice, calling on a broader definition of the backwards, in the case of the Samajwadi Party, or the redefinition of the BSP as a *sarvajan* party ("for the entire society"), rather than a *bahujan* ("majority") party – that is for the lower castes (Jaffrelot 2010a, Pai 2009). This was a two-pronged strategy. The first aspect was to develop a catch-all discourse, focused on development and social justice. The second dimension, crucial, was to distribute candidature tickets across castes in order to match the catch-all ambition with practice.

However, contrary to popular belief, this distribution of tickets did not necessarily follow a particular pre-determined calculation of inter-caste balance. Instead, parties focus on the local demographic and sociological features of constituencies to determine whom candidate from which group should get the ticket.

The logic consists in seeking the best possible local combination of castes, in order to maximize the party's chance of winning. This system draws on the notion of transferability of vote bank, or the transfer of the votes from the core supporters of a party in favor of a candidate from another caste. The BSP's calculation, for instance, is that with an average of 20 per cent of Dalit voters across constituencies, it needs to seek candidate who can deliver at least twenty other per cent of the votes which, added to the local Dalits support, will guarantee victory (see Section 2.3.2 for more details on this arithmetic). Thus, the choice of candidate is guided by local considerations and pragmatism, and not simply by a broad newly-found inclusive ideology.

This fact provides the base for the argument that caste politics has become more localized in the post-Mandal and post-Mandir years, against the popular perception that parties have suddenly become less caste-minded because they suddenly have stopped talking about caste publicly. The 2007 assembly elections are a case in point.

The 2007 elections: a turning point

The 2007 elections marked a turning point in Uttar Pradesh politics as the BSP succeeded in winning a single majority of seats (206 out of 403), with 30.5% of the vote share, a positive swing of 7.3% compared to 2002. The BJP vote share decreased by 3.12 per cent, to 17 per cent. The SP and Congress both maintained their vote share at 25.4 and 8.6 per cent respectively.

The BSP succeeded for the first time to attract a substantial part of the upper caste vote, having fielded a large number of upper caste candidates. Between 2002 and 2007, Mayawati doubled the number of tickets distributed to upper caste candidates, particularly in favor of Brahmins and Vaishyas (see Chapter 3). The Samajwadi Party adopted a vote base expansion strategy too, by fielding a large number of non-Brahmin

candidates, notably Banias and Rajputs. Both parties in sum attempted to expand their base by wooing the social categories that they had initially opposed[131].

Why did this strategy work better for the BSP than the SP? The first reason usually invoked is that the cohesion of the core support base of the BSP – the Dalits – is large (21 per cent of the population) and stronger than in other parties. In the 2002 assembly elections, 72.2 per cent of Dalits voted for the BSP (See Table 2.7). That number reduced significantly in 2007 but remained above 50% within this broad social category[132].

Table 2.7 *Dalit voting proportions by party in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, 2002-2012*

Uttar Pradesh	2002	2007	2012
INC	4.20%	7.40%	8.60%
BJP	6.40%	5.00%	5.90%
BSP	72.20%	52.00%	57.70%
SP	7.60%	27.60%	14.30%
Others	9.50%	8.00%	13.50%

Source: NES Data. Quoted from Gorringe, Jeffery and Waghmore (2016).

While the core support group of the SP, the Yadavs, is indeed smaller (8.7 per cent of the population, according to the 1931 Census), it is no less cohesive than the BSP's support among the Dalits. It is in fact more cohesive in 2012.

What the data about these last two elections indicate is that the core support of these two parties actually erodes between 2007 and 2012, a process that had started earlier for the BSP. At the same time both parties have increased their support among the upper caste, more so among the Brahmins for the BSP, and among the Rajputs for the SP. Both in 2007 and 2012, the bulk of the upper castes remained with the BJP[133].

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[131] This strategy is what A.K. Verma, a political scientists from Kanpur, called the 'reverse osmosis' and 'sandwich coalition' strategies (Verma 2002b).

[132] Dalits, like any other caste group, do not form a cohesive entity. We know through Lokniti surveys that various groups among Dalits support the BSP differentialy. In the 2009 general elections, 86 per cent of Jatavs voted for the BSP, against 64 per cent for Pasis and 61 per cent for other Dalits (Verma 2007b, a).

[133] In 2007, the BJP received 44 per cent of the Brahmin vote and 46 per cent of the Rajput vote. These numbers decreased to 38 per cent and 29 per cent respectively in 2012. Verma, op. cit.

Table 2.8 *Caste and Community-based party preferences in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections,*
2007-2012

	BSP		SP	
Jati	2007	2012	2007	2012
Brahmins	16	19	10	19
Rajput	12	14	20	26
Vaishya	14	15	12	12
Other Upper Castes	10	16	17	15
Jats	7	10	8	7
Yadav	7	11	72	66
Kurmi/Koeri	16	19	17	35
Other OBC	30	19	20	26
Jatav	86	62	4	15
Balmiki	71	42	2	9
Pasi/Pano	53	57	16	24
Other SC	58	45	16	18
Muslim	17	20	45	39
Others	30	23	23	31

Source: CSDS-Lokniti Survey Data. Quoted in Verma (2009). Figures in per cent and rounded off.

The second reason, more cogent, is that there were less contradictions in tying a part of the upper caste vote to the Dalit vote than with OBC voters. In many parts of the state, the social, economic and political competition tends to take place among the upper and the backward castes, in particular the dominant OBCs, who still form the bulk of the SP's organization. The induction of Rajput and Bania figures in the 2007 elections created tensions and resentment within the ranks of the SP. A series of Samajwadi Party figures left the party in protest or refrained their campaign enthusiasm. As we shall see in Chapter four, the local branches of the Samajwadi Party are mingled with local elite groups. Most of its candidates are drawn from its local organization. While for the BSP, there is a strict division of labour between the party organization, predominantly composed with Dalit members, and the candidates who are recruited outside the organization[134]. Although this duality created tensions after the elections, there was no contradiction in bringing in the ranks of the party elements who did not share the emancipatory ideals of the party's base. For the SP, inducting outsiders almost inevitably generate conflicts of interests.

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[134] This applies to general seats.

A third reason, more circumstantial, that explained the gap in performance between the SP and the BSP, is the simple fact that the SP was the incumbent party and that since 1985, no party in Uttar Pradesh has succeeded in being re-elected. Besides, the party suffered from a poor image due to the deterioration of law in order under their rule. The spectre of the *goonda Raj* (criminals' rule) haunted the party and its campaign. It did not help that in order to woo the upper caste, the SP chose as campaign mascots some of the worst public criminals the state has produced in recent times. It gave a ticket to Amarmani Tripathi, a Brahmin leader from the East and to one of U.P. most archetypal criminal politician, Raghuraj Pratap Singh (alias Raja Bhaiya), a Thakur figure from Kunda (North-East).

That being said, the Samajwadi Party resisted well despite these advantages, since it maintained its vote share. The SP won 97 seats and trailed in 167 seats (including 123 against a BSP candidate). In these elections, BSP and SP candidates occupied the first two slots in 200 seats, out of 403.

The BSP campaign succeeded by distributing tickets across caste lines and by appealing to a broader base of voters through a generalist discourse focused on the promise of development and caste inclusion, but it was also greatly helped by a series of circumstances.

The first one was that both Congress and the BJP were still reeling from their defeat in the 2002 elections and in the 2005 by-elections. This made the election a two-horse race, instead of the three-corner contest of 2002 (Pai 2009). The BSP in 2007 reaped the benefit of a shift in electoral strategy initiated two decades earlier by Kanshi Ram, who had already started to open the gates of the party to non-Dalit candidates. The difference then was the BJP was a much stronger contender for the upper caste vote, who shunned the BSP on account of its explicitly anti-upper caste rhetoric. The second circumstance is that the Samajwadi Party, as we saw, suffered from an incumbent disadvantage.

More importantly, the BSP benefited from the low turnout (46%), which lowered the bar of absolute votes necessary to convert a minority of votes into a majority of seats. Many field accounts described how BJP, Congress and even SP supporters did not vote that year,

not expecting their party to do well. In a way, the Brahmins who did not vote in 2007 also helped the BSP, alongside those who voted for its candidates.

The 2007 BSP victory, followed by the SP victory five years later, led many commentators to pronounce the end of caste as a factor in Uttar Pradesh politics. They harbored the illusion that the BSP had shed its caste-mindedness and saw in the rainbow coalition gathered by Mayawati the sign that caste calculations and narrow strategies had failed, to the benefit of a newly-found sense of general interest (Gupta and Kumar 2007).

Sudha Pai describes perfectly to what extent the party went to attract Brahmins, by organizing *Brahmins jodo Sammelans* (Brahmin enrolment conventions) [135] , using brahminical rituals such as Vedic hymns or the blowing of conches, and by organizing other caste-specific events across the state (Pai 2009). The very fact that the BSP addressed caste-based rallies and devised caste-based tactics and strategies indicate that caste was very much at the heart of its strategy, even if absent from its inclusive discourse.

Gupta and Kumar are right however in their critique that caste alone does not explain electoral outcomes. Other scholars, more nuanced, have noted the gradual decline of ascriptive identities, the presence of new alignments of parties and voters, and the greater appeal among voters of transversal issues such as security, law and order, and development and the increased saliency of class diversification of caste groups, or the role of intra-caste disparities (Pai 2013, Singh 2014, Sridharan 2014, Jaffrelot 2015a).

The 2012 successful Samajwadi Party campaign seemed to confirm that trend. The SP campaigned on the theme of inclusive development, social harmony, with a focus on the youth. The son of Mulayam Singh Yadav, Akhilesh, led the campaign as the new figurehead of the party, projecting an image of youthful change. Its campaign slogan – *Ummed ki Cycle* (the cycle of hope – the bicycle also being the party's symbol) – was an inclusive one. Televised advertisement showcased a social rainbow encompassing farmers, students, urban professionals, housewives and women professionals. The party also organized a massive road show – a *Kranti Rath* – reminiscent of Mulayam's 1987 campaign, in which

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[135] These conventions excluded Dalits' participation.

Akhilesh held 5 to 6 meetings a day, addressing audiences in the hundreds of thousand on a daily basis.

But despite the inclusive tone of the campaign and the assertions that candidates were selected on the basis of competence and clean records, the distribution of tickets remained essentially based on the local reading of caste configurations. Instead of attempting to forge transversal social alliances, the SP emulated the BSP strategy consisting in picking up candidates according to local circumstances. This resulted in a more diversified profile of candidates (see section 4.1.3).

Parties nowadays tend to lead parallel campaigns. At the macro level, they develop an inclusive discourse stressing on mobilization tropes that have a catch-all appeal – development, social justice and providential leadership. At the local level, the electoral competition remains grounded into the local configurations of competition among contending social groups, often organized along caste lines. Negating differences on the public stage while activating these differences locally has become the formula of a successful election, a formula that the BJP would adopt in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere in the 2014 general election. In both cases, the traditional tropes of mobilization do not disappear but are rather concealed under a generalist inclusive discourse adopted by parties.

2.2. Sub-regional trajectories

The description made so far of political trends and dynamics has been made in general terms, considering the state as a whole, regardless of sub-regional variations. It is obvious however that the transformations described and analyzed before as well as the growth and decline of political parties did not take place uniformly across the territory. There are necessarily spatial variations, which are important to consider. To begin with, political competition takes place in a variety of contexts that include demographic variations, differentiated, varied economic trajectories and localized social transformations. Most of the literature on electoral politics considers either the state or the constituency as unit of analysis, as if there was nothing else in between, or as if some single constituency case was representative of the whole.

The State of Uttar Pradesh is divided into various sub-regions that represent cohesive historical, social territorial entities within the state to people and therefore voters. Some of these sub-regions carry specific sub-regional identities. In fact, State boundaries cut across, or artificially divide, a number of ethno-cultural regions. The sub-region of Bundelkhand belongs to a larger ensemble located in Northern Madhya Pradesh. The region of Poorvanchal, in the East, has much to share with its neighbor Bhojpur, part of the state of Bihar. The Jat-dominated regions of Western U.P. and Haryana have also much in common, so much so that a party was created in the 1960s to unite the "Jatland" on both sides of the Yamuna River[136]. Finally, the Shravasti and Balrampur districts also belong to a large socio-geographical ensemble – the Terai – a plain region that stretches from Himachal Pradesh to Bangladesh, through Nepal, Uttar Pradesh and Northern Bihar.

For our purpose, I stay within the boundaries of the state of Uttar Pradesh, and find that dividing aggregate political data at a sub-regional level reveals important variations that challenge the narratives and explanations that scholars and commentators put forward to make sense of the state's politics.

2.2.1. Uttar Pradesh's sub-regions

There are multiple possible ways to divide the territory. Geographically speaking, there are three broad sub-regions in Uttar Pradesh – The plain area of the Gangetic basin, where the bulk of the population lives, the Northern Mountains and the Southern hills. Agronomists divide the territory into eight agro-climactic zones[137]. In her study on the correlation between electoral and economic variables in U.P., Francine Frankel uses five

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136 The Vishal Haryana Party (the « Greater Haryana Party) was created by Rao Birendra Singh, a Congress defector, in 1967. Singh became the first Chief Minister of Haryana that year, to be quickly unseated and replaced by a Congress Chief Minister, Bansi Lal. Singh, who had been one of the leading voice for the separation of the Hindi-speaking districts from Punjab, merged his party with the Congress in 1978.
137 The Western Plain Zone, Mid-western Plain Zone, South-western Plain Zone, Central Plain Zone, Bundelkhand Zone, North-eastern Plain Zone, Eastern Plain Zone and Vindyan Zone.

ecological regions (Frankel 1977, 153-156)[138]. Sudha Pai uses an economic criteria to divide the territory into five sub-regions: The Northern Hills (currently Uttarakhand), Western U.P., central U.P., Eastern U.P., and Bundelkhand (Pai 1993, 29). Administratively speaking, the state of Uttar Pradesh is divided into 71 districts, clustered into 18 divisions[139]. The late Planning Commission used to divide the state into four sub-entities – Bundelkhand, Central, Eastern and Western Uttar Pradesh – each region being further divided into a number of circles, aggregating three to seven districts (India 2007). Finally, parties have their own ways to look at the state's territory. The SP and the BJP both divide it into 10 circles, based on their reading of caste demographics. The BSP divides the state into four entities based on the projection of the state carved into smaller states[140].

I choose to divide the territory into seven sub-regions (or eight, if one includes Uttarakhand before its creation as a separate state)[141], following a nomenclature that is widely referred to popularly, or part of common parlance in the state[142]. These territories roughly correspond to cohesive socio-political historical entities, although the boundaries of these territories are necessarily shifting through time. They are distinct in their histories, demographics and socio-economic trajectories.

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138 The Himalayan Region, The West, Central and East Plain (that is the Gangetic basin), and the Southern Hills and Plateau Region.

139 Saharanpur, Moradabad, Bareilly, Lucknow, Devipatan, Basti, Gorakhpur, Meerut, Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Faizabad, Azamgarh, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Allahabad, Varanasi and Mirzapur.

140 The bifurcation plan includes Harit Pradesh comprising 22 districts in Western Uttar Pradesh (another version is named Braj Pradesh or Paschimanchal, and includes parts of Northern Madhya Pradesh) ; Awadh, or Central Uttar Pradesh, twice the size of Belgium and five times its population ; Poorvanchal, comprising the Eastern and North-eastern districts ; and Bundelkhand, clubbing the two parts of that historical region currently lying across Southern U.P. and Madhya Pradesh.

141 So does Ralph C. Meyer in his 1969 study of the sociological profile of U.P. legislators. He divides the territory into 8 entities: Mountains, Northwestern (Rohilkhand and Western U.P.), Western (around Agra), Central, North-Central (Pilibhit, Kheri and Bahraich districts), Near Eastern, Far Eastern and Southern U.P.

142 Although technically, Western Uttar Pradesh should be considered as Upper Doab, it makes sense to refer to it as a separate socio-political entity.

Figure 1.5 Sub-Regions of Uttar Pradesh

Source: Author's classification. Made with QGIS

In 2012, the distribution of the number of registered voters across these four sub-regions is as follows:

Table 2.9 *Registered voters population per sub-region*

Sub-region	Registered voters
AVADH	24.36%
BUNDELKHAND	5.00%
DOAB	21.51%
EAST	15.58%
NORTH-EAST	10.37%
ROHILKHAND	12.31%
WEST	10.88%
Total	100.00%

Source: Jensenius, F., Verniers, G. Indian
State Assembly Election and Candidates
Data (1962-Present)

The largest sub-region, Avadh, comprises 100 assembly seats and a quarter of the electorate. This sub-region contains some of the richest districts in the state – in

particular the state's capital, Lucknow – and some of its poorest, such as Shrawasti, Bahraich and Balrampur (see Annexure 3). The name of that sub-region comes from the eponym princely state, led by a Shia dynasty from the early Sixteenth Century until its annexation by the British in 1856.

The second largest sub-region, Doab, is a long tract of land that stretches from the West to the East, following the basin of two confluent rivers – the Ganges and the Yamuna. Both rivers joins at *Sangham*, in Allahabad, which marks the Eastern boundary of that sub-region. Historically, Doab was divided into three areas: Upper Doab, comprising parts of Uttarakhand, Western Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, Central or Middle Doab, a portion of the sub-region that stretches from Aligarh and Agra to the Southern districts of Etawah and Kannauj. And finally, Lower Doab, which comprises the districts stretching from Kanpur to Allahabad. In this dissertation, Doab refers to Central and Lower Doab and contains 89 seats.

The third sub-region, Rohilkhand, draws its named from the Rohillas, a community from Afghanistan who founded a Pashtun state in these areas in the 17th Century. This sub-region is located in the upper Ganges alluvial plains, south of Uttarakhand and Nepal. It is the cradle of several Muslim-rules princely states, such as the Rampur State (whose current heir is an MLA). This sub-region comprises 52 constituencies, many of them containing a large number of Muslim voters, who represent 35.31 per cent of the population in that region (against 19.26 per cent at the state level).

The East is divided into two sub-entities – the East (61 seats) and the North East (40 seats). They are also often jointly referred to as Poorvanchal and are nestled between Nepal in the North, Awadh on the West, the state of Bihar to the East and the region of Bagelkhand in the South, bordering Madhya Pradesh. The main cities are Allahabad, Varanasi in the East, and Gorakhpur in the North East. The predominant language in these areas is Bhojpuri.

Table 2.10 *Sub-region wise population and share of Muslim population, per locality*

Sub-Region	Total population	Rural	Urban	Total Muslims (%)	Total Rural Muslims	Total Urban Muslims	Muslims in Rural areas %	Muslims in Urban areas %
Avadh	51489825	85.26%	14.74%	19.40%	74.48%	25.52%	16.95%	33.58%
Bundelkhand	9681552	77.33%	22.67%	7.17%	47.61%	52.39%	4.41%	16.57%
Doab	42849809	71.03%	28.97%	12.43%	44.99%	55.01%	7.87%	23.60%
East	29741466	84.71%	15.29%	11.69%	58.87%	41.13%	8.13%	31.45%
North-east	18065568	90.34%	9.66%	16.57%	87.09%	12.91%	15.98%	22.15%
Rohilkhand	25798559	74.01%	25.99%	35.31%	60.18%	39.82%	28.71%	54.11%
West	22185562	58.10%	41.90%	31.08%	55.89%	44.11%	29.90%	32.72%
Total	199812341	77.73%	22.27%	19.26%	62.77%	37.23%	15.55%	32.20%

Source: Adapted from Census 2011.

The Eastern districts have historically lagged behind the rest of the state in terms of economic development. With Bundelkhand, they are the least industrialized. Most of the people living below the poverty line are concentrated in the East, where per capita income is also far below the state average[143]. Most of the rural economy rests on subsistence agriculture, with little crop diversification. The few industries that remained in the East – notably textiles in and around Varanasi, or carpets around Mirzapur and Bhadohi (once one of Asia's largest hand-woven carpets production centers) have considerably suffered in the last decade, due to cheaper Chinese imports, higher cost of raw materials (such as the wool yarn) and to the fall of the Rupee (Bhatt 2013)[144].

Before Independence, these two sub-regions followed the *zamindari* system of land revenue system (zamindar literally means 'land-holder'), a system that relied on big landlords belonging to local hereditary dominant families, most of them upper castes[145], who exerted their power and influence on behalf of a higher form of political authority – the colonial state before 1947, and the Congress party, for a time after Independence,

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[143] Planning Commission of India, Uttar Pradesh Develoment Report, op. cit.

144 Carpet weaving started in this region in the 16th Century. The Bhadohi carpets are now manufactured across nine districts in Eastern U.P., employing around 3.2 million people, including 2.2 million rural artisans.

[145] The three main dominant upper caste in Eastern Uttar Pradesh are the Brahmins, the Kayasths and the Bhumihars.

until their formal abolition in 1952[146]. Awadh has a similar land tenure regime, in which the landlords were given land titles and the hereditary right to rule over their holdings[147].

Figure 2.6 Total number of Heavy/Small scale industrial units (2012)*
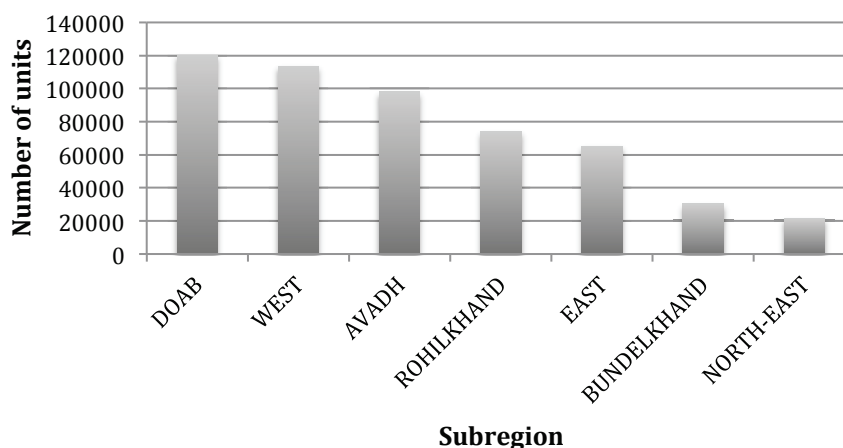
Source: Data compiled various reports from the Directorate of Industries, Uttar Pradesh
* These figures account for the number of registered factories, not the number of factories in operation[148].

The sub-region of Bundelkhand is the smallest and also the poorest. Bundelkhand is a sub-region comprising seven districts, and nineteen assembly constituencies, located in the dry Vindhyan plateau, a rocky geological formation. It is characterized by low rainfall and vast marginal lands. Like in the North East, it has less than 30 percent of gross irrigated area, against 96.5% for the Western Plains and 66.8% for the Central Plains.

Bundelkhand also has the largest share of SC population (24.7 percent), mostly employed as marginal agriculture workers (or daily-wage labourers).

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[146] Many zamindars joined politics after Independence, and contested either as Independent candidates or as Congress candidates. For a comprehensive study of the zamindari system until its abolition, see Peter Reeves classic study (Reeves 1991).
[147] These landlords in Awadh are usually referred to as *Taluqdars* ('holder of a dependency'), a term that is largely interchangeable with the *Zamindars*.
[148] In 2008, 17.8% of registered factories were inactive (Annual Survey of Industries).

Table 2.11 *Sub-region wise population and share of SC population, per locality*

Sub-region	Total Population	Rural Population	Urban Population	Total SC	Total Rural SCs	Total Urban SCs	SCs in Rural Areas	SCs in Urban areas
Avadh	51489825	85.26%	14.74%	23.89%	93.29%	6.71%	26.15%	10.87%
Bundelkhand	9681552	77.33%	22.67%	24.66%	81.37%	18.63%	25.95%	20.27%
Doab	42849809	71.03%	28.97%	21.50%	78.55%	21.45%	23.78%	15.92%
East	29741466	84.71%	15.29%	20.94%	92.58%	7.42%	22.88%	10.16%
North-east	18065568	90.34%	9.66%	17.82%	94.59%	5.41%	18.66%	9.99%
Rohilkhand	25798559	74.01%	25.99%	16.24%	86.69%	13.31%	19.03%	8.32%
West	22185562	58.10%	41.90%	17.19%	67.72%	32.28%	20.04%	13.25%
Total	199812341	77.73%	22.27%	20.70%	86.28%	13.72%	22.98%	12.75%

Source: Adapted from Census 2011.

Bundelkhand and the North-East are the least industrialized sub-regions. There were 139 factories in Bundelkhand in 1991, a figure that decreased to 112 in 2000 (and increased to 147 five years later). Between the early 1990s and the early 2000, the number of factory workers in that area has been reduced by four (from 12,138 to 3,763)[149]. It is also the sub-region that has seen the largest part of its population migrating [150].

Figure 2.7 Employment in Heavy/Small scale industrial units (2012)
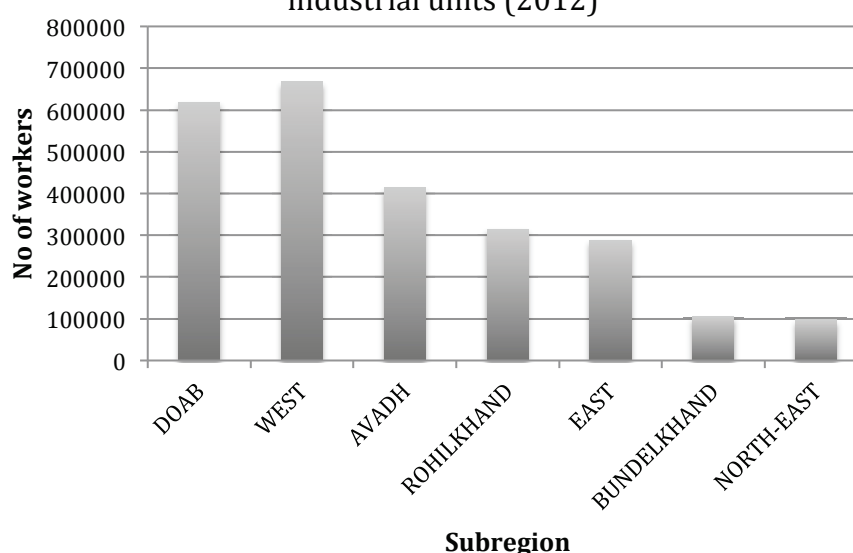
Source: Data compiled various reports from the Directorate of Industries, Uttar Pradesh.

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[149] On the political economy of Uttar Pradesh, see (Jeffrey 2010b, Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2005, 2008b) and (Pai 2007).

[150] During the drought that hit the region in 2016, a CNN-IBN report estimates that 10 percent of the population has left Bundelkhand to seek employment in other parts of the state or in the Delhi area.

The seventh sub-region is Western Uttar Pradesh, a comparatively smaller tract of land that borders the capital, Delhi, and stretches North towards the Himalayan range and Uttarakhand, alongside the East bank of the Yamuna. Owing to its geographic location – near the capital and bordering Haryana, Western U.P. is the most urbanized and industrialized sub-region[151]. Much of the wealth of the state is concentrated in its forty-four constituencies, while the rest of the state is comparatively low income.

Socio-economically speaking, Western Uttar Pradesh shares some important traits with the neighboring state of Haryana. The land tenure regime historically follows the *bhaiachara* system, a regime marked by a wide distribution of land among self-cultivating landowning communities who largely belong to the middle peasant castes. In the case of Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, the Jats occupy a dominant position. In Western U.P., other groups, such as the Gujjars (both Hindus and Muslims), Tyagis and Rajputs also practice this form of land tenure system. Compared to the zamindari system and other related agrarian regimes, land is more equally distributed within particular landowning groups, which does not preclude the exclusion of lower castes and Dalits, who largely work as labourers on land that they do not own (Friese 1990, 136).

The *bhaichara* system also prevails in Bundelkhand, where the OBCs have historically owned most of the agriculture land. It is not entirely absent in the East but is much rarer than the zamindari system (Stokes 1975, 516).

The growth that has occurred in several districts of Western Uttar Pradesh – particularly those adjacent to Delhi, is more linked to the growth of the national capital than to rest of the State. Arguably, if the recent economic transformations of areas such as Noida, Ghaziabad, and the commercial and industrial belt on the road to Meerut were made possible in part by important policy changes at the State level, they benefited more from their proximity from Delhi and specific policy treatment that did not concerned other parts of the State (specific land tenure regulation, politics of dispensation).

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[151] The eight districts of Western Uttar Pradesh concentrate more than half of the State's industry. See Planning Commission of India, *Uttar Pradesh Human Development Report*, 2006.

Beyond the real estate, industrial and IT hubs of Ghaziabad and Noida, a large part of the industry in Western Uttar Pradesh is linked to agriculture, notably food processing. Western U.P. is the food and sugar basket of the state (India 2007, 32)[152].

These variations, very briefly sketched here, are important to keep in mind since they produce varied socio-economic contexts for electoral competition. The land tenure regime, the hold of certain groups over economic resources, the diversification of the rural economy and the opportunities offered by urbanization have all political consequences.

Sub-regional party trajectories

The Jana Sangh initially emerged as a political force in the urban segments of Awadh and throughout Rohilkhand, two sub-regions where former rulers and big landlords – mostly upper castes – had retained much of their influence post-Independence. It then developed a presence in Bundelkhand and in the Eastern district, two areas adjacent to Madhya Pradesh. The Jana Sangh's bases were nestled among the upper segments of the urban electorate – trading communities, businessmen – as well among the large landowners in the rural areas (Brass 1984a, Burger 1969). Towards the late 1960s, the Jana Sang made inroads into rural constituencies, by building support among the middle class agriculturist. It also expanded its hold or urban seats by garnering the support of urban professionals, and also developed a strong cadre of full time party workers (Pai 1993, 55-56).

After its re-foundation in 1980, the party regained its strength first in Bundelkhand and Avadh. By 1991, the BJP had spread across the eight sub-regions of the state, scoring above 30 per cent vote shares, barring the East, where it lagged at 25 per cent. Subsequently, it registered its highest scores in Uttaranchal, carved as a separate state in 2000. Its decline in the 2000s was more marked in Avadh, where it lost 10 points of vote share between 2002 and 2012, Bundelkhand, where it lost 11 per cent of vote share

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[152] Western U.P. produces 45 percent of the state's grain production and 60 per cent of its sugar production.

between 2002 and 2007. In 2012, the BJP is situated below the 20 per cent bar of average vote share across the eight sub-regions.

The performances of the Congress have been fairly uniform across the territory over time. In the 1960s, the party was strongly ahead across all sub-regions, with a stronger presence (measured in vote share) in Uttarakhand and Awadh. Its period of vote share consolidation in the 1980s also took place across the state, and so did its collapse, which started to be measured in the 1989 elections. The Congress loses 13 per cent of vote share across the eight sub-regions, that year. In 1996, it loses a further 7.6 per cent of vote share again across the territory. In fact, the Congress resisted comparatively better in Uttarakhand, where it maintained nearly 30% vote share until 1993. But it did collapse there too, before the region was carved out as a separate state. The other sub-region where Congress comparatively performs better is Bundelkhand, where it grew from 11 per cent in 2002 to 18.6 per cent in 2012.

Historically, the socialists had a weak presence in Uttarakhand, Rohilkhand, and in Bundelkhand. They initially emerged in the West, where the alliance between Jats, Muslims and other landed backward groups such as the Gujjars and the Ahirs (Yadavs) formed a wide base supporting Charan Singh and the BKD. In the 1969 elections, the BKD received 34.45 per cent of the votes in that region against 21.3 per cent in the state overall. The party made inroads in the East in the mid-1970s, after its alliance with the SSP (Duncan 1988, 41). It grew further in central U.P. but retained the West and Doab as their two political bases.

In 1991, the split of the Lok Dal caused the Mulayam faction to drop to 6.2 per cent, against 47.7 per cent two years earlier. Since then, the SP never quite recovered the space the socialists occupied in that region. The polarization between the Mulayam faction of the Lok Dal and the Ajit Singh faction, backed by the Jats, explains why the Samajwadi scores particularly low in the sub region in the early and mid 1990s. Also, both the BJP and the BSP progressed there in the 1990s, by consolidating respectively the upper caste and the Dalit vote, and by denting into the support of lower OBCs for the BJP, and the Muslim vote, for the BSP.

Today, the SP tends to be weaker in U.P.'s border districts and stronger in the hinterland. Avadh counts 38 constituencies consistently held by an upper caste MLA (20 by Rajputs alone) and Doab counts 14 seats where Yadav candidates keep getting re-elected over time. The BJP holds most of the urban upper caste strongholds while the SP dominates in the rural and semi-urban caste strongholds.

Table 2.12 *Occurrence of seats held three times and above by the same caste in five Uttar Pradesh assembly elections 1993-2012*

	Avadh	**Bundelkhand**	**Doab**	**East**	**North-East**	**Rohilkhand**	**West**
Brahmins	8	0	4	2	4	0	2
Rajput	20	2	6	3	11	6	4
Bania	3	0	1	0	0	4	1
Bhumihar	6	0	0	3	0	0	0
Kayasth	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Khatri	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Jats	0	0	3	0	0	2	4
Yadav	4	1	14	7	0	2	1
Kurmis	6	0	4	2	1	1	0
Gujjar	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Lodh	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Muslims	9	0	5	6	2	12	2

Source: Author's calculations.

The BSP initially registered strong performances in Bundelkhand and in Poorvanchal, some of the poorest areas with comparatively larger SC populations. The party had a weak presence in the rest of the state (between 3 to 8 per cent of vote share), until the 1996 election, in which its alliance with the SP made it gain 13 points and gave him inroads into many areas where it had a negligible presence earlier. Its performances since have been fairly uniform across the territory, with a comparatively higher vote share in Bundelkhand. It also lost uniformly across the state in 2012, except in the West, where the combination of support from Dalits and Muslims voters enabled it to remain ahead of the SP.

Conclusion

It is often tempting to look at political transformations as the extension into the political domain of social changes or movements affecting the balance of power between

politicized groups. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, much of the political change has been driven by party politics, that is to say by dynamics marking their relations to other parties as well as their internal divisions. Thus, for long, the rise of the socialists was crippled by their internal divisions – both strategic and ideological. The collapse of the Congress was also a collapse of its organization, the party losing many of its cadres and militants to rival formations.

The early scholarship on U.P. politics focused on factionalism within parties – in the Congress first (Brass 1965), then the socialists (Brass 1984c, a, 1985, Burger 1969, Duncan 1988) and the Hindu right (Baxter 1971, Burger 1969). This trait would continue to define party politics in a state where, up to this day and with the notable exception of the BSP, parties remain fairly weak organizations, riddled by internal rivalries and by their inability to govern in alliance with one another.

The 1980s were a period of reconfiguration of political formations as parties started to identify themselves with specific segments of the voters, largely defined on caste or on religion, and mobilized these segments of voters in ways that sought to align social and political antagonisms. The result was the production of an intensely agonistic and violent political scene, fragmented in ways that made it impossible for any party to govern on its own. The bitterness of inter-party competition trumped the responsibility to govern and made it impossible for parties to form sustainable alliances. The 1990s experiment with coalition politics in U.P. has been a disaster, which contributed to the state's economic morass, at a time when India started to open its economy.

The transformation of electoral strategies of the BSP in the early 1990s and then of the SP towards the end of the decade brought an end to that phase of structural instability. By broadening their social bases through local caste-based alliances and through the adoption of a generalist development-oriented discourse, regional parties succeeded to win two absolute majorities, in 2007 and 2012.

This does not mean that the deep antagonisms that marked electoral competition have receded. Nor does it mean that the forms of political mobilization associated with Mandal and Mandir have disappeared or faded. They have instead been reconfigured through the

localization of parties' electoral strategies and concealed behind the generalist tone of their public expression.

These successive transformations have also had consequences on the evolution of the sociological profile of the political class, as we shall see in chapter 4. They also affect politics as a profession, as we shall see in the next chapter, by creating and imposing constraints on both parties and individuals contesting elections. In order to capture parties and politicians' behaviour, it is important to consider the conditions of exercise of the political profession, and how the constraints that weigh on political actors impact both their recruitment and their behaviour.

Table 2.13 *Regional vote share performance of main parties in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, 1962-2012*

	Region	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
BJS/BJP	Avadh	22.20%	26.07%	23.74%	22.48%		14.11%	11.80%	13.83%	32.72%	33.39%	31.78%	22.31%	14.14%	11.94%
	Bundelkhand	17.08%	32.50%	22.22%	26.48%		13.20%	16.16%	24.36%	30.09%	29.76%	31.52%	24.04%	13.17%	18.90%
	Doab	14.10%	18.84%	15.67%	17.22%		11.32%	9.28%	11.47%	30.30%	33.85%	33.26%	20.18%	18.78%	15.41%
	East	15.37%	22.20%	17.51%	13.07%		7.34%	5.50%	8.61%	24.59%	29.26%	30.00%	18.70%	13.40%	11.10%
	North-East	14.78%	22.40%	17.68%	16.40%		9.85%	10.82%	11.77%	31.37%	31.80%	29.48%	20.10%	19.78%	17.50%
	Rohilkhand	19.93%	23.05%	17.82%	15.71%		11.54%	12.44%	13.50%	35.56%	33.76%	31.68%	17.74%	20.27%	18.83%
	Uttarakhand	9.23%	14.39%	19.27%	13.20%		8.98%	6.14%	6.05%	37.79%	36.49%	41.42%			
	West	10.43%	13.13%	9.95%	11.02%		6.61%	6.71%	5.77%	32.89%	38.38%	36.53%	17.56%	20.06%	17.08%
	All	16.46%	21.67%	17.93%	17.12%		10.76%	9.73%	11.61%	31.45%	33.30%	32.52%	20.09%	16.97%	14.98%
INC	Avadh	37.43%	33.97%	38.17%	34.30%	32.80%	40.02%	42.89%	33.68%	19.91%	16.11%	8.91%	9.54%	10.75%	13.65%
	Bundelkhand	37.89%	34.60%	37.99%	32.49%	26.50%	43.08%	43.83%	28.78%	20.64%	19.80%	12.89%	11.00%	13.28%	18.58%
	Doab	31.43%	30.84%	31.85%	32.43%	30.74%	39.02%	40.05%	28.99%	14.91%	14.70%	7.99%	8.18%	7.86%	9.36%
	East	37.79%	33.21%	32.97%	28.79%	31.45%	36.27%	33.09%	22.60%	13.74%	9.69%	4.91%	6.70%	5.36%	8.21%
	North-East	39.67%	34.27%	32.97%	31.85%	31.10%	30.22%	36.55%	18.65%	17.21%	13.60%	6.63%	8.84%	8.79%	11.37%
	Rohilkhand	31.39%	27.42%	32.16%	27.55%	29.60%	32.31%	37.60%	23.61%	16.84%	12.20%	9.37%	10.42%	8.51%	10.40%
	Uttarakhand	50.36%	37.56%	40.21%	42.62%	35.59%	41.89%	55.05%	38.34%	28.01%	29.88%	13.21%			
	West	40.24%	31.00%	27.98%	34.51%	38.04%	40.67%	38.42%	28.53%	15.39%	17.03%	8.57%	9.92%	7.56%	14.11%
	All	36.33%	32.20%	33.69%	32.29%	31.94%	37.65%	39.73%	27.90%	17.32%	15.08%	8.35%	8.96%	8.61%	11.59%
BSP	Avadh								8.40%	8.70%	6.85%	20.12%	22.55%	31.26%	25.40%
	Bundelkhand								15.57%	20.31%	24.61%	22.77%	28.01%	33.24%	26.20%
	Doab								6.43%	8.99%	9.72%	21.76%	23.06%	32.38%	27.19%
	East								15.24%	16.45%	27.69%	23.07%	25.48%	31.66%	26.96%
	North-East								11.84%	10.42%	13.31%	19.42%	22.14%	25.99%	23.03%
	Rohilkhand								10.81%	6.24%	3.26%	18.06%	19.98%	27.06%	22.38%
	Uttarakhand								5.24%	4.37%	5.69%	10.14%			
	West								5.03%	2.76%	4.89%	14.78%	22.83%	29.54%	28.66%
	Total								9.41%	9.44%	11.12%	19.64%	23.06%	30.43%	25.80%

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.

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Table 2.13 Regional vote share performance of main parties in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, 1962-2012 (continued)

Region		1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
SP*	Avadh	7.97%	10.00%	15.14%	15.65%		17.59%	16.86%	23.91%	15.51%	27.31%	25.27%	28.45%	28.68%	32.89%
	Bundelkhand	16.86%	4.84%	14.47%	9.99%		16.31%	13.02%	13.18%	8.94%	3.68%	16.75%	23.10%	26.13%	25.30%
	Doab	12.27%	13.99%	23.59%	22.70%		24.27%	27.06%	36.42%	16.61%	22.13%	23.75%	23.71%	24.74%	29.30%
	East	13.58%	12.98%	17.67%	29.06%		20.92%	21.13%	27.12%	13.21%	11.38%	23.80%	26.15%	27.75%	31.99%
	North-East	12.72%	13.27%	19.91%	19.74%		21.65%	15.06%	27.59%	8.70%	13.59%	17.89%	26.23%	25.21%	27.48%
	Rohilkhand	11.62%	4.24%	26.52%	20.71%		20.49%	17.49%	27.05%	12.00%	22.65%	24.15%	24.99%	25.19%	28.41%
	Uttarakhand	15.14%	2.16%	12.41%	8.78%		14.09%	15.52%	21.30%	3.70%	5.07%	9.09%			
	West	10.28%	6.85%	34.45%	30.31%		32.06%	35.48%	47.70%	6.18%	7.77%	15.31%	21.00%	16.84%	20.01%
	All	11.52%	9.97%	21.29%	21.22%		21.51%	21.35%	29.71%	12.52%	17.94%	21.80%	25.37%	25.43%	28.99%
JNP	Avadh					46.05%									
	Bundelkhand					44.46%									
	Doab					51.87%									
	East					46.32%									
	North-East					51.27%									
	Rohilkhand					15.37%									
	Uttarakhand					48.19%									
	West					51.59%									
	All					47.76%									

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.

* Includes the main branch of the socialist family: SSP, PSP, BKD, BLD, JNP(SC), LKD, JD, JP, SP.

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Table 2.14 Regional seat share performance of main parties in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, 1962-2012

Party	Region	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
BJS/BJP	Avadh	19.05%	35.64%	13.86%	21.78%	13.86%	4.95%	1.98%	16.83%	56.44%	40.59%	32.67%	26.73%	9.90%	6.06%
	Bundelkhand	23.81%	52.38%	14.29%	28.57%	9.52%	4.76%	9.52%	23.81%	52.38%	33.33%	33.33%	28.57%	0.00%	15.79%
	Doab	9.78%	18.68%	9.89%	10.11%	4.44%	1.11%	5.56%	14.44%	46.67%	42.70%	42.22%	19.57%	15.22%	10.11%
	East	14.75%	28.33%	15.00%	15.00%	20.00%	1.67%	8.33%	21.67%	70.00%	63.33%	63.33%	30.00%	23.33%	15.00%
	North-East	4.88%	17.50%	5.00%	13.51%	2.70%	2.70%	8.11%	10.81%	62.16%	43.24%	35.14%	21.62%	18.92%	17.50%
	Rohilkhand	14.00%	24.00%	12.00%	21.15%	17.31%	5.77%	7.69%	17.31%	67.31%	46.15%	40.38%	20.00%	16.00%	15.38%
	Uttarakhand	0.00%	4.55%	9.09%		9.09%			4.55%	81.82%	59.09%	77.27%			
	West	2.50%	10.00%	7.50%	7.14%	7.14%			7.14%	38.89%	64.29%	51.22%	19.05%	16.67%	20.45%
	All	11.40%	23.06%	11.53%	14.39%	11.06%	2.59%	3.76%	13.41%	52.74%	41.75%	41.04%	21.84%	12.66%	11.66%
INC	Avadh	56.19%	47.52%	58.42%	63.37%	13.86%	78.22%	68.32%	36.63%	21.78%	3.96%	8.91%	3.96%	8.91%	6.06%
	Bundelkhand	57.14%	38.10%	71.43%	42.86%	9.52%	80.95%	71.43%	23.81%	19.05%	9.52%	14.29%	4.76%	14.29%	21.05%
	Doab	50.00%	42.86%	46.15%	44.94%	4.44%	73.33%	58.89%	13.33%	3.33%	4.49%	4.44%	8.70%	4.35%	3.37%
	East	54.10%	53.33%	50.00%	38.33%	20.00%	83.33%	48.33%	15.00%	6.67%	3.33%	6.67%	1.67%		5.00%
	North-East	56.10%	52.50%	52.50%	51.35%	2.70%	51.35%	62.16%	10.81%	13.51%	8.11%	10.81%	13.51%	10.81%	12.50%
	Rohilkhand	56.00%	42.00%	38.00%	34.62%	17.31%	63.46%	69.23%	17.31%	7.69%	5.77%	13.46%	6.00%	2.00%	3.85%
	Uttarakhand	90.00%	63.64%	68.18%	77.27%	9.09%	68.18%	81.82%	54.55%	13.64%	27.27%				
	West	75.00%	40.00%	25.00%	59.52%	7.14%	71.43%	61.90%	14.29%	2.78%	9.52%	4.88%	7.14%	2.38%	11.36%
	All	57.91%	46.82%	49.65%	50.71%	11.06%	72.71%	63.29%	22.12%	10.98%	6.60%	7.78%	6.20%	5.46%	6.95%
BSP	Avadh								14.29%	23.81%	8.91%	18.81%	22.77%	46.53%	9.09%
	Bundelkhand								0.00%	1.11%	42.86%	33.33%	47.62%	66.67%	36.84%
	Doab								8.33%	10.00%	13.48%	21.11%	22.83%	51.09%	22.47%
	East										53.33%	13.33%	30.00%	63.33%	13.33%
	North-East										13.51%	16.22%	16.22%	32.43%	20.00%
	Rohilkhand								3.70%		0.74%	3.70%	6.67%	18.52%	8.15%
	Uttarakhand												9.09%		
	West										4.88%	4.88%	26.19%	54.76%	38.64%
	All								3.06%	2.86%	16.04%	15.80%	24.32%	51.12%	19.85%

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.

Table 2.14 Regional seat share performance of main parties in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, 1962-2012 (continued)

	Region	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
SP*	Avadh	0.95%	6.93%	11.88%	10.89%		8.91%	12.87%	35.64%	8.91%	41.58%	34.65%	41.58%	30.69%	74.75%
	Bundelkhand	4.76%	0.00%	4.76%	4.76%		9.52%	0.00%	23.81%	0.00%	4.76%	14.29%	19.05%	19.05%	26.32%
	Doab	13.04%	20.88%	27.47%	29.21%		18.89%	28.89%	66.67%	13.33%	31.46%	26.67%	33.70%	20.65%	56.18%
	East	16.39%	13.33%	15.00%	45.00%		6.67%	26.67%	50.00%	10.00%	18.33%	31.67%	43.33%	25.00%	63.33%
	North-East	17.07%	12.50%	20.00%	24.32%		21.62%	8.11%	54.05%	2.70%	18.92%	13.51%	32.43%	35.14%	45.00%
	Rohilkhand	5.00%	0.00%	4.55%	9.09%		4.55%	9.09%	22.73%		4.55%	13.64%	42.00%	26.00%	55.77%
	Uttarakhand	5.00%	0.00%	4.55%	9.09%		4.55%	9.09%	22.73%		4.55%	13.64%			
	West	5.00%	10.00%	52.50%	30.95%		23.81%	38.10%	73.81%	5.56%	4.76%	14.63%	16.67%	4.76%	22.73%
	All	8.84%	10.35%	23.06%	25.00%		13.88%	19.76%	48.94%	8.11%	25.71%	25.94%	35.48%	24.07%	55.58%
						1977									
JNP	Avadh	78.22%													
	Bundelkhand	76.19%													
	Doab	95.56%													
	East	75.00%													
	North-East	89.19%													
	Rohilkhand	71.15%													
	Uttarakhand	81.82%													
	West	90.48%													
	All	82.82%													

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.

* Includes the main branch of the socialist tradition: SSP,PSP, BKD,BLD, JNP(SC), LKD, JD, JP, SP.

Chapter 3. Electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh: The rules of the game

Before dwelling into the question of the changing sociology of elected representatives in Uttar Pradesh, we need to consider the context within which they operate, notably the set of constraints that the electoral competition imposes on political actors and what impact those constraints have on who gets to contest successfully. One of such constraints is the competitiveness of elections that candidates have to deal with.

In this chapter, I examine what I would refer to as the rules of the electoral game. Elections can be seen as a form of competitive game, regulated by a set of rules, formal and informal (Bailey 1969). Some of these rules apply to parties and some to individuals. The formal rules are induced by the political system itself, such as the disproportionality of the electoral system, or the model code of conduct enacted by the Election Commission of India, or the qualifications required for contesting elections set by the Constitution. The informal rules are notably imposed by political parties, who choose who gets to run and who can re-run after a first election. Some of these rules also come from the configuration of the political competition itself. How many parties are in fray? How many candidates? How many effective candidates? Voters also contribute to shape the political competition by their choices, by nurturing expectations, by rewarding or punishing those they previously elected in power.

The argument I would like to offer here is that all these rules put together create a universe of constraints to which aspirant politicians must conform in order to stand a chance at winning a seat. These constraints tend in turn to filter out candidates who are not in a position to meet parties and voters' expectations in terms of fundraising or redistribution of resources, for example. They finally also impact how a large part of the political personnel behaves, in the pursuit and exercise of power and influence. They must therefore be understood not only in their diverse aspects and origins but also longitudinally, in order to grasp the changing conditions of the political profession.

The risk of such an argument is to come up with a tautological explanation such as "nothing succeeds like success". I am not claiming that the rules of the game uniformly

apply to all with the same force, or that outlier candidates do not stand a chance at winning elections. But the definition of these rules comes from an examination of political data. They are based on what the numbers say about the state of competitiveness of U.P. state elections. Have elections been more competitive since the 1990s than before? Does the stabilization of the party system in the 2000s mean that elections have become somewhat less competitive? The second set of questions deals with the constraints imposed by parties on individual MLAs' careers? Who gets to contest? Who gets to re-run? How many MLAs last in politics and why?

3.1. Have Uttar Pradesh elections become more competitive?

Competitive elections are usually seen as a precondition to be a democracy, along side their free and fair character (Dahl 1961, Przeworski 2000, Sartori 1987). The literature links competitiveness to better representation (Powell 2000), enhanced accountability (Jones 2012) and reduced corruption (Coppedge 1993). In the context of recent democracies, competitiveness is found to reduce the risk of democratic failure and the incidence of civil conflict (Wright 2008).

In the context of Uttar Pradesh, competition is not necessarily seen as a positive factor. For one, political competition in Uttar Pradesh is associated with instability, violence and voters' intimidation. The fragmentation of the party system in the 1990s was accompanied by a sharp increase of electoral malpractices and violence (Seshan 1995). The criminalization of politics that took place at the same time – that is the induction into politics of individuals belonging to organized crime – brought underworld violence to the forefront of electoral battles. Despite the crackdown on electoral malpractices and the introduction of electronic voting machines in the 2000s[153], which have greatly reduced electoral fraud, political life in Uttar Pradesh remains marked by violence and intimidation, and by the criminalization of every day economic transactions[154].

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[153] EVMs preclude booth capturing and have reduced vote invalidation. In fact, since their introduction, the Election Commission no longer reports invalid votes.

[154] Even victories can be celebrated with violence. In March 2012, in the days that followed the Samajwadi Party's massive victory in state elections, violence erupted in various towns, in the form of post-electoral vendettas and acts of intimidations. On the day of the results, a group of journalists in Jhansi were cornered and attacked by a mob of Samajwadi party supporters, who

The multiplication of candidates in recent years and the dispersion of votes among them has also meant that the vote share required to win a seat is fairly low (34.4% of the valid votes on average), which affects MLAs' representativeness and, in the eyes of some, their legitimacy. Since in a first-past-the-post electoral system, winning requires simply to have more votes than the others, the temptation to target narrow segments of the electorate while attempting to divide the rest of the political space, through violence, intimidation, or bogus candidates, can be quite high. Thus, competition is often associated with casteism, violence, instability and poor governance. Many commentators suggest that the size of the competition be curbed down, by imposing electoral threshold to reduce the number of parties or increasing further the amount of the security deposit, to get rid of ineffective independent candidates (Jalan 2005).

Competitiveness also means that political careers tend to be short, voters being often inclined to reject those they previously voted in power. This affects the behaviour of many MLAs, who are aware of the fact that they have only a few years to retrieve their investment in politics.

Before we look at candidates' data and at the number of effective parties in U.P. elections, we need to take a measure first of the size of the electorate and therefore of the size of the population among which the competition takes place. Vote share of parties need to be calibrated within the voting population and not simply within the registered voters population. That is a more accurate measurement of candidates and parties' actual popularity.

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protested after the defeat of their leader. Akhilesh Yadav, not yet sworn-in Chief Minister, had to intervene. The next day, Samajwadi supporters burnt several Dalit homes in Sitapur, because they had voted for an independent candidate. There were also reports about women and children beaten by S.P. workers in Ballia, because their *bastis* had voted for another candidate. On the 8th of March, day of the festival Holi, in a village near Agra, alleged S.P. workers brutally murdered a BSP Pradhan with spears. In Ambedkarnagar, property of an ex-BSP Minister, Sanjay Rajbhar, was torched by an angry mob (The same Minister had opened fire on the same day in a village that did not vote for him). Another BSP worker was killed in a clash in Sandila, Hardoi district, on March 10 (NDTV.com, March 10).

3.1.1. Turnout in Uttar Pradesh elections, 1962-2012

Turnout in Uttar Pradesh has traditionally been low, at an average of 50.4 percent, over the period 1962-2012[155]. Participation in assembly elections initially rose through in the 1960s (see Figure 3.1), at a time where political competition increased, with the rise of challengers to the Congress Party. The increase in turnout in the 1960s was largely due to the induction of a greater number of voters from marginalized groups (Yadav 2000). Participation fell below the 50% bar after the Emergency and remained flat until the 1989 elections. It is interesting to note that neither the Janata victory nor the Congress resurgence in the 1980s were carried by surges in participation.

Figure 3.1 Distribution of constituency-wise turnout in state assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh (1962-2012)
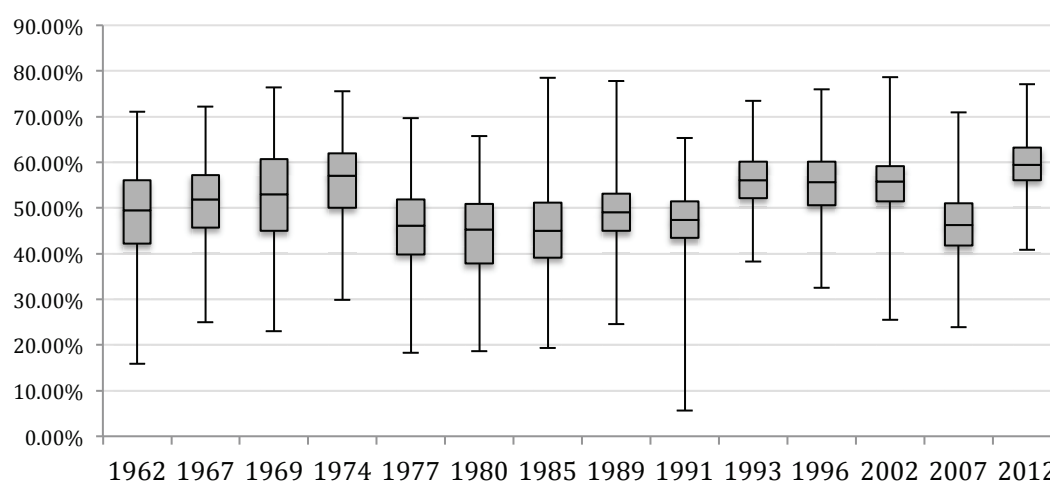
The fragmentation of the party system in the late 1980s and through the 1990s was marked by a 6-7 point increase in participation. That increase once again came from the lowest social segments of the electorate. Average turnout in the 1990s is barely two percent higher than in the 1960s. During the 2000, turnout increased again marginally.

Table 3.1 *Decadal average turnout in Uttar Pradesh state elections*

Decade	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s*
Average turnout	41.40%	50.58%	50.30%	45.99%	52.39%	53.08%

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.
* 2012 included.

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[155] That is substantially lower than the national average of state elections, which is at 64.5%, for the same period.

Contrary to many other states, Uttar Pradesh did not have a linear increase of turnout, as there are important variations within decades. In the 2000s, for instance, the state registered an all time high turnout of 59.5%, in 2012, against a nearly all-time low five years earlier, when participation fell to 46.4%.

Uttar Pradesh is a large diversified state and we need to consider spatial variations as well. One way to do that is to project turnout on a map of the state's constituencies, as illustrated here below.

Map 2: Pradesh Assembly Elections 2002 Voter Turnout (%)

Below 40 [70]
40-45 [100]
45-50 [107]
50-55 [86]
55-60 [32]
Above 60 [8]
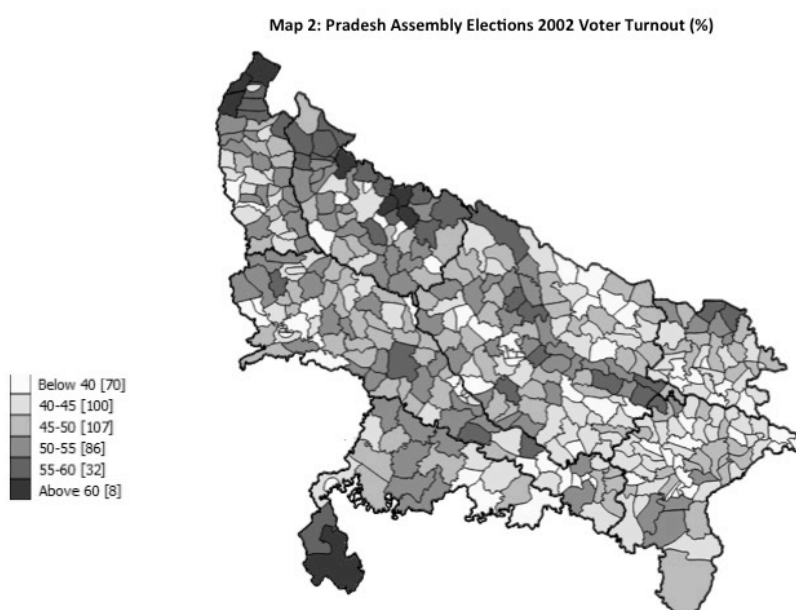
Source: Adapted from ECI data. Made with QGIS

In 2007, the drop of turnout was quite uniform, sub-region wise, although more pronounced in the East. Turnout was slightly higher in Rohilkhand and Western UP. There are slight variations between seats won by different parties. The average turnout in seats won by the SP or the BSP was at 46.9 percent, while it was at 43.8 and 43.5 percent respectively for seat where the BJP and the Congress won[156].

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[156] The seats won by the BJP tend to be more urban than for other parties, which can account for the variation in turnout, participation being lower in cities.

Map 3: Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections 2007 Voter turnout (%)

Below 40 [26]
40-45 [13]
45-50 [39]
50-55 [104]
55-60 [143]
Above 60 [78]

Source: Adapted from ECI data. Made with QGIS

The 2012 map clearly shows an East-West divide, with a turnout above 60% registered in most constituencies in Rohilkhand and in Western UP. A crown of constituencies North of Lucknow, in Avadh, also registered a high turnout, while the Eastern and North-eastern regions of the state, as well as parts of Bundelkhand, are clearly below average.

Map 4: Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections 2007 Voter Turnout (%)

Below 40 [0]
40-45 [2]
45-50 [16]
50-55 [62]
55-60 [139]
Above 60 [184]
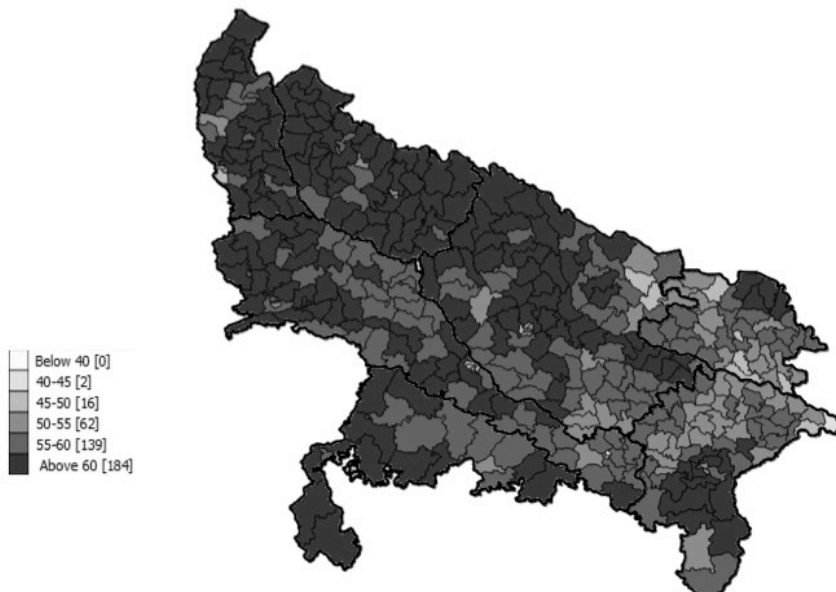
Source: Adapted from ECI data. Made with QGIS

Another way to consider spatial variations is to cluster constituencies into socio-politically salient sub-regions. Turnout figures of the eight sub-regions reveal how these trajectories

have followed a similar overall pattern and have rejoined in the recent years. In other words, the gaps in turnout between sub-regions has reduced over time. At the constituency-level, the gap between the lowest and highest registered turnout used to be of 18% in the 1960s, 15.5% in the 1970s, 10% through the 1980s and 1990s and slightly lower, at 8.3% during the 2000s.

In order to understand why these gaps have closed, we need to look at how different categories of voters have participated in elections. There are four categories of voters that used to participate less in elections and who have recently closed or narrowed down the gap: voters in reserved seats, women, young voters, and urban voters.

In her dissertation on the political and developmental consequences of political reservations, Francesca Jensenius shows that over time, participation in reserved seats increases, a fact that she attributes more to increased mobilization of Dalit voters than general category voters[157]. This is the case in Uttar Pradesh, where the gap between reserved seats and general seats narrows down over time, from 11.26 percent in 1962 to 4.6 percent in the 1990s and then a close down in 2002 (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2 *Decadal average turnout gap between reserved and general seats in Uttar Pradesh state elections*

Decade	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Turnout Gap	11.26	8.83	9.11	4.66	1.02

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.
* 2012 included.

Women are the second category of marginalized voters that have recently closed the gap. The turnout gap between men and women has historically been the largest, as attested in figure 3.6 and table 3.3.

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[157] Comparing turnout in seats before and after reservation, Jensenius detects that the turnout gap existed before the seats got reserved, indicating pre-existing causes for the observed gaps. In Jensenius (2013).

Figure 3.6 Gender-based participation in Uttar
Pradesh state assembly elections (1962-2012)
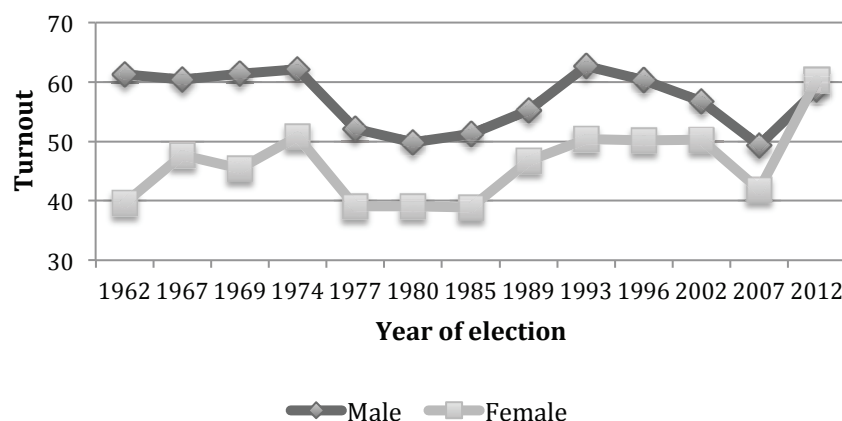
Table 3.3 *Decadal average gender turnout gap in Uttar Pradesh state elections[158]*

Decade	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Turnout Gap	16.8	12.11	10.57	11.21	4.1

Source: Adapted from ECI Reports.
* 2012 included.

Here, the gap narrows spectacularly in the 2000s. In 2012, for the first time, women outvoted men (60.28 against 58.7 percent).

Recent contributions on turnout have shown that most pre-existing gaps, on the basis of age and urban-rural character have rapidly narrowed down in recent elections (Kumar 2009). In Uttar Pradesh, the gap between rural and semi-urban seats closed in 2012. The gap between rural and urban seats however remained at 5% (Statistics 2012).

Turnout convergence of marginalized voters is not an Uttar Pradesh specific story as similar trends are observable throughout the country. In recent years, women participation has surged, to the point that their turnout exceeds that of men in 17 states[159].

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[158] The data for the 1991 state elections are missing in the ECI report, due to data entry error by the Commission.

[159] This does not mean however that women outnumber men, since the skewed sex ratio prevailing in most states continues to give an advantage to male voters. See (Kapoor and Ravi 2014).

What explains this convergence of marginalized categories of voters? The voters' education programs set up by the Election Commission account for the recent jump in participation. In 2010, the new Chief Election Commissioner, Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, made voters' education a priority, as a way to tackle the problem of participation deficit. Targeted voters' mobilization campaigns were held in direction of those categories of voters that had lagged behind[160]. That being said, the convergence of marginalized categories of voters, notably for SCs, had started earlier in U.P. as well as in many other states. The ECI efforts accelerated a process that had already started.

Finally, why did turnout fall in 2007? As I noted earlier, participation fell by 8 percent between 2002 and 2007, and then jumped by 13.3 percent in 2012. One explanation could be that the supporters of parties who were not expect to perform stayed at home, while the supporters of the BSP, who was poised to win these elections, voted massively. This is not sustained by the data, which does not show much variations in average turnout and average winner's vote share in seats between seats won by the SP or the BSP (turnout was significantly lower in seats won by Congress or BJP candidates, but these count a number of urban seats).

A significant feature of the 2007 elections was the strict enforcement by the Election Commission of rules and restrictions on the display of campaign material. In order to ensure a fair equality of treatment between small and large parties and candidates, the Election Commission gradually introduced a series of restrictions on the displays of visuals during the official campaign. The first notifications were issued in the wake of the 2004 General elections and were strictly implemented 2007 onwards.

These restrictions deal with a great number of issues and their range has expanded with time. The 2007 Code of conduct and attached notifications have provisions on the use of vehicles, on the number of hoardings, posters, banners, on the campaign material that can be distributed, on when and where it can be distributed, on when and where parties can

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[160] The ECI used surveys, mass media, star campaigners and conducted a massive voters' registration campaign, to increase the size of the electoral roll. This led to an overall increase in turnout in subsequent general and assembly elections in most states. For a comprehensive account of the ECI voter education campaigns, see (Quraishi 2014)

erect temporary campaign structures, on the authorization and organization of rallies. There are stricter rules in place on polling day, preventing the display of any party visual material, restricting the usage of buses to avoid candidates to ferry voters to the booths, etc.

The code of conduct also regulates participation in public events of politicians during the campaign. It decides whether a politician can attend functions for the anniversary of Jagjivan Ram or Ambedkar, for example, which both fall in April, whether they can attend mushairas or not, etc. Each move, intervention of public appearance of senior politicians has to be submitted and authorized by the ECI, including for members of the ruling parties, who have specific set of rules applying to them in order to ensure the distinction between party work and government work.

These restrictions were applied strictly during the 2007 elections, which was dubbed by parties, candidates and the media as the "colorless campaign". Walking in Lucknow and other parts of the state in those days, the only hoardings one would see were the voter awareness campaign hoardings of the ECI, giving the impression that the ECI itself was contesting the elections. The ECI was then largely criticized for hampering the capacity of candidates to reach out to voters. Candidates I spoke too then complained that they could not campaign effectively, or campaign the way voters want to seem them campaign.

> "*People want to see strong candidates, how can I campaign with only two vehicles?*"
> "*Campaigns are like festivals, people want to enjoy*"
> SP candidate

Candidates felt hindered in what they perceive as natural practices of campaigning. In particular, the habit of filing their nomination heading a procession of supporters, as a show of strength. They deeply resented to be imposed to file their nomination with a maximum four persons (ECI notification of February 9, 2007).

Small candidates in particular, who do not have means to reach out to voters other than through regular campaigning instruments, complained that the restrictions were particularly unfair to them.

To conclude this section, there have been massive transformations in turnout in Uttar Pradesh recent elections, even though the long-term trends variations are not that significant. What is worth retaining is that marginalized categories of voters have closed their turnout gap, and that these changes are to be attributes to processes and dynamics extraneous to party politics.

I now turn to an analysis of some of features and patterns of political competition in Uttar Pradesh, regarding the number of contesting candidates, and parties, the effect of the electoral system on electoral outcomes, and an analysis of incumbency patterns in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections. These features and pattern will provide information on the kind of rules and constraints the political competiveness of U.P. election impose on candidates and parties, and reflect on some of their consequences on who gets to win and last in politics, as well as on some aspects of MLAs' political behaviour.

3.1.2. Effective number of parties and candidates

Many people and many parties contest assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. Between 1962 and 2012, there is an average of about 12 candidates per constituency, with a marked increased in the 1990s and the 2000s (see table 3.4).

Table 3.4 *Decadal average number of candidates per constituency*

1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
6.65	8.31	13.13	17.27	15.27

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

These figures hide variations across constituencies, as shown in figure 3.7. While a few MLAs used to be elected unopposed in the early days, as many as 48 candidates contested the 1993 election in Farrukhabad.

Figure 3.7 Constituency-level number of candidates in
Uttar Pradesh state assembly elections (1962-2012)
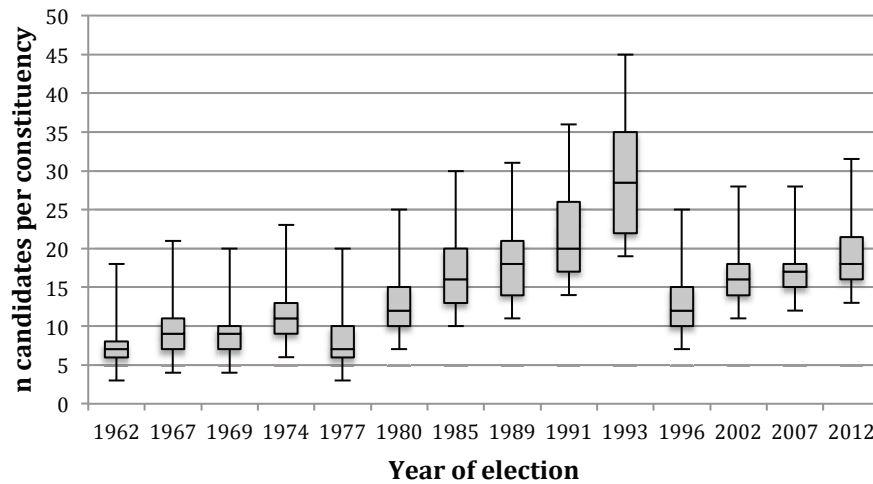
Source: Calculated from ECI Data.

There is a marked inflation in the number of candidates in the early 1990s, before and after the Babri Masjid incident. The politicization of religious and social cleavages incited many individuals to contest. Also, the context of fragmentation also gave away the impression that anyone could have a chance at getting elected, with the amount of votes required to win an election reducing in a multi partisan contest[161].

Another explanatory factor of this increase in the number of candidates might explain this enthusiasm for contesting could also be that in the post-liberalization years, the political profession gained new attractiveness. In a context of competition for scarce resources, having party connections and holding a position of power in a locality provides many advantages – material and symbolic – that draw individuals into elections. In his study on MLAs, Vir Chopra underlines that for many of his surveyed MLAs across India, politics has become a profitable occupation (Chopra 1996).

The drop in the number of candidates in 1996 can be attributed to the Election Commission of India's decision to raise the amount of the caution deposit from 250

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[161] Interview in Lucknow, March 12, 2009.

Rupees to 10,000 Rupees[162]. But since, the number of candidates, and parties, has been increasing, reflecting the attractiveness of the profession.

However, the number of candidates is not an adequate measure of competitiveness since most of them do not get a significant vote share. The proliferation of candidates is largely due to independents contesting, or candidates fielded by micro or local parties. These two categories receive on average respectively 10.6% and 5.6% of the total vote share (see figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8 Relative weight of candidates types
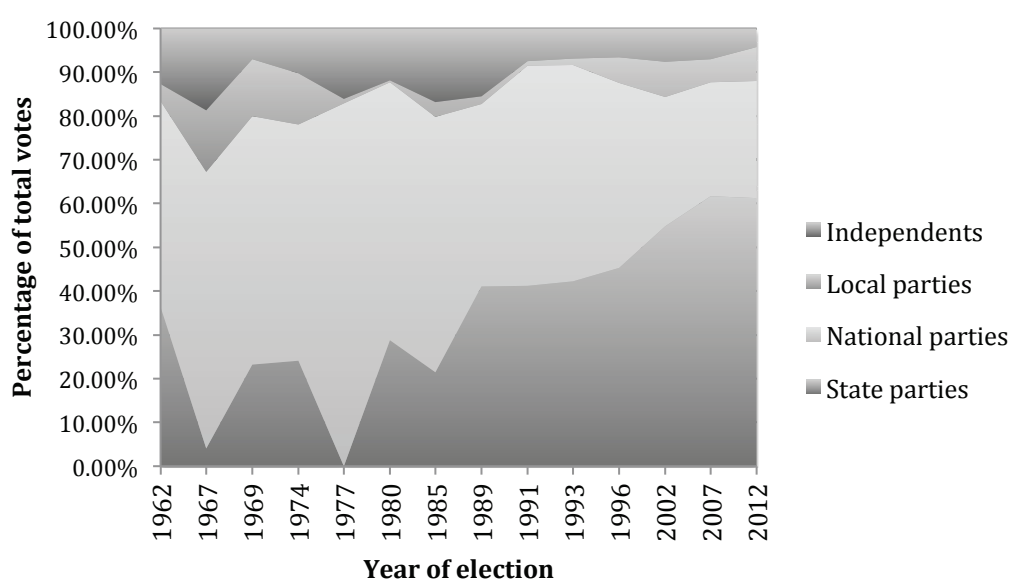
Figure 3.9 Number of parties contesting and represented in the U.P.
assembly (1962-2012)

	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
■ Contesting parties	11	8	26	25	14	18	12	41	49	72	75	91	131	223
■ Parties with representation	8	8	11	11	4	8	7	10	9	10	11	16	12	10
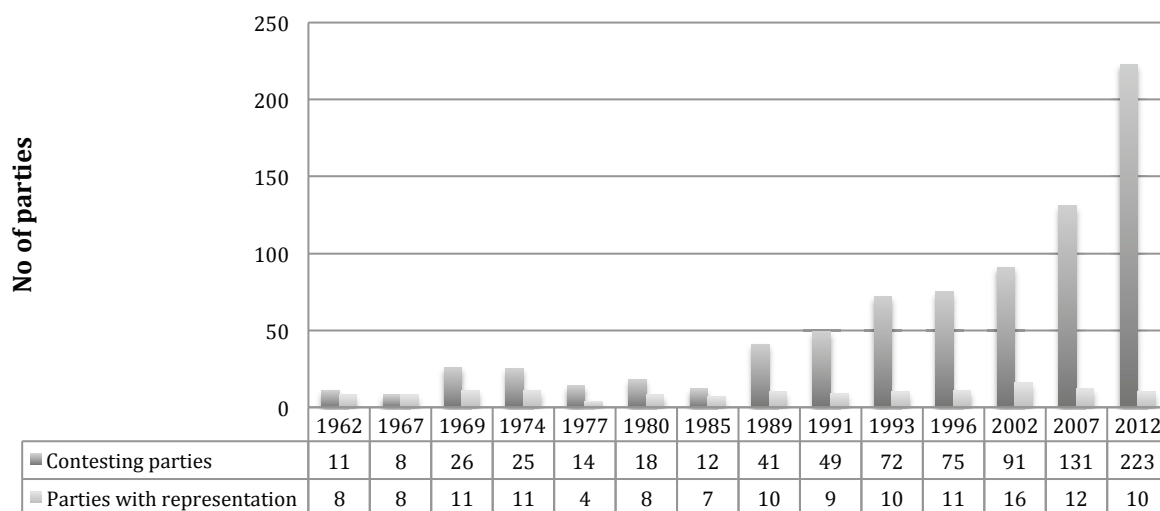
Source: Adapted from ECI data.

To get a sense of competitiveness, one should look at the number of effective candidates[163]. What we see is a far more stable picture, with an average of 3.6 effective parties between 1962 and 2012 (see figure 3.10)[164].

Figure 3.10 Effective number of candidates in
constituencies over time (1962-2012)
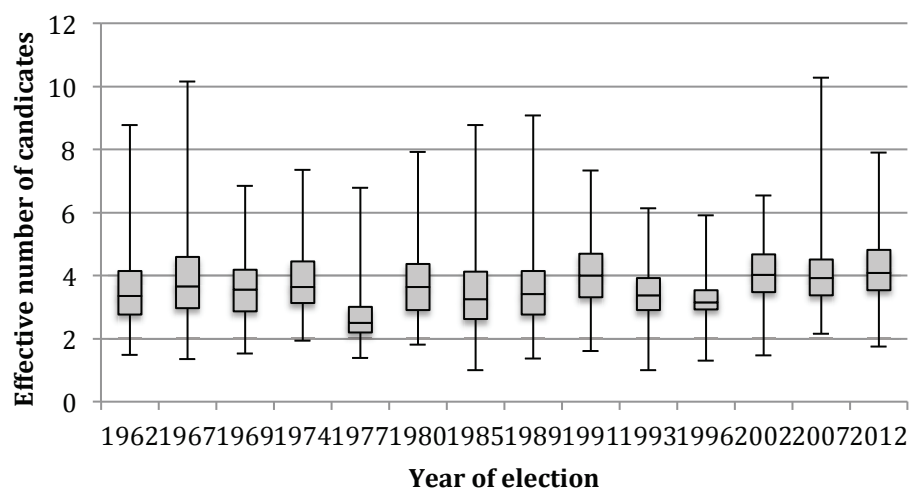
Source: Adapted from ECI Data.

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[163] Calculated with the formula from Laakso and Taagepera (1979), which is a measure of political fragmentation taking into account the number and the relative weight of parties.

[164] 1977 was an outlier year, due to the consolidation of the opposition under the Janata banner

What we also see is that there is not much variation across constituencies through time, which means that most seats are actually competitive. This means, in passing, that elections during the Congress domination era were already competitive. The state has always ben multi-partisan and the fact that the balance of power has shifted in favor to State-based parties or that the party system has fragmented does not mean that for individual candidates, elections have become substantially more competitive.

Table 3.5 *Decadal average ENOP*

	1960s	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**2000s**
Average ENOP	3.69	3.26	3.58	3.57	4.09

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

The fact that nearly all seats are competitive means that there are few 'safe seats' for the main parties, barring a number of exceptions, notably some urban seats such as Lucknow or Allahabad for the BJP.

3.1.3. The disproportionality effect of the electoral system

The fact that the majority electoral system in the Indian context produces disproportionality is well-known (Jaffrelot and Verniers 2011). In a fragmented party system and electorate under a FPTP regime, it is the distribution of votes among the candidates as well as the geographic distribution of votes that determine the conversion of votes into seats, more than aggregate vote shares. Thus, majorities of seats can be obtained with as low as 29 percent of total vote share. Similarly, parties can be wiped from the assembly despite obtaining a lot of votes. In the 1984 elections, Charan Singh's party, the DMKP, got only three seats is the state assembly despite having received 22% of the votes.

The instability of the 1990s also resulted from the wide distribution of votes among the main parties, which reduced the disproportionality effect of the electoral system. In recent years, regional parties have benefited the most from the disproportionality effect of the electoral system. This is not just because they get more votes than their competitors, but also because their vote bases are more spread out across the territory than the national parties, who tend not to have a weaker presence in rural constituencies.

Figure 3.11 Disproportionality of seats and vote share in the 2007
State Assembly Elections
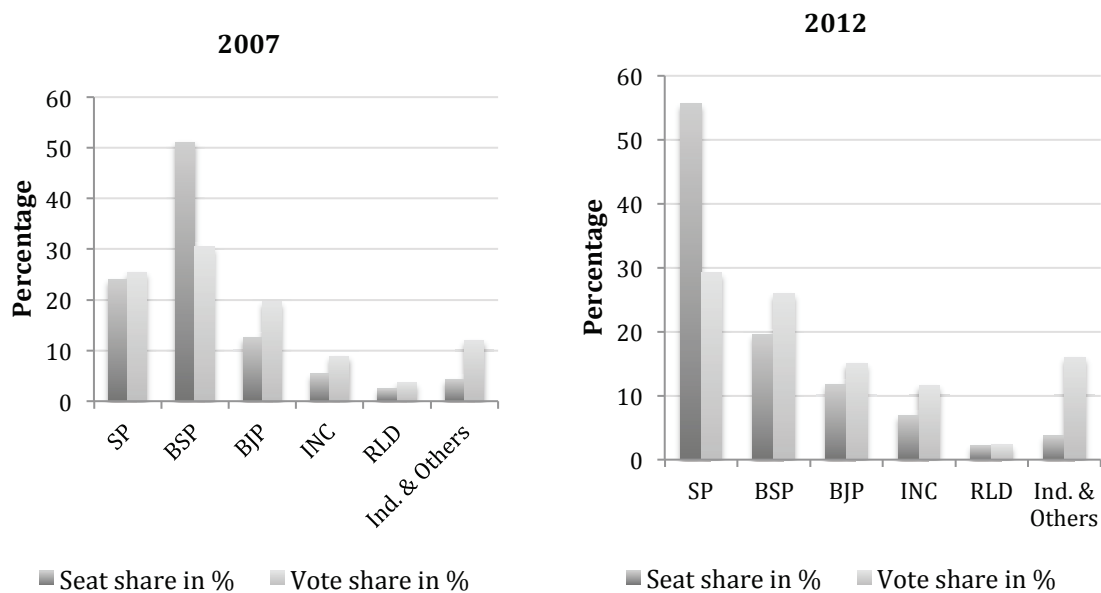
Source: Election Commission of India

This attribute of India's electoral system has far-reaching consequences. It means first that in order to win, one does not need to seek support from a majority of voters but from a number of voters large enough to obtain the minimal share of votes – or winning threshold – required to win a seat. In Uttar Pradesh election, that number, or average winning threshold, is 34.4 percent, or a little more than a third of the votes polled[165].

Table 3.6 *Decadal distribution of average winning thresholds in U.P. assembly elections*

	1960s	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**2000s**
Average winning threshold	34.34%	37.79%	35.31%	34.26%	31.45%

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

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[165] In order to calculate the winning threshold, I simply trace a median line between every constituency's winner and runner and calculate yearly averages. Another method could consist in measuring the runner-up's vote share +1, but then this would assume that every vote that is not going to the winner would automatically trickle down to the next candidate, that is the runner-up. In order to avoid having to make this assumption, I choose the other method consisting in drawing a line halfway between the winner and the runner-up's vote shares. I benefited from Neelanjan Sircar's insights on this question.

Figure 3.12 Distribution of constituency-level average
winning thresholds (1962-2012)
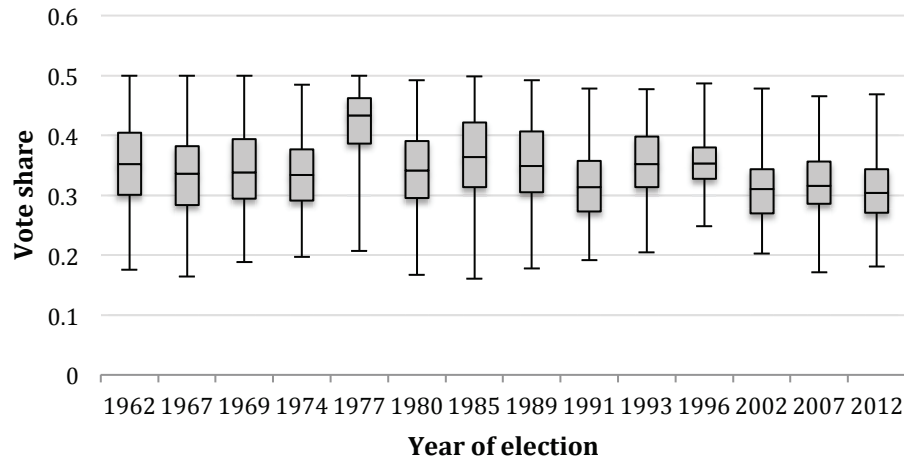
We can push the reasoning further by pointing the fact that the winning threshold in each constituency corresponds to a share of the voting population, and not of the voters' population. A case in point is the 2007 elections, in which the BSP won a single majority of seats with 30.5% of vote share. Since turnout that year was particularly low (46%), it actually means that it won its majority on the basis of the support of only 14% of the total electorate. This basically means that the support base you need to build or target to win an election is not that large (relatively to the total population). This encourage parties and candidates to target specific groups of voters, defined on the basis of caste or other form of ascriptive identity, rather than develop a catch-all approach, based on the articulation of some formulation of general interest.

This fact also encourages parties and candidates to attempt at dividing their opponents' vote base, by promoting enmity between groups that support an opponent. This was the logic at work in Muzaffarnagar in 2013 and in the by-elections that followed the 2014 general elections. As such, the electoral system provides incentives for narrow appeals.

3.1.4. Margins of victory

Another measure of competitiveness is the margin of victory. The margin of victory is indicative of the closeness of elections. The larger the margin, the more powerful the winner, the smaller the margin, the more closely fought the election.

Figure 3.13 Distribution of constituency-level margins of
victory percentages in U.P. assembly elections
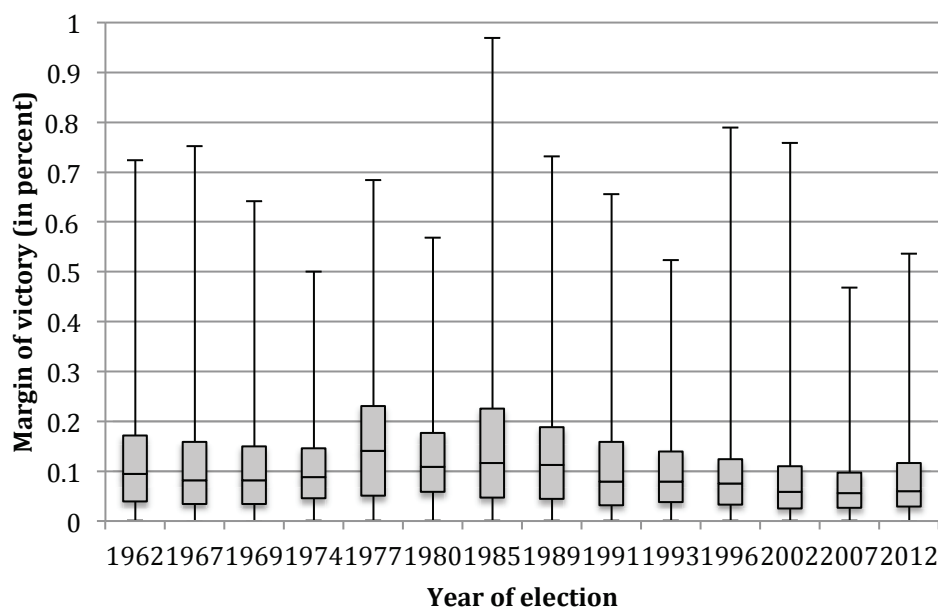
Here again, the data shows a fairly clear downward pattern, with an overall average margin of victory of 11.14%. This means that elections tend to be more and more closely fought in time. It also shows that the variance narrows down also with time, which indicates that a higher number of seats are closely fought.

Table 3.7 *Decadal average margin of victory (in percent) in U.P. assembly elections*

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Average Margin of victory (in percent)	11.04%	13.16%	14.04%	10.34%	7.77%

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

Looking at main parties variations, we see that the BSP tends to win in more closely fought contests than its opponents, with an exception in 2007. The difference among other main parties is not particularly pronounced.

Table 3.8 *Party-wise average margin of victory (in percent), 1989-2012*

	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
BJP	11.39%	12.83%	9.66%	11.25%	6.76%	6.77%	8.05%
INC	10.67%	6.82%	8.56%	11.01%	11.25%	10.96%	6.26%
BSP	8.55%	7.39%	12.19%	7.03%	5.87%	7.45%	5.17%
JP/JD/SP	16.11%	10.20%	9.39%	8.39%	8.22%	6.18%	8.91%

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

To sum up, what we have seen so far is that there has been a recent rise of turnout in Uttar Pradesh election, with various groups of marginalized voters reducing their gap in participation, for reasons that are largely extraneous to party politics.

Second, the inflation in the number of contesting individuals and parties does not fundamentally affect the overall competitiveness of assembly elections, which have been competitive since the early 1960s. However, at 3.4 effective candidates per seat over time, Uttar Pradesh elections are quite competitive.

Third, the low average winning threshold – 34.4% - encourages parties to target narrow segments of the electorate rather than a majority of voters. This creates incentives for narrow identity politics and polarization strategies. This low threshold is induced by the distribution of votes among parties and candidates, under the disproportionality effect of the electoral system.

And finally, margins of victories are narrowing, which indicate that the number of closely fought elections increases over time. Among parties, the BSP struggles more to win its seats than others. These observations convey the image of elections that are competitive.

The next step consists in examining a series of patterns of individual careers of MLAs, as another indicator of the level of competitiveness of Uttar Pradesh assembly elections as well as indicators of some of the constraints that the political system place on their shoulders. In particular, I look at the duration or length of individual political careers, the turnover of MLAs in each assembly. I also measure the phenomenon of turncoats and what I call the size of the stable political class.

3.2. Political constraints

In this section, I also start looking at the political tensions and obstacles that impact and shape politicians' careers, beyond the systemic effects of the electoral system and of the voters' choices. The combination of these two types of constraints – induced by the

political system and induced by political actors – constitute the systemic rules of political engagement.

3.2.1. The role of Incumbency

Any observer of Indian elections knows that "anti-incumbency", or the propensity of voters to reject whom they voted in power in the previous election, is an important factor in Indian elections. One of the recurrent questions journalists ask before an election is whether the anti-incumbency will play against the incumbent government.

Party incumbency

Incumbency is usually conceived in aggregate terms, that is to say the ability of a government to stay in power, or of a party to win two consecutive elections. Sanjay Kumar, Shreya Sardesai and Pranav Gupta show that in recent times, government incumbency has increased (Kumar, Sardesai, and Gupta 2013).

Earlier, the percentage of elections won by the incumbent declined from 85% in the 1950s to 51% in the 1970s, then to 27% twenty years later, to go up to 54% in the period 2004-2012.

In the case of Uttar Pradesh, government anti-incumbency has rather been and remains the norm, as shown in table 3.9. The last party that was re-voted into power was the Congress, in 1985, when N.D. Tiwari succeeded Sripati Mishra[166]. In fact, since 1952, only the Congress Party ever succeeded to win two consecutive elections in Uttar Pradesh.

This instability is further increased by the fact that many governments have fallen between elections without necessarily precipitating early polls. Either President's rule was declared until a new majority emerged or the party in power appointed a new Chief Minister (See Annexure 1). Despite the stabilization of the political scene in the 2000s, government incumbency remains high.

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[166] We are not counting successive Chief Ministers within a legislature, as happened with the BJP, who had three Chief Ministers between the 1996 and 2002 elections.

Table 3.9 *Pattern of pro and anti-incumbency in Uttar Pradesh state elections*[167]

	Number of elections	Number of elections won by incumbents (Pro-Incumbency)	Number of elections won by incumbents (Anti-Incumbency)	% Pro-incumbent	% Anti-incumbent
1950s	2	2	0	100%	0%
1960s	3	1	2	33.33%	66.67%
1970s	2	1	1	50%	50%
1980s	3	1	1	33.33%	33.33%
1990s	3	0	3	0%	100%
2000s	3	0	3	0%	100%
Total	16	5	10	31.25%	62.50%

Source: Calculated by author based on ECI data.

Government anti-incumbency being the norm, it is more useful to look at the volatility that takes place in given elections. One way to do that is to look at the number of seats that change hands between elections. This can be done at the party level, or at the individual level[168].

At the party level, volatility has to be measured within delimitation periods, for the seats compared must be similar[169]. Variations in parties' names over time must also be taken into account, to avoid coding errors. For example, the following sequence of parties: JNP → JD → JP → SP would be coded as the same party. Dissident factions of a particular party, such as INC(U) for example – have been coded as separate parties. Similarly, residual factions, such as the JP after 1993, have also been coded as separate parties. For the year 1980, the sequence JNP → BJP has been coded as the same party, since the BJP was part of the Janata coalition in 1977.

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[167] Format inspired from Kumar and Sardesai (2013).

[168] Adnan Farooqui and E. Sridharan show in their contribution on individual incumbency that party structures and strategies matter more than party ideology, in the decision or letting incumbent MPs or MLAs re-run (Farooqui and Sridharan 2014).

[169] About 30% of the seats change their name after re-delimitation. But even the seats that keep their name see their boundaries modified. For a detailed account of the procedure and outcome of the 2008 re-delimitation exercice, one will refer to the Election Commission of India's website : http://eci.nic.in/delim/ and to (India 2008).

The results are quite striking, as they reveal that, in the period 1980-2007, 65.2% of the seats in UP Assembly elections have changed hands, on average[170]. It is also interesting to note that the percentage of seat retention is slightly higher during the 1990s and the 2000s.

Table 3.10 *Percentage of seats changing hands in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections (1980-2007)*

	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007
Changed	72.94%	52.71%	76.47%	60.63%	68.04%	64.54%	62.69%	63.68%
Unchanged	27.06%	47.29%	23.53%	39.37%	31.96%	35.46%	37.31%	36.32%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	425	425	425	414	413	423	402	402

Source: Calculated by author, on the basis of ECI data.

Aggregate party performances often hide a high level of volatility at the candidate's level. In other words, a party's performance is the difference between the numbers of incumbent seats it retains and the number of new seats it wins over other parties minus the number of incumbent seats lost. One way to plot these variations is to look at parties' seat retention capacity, or the share of retained seats and the distribution of the seats lost across rival parties[171]. In the following tables, the diagonal value indicates the ratio of seats retained by a party between two elections. This particular presentation of data is useful since it reveals which parties tend to register more stable performances, which may indicate the presence of parties' strongholds.

It also reveals who were the main two contenders in each constituency, therefore helping to understand the composition of confrontations at constituency-level (in other words, who actually contested whom in every seat).

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[170] Wilkinson estimates that average to be of 40% at the national level from 1980 to the late 1990 (Wilkinson, 2007: 115).

[171] Ramashray Roy suggested me this method of plotting party volatility, in a conversation in Allahabad, April 2007.

Table 3.11 *Seat retention capacity of parties between the 1996 and 2002 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh*

	BJP	BSP	INC	SP	Others	Seats in 2002
BJP	**51** **(32.28%)**	38 (24.05%)	11 (6.96%)	46 (29.11%)	12 (7.59%)	158 (100%)
BSP	8 (12.12%)	**30** **(45.45%)**	0	21 (31.82%)	7 (10.61%)	66 (100%)
INC	8 (25.00%)	6 (18.75%)	**5** **(15.63%)**	7 (21.88%)	6 (18.75%)	32 (100%)
SP	15 (14.02%)	21 (19.63%)	6 (5.61%)	**59** **(55.14%)**	6 (5.61%)	107 (100%)
Others	5 (12.82%)	3 (7.69%)	3 (7.69%)	18 (46.15%)	**10** **(25.64%)**	39 (100%)
Seats in 1996	87	98	25	151	41	

Source: calculated by the author.

In this case, the BJP succeeded in wrestling 42 seats to the BSP in 2007, despite the strong performance of the latter. BSP candidates did much better when they were opposed to an SP candidate (as their main opponent), which makes sense since the SP in 2007 faced strong anti-incumbency.

Table 3.12 *Seat retention capacity of parties between the 2002 and 2007 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh*

	BJP	BSP	INC	SP	Others	Seats in 2002
BJP	**23** **(26.14%)**	42 (47.73%)	3 (3.41%)	18 (20.45%)	2 (2.27%)	88 (100%)
BSP	5 (5.10%)	**64** **(65.31%)**	5 (5.10%)	19 (19.39%)	5 (5.10%)	98 (100%)
INC	2 (8.00%)	5 (20.00%)	**7** **(28.00%)**	8 (32.00%)	3 (12.00%)	25 (100%)
SP	16 (11.19%)	71 (49.65%)	6 (4.20%)	**44** **(30.77%)**	6 (4.20%)	143 (100%)
Others	4 (12.12%)	18 (54.55%)	1 (3.03%)	5 (30.77%)	**5** **(15.15%)**	33 (100%)
IND	1 (6.25%)	6 (54.55%)	0	3 (15.15%)	6 (37.50%)	**16** **(100%)**
Seats in 2007	51	206	22	97	27	

Source: calculated by the author.

These two tables also reveal that the Congress has great difficulties to retain its seats. Even in their strongholds of Rae Bareli and Amethi, two Lok Sabha constituencies held by Sonia Gandhi and by Rahul Gandhi, respectively current President and Vice-President of

the Congress Party, the Congress cannot win a majority of their seats' assembly segments, which regularly change hands[172].

Table 3.13 *Seat volatility in Amethi and Rae Bareli Lok Sabha constituencies, 2002-2012*

PC	AC segments	2002	2007	2012
Amethi	Amethi	BJP	INC	SP
	Gauriganj	INC	SP	SP
	Jagdishpur	INC	INC	INC
	Salon	SP	INC	SP
	Tiloi	BJP	SP	INC
Rae Bareli	Bachhrawan	SP	INC	SP
	Rae Bareli	INC	IND	PECP
	Sataon	BSP	INC	SP
	Sareni	SP	INC	SP
	Dalmau	BSP	INC	SP

Source: Adapted from ECI reports.

The SP and the BSP tend to retain a higher share of seats in recent elections. This is of course linked to the fact that these two parties dominate the state's political scene and that they are in a position of winning in a greater number of seats than their opponents. But it reveals nonetheless that even these two parties inevitably lose a substantial part of their incumbent seats, including when they register an overall strong performance. This is a first indication that parties' performances hide greater volatility than meet the eye. Data on the individual trajectories of MLAs and candidates will provide a more precise picture of that phenomenon.

Individual incumbency

In order to measure individual incumbency, I have matched individual names in an original constituency-level dataset that contains the name, constituency, year of election, position and performance of every contestant of all assembly elections from 1952 to 2012 (73,450 entries)[173]. I have coded individual incumbency into five distinct variables: the status of the candidate (Incumbent, Ex-MLA, first time contestant), the number of terms

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[172] With the exception of the seat of Jagdishpur, which is firmly held by Ram Sevak, a nine-time elected Congress MLA, from the Dhobi caste (SC).

[173] The 'raw material' comes from ECI reports that have been parsed and cleaned by Francesca Jensenius. I have proceeded to further cleaning and verifications of the data before coding individual incumbency.

served, number of time contested, whether contested in the same party (with specific coding for turncoat candidates) and whether contested in the same constituency. The coding was restricted to the candidates who won at least once, covering all party affiliations. This enables me to know for any individual who falls within this grouping how many times he or she has contested, with what results, and whether that candidate has switched parties or seat between two elections.

Official ECI reports contain many errors, ranging from spelling mistakes and variations[174] to missing entries or duplicate entries. There are mistakes in total and accumulation of candidates. Further, name matching is difficult since there are many cases of single names candidates, homonyms[175] and candidates contesting in different constituencies through time[176]. Delimitations, in which roughly a third of the constituencies get renamed, further add to the complexity of tracing individuals' career trajectory[177].

Entry errors have been corrected and spelling variations harmonized, with the help of a fuzzy-name matching script and through manual checks and entries, based on personal knowledge, press reports and interviews conducted over several years. In the case of homonyms, we often made calls on the basis of party affiliation, consistency of electoral scores through time. This is not a foolproof method but we believe that it provides the best possible results, given the complexity of the task.

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[174] The ECI changes its spelling policy between elections. In 1967, first names in 1967 where reduced to their initial.

[175] Parties at times pay bogus or 'ghost' candidates bearing the same name as their opponent in order to cut into their vote base. In the 2014 General elections, several Hema Malini contested against the 'official' Hema Malini, BJP candidate.

[176] A few candidates also contest in several constituencies in the same elections. It is not more than a few case and usually involves party presidents (Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mayawati, Kalyan Singh are cases in point), who seek to secure their re-election.

[177] The last two delimitation exercises took place in 2008 and 1974. Prior to 1974, constituencies were regularly re-delimited. In the dataset, candidates constesting in a different seat post-delimitation have been marked as 'delimitation'.

Table 3.14 *Sample of individual incumbency coding*

Year	AC_name	Position	Cand	Party	status	Mandates	Contested	Same party	Turncoat	Same constituency
1969	BAHADURPUR	1	ROOP NATH SINGH YADAV	SSP	First election	1	1			
1974	JHUSI	2	ROOP NATH SINGH YADAV	BKD	Incumbent	1	2	ex-SSP	No	Delimitation
1980	JHUSI	7	ROOP NATH SINGH YADAV	JNP(JP)	Ex-MLA	1	3	ex-BKD	Yes	Yes
1989	JHUSI	2	ROOP NATH SINGH YADAV	INC	Ex-MLA	1	4	ex-JNP(JP)	Yes	Yes
1993	JHUSI	5	ROOP NATH SINGH YADAV	INC	Ex-MLA	1	5	Yes	No	Yes

Source: Author, Individual Incumbency in Indian State Elections dataset (1962-Present).

Other methods are available to quantify individual incumbency. Yogesh Uppal, an economist, has used a regression discontinuity design on close contests to study incumbency effect in Indian elections (Uppal 2009). His identification methodology consists in coding incumbency for candidates with a vote share above 5%, within similar constituencies (that is after and before the 1974 and 2008 re-delimitations). His analysis is then limited to constituencies where the victory margin is within 70% of the votes.

For our purpose, we consider all elections between 1952 and 2012. Since we follow all the main parties individual candidates, it is necessary to include individuals contesting in different constituencies over time and main parties candidates who may fall below the bar of 5% vote share that Uppal uses, as a relevancy threshold. This dataset, as shown through the sample in table 3.14, enables several measurements. First and foremost, it enables to quantify the turnover of MLAs in the Assembly, that is the ratio of first time MLAs versus the number of incumbents or previously elected MLAs. In other words, it is the measure of renewal of the political class.

A high turnover

In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the turnover of MLAs, from its second election to 2012, is on average 58.6%. In other words, it means that on average, nearly 60% of the members of the Legislative Assembly are first time MLAs, in every assembly. This is very high if you compare Uttar Pradesh with most of the cases covered by the literature (USA, United

Kingdom and other European democracies), where incumbency is the norm rather than the exception[178]. This state of affairs can be explained by a variety of reasons.

The first and main reason in this case is that less than half of sitting MLAs re-run in the first place. Some may be fielded by their parties to Lok Sabha elections and therefore leave their assembly seat in the following state election, if successful. Some MLAs die in office or choose to transmit their seat to a kin[179]. But these are not common circumstances. In most cases, it is the party that denies some of its sitting MLAs the chance of getting re-elected, by fielding different candidates. They may do so to prevent anti-incumbency, thinking that changing heads will prevent voters to turn against them. In the 2012 elections, the BSP fielded only 75 MLAs out of its 206 incumbents. Some had migrated to other parties. Others were removed under pressure and protest from local party cadre who complained against their MLAs.

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[178] There is no comprehensive data yet for national elections in India. A comparative overview of the literature on incumbency can be found with (Erikson 1971, Collie 1981, Campbell 1983, Hayama 1992, Cox and Morgenstern 1993, Krashinsky and Milne 1993, Cox and Morgenstern 1995, Cox and Katz 1996, Ansolabehere and Gerber 1997, Carey, Niemi, and Powell 2000, Weisberg 2002, Ansolabehere et al. 2007, Mayhew 2008, Smith 2013).

[179] Since the 2012 assembly elections, 10 MLAs have departed (http://uplegisassembly.gov.in/ENGLISH/memberListDead.htm) .

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Table 3.15: Individual incumbency in Uttar Pradesh state elections (1951-2012)

	1951	1957	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
1	430 (100%)	312 (72.56%)	318 (74.47%)	311 (73.18%)	277 (65.18%)	263 (62.03%)	244 (57.41%)	269 (63.29%)	238 (56.00%)	207 (48.71%)	244 (58.23%)	198 (46.70%)	191 (45.05%)	189 (46.90%)	220 (54.59%)	228 (56.58%)
2		118 (27.44%)	77 (18.03%)	66 (15.53%)	87 (20.47%)	104 (24.53%)	117 (27.53%)	81 (19.06%)	101 (23.76%)	113 (26.59%)	82 (19.57%)	119 (28.07%)	109 (25.71%)	95 (23.57%)	79 (19.60%)	76 (18.86%)
3			32 (7.49%)	37 (8.71%)	38 (8.94%)	32 (7.55%)	44 (10.35%)	47 (11.06%)	52 (12.24%)	60 (14.12%)	42 (10.02%)	58 (13.68%)	53 (12.50%)	58 (14.39%)	42 (10.42%)	46 (11.41%)
4				11 (2.59%)	18 (4.24%)	17 (4.01%)	10 (2.35%)	19 (4.47%)	22 (5.18%)	31 (7.29%)	25 (5.97%)	26 (6.13%)	42 (9.91%)	26 (6.45%)	27 (6.70%)	21 (5.21%)
5					5 (1.18%)	8 (1.89%)	7 (1.65%)	6 (1.41%)	8 (1.88%)	6 (1.41%)	19 (4.53%)	12 (2.83%)	18 (4.25%)	18 (4.47%)	16 (3.97%)	16 (3.97%)
6							3 (0.71%)	3 (0.71%)	4 (0.94%)	6 (1.41%)	2 (0.48%)	6 (1.42%)	7 (1.65%)	10 (2.48%)	10 (2.48%)	8 (1.99%)
7										2 (0.47%)	3 (0.72%)	3 (0.71%)	1 (0.24%)	4 (0.99%)	5 (1.24%)	5 (1.24%)
8											2 (0.48%)	2 (0.47%)	1 (0.24%)	1 (0.25%)	1 (0.25%)	3 (0.74%)
9													2 (0.47%)		3 (0.74%)	
10														2 (0.50%)		
Total	430 (100%)	430 (100%)	427 (100%)	425 (100%)	425 (100%)	424 (100%)	425 (100%)	425 (100%)	425 (100%)	425 (100%)	419 (100%)	424 (100%)	424 (100%)	403 (100%)	403 (100%)	403 (100%)
Total >1		118 (27.44%)	109 (25.53%)	114 (26.82%)	148 (34.82%)	161 (37.97%)	181 (42.59%)	156 (36.71%)	187 (44.00%)	218 (51.29%)	175 (41.77%)	226 (53.30%)	233 (54.95%)	214 (53.10%)	183 (45.41%)	175 (43.42%)
Total >2			32 (7.49%)	48 (11.29%)	61 (14.35%)	57 (13.44%)	64 (15.06%)	75 (17.65%)	86 (20.24%)	105 (24.71%)	93 (22.20%)	107 (25.24%)	124 (29.25%)	119 (29.53%)	104 (25.81%)	99 (24.57%)
Total Incumbents		118	97 (22.72%)	92 (21.65%)	110 (25.88%)	108 (25.47%)	142 (33.41%)	62 (14.59%)	132 (31.06%)	129 (30.35%)	140 (33.41%)	164 (38.68%)	150 (35.38%)	140 (34.74%)	145 (35.98%)	104 (25.81%)
Total Ex-MLAs			17 (3.98%)	27 (6.35%)	40 (9.41%)	56 (13.21%)	39 (9.18%)	94 (22.12%)	55 (12.94%)	90 (21.18%)	37 (8.83%)	64 (15.09%)	85 (20.05%)	74 (18.36%)	46 (11.41%)	74 (18.36%)
Re-running incumbents		118	200	132	282	230	271	224	214	271	312	324	297	277	302	225
Strike rate Incumbents		100.00%	48.50%	69.70%	39.01%	46.96%	52.40%	27.68%	61.68%	47.60%	44.87%	50.62%	50.51%	50.54%	48.01%	46.22%
Re-running Ex-MLAs			24	33	93	134	101	186	172	200	177	267	216	246	233	206
Strike rate Ex-MLAs			70.83%	81.82%	43.01%	41.79%	38.61%	50.54%	31.98%	45.00%	20.90%	23.97%	39.35%	30.08%	19.74%	35.92%

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What is striking is that individual incumbency was actually higher in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Congress dominated. The notion of Congress domination often conceals the internal instability and volatility within that party. The Congress was rid by factionalism. With the exception of Govind Ballabh Pant, Chief Minister from 1946 to 1955[180], no Chief Minister could impose his faction upon the others and constantly had to deal with insubordination and internal competition within the organization, the assembly, and even their cabinets (Srivastava 1976, 330).

The induction of a large number of upper caste candidates extraneous to the party organization in the 2007 elections had created a rift between many MLAs and the local cadre of the party, who complained that they were completely ignored after getting elected. The situation was so severe that many local branch leaders of the BSP deserted the party and sought fortune with other parties, notably the SP and the Congress Party.

Table 3.16 *Samajwadi Party re-running incumbent*

JD/JP/SP	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
Seats in previous election	84	208	126	109	110	143	97
Total N of candidates	356	773	256	281	390	393	402
Re-running incumbents	19	63	29***	61**	59	102	60
Re-running other incumbents	8	6	6	25	11	40	8
Ratio of re-running incumbents	22.62%	30.29%	23.02%	55.96%	53.64%	71.33%	61.86%

Source: Calculated by Author, Individual Incumbency in Indian State Elections dataset (1952-2012) *Adding Janata Dal and Janata Party
** Including Mulayam Singh Yadav contesting in two seats.
*** Including Mulayam Singh Yadav contesting in three seats.

There is little sign that fielding many sitting MLAs provides an incumbency advantage. In 2007, the SP re-fielded 71.3% of its sitting MLAs, in addition to 40 other incumbents candidates who had migrated towards the SP (see table 3.16). Less than a third of them won (56, including 37 incumbent SP candidates).

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[180] G.B. Pant had earlier been Prime Minister of the United Provinces, between 1937 and 1939. With the abolition of the zamindari system, the passing of the Hindu Code Bill, the imposition of monogamy for Hindus, he probably remains U.P.' most consequential Chief Minister

Table 3.17 *Main parties re-running incumbents*

Congress	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
Seats in previous election	286	249	199	211	215	47	309	229	94	46	28	33	25	22
Total N of candidates	429	425	424	415	395	424	425	410	413	421	126	402	393	355
Re-running incumbents	129	80	119	92	115	22	104	111	64	33	15	12	12	11
Re-running other incumbents	na	7	14	33	14	7	20	35	9	3	2	11	8	4
Ratio of re-running incumbent	45.10%	32.13%	59.80%	43.60%	53.49%	46.81%	33.66%	48.47%	68.09%	71.74%	53.57%	36.36%	48.00%	50.00%

BJP	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
Seats in previous election	17	49	98	49	61	72*	11	16	57	221	177	174	88	51
Total N of candidates	286	401	397	401	89*	400	347	275	415	422	414	320	350	398
Re-running incumbents	16	10	58	24	37	49	5	6	44	165**	119**	89	46	27
Re-running other incumbents	0	1	2	33	na	3	5	9	6	4	21	12	6	1
Ratio of re-running incumbent	94.12%	20.41%	59.18%	48.98%	60.66%	68.06%	45.45%	37.50%	77.19%	74.66%	67.23%	51.15%	52.27%	52.94%

*89 JNP candidates in 1977 had previously contested on a Jan Sangh ticket.
**Including Kalyan Singh contesting in two seats.

BSP	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
Seats in previous election	na	13	12	67	67	98	206
Total N of candidates	372	386	165	296	401	403	405
Re-running incumbents	na	6	9	22	30*	54	75
Re-running other incumbents	1	1	1	7	3	6	6
Ratio of re-running incumbent	na	36.41%	36.41%	36.41%	44.78%	36.41%	36.41%

* Including Mayawati contesting in three seats.

Source: Calculated by Author, Individual Incumbency in Indian State Elections dataset (1952-2012)

Shifting alliances

The second reason for excluding incumbent MLAs is that parties shift their electoral strategies and local alliances, which may lead them to reconsider their ticket distribution on the basis of caste or other variable. Again in 2007, the BSP opted for a strategy that targeted upper caste voters, Brahmins in particular. That shift required distributing more tickets to upper caste candidates, which meant that some non-upper caste sitting MLAs had to be sacrificed.

Similarly, parties may engage in pre-electoral alliances with other parties, which implies seat-sharing agreements. As we saw earlier, pre-electoral alliances have been rather rare in UP, barring in the Janata phase. They usually take place at the margins, between major party and a minor player, such as the RLD with the SP in 2002, or the Apna Dal and the BJP in 2014. The main party would concede a few seats to their partners, usually in their limited strongholds, which would not disrupt much their own ticket distribution.

Party funding

The third reason for a party to field a different candidate comes from the need to constantly search stronger candidates and candidates who can contribute more to the party, including financially. Elections in India have been described as a form of auctions, in which basic services and patronage are commoditized and traded against votes (Chandra 2004a). Similarly, parties often engage in similar bargains and trade-offs with potential candidates and sitting MLAs.

The BSP again is an extreme example, as it is known to auction tickets. In the run-up to the 2007 elections, I interviewed a BSP candidate in the Varanasi area, who had just got bail from jail after securing a BSP ticket, which he had purchased for 1.25 Crores of rupees. When asked what he would do in case of victory (he won), the response was to "*get a return on my investment*"[181]. This principle of auction is also valid for local elections and some candidates spend huge amounts of money in order to get a ticket. In some cases, local elections tickets cost even more than MLA tickets. In the recent zilla panchayat

[181] Interview in Varanasi, April 2007.

elections, that were held in January 2016, some BSP tickets were reported to have been sold for 12 Crores[182].

As a general rule, candidates are expected to fund their own campaign and to contribute to party funding between elections, through legal and less legal means. This puts tremendous pressure to candidates and elected representatives, who must constantly seek new sources of funding. The fundraising capacity of candidates is often a yardstick for their selection[183], and sitting MLAs can be outspent by rival candidates in their constituencies.

Factionalism and intra-party competition

A fourth reason for sitting MLAs to be evicted is that parties are themselves constituted as a highly competitive space. Intra-party factionalism and rivalry can lead to the rejection of sitting MLAs. Parties may also want to change their candidates one election after another, as a means of remaining competitive but also as a mean to maintain the authority of the party high command over candidates, who could use their political roots to grow within the party and eventually challenge the leadership, or constitute factions which could threaten the party's cohesion. Parties in India tend to be hyper-centralized. One expression of this is that the party leadership often attempts to prevent the emergence of alternate centers of power within its ranks by organizing a turnover of candidates. This is also a way to keep the other MLAs 'in check' and maintain party discipline, since getting the ticket to re-run depends from the will of the leadership, who seek to maintain a relation of dependency vis-à-vis its MLAs.

There are however important variations between parties in that regard. The logic of rotation prevails in the BSP, who is the most internally competitive party in Uttar Pradesh. If we compare parties' ratio of re-running incumbents (see table 3.17), we see that the Congress and the BJP tend to re-field a larger share of their sitting MLAs from one election to another. Since 1989, the BSP discards on average 62% of its sitting MLAs in every

[182] 1.6 Million Euros, as per 23 April 2016 rate. That number was reported to me by my student Rajkamal Singh, from his own fieldwork.
[183] Exceptions are made for important figures within the parties, relatives of the leader or regional bosses.

election, against 41% and 46% for the BJP and the Congress. The SP is situated in between, with a 54.4% of rejection ratio. These numbers also vary in time. In the case of the SP, the rejection ratio in the 1990s was of 67% in the 2000s, from 37.7% in the 1990s.

The case of Congress and BJP is interesting when we consider their re-running candidates patterns (including those who don't win). Both parties tend to keep their candidates longer, or to field the same candidates in the same constituencies over long period of times more than the BSP and SP, even when they are not performing.

The reason, as we shall see in chapter 3, is that their sociological recruitment pool is comparatively more limited than for the two state-based parties, both Congress and the BJP remaining skewed in favor of the upper castes while both the SP and the BSP recruit from a broader sociological spectrum of candidates.

The Congress as an organization often retains old associational bonds. Past allegiances and family histories matter significantly in the party's choice of candidates, often at the cost of their winnability and therefore performance. Having spent time in the 'war room' of the party during the 2007, 2009 and 2012 elections, I was struck by the fact that the same faces would evolve around the inner circle of the party's state leadership, comprising old notabilities, political figures from the past, who were sticking around and continued to pull strings in the party. The role of elders (or losers, as some bitter party workers refer to them) in the screening of candidates remains important within the Congress, despite attempts at rationalizing and professionalizing the recruitment of candidates. In addition, the party's campaign strategists are often 'imported' from other states and lack information to foray into new recruitment pools of candidates. It is literally as if the party preferred to maintain old associations with losing candidates to inducting fresh blood in the party. As it is, the party is reluctant to 'discard the deadwood', as a party worker confided to me during the 2009 campaign[184].

The BJP is the party where MLAs have the longest linear careers and where candidates re-run the most. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that the BJP counts more from stable strongholds than other parties, notably in urban seats, and is therefore under less competitive strains than others. Another reason is that strong ideological ties tend to

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[184] Interview in Lucknow, Congress headquarters, May 2009.

bound candidates to the party, which recruits many of them and of its cadres within the RSS. BJP MLAs show more allegiance to their party than others, and tend comparatively migrate less to other parties than their Congress and state-based parties counterparts.

Voters' choice

It is only after having faced and overcome all these hurdles than sitting MLAs face their last judge, the voters. In his study on individual incumbency in Indian elections, Yogesh Uppal finds evidence of a significant incumbency disadvantage in state legislative elections. He concludes, "*Incumbents are not only less likely to win than their challengers, but the adverse effect of incumbency has increased after 1991*" [185]. In Uttar Pradesh, I find a rather stable pattern of incumbent's re-election.

I measure the performance of incumbent candidates by calculating their strike rate, or the success ratio of the incumbents and ex-MLAs who re-ran[186]. We see that the strike rate for incumbent candidates is fairly stable, around 49% and that the ratio for ex-MLAs decreases sharply in the 1990s and 2000s. This illustrates the fact that voters in the 1990s and the 2000s grew reluctant to give another chances to MLAs who had been ousted out of power before. As a consequence, parties became also reluctant to give tickets to former losing candidates.

Table 3.18 *Strike rate of incumbent candidates and ex-MLAs in UP assembly elections*

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Strike rate Incumbents	52.40%	49.68%	45.65%	48.66%	48.26%
Strike rate ex-MLAs	65.22%	40.20%	42.50%	28.08%	28.58%

Source: Calculated by Author, Individual Incumbency in Indian State Elections dataset (1952-2012).

This data confirms that parties and not voters constitute the main obstacle to the longevity of politicians' careers.

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[185] Uppal, ibid., p.24.

[186] The strike rate is a term borrowed to cricket that indicates the ratio of seats won against the number of seats contested. This measure enables to compare parties' performance when they do not contest similar number of seats. On this topic, see (Sircar and Verniers 2016).

To sum up, voters' anti-incumbency, in addition to the four motives of party rejection mentioned earlier means that the probability for a incumbent to last after their first election is quite low (roughly one chance out of four). This, as we shall later, has far-reaching consequences on who contests and on MLAs' political behaviour.

3.2.2. The role of turncoats

Another feature of electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh is the weakness of affiliation ties between parties and candidates. The phenomenon of turncoats – or candidates shifting party allegiance before an election – is another popular topic of conversation for political observers and journalists. About a third of Uttar Pradesh's MLAs have changed their party affiliation at least once (see table 3.19). They may have done so for a variety of reasons.

Table 3.19 *Percentage of MLAs who changed party affiliation during their career, 1952-2012*

Changed once	Changed twice	Changed more than Twice	Did not change	Total MLAs
23.08%	7.00%	2.89%	67.03%	N= 4116

Source: Calculated from the author's Uttar Pradesh incumbency dataset.

The first reason may be that candidates seek a new affiliation after being rejected from their party, or leave because they anticipate that their party will deny them a ticket. Their status and strength will determine whether they get a strong competitive ticket or whether they will have to satisfy themselves with some morganatic marriage with a smaller party. MLAs who shift from a strong ticket to a weak ticket – or as independents – lose most of the time.

MLAs also leave their party when they feel that they do not get the place and status they deserve. Failure from the party to accommodate tickets to kin, relatives and associates is also a frequent motive for MLAs to seek new affiliations. In the 2009 election, the son of a prominent figure of the Congress party, former Minister and Speaker of the Assembly, member of the party's State Committee, contested on a BSP ticket in a constituency near Lucknow. In Western Uttar Pradesh, a tussle between the SP and a prominent Muslim political family led various of its members contest under various parties' affiliations.

Table 3.20 – Turncoats fielded by main parties in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections and their performance (1980-2012)

		1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
BJS/BJP	Turncoats	10	6	11	11	7	30	21	26	11
	Candidates	400	347	275	415	422	414	320	350	399
	Ratio	2.50%	1.73%	4.00%	2.65%	1.66%	7.25%	6.56%	7.43%	2.76%
	Succesfull	2	1	4	8	4	17	6	3	1
		20.00%	16.67%	36.36%	72.73%	57.14%	56.67%	28.57%	11.54%	9.09%
INC	Turncoats	19	30	44	9	13	11	25	41	27
	Candidates	424	425	410	413	421	126	401	393	356
	Ratio	4.48%	7.06%	10.73%	2.18%	3.09%	8.73%	6.23%	10.43%	7.58%
	Succesfull	15	26	19	0	1	5	3	6	1
		78.95%	86.67%	43.18%	0.00%	7.69%	45.45%	12.00%	14.63%	3.70%
BSP	Turncoats			8	4	2	37	21	38	11
	Candidates			372	386	165	296	401	403	403
	Ratio			2.15%	1.04%	1.21%	12.50%	5.24%	9.43%	2.72%
	Succesfull			2	0	1	19	6	27	1
				25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	51.35%	28.57%	71.05%	9.09%
SP*	Turncoats	10	42	72	7	10	35	30	55	30
	Candidates	399	385	356	399	256	281	390	393	402
	Ratio	2.51%	10.91%	20.22%	1.75%	3.91%	12.46%	7.69%	13.99%	7.46%
	Succesfull	4	23	55	1	6	22	15	20	16
		40.00%	-54.76%	76.39%	35.00%	60.00%	62.86%	50.00%	36.36%	53.33%
Total	Turncoats	39	78	135	44	32	113	97	160	79
	Candidates	1223	1157	1413	1613	1264	1117	1512	1539	1562
	Ratio	3.19%	6.74%	9.55%	2.73%	2.53%	10.12%	6.42%	10.40%	5.06%
	Succesfull	21	50	80	15	12	63	30	56	19
		53.85%	-64.10%	59.26%	34.09%	37.50%	55.75%	30.93%	35.00%	24.05%

* Includes the JNP(SC), LKD, JP and JD for the years 1980-1991.

Source: Calculated from the author's Uttar Pradesh incumbency dataset.

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And in another configuration, still in Western Uttar Pradesh, a figure of the Rashtriya Lok Dal, six-time elected and son of a former deputy Chief Minister, migrated his entire family to the Samajwadi Party before the 2012 elections after his party President denied a ticket to his brother. The Samajwadi Party nominated him in the Legislative Council.

Candidates can also switch parties on their own because they anticipate that their party might not do well in the next election. In 1989, 57 Congress candidates, including 43 sitting MLAs and 10 ex-MLAs, left for the Janata Dal.

In some cases, candidates are locally stronger than parties and win regardless of party affiliation. It is the case for some criminal politicians who keep changing parties, at times contesting under parties of their own or as independents, and keep winning nonetheless. For instance, Akbar Husain, a six-time MLA from Kundarki, contested ten times under six different party affiliations[187].

There is also evidence that parties attempt to poach MLAs from various parties, either ahead of an election, or after, as was current in the 1990s, when parties engineered defections to break down the majority in place[188]. The 1980s were also years of recomposition for parties of the Janata Parivar. Chopra estimates that 70% of the Janata Dal and Janata Party MLAs had changed their party affiliation at east once through their careers[189].

Every party is affected by turncoats, although the phenomenon is not as widespread or important as it is usually made to be. Between 1989 and 2012, 6.3% of the candidates fielded by the four main parties and 9.4% of their winners had contested under a different party affiliation in the previous election. Without surprise, turncoats tend to do better when they join a strong party, or a party strong in the concerned election. Thus, 71

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[187] Akbar Husain started his career with the Janata Party in 1977. He then left the Lok Dal for the BSP in 1989, joined the Janata Dal in 1991, which he left for the BJP. Subsequently, he fought on a Janata Dal ticket again in 1996, then on a BSP ticket 2002. He finally shifted to INLD in 2007.

[188] The 1985 Anti-Defection Law was meant to prevent individual MLAs to defect to other parties after their election, by stating that only groups of MLAs, constituting at least a third of a party's strength in the assembly could defect. As a results, parties organized mass defections, using money and at times violence.

[189] Chopra, op. Cit., p. 100.

percent of the turncoats who had joined the BSP in 2007 were elected, while only 6 turncoats out of 41 won on a Congress ticket.

Turncoats played an important part in elections in the 1990s, when parties engineered defections in order to topple down governments. Today, they may help parties prevail in a few local contests but their impact on electoral outcomes otherwise is marginal.

Turncoats retain attention because they serve as indicators of how politicians predict the outcome of the next election, and because they are also a symptom of the role of money and horse-trading in electoral politics. In any case, they do reveal the weakness of party-candidates affiliation bonds.

The tables and figures in this section have revealed that the defining character of MLAs' career is their short duration. MLAs face multiple obstacles before and after their election, obstacles that cause roughly 60% of them to lose their position after having served only one term. Party politics accounts for the major part of the assembly's turnover, while voters reject on average around half of the re-running incumbents. Many of the MLAs that I interviewed were acutely aware how difficult it is to last in politics and many confessed that they knew that they had only 'one shot' to make the most of their political career. As we shall see in the next section, these systemic constraints on political careers act as structural incentives for predatory behaviour.

Another consequence is that political power tends to be concentrated within relatively few hands. Parties are centralized organizations but even centralized organizations need cadres and local figures to sustain their local presence and connect the party to various sources of funding. One way to figure how concentrated power is is to estimate the size of what could be called the stable political class of Uttar Pradesh.

3.2.3. Competition for the ticket: The long road to the election

Aspiring politicians take sometimes years to prepare their candidacy, and must face a competition at times longer and harder, and in the long run costlier that the election itself. They of course need to gather sufficient resources to fund their own political campaigns

and careers. They are often expected to contribute to party coffers, notably through the purchase of their ticket. They must cultivate a caste network in order to develop a following among the group they belong to. In order to develop their base of followers, they must build local patronage networks. Since this kind of enterprise often costs beyond an individual's means, aspiring politicians must also develop networks with local special interests, individuals or groups who will 'invest' in the political future of the said individual and help him deploy further his or her fundraising and distribution capacity (Alm 2010).

These local elite networks can be caste based or cut across caste, according to the local demography and the local configuration of political leadership. Through these painstaking efforts, aspiring politicians will slowly build for themselves a status of a local leader, susceptible to attract the attention of a party. Some of them attempt to take shortcuts, by consorting with local criminal elements, or by resorting themselves to illegal activities, in order to accelerate the process and build up an image of 'effective leadership'.

It is important to keep in mind the long road towards the nomination, as it greatly impacts the cost of entry into politics. Aspiring candidates know the cost of losing a first election and are conscious of the efforts – and resources – required to succeed.

Data suggests that 76.3 percent of the MLAs won their first seat on their first attempt, 16 percent in their second attempt, and 7.6 percent beyond two attempts, from 1962 to 2012 (see table 3.21). That figure has recently increased and stood at 87 percent in 2012. This indicates that it is very difficult to win after an initial loss. Parties tend not to recruit their candidates among past losers. Some of my interviewees confirmed that candidates find it hard to get a ticket a second time after having lost an election. Most of the aspiring politicians I spoke too were very specific about when they would make their attempt to get a ticket. Some of them looked as far as two or three elections ahead, already being busy building their profile at times ten to fifteen years in advance.

Another reason why aspiring politicians prepare their candidacy well in advance is that they know that in all probability, they will have one chance to become an MLA, and that an initial loss will impede their chance to get a ticket again, and to get votes in case they do.

Table 3.21 Number of MLAs' contests before election in Uttar Pradesh state assembly elections (1952-2012)

	1952	1957	1962	1967	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
1	430 (100.0%)	309 (98.41%)	311 (98.73%)	258 (82.96%)	235 (83.04%)	225 (84.27%)	181 (73.28%)	205 (75.09%)	200 (82.99%)	144 (68.90%)	160 (65.04%)	116 (58.59%)	116 (61.05%)	142 (74.74%)	154 (72.99%)	196 (87.11%)
2		5 (1.59%)	2 (0.63%)	49 (15.76%)	37 (13.07%)	31 (11.61%)	47 (19.03%)	50 (18.32%)	30 (12.45%)	42 (20.10%)	56 (22.76%)	50 (25.25%)	42 (22.11%)	28 (14.74%)	44 (20.85%)	18 (8.00%)
3			1	4 (1.29%)	9 (3.18%)	8 (3.00%)	14 (5.67%)	14 (5.13%)	7 (2.90%)	19 (9.09%)	21 (8.54%)	21 (10.61%)	22 (11.58%)	12 (6.32%)	8 (3.79%)	6 (2.67%)
4			1 (0.32%)		1 (0.35%)	2 (0.37%)	4 (1.62%)	3 (1.10%)	3 (1.24%)	2 (0.96%)	6 (2.44%)	7 (3.54%)	5 (2.63%)	3 (1.58%)	3 (1.42%)	4 (1.78%)
5					1 (0.35%)	1 (0.37%)	1 (0.40%)	1 (0.37%)	1 (0.41%)	2 (0.96%)	1 (0.41%)	3 (1.52%)	5 (2.63%)	2 (1.05%)	1 (0.47%)	
6											2 (0.81%)	1 (0.51%)		3 (1.58%)	1 (0.47%)	1 (0.44%)
Total	430 (100%)	314 (100%)	315 (100%)	311 (100%)	283 (100%)	267 (100%)	247 (100%)	273 (100%)	241 (100%)	209 (100%)	246 (100%)	198 (100%)	190 (100%)	190 (100%)	211 (100%)	225 (100%)

Source: Calculated by Author, Individual Incumbency in Indian State Elections dataset (1952-Present)

They make calculations about which party or candidate will probably win in the next election, when a particular seat will become vacant, which sitting MLAs stands a chance at contesting a Lok Sabha seat, etc.

I met S. Thakur[190], a Congress party worker in his early forties, at the Congress State Office in Lucknow, in July 2011. He belongs to a small town in Awadh and owns a small business in Lucknow. He spends most of his free time at the Congress office, where he works as a communication officer during campaigns.

> "*I have been preparing my candidacy since long. See, I'm a Rajput. In my constituency, there are 20.000 Rajputs so I have to develop ties with about 500 families who in turn will touch other voters. Once I have their support, I can bring it to the party who in turn, will ensure me the support of their own supporters*".

The process that he describes is highly competitive, since many individuals may aspire to a status of local leader within a caste and within a locality. Political competition often starts by competing with one's own caste member, for a position and status of local leadership. Once they have established that position, they must seek support beyond their group, if that group is not large enough to ensure the election.

In many ways, aspiring politicians must act as elected representatives way ahead of their election, to progressively build a status of a local leader. They actually often behave, act, and dress up like politicians, incarnating the role ahead of being sanctioned by the voters. In short, they fulfill the duties of a politician way before they get a chance at running [191]. These individuals go by many names across India. *Dadas* or *Comrades* in West Bengal (Banerjee 2010), *dayals* ('intermediaries') in Northern India, the *Pyraveekar* ('the fixer') in Southern India (Reddy and Haragopal 1985).

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[190] Name changed.

[191] For a vivid description of the styles adopted by aspiring politicians, see (Michelutti 2010)

This kind of trajectory is essentially valid for those aspiring candidates who hope to be selected by parties, those who make politics their profession before actually becoming politicians. There are many other ways to obtain a ticket, some of them involving a quick purchase, or long careers in local politics or local public organizations.

I have rarely encountered MLAs who had been previously elected in local Panchayati Raj institutions[192]. But many of them profess to have been involved in student politics, another common way to get into the political career. Leading agitations helps to develop an individualized following and to attract parties' attention. Local student politics is highly politicized and student unions generally officiate as campus branches of political parties. Many of them get into student politics with the prime motive of developing individual ties with politicians, who rely on them for mobilization, helping with party events or create ruckus at rival parties' events and rallies[193]. It is not surprising that in large public universities, student elections emulate 'real' elections, with rough campaign styles, hyper-personalization of the competition, bike rallies, violent demonstrations of strength. Candidates often dress up as politicians, cultivate brash masculine sartorial style and attitude.

It is also important to contest for the first time on a strong ticket. Few main parties MLAs have been previously elected on a minor ticket – a local party – or, more rarely, as independent candidates (barring in 1957, an outlier election). We saw earlier that there has been a surge over time of the number of independent candidates. This hasn't led to an increase of elected independents in the Vidhan Sabha, as illustrated in Figure 3.14.

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[192] The data available on this question is largely insufficient. It essentially comes from the bio-profile of MLAs, also known as 'Who's Whos', contain only self-declared information by elected representatives.

[193] For a detailed sociology of student political leaders, across caste groups and communities, see (Jeffrey 2010a)

Figure 3.14 Independent candidates ratio
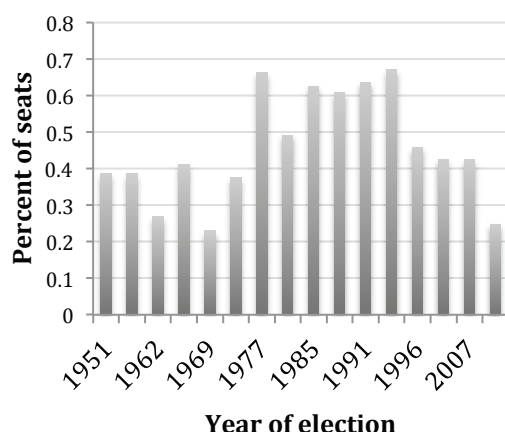
Figure 3.15 First-time running Independent winner
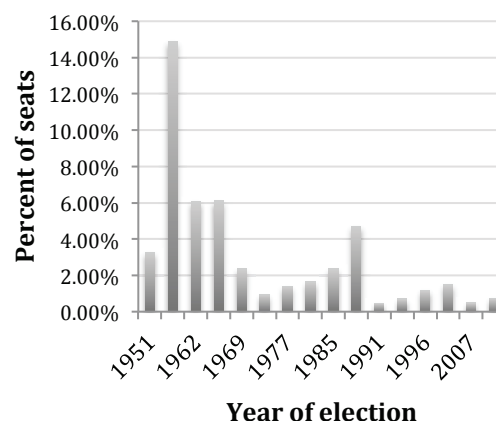
As an aparte, why do so many people contest when they clearly have no chance or hope of winning? Some may reason that contesting on a small party ticket can help to get a better ticket next time. Data suggests otherwise.

Even for those who cannot hope to win, contesting elections is seen as a means to enhance one's status. Contesting an election helps to acquire a public figure status that, arguably can subsequently help in life.

During my visits in party offices, I was regularly approached by individuals who would introduce themselves or one of their relatives to me, with the hope that I could speak on their behalf to the leaders I interviewed. Their visiting cards sometimes indicated that they had contested an election in some year in the past. One of these 'also ran' candidates explained to me that losing the election was not so bad and that contesting alone had helped them, as people knew them from then and knew about their association with the party[194].

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[194] Interview in Lucknow, Samajwadi party headquarters, March 2012.

3.2.4. The size of the stable political class

The individual incumbency data enables to make another measurement, which is the measurement of the size of the stable political class. What I have done so far is to look at the transient political population, MLAs who come and go. The other way to look at this data is to cluster those who last in politics. These "stable" politicians constitute the class of professional politicians; those who tend to make of politics their main occupation. It comprises individual MLAs who matter within party organizations, kin and relatives of party leaders or party figures, and local political dynasties. These lasting MLAs often usually head sub-regional patronage networks among other politicians. This stable class of politicians also includes powerful individuals, who succeed in lasting in politics on their own strength, at times regardless of party affiliation. Their number is a measure of how concentrated political power actually is within the state and within parties, despite the alternance of power, the turnover of MLAs and despite the overall competitiveness of the electoral arena.

My measure of who is part of this stable political is, quite simply, any MLA who has succeeded in being elected more than twice. One could contests the validity of this measure, calling it arbitrary. The logic is the following. Many individual or political entrepreneur aspire to get into politics, succeed in getting a ticket and eventually are elected. First-time MLAs will be inclined to re-run if they can (or are allowed to) and a certain number of them will succeed (28.8% of incumbent candidates on average succeed in getting re-elected, in the case of Uttar Pradesh).

To be re-elected a second time however implies in most cases that the candidate has become a professional politician, has succeeded to overcome all the hurdles of political life more than once, matters to his or her own party and intends to remain in this profession in the long run. This measure is of indicative value more than anything else.

MLAs who fall into that 'stable' category represent on average about 20% of the total population of MLAs. Over time, that number increases above 25% (see table 3.22), which make sense in a period of quadripartition of the party system.

Table 3.22 *Decadal estimate size of the stable political class*

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Stable political class	11.05%	14.25%	20.86%	25.56%	26.63%

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

If we take this as a measure of influence, it can be thus said that there are today roughly a quarter of all regional politicians who actually matter within their parties, that is to say a little above one hundred individuals. This isn't many, for a political society of two hundred million people.

If we break down this data by party, we see that two parties – the BJP and the SP – stand out since 1989. This is expected since these two parties have risen during that period. But the BSP also rose in the 1990s and the 2000s and its share of 'stable politicians' remains much lower, including in 2007, when it had a majority of seats. This means that the BSP relies more on "short-term' politicians, which is consistent with the turnover figures we saw in the previous section. This means that the BSP does not have the image of a party where one makes a long career.

Table 3.23 *Party-wise break-up of the stable political class, 1980-2012*

Total >2	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
BJP		4.65%	7.62%	25.81%	40.19%	45.97%	36.97%	16.35%	15.15%
INC	66.67%	58.14%	38.10%	26.88%	11.21%	8.87%	8.40%	7.69%	5.05%
BSP			0.95%		1.87%	10.48%	8.40%	26.92%	10.10%
SP	13.33%	25.58%	46.67%	44.09%	31.78%	30.65%	36.13%	39.42%	62.63%
Others	20.00%	11.63%	6.67%	3.23%	14.95%	4.03%	10.08%	9.62%	7.07%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Calculated from ECI data.

These numbers also show that the SP is the party that counts the largest number – and therefore ratio - of longstanding politicians. Most of the longest political careers have been served within the Samajwadi Party and before 1993 within the Janata Parivar parties. Mulayam Singh Yadav has been elected nine times, Mohammad Azam Khan, Shivpal Singh Yadav eight times. Mulayam Singh Yadav's family members figure

prominently among those longstanding politicians[195] but also other figures, such as Mohammad Azam Khan, from Rampur, and Vijay Singh, from Milak, both eight-time MLAs[196].

The lower numbers of the BJP in the last two elections is not only the reflection of its declining performance, but also from the fact the party is losing many of its longstanding politicians, who either leave the party or are replaced by new faces. Ajay Kumar Poiea, a three-time BJP MLA from Govardhan, contested (and lost) on a BSP ticket in 2007. Ajay Pratap Singh (alias Lalla Bhaiya), a four-time BJP MLA from Colonelganj, contested (and won) on a Congress ticket in 2007. Amarjeet Jan Sevak, a three-time MLA from Bindki, contested (and lost) on a SP ticket that same year. In recent year, the BJP has tended to centralize its ticket distribution from Delhi, where the new office bearer privilege new faces to old-timers.

The number of veteran figures within parties is also indicative of how centralized their organizations are. Of all the main four parties, the Samajwadi Party is the party that has the widest base of stable politicians, despite the control exerted by the ruling family. This would also explain why the Samajwadi Party is the largest recipient of turncoats. It is simply a more attractive party for those who aspire to longer political careers.

3.2.5. Political strongholds

Finally, another marker of stability within volatility is the presence of stronghold constituencies, which I define as any constituency held at least three elections in a row by a party. There is a number of seats that parties succeed in retaining over time, indicating either the presence of a strong MLA or a favorable constituency's demography, such as cities for the BJP or a high proportion of Muslim voters for some Muslim MLAs.

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[195] Not necessarily in the MLA dataset since some of them, such as Ram Gopal Yadav, have served in the Lok Sabha.

[196] Some of these careers have been interrupted for mandates served either in the Lok Sabha or in the Legislative Council. Very long careers are rather the exception with other parties. Some of these careers spanned across parties, like Kalyan Singh, ten times elected, who contested under various party banners.

The first measure of strongholds in Uttar Pradesh assembly elections reveals that there are not that common, except in the 1990s, where more than one seat out of three remained in the hands of the same party for three consecutive elections. The BJP and the socialist parties account for 86 percent of the strongholds in the 1990s and for 70 percent of the stronghold constituencies in the 2000s.

The high number of BJP strongholds in the 1990s (82) indicate how strong the party was. Between 1985 and 1993, the BJP counts 37 strongholds, including 7 in reserved seats and 14 in urban seats. Half of these strongholds are located in Awadh and Doab, in and around Lucknow, Sitapur, Agra, Mathura and Aligarh. Outside these two central regions, the BJP's strongholds are limited to the main cities, such as Meerut in the West, Bareilly City in Rohilkhand, Varanasi in the East, and Gorakhpur in the North-East.

Table 3.24 *Decadal party distribution and ratio of 'stronghold' seats*

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
BJP		7	82	34
BSP			12	22
INC	34	59	8	4
Socialists		33	60	38
JNP	37	5		
CPI/CPM	1	1	2	1
RLD				3
IND	1			
Total strongholds	73	105	164	102
Not stronghold	351	319	321	301
Stronghold ratio	17.22%	24.76%	38.68%	25.31%
Not stronghold ratio	82.78%	75.24%	75.71%	74.69%
N	424	424	424	403

Source: Calculated from the Uttar Pradesh Incumbency dataset.

In the 1980s, the Congress still had 59 seats it could call strongholds, half of them in Avadh. Of these 60 strongholds, one three subsisted in the 1990s: Hardoi, Rae Bareli, Rampur Khas. It then lost the first two in the 2000s, maintained its hold of Rampur Khas, and succeeded in preserving only two other strongholds, in Rae Bareli and Padrauna, a city the North-East. These seats are held by prominent – or formerly prominent figures of the party.

Pramod Kumar Tiwari, a former State Minister, won the Rampur Khas seat eight times in a row, usually with large margins. For nearly twenty year, Tiwari was the head of the Congress Legislator party, in the Vidhan Sabha. He was removed from that position in 2012 and replaced by the three-term MLA from Mathura, Pradeep Mathur. The party grew resentful of Tiwari's cross-parties connection – which led notably the Samajwadi Party to field weak candidates against him – and of his proximity with Subroto Roy's Sahara Group, one of the main corporate sponsor of the Samajwadi Party in the 1990s and early 2000s[197]. The Congress got him elected in the Rajya Sabha in 2013.

In Rae Bareli, the seat is held by Akhilesh Kumar Singh is a five-time MLA, who contested as an Independent in 2002 and as a Peace Party candidate in 2012 (he would then become the Peace Party's leader in the Vidhan Sabha, after the removal of its founder, Dr. Ayub). Singh started his career in the Congress in 1993. He currently has 45 criminal charges on twelve cases against him, including seven charges for rioting, seven charges for criminal intimidation, two related to murder, three related to attempt to murder, two charges or extortion one of dacoity and one charge related to kidnapping for ransom.

In Padrauna, the seat is held by Ratanjit Pratap Narayan Singh, Raja of Jagdishpur, attached to the Padrauna State Ruling family. He is a former Union Minister of State in the second UPA government (Road, Transport and Highways and then Home), son of Congress MLA and MP Chandra Pratap Narayan Singh, educated in Doon School (of which he presides the old school society) and St. Stephen's. He was elected in the Lok Sabha from Kushinagar (Padrauna Sagar) in 2009 and left his seat to Rajesh Kumar Jaiswal, who lost against the BSP candidate, Swami Prasad Maurya.

In the 1970s, the socialist parties had 38 strongholds (including six reserved seats)[198], scattered across the state, except in Uttarakhand and Bundelkhand, where they had

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[197] Times of India, June 7,2012.
[198] 24 of these wre held before the Emergency.

none. They retained fourteen of them through the 1980s, rural seats for the most part[199].

The Samajwadi Party's strongholds in the 1990s were for the most part located in central Uttar Pradesh, in Doab (22), Awadh (10) and in the East (11). They include long term strongholds held by leading figures of the party, like Jaswant Nagar, held by Mulayam Singh Yadav seven times between 1967 and 1993, then by his brother Shivpal Yadav, from 1996 to 2012[200] or Rampur, held with one interruption since 1980 by Mohammed Azam Khan, a prominent Muslim figure of the party and its longtime General Secretary.

Some of these seats are Yadav strongholds, such as Gunnaur, where 12 out of 18 MLAs have been Yadavs (including Mulayam Singh Yadav, in 2007), Jaswantnagar, where 14 out of 15 MLAs have been Yadavs, or Aliganj, where eleven out of the last thirteen MLAs have been Yadavs. The strongman in Aliganj is Rameshwar Yadav, a three-time MLA with 110 criminal charges on his head (for 27 different criminal cases). Some of these strongholds are located in reserved seats, like Tundla, Etmadpur or Kishni, where Rameshwar Dayal Balmiki was elected without interruption from 1989 to 1996.

Finally, some are historical seats, like Chaprauli, where Chaudhary Charan Singh contested and won between 1967 and 1974. It is now an RLD stronghold since 2002, though held by three different MLAs[201].

The Bahujan Samaj Party, finally, had few strongholds initially. Between 1989 and 1996, it only had four, all in general seats, and all held by OBCs.

Ram Lakhan Verma, a Kurmi politicians, held the Jalalpur seat (Eastern U.P.) between 1989 and 1993. He served as a Minister for Forests in Mayawati's first Cabinet and was

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[199] Rampur, Fatehpur, Kauriram, Maharajganj, Hata, Chilkahar, Jhunsi, Soraon, Bilhaur, Gokul, Hathras, Barnawa, Chaprauli, and Kandhla.

[200] Shivpal Singh Yadav is also a three-time MLA from Unnao, near Kanpur, in 1974, 1980, and 1991.

[201] Two Jats, Ajay Kumar and Virpal Rahi, in 2002 and 2012, and a Rajput, Dr. Ajay Tomar, in 2007.

part of the Bahujan Samaj Dal breakaway faction, a group defection engineered by the Samajwadi Party in 1995. He quickly joined the SP. His career was put to a brutal end when he was killed by Lal Bahadur, his own pet elephant, in 2003. The BSP lost Jalalpur to Rakesh Pandey, from the SP, in 1996. After Verma's defection, the seat went to Sher Bahadur Singh, a Rajput from the BJP (formerly Congress), who defected to the BSP in 2007, and then to the SP in 2012.

Ram Sevak Singh Patel is a three-time MLA from Bara (Doab), a constituency once held by H.N. Bahuguna, former Congress Chief Minister. He lost his seat in 2002 to Udai Bhan Karvaria, a Brahmin from the BJP. He contested again (and lost) on a Samajwadi Party ticket in 2007 and then on a BSP ticket, in Badaun, in 2012, where he lost again.

Vishambar Prasad Nishad was a three-time MLA from Tindwari (Bundelkhand). He's a leading figure among his Nishad (a caste of fishermen) who served as Minister in Mayawati's Cabinet on three occasions (Fisheries, Animal husbandry, Revenue, Ambedkar Gram Sabha Development, External Aid and Mining). He climbed on to become the Lok Sabha M.P. from Fatehpur (Doab) in 1996. In 2002, he defected to the Samajwadi Party, who offered him the post of National General Secretary. He contested (and lost) the 2014 general elections from Hamirpur-Mahoba, and was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2014[202].

Sriram Pal is a three-time MLA from Kalpi (Bundelkhand) and one of the four Baghel community figure in Uttar Pradesh in the early 1990s[203]. After 1996, the BSP went on to gain 21 strongholds (including 6 in reserved seats), scattered across the state.

It is difficult to state whether strongholds are held by popular parties or by strong individuals. Most of the MLAs described in these sections are either prominent political

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[202] His two claims of fame were his intervention for the liberation of the Bandit-Queen Phoolan Devi and the attempt to induct seventen castes of fishermen into the SC list. That attempt failed when a 2005 ruling of the Allahabad High Court quashed that decision. He now serves as President of the Samajwadi Kashyap Nishad Bind Turaha Ekta Mahasabha, a caste association working for the cause of fishermen's castes.
[203] The other three were Bhagwat Pal (Majhwa), Mathura Prasad Pal (Sarwankhera) and Inder Pal Singh Pal (Auriya).

figures – state Ministers or high office holders in their parties – or prominent figures within their castes. Caste ties do matter, as we see that strongholds occur more in seats dominated by specific castes. In Western Uttar Pradesh, for example, several seats – Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Shamli – are dominated by Gujjars, who are courted by various parties. These are known as "Gujjar seats" even though there may be an alternance of parties[204]. Family ties – and family fiefdoms – are another configuration of stronghold constituencies. Beyond the prominent families ruling over parties, there is a number of political families who control or hold their constituencies over a long period of time. Kazim Ali Khan (alias Navaid Mian) four-time MLA in Suar Tanda, is another example[205]. This politician belongs to the Barecha Rohilla dynasty, which used to rule the former Princely State of Rampur. He is the 15th ruler of this hereditary dynasty, which was founded in 1719. A Shia Muslim, he is the son of Nawab Zulfikar Ali Khan, alias Mickey Mian, who was elected Rampur MLA in 1963, and from 1980 to 1992[206], and of Noor Bano, the daughter of the Nawab of Loharu, also a prominent political figure[207].

Kazim Ali Khan joined the Congress in the mid-1990s. He was elected for the first time in Bilaspur, in 1996, then subsequently in Suar Tanda. In 2003, unhappy with the party's attitude towards minorities, he was among the eight members of a splinter group within the Uttar Pradesh Congress: the Akhil Bhartiya Congress Party. The formation then merged with the BSP and Kazim obtained a portfolio in the Mayawati government as Minister of Minority Welfare and Haj. He defected again in August 2003 for the SP when Mulayam Singh Yadav was able to form a government. A tussle with Azam Khan, another prominent Muslim political figure from Rampur prevented him from becoming a Minister[208]. He contested on an SP ticket in 2007 and won a third mandate but rejoined the Congress for his fourth term, in 2012. Not all political families belong to former rulers' families. The latter category often consider their constituencies

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[204] Rajkamal Singh attracted my attention on this point.

[205] I benefited from inputs from Juliette Galonnier regarding this MLA's biography.

[206] See http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/biodata_1_12/1818.htm

[207] A key member of the All Indian Congress Committee, she was elected MP from Rampur constituency in 1996 and in 1999 1999-2004. See http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/members/former_Biography.aspx?mpsno=50

[208] He would be granted the chairmaship of the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Corporation instead.

as personal fiefdoms and use electoral politics as a means to maintain their political status.

Looking at the caste composition of these strongholds, it would appear that they contain a slightly higher concentration of upper castes and dominant OBC MLAs among the 'stronghold MLAs' than in the general MLA population. Around 13 percent of all strongholds are held by Muslim MLAs (two third with socialist parties and the other third with Congress, in the 1970-80s). Twenty percent of all strongholds are located in reserved seats.

3.3. Conclusion

This rather long data enumeration reveals that the path to a political career in Uttar Pradesh is scattered with obstacles and pitfalls and that these careers tend to be short. Voters of course are the ultimate arbiters but parties act as powerful filters for candidates, by determining who gets the ticket and by determining who may have a chance to re-run after an election. Thus, parties' assessment on the 'winnability' of their candidates, and their assessment of what constitutes this winnability is crucial in determining the sociological composition of the State Assembly.

To be more complete about the rules of political engagement, one should also speak about the high cost of entry into politics – that is the individual financial commitment required from the candidates. The fact that campaign costs spiral after each election, that living the life of a politician is itself a costly affair also has a great impact on who gets to be an elected representative.

And while there is usually a lot of attention paid to which caste gets to be represented within the Assembly or within parties, we seldom pay attention to criteria determining which individual gets to become the representative of his caste or community. Besides the high cost of entry, candidates must also confront a long arduous path of intra-party competition – factionalism – and also often intra-caste competition. Who emerges as a local caste leader is also the product of intense competition. These questions shall be addressed in chapter four and chapter five. What is important to remember is that state

elections in U.P. have always been competitive. With an increased participation, parties must mobilize more voters than before. Also, the competition that used to take place within the Congress party now takes place between a larger number of political formations, each constituting a site of competition on their own. More groups are also included in this competition and we will see in the next chapter that if for a time caste-based competition seemed to take place through dedicated parties, caste-party alignments have in recent times been blurred by parties distributing tickets across caste groups.

Part. II The changing profile of Uttar Pradesh State Legislators

Chapter 4. The heterogeneisation of Uttar Pradesh's political class

The politics of Uttar Pradesh is most frequently analyzed through the lense of caste. This analysis is made from two different angles, parties and voters.

From the parties' point of view, caste is a central variable to the definition of their electoral strategies. Parties "read" the electorate on the basis of these social divisions, divide the electoral map and distribute tickets largely through their own assesment of local caste demography and through the desire to maintain particular representation balances between select groups.

Beyond this electoral arithmetic, caste is also presented as a fundamental political variable for voters, who, as the saying goes, vote their caste while casting their vote. Available survey data on voting behaviour confirms that there is a certain level of congruence or alignment between certain castes and certain parties. But the same data also contains as we shall see the elements for a necessary nuance of that depiction, indicating among other things that very few castes or communities – if any – seldom vote en bloc for any parties.

It is largely understood and admitted that caste has been the main vehicle of political mobilization in Uttar Pradesh for decades, the social unit around which demands for social justice, equity, and dignity are articulated and crystallize. Descriptive representation is seen as a measure and token of justice and dignity, an aim in itself meant to obtain the recognition of one's group social and political importance. From the point of view of dominant groups, political representation is also often a means to retain, develop or expand a group's social status, privilege, and hold over territories. Being represented in the Assembly also means to have access to power wielders, both within parties and within the bureaucracy, both organizations and institutions that play a determinant role in the distribution of resources. The two functions of representation – providing dignity and providing resources – are certainly not neatly distributed among social groups or according to a strict hierarchy. The pursuit of power of lower castes is

not devoid of materialistic considerations, and the elements of status and prestige attached to the position of legislator are a powerful force attracting many upper castes or members of locally dominant groups into the electoral fray.

The evolution of the sociological composition of the state assembly provides the main empirical base for the measurement of the political empowerment of castes and communities. It also provides the base for the building of the narrative that dominates the description of U.P. politics, that is to say a story of decline of the upper castes and of the rise of the OBCs, a story of reversal of the social order.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine this narrative by "unpacking" the data on caste and community representation in the State Assembly. I do this by breaking down the 'caste data' in three main ways: by jati, by party and by sub-region. The division by jati will reveal – as it is already largely known – that only a handful of castes detains a major share of the seats of the assembly, both within the upper castes and the OBCs. The division by sub-regions will reveal, more importantly, that there are strong spatial variations in the trajectory of castes, strong enough to question the dominant narrative of decline of the upper castes. Recent data furthermore reveals how the upper castes have regained a part of their past prominence, by being well represented within the parties that initially rose against them. I also examine in this chapter the question of inclusiveness of political parties, by looking at caste representation within them, as well as in the state's cabinet.

The data

The creation of an original database of caste representation among Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of Uttar Pradesh took considerable time. To begin with, U.P. has the largest assembly in India, with 404 members[209].

Then, the original dataset collected by Jasmine Zerinini for her contribution in the "Rise of the Plebeians?" was largely lost and a large part of her data had to be collected again[210]. In

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[209] 403 are directly elected and there remains one nominated members, from the Anglo-Indian community.

order to do so, I conducted numerous field trips to Lucknow and across the state between 2007 and 2012. Data on MLAs and candidates' jati was collected through interviews with three distinct sets of sources and actors. Interviews with politicians themselves and party cadres were particularly useful to gather the information regarding contemporary and past representatives. Correspondents and local journalists in Lucknow were the second source used to collect information. Long sessions of collective examination of the candidates' lists were held in newsroom or at the U.P. Press Club in Hazratganj. Local correspondents from the vernacular press were contacted by phone through the Uttar Pradesh Journalists' Directory. The third source of information was composed of colleagues, political observers and local research assistants[211]. I finally compiled the secondary data that could be found online or in print about particular individuals or constituencies. The data collected from these three sources has been juxtaposed and validated when matching. In case of divergence, further investigation was done until reaching a convincing output. In some cases, politicians were contacted directly by phone for confirmations, in the midst of a broader conversation.

The original dataset was thus re-created and expanded, by adding data on the main parties' candidates for the 2007 and 2012 elections. The data regarding the MLAs lying in the State Assembly archive and Library were collected and digitized[212]. Furthermore, the Election Commission' statistical reports on state elections were crawled, cleansed and merged with this data, so that the profile of candidates may be linked to data on performance, for further research.

Choices had to be made with regard to the codification of jatis. While there is an overall consensus on who belongs to the upper castes, the juridical categories of OBCs, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes fluctuate in time, as it is the state's prerogative to determine which caste belongs to which category. State governments have often changed the

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[210] As a consequence, my data varies slightly from Zerinini's, though not too substantially. The main variation is that she found more OBCs in the assembly in 1993 than upper castes (32.39 against 26.98 per cent), while I obtained significantly different figures (31.84 to 34.43 per cent, respectively). I also have less unidentified cases (1 against 28), which can account for a part of this variation.

[211] In more recent times, Rajkamal Singh, Research Fellow at the Trivedi Centre for Political Data, provided invaluable assistance to fill the gaps in the data and scout for coding errors.

[212] Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, *Who's Who* in U.P. Vidhan Sabha (1952-2012), Lucknow.

denomination of certain castes, essentially for electoralist purpose, shifting castes from the SC list to the OBC list and vice-versa.

The Jats are a case in point. This peasant caste, present and dominant in Western U.P., was included on the Central OBC list in March 2014, barely a few weeks before a general election, to the dismay of other groups already included[213] and to the irritation of their Jat neighbors in Haryana, who do not benefit from the same treatment (the decision was overruled by the Supreme Court a year later)[214].

The dataset does not account for these variations. The coding of jatis into caste groups is stable through time. This dataset should be seen more as a heuristic tools that help accounting for some of the large political transformations that have occurred in the state, rather than an effort to classify identities whose definitions are necessarily plural and shifting through time. With that purpose in mind, Jats for instance have been coded separately, as Intermediate castes, despite their recent inclusion in the OBC list.

4.1. The Evolution of caste representation

According to the 1931 Census, the upper castes constitute 20.5 per cent of the population, the Brahmins and Rajputs taken together amounting for 16.4 per cent. The Other Backward Classes (OBCs) represent 41.7 per cent of the population, the bulk of that number being composed of numerous small-size and geographically dispersed castes, usually referred to a Most backward Classes (MBCs). The three main groups among the OBCs, namely the Yadavs, the Kurmis and the Lodhis, account for respectively 8.7, 3.5 and 2.2 per cent of the population. Other locally dominant groups, such as the Jats and the Gujjars, represent respectively 2 and 0.7 per cent of the population.

These numbers have only an indicative value since we do not know how they have evolved in time, in the absence of caste census. Further, the carving in 2000 of Uttaranchal

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[213] They were not included in the original OBC list drawn by the Mandal Commission.
[214] Interestingly, the Jat political leadership had initially opposed the idea of the induction of Jats among the OBC list. See (Jaffrelot 2010b).

(now Uttarakhand) would have changed the overall demographic balance in U.P., the upper castes being demographically dominant in the Hill areas.

Table 4.1 *Castes and Communities in Uttar Pradesh, 1931 (in %)*

Castes and Communities	
Upper Castes	**20.5**
Brahmin	9.2
Rajput	7.2
Bhumihar	0.4
Bania/Jain	2.5
Kayastha	1.0
Khatri	0.1
Tyagi	0.1
Intermediary castes	**2.0**
Jats	2.0
Other Backward Classes (OBC)	**41.7**
Yadav	8.7
Kurmi	3.5
Lodhi	2.2
Teli	2.0
Koeri/Kacchi	3.1
Kewat/Murao	2.4
Gujjar	0.7
Others	19.1
Scheduled Castes (SC)	**21.0**
Chamar	12.7
Pasi	2.9
Dhobi	1.6
Bhangi	1.0
Others	2.8
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	**< 1.0**
Muslims	**15.0**
Sikhs	**< 0.5**
Anglo-Indians	**< 0.1**
Total	100.0

Source: Census 1931, United Provinces of Agra and Awadh, Part 2, Provincial and Imperial Tables, 1933, reproduced in Hasan 1989. Quoted from Zerenini (2009).

We do have more recent data on the Muslim and Scheduled Caste populations, from the Census of 2011 (see chapter 2). When we compare the two censuses, the total share of SC population decreases from 21 to 20.7 per cent. Among them, the Chamar / Jatav population decreases from 12.7 to 11.3 per cent, the Pasis increase from 2.9 to 3.3 per cent[215]. The share of Muslims increases from 15 per cent to 19.26 per cent in 2011[216].

4.1.1. The four phases of caste group representation

In her contribution to the Rise of Plebeians?, Jasmine Zerinini laid down in 2009 the empirical and contextual groundwork for the study of the evolution of caste-based representation from the early 1960s until 2002 (Zerinini 2009). She divides this evolution in three periods, or phases[217]. The first one, from 1952 to 1967, is marked by the ascendency of the upper castes, within and alongside the rise of the Congress Party. The upper castes then gradually declined in a second period, marked by the rise of Congress opposition, between 1967 and 1989. During that phase, a greater number of castes are represented in the assembly, particularly among the OBCs and among the Scheduled Castes. There were on average 26 and 32 castes represented in the Assembly in the 1960s and 1970s. The numbers increase to 40 in the 1980s, 46 in the 1990s and 43 post-2000[218].

Zerinini sees in 1989 a turning point, marking the beginning of a third period in which the representation of OBCs in the Assembly rises sharply. We see in the following figure that the rise of OBCs is in fact anterior to 1989. The victory of Indira Gandhi in 1980 meant a surge of representation of upper castes, at 47.8%, and caused a reduction of the presence of OBCs in the Assembly, down from 18.6 per cent in 1977 to 14.3 per cent three years later. From there, the OBCs would be on a continuous rise until 1993, where they peaked at 31.8 per cent of the seats, nearly at par with the upper castes, at 34.4 per cent. Zerinini rightly points at the SP-BSP alliance of 1993 as the reason for the surge of OBC

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[215] These overall variations among the SCs can be explained by demographics dynamics and also by the fact that the composition of the SC list changes in time. Further, the census at times clusters certain sub-castes together which may also account for variations.

[216] On the question of religious-based demographic trends, see (Jeffery and Jeffery 2006).

[217] Ibid., p.33.

[218] The variations come from the induction of small castes among the OBCs and the SCs. These figures do not take into account the diversity of groups among Muslims.

representation and the decline of upper castes. In the context of Mandal and Mandir, the caste polarization across parties was fairly strong. Subsequently, the BJP would make overtures to the OBCs – notably the Most Backward Classes – and provided them a large share of representation within its fold, as we shall see later.

Figure 4.1: Caste and Communities in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha (1969-2012)
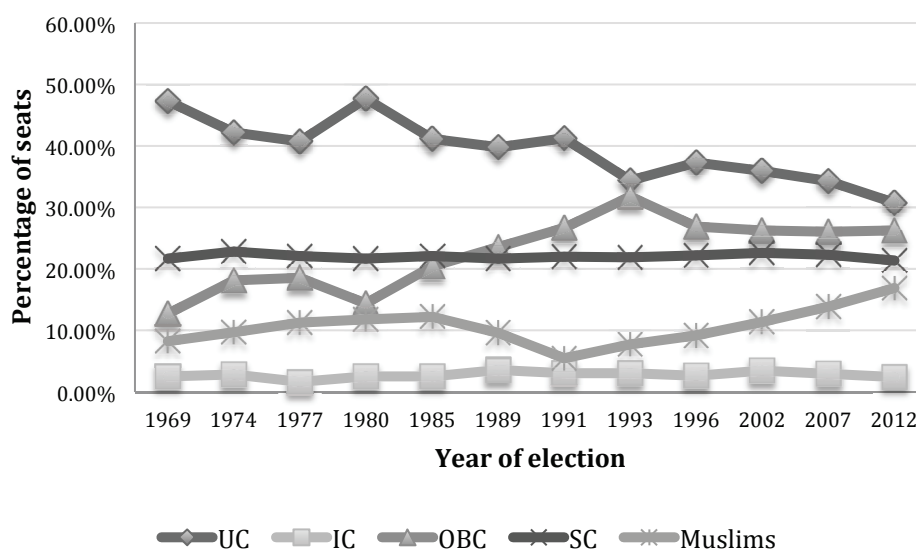
Source: Author's fieldwork.

The data from the last two – in fact the last three – state elections calls for the definition of a fourth period, which is a period of stagnation or even erosion of the representation of both the OBCs and of the upper castes, as well as a period of sustained ascension of the Muslims who, in 2012, achieved for the first time a representation nearly proportionate to their demography (16.9 per cent). More importantly, this fourth phase is also a period in which the representation of various caste groups becomes more equally distributed within the dominant state-based parties. In other words, this fourth phase could be defined as a phase of inclusion within the so-called "caste parties".

The SCs remain stable due to the fact that SC candidates typically do not get elected in non-reserved seats[219]. This come partly from the objective fact that non-Dalit voters tend

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[219] Only two three Dalits candidates have been elected in 2012 in general seats, including two former MLAs. The SC population in these constituencies is very high.

not to vote for Dalit candidates when they have alternatives and due to the fact that in any case, parties field very few Dalit candidates in general seats[220]. We can notice that the de-reservation of many constituencies after 30 years has not produced any effect in terms of electability of Dalit candidates in general seats. There were in fact a very small number of Dalit candidates in the de-reserved seats.

Over time, the upper castes remain the only caste group over-represented in the assembly (above 30 per cent). The OBC declined from 31.9 per cent in 1993 to 26.9 per cent in 1996. They have since then remained stable at 26 per cent of the seats. The SCs remain stable due to their quota, which ensures their descriptive representation. But the most remarkable change over the past twenty years is the rise of Muslims in the Assembly, due to the performance of the main two regional parties – the SP and the BSP – but also, as we shall see, due to a significant evolution of their voting behaviour in recent elections.

Obviously, these caste groups are broad categories that must be differentiated. None of them vote en bloc nore even constitute a cohesive social entity as they are divided into a large number of jatis, sub-castes or other forms of clanic kinship[221].

4.1.2. Uneven trajectories among the upper castes

Among the upper castes, the Rajputs and the Brahmins clearly dominate. These two groups used to be side by side in share of seats until 1985, after which they drifted on divergent trajectories. The Brahmins declined earlier while the Rajputs maintained their overall representation until the early 2000s. One of the reasons for this divergence is that the Brahmins were more associated with the Congress and the BJP, which declined at various stages, while the Rajputs divided their votes across other parties as well, and were well represented notably within the SP.

Collectively, these two castes occupy nearly 35 per cent of all the seats through the 1970s, 37 per cent through the 1980s, 30.5 per centin the 1990s and 26.5 per cent after 2000.

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[220] This has been the case since the first elections, as noted by Paul Brass (1984), p.23.

[221] For an overview of the early debate over the definition of the backward classes category, see (Galanter 1984).

That leaves a few per centage points to other upper castes, such as the Banias, essentially elected in a handful of urban seats such as Meerut Cantonment, Agra East, Bareilly, and Sitapur, the Kayasths, consistently elected in Lucknow Central, Mathura and Varanasi Cantonment, or the Bhumihars, elected in the East, in Varanasi South as well as in semir-urban segments such as Mohammadabad, Kolasla or Karchana.

The BSP's 2007 strategy of distributing a large number of tickets to Brahmin candidates accounts for their recent rise. As we shall see in section 4.1.3, the SP also did open its doors to a larger number of Brahmin candidates.

Figure 4.2 Representation of main Upper caste jatis (1969-2012)
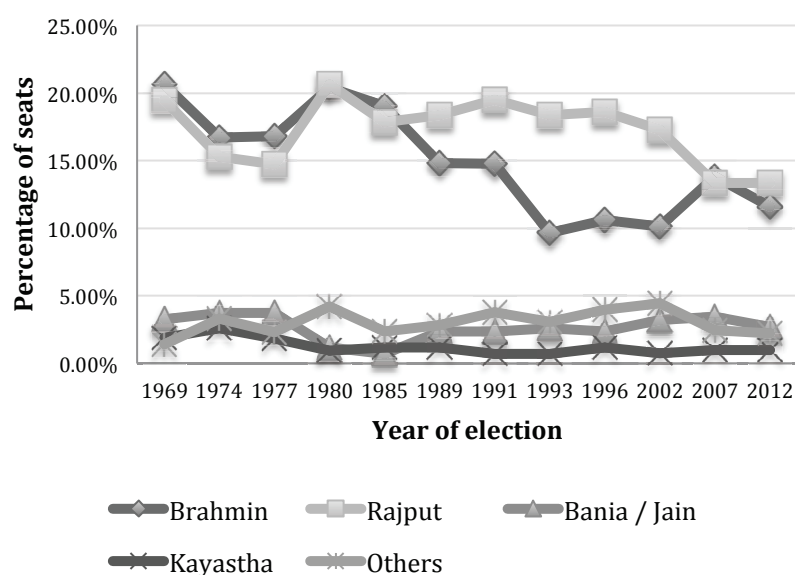
Source: Author's fieldwork.

4.1.3. A stabilized OBC representation

A similar observation can be made about the OBCs, where the divide between the dominant OBCs and the non-dominant OBCs is clear[222]. The following graph reveals that

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[222] The expression "Dominant OBCs" refers to groups among the OBCS who combine a demographic strength, either spread across the territory or localized, and a certain amount of control over small and medium landholdings, local economic and political institutions. These are essentially the castes that benefited from either the *baichara* system in Western U.P. and in Doab,

only a handful of important backward castes have benefited from the overall rise in OBC representation. The Yadavs are clearly ahead, followed by Kurmis (who have been on a downward slope since the mid-1990s).

Figure 4.3 Representation of main OBC and
intermediary castes jatis (1969-1980)
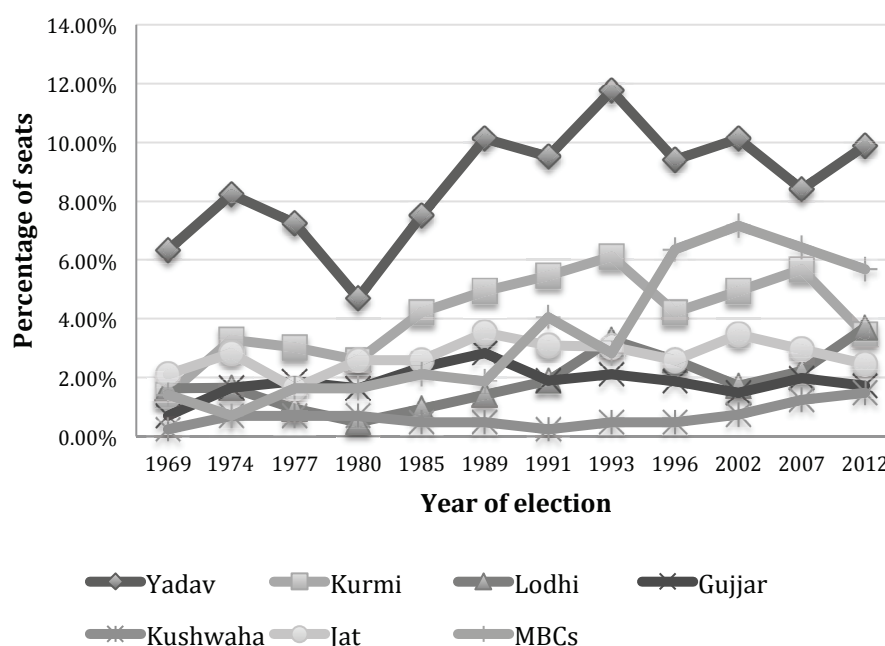
Source: Author's fieldwork.

It is worth noting that despite their alleged dominance in the U.P. political scene, or the dominance of the Samajwadi Party, the Yadavs are just about over-represented in the Assembly, with a representation oscillating around 9 per cent since 1996. This differs from the situation of Yadavs in Bihar, where their presence in the Assembly is far larger than their demographic weight[223].

The third group that has been rising is in fact a cluster of Most Backward Classes (MBCs), which do not constitute a cohesive political force or vote bank. Their trajectory follows

from the Green Revolution and later on from the marketization and diversification of the rural economy.

[223] In the 2015 state elections in Bihar, the Yadavs, who represent 15 per cent of the population, won nearly one fourth of the seats (Verniers 2015). The presence of pre-electoral alliance and vote transfers between allies' support bases contribute to the phenomenon. In fact, pre-electoral alliances are an incentive to distribute more tickets to one's core support base. See (Robin 2009).

roughtly the vote share curve of the BJP. The BJP's success in the 2000 was based on its ability to attract the support of many MBC voters by distributing tickets among various non-dominant OBC groups.

Table 4.2 *Caste and community composition of the U.P. Vidhan Sabha, 1969-2012 (%)*

	1969	1974	1977	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
Upper Castes	**46.71**	**41.65**	**39.49**	**47.42**	**41.08**	**39.53**	**41.19**	**34.35**	**36.71**	**35.80**	**34.07**	**30.86**
Bania / Jain	3.29	3.76	3.74	1.17	0.70	2.35	2.38	2.59	2.35	3.21	3.46	2.72
Bhumihar	0.47	2.35	1.40	1.64	0.70	1.18	0.95	0.71	1.18	1.98	0.99	0.74
Brahmin	20.66	1	16.82	20.42	19.01	14.82	14.76	9.65	10.59	10.12	13.83	11.60
Kayastha	1.88	2.59	1.87	0.94	1.17	1.18	0.71	0.71	1.18	0.74	0.99	0.99
Khatri	0.47	0.47	0.47	1.41	0.70	0.47	0.71	0.94	0.94	1.23	1.23	
Rajput	19.48	15.29	14.72	20.66	17.84	18.35	19.52	5	18.59	8	3	13.33
Vaishya	0.23	0.47	0.47	0.23	0.70	0.47	1.19	0.71	0.94	0.99	-	0.25
Others	0.23	-	-	0.94	0.23	0.71	0.95	0.71	0.94	0.25	0.25	-
Intermediary castes	**2.11**	**2.82**	**1.64**	**2.58**	**2.58**	**3.53**	**3.10**	**3.06**	**2.59**	**3.46**	**2.96**	**2.47**
Jat	2.11	2.82	1.64	2.58	2.58	3.53	3.10	3.06	2.59	3.46	2.96	2.47
Other Backward Classes	**12.21**	**17.65**	**16.59**	**13.85**	**20.19**	**23.53**	**26.67**	**31.29**	**26.59**	**26.17**	**25.93**	**25.93**
Baghel	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.25	-	-
Bishnoi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	0.25	0.25
Chauhan	-	-	-	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.48	0.24	0.47	0.49	0.49	-
Chaurasia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25
Gadariya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.49	0.49	0.74
Garedia	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.47	0.25	-	-
Goswami	0.23	-	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	-
Gujjar	0.70	1.65	1.87	1.64	2.35	2.82	1.90	2.12	1.88	1.48	1.98	1.73
Jaiswal	0.47	-	0.23	0.23	0.23	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.49	0.74
Kapur	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	-	-	-
Kashyap	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	-	0.49	0.25	-
Katiyar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	-
Kevat	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Koeri	-	-	0.23	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.25	-	-
Kumhar	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.24	0.25	-	0.25
Kurmi	1.41	3.29	3.04	2.58	4.23	4.94	5.48	6.12	4.24	4.94	5.68	3.46
Kushwaha	0.23	0.71	0.70	0.70	0.47	0.47	0.24	0.47	0.47	0.74	1.23	1.48
Lodhi	1.64	1.65	0.93	0.47	0.94	1.41	1.90	3.29	2.59	1.73	2.22	3.70
Mallah	-	-	-	0.23	0.47	0.47	-	0.24	0.24	-	0.25	0.25
Maurya	-	-	0.23	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.47	0.49	0.74	0.74
Muraon	0.23	-	-	-	0.23	-	-	-	0.47	-	-	-
Nishad	-	0.24	-	0.23	0.70	-	0.71	0.24	1.18	0.99	0.74	0.99
Rajbhar	-	-	-	0.23	-	-	0.48	0.47	0.71	0.99	0.74	-
Saini	-	0.24	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.47	0.49	0.25	0.25
Shakya	-	0.24	0.70	0.23	-	0.24	0.48	0.24	0.71	0.74	0.99	1.23

Soni	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.48	0.24	-	-	-	-
Teli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	-	-
Yadav	6.34	8.24	7.24	4.69	7.51	10.12	9.52	11.76	9.41	10.12	8.40	9.88
Unidentified	0.47	1.41	1.17	2.11	2.58	1.88	3.57	4.71	1.65	-	-	-
Scheduled Castes	**21.6**	**22.82**	**21.96**	**21.60**	**22.07**	**21.65**	**21.90**	**21.65**	**22.12**	**22.22**	**21.98**	**21.23**
Arya	-	0.71	0.47	0.23	0.23	0.71	-	0.47	0.24	0.25	-	0.25
Bairagi	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-	0.25	0.25
Barwar	-	-	-	-	0.23	0.24	-	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.25	-
Baudh Belldara Chauhan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.25	-
Beria	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	-	0.25	-	0.25
Chamar / Jatav	2.11	1.88	2.57	3.76	6.10	5.65	4.76	5.18	4.94	11.11	12.10	7.41
Dhanuk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.49	0.49	-
Dhobi	0.47	0.71	0.47	0.47	0.47	1.18	1.67	0.47	1.18	1.98	1.48	0.74
Dhrikar	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-	-	-
Dhusia	0.23	0.24	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dusadh	-	-	-	-	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gond	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	-	0.25	0.25	0.25
Goud	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	-	0.25	0.25	-
Katheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25
Katik	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-	-	0.49
Katoriya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-
Kewat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	-	-
Khatik	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.47	1.17	0.71	0.95	0.94	1.88	1.23	0.49	0.74
Kol	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.47	0.25	-	0.25
Kori	0.47	-	0.23	0.47	0.94	-	0.48	0.71	1.41	0.25	-	1.73
Kureel	0.23	0.47	0.70	0.23	0.47	0.24	0.48	0.24	-	0.25	-	-
Lonia	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	-	-	-	-	0.25
Pasi	1.64	1.18	1.64	3.05	3.99	3.06	2.86	1.88	2.59	4.20	4.69	5.93
Rajak	-	0.24	0.23	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ravidasya	-	0.24	-	-	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shilpkar	-	-	-	0.23	0.47	0.24	0.24	-	0.24	-	-	-
Valmiki	0.23	-	0.23	0.23	0.70	0.47	0.71	0.47	0.24	0.25	0.25	1.73
Visharad	0.23	0.71	-	0.47	-	-	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Visvar	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	-	-	-	-
Unidentified	15.73	16.24	15.19	11.74	6.81	8.00	7.86	10.12	8.24	0.74	1.23	0.74
ST	**-**	**0.24**	**0.23**	**0.23**	**0.23**	**0.24**	**0.24**	**0.47**	**0.24**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**-**
Muslims	**8.22**	**9.65**	**11.21**	**11.74**	**12.21**	**9.65**	**5.48**	**7.76**	**9.18**	**11.36**	**13.83**	**16.79**
Ansari	0.47	0.94	0.93	1.41	1.41	0.47	0.48	0.71	0.94	0.74	0.74	0.99
Bhangi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	0.24	0.25	0.25	-
Gaddi	-	-	-	-	-	0.47	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.74	0.25	0.49
Khan/Khansab	2.11	2.12	1.87	1.64	2.82	2.59	0.95	1.65	1.88	1.73	0.74	0.49
Lohar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-
Malik	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	0.25	0.25	0.25
Momin	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.24	-	-	-	-	-

Muslim Gujjar	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2%	0.24	-	-	-	-
Qazi	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Qureshi	-	-	0.23	-	0.23	-	-	0.24	-	0.74	0.25	0.25
Raeen Kunjda	-	-	-	0.23	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sayyed	0.23	-	-	0.23	0.23	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.94	0.99	0.49	0.99
Sheikh	0.23	-	-	-	0.23	0.24	0.48	0.47	0.47	1.23	0.99	1.48
Shia	0.23	0.94	0.70	1.41	0.94	1.18	-	0.47	0.47	0.74	0.49	0.49
Turk	-	-	0.23	0.23	0.23	-	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.49	0.49	-
Tyagi Muslim	0.23	-	0.23	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	0.25	0.25
Unidentified	4.46	5.65	7.01	6.34	5.87	4.47	2.38	2.82	3.53	3.21	8.64	11.11
Other minorities	**0.23**	**0.47**	**0.70**	**0.94**	**0.70**	**0.24**	**0.24**	**0.47**	**0.47**	**0.49**	**0.25**	**0.25**
Christian	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**		**0.25**	**-**	**-**
Sikh	**0.23**	**0.47**	**0.23**	**0.94**	**0.70**	**0.24**	**0.24**	**0.47**	**0.47**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Nominated	**0.23**	**0.24**	**0.23**	**0.23**	**0.23**	**0.24**	**0.24**	**0.24**	**0.24**	**0.25**	**0.25**	**0.25**
Unidentified	**8.69**	**4.47**	**7.94**	**1.41**	**0.70**	**1.41**	**0.95**	**0.71**	**1.88**	**0.00**	**0.49**	**2.22**
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Author's fieldwork.

Other dominant groups, such as the Jats (clubbed with the OBCs here for practical purpose) or the Gujjars are only politically significant in relatively small pockets of the territory, in the West. Some small OBC castes can draw advantage from their demographic weight when they are geographically concentrated. Such is the case of the Lodhis, present across the state but concentrated in a few pockets in Lower Doab. But most OBC castes – the MBCs in particular – are too small, scattered and poor to matter as political groups[224].

We can already see at this stage that caste politics is a game of few rather than many. By my estimate, about forty per cent of all repertoried castes in U.P. have never been represented in the Assembly[225]. These are mostly lower OBC groups and small SC castes, whose low numbers, poverty and geographical dispersion keeps them away from parties' attention or strategies.

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[224] Parties often "adopt" lower OBC figureheads – usually referred to as "poster boys" or "mascots" – whose role consist in giving their caste a token representation. Individuals such as Baby Singh Kushwaha or Swamy Prasad Maurya, who have shifted party allegiance several time along their careers, are two examples. There is no evidence that such "caste hints" actually have an impact beyond the local circle of inscription of these candidates.

[225] I estimate that figure by running the list of castes represented in the Assembly against the Central and State lists for OBCs and SCs and STs. On that question, see Essa Doron's chapter on the Mallah community in Uttar Pradesh (Doron 2014).

4.1.4. The steady rise of Muslims' representation

The other major phenomenon that has marked U.P. politics over the past twenty years is the steady rise of Muslims' representation. According to the 2011 Census, Muslims make 19.26 per cent of the population of Uttar Pradesh. In the current Assembly, they occupy 17 per cent of the seats, a near proportional representation. In 1991, there were only 23 Muslims in the Assembly (5.5 per cent). Since then, each election has seen their share increasing.

This trajectory is significant since Muslims have historically been under-represented in elected office at both the national and the state level in India (Ansari 2006, Jaffrelot and Kumar 2009, Jensenius 2013). For instance, Ansari shows that between 1952 and 2004 Muslims held about 4% of the seats in the Indian Parliament after the 1952 election, which increased to about 9 per cent in the 1980 elections and then declined somewhat to 5 to 7 per cent in the elections between the mid-1980s and 2004[226]. In the 2014 elections, the number of Muslims in the Lower House of Parliament decreased further to merely 4 per cent (Jaffrelot and Verniers 2014a). Ansari concludes that Muslims have been consistently under-represented and that parties' unwillingness to nominate Muslim candidates is one of the main reasons for this under-representation[227].

This trend is also significant since Muslims are also among the most economically disadvantaged groups in India and generally do not benefit from affirmative action. A recent government report, set up to investigate the social, economic and educational status of Muslims in India identified "deficits and deprivation" in practically all dimensions of development (Sachar 2006, 237), including literacy, access to education, employment in the government sector, and access to credit and loans. The situation was found to be 'particularly grave' in States with large Muslim populations, such as Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, the report found that in addition to the 'development deficit', the perception among Muslims that they are discriminated against and excluded is widespread, which exacerbates the problem. Uttar Pradesh has a long history of

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[226] Ibid., p.64.
[227] See also (Jensenius 2013).

communal violence between Hindus and Muslims. According to the Sachar Report[228], Muslims still fear for their safety and security and there is an underlying feeling of injustice towards the compensation to riot victims, with a perception of government discrimination against their claims.

In Uttar Pradesh, through the 1990s, the post-Mandal politics and the rise of the Hindu right did not leave much political space for the Muslims. Caste-based politics, quota politics and the FPTP electoral system ensured that they remained confined to the role of second base for the secular parties fighting the communal forces. But the need to expand their social bases led both SP and BSP to distribute larger numbers of tickets to Muslim candidates[229]. The Congress usually distributes few tickets to Muslims and the BJP practically none[230].

Table 4.3 *Muslim candidates nominated by main parties in the 2012 State Election*

	BSP	SP	Congress	BJP
Muslim candidates	88 (21.9)	83 (20.8)	20 (6.4)	1 (0.3)
Muslims elected	15 (18.8)	43 (19.4)	3 (12.0)	0
Muslims runner-up	38 (42.2)	13 (16.7)	3 (11.5)	0

Source: Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Legislators' data set. Quoted from (Heath, Verniers, and Kumar 2015, 13).

The BJP rose in Uttar Pradesh largely by antagonizing the state's largest minority. The Congress, having lost a large part of the support it used to get from Muslims, sees no point in distributing them many tickets. The Congress State President, Mrs. Rita Bahuguna, told me once that *"All parties give tickets to Muslims and their winnability thus reduces. Then, some Hindu contests and wins"*[231].

Data shown in Table XX reveals however that main parties – barring the BJP – have been consistently distributing tickets to Muslims over time. Even if these numbers have

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[228] Ibid, p.13.

[229] With respectively 21% and 18% of potential vote share, and with an average winning vote share of 36%, SCs and Muslims offer to the BSP a powerful combination. However, recent ethnographic work on the subject has shown that the transferability of the Dalit vote bank in favor of Muslim candidates cannot be taken for granted (Guha 2008).

[230] There was only one Muslim BJP candidate fielded in 2012, in Sahaswan. He lost his deposit.

[231] Interview held at the Congress headquarter, in Lucknow on July 27, 2011.

increased in recent years (they fielded 251 Muslim candidates in 2012), they do not account for the variation in time[232]. In fact, several factors – demographic, institutional, social and political – have been limiting Muslims' representation in the past.

The first limiting factor is the uneven geographic distribution of Muslim population across the state, which confines their political strength to specific sub-regions (Western U.P., Rohilkhand, Awadh and a few districts north of Poorvanchal). Without surprise, the geographical distribution of elected Muslims matches roughly their demographic distribution[233].

The presence of reserved seats in constituencies counting a large share of Muslim voters constitutes a second limiting factor for their representation[234]. It is a regular contention that constituency delimitation, added to the presence of 90 reserved constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, plays against Muslim representation, as acknowledged in the Sachar Report[235].

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[232] These numbers are below what they used to be throughout the 1990s, when the level of representation of Muslims was around a third or less than what it is today.

[233] In a fragmented polity, the majoritarian, First past the post, electoral system has the effect of dispersing the minorities when they do not constitute a solid vote block (Verniers, 2011).

[234] In 2007, Muslims represented more than 25% of the total electorate in four reserved constituencies (Hapur, Koil, Khalilabad and Jansath) and more than 40% in two of them (Najibabad and Nagina). These are however specific cases. In her study on the effects of delimitation, Jensenius finds that Muslims are not over-represented in reserved seats and therefore not discriminated against in that regard (Jensenius 2013).

[235] Ibid., p.25.

Table 4.4 Representation of Muslims in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1962-2012

Year	Seats	Muslim population (%)*	Nominated by main parties	Nominated by other parties	Independent Candidates	Total Muslim candidates	Total Candidates	Muslim candidates (%)	Muslims Elected	Independent Muslims elected	Muslims elected (%)
1962	430	14.63	113	28	75	216	2620	8.24%	30	0	6.98%
1967	430	14.63	102	29	146	277	3015	9.19%	27	0	6.28%
1969	425	15.48	118	56	108	282	2871	9.82%	35	6	8.24%
1974	424	15.48	143	120	150	413	4039	10.23%	41	1	9.67%
1977	425	15.48	95	21	254	370	3012	12.28%	48	4	11.29%
1980	425	15.93	197	52	255	504	4619	10.91%	50	3	11.76%
1985	425	15.93	143	68	416	627	6019	10.42%	52	4	12.24%
1989	425	17.33	225	37	544	806	6102	13.21%	41	8	9.65%
1991	419	17.33	249	41	604	894	7845	11.40%	23	2	5.49%
1993	424	17.33	217	62	768	1047	9602	10.90%	33	1	7.78%
1996	424	17.33	128	117	156	401	4429	9.05%	39	1	9.20%
2002	403	17.33	210	196	184	590	5524	10.68%	46	2	11.41%
2007	403	18.02*	229	236	240	705	6085	11.59%	56	2	13.90%
2012	403	19.26**	251	479	177	907	6859	13.22%	68	0	16.87%

Source: Compiled by author.

* Population data comes from the Census 2011 for 2012, from the Sachar Committee Report for 2007 and adapted from (Ansari 2006) for pre-2007 years. These figures should be treated as indicative and not as actual representation of the Muslims population in those years.

A third factor is related to the split voting in areas where Muslims have a strong presence. Voters split their votes between several Muslim candidates, opening therefore to losing the seat to a Hindu candidate.

Table 4.5 *Seats possibly lost due to split Muslim vote (1996)*

Constituency	% Muslims	Number of relevant Muslim candidates*	Beneficiary	Winner's caste
Seohara	39.43	2	BJP	Thakur
Afzalghar	41.60	2	BJP	Thakur
Kanth	37.37	3	BJP	OBC
Amroha	55.80	2	BJP	OBC
Suartanda	56.89	2	BJP	Kayasth
Baheri	44.09	3	BJP	Kurmi
Pilibhit	31.68	2	BJP	Sikh
Jalalpur	13.43	2	BJP	Thakur
Kaimganj	15.95	2	BJP	Shakya
Garhmukhteshwar	30.94	2	BJP	Jat

* Candidates gathering more than 2% of vote share.
Source: Election Commission of India and adapted from Ansari (2006)

Ten seats were lost in the 1996 State elections, to the sole benefit of the BJP, the only mainstream party that does not field any Muslim candidate. In 2002, the BJP won thirteen seats in the same way, while six other seats were also lost due to the dispersion of the Muslim vote, in constituencies where sometimes Muslims are in near majority.

Table 4.6 *Seats possibly lost due to split Muslim vote (2002)*

Constituency	% Muslims	Number of relevant Muslim candidates	Beneficiary	Winner's caste
Afzalghar	41.6	2	BJP	Thakur
Moradabad	50.88	2	BJP	Brahmin
Thakurdwara	45.97	2	BJP	Thakur
Usehat	31.91	2	SP	Yadav
Laharpur	28.63	2	SP	Kurmi
Shahabad	19.32	2	BJP	Thakur
Tiloi	50.78	2	BJP	Thakur
Sultanpur	13.87	2	BJP	Brahmin
Tanda	27.85	2	BSP	Kurmi
Masauli	24.82	2	SP	Kurmi
Kaiserganj	30.92	2	BJP	Kurmi
Nanpara	35.4	2	BJP	Thakur
Sadullanagar	26.36	3	BJP	Thakur
Itwa	37.2	2	SP	Brahmin
Shyam Deurwa	14.59	2	BJP	Thakur
Generalganj	n.a.	2	BJP	Vaishya
Patiali	17.9	2	BSP	Chauhan
Bulandshahr	23.97	2	BJP	Yadav
Meerut	44.72	3	BJP	Brahmin

Source: Adapted from Election Commission of India and adapted from Ansari (2006)

This phenomenon was much more circumscribed in 2007, where only five seats were lost due to the splitting of the Muslim vote. There were practically no instances of split voting in 2012, when 68 Muslims were elected MLAs.

Table 4.7 Seats possibly lost due to split Muslim vote (2007)

Constituency	% Muslims	Number of relevant Muslim candidates	Beneficiary	Winner's caste
Bijnor	46.99	2	BSP	Rajput
Tulsipur	23.01	2	BJP	Brahmin
Utraula	n.a.	3	BJP	Kurmi
Itwa	37.2	2	SP	Brahmin
Sarsawa	n.a.	2	BSP	Soni

Source: Adapted from Election Commission of India and adapted from Ansari (2006)

This observation points out to the main factor explaining the recent rise of Muslims' representation, which is that Muslims vote far more cohesively at the constituency level.

We should not deduct that Muslims have suddenly started to vote en bloc. In fact, it is quite the contrary. Muslims do disperse their votes across parties, as shown in Table 4.8. Even if the Muslims' support for the SP remains important, it has eroded in recent elections, as shown here below in the Lokniti/CSDS data. The BSP, who has also been fielding more and more Muslim candidates recently, received 30.4 per cent of the Muslims' votes in 2010.

Table 4.8 Muslim voters' party preferences in four state elections

	1996	2002	2007	2012
Congress	12.20%	10.00%	14.10%	18.00%
SP	48.00%	53.00%	47.70%	39.40%
BSP	12.30%	9.70%	17.60%	30.40%
BJP	1.90%	1.70%	2.40%	6.60%

Source: CSDS/Lokniti NES Data.

Further, research conducted soon after the 2012 state elections showed that a large number of Muslim candidates were elected with vote share beyond the demographic share of their co-religious electors (Heath, Verniers, and Kumar 2015). This contradicted the

widespread notion that fielding Muslim candidates leads to a Hindu backlash, resulting in lost seats [236].

Finally, to further discard the notion that Muslims in Uttar Pradesh are a homogeneous group or act politically as such, we must consider their internal divisions and stratifications. There are sectarian differences among Muslims, notably between Sunnis and Shias, the latter being particularly under-represented in politics (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012). Within the Sunni majority, the division between the *Barelvi* and *Deobandi* schools of thought is also important[237].

But the crucial division among Muslims in U.P., as in the Indian polity in general, remains caste. With the conversions to Islam of Hindus from different backgrounds, the Indian Muslim community has generated its own caste system[238]. A rapid examination at the caste composition of Muslim MLAs shows how the representation of Muslims is clearly biaised towards the upper castes.

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[236] This research was conducted on the basis of survey data collected before the 2014 General elections, in which the BJP swept the state of Uttar Pradesh, and before the August-September 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots. The religious polarization that has taken place in Uttar Pradesh around these two events is likely to alter our findings.

[237] The former, numerically dominant, defends the popular and traditional practices of Indian Islam (including the visiting of *mazars* and *dargahs*) and has historically opposed the reformist stance of the later. Both movements emerged in Uttar Pradesh, with Ahmad Raza Khan (1856-1921), the founder of the *Barelvi* School, hailing from Bareilly and the *Deobandi* thought coming from the famous *Darul Uloom* seminary in Deoband.

[238] At the top of the hierarchy stand the *Ashrâfs*. They are the alleged descendants of Muslim migrants: among them, the *Sayyids* come from the lineage of Prophet Muhammad; the *Sheikhs* are the descendants of other Arab groups; the *Mughals* have Turkish ancestors and the *Pathans* claim an Afghan line of descent. Hindu converts from high-caste groups (such as the *Kshatriyas*) also fall in this upper category. Then come the *Ajlâfs*, Hindu converts from backward castes, such as the *Saifis* (blacksmiths), the *Qureshis* (butchers) or the *Malis* (cultivators). At the bottom of the ladder are the *Azrâls*, issued from *Dalit* families who converted to Islam. They are often referred to as *Dalit* Muslims or *Pasmanda* Muslims.

Figure 4.4 Caste representation among among Muslim MLAs
(1993-2012)
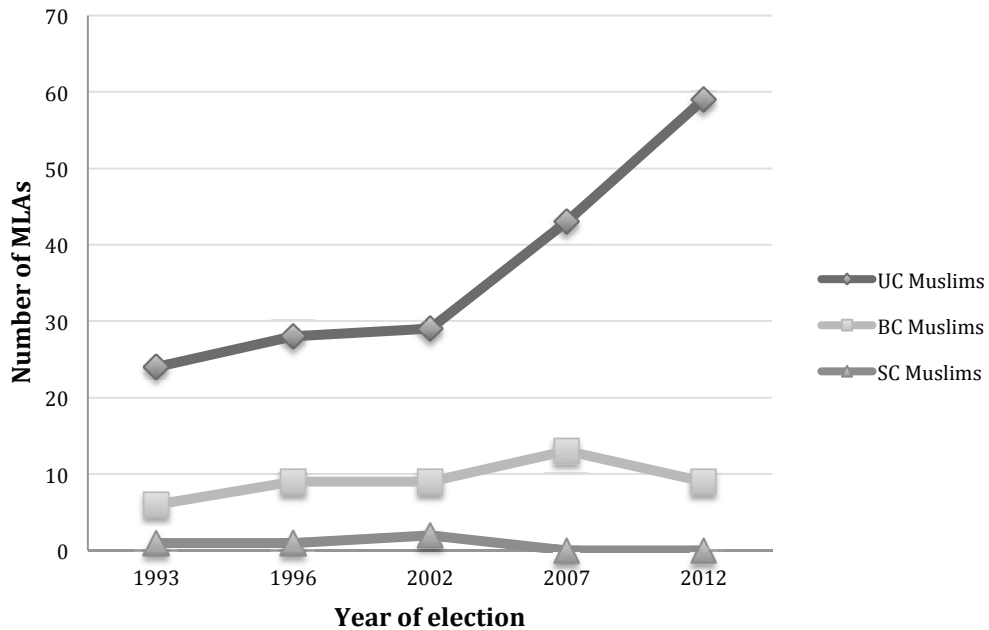
The domination of *Ashrâfs* is a historical phenomenon. They are comparatively richer, more educated, count among them former ruling families, and possess more land. They also constitute larger groups, backward Muslims being divided into a large number of small groups[239]. As a result, parties, who tend to see Muslims as a homogenized lot still guided by feudality, see the upper caste traditional Muslim elites as 'natural leaders', which explains why they get the bulk of the tickets distributed allotted to Muslims[240].

4.1.5. Have parties actually become inclusive?

As we saw in Chapter 2, the majorities of 2007 and 2012 have been built on the capacity of state-based parties to attract votes and provide representation beyond their core support base. An examination of the data on the caste composition of parties' MLAs and candidates in this section reveals that it has been the case for quite a while among the regional parties

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[239] The Census of 1931 recognizes 70 castes among Muslims, of which 7 belongs to the *Ashraf* category. They represent, again in the Census, 47 per cent of the total Muslim population. For a classification and description of castes among Muslims, see (Ansari 1960).

[240] As said by journalist Farzand Ahmed, "*Ashrafs* are dominant politically because they know the tricks: they know how to get tickets, how to get money… And because of the feudal structure which is still prevalent, political parties think that *Syeds*, *Pathans* and *zamindars* will influence the Muslim vote" (interview with the author, Lucknow, 27/07/2011)

and that caste biases have in fact perdured among the national parties, who claim to represent all sections[241]. This exercise helps to discard some common misconceptions about party and caste alignments.

First and foremost, and contrary to popular perception, the representation of OBCs is not the only preserve of the SP and the BJP. They have actually formed the bulk of the BSP's MLAs for more than 20 years, being outweighed by the upper castes only in 2007. Sixty-six years after the implementation of political quotas in favor of Scheduled Castes, it remains difficult (but not impossible) for a Dalit candidate to be elected in a general (non-reserved) seat[242], creating the need for the BSP to distribute tickets to candidates belonging to locally strong castes, hence to OBC candidates in many instances.

Second, the distribution of SC MLAs has shifted in time. In 2012, the SP won 58 reserved seats in 2012 (including 11 Jatavs). The share of BSP Dalit MLAs in Uttar Pradesh is usually quite low, as seen in Table 4.9[243]. The BSP gets usually a third of its seats among the reserved constituencies, except in 1991, where it won none, and 2007, where it won sixty-one seats out of eighty-six.

Table 4.9. Caste representation among among BSP Dalit MLAs (1989-2012)

	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
GEN	8	12	45	47	74	145	65
SC	5		23	20	24	61	15
Total	13	12	68	67	98	206	80

Source: Adapted from ECI data

Third, both the Congress and the BJP remain biased towards the upper castes. Over the last five elections, a majority of the candidates who won on Congress tickets were from

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[241] Parts of this section have appeared in (Jaffrelot and Verniers 2012).

[242] The reason being that SC candidates still face discriminations, first and foremost from political parties themselves, who are reluctant to give them tickets outside reserved seats. That being said, 81 SC candidates have been elected in general seats since 1962: 17 on Congress tickets (in the 1960s and 1980s), 12 on BJP tickets (in the 1990s) and about one or two per year for the BSP since 1993 (including Mayawati herself, who usually contests in two seats at a time).

[243] The election of a Dalit MLA depends in most cases from the support provided by non-Dalit voters, which can play in disfavor of an overtly pro-Dalit party. This observation validates Ambedkar's critique of the system of political reservations. In a text titled « *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables* », Ambedkar argued that the outcome of the election in reserved seats would remain determined by the vote of the caste Hindus.

the upper castes. The induction of several prominent OBC figures, such as former SP Minister Beni Prasad Verma, did not help it to make a dent among OBC voters. Similarly, the BJP is also bent towards the upper castes, including under the stewardship of its OBC figurehead, Kalyan Singh. Here again, the recourse to caste mascots, such as Kalyan Singh, Uma Bharti (both Lodhis) and Babu Singh Kushwaha failed. In 2012, the BJP fared badly among the OBCs, including in areas dominated by these two caste groups.

The SP, with a fairly balanced share of representation of the different caste groups, is the new catch-all party. Upper castes have a significant presence among the SP MLAs since 2002. Despite a decrease in support from the Yadavs, the majority of its OBC MLAs are still drawn from this group (34 out of 58 MLAs in 2012).

Caste representation among candidates

The "rainbow coalitions" of the 2000s had generated hopes that social divisions would be assuaged and that parties would be incited to devise inclusive strategies and design policies that benefit people on the basis of needs rather than on the base of their ascriptive identity.

An examination of the caste profile of parties' candidates tells a different story. If we look at the distribution of tickets across caste groups, the data seems to validate the impression that parties have indeed become inclusive, even if some preferential distribution remains. In 2012, both the Congress and the BJP distributed a higher share of tickets to upper castes candidates (34.4 per cent and 47 per cent respectively), while the BSP and the SP gave them nearly a third of their tickets (28.8 per cent and 29.3 per cent respectively).

Table 4.10 Representation of major caste groups within main parties (1989-2012)

BJP

BJP	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
UC	56.14%	52.04%	53.67%	50.00%	62.50%	58.82%	59.57%
IC	0.00%	1.81%	3.39%	2.30%	1.14%	3.92%	8.51%
OBC	19.30%	19.46%	20.90%	22.99%	17.05%	23.53%	23.40%
SC	22.81%	25.34%	20.34%	21.84%	19.32%	13.73%	6.38%
Muslims			0.56%				
Others	1.75%	1.36%	1.13%	2.87%	0.00%	0.00%	2.13%
Total	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
	N=57	N=221	N=177	N=174	N=88	N=51	N=47

INC

INC	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
UC	44.68%	52.17%	53.57%	63.64%	60.00%	63.64%	53.57%
IC	1.06%	0.00%	3.57%	6.06%	4.00%	4.55%	3.57%
OBC	18.09%	17.39%	14.29%	12.12%	12.00%	9.09%	10.71%
SC	20.21%	17.39%	21.43%	9.09%	8.00%	22.73%	14.29%
Muslims	11.70%	8.70%	3.57%	9.09%	12.00%	0.00%	14.29%
Others	4.26%	4.35%	3.57%	0.00%	4.00%	0.00%	3.57%
Total	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
	N=94	N=46	N=28	N=33	N=25	N=22	N=28

BSP

BSP	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
UC		8.33%	4.41%	14.93%	24.49%	27.67%	21.25%
IC				1.49%	1.02%	2.43%	1.25%
OBC	23.08%	83.33%	42.65%	37.31%	33.67%	24.27%	36.25%
SC	38.46%		35.29%	29.85%	26.53%	30.58%	20.00%
Muslims	38.46%	8.33%	17.65%	16.42%	14.29%	14.08%	18.75%
Others						0.97%	2.50%
Total	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
	N=13	N=12	N=68	N=67	N=98	N=206	N=80

SP

SP	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
UC	35.58%	22.83%	17.43%	22.73%	25.87%	28.87%	26.79%
IC	6.73%	9.78%	0.00%	0.91%	0.70%	1.03%	0.00%
OBC	26.92%	31.52%	49.54%	36.36%	32.17%	36.08%	27.23%
SC	24.04%	21.74%	21.10%	17.27%	25.17%	12.37%	25.89%
Muslims	6.25%	13.04%	11.01%	20.00%	16.08%	21.65%	19.20%
Others	0.48%	1.09%	0.92%	2.73%	0.00%	0.00%	0.89%
Total	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %	100.00 %
	N=208	N=92	N=177	N=174	N=88	N=51	N=47

Source: Author's fieldwork.

All parties distributed about a quarter of their ticket to OBC candidates and divided the rest between SC and Muslim candidates (barring the BJP for the latter category). Table 4.10 shows the return after the polls and confirms that the Congress and the BJP have greater difficulties to get their non-upper caste candidates elected. On the overall, the caste profile of BSP and SP candidates is converging, each caste category or community receiving between 20 to 30 per cent of the tickets as well as representation.

But does this inclusiveness mean that parties no longer rely on caste in the elaboration of their strategy? Is the party appeal or party leaders' appeal strong enough that the caste identity of the candidates no longer matters? If we break down these caste categories, we see that some alignments between certain jatis and parties persist. There are more Yadavs, Rajputs, Pasis and Upper caste Muslims candidates on the SP side, while there are more Brahmins, Jatavs, Kurmis and Lodhs on the BSP side. The BJP favors non-Yadav candidates amongst its OBC candidates (Kurmis and Lodhis in particular), while the SP distributes nearly half of its OBC tickets to Yadav candidates (53 out of 108).

These caste-party alignments indicate that caste remains important to parties' strategies. The variations in time indicate that these alignments aren't stable and that parties adjust their distribution of tickets according to circumstances.

What is important to retain here is that the distribution of tickets is primarily made according to local circumstances, and not from any pre-defined caste representation balance. Parties seek to maximize their chances to win seats by giving tickets to candidates who can bring enough votes from their own community (and beyond), in addition to the support of their core support base, when they have one. The localization of electoral strategies enables parties to develop a generalist discourse while letting the candidates do the caste appeal locally. Parties need to display such a discourse in order to attract the support from floating voters, who tend not to respond to caste appeal. Parties who give preferential treatment to specific castes or who seek to attract the vote from other groups through caste mascots tend to lose elections.

Table 4.11 *Castes and communities among main parties candidates in the 2012 U.P. State elections*

	INC		BJP		BSP		SP	
	Candidates	Elected	Candidates	Elected	Candidates	Elected	Candidates	Elected
Upper castes	**34.37%**	**51.72%**	**46.98%**	**59.57%**	**28.78%**	**21.25%**	**29.18%**	**26.79%**
Bania/Jain	2.25%	-	4.52%	10.64%	1.99%	1.25%	2.74%	2.23%
Bhumihar	1.13%	3.45%	1.51%	2.13%	1.24%	-	1.25%	0.45%
Brahmin	13.24%	13.79%	19.60%	21.28%	17.37%	12.50%	11.47%	9.82%
Kayasth	1.13%	6.90%	0.75%	2.13%	0.50%	-	0.25%	0.45%
Khatri	0.85%	6.90%	1.01%	4.26%	0.25%	-	0.50%	0.45%
Rajput	15.49%	20.69%	19.10%	17.02%	7.44%	7.50%	12.22%	12.95%
Sindhi	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25%	-
Tyagi	0.28%	-	0.25%	-	-	-	0.25%	-
Vaishya	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25%	0.45%
Unidentified		-	0.25%	2.13%	-	-	-	-
Intermediary castes	**1.41%**	**3.45%**	**4.02%**	**2.13%**	**1.74%**	**5.00%**	**1.25%**	**0.45%**
Jat	1.41%	3.45%	4.02%	2.13%	1.74%	5.00%	1.25%	0.45%
Other Backward Classes	**22.25%**	**10.34%**	**25.38%**	**23.40%**	**23.33%**	**36.25%**	**26.93%**	**27.23%**
Gujjar	0.85%	3.45%	1.51%	4.26%	1.24%	3.75%	1.25%	-
Kurmi	2.82%	-	6.03%	2.13%	4.71%	7.50%	3.99%	3.13%
Kushwaha	0.85%	-	1.26%	2.13%	1.99%	5.00%	0.75%	0.45%
Lodhi	2.54%	3.45%	5.03%	4.26%	4.22%	5.00%	2.74%	3.13%
Maurya	0.85%	-	1.01%	2.13%	1.99%	2.50%	-	-
Nishad	1.41%	-	0.50%	-	1.74%	2.50%	1.00%	0.89%
Jaiswal	1.41%	3.45%	1.26%	2.13%	0.50%	-	0.25%	0.45%
Shakya	0.56%	-	0.75%	-	1.49%	3.75%	0.50%	0.89%
Yadav	7.89%	-	4.02%	4.26%	1.99%	1.25%	13.72%	16.52%
Baghel	-	-	-	-	0.25%	-	0.50%	-
Banjara	0.28%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bishnoi	-	-	0.25%	2.13%	-	-	-	-
Chauhan	-	-	-	-	0.25%	-	-	-
Chaurasia	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25%	0.45%
Gadariya	-	-	-	-	0.50%	2.50%	0.25%	0.45%
Garedia	0.56%	-	1.01%	-	-	-	-	-
Gosain	0.28%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goswami	-	-	0.25%	-	-	-	-	-
Kahar	-	-	0.25%	-	-	-	-	-
Kashyap	-	-	0.25%	-	0.25%	-	0.25%	-
Khadagvanshis	0.28%	-	0.25%	-	0.25%	-	-	-
Kumhar	0.28%	-	-	-	-	-	0.50%	-
Mali	0.56%	-	0.50%	-	0.25%	-	-	-
Mallah	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25%	0.45%
Rajbhar	0.28%	-	0.50%	-	1.24%	-	-	-
Saini	0.28%	-	0.75%	-	0.25%	1.25%	0.50%	-
Teli	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25%	-
Unidentified	0.28%	-	-	-	0.25%	1.25%	-	-
Scheduled Castes	**24.23%**	**13.79%**	**21.36%**	**6.38%**	**21.84%**	**20.00%**	**20.70%**	**25.89%**
Jatav	10.99%	6.90%	7.29%	2.13%	14.39%	17.50%	4.74%	5.36%
Pasi	5.63%		4.27%	2.13%	2.98%	2.50%	5.74%	8.93%
Dhobi	1.41%	3.45%	1.01%	-	0.25%	-	1.50%	0.89%
Khatik	0.85%	-	1.51%	-	-	-	1.25%	1.34%
Kori	2.25%	-	1.76%	-	0.50%	-	1.75%	3.13%
Valmiki	1.13%	3.45%	2.01%	2.13%	0.50%	-	1.25%	1.79%
Others	1.13%	-	1.76%	-	0.99%	-	2.49%	3.13%
Unidentified	0.85%	-	1.76%	-	2.23%	-	1.75%	0.89%
Muslim	**16.34%**	**13.79%**	**0.25%**	**-**	**21.34%**	**18.75%**	**20.95%**	**19.20%**
Christian	**0.28%**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Unidentified	**1.13%**	**3.45%**	**2.01%**	**2.13%**	**2.98%**	**2.50%**	**1.00%**	**0.89%**
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=355	N=29	N=398	N=47	N=403	N=80	N=401	N=224

Source: adapted from (Zerinini 2009) and author's fieldwork.

Even the much-advertised Dalit-Brahmin alliance of 2007 was in a way misleading, since the BSP distributed a larger number of tickets to OBC candidates. The logic followed by the BSP was to distribute tickets according to local caste configurations, without pre-conceived notions on who should get how many tickets. The inclusion of Brahmins into the party's public discourse was a way to illustrate that it works for all, in a formulation reminiscent of the Congress' 'coalition of extremes'. The inclusive character of parties is a by-product of the localization of their electoral strategies, more than the consequence of an ideological shift towards inclusiveness.

This evolution bears two important lessons. The first one is that statewide caste appeals are less likely to reap political dividends today than twenty years ago. The tropes of backward caste mobilization of the 1990s – quota politics – have drained out their efficacy. Voters are no longer mobilized by the theme of reservations. Twenty-five years after the implementation of the Mandal report, the benefits of reservations have not trickled down very low among the backwards, far more numerous than the number of public jobs and university seats made available (there has been also a good amount of elite capture among the backwards of those benefits).

The second lesson is that this evolution does not mean that caste appeal has disappeared altogether. It remains in fact at the heart of parties' strategies and remains an essential vehicle for political mobilization but locally. First because local demographic still determine to a large part a candidate's chance at winning, and second, more fundamentally, because local networks of power and influence remain largely organized around local social structure largely based on ascriptive identities. We will see in the last two chapters of this dissertation that caste is deeply enmeshed with local economic networks and that local power and influence remains largely exerted through caste.

4.1.6. Caste representation in cabinets: persistence of biases

The next question is to see whether the inclusive character of parties has led to actual power sharing between groups. After all, parties could very well provide token representation to various caste groups and yet retain the positions of influence among their core support group. One way to look at this question is to examine the composition

of the Cabinet over time, to see whether changes in the Vidhan Sabha are reflected in the Cabinet's composition, and whether we observe party wise variations.

Traditionally, the upper castes have had the lion share of Cabinet portfolios, consonant with their domination of the parties in power and of their over representation in the Assembly (Jaffrelot 2003b). In the first Cabinets of G.B. Pant and Dr. Sampurnanand, Brahmins hold above 30 per cent of the portfolios. Some numerically marginal upper castes such as Kayasthas or Banias were also well-represented. Zerinini points at the fact that each Chief Minister of the early days tended to promote its own caste. The share of Bania ministers rising from 12.5 per cent to 29.4 per cent in 1960, when C.B. Gupta – himself a Bania – led the government[244].

Over the period, Muslims are given a more than proportional representation, while about 12 per cent of the portfolios are allotted to SC Ministers. Backward Ministers are quasi absent from these Congress governments. Besides Charan Singh, the first backward Ministers inducted as Deputy Ministers were Ram Swaroop Verma and Jai Ram Verma (both Kurmis), in the 1957 Sampurnanand cabinet. In the following C.B. Gupta Cabinet, only Ram Swaroop Verma remained a Minister. Two other Backward Ministers joined the 1963 C.B. Gupta Government but were not maintained in the Kripalani Cabinet. There were no backward Ministers in the 1967 C.B. Gupta Government (Mathur 2004). Backward representation started with the first Charan Singh Government, although even the first non-Congress governments remained biaised towards the upper castes.

The return to power Congress in the 1980s also meant a return to old practices. The average share of portfolios allotted to backward Ministers during that decade was of ten per cent, while the upper castes trusted nearly sixty per cent of the berths. The representation of SCs and Muslims remain proportional to their demography. This bias is reflective of the fact that party apparels were dominated by upper castes, including within the socialist parties.

The rupture would come in the early 1990s, with the installation of the first SP and BSP governments. The majority of portfolios were held by upper castes in the 1991 Kalyan Singh's government. Their share dropped to 6.7 per cent and 6.25 per cent in the next two

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[244] Op. Cit., p.55.

cabinets, formed by the SP-BSP alliance. Nearly three quarter of the portfolios were divided among the SCs and the OBCs, Muslims getting no representation at all[245].

The second half of the 1990s was a phase of ascension of the BJP. It became the BSP's coalition partner in 1997 and ruled the state on its own from 1999 to 2002. Consequently, the share of upper caste ministers rose again, to nearly half of the Cabinet. Post-2002, the strategies of the SP and of the BSP created a space for upper caste representation, which remained over-represented in the Cabinet, compared to their share of seats in the Vidhan Sabha.

One needs however to make the distinction between the types of portfolios allotted. There are basically three categories of Ministers: Cabinet Ministers (CM), Minister of State and Minister of State (MoS) with Independent Charge (MoS-IC). In the 2002 SP Cabinet, Upper castes make for a third of the portfolios, but sixty per cent of the Cabinet Ministerships. They are also clearly over-represented among the MoS (IC), positions, considered more prestigious than MoS since they are not placed under the authority of a Cabinet Minister. However, OBCs and upper caste share the better portfolios. The OBCs and SCs get about a quarter of the portfolios, while the Muslims get a proportional representation, including in the CM category.

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[245] op.cit., p.59.

Table 4.12 *Castes and communities in U.P. Cabinets*

	2002 (SP)				2007 (BSP)				2012 (SP)			
	CM	MoS (IC)	MoS	Total	CM	MoS (IC)	MoS	Total	CM	MoS (IC)	MoS	Total
Upper castes	**51.90%**	**60.00%**	**18.90%**	**33.30%**	**51.90%**	**25.00%**	**20.00%**	**34.40%**	**47.10%**	**21.70%**	**40.00%**	**33.30%**
Brahmin	18.50%	20.00%	3.80%	7.80%	33.30%	8.30%	2.00%	7.50%	17.60%	4.30%	-	8.90%
Rajput	22.20%	40.00%	7.50%	11.10%	11.10%	16.70%	8.00%	10.80%	29.40%	13.00%	40.00%	22.20%
Bania	-	-	3.80%	2.20%	-	-	6.00%	3.20%	-	4.30%	-	2.20%
Bhumihar	7.40%	-	1.90%	2.20%	3.70%	-	2.00%	2.20%	-	-	-	-
Other UC	3.70%	-	1.90%	2.20%	3.70%	-	2.00%	2.20%	-	-	-	-
OBC	**22.20%**	**10.00%**	**32.10%**	**26.70%**	**37.00%**	**8.30%**	**34.00%**	**29.00%**	**29.40%**	**34.80%**	**20.00%**	**31.10%**
Yadav	7.40%	10.00%	18.90%	13.30%	7.40%	8.30%	18.00%	12.90%	29.40%	8.70%	-	15.60%
Kurmi	-	-	-	-	14.80%	-	4.00%	6.50%	-	4.30%	20.00%	4.40%
Lodh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.70%	-	4.40%
Nishad	7.40%	-	5.70%	5.60%	3.70%	-	4.00%	3.20%	-	4.30%	-	2.20%
Other OBC	7.40%	-	9.40%	7.80%	11.10%	-	8.00%	6.50%	-	4.30%	-	-
SC	**7.40%**	**20.00%**	**32.10%**	**23.30%**	**7.40%**	**16.70%**	**30.00%**	**20.40%**	**5.90%**	**17.40%**	**20.00%**	**13.30%**
Jatav	-	-	13.20%	7.80%	-	-	14.00%	7.50%	-	8.70%	-	4.40%
Katik	-	-	3.80%	2.20%	-	-	4.00%	2.20%	-	4.30%	-	2.20%
Kori	-	10.00%	-	1.10%	-	8.30%	-	1.10%	-	-	20.00%	2.20%
Pasi	7.40%	-	5.70%	5.60%	7.40%	-	6.00%	5.40%	5.90%	4.30%	-	4.40%
Other SC	-	10.00%	9.40%	6.70%	-	8.30%	6.00%	4.30%	-	-	-	-
Muslims	**18.50%**	**10.00%**	**17.00%**	**16.70%**	**3.70%**	**50.00%**	**12.00%**	**14.00%**	**17.60%**	**26.10%**	**20.00%**	**22.20%**
UC Muslims	18.50%	-	5.70%	6.70%	3.70%	33.30%	8.00%	9.70%	17.60%	21.70%	-	17.80%
BC Muslims	-	10.00%	7.50%	5.60%	-	16.70%	4.00%	4.30%	-	4.30%	20.00%	4.40%
Unidentified	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.00%	2.20%	-	-	-	-
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	N=27	N=10	N=53	N=90	N=27	N=12	N=50	N=93	N=17	N=23	N=5	N=45

Source: Author's fieldwork.

The 2007 BSP Government follows the same pattern. Upper castes are over-represented, particularly among the CM positions. Interestingly, the share of portfolios allotted to OBCs increases slightly, to 29 per cent, and the per centage of portfolios allotted to SC ministers decreases, from 23.3 to 20.4 per cent. The main difference with regard to SC representation in SP and BSP cabinets is the fact that SCs get better portfolios under the BSP rule, but not a larger overall number of berths.

The SC representation drops to 13.3 per cent in the 2012 SP government, despite the strong performance of the party in reserved seats. Here again, the upper castes have the upper hand, even if OBC ministers get comparatively stronger portfolios.

Looking at jatis, we observe the same alignment that we saw in the Vidhan Sabha and among the candidates. There are more Rajput and Yadav Ministers in SP Cabinet and more Brahmin and non-Yadav OBC Ministers in the BSP candidates. Among the Dalits, there is not much differentiation between the two parties. Both distribute portfolios across the main SC castes and both of them exclude Jatavs from major posts (there are no Jatav Cabinet Ministers, with the notable exception of Mayawati).

A look at the denomination of the portfolios also reveals a common trend in India, which is that the upper castes and dominant OBCs trust the major remunerative positions (industrial development, natural resources, transport, sugar and cane industry, public works, etc.) while the "subaltern ministers" are confined to "subaltern portfolios", such as SC/ST welfare, or minority welfare. This inequality in the distribution of portfolios is significant since it does not only reflect a differentiation of status. Remunerative portfolios are those who provide access to vast resources – collection, subsidies, contracts and tenders – which can be used or rather misused to nurture patronage and clientelistic networks, and build electoral support.

Concentration of power within Cabinets

Finally, if the caste composition of cabinets is a reflection of the representation equilibrium sought by the party in power, it should not be necessarily interpreted as a indicator of caste

empowerment. The reality of power sharing within cabinets is that power is in fact very much concentrated in the hands of the Chief Minister and a handful of important ministers.

Thus, Chief Ministers retain most of the major portfolios (and a large number of less significant ones). In the current administration, Akhilesh Singh Yadav retains nearly 38 per cent of the portfolios, including major competences such as Home, Finance, Energy, Excise, Education, Sugar and Cane Development, and Industrial Development (The Hindu, 2012). In the previous government, Mayawati held 27 per cent of the portfolios, including Home, Finance, Justice, Appointments, State Revenue, Industrial Development, and so on.

A look at past data shows that this is no new phenomenon. In fact, Congress Chief Ministers in the 1980s used to concentrate power more than their successors have. In the 1980s, N.D. Tiwari and Vir Bahadur Singh used to retain up to 60 per cent of the portfolios.

Table 4.13 *Portfolio concentration in U.P. Cabinets, 1980-2012**

Year	Chief Minister	Party	No of Portfolio held by CM	Total Portfolios	Cabinet Size	% held by CM
1980-1982	V.P. Singh	Congress	56	93	15	60.2%
1982-1984	Sripati Mishra	Congress	29	98	26	29.6%
1984-1985	Narayan Dutt Tiwari	Congress	74	226	48	32.7%
1985-1985	Narayan Dutt Tiwari	Congress	44	106	36	41.5%
1985-1988	Vir Bahadur Singh	Congress	56	92	17	60.9%
1988-1989	Narayan Dutt Tiwari	Congress	54	89	13	60.7%
1989-1991	Mulayam Singh Yadav	JD	44	89	13	49.4%
1991-1993	Kalyan Singh	BJP	50	144	47	34.7%
1993-1995	Mulayam Singh Yadav	SP	65	121	27	53.7%
1995-1995	Mayawati	BSP	63	146	33	43.2%
1996-1997	Mayawati	BSP	69	222	46	31.1%
1997-1999	Kalyan Singh	BJP	19	113	43	16.8%
1999-2000	Ram Prakash Gupta	BJP	20	107	50	18.7%
2000-2002	Rajnath Singh	BJP	19	169	86	11.2%
2002-2003	Mayawati	BSP	45	117	24	38.5%
2003-2007	Mulayam Singh Yadav	SP	33	200	97	16.5%
2007-2012	Mayawati	BSP	40	147	57	27.2%
2012-	Akhilesh Singh Yadav	SP	50	133	46	37.6%

   Source: Compiled by the author, Uttar Pradesh Gazette.

   *Measure taken at the first government formation.

The increase of Cabinet size and of the total number of portfolios in later years account for the lower per centages. If we add the fact, not represented here, that the government's

number two also tend to concentrate a number of major portfolios[246], we can ascertain that Ministers tend not to matter more than the descriptive representation they provide and the number of supporters that they bring to the party in power.

We also see that the Cabinet size can vary greatly, from 13 members in the N.D. Tiwari and Mulayam Singh Yadav governments between 1988 and 1991 to 97 in the second SP government. The inflation of portfolios can come from the need to accommodate coalition partners, maintain regional and factional balance, induct new faces in the party, give prominence to some caste leaders ahead of elections or simply lure adversaries to defect.

The inflation of cabinet size also meant an increase of meaningless competences, such Minister of State for Awards and Trophies. These are only meant to grant the status of Minister, with the perks and advantages, material and symbolic, that come with it[247]. Similar observations can be made about the number of departments, which varies from 89 to 226, signaling the pressures put to the bureaucracy who must adapt rapidly to those changes of organization and nomenclature.

What we see here however is the persistence of biases that indicate that upper caste politicians have resisted rather well to the rise of so-called backward parties. An examination of sub-regional variations in the caste composition of the State Assembly will provide further confirmation of that fact.

4.2. Sub-regional variations

What I have done so far is to look at variations in time, on the basis of caste, jati and party lines. But the State of Uttar Pradesh is a vast territory containing a population greater than Brazil's. We must therefore pay heed to spatial variations and see how these variations affect the narratives built on the basis of aggregate data.

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[246] In 2007, Nasimuddin Siddiqui held eight "remunerative" portfolios, including Public Works, Irrigation, Sugar and Cane Development, Excise, and Urban Land. In the preceding government, the brother of Mulayam Singh Yadav, also held eight portfolios.
[247] In 2004, a Supreme Court ordered fixed the limit to Cabinet size to 15 per cent of the Assembly seats. Mulayam Singh Yadav's jumbo cabinet was made to resign in its quasi entirety in order to comply to the new rule.

What emerges from that exercise is that caste groups have been set on very diverse trajectories in various parts of the state, the upper castes notably resisting decline in large populated sub-regions. And in the sub-regions where the upper castes have indeed been challenged, they haven't necessarily been supplanted by OBCs.

The evolution of parties' electoral strategies after 1996 has altered pre-existing caste-party alignments, paving the way notably to a resurgence of upper castes representation in the Assembly.

Sub-regional trajectories can be sorted into three categories. The first one includes sub-regions where the upper castes and the OBCs have indeed fallen and risen. The second trajectory includes sub-regions where the upper caste domination has remained unchallenged over time. The third trajectory includes a particular case – Rohilkhand - where the upper castes have been supplanted in two periods by Muslim MLAs.

4.2.1. Where the Savarnas have fallen

The first trajectory includes four sub-regions where the upper castes' domination has been successfully challenged by the OBCS: Doab, the East, Bundelkhand and Rohilkhand.

In Doab, the share of upper castes MLAs was for a long period stable, around 40 per cent, until 1985 when they gradually declined. They hit their lowest representation, at 25 per cent, in 1996. The OBCs are on a reverse mirror trajectory over the same period, and peaked at 42.3 per cent of the seats in 1993. They have gradually declined since, due to the rise of Muslims' representation, but have remained ahead of the upper castes.

Doab contains a number of constituencies that have been SP and BSP strongholds. Etawah, Jaswant Nagar, Kannauj or Aligarh are important Yadav strongholds, controlled by the SP. Over the last five elections, the BSP has had a stable hold over 13 seats in that area, though not necessarily held by the same individuals over time.

Figure 4.5 Caste and communities representation
in Doab (88)
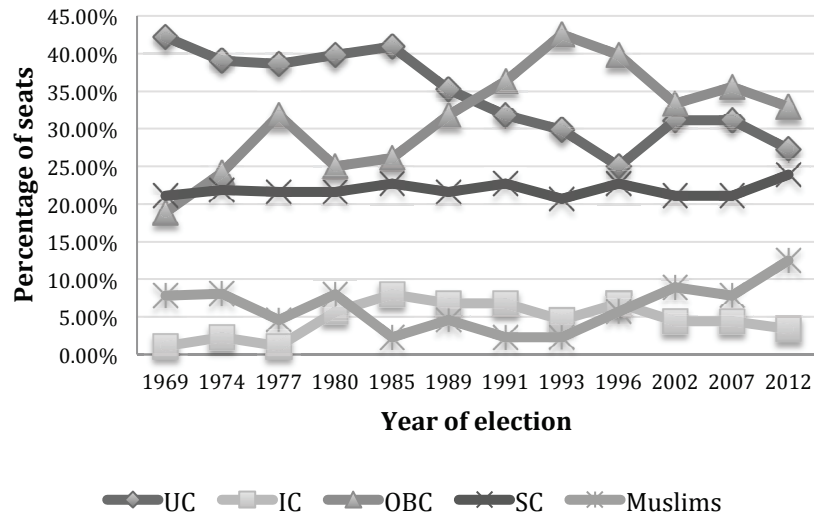
Source: Author's fieldwork.

The East follows a similar trajectory. The evolution of upper castes' representation through the 1980s and early 1990s follows the path of the Congress' vote share and seat share performance. It peaked in 1980 at 52.5 per cent of the seats and got divided by three by 1993. The rise of the BJP in the mid-1990s creates some space for upper caste representation. Once the BJP started declining in the 2000s, the state based parties followed suit As a result, both upper castes and OBC representation is well distributed among parties, and oscillates around 30 per cent of the seats for both groups.

Figure 4.6 Caste and communities
representation in East Uttar Pradesh (61)
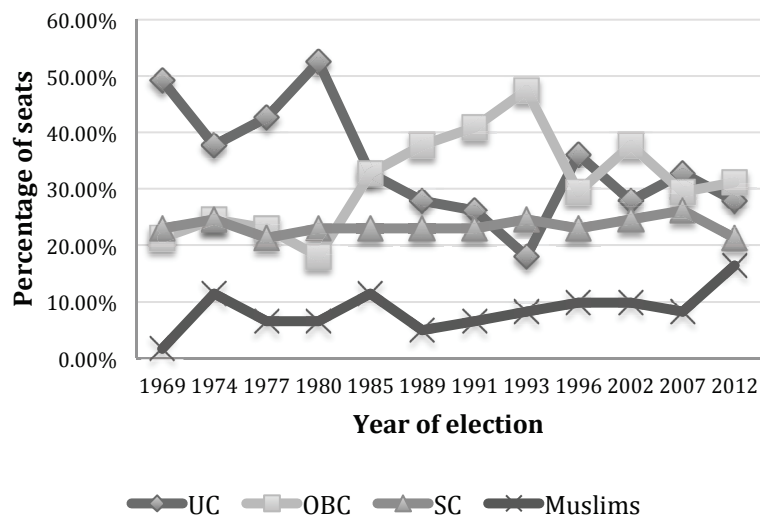
Source: Author's fieldwork.

Similarly as in Doab, the representation of UCs and OBCs gets rebalanced with the rise of Muslims' representation, at 12.5 per cent and 16.4 per cent of the seats respectively.

The scenario is again the same in Bundelkhand, a small poor sub-region in which the BSP has emerged as the first party (and has retained that position) since 1993. Here again, the variations in caste representations are not linked to the performance of the winning party. In 2002, for example, the BSP won 10 seats with MLAs belonging to nine different castes (four upper castes, three OBC castes and one Jatav). Five years later, it won 14 seats with MLAs belonging to eight different castes, and so on. One sees similar caste dispersion within the SP or the BJP earlier.

Figure 4.7 Caste and communities representation
in Bundelkhand (21)
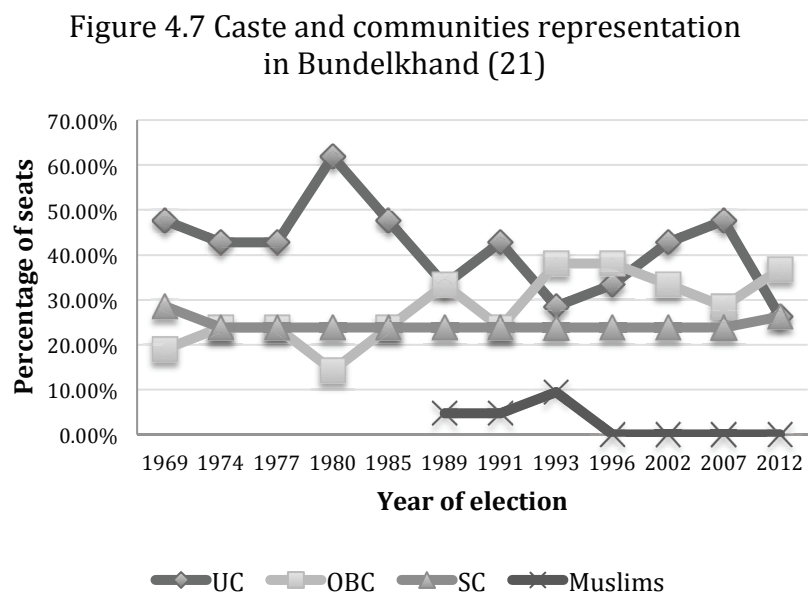
Source: Author's fieldwork.

In these three cases, the evolution of caste representation is coincidental to parties' performances and strategies. In other words, castes are represented through the three major parties.

Finally, one also sees a sharp decline of upper castes representation in Rohilkhand, with however three distinctive features. The first one is that the upper castes have been challenged in different periods. The first challenge to their domination came in the 1970 and early 1980s.

The second distinctive feature is that this challenge did not come from OBCs but from Muslims, who make 35.3 per cent of the population, according to the 2011 Census. The Janata Party defeated the Congress in 1977 notably by fielding a large number of Muslim candidates. The situation reversed in 1980, when the Congress returned to power also by fielding a large number of Muslim candidates[248]. These Muslim politicians were quickly abandoned by the Congress and for a time, the rise of the BJP led to a sharp rise of upper caste representation, Rajputs and Banias in particular (there are very few Brahmin politicians in the BJP in Rohilkhand). In 1991, the BJP won 67 per cent of the seats with 35.6 per cent of the vote share. They lost a third of their seats two years later and by 2007, its electoral base has been cut in half.

After the Babri Masjid demolition, Muslim voters mobilized behind the SP, who returned the favor with tickets. The BSP followed suit and created a new space of representation for Muslims in the area.

Figure 4.8 Caste and communities representation in Rohilkhand (52)
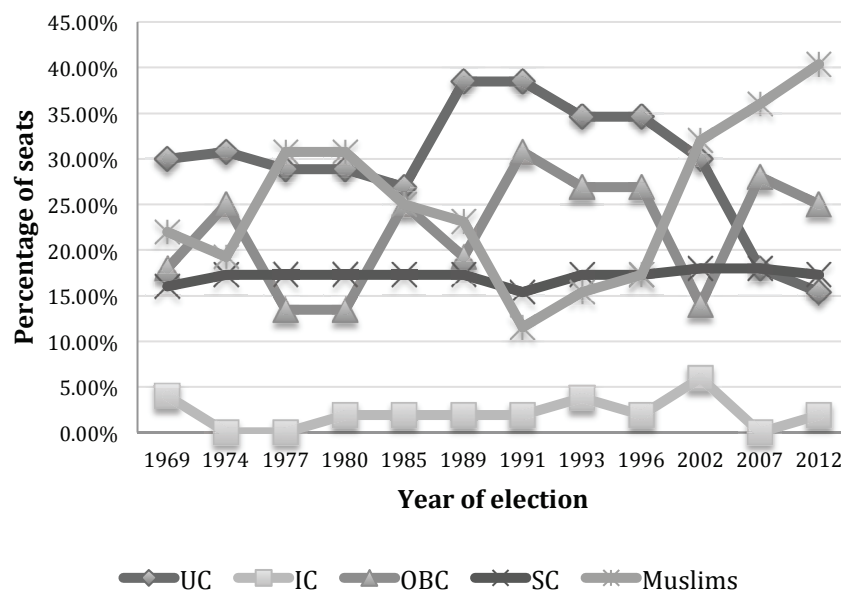
Source: Author's fieldwork.

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[248] In 1977, Muslims in Rohilkhand were well represented within the Janata Party, with 9 out of 16 seats won by Muslim candidates. Four were elected on Congress tickets and three as independents. In 1980, the Congress got a large number of Muslim candidates elected (11) while the JNP (SC) Muslim MLAs barely retains three seats (there were no defections).

In 2012, they secured the highest share of seats ever obtained by any group in this sub-region (40.4 per cent). Since 1993, the SP, BSP and BJP are all in a 20 to 30 per cent bracket, the SP being usually ahead of the BSP. As a result, the SP is neatly ahead of the BSP in terms of seat share, providing representation to its three main constituencies: Yadavs, Muslims and Rajputs. But the rise of the Muslims in Rohilkhand comes from the fact that not one but two parties offer them opportunities to win seats[249].

4.2.2. Where the Savarnas have resisted

The second group is made of two contiguous sub-regions – Avadh and the Northeast – which have in common the persistence of upper caste domination among their MLAs.

With 102 seats, Avadh is the largest sub-region, containing a quarter of the State's population. Here, the share of seats of Upper castes has remained as high as forty percent since 1993, ten points lower than in previous decades.

Figure 4.9 Caste and communities representation in Avadh (102)
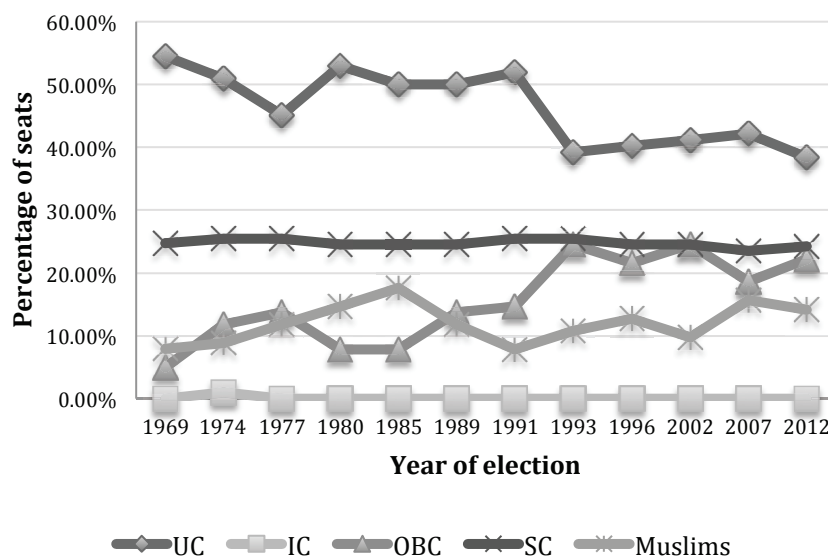
Source: Author's fieldwork.

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[249] The BSP won half of the 51 seats it won in the area with Muslim candidates, the rest being divided among a variety of castes. The SP won 95 seats since 1993, comprising 35 Muslim MLAs, 18 Yadavs and 8 Rajputs. The SP also usually scores well in reserved seats, half of its MLAs being Jatav Dalits.

The main reason for their resilience is the fact that they are strongly represented among all major parties, due to the hold they have maintained in a large number of constituencies. Both the BJP and the SP privilege Rajput representation[250], while the Congress used to be more skewed in favor of Brahmins, in the 1960s and 1970s. The BSP since its creation has distributed an equal number of tickets to both groups.

The same dynamic explains the situation in the Northeast, where the share of seats hold by upper castes MLAs is even higher (above 60 per cent until 1980 then in a see-saw between 48 and 62 per cent post-1980). OBC representation has increased slightly over the years, but is dispersed between nearly a dozen of different groups, none of them standing above the others. Muslims' representation is low and stable – below 10 per cent.

Figure 4.10 Caste and communities representation in the Northeast (37)
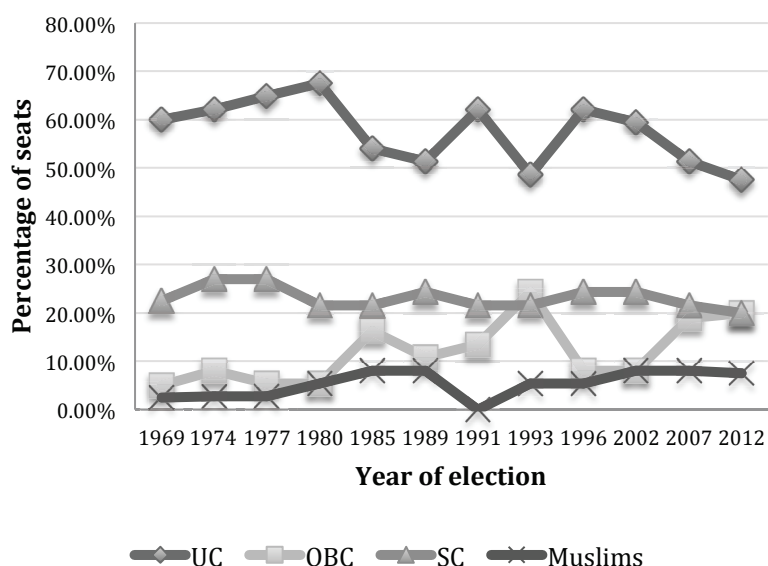
Source: Author's fieldwork.

Through the 1990s, the bulk of the upper castes MLAs came from the BJP (with an equal representation of Brahmins and Rajputs) and the SP, who also recruits half of its MLAs from these two groups. The BSP, weaker in this sub-region, also draws a third of its MLAs from these two groups. What is striking is that the rest of the representational landscape is completely dispersed between a large number of castes who all get few seats each. Therefore, socially and politically speaking, there is no group demographically strong enough and consolidated behind a party that could challenge the upper castes' domination.

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[250] 60 Rajput MLAs in total for the BJP from 1980 to 2012, against 39 to Brahmin MLAs.

One can also add Uttarakhand in this grouping. Now a separate state, this former sub-region of Uttar Pradesh has been since Independence dominated by the upper castes who, according to the 1931 Census, represent 66 per cent of the population[251]. Uttarakhand is a particular case, owing to its particular demography, but also because of the fact that Congress opposition before the BJP was traditionally weak and that the dominant party system would evolve into a bipolar party system with the rise of the BJP. Other parties never had much strength, barring the Janata Dal in the 1980s, which rose for a while, before being thwarted by the BJP and its appeal among upper caste voters.

Figure 4.11 Caste and communities representation in Uttarakhand (22)
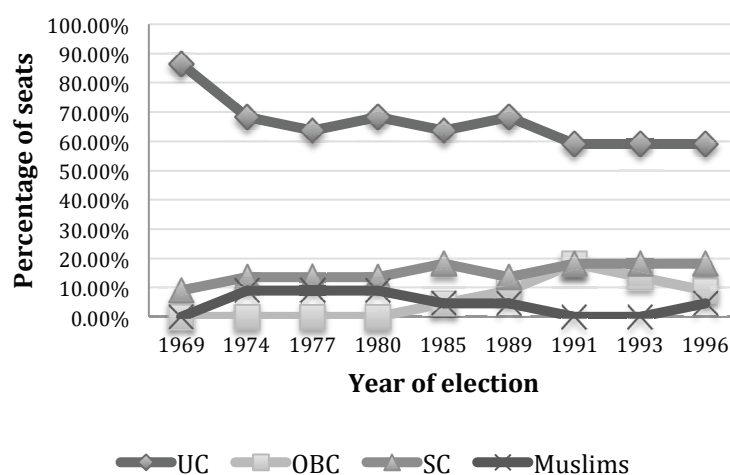
Source: Author's fieldwork.

These are two sub-regions (if one excludes Uttarakhand), that contain 35 per cent of the population and 35 per cent of the Vidhan Sabha seats, where the silent revolution, to say it prosaically, did not take place. This is due largely, once again, to the fact that upper castes find representation across the main parties and that the rest of the "caste landscape" is highly dispersed among the other groups.

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[251] I have calculated the ratio of upper castes (Brahmins, Rajputs, Banias/Vaishyas, Khattris and Kayasthas) to the total population of the Kumaon Division, Dehra Dun district and State of Tehri Garhwal, from the 1931 Census.

4.2.3. The West: Free-for all competition

Remains one particular sub-region – the West – where caste group's representation has been in seesaw, without any group dominating in particular. The political landscape in Western Uttar Pradesh is divided among five important groups – the Muslims, who make up 31 per cent of the population, the Jats, the Gujjars, the Brahmins and then the Rajputs. Parties compete by distributing tickets across these five groups, in dosages that vary in time. As a result, the political scene is highly competitive and volatile. The BJP has so far provided equal representation to four dominant groups: the Jats, the Gujjars, the Brahmins and the Rajputs. The BSP traditionally performs well in reserved seats and has recently been inducting many Gujjar and Muslim candidates.

Figure 4.12 Caste and communities representation
in Western Uttar Pradesh (42)
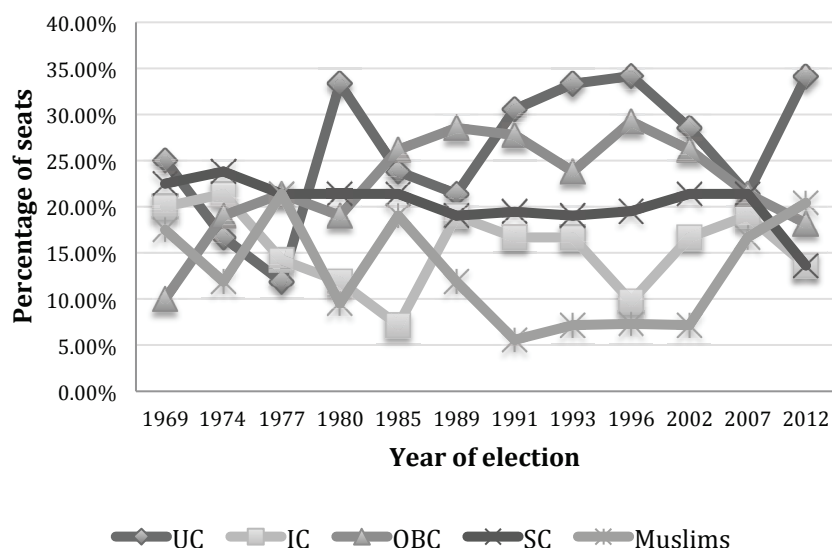
Source: Author's fieldwork.

From 1969 to 1989, the party system was essentially bipolar, the various avatars of Charan Singh's socialist party challenging the Congress. The Congress provided representation to Brahmins and Gujjars, and traditionally performed well in reserved seats. The socialists would provide representation to Jats, Gujjars, and Muslims. Both parties collapsed in 1991, when the JD split and when the BJP erupted on the political scene, winning votes across the caste spectrum. Since then, the Rashtriya Lok Dal has had difficulties garnering votes outside its Jat support base. That same Jat support base is itself divided among several parties. Muslims have left the RLD, breaking with a tradition of voting alongside the Jats. The BSP made dents into the Muslim votes by favoring backward Muslim candidates.

It is worth noting that Ralph C. Meyer, who conducted the first study of the sociological profile of U.P. MLAs in the 1960s, noted that what he called the "Northwesterners MLAs" were among the most distinct group in the state (Meyer 1969). He describes them as being "*highly non-agricultural in occupation as well as in heritage (…) half of them (…) in professions[252]*". He adds, "*no other plain regions had as high a proportion of lawyers, educators and doctors*"[253]. These MLAs were also more wealthy than others – due to the relative prosperity of the region, and counted more Muslims and few upper castes. The most represented Hindu castes were the Banias, Khatris, Jats, Tyagis and Chamars[254].

With such variations, it does not make much sense to speak any more about overall or aggregate trends. The various groups in competition rely on the grip they have over particular constituencies, due to their demographic strength and to the social, political and economic control they exert over these territories.

4.2.4. Explaining variations

What accounts for these variations? I have already hinted at two possible types of explanation: demographic, and political.

The simplest explanation would consist in saying that castes not being equally distributed across the territory, their representation in various sub-regions is determined by their demographic concentration. Thus, the high number of Muslim MLAs in Rohilkhand or the high number of upper caste MLAs in Uttarakhand derives from their respective numerical strength. The SP also tends to be stronger in constituencies where there is a high proportion of Yadavs, such as Mainpuri, Azamgarh, Ghazipur or Kheri[255]. But a high

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[252] Ibid., p. 287.
[253] Ibid., p. 293.
[254] Ibid., p. 293.
[255] The 1931 Census provides caste data at the Division and the district level. It provides some indications. Yadavs have a stronger presence in an area that covers four contiguous divisions: Faizabad (11.50 per cent), Allahabad (11.71 per cent), Benares (14.36 per cent) and Gorakhpur (13.85 per cent). They represent nearly 10 per cent of the population in the Lucknow division. There are few Yadavs (less than 3 per cent) in Rohilkhand and Meerut. The highest concentrations of Yadavs (above 20%) are found in the districts Mainpuri, Azamgarh,, Ghazipur and Kheri.

demography does not necessarily translate into political representation and, more importantly, does not account for variations in time.

The second explanation is simply political. By the ticket distribution choices that they make, parties determine to a large extent who is to be represented where. They may be determined by demography in their choices, but the local competitive set up also plays a part in their choice of candidates.

This is significant since it is often assumed that caste representation emerges from below, from the politicization and mobilization of castes on the basis of identity and their demands for representation. I am not denying that these dynamics take place, but I surmise that these types of mobilization dynamics only concern a handful of caste, relevant and powerful enough to constitute the core base of a specific political party. For most castes – and therefore for most voters –, the political choice they make is largely determined by what parties have to offer, a representation heavily skewed in favor of dominant groups.

There is further ground to explore to account for why certain castes are in a position of dominance in some areas and not in others. It is no coincidence that the area that has seen the most political churning – Western U.P. – is also the area that has developed the most. It is also the area where the land tenure system (based on the *baichara* system) favored smaller landholding peasant communities even before the Green revolution. Land reforms have been less successful in the East and the various classes of traditional landlords more successful at preserving their assets and privileges than in the West[256].

There are also commonalities across these sub-regional trajectories that are important to our main argument on the localization of electoral politics.

The first commonality is that the phase of decline of the upper castes and rise of backwards was in fact an episode limited in time – ten to fifteen years at the most, roughly through the

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Incidentally, the SP President Mulayam Singh Yadav contested both in Mainpuri in Azamgarh seats in 2012.

[256] As Rohini Guha demonstrates in her doctoral dissertation, access to land remains the main issue for Dalits in Eastern U.P., while education is the primary concern of Dalits in the West (Guha 2008, 117).

1980s and the early 1990s. In fact, the decline of the upper castes before all follows the decline of the Congress Party. The upper caste MLAs had a first resurgence when the BJP won two elections in the mid-1990s, and a second resurgence when the state-based parties started to open their doors to them.

The second commonality is that even in sub-regions where the OBCs have risen, it has usually not been uniformly behind a single party. Some crucial aggregation remain – Yadavs with SP for instance – but otherwise, the OBC representation is dispersed between many groups who do not form a cohesive ensemble – not socially nor politically.

This trend is also observable at the sub-regional level. Parties distribute tickets across castes also within sub-regions, which is a further indication that parties' strategies follow local caste configurations and not pre-planned broad caste alliances.

There were some caste-party alignments in the 1980s and early 1990s, but post 1993, these alignments were blurred by the transformation of parties' electoral strategies. In that context, caste representation has become a by-product of localized party strategies. In terms of mobilization and political discourse, state-level caste oriented narratives have ceased to operate to the benefit of local arrangements, negotiations, and transactions between groups and individuals embedded in specific socio-economic contexts. Party appeals matters, state level issues matters, but it is at the local level that the articulation between caste and politics takes effectively place. What makes a particular caste politically relevant to parties locally becomes then the next question to address.

4.3. Beyond caste

The Vidhan Sabha's *Who's Who's* mention the education and occupation background of MLAs. We will see in this section that the content of these documents is of limited help, but do reveal however some information about the sociological changes that have taken place in the Assembly.

4.3.1. Education

The first variable is education. In her contribution on the subject, Zerinini noted that since the 1960s, the proportion of MLAs with a university degree was quite high, a phenomenon she attributes to the elite character of the two main parties' organizations, Congress and socialists (Zerinini 2009, 48-49). Among the degrees pursued by the legislators, the LLB diploma was the most current.

The proportion of MLAs with a university degree increases over time. in a state where college enrolment in 2012 was four points below the national average (16.8 per cent against 20.4 percent nationally).

There isn't much differenciation of educational background, party-wise. Congress and BJP MLAs tend to be more highly educated than the others, but they are also much fewer in number and more urban, as far as the BJP is concerned.

Table 4.14 *Education of U.P. MLAs*

	1980	1985	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012
Up to Class VIII	6.57	3.76	4.68	3.57	2.81	8.96	3.23	6.45	6.20
Class IX to Intermediate	25.59	26.76	23.89	23.24	21.12	7.31	9.43	25.56	32.75
Graduation	15.72	20.19	23.42	25.23	35.7	48.35	52.85	41.44	38.21
Postgraduation	36.39	39.67	36.06	32.38	25.35	19.58	26.05	22.08	19.11
PhD	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.24	1.88	2.12	2.73	1.74	1.99
Non-conventional	0.23	0	0.23	0.24	0	0.24	-	-	-
Unidentified	15.25	9.39	11.47	15	13.14	13.44	5.71	2.73	1.74
Total	99.9%	100%	99.9%	99.9%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=426	N=426	N=427	N=420	N=426	N=424	N=403	N=403	N=403

Source: quoted from Zerinini (2009, 52) until 1993. Post-1993, adapted from Vidhan Sabha *Who's Who* (Affidavit data post 2002).

The variations that pre-existed between castes have also faded in time. Upper caste MLAs still tend to be more highly educated than others but the gap is closing. Over the past four elections, Jats have had the highest share of MLAs with university degrees (75.5 per cent), followed closely by upper caste MLAs (73 per cent). 67 per cent of the OBC MLAs have attended college, while that number lowers to 62 and 60 for SCs and Muslims, respectively. Zerinini noted the BJP SC MLAs tended to be more educated than the BSP SC MLAs. That is no longer the case since the mid-1990s.

We do have information also on the place of education. The data is only partial but does confirm that a large number of MLAs got their degree from a limited number of universities, among them the universities of Agra, Lucknow and Allahabad. A large number of Muslim MLAs have received their higher education at the Aligarh Muslim University. The decline of these institutions through time has not diminished their role of producer of political elites, though these elites emerge more the student unions than from the classroom per se.

Overall, the U.P. Assembly does have an elitist character, which confirms that education is also a political resource. However, one should be cautious handling this data, since many MLAs simply do not declare their education level, nor is there a standardized nomenclature for the type of the nomenclature[257].

4.3.2. The problem of occupation

Finally, assessing the professional background of MLAs is a complicated task for a series of reasons that have to do with the quality and reliability of the data available on that subject. The traditional way consisting in looking at Vidhan Sabha's *Who's whos* is unsatisfactory for at least six reasons.

The first reason is that the socio-professional categories used are too broad and undifferentiated. In particular, the categories of agriculturists, business or political or social workers are virtually meaningless, if one does not cross them with other information, on landholding sizes, the number of people employed, and so on, which is difficult to obtain[258].

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[257] Few actually do not declare the type of degree, which makes it difficult to assess the actual ratio of type of education.

[258] One could technically do that by crossing the occupation variable with the revenue information we get from affidavit. But this data being also self-declared and generally recognized as systematically under-valued, it is in fact of little help. Candidate's income is individual while in most cases, the relevant unit would be the household. In recent years, the affidavit includes the spouse's occupation and revenue declaration. However, it remains however easy for any candidate to conceal their actual wealth, especially since no verifications are conducted by the ECI or other state agency.

The second difficulty comes from the fact that many candidates simply don't declare their occupation. Jayant Chaudhury, son of Ajit Singh, for example, does not declare any particular profession.

The third issue is that it is frequent that a profession conceals other sources of revenue. In my years of fieldwork, I have encountered a number of lawyers politicians who owned factories, ran private schools, took participation in their partners or friends' businesses. For most of them, legal fees were a minor part of their income.

Until the 2000s, few MLAs would declare themselves as 'businessmen', for an 'agriculturist' tag fits better with the image they wish to project to their constituents[259]. A number of MLAs start declaring politics or social work as their profession after their first election[260]. For example, Bhagwan Sharma, an MLA from Debai constituency, ran in 2007 on a BSP ticket as an industrialist and in 2012 on a SP ticket as a political worker.

A fourth problem comes from the fact that many MLAs declare more than one profession, such as lawyer and industrialist, or social worker and petrol pump owner, which blurs socio-professional categories and poses coding issues.

A fifth problem comes from the presence of politicians involved in illegal activities or in the black economy more generally speaking. In many instances, local elected mafia dons are engaged into all sorts of undeclared interests in a range of economic activities – liquor, construction, illegal mining, trafficking, etc.. It would be unrealistic to assume that politics does not reflect in part the fact that a large share of the economy belongs to the shadows[261].

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[259] And the fact also that agricultural income is not taxed in India. There is thus a great incentive to declare oneself as "agriculturist" since money earned from other activities can easily be laundered through the farm. I thank Philip K. Oldenburg for reminding me of that fact.

[260] In quite a few cases, the spouse's occupation declaration provides a hint. Number of social workers are married to women who owns brick kilns or petrol pumps.

[261] There is disagreement on the size of the black or "shadow" economy in India. Recent reports place it somewhere 50 to 75 per cent of the GDP. For an attempt to measure the size of the black economy in India, see (Chaudhuri, Schneider, and Chattopadhyay 2006).

Finally, the occupation data suffers from the general unreliability of self-declared information by political actors[262]. That information cannot be trusted or easily verified. In my experience, that applies to all parties[263].

If we assume that the affidavit data contains more reliable information, the 2012 Vidhan Sabha gives us a strikingly different picture from the data contained in the *Who's who* for the previous years.

A longstanding trend is that a large part of the MLAs declares agriculture as occupation and source or income. They were slightly below 40 per cent in the 1950s and 1960s, a ratio that increased to a near majority of the House in the 1980s, at the height of Kisan politics. Zerinini notes a decrease of the ratio of farmers in the Assembly from the early 1990s onwards. In 2012, only 28.4 per cent of the MLAs declared themselves as farmer[264].

A second longstanding trend is the stable presence of self-declared lawyers through time, around 18 per cent according to the *Who's whos*. In 2012, they were only 3 per cent[265]. Generally speaking, liberal professions, or white-collar professions, represent only 6 per cent of the MLAs (including the lawyers) in the 2012 Assembly, another departure from the past.

In the 1980s, 7 to 8 per cent of the MLAs used to declared business as their occupation, a proportion that doubled in the following decade. In 2012, there were 33.4 per cent self-declared business in the Assembly. And if we club to that category those who declare themselves as industrialists (3.5 per cent), builders, contractors and property dealers (8.7

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[262] With the notable exception of self-declared data on criminal charges, which is the only form of data that can actually be reliably cross-checked.

[263] The situation has improved somewhat since the Supreme Court made it available for candidates to declare their revenue and criminal charge situation in an affidavit, before filing their nomination forms. The issue of self-declaration remains but we do have access to more data. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the affidavit data did not contain information on occupation before 2012. What I did was to verify that information through interviews. This method enabled me to get a comparatively more reliable picture of the socio-economic profile of the members of the current assembly.

[264] The legislators declaring as occupation agriculture and business have been coded in the "business" category.

[265] Lawyers who declared to be also businessmen have been coded as businessmen.

per cent) and traders (1.75 per cent), that ratio increases to 47.4 per cent of the MLAs. 7.7 per cent of the MLAs declared social service or politics as their profession.

Table 4.15 *Profession of MLAs in the 2012 U.P. Assembly, per party*

	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	Others
Agriculture	32.14	17.02	15.00	36.16	20.83
All business	**35.71**	**46.81**	**66.25**	**41.96**	**54.17**
Business	28.57	29.79%	35.00	33.04	45.83
Construction, Contractor, Builder, Real estate	-	12.77	22.50	4.02	8.33
Industry	3.57	2.13	7.50	3.13	-
Trade	3.57	2.13	1.25	1.79	-
Liberal Profession	7.14	8.51	3.75	4.02	4.17
Service	-	-	1.25	2.23	-
Education	7.14	4.26	1.25	2.23	-
Politics and social work	7.14	14.89	10.00	5.36	4.17
Former Civil Servant	-	2.13	1.25	0.89	4.17
Others*	-	4.26	1.25	3.57	8.33
Undeclared/unidentified	10.71%	2.13	-	3.57	4.17
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=28	N=69	N=133	N=318	N=37

Source: Candidate's affidavits, procured by the Association for Democratic Reforms.

* includes housewives, religious missionaries, pensioners, employees and Zamindars

Some of these variations may have to do with changes in semantics. Many traders would declare themselves as businessmen. Others would create their own category, such as this MLA from Loni who, in 2012, registered his profession "financier and traditional elite".

There are interesting variations between parties. The BSP is the party with the highest share of businessmen along its MLAs, notably in the construction business. It also has the smallest share of farmers (15 per cent). The BJP, too, has few farmers, which is not surprising given the fact that most of its MLAs are elected in urban or semi-urban segments. It also has the highest ratio of self-declared politicians or social workers (14.9 per cent). The Congress, which also has the smallest number of MLAs, counts no builders within its ranks. Both the BSP and the SP have fewer liberal professions among their representatives than the national parties.

In terms of occupation distribution among castes, we see that businessmen are most represented among the Jats, the OBCs and the Muslims. There are slightly fewer

businessmen among the upper castes (46.8 per cent) and least among the SC MLAs (36 per cent)[266].

Table 4.16 *Profession of MLAs in the 2012 U.P. Assembly, per caste group*

	IC	Muslims	OBC	SC	UC	Unidentified
Agriculture	20.00	23.53	27.36	34.88	29.37	14.29
All business	**60.00**	**51.47**	**53.77**	**36.05**	**46.83**	**57.14**
Business	50.00	38.24	33.02	27.91	32.54	57.14
Construction, Contractor, Builder, Real estate	10.00	7.35	13.21	5.81	7.94	-
Industry	-	1.47	5.66	1.16	5.56	-
Trade	-	4.41	1.89	1.16	0.79	-
Liberal Profession	-	5.88	3.77	5.81	4.76	-
Service	-	2.94	1.89	1.16	0.79	-
Education	-	1.47	1.89	3.49	3.17	-
Politics and social work	-	4.41	7.55	5.81	10.32	14.29
Former Civil Servant	10.00	2.94	1.89	-	-	-
Others	-	1.47	0.94	9.30	1.59	14.29
Undeclared/unidentified	10.00	5.88	0.94	3.49	3.17	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=10	N=68	N=106	N=86	N=126	N=7

Source: Candidate's affidavits, procured by the Association for Democratic Reforms.
* includes housewives, religious missionaries, pensioners, employees and Zamindars

We also see some caste, occupation and party aggregations. 60 per cent of the Dalit businessmen are with the SP and 29 per cent with the BSP. 62.9 per cent of the Muslim businessmen are with the SP, against 31.4 with the BSP. Half of the businessmen OBC are with the SP, against 38.8 with the BSP. There are practically no OBC businessmen with the BJP and barely two with Congress.

And finally, there are also patterns emerging if we break down the data by sub-regions. Without surprise, the share of businessmen MLAs is greater in the more developed parts of the state – Doab and the West. Their proportion is the highest (63.16 per cent) in Bundelkhand[267].

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[266] 60 per cent of the Dalit businessmen are with the SP and 29 per cent with the BSP. 62.9 per cent of the Muslim businessmen are with the SP, against 31.4 with the SP. Half of the businessmen OBC are with the SP, against 38.8 with the BSP. There are practically no OBC businessmen with the BJP and barely two with Congress.

[267] Most of these businessmen-MLAs from Bundelkhand are either contractors or in the construction business, which would indicate that they are not small business owners.

The ratio of businessmen MLAs is the lowest in the Northeast, where we saw that upper caste dominate. In this region, most MLAs tend to be landlords and declare themselves as agriculturists.

Table 4.17 *Profession of MLAs in the 2012 U.P. Assembly, per sub-region*

	Avadh	Bundelkhand	Doab	East	Northeast	Rohilkhand	West
Agriculture	30.39	15.79	20.45	24.59	45.95	38.46	25.00
All business	**43.14**	**63.16**	**56.82**	**45.90**	**32.43**	**38.46**	**59.09**
Business	33.33	42.11	38.64	32.79	27.03	26.92	34.09
Construction, contractor, builder, real estate	3.92	21.05	10.23	9.84	-	7.69	18.18
Industry	4.90	-	4.55	1.64	2.70	1.92	6.82
Trade	0.98	-	3.41	1.64	2.70	1.92	-
Liberal Professions	6.86	5.26	2.27	1.64	5.41	9.62	2.27
Service	2.94	-	2.27	1.64	-	-	-
Education	2.94	-	1.14	6.56	-	-	4.55
Politics and social work	7.84	5.26	9.09	13.11	5.41	3.85	2.27
Former Civil Servant	-	-	1.14	-	2.70	1.92	4.55
Others*	1.96	5.26	1.14	4.92	2.70	7.69	2.27
Undeclared/ unidentified	3.92	5.26	5.68	1.64	5.41	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N=102	N=19	N=88	N=61	N=37	N=52	N=44

Source: Candidate's affidavits, procured by the Association for Democratic Reforms.
* includes housewives, religious missionaries, pensioners, employees and Zamindars

The data for 2007 remains too scarce (occupation did not figure in the nomination form) but if we compare incumbent MLAs, we can make a series of observation. First, nearly half of them declare a different profession when they re-run.

For example, Deepak Yadav, from Garoutha, ran in 2007 as farmer and in 2012 as businessman. Dharam Singh Saini, a BSP MLA from Nakur, Western U.P., ran in 2007 as medical doctor and in 2012 as a businessman. Genda Lal Chaudhary, another BSP MLA, ran in 2007 as an 'educationist' and in 2012 as a real estate dealer and contractor. Iqbal Mahmood, an SP MLA from Sambhal, ran as a farmer in 2007 and as a businessman in 2012. Same for Jagdish Sonkar (SP) in Macchlisharh or Kailash Nath Chaurasia (SP) in Mirzapur.

Between 2007 and 2012, among the 95 re-elected MLAs, 45 declared the same profession, 41 shifted from a non-business related profession (agriculture, teaching, medical doctor) to

a business related occupation (business, real estate, contractor or industrialist). In total, 36 MLAs who registered in 2007 as agriculturists declared another occupation five years later (seven of them declared politics as their profession). What we have here is an indication that in 2012, nearly half of the incumbent MLAs geared towards some business activity after their first election.

There are finally some spatial variations. More MLAs declare farming as their activity in the East than in the West. There are more MLAs who declare a profession linked to construction or real estate in Western U.P., a reflection of the economic transformations that have taken place in that sub-region.

4.4. Conclusion

What lessons can we draw from the changing portrait of the State Assembly? The first one is that caste politics is a game of few and not of many. Only a handful of castes constitute a core support base to a party they can claim their own. The others are too small or too geographically dispersed to constitute a core support base to any party or candidate, even locally. These small and dispersed groups constitute a floating electorate that is generally insensitive to caste appeals.

Second, caste-party alignments have become loose, at the best. Lokniti/CSDS survey data already informed us that it was the case for party-voters alignments. Only a few groups vote cohesively for specific parties. These are the groups – Jatavs and Yadavs, essentially – that have both numerical strength and a party of their own. Other groups, including the upper castes, have been splitting their votes between parties and local candidates election after election.

Third, nurturing a core support base on the basis of caste may be necessary to win elections but surely cannot be enough. The politics of the 1990s has shown that campaigning by wooing specific castes at the exclusion of others does not help winning elections. In fact, in recent times, majorities have been built precisely on the capacity of parties to mobilize voters beyond their core support base, that is to say across castes.

Fourth, parties – by choosing their candidates – play a prominent role in the determination of the sociological composition of the Assembly. Caste representation outcomes are often characterized as the translation of political and social movement or dynamics among voters – i.e. the mobilization of caste groups and the political alignment of voters according to ascriptive identities. This is forgetting that parties act as powerful filters by determining who gets representation or not, by selecting candidates on the basis of caste. In other terms, the explanation for the variation in the social composition of the assembly is political and not only or merely sociological.

Fifth, sub-regional variations tell us that narratives based on aggregate data must be discarded or if not then criticized. In the case of U.P., the narrative of a general decline of upper castes and rise of OBCs does not hold, concomitant with the decline of national parties and rise of regional parties, does not hold.

And finally, these transformations can be interpreted as a reconfiguration of the relationship between caste and politics. Caste mobilizations were used in the pre-liberalisation period to politicize social groups and constitute blocks of voters across the state, bound by their ascriptive identity. In the post-liberalization period, these identity-based mobilization tropes – quota politics, for instance – lost their efficacy. The need to expand their social bases required parties to adopt a more inclusive generalist discourse.

This does not mean that caste as a political vehicle of mobilization did not disappear, far from it. It in fact became confined at the level at which it effectively operates, that it the local level, where caste social, economic and political interests clash or coalesce. One element of proof that caste remains important is that it still determines the distribution of tickets, which in turn shapes the representation caste groups have in the assembly. Ticket distribution is not done following pan-state caste combination strategies but according to local, constituency-level, circumstances.

In the next chapter, I will pay more attention to the functioning of this relationship between caste and politics, by examining local contexts in which this relationship is inscribed. I will finally compare parties trajectories and organization in a final chapter.

Chapter 5. Who wields power? Local perspectives on Uttar Pradesh electoral politics

The next question I seek to address is the question of inscription and diffusion of local power. One of the themes that I kept at the back of my mind every time I was on the field was: who wields power here? Who are the individuals possessing political influence or exert control over local institutions? What is their social status and what position do they occupy in the socio-economic environment of the locality in which they operate? And, finally, how has it evolved in time?

5.1. The sources of political power

The data used in chapter 4 points towards two types of major changes in the sociological profile of MLAs. The first one is the growing heterogeneisation of caste and community representation. Over time, more groups are getting represented in the assembly as well as within the parties that have been winning elections. There are sub-regional variations and variations between parties but overall, the U.P. State Assembly today is more representative than it used to be in the past.

The second transformation suggested by the data is that important changes have taken place in terms of the occupational background of MLAs, notably a rise of MLAs declaring business-related activities, including in regions that are poorly developed such as Bundelkhand. This data however does not capture the detail of this information, occupational categories being vague and ambiguous. This data also certainly does not inform us about the mechanisms through which business figures have risen in politics, or do not tell us anything about the motives that might have attracted these individuals to contest in the first place.

We saw in chapter 3 that the rules of the electoral competition tend to favor candidates with certain attributes, notably those who have the resources to compete. We also saw that the shortness of political careers filters in aspiring politicians who expect to make short-term gains from their election. But we cannot derive candidates' motivations from these systemic rules.

In order to examine this question, one needs to adopt a more qualitative approach, examining the career trajectory of individual politicians and their inscription in their local social, political and economical context. In order to avoid a locality bias, I compare some of these trajectories in Western U.P. and in the East, where I conducted most of my fieldwork.

This comparison will enable me to elaborate some of the aspects touched in chapter 3, regarding the rules of the electoral game. I have looked so far at the constraints induced by the formal rules of electoral politics and by the overall competitiveness of electoral politics. I have also looked at the constraints that parties impose on candidates, by deciding who gets to be in politics and very often deciding who gets to stay in politics or not.

Two other factors contribute to the competitiveness of a candidate and need to be accounted for: the centrality of money power, or the resources required to contest and win an election; and the compliance with the expectations trusted upon elected representatives by voters. Consorting with illegality comes as a third component of a candidate's competitiveness but for reasons that will be elicited further, I do not make a general rule out of it.

The argument does not consist here in saying that these attributes – money and muscle power and compliance to voters' expectations – are sufficient conditions to get elected. Surely, individual qualities such as individual charisma and eloquence have their own importance. So do party and state-level considerations. But in many instances, these attributes are a necessary condition to have a standing chance of winning a seat. In fact, I find that many, if not most, longstanding MLAs cumulate these attributes, which is why parties picked them up as candidates in the first place.

In the next two sections, I compare the trajectories of locally prominent political figures and will try to situate these trajectories into a broad context of political and economic transformation.

5.1.1. The case of Western U.P.[268]

Western U.P. has undergone deep transformations since the early 1980s, largely due to the economic development of this sub-region, adjacent to the National Capital Region of Delhi. Those changes have been driven mostly by urbanization, by industrial development, and by the marketization and diversification of the rural economy (Jeffery, Jeffrey, and Lerche 2014, Kumar 2014, Sharma and Poleman 1994, Singh and Mehrotra 2014).

Western U.P. is the richest, most urbanized sub-region of Uttar Pradesh. It concentrates much of its industry (see chapter 2) and of its private capital, concentrated in the urban sprawls of Noida, Greater Noida, Faridabad and Ghaziabad, which surround the national capital.

It also contains pockets of rural poverty, signal that the economic transformations that took place in this region have also contributed to social and economic inequalities. The conversion of large amount of land into commercial or industrial use has thrown on the market a large number of young educated people who struggle to find satisfactory jobs (Jeffrey 2009, 2010b, 2013). Land ceiling, which prohibit the indefinite expansion of family landholdings, also induce a fragmentation of landholdings between siblings at the time of inheritance or transfer of property titles.

Politically speaking, the region is highly volatile with a competitive five-party system. Castes alignments keep varying between parties, who distribute tickets across castes and community lines. As we saw in chapter 4, most caste groups obtain representation from different parties, which probably make of Western U.P. the most competitive sub-region in Uttar Pradesh.

But if the social alignments of castes and parties are relatively blurred at the level of state politics, they are not at the local level. A brief incursion into local Panchayat politics will

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[268] This section is based on interviews conducted over five years with political actors, and fieldwork conducted during the months of November and December 2012 in 11 villages across Meerut and Baghpat districts, in which Paul Brass, his partner Sue and I interviewed mostly local politicians (contesting Panchayat elections) and local caste leaders.

show how and why caste remains relevant as a political variable. It will also reveal how local politics and the political economy of localities are deeply intertwined.

Aminagar, urf Bhurbarai, Meerut District

The village of Aminagar, also known as Bhurbarai, sits on the outskirts of the city of Meerut, on the highway 35 that connects the district headquarter to Delhi. According to the 2011 Census, the village comprises 1044 households, for a total population of 6141, 17 per cent of which are Dalits. According to local estimates, Muslims represent about a third of the population. Brahmins represent a quarter. The rest is divided among Gujjars and Jats, who used to own most of the land. There is also a small number of Bania households, who run shops and small-scale businesses. The Dalits are divided into three main groups: Jatavs, who dominate numerically, Valmikis and Koris, who barely count a few households.

Due to its proximity with Meerut and the highway, most of the agricultural land has been sold for industrial developments. These parcels were sold through property dealers who were not from the village. The plots directly adjacent to the highway count a number of large structures, mostly education institutions, undergraduate colleges and technical schools. Most of these structures have remained empty, either waiting for more construction or for a re-allocation of the land-use, which will enable their owner to convert those buildings into commercial or industrial ventures.

As a result, few villagers are engaged into agriculture (about 20%, according to the *Pradhan*). The local Gujjars have sold their land or leased it to industrial groups. The Jats have almost entirely left the village (only three households remain), to migrate to Meerut or beyond. Most people are employed in service jobs – private or government. Others have small-scale business in the village. According to a Brahmin landlord, the majority of the village inhabitants are landless. Brahmins have retained their property and now own most of the remaining land. Besides the Jats, few have migrated.

Due to urbanization, the population of Aminagar has increased. According to the *Pradhan*, the village did not count many as many Muslims twenty years ago. They have come mostly from other towns and villages in Western U.P.. They live in a distinct neighborhood,

separated by the highway. They are divided among four groups: the Halvis, the Saifis, the Sakhe (tailors) and the Abbasi (whose traditional occupation consists in bringing water to homes). There are also a few Faqirs, lower among Muslims and considered as beggars by our Halvis interlocutors. Most Halvis are engaged in local businesses. The others work mostly as construction labourerss.

None of the land that went to the market was acquired by local landless dwellers. The agriculture labourerss – mostly Dalits – who used to work for the local landlords now commute to Meerut or its surroundings for daily wage construction or factory jobs. Some work as local masons or as security guards in Meerut. With an increased access to education, many Dalits have left these daily wage jobs to join civil service. According to one of our Jatav interlocutor: "*Around 50 boys are in government jobs: income tax, sales tax, police, LIC. One has become an IPS officer. He topped is rank. Four are working in bank branches*". He added that when Mayawati is in power, there is no harassment or bribes for appointments.

The fact that Dalits are now unwilling to work on local farms has led the larger landowners to import seasonal agriculture labourerss from Bihar. Those who have sold their land or part of their land have either invested in business ventures or acquired land in areas where the prices haven't soared as much as they have in their village. Many have invested in real estate – mostly residential properties or shops – that they have put on rent.

Politically speaking, the village is dominated by Gujjars. Between 1995 and 2010, Aminagar has had three different Gujjar Pradhans. Before 1995, the village had the same Muslim Pradhan, Mohammed Yamin, for twenty-two years. Mohammed Yamin's family used to be one the largest landholder in the village. When Yamin's father passed, he and his five brothers had 200 bighas (about 40 acres) to split among themselves.

The main rivalry used to take place between Muslims and Gujjars. Mohammed Yamin prevailed because the Gujjar vote was split between various factions, and because other groups, including the Brahmins and the Dalits, did not want a Gujjar to become Pradhan. In 2010, the seat became reserved and a Kori (SC) named Lallu was elected. Eighteen Dalit candidates contested that year, which led to a scattering of the votes. Lallu's runner up – a

Jatav – came 44 votes short. Some of my interlocutors described Lallu as an outsider (*bahar ka aadmi hai),* as a Gujjar stooge, and as a tantric who heals people with sweets.

Inter-group relations have become tense in recent years, particularly at time of elections. There is a long-standing rivalry between Gujjars and Muslims, who compete to garner the support from other groups, notably the Dalits. Traditionally, Dalits do not vote for the Gujjars, their former employers. The fact that no Dalits in Aminagar work on their farms anymore has given them a certain political autonomy, which they use to trade favors with other groups. S.K. Jatav (name changed) contested the election in 2010. A self-professed Ambedkarite, he owns a small business. In our conversation, he decried the reservation system, which lets stooges being elected on behalf of the local strongmen.

> "*Lallu's election is harmful to Dalits. He was made Pradhan by the Jats, the Banias and the Gujjars. All the development work is done in the affluent areas (…) He is not accessible to sign documents. He's not doing anything".*

A quick survey of recent Panchayat projects confirmed that most of the resources – for drainage and road construction – have been concentrated in the Gujjar neighborhood. They even obtained that a new road be built, connecting their *basti* directly to the highway, bypassing the village.

In order to counter the consolidation of votes behind a bogus candidate, the Jatavs sought to forge an alliance with the Muslims.

> "*We have good relations with the Muslims. We made a pact with them. They support us in this election and we will support them in the next Panchayat elections*".

Despite this arrangement, the high number of candidates led to a dispersion of the votes. The Gujjars voted solidly behind their chosen Dalit candidate.

Local Gujjars easily admitted that Lallu was a 'proxy candidate'. They supported Lallu because they did not want a Jatav to become *Pradhan*. A young Gujjar, member of the youth wing of the Samajwadi Party, confirmed it to me in those terms:

> *"Lallu is a namesake, we (the Gujjars) have influence. We have the muscle power so other groups follow (...) Muscle power is in our blood. We have money power too".*

Our interlocutor belongs to a local Gujjar family that supports the BJP in state and national elections. He enlisted with the SP, against his family's wish, because he sees it as the only contender that can defeat the BSP. His uncles and cousins are still engaged in farming, mostly sugarcane. He used the money he inherited after his father's passing to buy properties in the area. He now lives off their rent and shares his time between property deals negotiations and "doing politics".

The breakdown of the economic ties between local landlords and the Dalits hasn't helped to improve their relation. Still according to S.K. Jatav:

> *"Muslims teach their children that their enemies are Hindus. We teach our children that our enemies are Gujjars".*

Subsequent fieldwork in other villages revealed similar stories of how political competition remains entrenched in caste antagonisms – particularly among Dalits and landed OBCs – and how economic transformation – mostly dynamics around land transfers and acquisition – affected the balance of power between groups. What varied literally from a village to another was the caste composition and the identity of the local dominant group(s).

Another recurrent feature of change in these villages was the fact that most of those who had sold their land and had migrated were from the upper castes. They often lost the power and influence they wielded in the past to other backward groups, who used their numerical advantage and resources to gain control of local democratic institutions.

Amroli, urf Bara Gaon, Meerut District

In the village of Amroli (Urf Baragaon), for instance, Muslim Mirs dominate the local political scene. They own most of the land, orchards and fish ponds, a privilege they use to

share with the Rastogis (Banias). In recent years, many Rastogi families sold their land and migrated to cities. There used to be a number of Brahmin families but they have migrated gradually. The last Brahmin family to leave the village was the family of the firs last Brahmin Pradhan, Kaushik.

The Mirs acquired the land of these upper caste migrants and consolidated their properties. They also increased their revenue by cultivating higher value produces, such as fruits and turmeric, and by gaining control of most of the local brick kilns. They also made money by selling land bordering the village to Gujjars and Jats from surrounding localities. The richest landlord among them is reputed to own more than 100 acres of land, way above the authorized ceiling, through benami properties (properties owned through a strawman). The Mirs finally use their dominant position to bag most of the public contracts and local public tenders.

As the Mirs grew more and more dominant, they split into two factions, one led by Tanzim Akhtar son of a former Pradhan, the other by one of his relatives, named Jafar. The split started as a family dispute in which the head of the family and village pradhan Abdul Hamid was murdered. Violence ensued and a dozen more people were killed in a short span of time. Since then, the two factions have been fighting each other through elections, leading to a more pacified rivalry (one of Jafar's gunmen was sitting on a plastic chair in the corner of the room when we interviewed Tanzim Akhtar).

Their divisions however cost them politically. Tanzim complained to me that they (the Mirs) could not command other communities to vote for them like they used to in the past.

The village of Amroli, located in the Mewana Mandal, Meerut district, counted in 2011 786 households, for a total population of nearly 4600. By their own admission, Muslims represent over forty per cent of the population. They are mostly Mirs (upper castes) but there are also a number of small backward Muslim castes, such as the Nais (barbers). The Census says that twenty-five per cent of the population is Dalit. The rest of the population is divided among Sainis (OBC), Gujjars (OBC), Banias (Rastogis) and Jogi-Upadhyay (OBC). Most of the SCs are Jatavs. There are a dozen of Valmiki households.

In terms of employment, the Dalits are split between agriculture labor and menial jobs. Most of them own small plots of land. Only two Dalits own sufficient land to generate a surplus. NREGA jobs come as a revenue complement but many complain of the dysfunctional payment system, which leads to considerable delays in the payment of dues.

Sainis are engaged into business activities. They also own one brick kiln and the cold storage facilities for the area. They are relatively well-off, compared to other OBCs, who mostly work as government clerks, security guards, masons or construction workers.

The first Pradhan remembered by our interlocutors was a Brahmin named Kaushik. The first Muslim Pradhan, Abdul Hamid, was elected before 1990. He was succeeded by Tanzim Akhtar, alias Tannu, one of his relative. Akhtar's wife, Fakhra, then succeeded him when the seat became reserved for women. In 2000, the wife of the other faction leader, Jafar, became Pradhan. The seat became reserved for SC women in 2005. The votes of dominant groups were split that year and a woman named Rajesh, a Jatav, won. In 2010, the seat got de-reserved and was won for the first time by a Saini, Harbir Singh. He defeated a Muslim named Yasin Salmani (a Nai), with the support of the Tanzim faction. Before the election, Harbir had made a pact with Tanzim, offering his support for his affairs at the district level against the vote of his faction. The combination of their support to the Saini vote led him to a comfortable victory. Asked about state elections voting patterns in the village, Harbir Singh explains:

> "*Sainis vote for the BJP, Muslims and Gujjars for the SP, the SCs for the BSP. But if the BSP candidate is a Saini, Sainis will vote for him. If there are several Saini candidates, they get confused and they lose*"[269].

This example illustrates how caste voting remains cohesive at the locality level, but can be distributed across parties across constituencies. Aggregate survey data may show that the vote of a particular group – here the Sainis – may be split across parties, but it also obfuscates the fact that members of a particular group tend to largely vote cohesively at the local level, where caste ties remain strong and relevant to individuals' lives. This is not specific to particular groups and local caste groups may decide to vote for one of their

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[269] Interview with Harbir Singh Saini, Pradhan of Amroli, at his residence, 13 November 2012.

own no matter what the rest of the competition looks like or decide to vote strategically for the candidate of a strong party who may not share their caste identity. It remains that voters tend to coordinate their choice within their ascriptive group.

Dhanauria, Baghpat district

As we progressed westward towards Baghpat district, we entered into Jat territory. Jats represent seventeen per cent of the population in Western U.P. but they are particularly concentrated in a few constituencies scattered in the most rural parts of Western U.P. - Agota, Barnawa, Khatauli, Siwal Khas and Chaprauli – long stretches of sugar cane fields dotted with brick kilns.

In the villages we visited, the control of Jats over local institutions was almost complete. When the seats are reserved, they determine, barring a few exceptions, which Dalits gets to become Pradhan.

These Jat dominated villages also tend to be far away from the more developed and more urbanized parts of the region. Take a right angle on a highway and travel a few dozen kilometers inroads and the signs of urban life quickly disappear. The village of Dhanauria for instance, located about 80 km North of Delhi, near the town Chaprauli, has remained unaffected by the kind of economic transformation that has marked the region. Sugar cane is the main crop and industry and those who don't cultivate their own land till the land of others.

As a result, the old inequality patterns have persisted. Dalits own no land in Dhanauria (except one household) and they nearly all work as labourerss in the Jats' cane fields. Shoe making and NREGA jobs come as revenue complements. The Valmikis, who tend to be unemployed, get most of the NREGA jobs, which essentially consist in landfilling and other odd jobs. In recent years, only three Dalits have left the village to work in the police, in Delhi, as constables. One has joined the Air Force[270].

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[270] Interview with Dhani Ram (name changed), a Dalit shoe maker, at his residence, Dhanauria, 17 December 2012.

By their own admission, over sixty per cent of the population is Jat. Other groups comprise Kashyaps (OBC), Muslims, Pandits (Brahmins) and Banias (a few households). Among the lower groups, there are Nais, Kumhars, Jatavs and Valmikis. Most of the non-upper caste non-Jat communities are small and do not possess any land. The upper castes do but they started migrating to cities fifteen years ago, household per household, leaving the political field open to the Jats who saw their dominance increase to the measure that upper castes were leaving.

In local elections, non-Jat voters tend to vote against the Jats' preferred candidate (the seat has been reserved for many years, generating frustration and resentment among the Jats).

Local Gujjars have succeeded to gain employment in cities and have used the remittances to build small local businesses. They own most of the general stores as well as a few brick kilns (most brick kilns are owned by Jats and a few by Banias and Gujjars). They raised their position by selling parts of their land and investing the capital.

The relative prosperity of the Gujjars creates jalousies. One of our interlocutors, M. Rana, a relative of a former Jat Pradhan told us that "*Gujjars are richer because they have NCR relatives. We* [the Jats] *don't have relatives in Delhi*"[271].

These areas are and have been Rashtriya Lok Dal strongholds for many years. Chaudhary Charan Singh contested from Chaprauli from 1967 to 1974, when he was at the height of his popularity. While most of our Jat interlocutors were critical of his son, Ajit, they have largely remained faithful to the Rashtriya Lok Dal.

Caste relations – particularly between Jats and Dalits – are harsh and marked by violence. Some of our Jat interlocutors told us that the beating of Jats is still done in Chaprauli (but not in Baghpat, where they retaliate and where the police works for them). They spoke disparagingly of their shoe making, chastising them for fabricating "out of fashion" *jutis* (shoes). They blamed Mayawati for the necessity of beating Dalits, whom they still call Harijans. One of interlocutor told us:

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[271] Interview with M. Rana, at his residence, Dhanauria, 17 December 2012.

"Before [Mayawati], there was no need to beat them. They were naturally terrified"[272].

Even if they get to pick their Dalit candidate in Panchayat elections, they still resent being represented by an SC. "*How can we meet our relatives in other villages, when our Pradhan is an SC?*", confided the same interlocutor[273].

Caste violence and violence related to elections isn't new in Dhanauria. In the 1988 Panchayat elections, Ramesh Chand Bhairagi, an OBC, defeated Virender, a Jat candidate. Local Jats got angry and attempted to murder him. They blocked access to their fields to his caste fellows, preventing Ramesh's supporters from reaching their work place[274]. The army (more likely the paramilitary) had to be called to pacify the village. In the next election, the Jats distributed money and threatened people, in order to divide the non-Jat vote. They even bribed a cousin of Ramesh Chand to run against him.

When I asked him whether this was all worth it, he smiled first, and then told me that being Pradhan provides access to a lot of resources, much more so after 1998, when the decentralization reforms starting producing their effects. Being Pradhan has overall been a profitable experience. He invested in buffaloes and sold land to send his children to Delhi, to get educated. His elder son is now a property dealer in Delhi (and has been cited in a murder case). When he sold his land, he made sure that he sold it to outsiders, and not to local Jats.

Local elections matter because what is at stake goes beyond the material benefits that an individual and his community can gain from winning. From the dominant groups' perspective, controlling local institutions is considered to be an entitlement owed to their status and position. The language used to describe this entitlement constantly refers to their control of institutions as a natural state of affairs. For the individual contesting, the election is about personal prestige and status within the community, before material gains.

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[272] Interview in Dhanauria, 17 December 2012.
[273] Interview in Dhanauria, 17 December 2012.
[274] Interview with Ramesh Chand Bhairagi, at his residence, Dhanuria, 17 December 2012.

From the perspective of the dominated, the election is the opportunity to challenge oppression and contest the dominants' claim over local institutions. I find a lot of resonance with Mukulika Banerjee's argument that elections matter first and foremost because they represent a rare and valuable opportunity to experience political equality, regardless of who is contesting (Banerjee 2007).

However, seen from the vantage point of candidates and their supporters, the election is first and foremost a game whose stake is local territorial control. Those who succeed to 'dethrone' a dominant group candidate tend to replicate the same proclivity for elite capture. This tends to show that if voters are drawn to the polling booth by their attachment to political equality, the outcome of the act of voting rarely offers the possibility of an enactment of tangible political equality.

Local contests are also more complicated than a simple confrontation between dominant and dominated. Dominant groups are often divided into factions, who trade with other groups in order to surpass their rivals.

Also, material gains from office are not to be discarded at all. For one, the decentralization reforms introduced by the 1992's seventy-third Amendment to the Constitution initiated a process of devolution of power and resources to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). The implementation of various schemes – and the resources that come with them – also passes through local institutions. But more importantly, control over local political institutions is a mean for dominant group to enter a broader political arena, to set foot into district-level politics, where more resources can be tapped for the broad objective of development. It is also a means to engage with other public institutions and actors – the police, the Sub-Divisional Office – from a political and legitimate standpoint. Landowning groups or those engage into various businesses or contracting must frequently engage with public authorities. Having the status of village representative helps in those dealings.

When I asked various *pradhans* and local caste leaders whether they were coordinating with their caste brethren from other villages to determine how they would vote in Zilla Panchayat or state elections, they told me two things. The first is that there are formal consultation mechanisms taking place ahead of elections between chosen caste representatives. Discussions take place at the occasion of caste meetings (or Khap

meetings, in the case of the Jats). Local politicians or their associates often attend those meetings, to keep track of people's voting intentions. The second aspect is that in case of local alliances between groups, a particular caste may trade support to another caste's candidate for the Panchayat election against that candidate's caste support for their own candidate in another election, as we saw in the case of Amroli.

Politics as an instrument of territorial control

These local observations may seem disconnected from state politics or constituency-level political considerations. They are however important to keep in mind for two main reasons. First, it is at that level of observation than the interweaving of caste, community, politics and the economy is visible, tangible. And secondly, constituency-level politics is in fine the aggregation of these local contexts, the product of local quid pro quo and alliances between groups, who often trade their support in one election for someone else's support in another. It is therefore important to grasp the dynamics at work at the village level.

What I learned from these various cases is that political competition remains deeply shaped by agonistic caste relations, and that social and political alliances are formed along the fracture lines of these caste-based antagonisms. Caste distinctions remain deeply entrenched and other forms of social stratification remain largely organized around castes. This does not mean however that the trajectory of families, their rise and fall in terms of their land-wealth, and their other resources, are necessarily tied to the caste they belong to, or caste directed[275].

I also learned that local politics is as much about preserving one's social status and position or contesting someone else's social status and position than fighting for access to resources. Both in fact go hand in hand and constitute the basic elements of what Jeffrey Witsoe, in his work on Bihar, as termed as "territorial democracy" (Witsoe 2009, 2012), which he defines as "*the ways in which electoral outcomes are influenced by relations of dominance and subordination within specific territorial spaces and, conversely, the ways in which electoral practice reinforces, and can even produce, territorial dominance*".

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[275] I am thankful to Philip Oldenburg for pointing this out to me.

According to Witsoe, the interplay between elections, electoral practices, and relations of domination and subordination accounts for the violence that marks local daily public life and political processes, such as elections, in particular.

> "*Elections, therefore, tend to not be about competing policy platforms or ideologies; from the perspective of the dominant, elections are about maintaining standing in the village, controlling labor, and ensuring continued access to state patronage; for the subaltern, elections are about challenging the dominance of oppressive landlords (to whom one's parents and grandparents may have also been bonded in subservience), demanding minimum wages (that are already legally mandated but not enforced), preventing indiscriminate violence by upper castes, and asserting one's caste's long- trampled honor*"[276].

In the case of Uttar Pradesh too, local politics is fundamentally about territorial control, or the maintenance, expansion or challenge to someone else's hold over a particular territory – a village, a town, a tehsil, an Assembly constituency, a district. The more local, the more clear-cut or entrenched caste antagonisms are. The higher we go, the more complex and diffuse things become, due to the multiplicity of actors and due to the competitiveness of the electoral process.

Territorial control passes through control over resources (such as land), as well as through social and political dominance. These three aspects of influence are self-reinforcing. The resentment against reservations is high because reserved seats in Panchayat elections are often seen by the dominant as an affront and as a challenge to their authority.

As the region developed economically, the sources of political and economic influence have changed and diversified. The control over economic assets such as brick kilns, petrol pumps, cold storages or transport companies is crucial as it enables local dominant groups to exert pressure and/or develop patronage vis-à-vis the population who depends from those sectors of economic activity.

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[276] Ibid., p. 66.

At the same time, the diversification of the economy and urbanization in particular create new opportunities of employment to subaltern groups, who can develop their own political agency from the autonomy they gained vis-à-vis the local dominant groups. Access to education has enabled many individuals to join the civil services. In this case, economic autonomy precluded political agency, something that individual from other groups readily admit. "*Mayawati has transformed the Jatavs into Jats*" was a refrain that I would often hear in my interviews[277].

I also learned that politicization was not enough to gain actual political power. In the case of Aminagar, social and economic inequalities have persisted and political domination has faded. However, local dominant group still capture local democratic institutions by supporting proxy candidates and running these institutions in their stead and to their benefit. An illustration of that came from the fact that our interview with the Pradhan quickly turned to a farce, as Brahmin and Gujjar men quickly surrounded us. They initially whispered answers to the Pradhan's ears, kept correcting his answers, and after a point, did not even bother to let him speak and answered to our question directly.

Finally, this whole process of political competition is deeply marked by violence. In the eleven villages that we investigated, nine had a recent story of violence to tell. Most cases involved murders, for motives of land, caste or family disputes (and sometimes a combination of these two or three). In an extreme case, a young twenty-four year old Pradhan admitted that he had murdered his own grandfather (who by his admission was very old anyway) in order to frame the leader of a rival faction. As we saw in the introduction of this dissertation, daily life in Uttar Pradesh remains marked by constant forms of social, political and religious tensions that can turn banal incidents into full-fledged confrontations.

The rise of businessmen-politicians

Politics at the assembly constituency level does not fundamentally differ from local politics. I find that the motives for political engagement of contestants from a business

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[277] Interview with the brother of former Pradhan of Bhurbaral village, near Meerut, at his residence, on 13 November 2012.

background similarly consist in using politics as a tool to expand individual or group-based social status and economic interests.

We saw in chapter 4 that in the 2012 state election, over sixty per cent of the MLAs declared to being engaged in some form of business activity. We also know that a third of those are engaged in real estate or construction. For the rest, the business category remains vague.

A cursory look at the economic profile of some of the main parties' contestants across several constituencies reveals that the economic profile of MLAs tends to be quite specific. They usually belong to the sectors of economic activity that have been growing the most in recent years, and that are key to the development of other sectors of economic activity. In the city of Loni, three of the five main candidates in the 2012 elections were realtors. The RLD candidate, Madan Gopal, alias Madan Bhaiya, a Gujjar, is a moneylender who specializes in property disputes. He is reputed to have amassed vast properties in the area and is known as a local don. The BSP and the SP candidates, Zakir Ali and Aulad Ali, are also both property dealers. Aulad is Zakir's uncle. Zakir, 34 year old, has strong Delhi connections and is acquainted with the BSP Muslim figure Naseemuddin Siddiqui. A self-declared agriculturist, Ali lives from property dealings and declared 16 Crores of assets in his 2012 nomination affidavit.

Loni is a city of half a million inhabitants, located at the northern border of the state of Delhi. It is the gateway to the capital for those travelling on the Highway 57, from Saharanpur, Shamli, Baraut and then Baghpat. As a border town, it is a major transit point for goods and trade. Major transport, storage and logistics companies operate from there. Loni is also the terminal point of the world's largest gas pipeline, connecting the gas town of Jamnagar (Gujarat) to Delhi. Major gas companies have set their distribution terminals there and most of the cooking gas supplies for North India originates from Loni. Due to its strategic location, the city has seen a boom of the real estate sector and of its industrial activity.

The city, alongside Ghaziabad, is also host to a number of criminal organizations whose members have migrated from the rural hinterlands over the past two decades. The city offers them anonymity and opportunities to apply their methods to lucrative businesses.

Thus, business competition has become quite criminalized and violent. Madan Bhaiya has been the object of several attacks and has been accused of violent retaliations. In 2001, his bodyguard was critically injured after a attempt on his life in broad day light in Ghaziabad. The four assailants were later found dead, allegedly killed by angry villagers. In 2012, he contested with four criminal cases on his head, including murder, rioting and criminal intimidation charges. In 2007, he contested with 59 cases against him (Hindu 2007).

Madan Bhaiya is a figure among the local Gujjars (he is nicknamed the "Gujjar Tiger"[278]) of the local underworld in Loni. Based in Ghaziabad, he hails from a nearby village named Jawli. He started his career in the early 1980s as a second knife in a local gang, headed by Sunil Tyagi and Mahinder Fauji. He gradually rose within the organization as Tyagi's closest lieutenants disappeared, either killed or arrested. He made a name for himself as the leader of an abduction racket, in which local businessmen were kidnapped for ransom.

Madan Bhaiya contested and won for the first time in 1991, in the seat of Khekra (Khekra became Loni after the 2008 re-delimitation). That year, he showed up at the DM's office to file his nomination papers, accompanied by 2,000 supporters. Gunshots were exchanged as the police tried to keep them outside the office. In protest, Madan's men went on a rampage in the streets of Meerut, the then district headquarters.

Madan contested every subsequent election and won three other terms in 1993, 2002 and 2007. After his 2002 victory (he contested as an Independent), he went undercover, wanted by the police in a series of murder cases, notably for the murder of a rival, Sri Ram, also known as Siriya Pahalwan, near the Ashok Hotel in Delhi, barely two hundred meters away from the Prime Minister's residence (he would also be charged under TADA). Rumor had it that he developed ties with the BSP in order to trade his support against police protection. He was arrested in February 2003 but was immediately released on bail by a District Judge in Meerut. He contested again, and won, on an RLD ticket in 2007. In 2012, he lost to Zakir Ali.

Fifty kilometers North sits the town of Baghpat, headquarter of the recently created eponym district (carved out from Meerut district in 1997). It is surrounded by vast

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[278] One of his campaign slogan is "*Dekho Dekho Kon Aaya Gurjar Biradri Ka Sher Aaya*" ("Look, look who is coming. It's the tiger of the Gujjar community").

stretches of agriculture land, essentially sugarcane, wheat and rice. The main industrial activity comes from the Baghpat Cooperative Sugar Mills, located at the outskirts of the town, on the road leading to Meerut.

From the mid-1980s to 2012, the seat of Baghpat was held by the local nawab, Kaukab Hameed Khan, son of former Congress MLA Shaukat Hameed Khan. He contested eight times, starting in 1980 and won five mandates under four party affiliations (Lok Dal, Congress, BKKGP and RLD). His main opponent through the 1990s was Ved Prakash, a farmer contesting on a BJP ticket. In 2002 and 2007, his main opponent was Sahab Singh, a Jat candidate who made his money on land deals and property disputes. Singh contested in 2002 on a BSP ticket and in 2007 on a SP ticket. The BSP candidate that year was a Brahmin named Mukesh Pandit, also known as Guddu Pandit. Pandit started his career as a puncture mechanic in Baghpat and went on to work as driver for a famous criminal politician, Amarmani Tripathi. He used the wealth gathered during his years of service to invest in properties and now lives as a property dealer in Baghpat. Over the years, both Congress and BJP have nominated outsider candidates (candidates who hailed from Baghpat but were not residing them).

In 2012, Kaukab Hameed Khan was defeated by Hemlata Chaudhary, wife of Prashant Chaudhary, a local figure of the Gujjar community, BSP politician, and a former Member of the Legislative Council. The Chaudhary's run a successful contracting business that deals with sand, mud and road digging. They also are property dealers. Khan described her opponent to me as a newcomer in politics, and attributed his defeat to the fact that she and her husband had outspend him many times during the campaign (he mentioned a figure in several Crores of Rupees). He lamented that the flow of money the Chaudhary's injected into the campaign made him powerless[279].

The seat of Muradnagar, northeast of Ghaziabad, is a Tyagi stronghold. Eight of the 10 winners and runner up of the last five elections have been Tyagis. The seat was held for eighteen years by Rajpal Tyagi, a property dealer who invested in schools and petrol pumps after his first election in 1989. In 2002, a Gaddi Muslim (backward) named Wahab Chaudhary, challenged Rajpal, contesting on a BSP ticket. Wahab lost by a margin of 3,000

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[279] Interview with the author, Khurshid Manzil, Baghpat, 15 November 2012.

votes. After his defeat, the BSP appointed him Chairman of the Muradnagar Municipal Corporation. From this position, he defeated Rajpal in 2012.

Five years earlier, Wahab was a newcomer to politics. He had declared then to be an agriculturist with 30,000 Rupees as assets. In 2012, he declared owning 3.3 hectares of agriculture land, a commercial center with forty-two shops, and residential property in Delhi for a total worth of 9.2 Crores of Rupees. The resources he gathered during his tenure as Chairman helped him consolidate his position among his community, who backed him strongly. Added to the support of a large chunk of the Dalit voters his social base and his resources made him an MLA.

One could multiply examples but what we see here is that the electoral game in Western U.P. seems to favor candidates coming from fairly specific economic backgrounds. Most of the businessmen politicians in Western Uttar Pradesh tend to come from a limited number of sectors of economic activity: property dealing and construction, contracting, transport companies, brick kilns, liquor production and distribution, or the ownership of assets such as petrol pumps or cooking gas distribution companies. Besides, many of them have built or own education institutions. There are also manufacturers of various kinds but they tend to be lesser in numbers.

This similarity of business background is not coincidental. In fact, these sectors share three important characteristics, which also help us understand why these businesspersons should want to 'invest' in politics in the first place.

The first characteristic is that these sectors and their activities are heavily regulated by the state, essentially in the form of licensing and tenders. According to the scale and investment amounts involved, district or state-level authorities preside over the allocation of vast amounts of public resources in the form of tenders and licenses.

Despite liberalization, state control over economic activities remains strong. Due to a lack of private investment, the organized private sector is small and a lot of private activities depend from state regulations and interventions. This means that business owners and local industrialists must engage with the state – and its actors – on a frequent if not

constant basis. Getting into politics or getting in acquaintance with parties and politicians is a means to navigate that interface.

The second characteristic is that these sectors of economic activity put together constitute what could be terms as the backbone of the local economy. In other terms, they are the sectors of activity on which other sectors are dependent. Over the past two decades, many households in Western U.P. have been selling land to invest in more productive non-farm activities. Be it building schools or small workshops, starting shops or dispensaries, all these small investors need the same commodities: bricks, sand, mortar and pebbles, etc. So do public and private infrastructure projects. Farmers depend from transport companies to carry their production to the mill or to the distribution market. They also depend from cold storage owners to store their produce before they get distributed. Liquor distributors usually enjoy local monopolies, or control local segments of the local distribution market.

Those who own or control these key sectors can if they wish derive political capital from these, for they are not only lucrative, the also generate employment and create dependency by providing indispensable services to a large number of households and economic agents. They constitute an ideal position to start building patronage or clientelistic networks, by redistribution or by association.

The third characteristic is that despite the amount of state regulation, these sectors of economic activities are deeply criminalized. Like most of the informal and black economy, they rest essentially on cash-based transactions and generate vast amount of black money. The competition for public and private resources is harsh and often violent. The control over these activities is often enmeshed with the control exerted by local dominant groups – and their competitors – over local territories. The influence of a group derives not only from demographics or land ownership but also from the control they exert over local political and economic institutions. Competition over such control through engagement into the democratic process is a means to maintain or challenge the position and status of local dominant groups, depending on one's vantage point.

Few politicians exemplify how a political career can be used to further private interests more than Haji Iqbal, a backward Muslim business figure born in the town of Mirzapur

(Behat Tehsil). Iqbal rose within the BSP and developed a local business empire that stretches from mining to construction, including the set up of a large private university in Saharanpur.

Haji Iqbal started his career as a small trader, selling utensils from village to village in Saharanpur district. His father helped him set a permanent store, which he and his brothers Aarif and Mahmood used as a base to expand and diversify their activity towards the smuggling of timber, notably of poplar trees, a lucrative illegal activity that has proliferated in this area, set in the vicinity of the forest-covered Himalayan foothills[280].

Iqbal contested the 1996 elections in Muzaffarabad, Saharanpur district, on a BSP ticket. He lost to the incumbent SP MLA Jagdish Singh Rana, a Rajput. His induction within the BSP however enabled him however to expand his business interests, and develop connections that would help him develop his activities further, notably through the protection of his illegal activities when the BSP was in power.

In the late 1990s-early 2000, Haji Iqbal expanded his business activities to sand and stone mining (pebbles), both illegal activities in this part of the state. He and his brother invested the money they made into real estate and companies, allegedly created to launder their massive wealth. They appointed friends and relatives of other local and state-level politicians in the boards of these companies, and further developed their political networks.

Within the BSP, Iqbal became close to one of Mayawati's confidante and Minister for Family Welfare, Babu Singh Kushwaha. Kushwaha was expelled from the party in 2012, due to his involvement into a massive scam around the National Rural Health Mission[281]. According to media reports, some of Iqbal and Kushwaha's relatives were business associates in a Delhi-based company.

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[280] Glocal University (http://www.glocaluniversity.edu.in).

[281] This massive scam involves massive embezzlement from NHRM funds (allegedly near 1.5 billion USD), destined to health care delivery in rural areas, by a nexus of politicians and bureaucrats associated with the BSP, under Mayawati rule. Two Ministers, including Kushwaha, were indicted as well as a number of bureaucrats. Between October 2010 and February 2011, 6 civil servants, including four Chief Medical Officers, were murdered or died in unexplained circumstances. For a detailed account, see (Bhalla 2012).

In 2009, Haji Iqbal was nominated by the BSP as a Member of the Legislative Council, Uttar Pradesh' Upper House. His brother, Mahmood Ali, also became an MLC, while his wife is an elected member of the Saharanpur Zila Parishad[282].

In 2011, he set up a massive campus on a 300 acres plot in the Shivalik Foothills. He also runs intermediate colleges in Saharanpur, Deoria, and Badshahi Bagh, on the border of the Rajaji National Park. When asked about his credentials, Haji Iqbal usually introduces himself as an educationist. His personal description on his Facebook page reads: "*Haji Mohd Iqbal is a well know Social worker and education reformer of Distt. Saharanpur, His contribution to education and social work will be remembered for generations*"[283]. Similar hagiographic descriptions can be found on various webpages dedicated to him.

Haji Iqbal's term in the Legislative Council ended in January 2016. Perhaps as a sign of how fast one can lose political protection, Iqbal became subjected to a CBI inquiry, under the allegation that he had amassed close to 10,000 Crores of Rupees of illegal money[284], and created 111 shell companies to launder it (Mahapatra 2012). In his 2009 affidavit, Iqbal declared assets worth 6.5 Crores of Rupees and did not have any criminal charges against him.

His case may be particular, notably owing to the scale of his operations but it is certainly not unique and he exemplifies well the nexus that can exist between a party like the BSP and local business figures. Both develop a mutually beneficial relationship based on the trade of position, influence and protection, against resources for party and campaign funding. Haji Iqbal acquired the protection of the BSP by funding it, and developed his own patronage networks within the party by supporting financially a number of BSP MLAs in the Behat area. He also exemplifies how local political figures expand their political grasp by having their close relatives elected in positions at various levels of representation, including the district administration, through the Zila Parishad Council.

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[282] I thank Rajkamal Singh for providing this information.
[283] https://www.facebook.com/HajiMohdIqbal/info?tab=page_info (accessed on July 13, 2016).
[284] Approximately 1.34 billion Euros.

It is easy to understand why a party such as the BSP may be interested in nominating an individual such as Haji Iqbal. Put it simply, he has the resources to fund his own campaign and contribute to party funding. He also has the capacity to build a following through his business and patronage networks. And lastly, he also likely to respond to the various incentives that a political career – however short – can offer to individuals of his set.

These incentives work in different ways, or offer various types of benefits. Developing political ties enables businessmen to acquire protection, from the police and from competitors. It also provides access to new resources that can be used to further develop business and patronage networks. Politics also serves as a status enhancer, a marker of power and influence that goes beyond the restricted realm of politics.

The rise of businessmen in politics thus means that a process of integration of political and economic elites is taking place. While political representation becomes more heterogeneous on the basis of caste, it also becomes more homogeneous on the basis of the class background of the candidates (as we will see in Chapter 6, this is essentially true for the SP and the BSP, and less so for the Congress and the BJP).

In this context, politics becomes an effective mean to further private economic interests. According to local contexts and individuals, these interests can be individual or collective. They can also be caste-based or cross-caste based.

One could argue that it has always been the case and that the traditional upper caste elite individuals contesting on a Congress or Jana Sangh ticket in the 1950s and 1960s were also 'in politics' as a means to further private caste or class interests.

What has changed in Western U.P., and indeed in other parts of Uttar Pradesh, is that the composition of these elites has changed. Local economic elites have become a more diverse or heterogeneous ensemble. Also, some of the fastest-growing economic sectors have become more and more intertwined with the state, the state controlling a major part of available resources for business development. It is therefore no surprise that a new class of politicians as emerged from these sectors. Getting into politics is a way to stay competitive in a harsh agonistic social environment.

One of the results of economic transformation in Western U.P. is that inter-group competition has increased, as segments from groups that were historically lagging behind have become upwardly mobile. This enhanced competition has also affected relation between groups that had a history of collaboration, such as the Jats and the Muslims.

While Muslims overall lag behind other groups in terms of socio-economic development (Sachar 2006), segments among them have gained from the economic transformations that have taken place in Western U.P. Particularly among the backward Muslims, a tiny elite has benefited from the growth of sectors such as trade, manufacturing (metal work, brass and glass industry) or the meat industry[285].

Backward Muslims aspiring politicians found in the BSP a party that would provide them with space and opportunities to contest elections on strong tickets. The consolidation of backward Muslim support behind BSP candidates partly accounts for the good performance of the BSP in this region (Heath, Verniers, and Kumar 2015)[286].

They have also used their demographic advantage in cities, where they frequently make up more than thirty per cent of the population, to conquer municipalities (Verma 2012a) as well as Zilla Parishads.

The economic and political rise of Muslims in particular has generated resentment from rival parties and social groups, which translated into a rise of communal tensions and to a full-fledged riot in Muzaffarnagar in August and September 2013 (Berenschot 2014, Chishti 2013).

Six months ahead the Muzaffarnagar riots, a BJP MLA from the area had told me how the issue of (cow) meat and Muslim assertion were seen as a sensitive provocative issue, generating anger amongst Hindus:

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[285] India has become the world's second exporter of beef (buffalo meat) and a large part of that trade is located in Western U.P If some of the main traders are Hindus, the profession of butcher remains associated with Muslim communities.

[286] In the 2012 state elections, the BSP remained ahead of the SP only in Western Uttar Pradesh.

> "*The biggest business in Western U.P., after mining, is cow slaughter. You can buy a cow for 4,000 Rupees and sell it cut for 20,000. Cow slaughter is banned but these meat-processing plants are hugely profitable. They are run by strongmen (...) This creates a deep divide among the people*"[287].

My Muslim interlocutors in Aminagar had explained how their political situation had changed now that most parties were courting the Muslim vote:

> "*Muslims are not scared. They have their own will. Muslim leaders have joined different parties. They are protected because they are a vote bank for every party, except the BJP*"[288].

It is generally expected that economic growth would lead to the attenuation of social and communal tensions. In reality, the assertion of deprived groups tends to increase these tensions. Moreover, the fact that economic change, crime, and the antagonistic social interplay of castes and communities all converge and get intertwined in the field of electoral politics breed those tensions rather than defuse them. Party politics also plays a contributive role, through the activation of social and political divisions among groups.

5.1.2. The case of Eastern U.P.: *more continuities than change*

Eastern U.P. contrasts vastly with Western U.P. as some of the major processes of change described earlier have not taken place in that region. Eastern Uttar Pradesh, and the North-East in particular, are poor, under-developed, poorly connected and is, with Bundelkhand, one of the least urbanized part of the state. Poverty reduction has been slower than in the rest of the state, particularly among the Dalits and Muslims who represent a higher proportion of the BPL (below the poverty line) population than any other sub-region (Akarsh 2015).

In 2012, by CSDS estimates, East and North-eastern U.P. together counted 86 rural seats, 11 semi-urban seats and only 4 urban seats (three in Varanasi and one in Gorakhpur).

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[287] Interview with P. Singh (name changed), BJP MLA from Rohilkhand, in Delhi, 10 February 2013.

[288] Interview with a former Muslim Pradhan's relative, Bhurbaral urf Aminagar village, near Meerut, 13 November 2012.

That is 85, 11 and 4 per cent respectively, against 59, 25 and 16 per cent respectively for Western U.P. As per the 2011 Census, Eastern Uttar Pradesh is the most populated sub-region of the state (nearly 40 per cent).

The economy of Eastern U.P. remains largely based on agriculture. The few industrial sectors that flourished in this region – sugar and textile – have dramatically declined over the past twenty years, owing to a lack of investment and under the pressure of national and international competition. The region that used to lead the state in sugar production has seen many of its sugar mills closing, generating unemployment. As a result, outmigration is high, creating additional pressures on women, who tend to stay behind (Thelma et al. 2005).

Sudha Pai documented in the mid-1980s how the large landlords succeeded in mitigating the impact of successive land reforms and maintained therefore their political influence (Pai 1986). As a result, Eastern U.P. has not seen the kind of political empowerment induced by shifts in land ownership as Western U.P. experienced.

Lieten and Srivastava describe how agriculture productivity in the East, before Independence, used to surpass that of the Western region, due to the fertility of land and abundance of water resources. They also describe how the combine effect of the green revolution and land tenancy reforms in the West have led to a reversal of that situation. Agriculture and land reforms also led to the empowerment of the middle peasantry in the West and to a reshuffling of the cards of power between erstwhile dominant groups and newly ascending groups (Lieten and Srivastava 1999, 85-90). This process did not take place in the East, leaving the landowning groups in a position of preeminence.

Land in the East has remained unequally distributed between big landlords – mostly upper castes – medium-large landowners – mostly OBCs – and a multitude of occupancy tenants, who could gradually acquire small parcels (between 1 and 3 acres, or below 1 acre)[289]. As a result also, agriculture has remained concentrated around food crops, mostly for subsistence agriculture, rather than diversified towards more profitable cash crops.

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[289] Ibid., p. 86.

The consequence of this stagnation is that the old elites haven't been challenged the way they have been in the Western parts of the state, leading to the resilience of the upper castes.

This is particularly true for the North-East, where fifteen out of the eighteen caste-based strongholds are held by upper castes, mostly Rajputs (11). In the East, there are six Muslim strongholds, mostly located within the Azamgarh-Varanasi-Mau triangle. Seven seats have also consistently returned Yadav candidates, scattered in Azamgarh district, in Mughal Sarai, and in Phulpur, near Allahabad. Beyalsi, Kolasla and Varanasi South are Bhumihar strongholds.

The observation of caste-based strongholds has an indicative value about patterns of change at the constituency-level, but does not inform us much about anything else. In this next section, I examine more closely the socio-demographic profile of some of the long-standing northeastern politicians, to see whether other patterns than caste arise.

The resilience of traditional elites

As we saw in chapter 4, if the overall share of upper caste MLAs in the North-East has been decreasing since 1996, it remains that one MLA out of two is still an upper caste. Over the past five elections, thirty-five per cent of the runner-ups have also been upper castes candidates (their share has actually increased over the past three elections, after a drop in the early 1990s). In fact, if one only considers the general seats, the average ratio of upper caste winners and runner-ups over the past five elections increases to 67 and 44 per cent.

Since 1991, 37 MLAs out of 138 have been elected three times or more. Out of these 37, 23 are upper caste, 6 Dalits, 5 OBCs and 3 Muslims. The Janata Dal – SP concentrates the largest number of upper caste longstanding politicians (eight, half Brahmin, half Rajputs), followed by the BJP (six, mostly Rajputs). Five out of six Congress longstanding politicians are upper castes. The BSP counts only four such MLAs, two OBCs and two upper castes.

Barring the three longstanding Muslim politicians, who are all with the SP, all others are in fact quite dispersed between parties. Upper castes are well represented in the North-East because they are well-represented within all parties, and not because they have aligned with any dominant party. If we look further, we can observe other commonalities between them.

The first one is that none of these longstanding politicians is elected in urban or semi-urban seats, which is not surprising since 90 per cent of the seats in this region are rural.

Second, all but five declare agriculture as their profession. Janardhan Prasad Ojha, in Shyam Deurwa and Abdul Kalam, in Mehndawal, are self-declared traders. Shiv Pratap Shukla, in Gorakhpur, and Jagdambika Pal, are both lawyer. Harivansh Sahai, in Bhatpar Rani, presents himself as an educationist.

A cursory look at their assets declaration reveals that they all declare possession of agriculture land, often beyond three hectares, and that they all draw revenue from the possession of commercial buildings. None of them declare any industrial activity, although some are reputed to own factories in other parts of the state, such as Noida or Azamgarh.

In terms of education level, twenty-two are graduate or more. Most have studied in local universities, in Gorakhpur (7), Basti and Varanasi (BHU). A few have studied in Agra and Bombay university.

Twenty-one belong to political families (14 upper castes, 4 SCs, 2 OBCs and one Muslim), mostly through horizontal ties (cousins, brothers and sisters-in-law). There are few vertical political families and these tend to be either of the royal variety (Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh, from the royal family of Padrauna, son of former Union Cabinet Minister C.P.N. Singh) or of the criminal one (Amarmani Tripathi's son, or Hari Shankar Tiwari's father). A dozen of these MLAs are or have been Ministers, a majority of them with the BJP (a large number of BJP's Ministers, both at the state level or in the Union Cabinet, come from Eastern U.P. and from the North-East).

In fact, prominent political families tend to cumulate a royal lineage and ministerial berths, such as R.P.N. Singh from Padrauna and Kushinagar, Jai Pratap Singh from Paniara,

Shivendra Singh from Siswa, or Vir Bahadur Singh, former Chief Minister. Several of these "royal MLAs" have become Lok Sabha MPs and at times Ministers, like R.P.N. Singh and his father before him.

Most of these royal political families do not have criminal records and when they do, it is usually for family feuds. Most of them align either with the Congress or the BJP. Ministers aligned with the SP or the BSP tend to be more of the criminal kind, such as Amarmani Tripathi, Hari Shankar Tripathi, or Raghuraj Pratap Singh, also alias Raja Bhaiya, in Kunda.

One also finds similar profile among politicians who had shorter careers or who indeed lost elections so this is not to say that possessing these features – land, upper caste status and titles or a criminal record – is the only thing that gets these longstanding politicians elected. Individual qualities such as charisma and eloquence, the demographic and socio-economic configuration of the constituency and the features of the competitors also play a role, to say nothing of state level political considerations. But they do appear as necessary conditions to hold long political careers.

Jai Pratap Singh is a six-time MLA from Bansi, Siddharthnagar district. A Rajput by caste, he is the heir of the Bansi estate. A graduate from K.C. College in Bombay, Singh did his secondary education at the Mayo College in Ajmer, a boarding school well attended by the aristocracy. He is a self-declared agriculturist and declared in 2012 possessing 52 acres of land. He also owns large commercial spaces around Basti, as well as a marriage hall. He also owns a bungalow in the posh neighborhood of Gomti Nagar, in Lucknow.

Jai Pratap Singh started his political career as an independent (1989 and 1991), and then contested subsequently as a BJP candidate. He was briefly expelled from the party before the 2012 state elections, when his wife, Vasundhara Kumari contested the 2012 election in Domariaganj on a Congress ticket (the former Congress MLA from Domariaganj, Jagdambika Pal, won the seat on a BJP ticket).

His longstanding local opponent is an SP politician named Lal Ji Yadav, a medium landowning farmer with four criminal cases against him, for intimidation, election fraud (personation), and rioting. Singh lost his seat to Yadav in 2007 but regained it five years

later against a BSP candidate, Vinay Shankar Tiwari, son of the renowned criminal politician Hari Shankar Tiwari.

Another longstanding royal politician is Shivendra Singh, alias Shiv Babu, won five terms in Siswa, 1985, 1991, 1996, 2002 and 2012. He belongs to the local royal family.

Shiv Babu is a 'party-hopper'. He contested eight times under four consecutive party affiliations: Congress from 1985 to 1996, then twice on a BSP ticket, as a BJP candidate in 2002 and then as an SP candidate in 2007 and 2012. He owns large tracks of lands around the town of Siswa and a number of commercial buildings.

Shiv Babu has had to compete against several strong opponents. In recent years, his main rival was a Brahmin named Avnindra Nath Dwivedi, alias Mahant Dubey, a local strongman charged for murder and dacoity, who contested under various party banners (and won the seat in 2007). The other effective candidate was Rakesh Kumar, a medium landowning farmer, who contested first on a BSP ticket and then on a Peace Party ticket.

In 2012, his cousin, Raghavendra Pratap, alias Ankit Singh, contested against him, on a Rashtriya Lok Manch ticket (Amar Singh's short-lived party). Ankit is the son of Shivendra's uncle and former state Minister Devendra Singh, who was allegedly murdered by Shivendra's elder brother, Manvendra. Ankit finished fifth.

The Congress also has its share of royal candidates. The most notorious Congress royal in Northeastern U.P. is Ratanjit Pratap Narayan (R.P.N.) Singh, a three-time MLA from Padrauna, who went on to become a member of the 15th Lok Sabha, as well as a Minister of State (first Road, Transport and Highway, and then Home Affairs). Singh belongs to a Sainthwar Rajput family, custodian of the estate of Padrauna. His father, C.P.N. Singh, was a Member of Parliament and a former Minister of State (Defense) in Indira Gandhi's last Cabinet.

R.P.N. studied at Doon School (he is the President of the Doon School Old Boy Society) and at St. Stephen's College, two of India's premier elite institutions. He ambitioned a cinematic career but took the family political mantle after the murder of his father, by one

of his cousins. R.P.N.'s mother, Mohini Devi, initially contested the seat but lost badly (she finished fourth).

While an MLA, R.P.N. Singh attempted twice to regain his father's seat of Kushinagar. He won on the third attempt, defeating Swami Prasad Maurya, one of the leading MBC figures of the BSP. He lost his seat in 2014 against the BJP candidate, Rajesh Pandey, son of a Congress member Rajmangal Pandey.

R.P.N. has long been one of the Congress' most prominent face in North-East U.P. He is a former Youth Congress President (1997-1999) and AICC Secretary (2003-2007).

There has been a recent academic and journalistic attention paid to the phenomenon of political dynasties in India (Aron 2016, Chandra 2016a, Malhotra 2004). Due to the difficulty of gathering data on the subject, they have focused on national politics and big family biographies, in the case of the journalists[290].

In Kanchan Chandra's book, Jensenius notes that the constituencies that send dynastic MPs to the Lok Sabha do not differ particularly from those who don't, but that "royal MPs" tend to belong to poorer and more rural areas (Jensenius 2016b, 101). It is certainly the case in Eastern U.P. as well as in other parts of the state. But then, the whole region tends to be poor and rural.

It is therefore not the level of backwardness that alone explains why voters may want to send these royal politicians to the State Assembly, but the fact that they possess qualities and attributes that attract voters' support: a name and a reputation, a high social status, party linkages, resources, a history of closeness with the local and district-level administration. In short, they tend to possess the resources that help winning elections.

But it is not a guarantee that they position is secure through time. Many 'dynastic politicians' lose elections, or fail to get their family members elected. Vasundhara, wife of Jai Pratap Singh, finished fifth in her contest in Domariaganj, with only nine per cent of the

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[290] Romain Carlevan, at City University of Hong Kong, is currently undertaking an extensive research of political families in Madhya Pradesh.

votes). Similarly, many ex-zamindari families who use to have some political clout have sunk into anonymity.

Other longstanding politicians tend to conform to the portrait sketched earlier. They tend to belong to the upper caste, declare farming as their occupation. They draw most of their resources from agriculture and rent of commercial buildings. They belong to various parties and nearly a third of them have a history of successfully switching party allegiance, which may indicate that it is their attributes rather than party affiliation alone that gets them elected. The politicians who conform more to the portray outlined in the Western U.P. section of this chapter tend to be criminals, who are engaged in illegal trade or exert a criminal control over economic activities such as brick kilns, transport of raw material such as sand and stones, mining and quarrying.

The profile of politicians from Western and North-Eastern U.P. do not fundamentally differ from each other. On both sides, those who possess the resources to fight elections stand a better chance at getting elected than those who don't. Cumulating various social and economic attributes – such as a high caste status, an aristocratic lineage, land and property – helps to become even more competitive. In both sub-regions, local political elites tend to be drawn from groups and communities who exert control over local political and economical territorial entities.

What differs however is the nature of the resources from which political capital can be drawn, and the distribution of these assets between social groups. In the West, a fast-developing urban economy and a transforming rural economy had led to the empowerment of a large number of segments of the population, or to the rise of economic and political elites within many social groups. Even underprivileged groups such as the Muslims do have an economic elite whose some members have risen in politics, including from the non-traditional upper caste elite communities.

Economic change has contributed to the emergence of a very volatile and competitive political scene, in which caste, voters and party alignments have become blurred.

In the North-East, the lack of economic transformation has meant that the traditional landowning elites have retained much of their past influence. Even if the OBCs have risen

in the Eastern districts, the fact that all major parties co-opt a large number of upper caste candidates within their ranks ensures their resilience.

Similar processes contribute to explain also why and how the upper castes have retained much of their ascendency in Awadh, a former Princely State in which a large number of ex-Zamindari and aristocratic families went into politics after Independence. This pattern however is not uniform. There are cases of politicians who have risen through the mobilization of backward voters. One example is Pankaj Chaudhary, a Kurmi leader five-time MP from Maharajganj.

Chaudhary emerged through municipal elections in Gorakhpur. A traditional Rajput stronghold, the city has been for many years under the influence of the Gorakhnath Math, a religious institution and monastic order that runs several large temples in Gorakhpur as well as in Nepal, in the district of Gorkha. The head of the Math (Mahant) has been involved in politics since the 1920s. Mahant Avaidyanath has been a local MLA for five terms in the 1960s and 1970s, on a Hindu Mahasabha ticket, then a three-time MP from Gorakhpur, first as a Hindu Mahasabha, then as a BJP candidate. The current Mahant, Yogi Adityanath, succeeded him both at the head of the *Math* and as a Member of Parliament. He is one of the BJP's strongest and most controversial figures in U.P. (Jaffrelot 2014).

Pankaj Chaudhary challenged the Rajput's hold over the municipality by mobilizing its large Kurmi population, and by gathering the support from smaller groups who opposed or resented the political domination of the Rajputs. At the age of 25, Chaudhary became a member of the Municipal Corporation in 1989, and then the Deputy Mayor, in 1990. He joined the BJP the same year and was nominated for the seat of Maharajganj, a traditional upper caste strongholds.

He applied there a similar strategy than in Gorakhpur and succeeded in ousting the upper castes from power. The upper castes in Maharajganj are divided among four main groups, competing with each other: Brahmins, Banias, Rajputs and Kayasths. Each group would try to win over the other by forming local alliances with other non-upper caste groups. Pankaj Chaudhary consolidated support among the non-upper caste voters and won five terms (he lost in 1999).

Chaudhary started his career as a son of farmer in Maharajganj. He migrated to Gorakhpur and became a businessman (he now owns hair oil factories in Noida and Aligarh). During his political ascension, he pushed other family members to be involved in politics. His own father, Bhagwati Prasad Chaudhary, was a Zila Parishad member. His elder brother was the first Zilla Panchayat of the district of Maharajganj, created in 1989. His sister, Sadhna Chaudhary, contested three times in Shohratgarh (Siddharthnagar district), unsuccessfully[291]. She is also a former Zila Panchayat head. He even has cross-border political connection, since his brother-in-law is a legislator in Nepal[292]. The political clout of Pankaj Chaudhary over his constituency is thus completed by the control of local democratic institutions, which enables the family to accumulate resources and put them in a position to redistribute them clientelistically.

There are limits therefore to the value of a cross-region comparison, as none constitutes a homogeneous social, economic and political landscape. This furthers the argument that electoral political is before all local politics. Once again, local configurations do not necessarily trump state level or national level considerations. Nor do they exhaust the complexity of social, economic and political antagonisms that mark the life of localities. But these local configuration of power and influence do play a crucial role in determining the political supply voters must choose from; who gets to contest in the first place, who gets to be more competitive than others, and who may last in politics.

In the next section, I examine in further detail the question of what voters expect from their candidates and elected representatives and how the capacity to meet those expectations determine whether other attributes of political competitiveness – such as crime – help or not winning elections. It is not sufficient to explain why businessmen or criminals might be interested to contest elections. One also needs to factor in why voters would also want to support such candidates. A simple answer to that question consists in saying that the candidates who succeed are not those who possess the attributes that makes them competitive. But equally importantly, successful candidates are also those who conform to what voters expects from them, both retrospectively and in anticipation.

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[291] In 2012, she contested against her former husband, Chaudhary Ravindra Pratap alias Pappu
[292] I am thankful to Rajkamal Singh for providing me with information about Pankaj Chaudhary.

5.2. What do elected representatives do? A job description

I grew so rich that I was sent
By a pocket borough into Parliament.
I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.
I thought so little, they rewarded me
By making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navee!

Sir Joseph Porter[293]

Anyone who has followed an elected representative on a constituency visit or on a regular day of business has felt the exhaustion hitting hard by the end of the day – and sometimes earlier.

The regular life of most elected representatives I have met started early – usually at dawn – and ended late – often past midnight. Between these two moments, they might have met and talked to literally hundreds of people (sometimes thousands, during the campaign), visited dozens of places, homes and villages, received an equally high number of requests from petitioners camping in front of their personal or official residences, and taken a countless number of calls from one of the three or four handsets they possess and that are usually handled by aides and assistants, who must manage at the same time the flux of people and of incoming calls.

The Constitution lays down the rules of qualifications to become an MLA[294] but is silent on their duties. So is the rulebook of the state assembly, which describes the procedures and the general mode of functioning of the Assembly and its proceedings, but does not mention explicitly what its members are actually supposed to do. The MLA's oath of office does mention that an MLA will 'faithfully discharge the duty upon which [he is] about to enter' but, as an RTI activist in Maharashtra found out in 2011, no one could tell exactly what these duties formally were[295].

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[293] From "Sir Joseph Porter's Song" ("*When I was a Lad I served a Term*") from *H. M. S. Pinafore, or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor* (1878), W.S. Gilbert.

[294] Art. 173 of the Constitution mandates that in order to be qualified to fill a seat in the Legislature of a State, one must be (a) a citizen of India, (b) less than twenty-five years of age and (c) possessing such other qualifications as may be prescribed [...] by or under any law made by Parliament, such as being a registered voter in that state, and so on.

[295] 'RTI reveals MLAs have no duties', Times of India, 29 December 2011.

It is understood though that the responsibilities of members of the Legislative assemblies are of five orders: legislative (making laws on items figuring in the State and Concurrent lists), financial (the Assembly approves the state's budget and state's funds allocation), executive (the Executive is accountable or responsible in front of the Legislature), electoral (MLAs are part of the electoral college for Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections) and constitutional (Some parts of the Indian Constitution can be amended by the Parliament with the approval of half the state Legislatures).

However, as Chopra found out in his survey of legislators across five states, not a single MLA surveyed in Uttar Pradesh mentioned any of these duties when asked about their job description[296].

When asked about their role and functions, most MLAs and candidates I spoke to through my years of fieldwork have usually used the term *seva* ("service") to describe their duties of elected representatives. Many of them explained that once elected, their main duty was to provide relief and assistance to their constituents, and that their life basically consisted in receiving pleas and demands for direct assistance, or requests for mediation in dealings with the local bureaucracy. Some of these requests are individual. Others are collective, carried by village or caste representatives, who sometimes storm the MLA's office in great number, as a show of strength. Village heads usually come with pleas for public work, or to complain when sanctioned projects are not implemented. As Paul Brass noted, elected representatives in India are often expected to "*care for the material interests of their followers*" (Brass 1990, 96).

It is therefore not surprising that many elected representatives actually declare "social work" as their profession, often used interchangeably with the "political worker" denomination.

Many legislators complain about the gruelling routine that they are subjected to when they visit their constituencies. Interviewing MLAs in their constituencies alone is in fact

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[296] Chopra, op.cit.

virtually impossible, since they are constantly surrounded by aides, assistants, party workers, visitors, petitioners, and assailed with phone calls.

This routine follows them outside their constituencies as well. People travel long distances to meet their representative in the state capital, Lucknow, or in Delhi. The posh leafy green avenues of Lutyens Delhi often offer the sight of dhoti-clad farmers knocking at the door of their representative's home, early in the morning, before the inrush of vehicular traffic.

The fact that elected representatives are expected first and foremost to solve problems is a reflection and an inheritance of the dysfunctions of local administration, of the paucity of local resources, and of the general difficulty faced by the public to access goods or services they are entitled to.

Sometimes, this role of facilitation of bureaucratic processes gets institutionalized by a division of labor established between the local bureaucrats and the politicians. Elected representatives can attest certain qualities of individuals in lieu of the bureaucracy. They can recommend individual cases for pension cards, ration cards, MNREGA duties or dues. They can also attest the caste of individuals, or their status as a widower, the certification of which is vital to access a variety of benefits. Bureaucrats often send petitioners to their elected representatives, for written attestations or letters of recommendations.

In November 2013, Paul Brass, his companion Sue and I were sitting in the antechamber of a makeshift party office in Meerut, waiting to meet a prominent Muslim Cabinet Minister from the area. We were sharing the cramped room with about twenty individuals, all *Pradhans* (Heads) of Panchayats from the district. When asked about the purpose of their intended meeting with the Minister, they laughed at the naïveté of the question. One of them looked at us straight in the eye and said "*Elections are looming. We've all come for one thing (…) pistol license*" (said he, after a dramatic pause, and pointing at me with his hand raised mimicking a gun).

The other side of that role of facilitation is the imperative to provide access to resources to one's constituents. Not only those who depend on the state for livelihood, but also those who engage with the state for economic pursuits. Elected representatives are expected to land projects for their constituency, to facilitate their supporters and associates' access to

contracts, sub-contracts, public tenders and as well credit. This is the foundation of the transactional relation that ties them to their support base – what is usually referred to as patronage (Chandra 2004c). In this form of quid pro quo relation, (electoral) support is traded against access to resources.

This role of intermediation of politicians has been well documented in the literature (Jeffrey 2002, Manor 2000, Oldenburg 1987, Reddy and Haragopal 1985). Politicians themselves employ or rely on local relays of influence by building mutually beneficial ties with local *dayals* ("intermediaries", or "brokers"), caste leaders, head of local political institutions, Zila Panchayat Chairpersons, or any other individual susceptible to garner them vote in exchange of favors and protection.

These patronage networks, indispensable for the building and development of a political career, are usually built on both sides of legality. They also constitute a pre-condition to become a politician in the first place.

Through my years of fieldwork, I have met scores of aspiring politicians who were preparing their future candidacy by building their own local patronage networks, by assisting a sitting MLA or MP in building or maintaining their own patronage networks, and by devoting time to "party work" in the hope to climb within the organization and attract the attention of the party's leadership.

It is hard to assess whether the respect of these obligations and the actual effectiveness of politicians to act as *dayals* (intermediaries) are determinant to electoral outcomes. As was mentioned earlier, there are only a certain number of hours in a day and days in a week, and politicians cannot possibly attend the need of even a significant portion of their voters. But I have also mentioned earlier that not conforming to that role is a sure way of not going anywhere in politics.

5.2.1. *Seva* as a political and social obligation

This transactional relation that binds a representative to his supporters or constituents is not defined alone by the materiality of the commodities exchanged. It is first and foremost

a symbolic obligation that weighs on the politicians' shoulders, an imperative to appear both accessible or effective.

Effectiveness in particular can be attested by the service rendered, but they are also ritualized in the form of image, practices, language and code that signal to voters that the candidates who comes to them is determined and able to solve their issues.

For top party leaders, these encounters with voters/citizens are often staged and ritualized, in the form of collective audiences, of *durbar*, reminiscent of a practice common at the time of monarchy, in which the Prince would appear in front of "his people" assembled. It is rare that actual work gets done in these assemblies, unless party aides collect the requests and do follow the cases up. For politicians, these *durbars* are more an opportunity to display their availability to a general audience.

After his 2012 victory, the Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav resumed the practice of the weekly *Janta durbar* ("People's Durbar"). Ten thousand people flocked to the gates of his residence on the first day, transforming what was advertised as a popular consultation and an opportunity to address grievances into the staging and the spectacularization of the Chief Minister's accessibility and popularity[297].

The imperative of appearing accessible and effective is constant and permeates into the daily life of elected representatives, who can be disturbed at any moment of the day and are perpetually called to grace various sorts of social and political events with their presence.

MLAs are bound by a series of social obligation, vis-à-vis their constituents, families and the locality that sent them to the Assembly. They must maintain a visibility and presence in their constituency by attending social events such as weddings, funerals, religious festivals, caste *sammelans* (assemblies) and a string of official events – inaugurations of projects chief among them.

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[297] There are conflicting reports about the number. Kushner cites sources evoking 25.000 people (Kushner 2015).

This is what politicians in Western U.P. refers to as the *sukh dukh* (literally the happy and the sad), that is the range of significant social events marking the life of individuals and communities that require the presence and the contribution of a local political figure. In this case, the *sukh* refers to births, and the *dukh* to funerals, to mark the comprehensive range of events politicians are expected to attend. Thus, the wedding seasons, which takes place twice in the year, in winter and in summer, are a particularly gruelling time. An MLA can easily attend several dozens of wedding in a single day, bless the groom and the bride, attend to the parents and their relatives, to the other local dignitaries present.

For the host, having the presence of the local MLA is not just seen as a matter of prestige or a tribute to their own status, but as a matter of obligation that the representative has towards them. The cost of refusing an invitation can be high. One MLA from Allahabad described this the following way:

> "*Representatives are not only expected to be accessible, they should demonstrate their forwardness by coming to people, rather than waiting for their requests*' [298].

Beyond attending those events, MLAs are also expected to contribute to these events, even in a modest manner, by providing monies, food, by helping with the organization of the events, by providing workers or transport. An MLA in Western UP complained that his daily expenses amounted to at least fifteen thousand rupees a day, which amounts to a hefty sum at the end of the month.

Entering public life, as a private business figure or as a public political figure implies that one enters into a system of deeply codified obligations. There must be counterparts to be paid for the benefit of rising in society.

Candidates are first and foremost evaluated on their capacity to redistribute. They have an obligation of redistribution. What politicians present as 'service' (*seva*) is in fact a codified obligation to redistribute, to provide access to resources in order to develop and maintain a high status. This is evocative of the ancient Roman evergetism, a practice in which the rich classes legitimized their dominant position by funding public institutions or funding public work from their own resources. Wealthy citizens who sought high

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[298] Interview in Allahabad, April 2007.

magistrate or elective positions had the moral obligation to distribute a share of their wealth to the community (Veyne 1992).

As a result, being an elected representative is a costly proposition. Complaining about the cost of a politician's life is an old refrain, which F.G. Bailey recorded in Orissa, in the 1950s, with one of the Assembly's wealthiest member:

> "*I'm not in it for the money, that is certain. I was a minister in the last government, and after paying one hundred rupees to the Assembly party ad fifty rupees to the party, and bills for electricity and water and all that, I was getting a clear eight hundred fifty rupees. Who on earth can live like that? I have to entertain. Morarji and Mrs. Gandhi and other people come down and stay with me. (...) There are some MLAs that rent out their quarters and themselves live in the servants' room or the garage. To be in politics you have to be a very rich person, or very poor*"[299].

In my years of fieldwork, I have rarely encountered MLAs who were very poor, even if some led apparently a simple life and if many others clearly lived above their means or had to struggle to meet their daily expenses. When the BSP won its first majority in 2007, some its MLAs found it difficult to find adequate housing in Lucknow. The government then set up a housing scheme for MLAs in an apartment blocks near Hazratganj, in Lucknow.

5.2.2. On candidate's effectiveness

The message of effectiveness is conveyed through the deeds of the representation but also through a whole symbolic grammar that interweaves language and eloquence, sartorial choices, body language and attitudes. Politicians, and aspiring politicians in particular, tend to overstate or emphasize their projected effectiveness by adopting certain 'styles' of political leadership, meant to strike people's attention and imagination.

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[299] Quoted in (Bailey 1998, 95).

Muscular politics is one such register. Resorting to violence or projecting visual signals that connect to a universe of heroic macho references is one way to convey the message that the candidate is ready to do what it takes to meet his voters' expectations.

Political campaigns are marked by these signals of strength: bike rallies, jewellery and gold-rimmed sunglasses, as well as a fiery rhetoric. It is not surprising that parties like to bring movie stars, incarnating heroic figures on the screen, onto the campaign trail. In 2009, one of the star campaigners of the Samajwadi Party in the general elections was the actor Sanjay Dutt, a large-hearted muscular hero figure in Indian cinema, with a troubled relation with the law.

The muscular register can take sinister turns when violence gets unleashed during or between the campaigns. The criminals who populate parties do not show restraint in all circumstances and the newspapers frequently relate tales of road rage, intimidation, kidnappings or even murder involving politicians. Ahead of the 2012 elections, and in order to amend its image of a party harbouring criminals, the Samajwadi Party imposed a strict dress code to its candidates, meant to codify and regulate their appearance.

The dress code included a long list of mandatory items, such as a nicely ironed white kurta pajama (of good cut and fine material), a black sabri (Nehru jacket, optional), well-tucked shirts ("No keeping buttons open with the hair coming out"), personal grooming, trimmed beards and no unkempt or floating hair. In addition, it prohibited *paan* (betel and tobacco) chewing, the visible display of guns and rifles. It specifically asked its candidates to avoid driving in the streets flashing their guns out of windows. There were also restrictions on jewelry, dark and gold-rim glasses and recommended those sporting sandals to wear then with white cotton socks. A Cabinet Minister and party strategist explained the rationale behind the dress code as follows:

> "*We wanted to project the image of a new SP, not associated with old bias, prejudices, with vices. We wanted our candidates to project a neat and clean image, in a campaign*

led by a well-groomed, modern, foreign educated leader. The choice of candidates reflected that choice of new image"[300].

Accessibility and effectiveness is linked to the necessity to build patronage networks to build and develop a political career. These networks are not necessarily based on direct interaction between politicians and voters, but rather between politicians and a range of intermediaries, tasked with the building of direct ties with voters and local communities. These networks often include individuals who are drawn from local elite families and / or local dominant groups. These local elite networks usually cut across castes, following local demography and local configuration of power.

Through painstaking efforts and at great personal cost, aspiring politicians will slowly build for themselves a status of a local leader, susceptible to attract the attention of a party. Some of them attempt to take shortcuts, by consorting with local criminal elements, or by resorting themselves to illegal activities, in order to accelerate the process and build up an image of 'effective leadership'.

One meets many of these aspiring politicians in party offices, where they seek the protection and patronage of a senior party member. Many offer their service to existing candidates and representatives, helping them to build and maintain their own patronage networks, with the hope of using them one day for their own benefit. They often act as gatekeepers, or intermediaries, between a senior political figure and their own community. Established politicians often seek to 'reach out' to other caste via local leaders that they patronize, in exchange for access to their own base of supporters. Thus, aspiring politicians cultivate their own networks and use these roles to ensure resources to themselves (Harriss 2011).

There are other routes to the candidacy, usually through individuals' inscription into local network of influence, organized around institutions or social organizations. Many MLAs started their public career in Kisan unions, cooperative organizations, student unions or teachers' associations. There is no data to quantify how many MLAs have been elected

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[300] Interview with Abhishek Mishra, Minister for Protocol in the Akhilesh Cabinet, at his residence, Lucknow, November 7, 2013.

first at the Panchayat levels but most politicians I interviewed maintain close ties with local democratic bodies in their constituency.

They act as spokesperson of their community and convey to local politicians and the local bureaucracy requests related to the welfare of their communities. Many public work or public project have started with the mobilization campaign of caste or communities leaders: building roads, digging tube-well, fixing power connections, repairing or expanding irrigation canals, providing government jobs, etc.

In due time, these networks can be converted into resource, at the service of a party or at the service of the individual who contributed to build those networks and accessed a position of leadership within them. Sometimes, local leaders acquire the strength to win elections without even the support of political parties, because of their position or social status within their locality and community[301].

5.2.3. The high cost of entry into politics

Building and maintaining a political career involve significant investments. There are the costs of campaigning, of course, that are spiraling after each election. Most parties expect their candidates to fund their campaigns as well as to contribute to party coffers.

The cost of campaigning in fact can be small compared to the cost of building a political stature, or profile. Building local support networks, through mobilization and patronage, consumes a lot of time and resources. Many candidates indeed start investing in their political career years ahead of an election, by acting, looking, speaking, and spending like elected representatives.

Some parties, such as the BSP, offer shortcuts for aspiring politicians, by selling tickets (auctioning them, in fact). Months ahead of the polls, rumors start spreading about the cost of BSP tickets, fixed by the party high command. The closer from the date of nomination, the higher scale.

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[301] Interview with Sibagtullah Ansari, MLA Mohammadabad, in Yusufpur, 13th June 2007.

In May 2007, a BSP candidate explained to me how he had bought his BSP ticket for 1.25 Crores of Rupees, contested from jail (where he was awaiting trial for murder), won thanks to the local Dalit vote and the votes of his supporters, and obtained bail soon after the election. When asked about his plan of action from there, he laughed at me and said "Well, *now I have five years to regain my investment*"[302].

Once they have the ticket, the candidates must fund their campaigns and be mindful of what their competitors are spending. There is a lot of pressure to try to outspend one's opponents. As F.G. Bailey put it, "*to be successful as a leader is to gain access to more resources than one's opponent and to use it with greater skill*" (Bailey 2001, 35).

And once a candidate is elected, he or she enters into a world of constant expenditures, for events, people, staff, the hiring of vehicles, hosting of leaders, gifts, etc.

The combination of high cost of entry, cost of competition, uncertainty of winning and further uncertainty of serving more than a term create many incentives for predatory behaviour. Particularly when the sectors susceptible of generating cash for elections are themselves criminalized.

Most candidates don't have the resources to fund their political career on their own, and therefore develop business activities or business ties with individuals who can support them in turn. Patronage serves the double purpose of building support among voters, largely through intermediaries, and to develop a support network among local business elites who can contribute to party and campaign funding against the 'facilitation' of business dealings and transaction.

Candidates who cannot follow up or who cannot count on their parties to fund their campaign tend to be filtered out of the competition. Generally speaking, failing to conform to even a few of the multiple obligations bestowed to elected representatives can cut a candidacy or a political career short, regardless of the other qualities or attributes of the person in question. This partly explain why powerful individual, who possess both

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[302] Interview with a BSP MLA, Varanasi, May 2007.

financial and criminal resources, can very well lose elections, should they fail to conform to voters' expectations.

In the next section, I examine the question of criminalization of politics in Uttar Pradesh and compare the trajectories of criminal organizations in Western and Eastern U.P.

5.2. *Don* or *Dayavan*? Divergent trajectories in the criminalization of politics

The *Goonda Raj* – or the reign of the brigands – is a central feature of politics in Uttar Pradesh. The term refers to the criminalization of public life and of institutions, through the induction of criminal elements within parties and to the use of violence in the conduct of power. The term is also used to refer to a general sense of lawlessness, arbitrary and violence in public life, as well as to the impunity that such a climate offers to criminal individuals or organizations.

Data on the 'criminal profile' of contestants is available for the past two State Assembly and General Elections in Uttar Pradesh. While the treatment of that data is problematic (Jaffrelot and Verniers 2014b), one can still point at interesting variations. According to the affidavit data, 27.3 per cent of the candidates fielded by the five main parties in 2007 had pending criminal charges. That number rose to 37.6 per cent in 2012.

The BSP and the SP tend to field more candidates with criminal charges than the BJP and Congress, although the ratio for the BSP, BJP and Congress in 2012 were of similar order (between 32 and 36 per cent). In 2012, 49 per cent of the SP candidates had criminal charges. These percentages tend to increase among the winners and the runner-ups, which confirms Vaishnav's observation that criminality improves electoral prospects (Vaishnav 2012, 88).

That being said, the fact that the criminal ratio among runner-up candidates and other losing candidates indicates that the relationship between crime and victory should not be seen as deterministic. Many candidates with criminal charges lose their election, including against "clean" candidates (88 and 71 respectively, for 2007 and 2012).

In terms of regional variations, there was in 2007 a higher ratio of tainted candidates and winners in the East and the North-East than in the West and Rohilkhand. Those differences faded in 2012, the overall ration being higher and more equally distributed.

This data should be seen as merely indicative and certainly not isolated from other factors contributing to the competitiveness of a candidate.

With these caveats in mind, I wish in this section to make three observations. The first one is that there are a variety of contexts from which the criminalization of politics emerges and operate, and that these contexts follow the kind of economic transformation that has occurred in various sub-regions. In a nutshell, criminality and the criminalization of politics in Western Uttar Pradesh is more intertwined with the urban context and the capitalist economy that has grown over the past two decades, while criminal organizations in the East have remained more associated with traditional forms or rural criminality.

The second point I wish to stress on is that the participation of 'criminal elements' in the electoral process does not fundamentally differ from the participation of business figures in politics, for they respond to similar incentive: access to resources, fame and protection. Just as the businessmen politicians, criminals use the resources they have at their disposition – muscle and money – as a competitive advantage.

The last point is that the advantages that tainted candidates can draw from their criminal profile work in conjugation with other factors contributing to their electability, such as personal reputation, eloquence, accessibility and so on. Criminals might have a competitive advantage in the electoral race but they still need to conform to voters' expectations in order to win and in order to last in politics. There are a number of cases of dreaded criminals losing elections once they fail to live to their supporters' expectations.

5.3.1. "We have turned corporate": the reconfiguration of criminal organizations in Western Uttar Pradesh

The MLAs I interviewed through my fieldwork frequently admitted that it is extremely difficult to start or develop a political career without dealing with the world of criminality. The reason quite simply is that in order to build up support, raise funds, expand their influence and develop a redistributive capacity that will make them attractive to voters, they need to cultivate ties with a range of economic actors and groups who wield local influence and power. And in Western U.P., a number of key economic activity sectors are deeply criminalized.

The size of the black and grey economy and the absence of effective policing of the region's fastest growing economic sectors mean that individuals and groups who invest capital in economical or business activities have a near free hand at using illegal means to further their interests. The high entry cost to politics is another pull factor to resort to illegal ways of raising funds.

With the liberalization that took place post-1991 and with the explosion of the development of Delhi NCR, opportunities for enrichment have greatly increased, enhancing the competition over resources and influence and inciting economic agents to resort to criminal means in order to expand their business activities. Thus, the sources of party funding for politicians have changed. Pre and post-Independence, local dominant farming communities drew their resources from land, which generated both revenue and opportunities for patronage, through labor relations. In the context of urbanization and diversification of the economy, politicians now draw their resources from the sectors of construction, real estate, transport, brokerage, liquor and the provision of utilities such as water, electricity, cable television, and, famously, sand[303]. As we saw earlier, many politicians were already active in these businesses before getting into politics. And as we also saw, a number of politicians used their elective position to further their interest or start ventures in these sectors as well.

These new sectors and hubs of economic development are equally attractive to criminal elements and criminal organizations, who in Western U.P. have diversified their

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[303] See (Kapur and Vaishnav 2011)

traditional activities – smuggling, trafficking and the extraction of resources from impoverished rural populations – by investing heavily into these new booming sectors, more profitable. Their criminal proclivity provides them with nearly unbeatable competitive advantages, particularly since the development of these sectors of activity remain largely unregulated.

In short, local political life is almost inextricably linked with local criminality. Not only the pressures and constraints of electoral competition create incentives to resort to illegal means, but the very sources that fuel political life with resources are themselves criminalized. Unsurprisingly, in Western Uttar Pradesh, those sources are equated with the sectors of activity that have grown the most in recent years. They are also the sectors from which most of the businessmen politicians come from.

The criminalization of these sectors of activity was accelerated by the migration of gangsters from village to the cities.

While conducting fieldwork in villages across Baghpat and Meerut district, I was struck by the difficulty of finding the dacoits the region was so infamous for. Ask (almost) anyone in these villages who the local dreaded criminal figures are, and they will provide you with a long list of names. Ask where these individuals can be found and the answer comes in the form of a question mark. To the question *dakhu kaha hain?* ("Where are the bandits?"), the common response was that they there used to be dacoits in the area, but that they had left recently.

Indeed, most of the leading figures of gangs, or criminal organizations, who used to be based in the countryside and operate in villages, have migrated to nearby cities, in Ghaziabad, Noida or Loni, or sometimes Delhi and beyond. Having traced some of these individuals, two explanations were provided for this rural exodus of criminals.
The first and main motive for their migration is the fact that cities offer better returns to criminal activities than villages. Investing in booming business sectors and using their criminal skills as a competitive advantage is far more rewarding than extracting resources from impoverished localities and their low-income inhabitants.

Criminal organizations usually live off the plundering of state resources by controlling the world of contracting and distribution of raw materials, such as stones, sand or timber. They usually use criminal pressure to win contracts, bribe local police forces and intimidate their legitimate competitors, or drive them out of local markets.

These are profitable activities but they do not compare with the returns that can be made from plundering the private sector in fast-growing cities. Targeting the private sector also has the advantage of avoiding public scrutiny.

Cities also offer a relative anonymity, compared to villages where everyone knows everyone's whereabouts.

The second incentive for criminals to migrate to cities is the fact that rural criminality has become a more competitive space. The assertion of backward groups, the fragmentation of the political space, the rise of new parties who develop their own local networks have also led to an increase of competition among criminals and among criminal organizations. This competition is often regulated through violence, which, at a certain point, call for state intervention.

There is a particular area in Western Uttar Pradesh, a triangle between Baghpat, Baraut and Meerut, where criminal gangs have been at war with each other through the 1990s and early 2000s, over territorial control, competition over resources and vendettas (TNN 2006). Under the Mayawati regime, the police cracked down on a number of these gangs. Several prominent criminals were killed in encounters with police forces[304]. There were also instances of connivance between police officers and gangs, leading to further violence.

In that context of gang war, many sought refuge to cities and their anonymity, and are considered absconding from the villages they originate from.

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[304] In April 2016, 47 policemen were sentenced life terms for fake encounters killings that took place in the early 1990s (Rashid 2016).

"Life was becoming difficult [in the village] as the police was after me. I decided to turn corporate, since there is more money to be made here [in Ghaziabad] in the construction business"[305]

Gangsters often speak euphemistically when describing their occupation. "Turning corporate" is a term often used by criminals to describe their conversion to the new economy, where they use their criminal resources to carve for themselves or their patrons a piece of the urban cake.

Only a fraction of these gangsters become politicians. Most of them however develop ties with parties and politicians, in order to secure both opportunities and protection. There are famous and spectacular figures that illustrate this process of integration of the spheres of politics, business and crime. One such figure is the late liquor baron Gurdeep Singh Chadha, also known as "Ponty" Chadha[306].

By the time of his death in November 2012 (he was killed by his own brother during a shootout at his South Delhi Chattarpur farm house), Chadha had acquired a quasi monopoly on liquor distribution in Uttar Pradesh, occupied a dominant position in the liquor retailing business, had started making inroads in the liquor market in neighboring states, and was running a Western U.P. based real estate and industrial empire that cut across construction, education institutions, malls, cinema halls, paper mills and film distribution.

The Chadha's were Partition refugees (from Rawalpindi) who settled in Moradabad, an industrial settlement 180 kilometers East of Delhi, near Rampur. The Chadha family invested in a local liquor store, and proceeded to expand their business, eventually gaining control of the liquor market in Moradabad. During the Emergency, the family moved into the sugar trade (the base product for liquor making), setting up several factories in the area.

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[305] Interview with an anonymous source in Ghaziabad, January 2013.
[306] This section draws heavily from a detailed portrait written in 2013 by Mehboob Jeelani in The Caravan (Jeelani 2013).

Their business started to really flourish and expand once Gurdeep's father, Harbhajan, developed ties in the late 1980s with an emerging political figure, Mulayam Singh Yadav. The Chadha family contributed generously to the Janata Dal 1989 campaign. Once Mulayam became Chief Minister, the Chadhas started applying for public tenders and got a number of public contracts for sand and pebble mining, two activities key to the industrial development and construction boom that was taking place in Western U.P. They used the money they made through these activities to expand further their liquor business.

Liquor trade in U.P. is perhaps one of the most criminalized sectors of economic activity. In order to cope with the harshness of competition, the Chadhas hired local criminal figures to oversee and protect their operations. The mix of criminal means and political protection enabled them to expand their business aggressively to a growing number of districts in Uttar Pradesh, notably through the rigging of tenders and licensing system.

The political instability of the 1990s incited the Chadhas to develop ties across parties. They connected with the BSP, which was growing in Western U.P., as well as with the BJP (they allegedly helped Kalyan Singh's son Rajvir to develop his own liquor business in Aligarh). The way to connect with politicians was to provide financial support to their campaigns, but also to develop local business ties with their relatives or associates, thus ensuring political protection wherever they expanded their activities.

Ponty Chadha's business peaked under successive Mayawati governments. Since the BSP needed to consolidate its hold over several districts in Western U.P. and surrounding areas, they relied heavily on Ponty Chadha's influence and money power, trading support against further business activities. Mehbood Jeelani sums up the trajectory of Chadha under the Mayawati regime as follows:

> "(…) *under Mayawati's rule, Chadha was awarded a monopoly over distribution for the state's Rs 14,000-crore liquor market. In addition, he was given control of 30 percent of the alcohol retailers across the state, and was allowed to purchase a number of distressed but viable state-owned sugar mills at a price below their fair-market value. He also received a Rs 10,000-crore contract for distributing food under the state's midday meals scheme for children and pregnant women—in violation of an earlier*

Supreme Court order—and landed vast tracts of prime real estate just outside Delhi at a loss to the public, state Congress leaders claimed, of Rs 40,000 crore. Both Chadha and the BSP government made enormous sums from the booze trade in particular—excise tax on the 10 million cases of liquor sold every year generated roughly Rs 10,000 crore annually for Mayawati's government—and within the state administration Chadha became known as "Mayawati's financier"" (Jeelani 2013).

Once he acquired his liquor distribution monopoly, Chadha increased the retail price of liquor, a gesture that was known as the "Ponty tax".

In November 2013, a family dispute over the division of family assets and property, found its conclusion in a shootout in which Ponty and his brother Hardeep died. Since then, Ponty Chadda's son, "Monty", took the reins of the company and has started a cleanup drive of the family businesses, aiming to convert his father's empire into a company following more established corporate norms. After Chadha's death, the U.P. government, led by Akhilesh Yadav, ordered the pending investigations against the family to be put to an end, and renewed the company's liquor license.

Ponty Chadha never contested an election in his life, nor did any of his relatives. But his ties with various parties through time and his engagement with local and state-level political figures made him a prominent political figure. Chadha's business acquisitions – notably the sugar mills – were often made through screen companies or through cartel organizations in which shares were generously distributed to local power holders, blurring the boundaries between the world of politics, business and crime.

The story of Ponty Chadha is of course quite spectacular and in various ways unique. But one finds a large number of "smaller Ponty Chadhas" across the region, individual or networks of entrepreneurs who reap the benefits of a developing capital region, and develop both political and business ties in order to fight their way through a highly competitive, violent and therefore risky business environment.

These ties enables them to gain access to the vast resources that the state distributes through its system of tenders, as was well illustrated by Kapur and Vaishnav in their paper on the quid pro quo relationship binding politicians and builders in U.P. (Kapur and

Vaishnav 2011). The state retains huge stakes and still control a number of industries – notably sugar mills and the range of Public Service Undertakings (PSUs). And while it should normally be the task of the bureaucracy to organize and supervise those tenders, parties and politicians in government effectively oversee or direct those processes. A BJP MLA from Rohilkhand confided to me that:

> "*The sand contracts are decided by the Minister of Mining but usually by the Chief Minister himself, or one of his close family member*"[307].

As a result, political connections are nearly mandatory to hope to win those tenders.
I interviewed a BJP MLA from the neighboring region of Rohilkhand, who reflected on the profile of the SP and BSP politicians in the following manner: "*The candidates of the SP and the BSP are not business people. They are exploiters of state resources*". He went on to describe them as "*mafia, that is the term I would choose*"[308].

This goes on to illustrate how the work of politicians interferes with the missions of the administration. If one goes by the institutional book, legislators make law and the bureaucracy apply them. In reality, those distinctions can be quite blurred since individual interests get often interwoven with the pursuit of the general or public interest, through regular interferences of political actors within public systems.

This also calls on to reflect about the fact that despite 25 years of gradual opening or liberalization of the economy, the state remains engaged in a number of key economic and industrial sectors. It still also presides over a maze of bureaucratic regulations, systems of tenders and licensing that organizes the state's economic life. As political anthropologist Akhil Gupta demonstrated in his study of the working of a local bureaucracy in Mandi, a small town in the vicinity of Muzaffarnagar, the working of local administration is not only politicized but also guided by arbitrariness (Gupta 2012), making "political guidance" a necessary help to navigate this complex universe.

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[307] Interview with P. Singh (name changed) BJP MLA from Rohilkhand, in Delhi, 10 February 2013.
[308] Ibid.

5.3.2. The resilience of rural gangsters in the East

Considering the state of dereliction and corruption of public institutions in Uttar Pradesh, it is not difficult to imagine why voters would vote for tainted candidates. They present themselves – and often are – as having the will and capacity to "get things done". An IAS officer in Lucknow once told me, under the promise of anonymity, that some of the best-performing areas in the state were those controlled by criminal politicians, who could coerce local bureaucrats to deliver[309]. In the U.P. context, marked by poverty, scarcity of resources, lawlessness and violence, there is a social legitimacy to resort to grey methods – or plain illegal one's – in order to fulfill people's legitimate needs.

On this question, I recall a particular conversation with the Muslim owner of a mill in the outskirts of Varanasi, staunch supporter of the Samajwadi Party. I asked him what did the SP ever do for Muslims in Uttar Pradesh, and if it bothered him that the party was harboring known gangsters. His response was as follows:

> "*See, what matters the most to us is bijli (electricity). Without bijli, we cannot run the mills. At the end of the days, they [the politicians] are all corrupt. But at least, with the SP* [referring to the local Samajwadi Party office]*, you can count on them. When the power is gone, you can go to them. They will send some goons to beat up the local engineer until the power is restored*"[310].

Thus, criminal incursion into politics is not a one-way street. After all, tainted criminals must confront themselves to the ballot test and win support from voters. There was a period in Uttar Pradesh politics, particularly in the 1980s, where parties and candidates called on criminal gangs to influence local electoral outcomes. Criminal intimidation, coercion, booth capturing, political assassinations were quite common. The rise of criminalization of politics followed the process of decline of the Congress, who called on these criminal elements as a way to mitigate their flailing popularity.

The criminalization of the electoral process was largely checked in the mid-1990s, under the impulse of T.N. Seshan, the then Chief Election Commissioner. Seshan countermanded

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[309] Interview in Lucknow, March 2009.
[310] Interview in Varanasi, March 2007.

elections in constituencies that had seen fraud, arrested preventively "trouble makers" and "history sheeters", and deployed the army to secure the ballot. In the 1996 elections, nearly one hundred fifty thousand people were preventively arrested in Uttar Pradesh alone. After Seshan's retirement in 1996, the Election Commission of India would pursue the effort of securing and policing the electoral process, as well as place candidates under tight scrutiny (Verma 2005b). Today, voters are far less likely to be intimidated by criminal politicians. As a popular saying goes, *sabko thode hi maar sakte ho* ("one cannot possibly beat up everyone").

Instead of coercion, the capacity to solve problems, perceived generosity and a reputation of accessibility is crucial for building and maintaining popular support. As always, the way this principle works in reality is more complicated and ambiguous that it initially appears. I had a demonstration of the ambiguity of the criminal-voter connection during the 2007 State Elections campaign.

In the month of March 2007, I paid a visit to the Ansari brothers – Afzal and Sibagtullah – in Mohammadabad, a small dusty town bordering Ghazipur, hundred kilometers east from Varanasi, where I was based to cover the state election campaign. Friends from Delhi had provided me with a contact number, which I used to secure an appointment with the family of one of Uttar Pradesh's most prominent criminal political figure, Mukhtar Ansari, at that time jailed in the Jhansi prison for the alleged murder of Krishnanand Rai, a BJP opponent and head of rival local criminal organization.

The story of the family is well known. Born in 1960, Mukhtar Ansari hails from an illustrious political family. His grandfather, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, served as Congress President in 1927-28 and was one of the founders of the Jamia Millia University. He is also a relative of India's current Vice President, Mohammad Hamid Ansari. His elder brother, Afzal, is a five-time MLA from Mohammadabad, where he ran first in 1985 as a Congress candidate. He then served three terms as a communist (CPI), and won a fifth term in 2002, on a Samajwadi Party ticket. In 2004, he won the seat of Ghazipur, again on a SP ticket, but lost his seat twice, first under a BSP ticket and then under the banner of the family's own political party, the Quami Ekta Dal (QED).

A four-time MLA from Mau constituency, Ansari has been elected under various party labels (including under the flag of his own party, the Quami Ekta Dal). He was inducted into state politics by Mayawati during the 1996 elections. The BSP leader saw in the strongman of Mau the ideal candidate to win the seat of this volatile locality (before Mukhtar Ansari, no MLA succeeded in being re-elected not any party managed to win the seat twice consecutively). Ansari's gangster's reputation was then already well earned. He was accused of the murder of Nand Lal Rungta, a local VHP Treasurer, of extortion, kidnapping, cheating by impersonation and rioting.

Ansari is known for his disposition to deal violently with his competitors, notably from the notorious Brijesh Singh's gang. On November 29, 2005, a group of armed men killed Krishnanand Rai, the MLA from Mohammadabad, on his way back from a family wedding. Seven people died in the attack. Rai, a Bhumihar, was a medical school dropout from Benares Hindu University. He settled in Varanasi where he grew a flourishing business in infrastructure contracting and real estate. He then allegedly grew ties with the local mafia, notably the Brijesh Singh's gang. He was inducted into politics by Manoj Sinha, then MP from Ghazipur and fellow Bhumihar[311], and contested a first in Mohammadabad in 1996. He lost against SP candidate Afzal Ansari, Mukhtar's brother and MLA from this constituency since 1985 (first on a Congress ticket, then on three CPI tickets). Rai defeated Ansari five years later and was assassinated three years after that. The Ansari brothers were quickly accused of the murder, as well as some of their associates. The case had to be transferred outside the region, since no one dared to press charge or investigate the two brothers. Eventually, Mukhtar was arrested and jailed, first in Jhansi, then in Agra, where he still awaits trial[312].

Through their political careers, the Ansari brothers have expanded their activities through the Mau, Ghazipur, Varanasi and Jaunpur districts. By the time they ran general elections, they had established themselves as key players in the area for the coal mining business, railway contracts, scrap disposal, public works and liquor distribution business. Their status of politician, clearly, had helped them to further their business and illegal interests.

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[311] And currently Minister of State for Railways in the Narendra Modi government.

[312] This imprisonment does not apparently prevent him from conducting business, since he was booked in March 2010 for the murder of a local contractor, in the Dakshintola area of the Mau district.

It notably helped them and their associates to bag public contracts. Their clout also helped them to develop (or buy) strong rapport with regional party leaders across the board (he's reputed to be close to Mulayam Singh Yadav and to some senior congressmen). Both Congress and the SP kept fielding weak or dummy candidates against Mukhtar[313].

Their position of influence also enabled them to build strong patronage network, which they would use for electoral purpose. I interviewed Afzal and Sibagtulla Ansari in March 2007, a few weeks before the declaration of the elections' results. Afzal described his brother as a do-gooder, using his strength and influence to help the lives of common citizens. He described the long queues that would form every morning in from of his residence in Mau, where people would register their pleads and grievances to Mukhtar's constituency care takers.

Criminal politicians such as the Ansari's like to present themselves as Robin Hood incarnations, insisting that they serve interests greater than themselves, and excusing their recourse to criminal means to the obligations set upon them by "their" people or supporters.

Popular culture and movies in particular have reinforced this stereotype. In 1988, the movie *Dayavan* (in English, "the Compassionate"), a remake of a popular Tamil film, featured Vinod Khanna as a young boy turning to crime after the murder of his family and the destruction of his home by the police. His character, Shakti, kills his family and friend's murderers and acquires a reputation of a Don with a good heart ("*dayavan")*, leading him to become the king of Bombay's underworld.

This posturing of course fools few people in the area, who are well aware of the family's exact whereabouts. What matters more is that the family does not deviate from what is expected from them, as community leaders, politicians, and representatives. The quid pro quo relationship between voters and representatives is marked by pragmatism and opportunism, from both sides, as voters are also often in a position to bargain with candidates. This does not prevent politicians to use their own capacity of redistribution to

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[313] In 2007, all the Congress cadre of the Mau district resigned collectively, in protest against the parachuting of Gopal, a dummy candidate imposed by the PCC, who lost his deposit against Mukhtar Ansari.

bargain with voters, by distributing resources selectively. I had an illustration of this form of opportunism and pragmatism in a campaign event organized at Sibagtulla's residence, in Mohammadabad.

The event consisted in handing 20,000 Rupees checks to a large number of women, queuing in front of the gate of his residence. These checks were part of a last-minute Samajwadi Party scheme that rewarded families whose girls attended schools. The women in line had brought documents attesting of their daughters' enrolment. Some had brought their daughters along in fear that the documents might not suffice or be dismissed.

In the course of the proceedings, I noticed that some of Sibagtulla's associates, who were guarding the gate to verify the women's documents, were rebuking some of them while letting the other in the compound. When I asked on what basis they decided who could get in and who could not, I was casually explained by one of Sibagtulla's aid that only the women who had come from the 'right' *basti* ('neighborhood') could come in – the 'right' meaning those who had voted for his brother Afzal in the previous state election (Afzal had contested and lost against Krishnanand Rai). The other women, who resided in pockets that had voted differently, were told to go away and to vote the 'right way' this time if they wanted to benefit from the MLA's largesse in the future. When asked how they knew for sure which *basti* voted for them, the same associate produced a bunch of printed document – polling booth data from the previous election – which they used to determine where they voters reside.

Sibagtulla prevailed in that election, on a CPI ticket, over Alka Rai (BJP), the widow of Krishnanand, by thirty-four hundred votes. He thus inherited, through the ballot, the constituency that had send his brother Afzal five times to the State assembly. Two years after his 2002 defeat, Afzal contested the Lok Sabha elections, from Ghazipur. He won against the BJP candidate Manoj Sinha, who had held the seat in 1996 and 1999, and regained it in 2014, on a BJP ticket (he was appointed Minister of State for Railways then Telecom in the 2014 Narendra Modi cabinet). Sinha is an RSS pracharak and former ABVP leader at Benaras Hindu University (he presided the university's student union in 1982), as well as an engineer by training. He is one of the BJP's major figures in Uttar Pradesh.

Mukhtar contested general elections twice, unsuccessfully, in 1996 (in Ghosi) and in 2009, in Varanasi, both times on the BSP ticket. In 2009, he contested from jail, against Murli Manohar Joshi (BJP). He attempted to contest against Narendra Modi in 2014 but pulled out of the race before the nomination deadline (he also contested from Ghosi, and finished third, behind the BJP and the BSP candidates).

Parties have kept an ambivalent attitude towards the Ansari brothers. In 2010, Mayawati expelled both Mukhtar and Afzal from the BSP, in an effort to clean up the party's image[314]. A year earlier, in an electoral meeting held in Varanasi, Mayawati described Mukhtar as "a Messiah for the poor". She also referred to his professional activities as part of a "*crusade against affluent and powerful landowners to uphold the cause of the poor and the downtrodden*"[315].

By then, Mukhtar and Afzal had become political pariahs. As regional parties attempted to clean their image of parties harboring criminals, they turned into the caricature of the criminalization of politics. They formed with their elder brother their own party, the Quami Ekta Dal, in 2010, which in 2014 joined the Ekta Manch platform, a grouping of Eastern U.P. micro-parties, convened by Om Prakash Rajbhar, former BSP MLA from Kolasla and leader of a the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), a tiny formation that commands some support among the MBCs (mostly Rajbhars) and some segments of the Dalits in various districts in Eastern U.P.[316]

One should of course be wary of the 'Robin Hood' type of discourse that criminal politicians like to offer to those who listen to them. Discussions with random individuals across the constituency revealed that people were fully aware of the family's criminal whereabouts. But these revelations did not sound as indictments. It was actually

[314] The BSP press release indicated candidly "*Ansari's involvement in criminal activities led our party president to take the decision to expel him*" and that *he* (Mukhtar*) had failed to live up to the expectations of the BSP where he was given entry on the promise that he would mend his ways*"
 In http://www.hindustantimes.com/Mayawati-expels-Mukhtar-Ansari--brother/Article1-532149.aspx

[315] Hindustan Times, April 16, 2010.

[316] The SBSP contested 13 seats in 2004 and 16 seats in 2009. They get above 10,000 votes in half of the seats they contest in. Their strategy consists in allying with other parties and provide them with the additional voters that may help them win their seats. They usually trade their support for money or favors.

enunciated rather matter-of-factly, or presented as an obvious aspect of local political life. Several respondents also noted that most of their crimes had been geared towards other criminals, and not against 'common people'. But for all their known wickedness, the Ansari brothers forged themselves a reputation of accessibility and helpfulness, which surpassed the fear that their not-so underground activities might induce. They also made sure that some key segments and individuals from their core support base be included as beneficiaries of their redistribution. Mau is a constituency with a large Muslim population (11 out of its 14 MLAs have been Muslims) and Mukhtar Ansari has been careful to cater to that particular segment of the electorate, as well as to include in his organization local figures from other castes and communities. Thus, the "social engineering" that marks electoral strategy also applies to the organization of patronage and daily business activities, in this case of the illegal type.

Even if their political fortuna seems at the moment behind them – they have been publicly outcast by most parties – they retain a lot of strength in their area, as their reputation for generosity has not eroded among their core supporters. This is not the case for other famous criminal politicians, whose career sank the moment voters spread the word that they had become *greedy'*, a euphemistic term used to say that they weren't sharing anymore.

The case of Atique Ahmad, a former Samajwadi Party MP in Allahabad, provides a good example. A local figure of the Allahabad crime scene, Ahmed rose into politics by contesting and winning the Allahabad West seat in 1989, as an Independent candidate. He was re-elected twice, with large margins, still as an Independent, until the Samajwadi Party co-opted him, for a fourth term in 1996. A year after his election, Ahmad defected to the Apna Dal, a local Lodh political party. He then proceeded to win his fifth term. By that time, Ahmad was controlling much of the illegal activities in Allahabad and faced little opposition. The Samajwadi Party lured him back into the party fold by offering him the Phulpur Lok Sabha ticket in the 2004 election, which he won[317]. By then, his troubled past and present caught up and he was jailed in 2008 on various charges of murder, attempt

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[317] That seat was once held by Jawaharlal Nehru and V.P. Singh. Ram Manohar Lohia also contested in Phulpur, in 1962, and lost against Nehru.

murder, kidnapping and abduction. Rejected by both the SP and the BSP[318], he contested from jail in the 2009 elections on the Pratapgarh seat, on an Apna Dal ticket. He finished fourth.

In the 2012 Assembly elections, he contested again from his old constituency, Allahabad West, again on an Apna Dal ticket. He lost by a margin of 43,000 votes against Puja Pal, Widow of BSP leader Raju Pal, who had been killed in broad day light by Ahmad in 2005, on Republic day. Raju Pal, who went by the nicknames « Tiger of Allahabad » or « *Garibo ka Masiha* » ('Messiah of the poor') had lost against Atique in the 2002 election, but won over his seat in a by-election held in 2005, against Atique's brother, Mohammad Ashraf.

Jailed once again, this time for the murder of Raju Pal (and a score of other murder charges), Ahmad contested the 2014 elections in Shrawasti, further East, on an SP ticket. He lost by an 86,000 vote margin against Daddan Mishra, former Minister of State for Medical Education in the 2007 Mayawati Cabinet, who had defected to the BJP.

Contesting in seats where his criminal influence did not reach cost him his job of representatives. He could have contested in Allahabad on his own, as an independent candidate or under some other small party banner, as he had done in the past. But by then, his popular support in Allahabad had shrunk, under the reproach that he had become greedy and inaccessible. Regular threats to his life had led him to cut himself away from public contacts. Besides, the loss of his political protectors cut his own access to resources and undermined his effectiveness. His authority in the underworld was also challenged by rival organisations. As a result, he lost both the legitimacy and the aptitude to build electoral support.

Other political criminal figures have shown extraordinary resilience, despite all sorts of odds. They tend to belong to more traditional forms of criminal organizations, rural based, living off the extraction of rural and public resources. These figures tend to also belong to traditional elite groups that is the upper castes, contrary to Western UP where the composition of the crime world is more sociologically diverse.

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[318] Atique Ahmad was formally expelled from the SP for having broken the party's whip, by voting against the Indo-US nuclear deal, which had been saved in Parliament by the Samajwadi Party. On this subject, see (Sasikumar and Verniers 2013).

These criminal figures combine several attributes that help them resist the pressures from parties who at times wish to distanciate themselves from these controversial figures.

One example is Amarmani Tripathi, a four-time MLA from Lakshmipur who started his political career in 1989 with the Communist Party, before joining the Congress. He served a second term in 1996 before leaving the Congress to join a small party, the Loktantrik Party, which merged with the BJP ahead of the 2002 elections. He contested and won his third term that year, but on a BSP ticket.

Tripathi's influence grew far beyond the limits of his constituency. He developed ties across parties and became a master schemer, peddling defections on behalf of the Congress Party, the BSP and the SP. Tiwari was part of Kalyan Singh's infamous gang of 19 criminal cabinet members, as Minister of State for Science and Technology. In 2001, he joined Rajnath Singh's cabinet in 2001, as Minister of State for Institutional Finance, but was dismissed soon after because of his involvement in a case of kidnapping for ransom, involving the son of a businessman from Basti[319]. He became a Minister in Mayawati's Cabinet in 2002 but was rapidly dismissed on account of the accusations mounted against him, in the case of the murder of Madhumita Shukla, a 24 year-old poetess, who happened to be Tripathi's mistress (Tripathi 2003)[320]. The Samajwadi Party welcomed him immediately and helped him win a fourth term in Lakshmipur in 2007.

Tripathi is a known associate of another criminal politician, Hari Shankar Tiwari, a six-time MLA from Chillupar (North-east). Tiwari started as a railway contractor, and ended up heading one of the two large criminal gangs of Gorakhpur (he was one of the first MLA to be elected from jail, in 1985). Tiwari served four mandates under the Congress banner and then created his own outfit, the All-India Indira Congress (Tiwari), a short-lived platform of dejected Congressmen[321] and fellow upper castes[322].

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[319] The son was recovered from Tiwari's bungalow in Lucknow.

[320] Amarmani Tripathi and his wife Madhumani were convicted in October 2007 for the murder of Madhumita Mishra, who was seven month pregnant.

[321] Tiwari transformed his party into the Akhil Bhartiya Loktantrik Congress (ABLTC) and ran three times, unsuccessful, under that banner.

[322] 38 candidates of AIIC(T) contested the 1996 elections, including seven incumbent or former legislators, essentially in the North-east and in Uttarakhand, a state with a large proportion of

Tripathi and Tiwari are also the head of political families who have contested under a variety of party affiliations. Hari Shanker Tiwari's son, Bhishma Shanker Tiwari, was elected in the 14th Lok Sabha in a by-election in 2008, on a BSP ticket. His second son, Vinay Shanker, contested and lost against Yogi Aditynath in Gorakhpur, in 2002. Vinay Shanker contested again in the 2008 Ballia by-election, which he lost again against Neeraj Chandrashekhar, son of the late Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar. Tiwari's nephew, Ganesh Shankar Pandey, was elected MLA in Dalmau in 1993. Pandey was re-elected three times and was elected Speaker of the House in his fourth term.

In 2012, Amarmani Tripathi's son, Amanmani, contested in his fathers' seat (Nautanwa was partly created from Lakshmipur in the 2008 Delimitation) and lost against Kaushal Kishore, a first-time candidate from Congress, by a small margin. After his lifetime conviction in 2007, in the Madhumita Shukla case, he appointed his brother Ajit Mani Tripathi, as his successor for the Maharajganj Lok Sabha Seat[323].

Both carried multiple criminal charges on their heads, on account of murder, attempt to murder, rioting and dacoity, among others. For many years, their proximity to party heads protected from the reach of the law. Unlike Tripathi, who got a lifetime conviction, Hari Shankar Tiwari emerged cleansed from all charges[324].

There are many other such figures, across parties. In the 2012 state elections, there were only 92 seats out of 403 where none of the first three candidates did not have any criminal charge. If we consider only the winner and the runner-ups, the number of constituencies increases to 143.

The five-time MLA from Kunda, Raghuraj Pratap Singh, alias Raja Bhaiya, is another example. Raja belongs to the local royal family of Kunda. He built himself a reputation of strong man and won his first election as an Independent candidate. Like Amarmani

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upper caste population. Four of them won their seat that year, including Jagdambika Pal (Basti), a turncoat from Congress, Hari Prasad Tiwari himself, in Chillupar, K.C. Singh (alias Baba), in Kashipur, and Shyam Sunder Sharma, in Lucknow East.

[323] «*In UP, master defectors back in business* »The Asian Age, 29 March 2009.

[324] Ashish Khetan, then reporter for Tehelka, uncovered that Tripathi was regularly leaving prison to hold court, manage his business affairs and maintain his patronage ties alive, under the guise of medical check-ups. See « Jailhouse Rocks », Tehelka, June 2012.

Tripathi, Raja Bhaiya also started his political career as a self-professed Marxist. He quickly turned into a major criminal figure, acquired vast tracts of land and engaged into various illegal activities such as sand mining. He served five times as a Minister in various BSP and SP governments. His tenure as Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, from 2003 to 2007 and his looting of the Public Distribution System (PDS) was the object of a front page Tehelka reportage, when Raja Bhaiya regained that portfolio, in the Akhilesh Cabinet, in 2012 (Khetan 2012)[325]. Prior to his enrolment in the SP, Raja Bhaiya had served in the Kalyan Singh' 1996 Cabinet, where he was close to Amarmani Tripathi. In 2002, he was booked under POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) after a cache of arms and explosives was discovered in his residence. He received 44 criminal charges that year. After the 2002 elections, Mulayam Singh Yadav obtained him bail and inducted him in his Cabinet, alleging that the charges against Bhaiya had been fabricated by Mayawati. He was forced to resign in March 2013 for his involvement in the murder of a District Superintendent of Police[326] .

The reasons attracting these Eastern U.P. criminals into politics and the mechanisms through which they build and maintain support does not fundamentally differ from their Western U.P. counterparts. What differs is their social and economic inscription and their sociological composition, which reflect both the economic changes that have occurred in their region of inscription, and the sociological profile of the political class at large.

These three spheres of activity – politics, business and crimes – have not just built ties – or a nexus – with each other. They have integrated each other, functionally and sociologically, as an outcome of the broader transformations that have taken place in Uttar Pradesh.

The integration of these three fields does not cover the entirety of the political field, which remains more diverse. But they do occupy a central place and play a central role in U.P. politics, as the stable political class, as I have defined it in Chapter 3, is usually connected into these three spheres of activity.

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[325] Ironically, he was also appointed Minister for Prisons, that year.
[326] « *DSP's Killing: Raja Bhaiya Resigns From Up Cabinet* », in Tehelka, March 4, 2013.

5.4. Conclusion

Three observations can be made at this stage. The first is that electoral politics is not simply a space where contending political and social formations and identities meet and compete for power, status and influence. Electoral politics is also deeply embedded in the political economy of the localities and the regions where that competition takes place.

In a number of constituencies and districts across the state, the rules of the electoral game and changing economic contexts have created incentives for people from various sorts of business background to invest in politics. Becoming an MLA enhances a person's status, provides access to resources and networks of power, and to protection. It is in the parties' interest to nominate candidates who can win elections, those who combine the resources and the qualities that attract votes. Many voters seek to elect a representative who can effectively defend their interests. The conjunction of these three rationales favors the integration of local social and economic elites in the domain of politics.

This is hardly a new phenomenon. Political power after Independence was already based on a similar sort of conjunction. Candidates who combined a high caste status with land and a Congress party ticket stood greater chances than others to get elected. Traditional elites and other landed groups used the resources they drew from land ownership and their caste status to dominate local institutions and win elections (Brass 1983, 1984c).

They did so until the superiority of their caste status was challenged from below and until a changing economy created new economic resources available to electoral politics. As a result, caste status and land as political resources have been substituted by caste number (or the ability to mobilize within and across castes) and by the inscription of parties and candidates into local economic structures.

The second observation is that this has not been a uniform process. The economic sources of political power have diversified to the same extent as the economy did. In Western U.P., urbanization and the transformation of the rural economy have produced a new class of politicians embedded in specific sectors of economic activity.

In other parts where economic change has been slower, and where the economy did not diversify as much, the old patterns of social, economic and political domination have resisted to the pressures from below. Thus, traditional upper caste elites continue to exert an influence. They were also helped by the very parties who initially rose against them and who have now pragmatically opened their gates to anyone who can help them winning seats. The parties who until 2012 dominated the political scene were precisely those who succeeded in fielding candidates drawn from the local elites, in all their diversity.

Some scholars had already noted that "*the persistence of local patterns of dominance and subordination explains why the rise of a party like the BSP has not translated into a deep structural transformation of local caste hierarchies and into a redistribution of economic, social and political opportunities*" (Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2008a, 1365).

If social and economic inequalities have indeed persisted, I find however that the transformation of labor relations between landed groups and daily-wage earner classes, or the breaking of economic dependency between these two groups, has facilitated the development of an autonomous political agency among subaltern group, leading to an electoral competition less affected by traditional caste hierarchies.

It may be so that the rise of the BSP has not led to a major redistribution of economic and social opportunities, as indicated by Jeffrey and the Jeffery's. But politically, the rise of the BSP has led to a breakdown of traditional bonds of subjugation which has led local Dalit communities to make their own local political choices. It may not be reflected in the sociology of the candidates of the BSP, which does not leave much room to Dalits to become representatives, but it is reflected in the support that the BSP gets from Dalit voters, and through the preferential distribution of public jobs to Dalits by successive BSP governments.

The third and final observation is that these tectonic economic and political shifts have been accompanied by a tremendous amount of violence of various kinds. The professional domains from which this class of business politicians has emerged are also the most criminalized sectors of the economy. The violence that regulates business life and transactions transpired to their political dealings. The political assertion of lower castes

has also been met with violent reactions from dominant groups, who do not hesitate to resort to violent means to maintain their ascendency.

Finally, the context of exacerbated competition has created resentment among the landed dominant groups, who face competition from other backward groups and the minorities. In Eastern U.P., criminal organizations dominated by upper caste gangster politicians has also contributed to the political resilience of traditional elites. We cannot say however that the political class is undergoing a process of class homogenization. There is still a large diversity of background among legislators, notably those coming from reserved seats. But there is a process of integration of local political and economic elites, that is well aligned with the evolution of parties' electoral strategies.

In the last chapter of this dissertation, I compare parties' organizations and the way these organizations relate to local elites.

Chapter 6 - Interparty comparison

In this final chapter, I examine how parties relate with local elites and notably with the new local elites that have emerged since the early 1990s. I divide this question into two sub-sections. The first sub-section deals with the methods parties follow to recruit their candidates, including the methods they follow to source information on potential candidates and the role party organizations play in that process.

In the second part, I discuss the main consequences of party organizational variations on the comparative strength of regional parties with regard to national parties, on party-elite linkages, on the criminalization of politics and on the question of democratization of the political system.

The argument I wish to offer is that parties' organizational structures and strength impact the way they relate with political elites, depending on how open or closed they are. Some parties for instance have a candidate recruitment process that is more open to individual outsiders and individual political entrepreneurs than others. These outsiders generally do not have the vocation of becoming party cadres, or formal members of the organization (as opposed to membership to the party). A party like the BSP must rely on outsiders to win seats, which leads to a division of labor between the party's organization, mostly populated by Jatav Dalits, and the candidates, who remain outsiders to the organization even after their election.

This leads to a second argument, which is that the success of regional parties in recent years is linked to their ability to attract strong candidates, drawn from the local elites, and particularly from the new elites. Put simply, regional parties have been more successful at winning seats than national parties because of their ability to attract strong candidates who have incentives to contest and the resources that help winning seats. In the process, the old Congress political elite – still inscribed in the old forms of political and social dominance – has been sidelined by members of these new social and economic elites.

The third argument is that there are drawbacks to this elitist recruitment by regional parties, which is that it has contributed to the formation of a largely predatory rent-

seeking political class, inclined to misconduct, corruption and abuses of power. This may also partly explain why the turnover of elected representatives is so high.

Finally, the integration of political and economic elites within the regional parties is a significant transformation as it puts under question the democratization potential of the rise of backwards. While the Assembly becomes more representative, it also remains very elitist, although in different ways than before.

Political parties in India are peculiar bodies. They tend to be highly centralized, personalized, and weakly organized (Manor 2003, 2005, Wilkinson 2015, Wyatt 2013). There is a good deal of differences however between their organization and their level of institutionalization. The ability of parties to develop a strong local presence is crucial to their ability to connect with local elites, as they become part of the daily life of a constituency, rather than simply be a machine to contest elections. A strong local presence is also crucial to the sourcing of information that guide the nomination process.

In all these aspects, regional parties have had considerable comparative advantages against national parties, which suffer from their centralized character and their urban and upper caste biases.

6.1. Candidates selection process

In this section, I compare how the main four parties have been selecting their candidates in recent elections. As a rule, candidates nomination tends to be centralized and placed under the control of parties' leadership (Farooqui and Sridharan 2014). Where parties mostly diverge is on the criteria they follow for nomination, the kind of information they rely on to identify and nominate candidates, and the processes used for sourcing that information. Those differences reflect variations in organizational structures and strength between parties.

As far as nomination criteria are concerned, one can identify four main selection principles[327]. The first is affiliation. Some parties insist that their candidates be long

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[327] I am thankful to Neelanjan Sircar for discussions on this topic.

affiliated members of the party while others have no qualms nominating outsiders. The second principle is personal loyalty, or personal ties between the candidates and the party's leadership, or between the candidates and the leaders of factions within the party. Nepotism and the distribution of tickets to kith and kin also fall under that category. The third principle is a broad pragmatic category of 'winnability'. Parties who follow this principle tend to select candidates on the basis of their expected ability to win a seat, following a number of pre-set criteria, such as money, muscle, personal following and reputation. The last principle is ticket auction, a rather extreme case in which tickets are simply sold to the highest bidder.

I am deliberately not including ideology in this list. I am not implying that candidates are not at times expected to adhere to some basic commonly instituted party values or aspirations, but ideological considerations do not constitute a determining criterion for candidate selection. It is commonly admitted that ideology does not serve as distinctive factor to differentiate parties in India, barring a few exceptions (Hasan 2010). If anything, ideological ties between candidates and parties can be a component of the category of affiliation.

It is never the case that only one criterion prevails over all others. For instance, tickets may be auctioned among candidates who are also deemed 'winnable'. But the four main parties in Uttar Pradesh are positioned differently with regard to those criteria, some predominating over others. These variations offer a mean to compare parties' organizations.

The sourcing of information is the second important aspect to candidate nomination. All parties claim to follow a systematic information sourcing process that starts from the ground, in consultation with their cadre and rank-and-file. These processes can be quite sophisticated and all parties now do extensive data gathering on potential candidates, insisting on the scientific character of their methods. Parties differ on the treatment processing they do of that information. Some tend to follow the indications they receive from their ground organization. Others apply a centralized top-bottom candidate selection process, or rely on information gathered from sources external from the party.

The Congress and the BJP fall in that latter category. The BSP relies on the strongest local information sourcing mechanism among all parties. The SP falls between these categories. Its nomination process relies on ground information but is heavily biased by leadership intervention.

6.1.1. The Congress Party: sticking with the deadwood

Until the party's split of 1969, the process of Congress candidates' selection was highly centralized, under the control of the party's high command. Congress leaders in Delhi were then wary that local MPs and MLAs developed a sense of personal ownership of their constituency and organized a rotation system under which a third of the party's representatives was forced to retire after a term (Graham 1986, 211-12). At the same time, the party leadership had to grapple with a complex set of criteria, including caste, personal claims, regional claims, the need to accommodate demands from the party's 'frontal' organizations (Youth Congress, Mahila Samithi,, the unions, etc.). Taking these local and regional factors into consideration and dealing with the consequences of decisions taken was a complicated balancing act that, to the eye of the leadership justified a centralized process (Roy 1966, 1967a, b). In his study of the Congress Party, Kochanek underlines that local caste and religious configurations were also key variables for the choice of candidates (Kochanek 1968). Other scholars have also highlighted the role of factions in the distribution of tickets (Brass 1964a, 1965, Weiner 1967).

After 1968, state leaders were "*given wide discretion to nominate as many incumbents as they wished, to build upon experience and to exclude defectors*"[328]. This encouraged further a clientelistic distribution of tickets.

The splits in the party and the rise of Indira Gandhi led to a new phase of centralized control over the nomination process, in which loyalty to the high command and the ruling family often prevailed over other considerations. Party loyalists were also entitled to distribute tickets in their area of local influence, often bypassing the State Committee's rules and procedures. This among other factors led to a decline of the party's organization, and of its capacity to reach voters locally through its cadre (Manor 2003). After the death

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[328] Graham, ibid., p.212.

of Indira Gandhi, there have been a series of attempts to introduce some measure of internal democracy, which remained largely inconclusive[329].

Despite the establishment of a formal list of selection criteria, the Congress traditionally recruited its candidates among the local traditional elites and notabilities, mostly from the upper castes (Meyer 1969). After Independence, the largest number of Princes who entered politics contested on Congress tickets (Richter 1977). As we have seen in Chapter 4, the Congress never departed from its upper caste bias. Even though it now distributes tickets across caste groups, the remaining strongholds are usually held by upper castes MLAs.

The Congress nomination process in recent years (post 2003 election) has followed two divergent and somewhat contradictory routes. The first route is the deliberate choice to use elections as a mean to revive its organization and connect with its lost subaltern voter bases, by selecting candidates "from the grassroots". Between elections, the party spends a considerable amount of time scouting for potential candidates from local communities, individuals involved in the lower strata of democratic institutions or people involved in local mobilization. They seek to induct them within the frontal organizations of the party – especially the Youth Congress – with the avowed objective to 'groom' future generations of new politicians.

The second feature, more a trait than a deliberate strategy, is the cultivation of old ties, or the distribution of tickets according to the longstanding affiliation of some of its members and their own affiliates. Having experienced a severe decline in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress party seeks to reward the loyalty of its longstanding associates, even though some were associated to the decline of the party. As a result, the party nominates candidates regardless of their ability to win seats and often contradicts its other objective of rejuvenation of the organization.

In the 2012 state elections, a Congress party worker explained that a certain number of tickets (about ten) in Rohilkhand had to be distributed to followers of N.D. Tiwari, a former Minister, Congress U.P. President and Governor, whose career had ended in

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[329] Manor, op. cit.

disgrace three years earlier[330]. Leaders of the past thus retain some influence by having "their people" contest election in their past areas of influence. Many party workers and aspiring candidates complained to me that the entry to the nomination was 'clogged up by deadwood' that the party was unwilling, or unable, to get rid of.

The continuing influence of past leaders is not the only way the party contradicts its internal democracy agenda. In the 2009 and 2012 elections, the Congress party attempted to organize an ambitious ground consultation effort by organizing and institutionalizing the consultation of various components of its organization, setting up a complex network of parallel information channels. In the run up to the 2012 state elections, the Congress sought information and suggestions on potential candidates from four distinct sources.

The first level of consultation is the local level – block level committees and ward committees, for the cities. These committees include all formal Congress party workers. They report to an Assembly segment committee, itself divided into various subsidiaries representing segments of the electorate (a youth wing, an OBC wing, a minority wing, a women's wing, and so forth)[331]. These subsidiaries also report to their mother organization, at the state level, and then at the national level. Thus, interferences between these different layers of the Congress subsidiaries are frequent. Constituency-level committees are expected to send a list of one to five names, as proposed candidates.

The second level of consultation is a group composed of the party's office holders (Pradesh Congress Committee), enlarged with the U.P. members of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), as well as a selection of appointed former MPs and MLAs. This is probably the most dysfunctional level since each member of that group, expected to provide counsel to the party, is rid by factional divisions and individual conflicts of interests.

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[330] Interview with a Congress party worker, Lucknow, March 2009.

[331] A member of the Congress Pradesh Committee shared with me that the fact that the party has caste-based wings for all segments of the population but none for the upper castes was itself an acknowledgment that the party remained upper-caste dominated. Interview in Lucknow, March 2009.

The third level is a group of 10 observers appointed from and by the AICC. The state is divided into ten territorial units, each observer responsible for one. They are expected to travel their assigned territory for a period of six-months, conduct local meetings with local party branches, supervise the organization of campaign yatras, in which they assess the mobilization capabilities of potential candidates. At the end of the exercise, they send a confidential report to the party's high command as to whom should get a nomination.

These observers do not necessarily hail from Uttar Pradesh and are appointed on the basis of their performance in their state of origin and loyalty with the party's high command. They usually conform to three types of profile: senior AICC members put in charge of the campaign, young politicians who have distinguished themselves in their home state and are 'groomed' by the party leadership for higher responsibilities, and young foreign-educated sons of political families close to the high command.

Their presence is often deeply resented by local cadres, who consider them as outsiders, illegitimate and incompetent on local political matters.

Finally, a list of proposed candidates is submitted by the MPs, sitting MLAS and other 'senior leaders'. Sitting MLAs are asked to suggest who should contest in the constituencies surrounding their own.

The information provided by these four sources is then compiled for a State Election Committee, which convenes in Delhi. This state election committee, chaired by the party President, Sonia Gandhi, counts 21 members, all nominated by the Chair. They clear the names proposed into panels of candidates. These panels are then sent to a central screening committee that "*see if the balances are correct*" [332], meaning that it ensures that various caste groups and factions are appropriately represented.

This rather elaborate structure leaves plenty of room for discreet interventions from the party leadership. Interference from the top creates deep resentment in the rank-and-file, particularly when the candidates nominated do not even figure in the original lists of names sent by the local branches. As a result, and despite all the efforts to deploy a

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[332] Interview with Uttar Pradesh PCC President, Rita Bahuguna Joshi, in Lucknow, July 27, 2011.

participative nomination procedure, the tickets' distribution process remains marred by opacity and nepotism, which leads to further internal divisions and organizational disarray. As Kanchan Chandra puts it: "*The process of ticket allocation in the Congress is virtually unconstrained by formal rules*" (Chandra 2016b, 227).

As with other parties, the nomination process gets often disturbed in the last moments preceding the nomination filing deadlines. Once other parties publish their list of candidates, they try to poach candidates, nominate incumbent rejected by other parties, or to make last minute strategic changes, in view of other parties' nomination strategy.

In 2012, a party functionary part of the Congress mobilization team for reserved seats explained to me in the detail how their initial strategy consisted in wooing non-Jatav Dalits – Pasis in particular – who could be more easily "detached" from the BSP. But when local BSP Jatav leaders expressed their interest for contesting under the Congress banner, they quickly changed their list, effectively undermining the mobilization efforts that they had consented weeks and at times months before the elections.

The commitment to internal democracy and inclusion is furthermore contradicted by the social composition of the party's leadership, which remains primarily dominated by upper castes and Delhi loyalists. The party may distribute tickets across castes, but the organization remains reluctant to include lower caste leaders in a position of leadership.

One finds party leaders from lower castes but they are few and often sidelined. One example is P.L. Punia, a former Jatav Dalit Chief Secretary under Mayawati, who had left the civil service to join Congress (he won his Lok Sabha seat in Barabanki in 2009 but lost in 2014 to the BJP candidate). Instead of projecting him as the party's Dalit face, he was largely sidelined within the organization, to the point that the Dalit mobilization program (labeled "Mission 89" for the 89 reserved seats) was entrusted to a young princeling from Rajasthan, son of a former Congress Minister. A party worker at the Congress office complained to me that the party could not have found a less legitimate figure to mobilize Dalits in U.P.[333]

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[333] Interview with a Congress party staffer, Lucknow, March 2009.

The over-representation of upper caste within the Congress organization in the past has been well documented (Jaffrelot 2003b, Zerinini 2009). Since 1988, the Congress has had ten state Presidents. Six of them belonged to upper castes, one to an aristocratic Muslim family (Salman Khursheed), two OBCs (Sreeprakash Jaiswal and Balram Singh Yadav) and one Scheduled Caste (Mahavir Prasad, from Bansgaon). All of them are loyalists to the Gandhi family. They collectively contested forty-five Lok Sabha seats and they lost twenty-six times. One of them, Jagdambika Pal, defected to the BJP in 2014.

The ratio of upper castes members of the Pradesh Congress Committee is roughly equivalent. Zerinini estimates that between 1991 and 2000, 57 per cent of the party's vice-presidents and general secretaries belong to the upper castes[334].

That ratio is exactly the same in 2916, as 22 of 38 Vice-Presidents are upper castes. There is only one Scheduled Caste Vice President and only five Muslims. At the City and District Presidents (CCC/DCC), 55 per cent of the office holders are upper castes, 25 per cent Muslims and barely a few Scheduled Castes.

Besides, the AICC Secretaries and General Secretary in charge for Uttar Pradesh usually do not include anyone from the state. The logic is to avoid conflict of interests and factional feuds spreading to national bodies. It also has the effect of marginalizing the state leadership.

In short, formal rules and pledges of inclusiveness are thwarted by the centralization of decision processes, as well as by the upper caste and traditional elite biases that have subsisted in the party.

6.1.2. The BJP: within the family

The BJP is usually described as a cadre-based party whose members are strongly attached to the party through ideological bonds. In reality, the organizational strength of the BJP is usually overstated, as it as been observed in other states (Manor 2005). Also, deeply

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[334] Op. cit., p. 58.

entrenched political rivalries and internal caste conflicts often trump the ideological cohesiveness of the party.

The BJP compensates its organizational weakness by relying on the RSS for mobilization and, in recent times, by relying on modern forms of communication and new forms of campaign technologies.

Formally speaking, candidates are selected by two bodies instituted for that purpose: the State Election's Committee (SEC), and the Central Elections Committee (CEC), located in Delhi. For state elections, the SEC merely suggests lists of potential candidates to the CEC. That list is screened and evaluated by a small group of appointed functionaries. In reality, the process is even more centralized, with a limited members of senior party members and the party's president calling the shots on who gets to contest.

BJP tickets are distributed according to three main criteria. The first one is caste, following a method that differs from other parties. Rather than adapting ticket distribution to local caste configurations, the BJP pre-defines the caste or the caste combinations it seeks to mobilize and then distribute tickets accordingly. Thus, in the 2000s, the BJP started distributing many tickets to non-Yadav OBCs such as Kurmis, Lodh, Rajbhars and Kushwahas; and to non-Jatav Dalits, such as Pasis, Sonkars and Rawats. The party also appointed Kalyan Singh, a Lodh, as State President and then Chief Minister in 1991-92, and between 1997 and 1999.

As a result, the management of caste equations within the BJP is a balancing act between groups that are often in conflict with each other. Unlike the BSP where the core support base dominates the organization, the BJP's organization is frequently undermined by internal caste conflicts, particularly between upper castes leaders – who can display a strong sense of ownership of the party – and OBC leaders, often considered by the former second-rate party functionaries.

The second criterion is loyalty and compatibility with the RSS, the BJP's parent organization. Most of the BJP backward and Dalit caste leaders are RSS members, or have been socialized and educated through Hindu nationalist organizations. Many of them, such as Keshav Prasad Maurya, are *pracharaks* ("propagandist") or VHP functionaries.

The RSS vets the BJP candidates and provide the party with their own suggestions. It is entitled to do that not only because of the historical ties that binds the party to it, but also because the BJP remains dependent from the RSS to mobilize voters, either by providing campaign workers during elections, or through its multiple ground-level organizations in between. In fact, the BJP's forays into the lower strata of the electorate goes through the deployment of RSS-linked organizations, that provide social services to the more deprived sections of the population (Thachil 2014).

Like in Madhya Pradesh or other states, RSS *pracharaks* form the core of the party's organization and maintain its cohesiveness and internal discipline (Jaffrelot 1998).

The third criterion is a general definition of winnability, essentially based on an assessment of past performances. In recent years, the BJP relies more and more on technology and private technology firms and survey companies to generate the data necessary to make those assessments. These companies also provide campaign design services, survey data, and campaign coordination services that are seen as substitute for traditional forms of campaigning.

The BJP also welcomes defectors from other parties, usually to send the signal to voters ahead of the elections that these turncoats switched to the BJP because they expect it to win the incoming election[335].

In that organizational set up, state organization and local branches are only one of various sources providing information to the leadership on who should get tickets. Unlike the SP or the Congress, few BJP leaders are entitled to distribute tickets to their followers on a discretionary basis. There are few cases of leaders who have the power to weigh on ticket distribution in their own area, due to their particular status and domination of local party structures. Yogi Adityanath, in Gorakhpur, is one example. He keeps pushing for the distribution of tickets to fellow Rajputs in Northeastern U.P. and is usually obliged by the party, who fears to cross this all-powerful political and religious figure.

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[335] I am thankful to Shivam Vij, who pointed this to me.

Hukum Singh, in Saharanpur is another example. In an area where the BJP does not have a strong presence, he calls the shot due to its prominence among local Gujjars, the strongest group in the area.

But as a rule, the party does not have much to say. In recent years, the BJP has developed the habit of appointing weak state Presidents, who do the Central Command's bidding.

The BJP also does not accommodate political families easily. Allegiance to the party primes and the party leadership does not want to see strong regional leaders institutionalizing themselves through dynastic politics. Rajnath Singh, former Chief Minister, BJP President and Union Minister, has not been able yet to obtain a seat for his son, due to internal resistance and rivalries[336].

Overall, the logic of affiliation binding the candidates to the party is strong. Candidates with an RSS background tend to be privileged to others. As we saw in chapter 3, careers within the BJP tend to be longer. There are also less people leaving the BJP for other parties than the other way around (Jaffrelot 1998, Manor 2005).

The dependence of the BJP to the RSS and the urban and upper caste bias of its organization have meant that the BJP has not succeeded to develop a strong local presence in rural areas. The party did mobilize in the late 1980s and 1990s through large-scale political and religious campaigns, but the effect quickly faded out. After a period of peak of popularity in the early 2000, the BJP declined in Uttar Pradesh. Its organization retracted itself in urban areas and they lost much of the ground presence they had in rural areas.

In recent years and particularly in the 2014 General Elections, the BJP compensated for its lack of local presence by saturating the public space with party images and sounds. Heavily centralized campaigns relying on modern forms of communication tend to supplant traditional forms of ground mobilization, and tend to diminish the importance of candidates themselves (Jaffrelot 2015b).

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[336] I am thankful to Shivam Vij, who pointed this to me.

6.1.3. The Bahujan Samaj Party: outsourcing candidates

The BSP has by far the most centralized candidate selection process of the four main parties of Uttar Pradesh. The allotment of tickets is determined by Mayawati herself, assisted by a handful of aides who provide her with information on the candidates and on possible alternative candidates. The principle guiding the nomination is the spending capacity of the candidate, who is required to make an upfront donation to the party before even being confirmed for a candidacy (Farooqui and Sridharan 2014). The amount of that 'donation' is fixed by the party, like a scale, and nearly doubles every election[337].

The reasoning is that individuals able to raise the required amount and in addition fund their own campaigns will be in a good position to 'deliver the seat'. This is made possible by the peculiarity of the BSP's support base, largely composed of Dalit voters, and by the fact that winning thresholds in U.P. tend to be low (see chapter 3).

Guha has shown that in general seats, committed Dalit BSP supporters are willing to trade descriptive representation and its benefits in order to ensure the party's victory (Guha 2011). Given the fact that the probability of Dalit candidates being elected in general seats is very low (Jensenius 2012), it is hardly a trade at all.

This is the base of the mechanism described as vote bank transferability, or the ability of a party to get its core supporters to transfer their votes to candidates belonging to other ethnic groups, for the sake of party victory and programmatic gains.

If one assumes that Dalits represent on average 20 per cent of the electorate in any given constituency, and assuming that the BSP's vote share among Dalit voters remains high, the BSP candidate only need to mobilize a residual share of the electorate in order to win, given the low victory thresholds. This is why the party can make the assumption that nearly any individual with the right combination of caste identity and resources "can do" as a candidate.

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[337] Farooqui and Sridharan quote the figure of 5 to 10 million rupees in their 2014 article. In the 2016 elections, the 'ongoing rate' start at 25 million. That figure also increases as the time of nomination approaches.

As a result, candidate selection in the BSP is quite open among those willing to pay for a ticket. In the seats where several candidates offer to contribute, tickets are simply auctioned among aspiring candidates. It is also quite frequent that confirmed nominations get cancelled ahead of the campaign, and transferred to a higher bidder.

While the nomination process is indeed highly centralized and reliant on money, it does involve the participation of the party's ground organization. Ticket allocation does not only depend on the spending capacity of the candidates. Local caste configurations – both caste demographics and the local history of inter-caste relations – are considered first, on the basis of assessments produced by the local branches of the party.

These local branches, essentially composed of Jatav Dalits, send on a regular basis to the party high command information regarding the local caste balance, local political alignments and social alliances, as well as any information regarding significant political events, or incidences of acts of atrocities committed against Dalits. It is on the basis of that information that the party determines which constituency-level caste alliance to foster (it needs not be a single caste alliance. Alternative alliances are also considered). The quest for the individual who will contest in the name of the party comes thus second.

This is how the BSP achieves inclusiveness, by localizing its ticket distribution process and adapting it to local circumstances. There can be instances where certain alliances are pushed – like the greater distribution of tickets to Brahmin candidates in 2007 – but only in constituencies where it makes rational sense to do so.

The BSP's pyramid

The BSP is certainly U.P.'s most centralized and least democratic party. Its structure is a strict pyramid, where information flows upward and orders downward.

The Party President concentrates most of the decision-making power within the party. She is surrounded by a handful of close aides and senior party office bearers, entirely devoted to her.

Revealingly, the "leadership" section of the party's official webpage provides only three names, besides Mayawati's : Satish Chandra Mishra, the Brahmin face of the party and the person in charge of strategy and organization; Dr. Suresh Mane, a Bombay-based academic and unionist[338], in charge of developing the party's presence in South India and the North-East; and Naseemuddin Siddiqui, General Secretary of the Party and number two Minister in Mayawati's Cabinets.

These are the General Secretaries, also member of the party's National Executive, which includes between thirty to forty people, all appointed by Mayawati. Its main functional role is to give a pretense of internal democracy (the National Executive "elects" the Party President, who never had to face a challenger so far). The second purpose of the Executive Committee is to give visible or descriptive representation to the range of castes the party aims to represent. Posts are thus distributed to caste figureheads, following Kanshi Ram's precept of "*jiski jitni sankhya bhari, uski utni bhagidari*", that is the distribution of party positions proportionate to groups' demographics.

The transformation of the BSP into a catchall party has meant that the party leadership has created space for the representation of more groups within the organization. Data collected by Jaffrelot shows that in 1996 and 2000, about 45 per cent of the state party office bearers were OBCs, mostly MBCs. Post-2000, the ratio of upper caste increased, with the induction of new office bearers, mostly Brahmins. The inclusion of a significant number of Brahmins and of a few Yadav office bearers circa 2007 created tensions among the other members of the Committee.

These tensions also reflect the game of personal and individual ambitions that plays out within the higher echelon of the party's organization. Caste representation is literally nominal and no caste can avail of any collective strength within the party. Besides, every member owes its position to Mayawati and therefore remain dependent from her.

Caste representation within the party is thus highly individualized. Junior party members frequently accuse senior members of abusing of their position and of promoting their

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[338] **He is the President** of the Mumbai Port Trust Workers Union.

individuals and families' interests. Thus, the National Executive counts a number of newly created political families.

As a result of these tensions, there is a high turnover among the office bearers. Many of the prominent MBC figures of the party have recently left the party or have been dismissed [339].

The same logic of caste ecumenism and power play applies to the party's sectorial bodies, such as the women wing, the youth wing or the various caste-based platforms that the party has created in order to mobilize various caste segments of the electorate. These sectorial bodies are weak and serve essentially to co-opt local leaders and individuals who compete within these organizations for access to favors and appointments.

These sectorial bodies play a satellite role compared to the local branches of the party, which remains controlled by Jatav Dalits, and which covers each district and each constituency in a pyramidal structure, following both political and administrative boundaries.

There are four levels of organization, interwoven with each other. The first level is at the zilla (district) level, where the party organization replicates the Zilla Parishad organization. The party appoints an Adyaksh ("*Chairman*") who supervises the entire district organization. He is seconded by 4-5 members, who form a Zilla executive ("*Satyush*"). Each member of that executive is drawn from one of the major castes present in the district (the thumb rule is that each caste numbering above 50,000 individuals over five seats within a district gets to be represented in the party's Zilla executive)[340]. The same organizational structure applies to Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituencies, where each major caste gets representation within the organization. Each constituency is then divided into sectors, covering cities, towns and villages. The constituency of Jalalpur for example, is Eastern U.P., is divided into 37 sectors, including 29 Panchayats.

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[339] One can mention Babu Singh Kushwaha, Swami Prasad Maurya, Romi Sahmi and Brajesh Verma, all non-Yadav OBCs, who have left the party between 2012 and 2016. Mayawati also regularly fires non-performing party leaders, particularly after electoral setbacks.

[340] Interview with R. Pandey, defeated BSP candidate in the 2012 state elections, at the Oberoi Hotel, New Delhi, 2nd February 2013.

Each sector has an appointed *adyaksh* and before 2012 each *adyaksh* was a Jatav Dalit. Thus, while representation is organized and even guaranteed for the major groups within a constituency and within a district, the structure is almost entirely controlled by Jatav party cadre, trained and fully dedicated to their party work. They serve two main functions. To mobilize the Dalit base ahead of elections and maintain a communication line with the base of the party – at ground level – and to provide the party's high command with information on local events, on caste and political dynamics, as well as information on potential candidates.

During elections, the party appoints 10 local party members to each polling booth, to canvass for the party's candidates and report on eventual incidents during polling. The party is thus able to mobilize four to five thousand cadres and workers in each Vidhan Sabha election (which in 2012 counted on average 3.16 lakhs electors). In recent years, this effort if complemented with intensive mobile campaigns, through SMS and other social network applications (Jeffrey and Doron 2012).

At this level of the organization, party control is weaker, given the scale and number of booths requiring supervision. A BSP MLA from Akbarpur district told me once that the local organization used to be stronger under Kanshi Ram, and that the party suffered from the intrusion of rent-seekers.

While the Zilla and local *adyaksh* send information on potential candidates, they play little if not any role in the actual candidate nomination process. This role is devoted to the higher strata of the party, tightly controlled by Mayawati who makes all the appointments. The top leadership of the party divides the state territory into zones, divided into Mandals. Mandal leaders are appointed by the party high command. Each Mandal leader is responsible for the ticket distribution across four or five Mandals. Ten to fifteen zonal coordinators work under them. They are in charge of "collection", of contributions to the party's coffers from candidates and aspiring candidates. They are also in charge of organizing local ticket auctions, when the party decides to follow that method. The first two layers of that zonal organization are directly appointed by Mayawati. They are all Jatav Dalits. According to a BSP MLA:

> "*Mandal leaders are powerful figures with the party. They operate in proximity with the top cadres of the party, the local power holders, the Ministers. The cadre runs*

like a parallel government. They are in charge of collection but they were also making money"[341].

"*After the 2012 elections, Mayawati conceded that the party organization was too Dalit dominated and she authorized the creation of non-Dalit local executives, called Baicharas. In 2013, there were five non-Dalit Bhaicharas (Brahmin, Kurmis, Thakur, Muslim and Maurua/Koeri). They tried with Yadav but it's not defunct. They [the Baicharas] are not as powerful. Even the Muslims are not taken seriously*"

These concessions have hardly altered power relations within the party and the hold of Jatav cadre. One reason is that the power balance remains strongly tilted in their favor. The second is that these party positions are not attractive for aspiring politicians, since members of the party organization do not have the vocation of becoming candidates.

Thus, contrary to most parties in India, party work in the BSP does not constitute an antechamber to the nomination. They do exert influence and the business of ticket auction enables them to make money, but otherwise, they are political dead ends for individual who aspire to become elected representatives.

This is a crucial aspect of the BSP's organization, which maintains a strict division of labor between its organization, composed and controlled by Jatav cadres, and the pool of candidates and elected representatives, who are largely drawn from outside. Thus, the party does not require its candidates to adhere or commit to the party's ideology. They are pragmatically selected according to an estimation of their ability to deliver enough votes to the party's local Dalit base in order to win the seat. With an average SC population oscillating between 20 to 22 per cent in nearly every seat, these candidates only need to deliver a fragment of the vote – 13 to 15 per cent, in order to secure victory. Hence, it becomes possible for these candidates to be elected on the basis of small numbers. Usually, candidates are expected to bring in a fraction of the vote of their community. One of the evaluation criteria is the capacity of the candidate to mobilize within its own groups. But in seats where demographically dominant groups are divided into faction, the capacity of the candidate to mobilize across his or her caste is also taken into account.

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[341] Interview with a BSP MLA in Delhi, February 2013.

This system offers many advantages to the party. The first is that it can depend from a base cadre devoted to the party's work rather than to the advancement of their own elective political careers. This autonomy of the local organization is further reinforced by the homogeneity of its social composition. Local Jatav BSP leaders are usually well trained disciplined, educated and ideologically aware full-time party workers, entirely devoted to the cause of the party and of its leader.

The second advantage is that autonomy confers a certain degree of reliability to the information that the base sends to the party high command. I have quickly abandoned the idea of collecting constituency caste demographic composition data from party workers and members of other parties as they would frequently deliberately over-estimate the size of their own community, or minimize the size of their opponent's social base, which is equivalently bad. Most of my interlocutors across the three other parties admitted that the BSP's organization is by far the most 'scientific', the most disciplined, and that the BSP holds the best data on local political contexts.

After the 2012 defeat, however, cracks have started to appear at the base of the edifice. The experience of inducting outsiders, from an array of non-Dalit castes, with the party's fold and the maintenance of a wall between the party's local organization and the representatives meant that these representations felt little obligation to work for them or to pursue an agenda other than their own. The main issue with the auctioning or selling of tickets is that it creates little sense of obligation of the MLAs or MPs towards the party, since the relationship is fundamentally transactional.

This division of labor also applies to reserved constituencies, where local party cadres are discourages to contest themselves – for the sake of maintaining the autonomy of the local organization, avoid conflicts of interests, but also from the realization that the voters who decide which Dalit gets elected are precisely the non-Dalit voters, who may not vote for a overtly militant ambedkarite candidate. As a result, the BSP does not necessarily pick Jatav candidates in reserved seats. Once again, local circumstances prevail over the Jatav representation agenda.

There has been thus a growing sense of discontent within the party's rank and file. In the 2012 elections, the Congress and the SP fielded a number of Jatav candidates who had previously worked within the BSP. Some of them won seats, under SP tickets (none with Congress).

This discontentment shows that the symbolic value of having Mayawati as Chief Minister and the BSP in power in Lucknow has its limitations. Many BSP workers protested that their plight had not improved locally despite the majority that they conquered in 2007. This discontentment also pushed some of the party's cadre to use their party position for their own private benefit. Thus, the commodification of ticket distribution is a recent phenomenon, as pointed by my BSP interlocutor.

> "*In the early days, the candidate selection was done by Kanshi Ram. The role of adyaksh was merely to pinpoint at possible candidates. Now, people run with the ticket money*"[342].

Be it as it may, this particular organization of ticket distribution and the division of labor between candidates and organizations, illustrates how localized the process of candidate selection is, based on pragmatic assessment of the local caste and power configurations rather than pre-determined caste dosage. The BSP will literally distribute a ticket to anyone who can convince the party that they can deliver the seat.

The BSP's organization confirms the party's peculiarity in the Indian political landscape. The party is hyper-centralized and is led in a quite authoritarian fashion, but it also draws its strength from its local implantation and from the devotion of a strong militant base.

6.1.4. The Samajwadi Party: factionalism and local elites integration

The Samajwadi Party has a different system of candidate nomination, which reflects the factional character of the party. Formally speaking, the party's Central Parliamentary Board is responsible for the nomination of all candidates. This board comprises the National President (as Chair), a General Secretary and up to five members appointed by

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[342] Ibid.

the Party's President[343]. State Parliamentary Boards are constituted in the same manner and contain a higher number of members (up to seven). State Boards form a panel of candidates that they submit to the Central Board, who takes the final decision.

In effect, the ruling family completely canvasses the nomination process. As noted by Chandra, several members of the National Parliamentary Board and of the State Board are Mulayam's kin (his brother, his son).

The family however does not constitute a cohesive block. Each of them leads its own faction that competes for tickets and positions. Mulayam's brothers Shivpal Singh Yadav and Ram Gopal Yadav measure their strength by the number of tickets they can distribute to their followers. The same goes for other General Secretaries of the party, who also lead their own faction. For example, Azam Khan reigns over ticket distribution in much of Western U.P. and Rohilkhand.

The party was not always that centralized. The concentration of power within the hands of the Yadav family took place as the old guard of the party withered or passed away. In recent years, Mulayam Singh lost four longstanding companions. Ram Saran Das, a close associate of Lohia and former UP President of the Samajwadi Party, died in 2008. Janeshwar Mishra, co-founder of the Samajwadi Party, passed away in 2010[344]. Mohan Singh, three-time MP from Deoria and a General Secretary of the Party, passed away in September 2013[345]. Brij Bhushan Tiwari, a five-time Samajwadi Party MP, passed away in 2012. These were historic figures of the party who could hold their ground vis-à-vis Mulayam and his kin, and ensured that the management of party affairs was more collegial than it is now.

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[343] Constitution of the Samajwadi Party. Quoted in (Chandra 2016b, 230)

[344] Nicknamed *'Chhotey Lohia'* for his association with Lohia, Janeshwar Mishra was a member of what was known as the Quartet from Ballia, a group of four socialist activists who would be instrumental in the building of the PSP in Eastern UP and play a role in national politics subsequently. The other three members were Gauri Shankar Rai, Kashi Nath Mishra and Chandra Shekhar. Rai was Lohia's secretary, Mishra shifted to Congress in 1984 and Chandra Shekhar became Prime Minister in 1991.

[345] He had left the party less than a year before, over a spat about the nomination of D.P. Yadav, a controversial political figure, in the 2012 elections.

A consequence of power concentration is that many members of the ruling family have been inducted into politics, reinforcing thus the family-holding character of the party. Today 16 members of the Yadav family are active in politics, at various levels[346].

Fig. : 6.1 Caricature by Surendra, The Hindu.

The factional distribution of tickets also applies at the district level. The party's main factions are themselves divided into local strongholds and local factions, where power is distributed among local party bosses who control the party's apparatus over certain territories. Kanchan Chandra is right to note that there are no other prominent political families within the SP, other than the Yadav family[347]. But she overlooks that fact that the distribution of tickets among the lower layers of the party is very much done on a factional basis, within which local political families figure prominently.

The SP is in fact reputed for accommodating family members into the party ranks, and local leaders often fight in order to get their relatives nominated. One example are Atul Pradhan and Shahid Manzoor, two SP local bosses in Western U.P., who fought each other and lobbied to get their wives nominated in Meerut, for the 2016 elections.

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[346] Though not all at the national or state level. Ratan Singh Yadav, brother of Mulayam, remained a block *Pramukh* in Saifai, the family's native village, all his life. Another brother, Rajpal, is Chairman of the district Panchayat in Etawah. The latest entrant, Abhishek alias Anshul Yadav, contested the 2015 Panchayat elections.

[347] Chandra, ibid., p. 232.

Shahid Manzoor is a three-time MLA from Kithore. He is a leading local Muslim figure close to Mulayam. A former State Minister, he is the son of Manzoor Ahmad, a prominent Muslim SSP figure who won five terms in Meerut and Kithore between 1967 and 1980. Atul Pradhan is a former President of the SP's student wing and local Gurjar political figure. He is close to Akhilesh and contested in 2012 in Sardhana, unsuccessfully. Due to its proximity with Akhilesh, Atul Pradhan oversees much of the party's nomination in local elections – municipal, Panchayats, as well as student unions' elections. His wife became Chair of the Meerut Zila Parishad in 2010. Despite being charged in several cases or rioting and murder, he benefits from an official police protection, granted by the Chief Minister (ENS 2013).

Nominations are thus distributed on the basis of three main criteria. The first one is caste. Local caste configurations play a major role in the selection of candidates. Besides, the party seeks to maintain a nominal descriptive representation to various groups. Its organization contains a lot of caste-based branches, usually led by a single political co-ethnic figure, whose aim is to mobilize strictly on caste lines.

The second criterion is the individual strength of the candidates, who like in the BSP is expected to find its own campaign (with the exception of some party leaders belonging to the party's first circle). Candidates must also demonstrate their mobilization capacity, by organizing rallies, road shows when party dignitaries are visiting their area. They also must be able to draw support from local economic elites and private companies associated with the party, which also contribute to campaign funding.

The third criterion is factionalism. SP tickets are distributed clientelistically within factions that integrate various levels of political power. These factions also include party sponsors, individuals who fund candidates belonging to their caste or their locality.

One such sponsor is Narendra Bhati, a Gujjar politician based in NOIDA. He supports the career of various other Gujjar politicians in Western Uttar Pradesh by contributing to their campaigns and organizing campaign events. A former congressman, he joined the SP in 1989 and won three times in Sikandrabad. He lost his seat in 2002 and failed to regain it in 2007. But his status of sponsor helps him to maintain its position and status within the party. Bhati's younger brother, Surender is an accountant with the Uttar Pradesh Housing

and Development Board. Another brother, Bijender, served as SP President for Gautam Budhh Nagar.

There is no clear division of territories among factions, whose members often compete with each other in the same districts or localities. These factions aren't also based on a single caste identity. Instead, a faction leader will induct representatives from different castes, through patronage, in order to expand his support base. Faction leaders and the caste leaders within factions tend also to promote their family's interest within the party (and at times outside the party).

It is true then that a lot of political families within the SP are horizontal rather than vertical. Political families expand their influence by getting members elected in a variety of positions, rather than simply transmitting a seat to a political heir. In that context, factions trump the formal organization of the party.

The SP organization: authoritarian yet decentralized

In terms of organizational structure, the SP follows a classic pyramidal model with bodies instituted from the national to the block level. A particularity of that organization is that contrary to other parties who tend to have only one body for each level, the SP has two – an executive and an assembly (Shafiuzzaman 2003, 80). Thus, the national organization is divided between a National Conference and a National Executive; the state level organization is divided between a State Conference and a State Executive. Similar structures are replicated at the district level, at the city level (where they are called cooperatives) and then at the Block level (organization and executive).

Executive members are appointed from the top and the various assemblies are meant to oversee the working of the Executive. In reality, these assemblies function as forums enabling party members to develop their networks and trade influence rather than check on party leaders who draw their authority and legitimacy from the party's high command.

The most important layer in the party's organization is the district level. This is where party office holders interact with the bureaucracy, where a large part of public resources

are concentrated. Local branches of the party are organized around factions who rarely extend beyond a district. Thus, the party's *zila adyaksh* ("District President") concentrates a lot of power and influence. They are also fairly autonomous, in their daily functioning. The party led them develop their own affairs or business as long as they supply resources and manpower for elections.

The party also has a series of affiliated bodies: The Mulayam Singh Youth Brigade, the Mahila Vahini (Women's Brigade), the Lohia Vahini, the Chatra Sabha ("Students' Assembly") who are essentially used for mobilization during campaigns.

Nominations to the party's various bodies and executives is top down. A particularity of the Samajwadi Party is the practice of vast organizational overhauls before and after every election. Ahead of an election (usually a year before an election), the party leadership assesses which local bodies and which office bearers haven't performed and are likely to be more liabilities than assets in the incoming polls. It does the same with its elected representatives. Local bodies are then replenished with new office bearers and militant, expected to breath in a new energy within the party.

After the election, the party often dissolves local branches in the seats they did not win. In the process, cards get reshuffled between factions. After his appointment as Chief Minister in 2012, Akhilesh Yadav proceeded to several organization overhauls in order to place "his" men within the organization, and in order to sideline some of the more rebellious factions associated with his father and uncles.

The party presents that process as an exercise of internal democracy, since the local base of the party gets to be regularly renewed. However, a cursory look at these local reshuffles indicate that a lot of sacked local leaders get a second or a third chance and are quickly reinstated within the organization.

Far from being a well-oiled machinery, like the BSP, the SP organization is constituted as a competitive space for access to political networks and resources. Faction leaders and their follower permanently wrestle against rival factions for power and influence.

After the 2007 defeat, the party tried to emulate the BSP organization but did not succeed. Factionalism and unruliness prevented the party to achieve the level of dedication and discipline that characterizes the BSP's organization. After the elections, the party organized a series of training camps for party workers, aimed at teaching them the tenets of socialism and at reinforcing party loyalty. The experience was not entirely successful. A party spokesperson confided: *"People were disrespectful. They were not disciplined. They would not listen to the leaders. They would leave the meetings"*[348].

The SP is a good reminder of the fact that building organizations is costly and complicated. Loyalty has to be inspired by the party and its leadership and cannot simply be bought. So rather than building a complex local organization, the SP prefers to let its local branches be run by people drawn from local elite groups, and trust that their sense of self-interest will transmute into a sense of party interest.

Conclusion

This description of how parties recruit their candidates is not comprehensive as there is obviously a diversity of routes leading to the nomination in each party. Party transfers and the poaching of candidates for example constitute another method.

But there are interesting variations between parties and notably between national and regional parties. In national parties, the recruitment tends to be done in closed circuits, through a highly centralized process. It is easier for outsiders or individual political entrepreneurs to get tickets in regional parties, particularly with the BSP who recruit its candidates largely outside its organization. The SP is an intermediary case where ticket distribution is centralized and discretionary, but where factions and political families play an important role.

These organizational variations matter since they affect the parties' ability to connect with local elites – old and new – and therefore affect their overall electoral performance. I discuss some implications of these variations in the final sub-section.

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[348] Interview with an unnamed SP spokesperson, in Lucknow, April 2012.

6.2. Implications

In this section, I enumerate a series of implication and consequences of party organizational variations. The first implication concerns the importance of studying and understanding the functioning of partisan organizations in India, who too often are treated as blocks, under the assumption that the organization follows abides by the will of their centralized leadership. Party organizations matter since they affect the capacity of parties to connect with voters as well as with local elites, and determine also the modalities of these linkages. I argue that organizational variations contribute to and help understand why parties operating under the same context follow different trajectories.

The second implication has to do with the reasons behind the domination of regional parties. Traditional explanations of the success of regional parties point at underlying social transformations and movements, of which parties are either the political beneficiaries or the political extension. While I do not deny the association between regional parties and lower caste movements, I wish to offer another explanation – a political one – that sources the success of regional parties to the particular way they are constituted and organized and to their ability to connect with new elites.

The third point I wish to discuss is how organizational variations between the SP and the BSP affect the way they connect with local elites.

As mentioned earlier, the rise of backwards has been accompanied by violence and by the criminalization of the political sphere. One party, the SP, embodies this phenomenon more than others and I wish to offer an explanation about why the "goonda raj" tag sticks to the SP more than to its opponents, despite empirical evidence that all parties share the responsibility for the criminalization of politics.

Finally, the fifth implication that I wish to discuss is the meaning of these party-elite linkages with regard to the democratization argument that characterizes much of the literature on the political rise of lower castes.

6.2.1. The importance of party organizations

Political parties in India are known to be heavily centralized, personalized and often dynastic (Chandra 2016a). As a result, much of the recent literature on parties focuses either on party leadership or electoral strategy and overall performance, and tends to overlook questions related to their internal organization (Chhibber, Jensenius, and Suryanarayan 2014). There are several reasons to think that organizations matter, including in parties that are highly centralized.

Chhibber et al. have recently argued, with statistical evidence, that the low organization of parties incentivizes individual candidates to defect to other parties, thus increasing the overall electoral volatility[349]. In a previous contribution, Chhibber observed that "*the absence of a party organization, of independent civil society associations that mobilize support for the party and centralized financing of elections has led to the emergence and sustenance of dynastic parties in India*" (Chhibber 2011, 1). According to Chhibber, the presence of dynastic parties leads to a representation deficit and more instability in the electoral system.

Wilkinson partly refutes the argument that weak party organizations necessarily weakens democracy, citing counter-example and observing that indicators of party instability do not correlate with outcome measures (Wilkinson 2015, 438). He further notes that democracy thrives in India even when parties do not.

The configuration of party organizations also determines modalities of party-elite linkages and the need for candidates to rely on individual patronage networks.
The degree of local presence of parties also determines their mobilization capacity during and between elections. It also affects the quality of the information they rely on to read the electoral map. The BSP is able to localize its electoral strategy effectively because its ground workers provide the party leadership with reliable and relevant information about local politics. So, despite its centralized character, the BSP relies on its organization, to mobilize its core support base and to source information.

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[349] Chhibber et al., p. 499.

6.2.2. Why are regional parties dominating?

Traditional explanations for the rise of regional parties insist on the history of social movements and mobilizations that have purported regional parties dedicated to their representation, as well as on the role of contextual transformations that facilitated their development (Jaffrelot 2000a, 2003b, Pai 2002a). Some authors have linked the success of regional parties to the politicization of caste and the development of its role as vehicle of mobilization (Heath and Yadav 2010, Jaffrelot 2000a, b, 2003b, Michelutti 2008, Palshikar 2013).

Other sociological and cultural explanations include the role of regional identities, explaining the success of regionalist parties by their ability to incarnate a regional identity in ways that transcends other social cleavages (Kohli 1997, Subramanian 1999, Wyatt 2013, Zavos, Wyatt, and Hewitt 2004).

There are older political explanations as well, that situate the origin of various regional parties in the process of scission of the Congress party (Brass 1977, 1983, Burger 1969).

In his book on regional parties in India, Adam Ziegfeld disputes the notion that the electoral success of regional parties derives solely from their ability to harness popular grievances and strong regional identities (Ziegfeld 2016). He offers an alternative explanation of their success based on clientelism, coalition governments and elite factional alignments.

According to Ziegfeld, regional parties succeed because they are more apt than national parties at connecting with voters through clientelistic ties. Decentralized clientelism through brokers and fixers offers an effective substitute to the costly construction of a locally implanted party organization.

Secondly, regional parties have also benefited from a process of political decentralization that consecrates the state as a most important political unit for the articulation of policies, party politics and voters' preferences. The advent of coalition politics at the state and at the national level has further raised the profile of regional parties, who have become more attractive to aspiring politicians.

The final factor is the factional alignments between parties and regional elites. Ziegfeld states that regional parties are more likely to emerge in states where a large portion of the elite is strongly bound by ideology or cannot connect with the elite of a different region (Ziegfeld 2016, 206). Successful regional parties can also be bound by a common sense of opportunism that binds political actors together within a single party umbrella.

Ziegfeld's elite-centric approach finds a lot of resonance in this dissertation but suffers from two important limitations. The first one is linked to the broad usage of the term 'elite', used broadly and interchangeably with the term 'politician'. Ziegfeld therefore clubs all elected representatives into one undifferentiated elite category, and discards all other non-elected actors who may wield power and influence within and outside parties.

The second limitation, related to the first one, is that the use of the term 'faction' applies to large groups who collectively decide to form or not a regional party. It conceals the internal diversity of regional parties, and notably the factionalism that characterizes their functioning in many cases, regardless of the fact that they have a centralized organization or not.

The fact that regional parties tend to be centralized, personalized, weakly institutionalized, guided more by informal than formal rules and that they tend to place their elected representatives in a position of uncertainty regarding the longevity of their career does not mean that their organizations do not matter. Quite the contrary, the actual internal arrangements between leaders and factions are crucial to the performance of regional parties. The SP may not have to deal with a complex well-ramified organization, but its leaders do spend most of their time adjudicating (and at times even nurturing) conflicts within the party, between faction leaders and their followers.

The approach adopted in this dissertation also focuses on political elites but attempt to unravel the variety of elites and the differentiated modes of connection between various elites and various political parties. The explanation offered for the success of regional parties in Uttar Pradesh is threefold.

First, the success of regional parties is linked to their ability to attract and co-opt members of the new elites. Local elites and the new elites in particular are more incentivized to contest on regional parties' tickets for three main reasons. The first, quite simply, is that success attracts strong candidates. Between 1996 and 2012, the SP and BSP tickets were objectively stronger than national parties' tickets.

The second is that the SP and BSP regimes are reputed to be more permissive towards the deployment of clientelistic networks that feed from public resources. In short, the SP and the BSP provide more opportunities for 'fundraising' and a better protection from the state against political and business malpractices.

The third reason is that while the competition for tickets is harsh and expensive, it is also comparatively more open than with the BJP or the Congress, who tends to select their candidates within restricted sociological pools or closed networks.

The second explanation for the success of regional parties in Uttar Pradesh is that, contrary to a popular assumption, their organization is stronger than the national parties'. It is better distributed across the territory and better implanted at the ground level. This organizational deployment is crucial to their ability to connect with local elites. A stronger local organization means that regional parties also benefit from better and more reliable information about ground realities, caste demographics and dynamics, and so forth.

The third explanation finally consists in recognizing that the regional parties in Uttar Pradesh, contrary to the national parties, benefit from the support of a core electorate that gives them a head start advantage in elections (even if these core support bases are eroding). The reason these parties have a core electorate cannot be limited to the practice of clientelism alone. There is a logic of ethnic identification at work between the Yadavs and the SP, or between the Jatavs and the BSP, that goes beyond the tradeoff of votes against material or even programmatic benefits. There are material considerations nurturing the relation between regional parties and their electorate, but as the Chhibber and Ahuja point out, patronage networks cannot reach enough people to determine alone electoral outcomes. Also, contrary to the assumption that patronage networks usually benefit to co-ethnics, I find that the practice of patronage enables parties and candidates

to expand their social base beyond the group they are traditionally identified with, by trading support against benefits with prominent members of those groups.

6.2.3. Differentiated party-elite linkages

Electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh has always relied on the induction of candidates drawn from the elites into the competition. Elite candidates are deemed more legitimate and effective candidates than non-elite candidates. Parties themselves tend to be organizations led by elites, either traditional, as in the case of the national parties, or non-traditional, as in the case of the regional parties. Parties controlled by traditional elites tend to be partial to their own kind when it comes to distribute tickets and ultimately share power.

Over time, the definition of who the elites are in Uttar Pradesh has become more diverse and complex. Vast processes of social, political and economic transformations have led to the emergence of new local elites, diverse in their caste identity, and relatively homogenous in their inscription into the new networks of economic and political influence.

Parties vary in their ability to connect with these new elites and in the modalities of these connections. This is partly determined by their overall trajectories.

The Congress Party after Independence was a well-institutionalized catch-all party, present in every district and with an effective ground organization that co-opted local notabilities into patronage networks. Today, it has lost its local organization and capacity to connect with local elites. A Congress ticket, erstwhile an electoral sesame, as become a liability. Its social composition of old notables and young professionals is also detached from the sociological world that has produced these new elites.

The recent efforts at rebuilding an organization from the bottom by including members of deprived segments of the population has failed so far to deliver any result, since it tends to exclude those who tend to win elections, i.e. the local elites.

The BJP recruits its candidates in relatively closed circuits. The party remains dominated by the upper castes and thrives in regions where the ascendency of the upper castes has

not been challenged from below. Candidates from the backward classes and from the lower castes tend to be selected within the ambit of the Sangh Parivar. The few 'new elites candidates', or the figure of the businessmen politician, that are found in the BJP tend to be urban based, or defectors from other parties.

The BJP mobilization in rural areas is largely done by external organizations – the RSS and its subsidiaries – that aim to build direct ties with segments of voters through social and political action, rather than simply rely on the intermediation of local elites by co-optation.

The BSP and the SP are both able to connect with the local elites through their ground organizations. However, the modalities of these connections differ widely.

The BSP has a strong and cohesive militant base that is spread over the territory. This base enables the party to 'read' the electoral map with great precision and to aptly design its local alliances. The party however maintains a strict division of labor between its organization – primarily composed of Jatavs – and the candidates, drawn from the local elites. In short, the BSP externalizes the business of winning seats to individual political entrepreneurs who invest in an election to further their private interests. Who these local elites are and to which group do they belong to literally varies from one seat to another. But what the BSP candidates have in common is that they tend to belong to local networks that control parts of the local economic and political institutions, or occupy a position of strength in the local political economy of their constituency.

The Samajwadi Party is an intermediary case. The party has a weak unstable organization but draws its strengths from the integration of its local branches with local elite groups. It is usually assumed that parties seek to rely on local elites since the cost of building a strong and stable organization is high. This applies to the SP.

However, one should not dismiss entirely the party's organization because of its centralization and dynastic character. Nominations to the formal bodies of the party are tightly canvassed and controlled by the party leadership but in reality, their functioning is far more fluid and autonomous than it first appears. Local elites compete within the parties' organizational layers for positions, resources and influence. That competition is organized around factions that are unruly and undisciplined but at the same time make

the party attractive to individuals belonging to the new elites. The organization reinforces them in their dealings with the bureaucracy and various economic forces.

With Akhilesh at the helm, the party has regained some organizational capacity, by enrolling large numbers of young party workers – mostly students – who can be mobilized during election campaigns. But these do not form a stable solid cadre that the party can rely on between elections. Further, this army of young militants is not yet part of the local power circles from where political influence can be sourced.

6.2.4. Why does the *Goonda Raj* tag stick to the SP and not the BSP?

It is widely assumed that the SP lost the 2007 elections because of the severe deterioration of law and order that had marked its 2003 mandate. The state frequently tops national crime rankings and the evocation of "U.P. politics" itself has become a semantic signal referring to the criminalization of politics. In 2007, Mayawati actively campaigned on the theme of probity, promising to put the *Goonda Raj* of the SP to an end.

However, an examination of the crime record of the BSP candidates and MLAs reveal that BSP politicians are no less 'criminals' than their SP counterparts.

In fact, while the SP and the BSP do speak and mobilize different segments of the electorate, they do not differ much in terms of candidates' profile. There are variations in terms of caste – more Yadavs, Thakurs and non-Jatav Dalits with the SP, more Kurmis, Brahmins and Jatavs with the BSP. But in terms of economic background, their candidates are strikingly undifferentiated. The reason is that both parties recruit their candidates from the same sociological pool of local elites, and notably the new elites, who have emerged from some of the most dynamic and criminalized sectors of economic activity.

One would also be hard pressed to distinguish the two parties in terms of corrupt practices while in office. Both parties have been held responsible (though not guilty) of large-scale scams and scandals. Both Mayawati and Mulayam are under a CBI investigation for disproportionate assets.

Yet, the "*goonda* tag" sticks more to the SP than the BSP, who remains defined in popular imagination as a Dalit party rather than a party harboring criminals. One can think of several reasons that explain this variation of opinion.

One obvious and valid explanation is that these parties have distinct identities and political cultures, leading to differentiated images. Lucia Michelutti argues that violence and a 'masculine' brand of politics is consubstantial to the political culture of the Samajwadi Party, a party often described by its supporters as a '*goonda* party': a party of musclemen and fixers (Michelutti 2008, 48). Its local party workers, especially the Yadavs, cultivate an image of 'strongmen' essential to maintain their social and political ascendency.

The BSP on its side cultivates the image of a party dedicated to social change and to the emancipation of the most deprived groups. One could point that BSP local representatives have often contradicted that image but generally speaking, the BSP tends to win the battle of the image.

A second explanation lies with the two parties' mode of interaction with local elites. We saw that the BSP maintains a division of labor between the organization, whose main role is to mobilize the core support base of the party and provide the party high command with information on constituencies, candidates and the implementation of schemes in favor of Dalits, and the candidates, who are drawn from local elite groups, most of the time distinct from the local Dalit population.

The separation between the candidates and the party makes the former expendable. Sacking them and replacing them with new candidates or MLAs usually pose no threat to the organization.

In the 2007 BSP regime, criminal politicians no longer benefited from the kind of protection and impunity they used to enjoy in the 1990s. The BSP in particular explicitly warns its cadre, MPs and MLAs to not cross certain yellow lines (which is a plead for discretion in the conduct of their illegal activities rather than a thou-shalt-not kind of order), at the risk of being expelled from the party. During her fourth tenure as Chief

Minister, Mayawati expelled a number of her own MLAs and Ministers from the party for acts or allegations of criminality[350].

In 2011, she sacked her Bijnor MLA, Shahnawaz Rana, for protecting two of his aides who had attempted to rape two women in Delhi. In the month of December 2011, she sacked nineteen of her Ministers after the state *Lokayukta* ("ombudsman") found them guilty (or was about to declare them guilty) of embezzlement of public funds, land grab, abuse of power and illegal earnings. One of them, in charge of animal husbandry, had attributed public contracts to build 21 veterinary hospitals in Etah district to his own son. Another, Minister for secondary education, had diverted funds from his ministry to fund his own school.

Ahead of the 2012 elections, Mayawati suspended from party membership a number of prominent criminals-turned politicians, among which Dhananjay Singh, the MP from Jaunpur, with a dozen murder cases on his head; Jitendra Singh Bablu (MLA from Bikapur), another notorious killer and land grabber, who shot to fame in 2009, when he set the house of the Congress State President, Rita Bahuguna, on fire. Other MLAs charged with violent and heinous crimes were suspended during the same period, in Auraiya (Shekhar Tiwari), Bilsi (Yogendra Sagar) and Bulandshahr (Bhagwan Sharma, alias Guddu Pandit)[351].

The eviction of criminal elements from the party is sometimes voluntarily dramatized. On May 29, 2007, a BSP MP from Azamgarh, Umakant Yadav, was accused of land grabbing in his district. Two days later, Mayawati invited him to her residence in Lucknow; only to get him arrested by a squad of police Special Forces, and in the presence of television crews. Yadav and his son Dinesh, who had contested the Assembly election on a BSP ticket, were both expelled from the party.

The Samajwadi Party, on the other hand, is unable to do so as the criminal elements within the party are very much part of the organization, or are protected by the factions they belong to. Raja Bhaiya is a famous example. The MLA from Kunda was expelled from the

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[350] '4 expelled by BSP for criminal activities', Indian Express, April 26, 2010.
[351] Facing arrest, Guddu Pandit migrated to Dubai and joined at the same time the Samajwadi Party.

party before the 2012 election, as a signal of departure from old practices. He contested and retained his seat as an Independent candidate. Immediately after the victory, he was appointed, against the Chief Minister's will, Minister of Food and Civil Supplies – the same Ministry that he had plundered when he was a BJP Minister – and of Prisons[352].

Since party bosses, candidates and local elites are all integrated locally, the sacking of MLAs poses the risk of splitting the party's local organization, and to lose not just individuals but also networks, party workers and resources to a rival party.

Local SP branches have a good deal of functional autonomy, which leads to the difficulty of controlling their action and excesses.

Thus, despite the concentration of power in the hands of the party leadership, the party is far more dependable from its base than the BSP. Local bosses are well aware of that fact, which encourages a strong culture of impunity within the SP.

This culture of impunity is further reinforced by the fact that the local elite's control and influence often extend to local police forces, who are often helpless, and at times complicit, to SP politicians' wrongdoings.

Anupam Mishra, an Allahabad based journalist sums up the difference between the two parties as follows: "*Under SP, there is democratization of crime. Every SP worker feels he can take on the law. Under BSP, there is total centralization, and so even the cadre is careful*"[353].

6.2.5. Consequences for governance

If the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party don't differ much in terms of the sociology of their candidates, do they differ in terms of policies when in power? Do they serve the interests of the groups who elected them in office in the first place?

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[352] He was briefly suspended a year later when his name came up in the murder case of a police officer in Kunda. He got cleared of the charges and resumed his office.
[353] Quoted from (Jha 2016).

Most contributions on the governance or developmental outcomes in Uttar Pradesh tend to focus on the state as whole and not on the action of a particular party. Atul Kohli, for example, clubs the SP and the BSP in the same neo-patrimonialist formations category and blames them equally for the state of dereliction of Uttar Pradesh (Kohli 2012). According to him, party centralization, caste-based electoral considerations and a generally weak economy have pushed both parties to privilege narrow policy agendas, to stray away from public interest policies and to seek to favor their electoral base through the distribution of public goods, through preferential policies and through the politics of symbols[354].

This description echoes the diagnostic that he had made in 1990, when he attributed India's crisis of governability to the decline of the Congress and the inaptitude of regional and communal parties to propose a viable alternative in terms of policy and state authority (Kohli 1990).

In a recent contribution, Prerna Singh, a former student of Kohli, asserts that the absence of a strong over-arching regional (subnational) identity has prevented the formation of a public minded ethos among the political class (Singh 2015). She notes that in a state like Kerala, notwistanding the legacy of a welfare tradition inherited from former rulers, an electoral competition organized around two left and centre-left leaning coalitions, a sense of common belonging to a subnational space has been conducive to the development of generalist welfare policies. By contrast, she notes that in Uttar Pradesh, the absence of a strong subnational bond across social categories has encouraged the development of divisive caste-based politics and the "conceptualization of welfare in narrow, sectional terms"[355].

In fairness, these authors recognize that there is a longer legacy of poor governance in Uttar Pradesh. But they note that in the context of liberalization, the state of Uttar Pradesh has been particularly crippled by its politics.

Beyond the question of economic performance and development indicators, can we spot differences in the policies designed and implemented by the SP and the BSP? Or can we

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[354] Ibid., p. 172.
[355] Ibid., p. 545.

state, as it is often assumed, that both parties work for the exclusive benefit of their core electoral bases, Dalits for the BSP, Yadavs and Muslims for the SP.

What I suggest here is that both parties do not fundamentally differ with each other in terms of policies. They both also practice what could be termed as segmentary distribution, or the preferential access to public goods and welfare schemes of particular segments of the population, defined in caste and community terms or defined in terms of their political preferences. Where the SP and the BSP vary is in the determination of who benefit from their policies and largesses.

To begin with, there are strong arguments for looking at these two parties as being largely policy-indifferentiated. After its victory in 2012, the Akhilesh Yadav's government rapidly announced the dismantling of 27 schemes and policies established under the previous government. The main reasons cited were the lack of budget or the inefficacy of those schemes.

A closer look reveals that most of the cancelled schemes bore the names of Dalit icons, such as the Savitribai Phule Balika Madad Yojna, a cash-for-girl scheme in education, the Manyawar Kanshiram Shahri Garib Awas Yojna, an urban poor free housing scheme, or the Bhimrao Ambedkar tube well scheme.

Some of these schemes suffered from strong limitations. The Kanshiram Shahri Garib Awas Yojna never took off due to the lack of availability of land in urban areas. But in most cases, these policies were quickly re-enacted under new denominations. The Savitribai Phule Balika Madad Yojna was replaced by Kanya Vidya Dhan Yojna, in which a bicycle was added to the cash given to families with girls enrolled in school. The urban poor free housing scheme was re-launched by the Ministry for Urban Development under the 'Aasra' scheme.

While re-naming the scheme, the government also changed the conditions of eligibility. Dalits lost the 50 per cent quota they had in the previous scheme to the benefit of Muslims and poor OBCs. The scheme was re-launched in Rampur district, the home district of the Minister in charge of urban poverty alleviation and urban development, Azam Khan.

In November 2012, the Akhilesh government announced the discontinuation of two schemes devised by the BSP, the Bhimrao Ambedkar tube well scheme and the Ambedkar collective tube well scheme (for construction of tube wells). In the same breath, It announced the creation of a unified Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Community Tube Well Scheme (later on Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Collective Tube Well Scheme), which exactly reproduced the same features as the BSP schemes, including higher and preferential subsidies for SCs and STs.

One of the most popular and ambitious welfare policy of the BSP, the Ambedkar Gram Sabha Vikas Yojna (AGSVY) – also known as 'Ambedkar villages' – was also discontinued in favor of a Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Samagra Gram Vikas Yojana, a village development scheme. Most villages falling under the AGSVY – Dalit dominated – were excluded from the new scheme which could technically apply to any village. The SP targeted the creation of 1600 new 'Lohia villages', on the premise that the Ambedkar villages had already benefited from public attention and that there were no other dalit village to find to justify the continuation of the scheme.

The Ambedkar Village scheme had been one of BSP's most successful policy, including over its various phases of existence about 19,000 villages comprising a majority or a near-majority of SC/ST population[356]. It included the construction of apartment complexes reserved for Dalits. Painted dark blue (the color of the party), these buildings were usually located in the outskirsts of villages, near crossroads or national roads, where they would be visible and where Dalits could live among themselves, at safe distance from their local oppressors.

In all these examples, the SP simply extended existing schemes while renaming them and changing the beneficiaries. The BSP in its time did in part the same thing. The current Kanya Vidya Dhan Yojna of the SP government was initially launched by the Mulayam Singh Yadav government in 2004. Under that scheme, girls from families below the

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[356] The Ambedkar Village scheme was launched in 1991 and initially targeted only villages that had 50 per cent of Dalit population or more. Subsequently, Mayawati relaxed the criteria to include villages containing 22 to 30 per cent of Dalit population. Dalits in these villages get a privileged access to public goods and other government development and welfare schemes such as roads, electrification, hand-pumps, housing schemes, etc.

poverty lines were entitled to a 20,000 Rs cheque upon higher secondary education graduation, to help them pursue higher education.

With the recent inclusive turn of Uttar Pradesh politics, these schemes tend to be less oriented towards specific groups, as compared to earlier. This fits with the necessary image of inclusiveness that parties must project. But the language of general interest can be used to obfuscate practices of discrimination in the distribution of public goods. Not specifying the beneficiaries of a policy enables those who handle those funds – bureaucrats and elected representatives alike – to distribute them in an arbitrary or a discriminatory fashion. While Dalits are usually not explicitly excluded from most SP schemes, they are diluted into a broader definition of beneficiaries, based officially on class as well as on caste[357].

The SP government used the same inclusive argument to discard the two per cent quota for Dalits in government contracts that the BSP had introduced in June 2009[358].

Most of the policies and schemes of recent Uttar Pradesh governments have been redistributive in nature. On the one hand, few governments have been interested or incentivized to engage with structural reforms policies, or to improve the provision of basic public services such as education or health care. On the other hand, the room for maneuvre in a poor endebted state is limited. The government cannot touch to planned expenditures or central funds to finance its policy and therefore mainly has the instruments of distribution and subsidies to come up with new policies.

Parties use those instruments to garner support from their core support base. For instance, in 2012, the SP was elected on the promise that it would provide free electriticy and free water for irrigation (a promise it could not entirely uphold).
In that regard, the SP and the BSP are largely undifferentiated.

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[357] There is considerable social and pressure onto political parties to include poor members of the upper castes into those schemes.
[358] Initially for small contracts up to a maximum of five lakhs. The bar was raised to twenty-five lakhs subsequently.

These two parties however differ in terms of expectactions. The BSP victory in 2007 created the hope, from its supporters, that it would finally be able to work in their favor, now that is was free from the shackles of coalition politics.

Some BSP schemes, such as the Ambedkar Village, have been resounding successes, leading to the effective distribution of affordable house to SC citizens. Other schemes, and the general implementation of central schemes such as the National Rural Health Mission, have been more in tune with the regular governmental malpractices that have plagued the state of Uttar Pradesh.

When elected in 2007, Mayawati found herself entangled between two contradictory objectives: to meet the pressing need of her core electoral base, and to nurture a broad social alliance not only through the instrument of representation but through the instruments of policy and governance. In 2012, the SP campaigned on the theme that the BSP was privileging Dalits over other needy individuals and categories, which eventually contributed to her defeat.

The functioning of the state in Uttar Pradesh is rather nebulous, marked by opacity and arbitrariness. This leaves plenty of space and opportunities for the misuse of public funds and various forms of abuse of power. Atul Kohli is right to underline that the state's political class is "*focused on everything but the state's development*". He adds, "*… a variety of socioeconomic problems continue to accumulate: poor infrastructure; the decay of major public institutions, including universities; the deterioration of law and order; and widespread corruption*"[359].

6.2.6. Consequences for democratization

Finally, the process of integration of political and economic elites within the regional parties raises question about the emancipatory promise that these parties embodied at the time of their inception. The rules of the electoral game and party politics have contributed to create a class of new politicians who get into politics as a way to further

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[359] Op. Cit., p. 178.

private interests, rather than pursue the progressive emancipatory agenda promised by political parties.

The SP and the BSP have been successful parties not just because they have succeeding in capturing large segments of voters' imagination with their discourse on social justice, but because they have aligned themselves with the new elites that dominate the social, economic, and political landscape they operate in. These new elites tend to be in a better position than others to deliver and meet the expectations of voters.

The rules of the games and party politics have contributed to create a predatory political class that invests in politics as a mean to further private interests. Electoral politics and representation are an instrument for the maintenance and development of the control that groups or individuals exert over territories. The spiraling cost of entry to politics excludes those who cannot afford to compete. And parties who field such candidates are bound to lose elections.

These evolutions have had a negative impact on the respect of conventional democratic norms by the political class. The nonchalant attitude of parties towards crime and lawlessness among the political class has contributed to the development of a culture of impunity, which in turn has further encouraged various form of predatory behaviour.

Also, what is the meaning of representation if the recruitment of the political class is made on the basis of criteria that exclude the majority of the population? What is the relevance of having caste diversity if the way to achieve caste-based inclusiveness is to recruit preferentially among the new business elites?

It has been documented that the elitist and biased recruitment of candidates by parties tends to exclude 'weaker' segments of the population – the poor, women, and the lower castes. Analyzing the candidates fielded by parties since 1962, Francesca Jensenius shows that the recent increase of the number of women nominated to contest is largely limited to the reserved constituencies, which "tend to be less competitive and less dominated by 'money and muscle' politics" (Jensenius 2016a, 2-3).

The profile of winners in U.P. election is consistent with Adam Ziegfeld's findings about the candidates and winners attributes in Haryana. Ziegfeld notes that "*candidates who are natives of their constituency, previously held local political office, had family who were involved in local politics, are members of the state's major political dynasties, and have occupations in business also tend to win larger vote shares*" (Ziegfeld 2016, 244).

Various authors have insisted on the symbolic benefits of having backward and lower caste leaders elected to the Assembly and ruling governments (Jaffrelot 2003b, Pai 2000a, 2002a, Varshney 2000a, b). But while I do not deny the tangibility of the politics of dignity, I raise doubts that any structural change to social and economic inequalities will come from the political class, whose commitment to democratization remains contingent to the pursuit of their interests.

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to achieve two inter-related tasks. The first was to describe some of the more significant political changes that have occurred in Uttar Pradesh after the Mandal and Mandir period. Two of these significant changes were the growing domination of regional parties and the gradual heterogeneisation of caste representation within them.

The second task consisted in placing electoral politics in a broader context of social, political and economic transformations. The study of sub-regional variations for instance illustrated how economic change induces the emergence of new elites, who have been co-opted mostly by the regional parties.

In order to address these questions, I have adopted an elite-centric approach, examining in chapter three the set of institutional and political constraints candidates and elected representatives operate under and how those constraints impact their selection process and their behaviour once elected.

In chapter four, I have examined the evolution of the sociological composition of the state assembly, in terms of castes and communities but also in terms of other socio-demographic variables such as education and occupation. The data on the former two variables being unsatisfactory, I proceeded in chapter five to examine the question of representatives' socio-economic background qualitatively, to illustrate how caste, economic position and political status interweave in local contexts.

In chapter six, I have compared the trajectory of the four main parties, with regard to their candidates' selection processes, their organizational strengths and weaknesses, and their ability to connect with local elites.

The first conclusion that I drew from this study was that electoral politics has undergone a process of localization, owing to the localization of parties' electoral strategies. Parties no longer seek to mobilize exclusively a core electorate at the cost of the support of others but instead seek to forge social alliances in order to broaden their support base. The parties who have won elections in the past twenty years or so are those who adapted their

strategies to local social, political and economic configurations – covering caste and local elites dynamics.

The second conclusion is that even if state-wide caste-based mobilizations no longer operate the way it did in the late 1980s and early 1990s, caste and politics remain deeply intertwined. The expressions of that connection occur locally, where their consequences are tangible.

The conjunction of these two phenomenon, the localization of electoral politics and the interlocking of local caste and political economy contexts, has led to a process of integration of local political and economic elites, marked by the greater induction of candidates with a business background into the electoral fray. This process is stronger in sub-regions that have undergone deep economic transformations, such as Western Uttar Pradesh but is also noticeable in some under-developed parts of the state, such as Bundelkhand, where the majority of the political class comes from the construction and public contracting sectors.

This process of integration of political and economic elites has far reaching consequences, in terms of elite capture of local public institutions, control over the allocation of public resources, probity in public life and criminalization of politics in general. This process helps also to understand why political change has not contributed to bring the structural change in terms of local caste-based domination that was expected from the rise of backward. In other terms, there is a clear contradiction between the emancipatory aspiration of backward and lower caste parties and their practices of political recruitment. Traditional elites have resisted to pressures from below in areas that have stagnated economically.

Implications

This dissertation contributes to five academic discussions on contemporary Indian politics.

The first one is the identity politics literature. A significant change of the past twenty-years is that the tropes of transversal caste mobilization have largely lost their effect. Backward caste voters who were mobilized on the theme of reservations twenty-years ago

are less likely to respond to this kind of campaign or this kind of generic caste appeal. I have however argued that caste, as a vehicle of political mobilization, has not lost its saliency but has been progressively de-linked from stable party affiliation on the basis of identity, to the benefit of the localized interlocking of caste, political and economic factors. Caste politics needs to be located at the level where it effectively operates, in conjunction with other salient political variables.

The second contribution concerns the discussion on clientelism, or patronage. This dissertation adopts an intermediary position between those advocating that India is a patronage democracy and those who claim that post-liberalization programmatic policies have trumped patronage. Patronage networks are an indispensable component to any politician's career but hardly ever cover the entirety of candidate-voters linkages and party-voters linkages. In other terms, they may be a necessary condition to be competitive in the electoral race but certainly not a sufficient one, other factors such as party appeal, local demographics and inter-caste power relations, and candidates' individual qualities, among others, also influence voters' decisions. In any case, patronage does not determine electoral outcomes.

In fact, I do not claim that an elite-centric approach covers exhaustively the political field or that elite-centric explanations subsume other forms of social and political factors that affect voters' preferences and choices.

This dissertation takes a similar position on the question of criminalization of politics. I have attempted to describe the mechanisms and incentives that attract individual embedded in criminality to invest in politics. I have also attempted to show that criminal attributes are but one among other resources that candidates can use in order to win an election. "Muscle" is a resource that helps winning seats but not a guarantee of success. Criminal politicians who do not meet the expectations of voters in terms of accessibility, distribution of resources for example cannot count on their criminal attributes to sustain themselves in politics. Similarly, and even if the data should be used with caution, there is also evidence that many candidates with criminal charges lose elections. Once again, all these attributes of successful candidates tend to work in conjunction with each other and not separately.

The fourth discussion this dissertation contributes to is the literature on parties and party politics. This literature has traditionally focused on party leadership and broad party-voter alignments, but has not sufficiently paid attention to political actors and their agency. Similarly, not enough attention has been paid to party organizations, which are often assumed to be weak and hyper-centralized, and therefore not relevant besides the obvious task of mobilizing voters. I have showed that organizational variations impact the capacity of parties to connect with local elites and to integrate them within their ranks. I have also shown that even hyper-centralized parties do need an organization in order to gather information on local caste and political contexts and configuration and to connect with local elites. Parties that outsource information collection to external agencies, such as private companies or external political operators usually fail to grasp these local social and political configurations.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to the election analysis literature by insisting on the need to consider data analysis at intermediate levels of observations, between the state and the local. Looking at sub-regional variations for instance is a convenient way to deconstruct electoral trends built on the basis of aggregate data. Similarly, following patterns of individual representatives' career trajectory helps to unearth a number of insights about the competitiveness of elections and about the many hurdles politicians face in their career. This helps to measure power concentration within parties and assemblies, patterns of incumbents' re-nomination and measure the phenomenon of turncoats. There is scope here for much inter-state comparative work.

Ultimately, the question that matters is what are the sources of political change in contemporary India? Sociological explanations tend to assume too quickly that political change and political actors are merely the reflection or the extension into the political domain of deeper social transformation dynamics. I have shown that by controlling the political supply, parties determine who gets to stand for elections and therefore who gets represented in the first place. The under-representation of Most backward Classes and of the non-Jatav Dalits is a case in point. Ultimately, voters are constrained to choose among the candidates that parties choose to field.

Finally, this dissertation covers a period of Uttar Pradesh politics that broadly starts I the late 1980s and ends with the 2012 state elections. Many changes have occurred since then, some of them challenging some of the findings enunciated here.

The first major change is the new rise of the BJP, on terms that vary from its earlier ascension in the late 1980s. The 2014 General Elections and the BJP campaign in particular ushered new methods of mass campaigning, personalized of electoral campaign, added to older practices of caste-based ticket distribution, religious symbolism and communal polarization (Jaffrelot 2015b). The BJP won 71 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats with 42.3 per cent of the votes. It also stood second in the seven constituencies that it lost[360], and surpassed the combined vote share of its three opponents (Congress, BSP and SP) in twenty-two constituencies (Jaffrelot and Verniers 2015, 31-32).

The strength of the Narendra Modi-led campaign was such that who the candidates were did not matter much. The BJP's opponents and the individual strength of their candidates could not match the appeal of the BJP campaign.

It remains to be seen whether 2014 was a critical election (Key 1955), marking a major and durable electoral realignment between parties or if it was merely an exception, or an anomaly, linked to the particular context of a strong rejection of the Congress party and the simultaneous political ascension of Narendra Modi.

While these events and what will follow are beyond the scope of this project, I hope to have made the case that political transformations ought to be scrutinized both quantitatively and qualitatively, using various forms of empirical evidence and that the findings that I have summarized in this conclusion provide a useful analytical framework for the comparative study of state politics and democratization.

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[360] The two remaining sets were given to the BJP's partner, the Apna Dal.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Tenure of Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers (1950 – Present)

No	Name	Constituency	Party	Term of office		Tenure length	Assembly
1	Govind Ballabh Pant	Barreilly Municipality	INC	26-Jan-50	20-May-52		Not yet created
				20-May-52	27-Dec-54	4 years, 335 days	1st Assembly (1952–57)
2	Sampurnanand	Varanasi City South	INC	28-Dec-54	09-Apr-57	5 years, 344 days	
				10-Apr-57	06-Dec-60		2nd Assembly (1957–62)
3	Chandra Bhanu Gupta	Ranikhet South	INC	07-Dec-60	14-Mar-62	2 years, 298 days	
				14-Mar-62	01-Oct-63		3rd Assembly (1962–67)
4	Sucheta Kriplani	Mendhwal	INC	02-Oct-63	13-Mar-67	3 years, 162 days	
3	Chandra Bhanu Gupta	Ranikhet	INC	14-Mar-67	02-Apr-67	19 days	4th Assembly (1967–68)
5	Charan Singh	Chaprauli	BKD	03-Apr-67	25-Feb-68	328 days	
	President's rule			25-Feb-68	26-Feb-69	1 year, 1 day	Dissolved
3	Chandra Bhanu Gupta	Ranikhet	INC	26-Feb-69	17-Feb-70	356 days	5th Assembly (1969–74)
5	Charan Singh	Chaprauli	BKD	18-Feb-70	01-Oct-70	225 days	
	President's rule			01-Oct-70	18-Oct-70	17 days	Dissolved
6	Tribhuvana Narayana Singh		INC	18-Oct-70	03-Apr-71	167 days	
7	Kamlapati Tripathi	Chandauli	INC	04-Apr-71	12-Jun-73	2 years, 69 days	
	President's rule			13-Jun-73	08-Nov-73	148 days	
8	Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna	Bara	INC	08-Nov-73	04-Mar-74		
			INC	05-Mar-74	29-Nov-75	2 years, 21 days	6th Assembly (1974–77)
	President's rule			30-Nov-75	21-Jan-76	52 days	
9	N. D. Tiwari	Kashipur	INC	21-Jan-76	30-Apr-77	1 year, 99 days	
	President's rule			30-Apr-77	23-Jun-77	54 days	Dissolved
10	Ram Naresh Yadav	Azamgarh (Lok Sabha)	JP	23-Jun-77	27-Feb-79	1 year, 249 days	7th Assembly (1977–80)
11	Banarsi Das	Hapur	JP	28-Feb-79	17-Feb-80	354 days	
	President's rule			17-Feb-80	09-Jun-80	113 days	Dissolved
12	V. P. Singh	Tindwar	INC	09-Jun-80	18-Jul-82	2 years, 39 days	8th Assembly (1980–85)
13	Sripati Mishra			19-Jul-82	02-Aug-84	2 years, 14 days	

Annexure 1: Tenure of Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers (1950 – Present) (continued)

No	Name	Constituency	Party	Term of office		Tenure length	Assembly
9	N. D. Tiwari	Kashipur	INC	03-Aug-84	10-Mar-85		
				11-Mar-85	24-Sep-85	1 year, 52 days	9th Assembly (1985–89)
14	Vir Bahadur Singh	Paniara	INC	24-Sep-85	24-Jun-88	2 years, 274 days	
9	N. D. Tiwari		INC	25-Jun-88	05-Dec-89	1 year, 163 days	
15	Mulayam Singh Yadav	Jaswantnagar	JD	05-Dec-89	24-Jun-91	1 year, 201 days	10th Assembly (1989–91)
16	Kalyan Singh	Atrauli	BJP	24-Jun-91	06-Dec-92	1 year, 165 days	11th Assembly (1991–92)
	President's rule			06-Dec-92	04-Dec-93	363 days	Dissolved
15	Mulayam Singh Yadav	Jaswantnagar	SP	04-Dec-93	03-Jun-95	1 year, 181 days	12th Assembly (1993–95)
17	Mayawati	MLC*	BSP	03-Jun-95	18-Oct-95	137 days	
	President's rule			18-Oct-95	17-Oct-96		Dissolved
	President's rule			17-Oct-96	21-Mar-97	1 year, 154 days	13th Assembly (1996–2002)
		Harora	BSP	21-Mar-97	21-Sep-97	184 days	
16	Kalyan Singh	Atrauli	BJP	21-Sep-97	12-Nov-99	2 years, 52 days	
18	Ram Prakash Gupta		BJP	12-Nov-99	28-Oct-00	351 days	
19	Rajnath Singh	Haidargarh	BJP	28-Oct-00	08-Mar-02	1 year, 131 days	
	President's rule			08-Mar-02	03-May-02	56 days	
17	Mayawati	Harora	BSP	03-May-02	29-Aug-03	1 year, 118 days	14th Assembly (2002–07)
15	Mulayam Singh Yadav	Gunnaur	SP	29-Aug-03	13-May-07	3 years, 257 days	
17	Mayawati	MLC	BSP	13-May-07	15-Mar-12	4 years, 307 days	15th Assembly (2007–12)
20	Akhilesh Yadav	MLC	SP	15-Mar-12	Incumbent	3 years, 344 days	16th Assembly (2012–17)

* MLC: Member of the Legislative Council, Uttar Pradesh's Upper House.

Annexure 2: Coalition governments in Uttar Pradesh (1977-Present)

No	Coalition	Chief Minister	Tenure	Main Party's Single Majority
1	JNP	Ram Naresh Yadav	23.06.1977 – 27.02.1979	Yes
2	JNP	Banarasi Das	28.02.1979 – 17.02.1980	Yes
3	SP-BSP	Mulayam Singh Yadav	04.12.1993 – 03.06.1995	No
4	BSP-BJP	Mayawati	03.06.1995 – 17.10.1995	No
5	BSP-BJP	Mayawati	21.03.1997 – 21.09.1997	No
6	BSP-BJP	Mayawati	03.05.2002 – 29.08.2003	No
7	SP+*	Mulayam Singh Yadav	29.08.2003 – 12.05.2007	No

Source: Government of Uttar Pradesh official website: http://up.gov.in/upexcms.aspx. Last accessed on March 9, 2016.

* The Samajwadi Party formed the government in 2003 with 143 seats, with the support of Congress (16 seats), the Rashtriya Lok Dal (14 seats), the Rashtriya Kranti Party (2 seats), the CPI-M (2 seats), smaller parties and Independents (19) and 13 defectors from the Bahujan Samaj Party, for a total of 209 seats.

Annexure 3: Representation of castes and communities in main parties, 1989-1996 (%)

	1989				1991				1993				1996			
	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	SP
UC	**41.18%**	**56.14%**	**-**	**36.63%**	**48.00%**	**51.57%**	**8.33%**	**23.33%**	**55.56%**	**52.78%**	**4.48%**	**22.58%**	**65.63%**	**48.04%**	**14.93%**	**23.15%**
Bania / Jain	-	12.28%	-	-	2.00%	3.59%	-	1.11%	3.70%	5.00%	-	-	3.13%	3.91%	-	1.85%
Bhumihar	0.98%	1.75%	-	1.49%	-	0.90%	8.33%	1.11%	-	0.56%	1.49%	-	-	1.68%	1.49%	0.93%
Brahmin	19.61%	19.30%	-	12.87%	26.00%	20.18%	-	1.11%	25.93%	15.56%	1.49%	3.23%	25.00%	15.08%	4.48%	2.78%
Kayastha	-	1.75%	-	1.98%	-	0.90%	-	1.11%	-	1.67%	-	-	-	1.68%	1.49%	-
Khatri	-	1.75%	-	0.50%	-	1.35%	-	-	-	1.67%	-	-	-	2.23%	-	-
Rajput	18.63%	17.54%	-	19.31%	18.00%	21.08%	-	18.89%	25.93%	25.56%	1.49%	19.35%	34.38%	21.79%	5.97%	15.74%
Tyagi	-	-	-	0.50%	2.00%	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	3.13%	0.56%	1.49%	0.93%
Vaishya	0.98%	1.75%	-	-	-	2.24%	-	-	-	1.11%	-	-	-	1.12%	-	0.93%
Others	0.98%	-	-	-	-	0.90%	-	-	-	1.11%	-	-	-	-	-	-
IC	**0.98%**	**-**	**-**	**6.93%**	**-**	**1.79%**	**-**	**10.00%**	**3.70%**	**3.33%**	**-**	**16.13%**	**6.25%**	**2.23%**	**1.49%**	**0.93%**
Jat	0.98%	-	-	6.93%	-	1.79%	-	10.00%	3.70%	3.33%	-	16.13%	6.25%	2.23%	1.49%	0.93%
OBC	**16.67%**	**19.30%**	**21.43%**	**27.72%**	**16.00%**	**19.28%**	**83.33%**	**32.22%**	**14.81%**	**20.56%**	**43.28%**	**29.03%**	**12.50%**	**22.35%**	**37.31%**	**37.04%**
Baghel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.49%	-
Bishnoi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chauhan	-	-	-	0.50%	-	0.45%	-	1.11%	-	-	-	-	-	1.12%	-	-
Chaurasia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gadariya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.49%	-
Garedia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.11%	-	-	-	-	-	0.56%	1.49%	-
Goswami	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gujjar	2.94%	-	-	4.46%	2.00%	0.45%	-	5.56%	11.11%	1.67%	-	6.45%	3.13%	2.23%	-	0.93%
Jaiswal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	0.93%
Kapur	-	1.75%	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-
Kashyap	-	1.75%	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Katiyar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Koeri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Annexure 3: Representation of castes and communities in main parties, 1989-1996 (%) (continued).

	1989				1991				1993				1996			
	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	SP
Kumhar	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.33%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.49%	-
Kurmi	1.96%	5.26%	7.14%	5.45%	2.00%	4.48%	16.67%	6.67%	3.70%	5.56%	4.48%	9.68%	-	3.35%	8.96%	4.63%
Kushwaha	-	-	7.14%	0.50%	2.00%	-	-	-	-	-	2.99%	-	-	0.56%	1.49%	-
Lodhi	0.98%	5.26%	-	0.99%	-	2.69%	8.33%	-	-	5.00%	5.97%	-	-	4.47%	4.48%	-
Mallah	0.98%	-	-	0.50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.93%
Maurya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.11%	-	-	-	-	-	0.56%	1.49%	-
Muraon	-	-	-	-	2.00%	-	-	-	3.13%	-	-	-	-	-	1.49%	-
Nishad	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%	8.33%	-	-	-	1.49%	-	-	0.56%	4.48%	0.93%
Rajbhar	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%	8.33%	-	-	-	2.99%	-	-	0.56%	2.99%	-
Saini	0.98%	-	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	0.93%
Shakya	-	-	-	0.50%	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	0.56%	1.49%	0.93%
Soni	-	-	-	-	-	0.90%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yadav	8.82%	1.75%	7.14%	11.88%	6.00%	3.59%	16.67%	13.33%	6.25%	1.11%	11.94%	9.68%	-	4.47%	1.49%	25.93%
Unidentified	-	1.75%	-	2.97%	2.00%	4.04%	16.67%	3.33%	-	3.89%	13.43%	3.23%	-	2.23%	2.99%	0.93%
SC	**18.63%**	**22.81%**	**35.71%**	**24.75%**	**16.00%**	**25.11%**	-	**22.22%**	**9.38%**	**20.00%**	**34.33%**	**6.45%**	-	**21.23%**	**29.85%**	**17.59%**
Arya	0.98%	-	-	0.99%	-	-	-	-	3.70%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bairagi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.11%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barwar	0.98%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.70%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.93%
Baudh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.49%	-
Belldara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chauhan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beria	-	-	-	0.50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jatav	1.96%	7.02%	-	8.42%	4.00%	5.83%	-	5.56%	3.70%	5.56%	7.46%	5.56%	-	3.91%	13.43%	2.78%
Dhanuk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dhobi	1.96%	3.51%	-	0.50%	2.00%	2.69%	-	0.50%	-	0.56%	1.49%	-	-	1.68%	1.49%	-
Dhrikar	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dhusia	0.98%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Annexure 3: Representation of castes and communities in main parties, 1989-1996 (%) (continued)

	1989				1991				1993				1996			
	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	JD	INC	BJP	BSP	SP
Gond	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goud	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Katheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Katik	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.11%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Katoriya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-
Khatik	-	-	-	0.99%	-	1.35%	-	1.11%	-	1.11%	-	3.23%	-	2.23%	1.49%	1.85%
Kol	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-
Kori	-	-	-	-	-	0.90%	-	-	3.70%	1.11%	-	-	3.13%	2.23%	1.49%	-
Kureel	-	-	-	0.50%	-	0.45%	-	1.11%	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lonia	-	1.75%	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pasi	5.88%	-	-	3.47%	10.00%	1.35%	-	1.11%	3.70%	1.11%	1.49%	-	3.13%	0.56%	2.99%	3.70%
Shilpkar	0.98%	-	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-
Valmiki	-	-	-	0.99%	-	0.45%	-	1.11%	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	0.93%
Visvar	-	1.75%	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified	4.90%	8.77%	35.71%	8.42%	-	9.42%	-	10.00%	3.70%	8.33%	23.88%	3.23%	3.13%	8.94%	7.46%	7.41%
ST	0.98%	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.11%	3.70%	-	1.49%	-	-	-	-	0.93%
Muslims	18.63%	-	42.86%	3.47%	16.00%	0.90%	8.33%	11.11%	-	2.22%	16.42%	25.81%	6.25%	2.79%	16.42%	18.52%
Christian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sikh	-	1.75%	-	-	-	0.45%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	1.12%	-	-
Unidentified	2.94%	-	-	0.50%	4.00%	0.90%	-	-	-	0.56%	-	-	-	2.23%	-	1.85%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N=102	N=57	N=14	N=202	N=50	N=223	N=12	N=90	N=27	N=180	N=67	N=31	N=32	N=179	N=67	N=108

Source: Author's fieldwork

Annexure 4 : Representation of castes and communities in main parties, 2002-2012 (%)

	2002				2007				2012			
	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	INC	BJP	BSP	SP
UC	**50.00%**	**61.80%**	**24.74%**	**26.81%**	**58.33%**	**58.82%**	**27.40%**	**29.47%**	**48.39%**	**55.10%**	**20.48%**	**26.79%**
Bania / Jain	6.67%	5.62%	2.06%	1.45%	4.17%	13.73%	0.96%	4.21%	-	10.20%	1.20%	2.23%
Bhumihar	-	3.37%	2.06%	2.17%	-	3.92%	0.48%	1.05%	3.23%	2.04%	-	0.45%
Brahmin	13.33%	15.73%	6.19%	8.70%	12.50%	13.73%	16.83%	10.53%	12.90%	20.41%	12.05%	9.82%
Kayastha	3.33%	2.25%	-	-	4.17%	3.92%	0.48%	-	6.45%	2.04%	-	0.45%
Khatri	3.33%	3.37%	-	-	8.33%	5.88%	-	-	6.45%	4.08%	-	0.45%
Rajput	20.00%	30.34%	14.43%	13.04%	29.17%	17.65%	8.65%	13.68%	19.35%	16.33%	7.23%	12.95%
Tyagi	3.33%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vaishya	-	1.12%	-	1.45%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IC	**3.33%**	**1.12%**	**1.03%**	**0.72%**	**4.17%**	**3.92%**	**2.40%**	**1.05%**	**3.23%**	**8.16%**	**1.20%**	**-**
Jat	3.33%	1.12%	1.03%	0.72%	4.17%	3.92%	2.40%	1.05%	3.23%	8.16%	1.20%	-
OBC	**10.00%**	**16.85%**	**34.02%**	**33.33%**	**8.33%**	**23.53%**	**24.04%**	**36.84%**	**9.68%**	**22.45%**	**33.73%**	**27.23%**
Baghel	-	-	1.03%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bishnoi	-	1.12%	-	-	-	1.96%	-	-	-	2.04%	-	-
Chauhan	-	2.25%	-	-	-	1.96%	0.48%	-	-	-	-	-
Chaurasia	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	1.05%	-	-	-	0.45%
Gadariya	-	-	1.03%	0.72%	-	-	0.96%	-	-	-	2.41%	0.45%
Garedia	-	-	1.03%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goswami	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.48%	-	-	-	-	-
Gujjar	3.33%	2.25%	1.03%	-	-	3.92%	2.40%	-	3.23%	4.08%	3.61%	-
Jaiswal	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	0.48%	1.05%	3.23%	2.04%	-	0.45%
Kapur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kashyap	-	-	1.03%	0.72%	-	-	-	1.05%	-	-	-	-
Katiyar	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.48%	-	-	-	-	-
Koeri	-	-	1.03%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Annexure 4 : Representation of castes and communities in main parties, 2002-2012 (%) (continued)

	2002				2007				2012			
	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	INC	BJP	BSP	SP
Kumhar	-	-	1.03%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Kurmi	-	7.87%	5.15%	5.80%	4.17%	7.84%	5.77%	5.26%	-	2.04%	7.23%	3.13%
Kushwaha	-	-	2.06%	0.72%	-	-	1.92%	1.05%	-	2.04%	4.82%	0.45%
Lodhi	-	-	3.09%	0.72%	4.17%	3.92%	0.96%	4.21%	3.23%	4.08%	4.82%	3.13%
Mallah	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.05%	-	-	-	0.45%
Maurya	-	-	2.06%	-	-	-	1.44%	-	-	2.04%	2.41%	-
Muraon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nishad	-	-	2.06%	1.45%	-	-	0.96%	1.05%	-	-	2.41%	0.89%
Rajbhar	-	-	3.09%	0.72%	-	-	1.44%	-	-	-	-	-
Saini	-	-	2.06%	-	-	-	0.48%	-	-	-	1.20%	-
Shakya	-	-	1.03%	1.45%	-	-	0.96%	2.11%	-	-	3.61%	0.89%
Soni	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teli	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yadav	6.67%	3.37%	6.19%	19.57%	-	3.92%	4.81%	18.95%	-	4.08%	1.20%	16.52%
Unidentified	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SC	**6.67%**	**19.10%**	**25.77%**	**26.09%**	**20.83%**	**13.73%**	**29.81%**	**12.63%**	**12.90%**	**6.12%**	**19.28%**	**25.89%**
Arya	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Bairagi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barwar	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	1.05%	-	-	-	-
Baudh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belldara Chauhan	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	1.05%	-	-	-	-
Beria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Jatav	-	10.11%	17.53%	10.14%	4.17%	3.92%	21.15%	2.11%	6.45%	2.04%	16.87%	5.36%
Dhanuk	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	2.11%	-	-	-	-
Dhobi	3.33%	3.37%	-	2.90%	4.17%	3.92%	1.44%	-	3.23%	-	-	0.89%
Dhrikar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dhusia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Annexure 4 : Representation of castes and communities in main parties, 2002-2012 (%) (Continued)

	2002				2007				2012			
	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	INC	BJP	BSP	SP	INC	BJP	BSP	SP
Gond	-	-	-	0.72%	-	1.96%	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Goud	-	1.12%	-	-	-	1.96%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Katheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Katik	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.89%
Katoriya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Khatik	3.33%	-	1.03%	2.17%	4.17%	-	-	1.05%	-	-	-	1.34%
Kol	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Kori	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.13%
Kureel	-	-	-	0.72%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lonia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.45%
Pasi	-	3.37%	5.15%	5.07%	8.33%	1.96%	4.81%	4.21%	-	2.04%	2.41%	8.93%
Shilpkar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Valmiki	-	-	-	0.72%	3.23%	-	0.48%	-	3.23%	2.04%	-	1.79%
Visvar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified	-	1.12%	2.06%	-	-	-	1.92%	1.05%	-	-	-	0.89%
ST	-	-	**1.03%**	-	-	-	**0.48%**	-	-	-	-	-
Muslims	**26.67%**	**1.12%**	**13.40%**	**13.04%**	**8.33%**	-	**14.90%**	**20.00%**	**22.58%**	**4.08%**	**21.69%**	**19.20%**
Christian	**3.33%**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sikh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unidentified	-	-	-	-	-	-	**0.96%**	-	**3.23%**	**4.08%**	**3.61%**	**0.89%**
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	N=30	N=89	N=97	N=138	N=24	N=51	N=208	N=95	N=31	N=49	N=83	N=224

Source: Author's fieldwork.

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