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**CHANGING POLITICAL FIELD STRUCTURE AND MODULATIONS IN
DEMOCARCY CONSOLIDATION: INDIA, 1947-1984**

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Changing Political Field Structure and Modulations in Democracy Consolidation: India,
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In my research, I have empirically developed a theory regarding the relations among political structure, elite agency and democratization processes that overcomes the political structure/elite agency duality currently plaguing democracy consolidation studies. Using Bourdieu's insights on the structure/agency relation to empirically examine the Nehruvian (1947-71) and Gandhian (1971-77) periods of Indian democracy, I show that the elite's role in democratization processes is shaped by their political habitus, which in turn is structured by historically specific political structures. Furthermore, neither the elite's political habitus nor the political structures that influence it are immune to change. Political structures are shaped by intraparty conflicts among the elite to establish their political authority. Since political structures change because of the changing state of conflict among the political elite, the milieu in which the elite's political habitus is conditioned also changes. In the changing political milieu, the existent elite's political sensibilities are reconfigured, and the sensibilities of the new generation of political elite, who have differing interests in democratization processes, become

mature. I have developed my theory by extensively studying the writings (letters, articles, party reports, etc.) and biographies of late colonial and early postcolonial political elites, as well as by compiling an original dataset of all 4,000 parliamentarians elected to the seven parliamentary sessions held during the 1947-84 period. I personally computerized this dataset by drawing information from the *Data Handbook on Elections in India* and *Who's Who of the Indian Parliament*. I have used network analysis methods and logistic regression modeling, as well as content analysis of the political elite's writings and biographies, to illustrate the consequences for Indian democracy because of the changing relation between political structures and the political elite's habitus.

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Chapter 1

Changing Political Field Structure and Modulations in Democracy Consolidation: India, 1947-1984

The role of political structures in stabilizing democracy has been very well studied, and there has been a recent resurgence in the study of role of elite agency stabilizing democracy as well. However, the consequences of the relation between political structure and elite agency for democracy consolidation have yet to be systematically explored. The main purpose of this dissertation is to explore the impact of the changing relation between political structure and elite agency on the democratization processes by treating the two as ontologically one entity. For this purpose, I have engaged with the current debates on the structure/agency problem, as well as Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" as a solution to this problem. After translating Bourdieu's notion of habitus into the language of politics, I use it to empirically explore two dramatically opposite impacts of the changing relation between political structure and elite agency on Indian democracy during the early and mid-postcolonial period of Indian politics: consolidation of democratic institutions during the Nehruvian period and their suspension during the Gandhian period.

India is a well-known negative case (cf. Emigh 1991) of the modernization and class structure theories of democracy (Markoff 2005; Moore 1966; Tilly 2007; Dhal 1998; Huntington 1991; Munck 2007; Varshney 1998; Ganguly 2007; Doorenspleet & Mudde 2008; Gupta 1990).¹ Paradoxically, however, democracy scholars widely agree

¹ According to modernization theory, increasing wealth creates better prospects for the survival of democracy by reducing social conflict (e.g., Lipset 1959, 1994; Dhal 1998; Gasiorowski 1995; Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and

that since its independence, except for the brief period of Emergency (1975-77), India has maintained the defining features of a typical liberal democracy: free and fair elections, universal suffrage, and civil and political liberties (Schumpeter 1942; Sartori 1962; Huntington 1991; Dhal 1998; Diamond 1999; Schmitter and Karl 1991; Diamond, Linz & Lipset 1990; Linz & Stepan 1996; Moller & Skaaning 2013).

In 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed the state of Emergency, claiming that the Jaya Prakash (JP) movement – a political movement supported by ideologically different opposition parties – was a threat to the integrity of the country. Among the many steps taken by the government to fulfill its officially stated purpose of saving the country from the JP movement was the suspension of citizens' rights to move to the courts on any civil liberty issue. New laws were passed that gave law enforcement agencies the authority to detain any citizen without an official warrant. Public gatherings of more than four individuals were outlawed. Leaders of the opposition parties and the ruling party known for criticizing Gandhi's government were arrested, and the general elections that had been due in eight months were postponed for a year (Tarlo 2003; Jalal & Bose 2004 [1997]). In other words, grounds gained by democratic institutions in Indian politics during Nehruvian era were suddenly lost in 1975 when Gandhi imposed the Emergency.

Limongi 2000; Gould & Maggio 2007). According to the class structure theory, changes in the valence of power among conflicting classes determine whether or not a country will remain democratic (e.g., Moore 1966; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992; Luebbert 1992). Slater (2009; 2011) has recently produced the most powerful criticism of modernization and class structure theories to date, citing the fact that they confuse the objective socio-economic conditions of social group formation with the actual conditions of social group formation, which are based on subjective perception of group identities. As far as the concrete case of India is concerned, it is quite clear that India does not fit these theories at all; it only reached the minimum threshold per-capita income required for sustaining democracy (\$3,700) in 2006 (59 years after its independence), and its society has remained heterogeneous while its literacy rate has only marginally improved (Ganguly 2007). India's stunted industrialization during its colonial period precludes the class conflict-based explanation of democracy, which focuses on conflict between the bourgeoisie (Moore 1966), working class (Rueschemeyer et al 1991), and middle class (Luebbert 1992).

Inspired by studies examining the role of political structures (cf. Sartori 1976; Weiner & LaPalombara 1966; Mainwaring & Scully 1995; Mainwaring & Torcal 2006; Stokes 1999; Diamond & Gunther 2001; Webb & White 2007; Dalton, Farrell & McAllister 2011; Stephan & Skach 1993), colonial history (cf. Bollen and Jackman 1985; Weiner 1987; Bernhard & Reenock 2004) and elite agency (cf. O' Donnell & Schmitter 1986; Rustow 1970; Higley, Hoffman-Lange, Kadushin & Moore 1991; Higley & Burton 2006; Higley 2010; Ziblatt 2008; Lijphart 1977, 1984; Powell 1979; Cappocia & Ziblatt 2010; Bermeo 2010; Mainwaring & Perez-Linan 2013) in stabilizing democracy, a large number of scholars explain the odd success of Indian democracy by citing the rise of a stable party system, dominated by the Indian National Congress (INC) party, during the late colonial period, as well as the political ideals of the INC elite.

Oldenburg (2010) and Jaffrelot (2002) attribute the success of Indian democracy to the positive impact of the British colonial state on institutional politics in India and INC leaders' use of their deep social roots to successfully resolve contentious issues of ethnic differences during both the late colonial period and early postcolonial period. They also argue that, for these same reasons, state bureaucrats and armed forces officers were unable to claim political authority in India. Adney and Wyatt (2001, 2004) also credit the colonial legacy and INC leaders for the success of Indian democracy. In addition, they focus on the crucial role of the INC elite, especially Prime Minister Nehru, in sustaining Indian democracy. While Ganguly (2007) and Varshney (1998) also focus on Nehru's democratic ideals in their analysis, they are less sympathetic to the argument that the British colonial state made a positive contribution to the success of postcolonial Indian democracy. Lijphart (1996) focuses on the postcolonial INC elite, arguing that their

ability to adopt a consociational ethos explains the stability of Indian democracy during its early days; this argument is also supported by Kohli (2001).

Interestingly, none of the studies discussed above have given adequate attention to Emergency period. They usually present the Emergency as a brief part of Gandhi's political history. It is true that most of the available comparative research on democracy that acknowledges the unique case of Indian democracy also mention the Emergency period (cf. Markoff 2005; Moore 1962; Tilly 2007; Dhal 1998; Huntington 1991; Munck 2007; Doorenspleet & Mudde 2008). However, such studies also have a tendency to present the Emergency period as little more than an unpleasant moment in Indian politics that does not deserve much attention. Most often, it is acknowledged only in a brief line or footnote, with no attempt to explain its occurrence.

Only few scholars interested in Gandhi period of Indian politics have ventured to explain Emergency. Taking a class structure approach to state transformation, Kaviraj (1986) and Kochanek (1976) argue that combination of the rising rural middle class the JP movement and a regional (Allahabad) court judgment disqualifying Gandhi's election to the 1971 parliament, led to the Emergency period. Rudolph and Rudolph (1987), and Kothari (1989) reason that Gandhi's decreasing mass popularity and the ruling Congress party's decaying organizational capabilities, in combination with the JP movements and Allahabad court judgment, as the major reasons for the sudden appearance of Emergency. Nandy (1980) described Gandhi as a political leader with authoritarian instincts and argued that the unwavering support she had received from the urban middle classes since the late 1960's reinforced her authoritarian instincts, eventually leading her to impose the state of Emergency. Hart argued that Gandhi's psychological predisposition to control the

state from the top was triggered by the JP movement and the Allahabad court's decision, leading to Emergency (Hart 1976).

The available explanation of Indian democracy is based on the conception of a stable INC and the democratic ideals of its enlightened elite. When we closely examine the INC and its elite, however, we can see that this notion is more assumption than fact. While it is true that the INC did not experience any major splits from its inception in 1855 until 1967, its history is nonetheless marred by serious conflicts among various factions, as well as changes in its organizational strength (Baker 1976; Bayly 1975; Talbot 1986; Reeves 1971 Tomlinson 1976; Low 2006 [1977]). Indian democracy scholars' view of Nehru as a leader who was unconditionally committed to democratic ideals is undoubtedly an exercise in reductionism. Moreover, even a surface reading of Nehru's political history reveals numerous instances in which he acted as a less than democratic leader.² Furthermore, studies on the INC organization show that neither can its strength be accounted for without taking into account the INC elite nor can one fully comprehend the INC elite's normative commitment to democracy without taking into account challenges to Nehru's authority posed by the organization leaders (cf. Kochanek 1968).

The available explanations of the Emergency period based on analysis of class structure and Congress party organization are aware of changes in Indian politics. However, they fail to address the question of why these changes occur. They assume that structural conditions have their own internal logic of change which has nothing to do with elite agency. On the other hand, those scholars who look towards Gandhi for an

² For example, Nehru is well known to have ordered the dismissal of the first democratically elected communist party government in Kerala in 1959 for inadequate reasons. For details, see Jeffrey (1991).

explanation of Emergency focus so much on her personality that they take descriptions of her instincts as explanations of her actions. In other words, they assume that the agency of a member of the political elite has no significant relation with the external political milieu in which she is acting.

Thus, explanations of the consolidation of Indian democracy, as well as its faltering moments in the late 1970s, are based on the flawed assumption that political structure and elite agency exist separately. When we examine the democracy consolidation literature, we can see that these limitations of Indian democracy scholarship are a reflection of the general limitations of the political structure and elite agency theories of democracy consolidation. On the one hand, political structure scholars tend to view political structures as a self-evolving system and hence to underappreciate the role of the political elite in shaping those structures. On the other hand, political elite agency theories fail to appreciate the importance of the elite's extensive experience with politics within historically specific political structures in shaping agency.

I argue that the inclusion of Bourdieu's insights on habitus vastly improves democracy consolidation theories' potential understanding of the changing relation between political structures and elite agency. According to Bourdieu, within the historically specific structural conditions of a particular social space, social actors' habitus is structured by the simultaneous struggle among them to use their resources to attain collectively consecrated goals and to establish/reproduce/increase social space-specific authority (Bourdieu 1990, p. 80-98, 60-61; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.19-26).

The application of Bourdieu's insights to the puzzling case of Indian democracy shows that the newly adopted democratic institutions facilitated Nehru's attempts to establish his political authority among early postcolonial Indian politicians, and thus led to the consolidation of democracy in India. Later, in 1975 when Gandhi realized that those same democratic institutions were threatening her very existence as political elite, she decided to suspend by imposing Emergency.

The general lesson learned from this study is that survival of democracy in a newly democratized country is largely dependent on whether or not the endogenously evolved political elite in state offices believe that the formal features of democratic politics – free and fair elections, universal suffrage, and civil and political liberties – can contribute to an increase in their authority among professional politicians. If so, the incumbent elite are likely to consolidate the formal principles of liberal democracy, which later constitute the 'only game in town' (cf. Linz & Stepan 1996). In case they do not, then fate of democratic institutions is in peril.

Structure and Agency in Democracy Consolidation Theories

Within scholarship examining the relation between politics and democracy, there exists a large volume of research on the role of political parties in facilitating the participation of the masses in governmental activities (cf. Dalton, Farrell & McAllister 2011; Webb & White 2007; Rommele, Farrell & Ignazi 2005). Since the number of parties is crucial for the quality of relations between the masses and the government (Wolinetz 2006), classical studies on parties and democracy – known as party-system studies – spent a considerable amount of energy on developing various methods of

counting parties in order to classify party systems and their possible consequences for the quality of democracy (cf. Duverger 1954; Sartori 1976; Laakso & Taagepera 1979).

Mainwaring and Scully (1995) argued that party-system theorists did not take into account an important condition for effective relations between party systems and democracy – namely, the institutionalization of the party system, which refers to the wide recognition of the role played by competition among political parties for gaining control over a government. In a democratized country lacking an institutionalized party system, political leaders openly critical of the role of the party as the mediator between the masses and the government are much more likely to rise. The cases of the fate of democracy in Peru under President Fujimori and in Venezuela under President Chavez show that the presence of such anti-party leaders in power poses a serious threat to the future of democratic institutions in their respective countries. Thus, it can be reasoned that a strongly institutionalized party system will lead to consolidated democracy, whereas a weakly institutionalized party system will lead to unstable democracy (Mainwaring & Scully 1995; Mainwaring & Torcal 2006).

Another set of scholars interested in the relation between politics and democracy study the formal rules of politics, or constitution, under which parties interact with each other. Such scholars have argued that the parliamentary system is more conducive to the stability of democracy than the presidential system, with the United States as the only real-world exception to this rule (cf. Stephan & Skach 1993; Fukuyama, Dressel & Chang 2005; Abdukadirov 2009). These scholars reason that, since the chief executive in the parliamentary system is likely to be a member of the major party in the legislative assembly, his ability to effectively shape and implement policies is likely to be quite

high. On the other hand, in the presidential system, where the president is elected separately from other party members for legislative seats, there is no certainty that the chief executive's party will also be in the majority in the legislature. This creates a high chance of confrontation between the president and the legislature, thereby increasing the potential for democratic instability.

A noticeable feature of scholars studying the impact of politics on democracy is their acute focus on the macro-level political structure, which they believe to have no significant relation with micro-level politics, especially as it unfolds in everyday interactions among professional political actors. Party system scholars assume that political actors automatically follow the dictates of their respective parties and that there is thus no significant difference between party leaders and their organizations. This assumption, however, does not acknowledge the fact that the party does not control its members; rather, the party elite control the party members through their control of party offices. These elites are most likely to have reached their offices after both cooperative and competitive interactions with other elites. Hence, interactions among the elite play an important role in the manner in which a party activates its members, acquires particular organizational forms, participates in interparty interactions, and so forth. However, interaction among political actors, which often becomes competitive and noisy, is viewed by political system theorists as a sign of political pathology inimical to democracy, rather than as a part of routine politics (cf. Mainwaring & Scully 1995; Mainwaring & Torcal 2006).

In constitutional system studies, we do hear political actors' voices in terms of how they negotiate their relations with each other through the constitutionally framed

relation between the executive office and legislative branches. However, their interaction is presented to be so deeply scripted by the constitutional framework of the relation between the executive and legislative branches that it is difficult not to see political actors merely as puppets of the constitution. Thus, the party system and constitutional system scholars remain focused on macro-political structures at the expense of accounting for the role of political elites in the reproduction, transformation or destruction of political structures.

One cannot deny the importance of macro-level political structures to democracy. However, it would also undoubtedly be a mistake to fail to appreciate the importance of political actors at the micro level of politics as an object of analysis. The fact that political actors, especially political elites, played the most important role in the reversal of democracy in countries democratized in the third wave (cf. Huntington 1991; Brooker 2009 [2000]) is ample evidence that these actors need to be brought into the picture when discussing the consolidation of democracy. Not surprisingly, recent studies have demonstrated that the political elite's practices have serious consequences for the creation, reproduction, transformation, and/or destruction of democratic institutions (cf. Cappocia & Ziblatt 2010; Bermeo 2010; Mainwaring & Perez-Linan 2013).

Elite dynamics scholars were among the earliest scholars to appreciate the importance of political elite agency in democratization processes (cf. Rustow 1970; O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986; Di Palma 1991). They reasoned that the formation of pacts among different elite during the democratic transition period paves the way for democracy consolidation. Elite circle (Field and Higley, 1973, 1980, 1985; Higley, Hoffman-Lange, Kadushin & Moore 1991; Higley & Burton 2006; Higley 2010) and

consociational democracy scholars (Lijphart 1977, 1984, 1996; Mair 1994; Lehmbruch 1993) have argued that the formation of a consensus among the elite (who had previously pursued conflicting interests) on the distribution of power among them in a democratic set-up is crucial for democratic stability.

While past political structures are not explicitly included in these classic studies' analysis, a common assumption among them is that the elite are heroic actors who successfully pit themselves against old non-democratic political structures in order to create new political structures. The most recent incarnation of this idea can be found in Mainwaring and Perez-Linan's (2013) study on democratization. Using a vast amount of quantitative data, these authors have argued that the elite's commitment to democracy is one of the most important conditions for democracy consolidation in newly democratized countries lacking the typically required socio-economic conditions.

A series of articles published under the editorship of Cappocia and Ziblatt (2010) has toned down the depiction of elites as heroic actors without depreciating their role in democracy consolidation. Using examples of democratization in European democracies that are now considered established, Cappocia and Ziblatt argue that democracy consolidation theorists should focus on the point of view of political actors in order to comprehend their role in consolidating democracy. Specifically, they appear to be more interested in why the political elite will view certain kinds of democratizing political practices as *obvious* things to do rather than why the political elite will view them as things that *ought* to be done.

Among the articles published in Cappocia and Ziblatt's collection, an article by Nancy Bermeo (2010) is especially relevant to the present study's purpose of

understanding Indian democracy. Bermeo (2010) argues that free and fair elections are central to the democratization process. Using the examples of two elections held in Portugal – the first election at the founding of the first republic in 1911 and the first election after the fall of the Salazar – Caetano dictatorship in 1975 – she shows that the incumbent political elite’s perception of the election results is important in determining whether or not elections will be free and fair.

Bermeo’s study dexterously demonstrates Cappocia and Ziblatt’s (2010) argument that understanding the political elite’s point of view is necessary in order to explain the formation of democratic institutions (in this case, free and fair elections). While her study subtly captures the Portuguese elite’s attitude toward elections, it does not account for the relation between the elite’s past political conditions and their present perspective on politics. After all, incumbent elite never start fresh in politics; they always have prior experiences to draw upon. More importantly, those past experiences are likely to have been shaped by older (i.e., non-democratic) forms of political structures.

Thus, studies on the elite’s role in democracy consolidation depict the elite either as normative political actors who overcome hurdles from the past or as calculating political actors who have no past at all. However, one of the most important insights provided by scholars of the structure-agency relation is that structure and agency are dialectically related to each other, rather than existing separately or in opposition; thus, structure plays a pivotal role in creating subjects’ agency, and, in turn, subjects’ agency creates structure (Emirbayer & Mische 1998; Sewell 1992; Hays 1994). Thus, it is reasonable to argue that, in order to fully comprehend the role of elite agency in democracy consolidation processes, it is important to take into account their relation with

past political structures within which they evolved as political actors. This point resonates well with Ahlquist and Levi's (2011) call for examining political elite as endogenous entity rather than depicting them as exogenous entity as is the case with the available studies of politics based on elite agency.

To summarize the discussion so far, we can say that, while scholars investigating the relation between political structures and democracy do not acknowledge any significance of elite agency in their studies, scholars studying the role of the elite in shaping democratic institutions likewise fail to account for the role of political structures in their studies. Mahoney and Snyder (1999) uncovered a similar issue about structure and agency concepts in studies attempting to explain the democratic transition process. They blamed these studies' weaknesses on a lack of serious engagement with the broader structure-agency debate. The same problem also appears to be present in the democratic consolidation literature. None of the studies on democracy consolidation have seriously engaged with scholars who are known to have tackled the structure-agency problem.

Bourdieu's Solution

Among contemporary scholars, Bourdieu is widely recognized for his deep engagement with the problem of structure-agency duality (Sewell 1992; Lizardo 2010; Depelteau 2008; Stones 2005). In a recent article, Lizardo (2010) has shown that both Giddens and Bourdieu developed their respective theories by adopting the notion of structure from Lévi-Strauss. However, he also astutely notes that Giddens interpreted Lévi-Strauss's notion of structure as referring to the ontological reality of the world, while Bourdieu adopted it as an epistemological tool for comprehending the social world,

albeit from a scientific point of view. Thus, it is not surprising that one of the earliest and most influential critics of Giddens' structuration theory, Thompson (1989, p. 69), pointed out that while Giddens eventually conflated scientists' and natives' understanding of the social world, Bourdieu was able to distinguish between the two. Perhaps because Bourdieu clarified the distinction between the two points of view, he was able to develop the notion of habitus which transcends both structural and agentic explanations of practices, while Giddens' structuration theory has continuously faltered in explaining the relation between subjects and structure without collapsing one into the other (cf. Stones 2005, p. 7).

Habitus refers to 'a feel for the game, as the practical mastery of the logic or of the immanent necessity of a game' (Bourdieu 1990, p.60-61). Bourdieu argues that, although habitus is structured by structural conditions, actors caught up in the moment of action are more likely to be attentive to the unique, spatially and temporally limited demands of their immediate situation than to reflect on their situation in relation to the history or possible futures of the entire structure. Furthermore, as actors encounter similar but not identical social situations, they creatively adapt their habits, which are initially shaped by past experiences, to navigate through these everyday challenges (Bourdieu 1990, p. 80-98; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.19-26). Thus, the notion of habitus allows us to accept the idea that, while social actors are creative, their creativity continues rather than conflicts with their embodied experiences of structure (cf. Crossley 2001; Collet 2009; Dalton 2004).³

³ Bourdieu is not without his critics, however. In fact, a large body of scholarship has criticized his conceptualization of the relation between subjects and structural conditions as too restrictive, leaving little room for agency and incapable of explaining change (e.g., Archer 2010; King 2000; Evens 1999; Myles 1999; Sewell 1992; Vandenberghe 1999). Recent discussions on Bourdieu's theory have shown that most of these criticisms rely heavily

The immanent necessity of modern politics is the mobilization of the masses to gain control over state offices. After all, one's claim over state offices as a politician reflects one's ability to claim oneself to be a representative of the masses. Most of the available work on the relation between political actors and the masses shows that political actors use political clientelism (cf. Auyero 2000, 1999; Stokes 2005; Keefer 2007; Keefer & Vlaicu 2007; Weitz-Shapiro 2012; Calvo & Murillo 2013), charisma/populism (cf. Jagers & Walgrave 2007; Lucen 2007; Hawkins 2009; Jansen 2011; Madsen & Snow 1991), or policy programs (cf. Schattschneider 1942; Lipset & Rokkan 1967; Ray & Taylor 1970) to mobilize masses, especially during election periods. In addition to emphasizing the importance of these linkages between professional politicians and the masses, Bourdieu, in his essay on the political field, also emphasized the importance of politicians' intra- and inter-party ties as resources for mass mobilization (Bourdieu 1999 [1991], p. 194-195). Hence, we can argue that political actors' practices are shaped by their habitus of using linkages with both the masses and fellow professional politicians to mobilize the masses electorally.⁴

on Bourdieu's arguments regarding the necessity of developing structural models of the world (i.e., the importance of the scientific point of view in sociological analysis). However, Bourdieu's critics fail to see his equally strong arguments for including subjects' point of view. As a result, they cannot appreciate the flexibility of social actors' practical sense, which, while based on habits formed through patterned past experiences, can creatively navigate through both dissimilar and unfamiliar situations (Collet 2009; Dalton 2004) and can create conditions for change (Gorski 2013b).

⁴ Sallaz and Zavisca's (2010) recent study has demonstrated the increasing popularity of field theory among mainstream sociologists. However, among all sub-disciplines of sociology, field theory has remained least popular in political sociology and political science (Swartz 2013). Ironically, two central topics of interest for political sociologists and political scientists – power and authority – are central to field theory. Swartz reasons that, while Bourdieu's work profoundly engages with questions of power and authority in everyday life, it does not engage with the conventional topic of interest among political sociologists and political scientists; namely, institutional politics. Hence, it is for this reason that Bourdieu has not been popular either among political sociologists or among political scientists. Among the few well-known examples of the application of field theory to the study of institutional politics are Eyal (2003), Loveman (2005), Go (2008) and Steinmetz (2008).

Furthermore, Bourdieu's notion of habitus contains another layer of complexity.

Adopting Weber's insights on legitimacy, Bourdieu argues that not every capital in a field is considered equally legitimate from the point of view of actors in the field; from their perspective, some capitals have relatively higher symbolic value, or legitimacy, than others. The practices of those whose resources attain relatively greater legitimacy will receive a higher degree of acceptance among field inhabitants than will the practices of those whose resources develop relatively lower legitimacy.

To these Weber-derived field theory ideas, Bourdieu adds a Marxian emphasis on the ever-present conflict among social actors over the distribution of power. According to Bourdieu, the legitimate value of various resources is never stable, because a field is always in a state of war between social actors interested in preserving the existent norms of legitimate domination and social actors bent upon changing them (Bourdieu 1998, p. 1-14; Bourdieu 1999 [1991], p. 168-170; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p.94-104, 119; also see Martin 2003; Loveman 2005; Swartz 2013).

When we apply Bourdieu's insights regarding the symbolic value of capitals to the study of politics, we can say that, while political actors adopt different strategies for mobilizing masses, they do not perceive all of those strategies to be of equally legitimate value. This statement seems to be not only theoretically but also empirically true. For example, in political system theory, we encounter cases in which charismatic or popular leaders like Fujimori and Chavez criticize the party bosses (whose political strength is usually derived from their intra- and inter-party ties) for restricting the access of the truly deserving masses to governmental resources (Mainwaring & Torcal 2006). On the other

hand, opponents of such leaders within their parties are likely to be political bosses who criticize them for using populist rhetoric to mislead the gullible masses.

In other words, the goal of political actors in their contest with each other is not simply to gain control over state offices but also to prove that their means of gaining control over state offices (i.e., their respective mass mobilization strategies) are the most legitimate means of doing so. Those whose mass mobilization resources are viewed as having the highest legitimacy are also likely to have the highest political authority. With this in mind, an actor's political habitus can be defined as that actor's mastery in using mass mobilizing resources to gain control over state offices while reproducing or increasing the legitimate value of those resources and that actor's consequent political authority. In the rest of this dissertation, I will adopt the notion of political habitus to study first how the consolidation of Indian democracy resulted from the political strategies of Nehru, and then how it was suspended in 1975 during Gandhi's reign.

In chapter 2, I will describe the structure of relations among various social groups in India and the four mass linkage strategies used by Indian political actors to mobilize masses: ties with party wing leaders, ties with ministerial wing leaders, particular mass popularity and universal mass popularity. Next, I will develop outlines of how the political elite converted their mass mobilizing resources into enduring political authority. I will then describe qualitative data on the everyday political life of political elites, as well as quantitative data on almost 4,000 Indian parliamentarians elected for the seven parliamentary sessions held during the 1947-84 period. These data will be used in this dissertation to study the contest among the political elite over political authority during the Nehruvian and Gandhian periods and its impact on Indian democracy.

In chapter 3, I will illustrate how the political structure of the late colonial period structured the political habitus of Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, two prominent Indian political elites of the early postcolonial period, and deeply influenced the result of the contest between them over ultimate political authority. I will then describe how, in the early postcolonial period, the combination of the newly adopted democratic political structure and Nehru's and Patel's different practical senses of politics re-ignited the contest between them to establish their political authority. I will describe how Nehru's strategy of using postcolonial India's first general election (1952) to gain control over ministerial appointments simultaneously increased his authority among politicians and secured the future of Indian democracy.

In chapter 4, I will describe the structuration of Indira Gandhi's political habitus for populist politics during the Nehruvian period. In the first part of this chapter, I will illustrate the structural conditions of Indian politics during the Nehruvian period, focusing especially on how Nehru reproduced his political authority during his everyday political activities. In the second part, I will show how Nehru's political authority reproduction practices mediated Gandhi's experiences of various mass mobilizing activities, resulting in her differential exposure to the various mass mobilization resources used by political actors and the development of her enduring proclivity for populist politics.

In chapter 5, I will explain how Gandhi established her authority in Indian politics. I will show that, in spite of having belonged to the politically illustrious Nehru family, Gandhi suffered numerous indignities as a minister in the immediate post-Nehruvian period because the Syndicate – the incumbent political elite at the time –

devalued the symbolic value of her family-name-based capital of mass popularity. Changes in the clientelistic relations between the landed and landless caste groups had created conditions for the failure of the Syndicate's claim that their ties among the leaders represented the symbolic capital of the Indian political field. Gandhi took advantage of her access to the symbolic power of the state offices to classify the landless caste groups as *garib* (poor) in order to electorally defeat the Syndicate and establish her capital of popularity among the masses as the symbolic capital of the Indian political field.

In chapter 6, I will illustrate how the Gandhi-led elite's authority reproduction practices created conditions for the appearance of the Emergency, the only period in Indian politics during which all core procedural features of democracy, with the exception of universal franchise, were suspended. In this chapter, I will illustrate how Gandhi's attempts to reproduce her mass popularity capital emaciated the entire inter and intraparty political network in Indian politics. Thus, when the JP movement, which was mainly concentrated in small urban centers of only two regions of India, appeared to the Gandhi-led elite as a force that would smash their political network, they decided to impose Emergency rather than face the likely consequences of the JP movement.

In chapter 7, the conclusion of the dissertation, I will argue that Bourdieu's political field theory provides us with a unique opportunity to improve our comprehension of political structures. I will reason that the application of this theory to the study of Indian politics shows that not interparty but rather intraparty conflict among elites of the ruling party is at the foundation of the political structure in democratic polity. Field theory also helps us understand the fact that the legitimacy of a regime is equally dependent on the point of view of the masses and the point of view of the professional

politicians. Finally, it shows that there is a distinction between mere occupancy of a state office and political authority over that office.

Chapter 2

Caste Relations and Mass Mobilization Strategies in India

By the late 1940's, the Indian social space was experiencing a rise of caste-based interest groups that defied the behaviors expected from a typical caste group. Rather than act as a caste group that needed to take into account its ritually sanctioned relations with other caste groups before its members could make political choices, they acted as independent, self-interested political actors. This phenomenon, which became increasingly common among almost all caste groups across India, was considered a sign of the modernization of the traditional political institutions (e.g., see Rudolph and Rudolph 1967; Kothari 1970).

While the appearance of caste corporatism on the surface of the Indian social space during the early decades of the postcolonial era can be considered a prelude to the manner in which various social groups are politically organizing themselves in contemporary India, it did not have much impact on politics during the early decades of postcolonial politics. The reasons for this are not too difficult to comprehend. Most of the reported caste associations were based in then-emerging urban India; thus, more often than not, most of their members came from the urban population. However, the urban population constituted merely twenty percent of the total population of India, while nearly eighty percent of India's population was in its villages. Thus, in order to understand which group of the masses decided the fate of political actors in the field of politics during the early decades of postcolonial India, as well as the means employed by political actors to successfully mobilize them, we need to focus our attention on the rural social space. This leads to the following question: How did the rural population make

political choices in the early decades of postcolonial politics? The key to answering this question lies in understanding how various caste groups related to each other.

Dumont (1970), on the basis of his study of Hindu ritual scriptures, identified four caste groups – *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*. A *Brahmin* performed priestly functions, interpreted religious texts and was considered the legitimate authority to give discourses on moral, social and political order. A *Kshatriya* managed day-to-day administrative affairs and took the role of legitimate protector of all caste groups from any external or internal threats. A *Vaishya* engaged in mercantile activities. Finally, a *Shudra* took care of agrarian activities and provided his services as a servant to households of members of the other three caste groups. In addition to these four caste groups, the ritual scriptures also recognized the tribal population as another caste group; however, they were perceived as the outcaste or untouchables. Most of the members of this caste were in the profession of making arrangements for funerals and for the disposal of dead animals. Mahatma Gandhi gave them the name of *Harijans*, or “children of God,” by which they came to be known in the latter half of the colonial era.

The pollution-purity principle determined the hierarchical relations among different caste groups. According to this principle, a profession that dealt with religious rituals was the purest profession, while one that involved tactile contact with dead animals or dead human beings was the most polluted. The rank of a caste group was determined by the degree of purity of any profession practiced by its members.

Accordingly, a *Brahmin* occupied the highest position in the caste hierarchy, and a *Harijan* occupied the lowest position. Members of the *Kshatriya*, the *Vaishya* and the *Shudra* caste occupied positions between those of the *Brahmin* and the *Harijan*. When we

comprehend relations among various caste groups in a village community through the ritual conception of hierarchical relations among them, it was highly likely that members of the Brahmin caste were the most influential members of a village community. Thus, it was highly likely that their opinions on political issues would have determined how the rest of the caste groups in a village made their political decisions.

Harold A. Gould's (1977, p. 287-292) anthropological study of a north Indian village, Govindpur, illuminated a facet of caste relations that could not be accounted for by the ritual conception of relations among caste groups. It showed that, while castes did exist in the way they are ritually identified and that members of the respective caste groups did practice professions that formed the core of their caste identity, the relations among them did not follow ritualistic rules. Instead, Gould's study showed that the relations among caste groups were better explained by the dyadic structure of relations between patrons and clients (i.e., relations involving mutual obligations among members of a group based on their unequal socioeconomic status).

He found that, among the families in Govindpur, the members of the family owning the largest tract of land acted as *jajmans*, or patrons, while the rest of the village members performed the role of *purjans*, or clients. *Purjans* were categorized into agrarian and non-agrarian groups. The agrarian group, consisting of small land-owning cultivators and landless agricultural workers, tilled the land of their *jajmans*. Meanwhile, the non-agrarian *purjans*, including the village priest, carpenters, blacksmiths, washer-men, and so on, provided professional services associated with their respective caste's profession to their *jajmans*. In exchange for the services of the *purjans*, a *jajman* distributed a part of the total agricultural produce from his land among his *purjans*.

Gould's study overcomes the limitations of the ritual conception of relations among caste groups by perceiving those relations as representing a particular case of the patron-client dyad. However, his study does not explore how the patron-client relations among the village community members affected the hierarchical relations among the village community members. To understand the hierarchical dimension of relations among members of various socially and economically unequal caste groups in an Indian village, we need to refer to Srinivas's (2004 [1991]) classic ethnographic study of Rampur, a village in the southern part of India.

In contrast to the ritualistic conception of caste groups, which gives the impression that the Brahmins were the most influential members of a village community, Srinivas found that the family of the landowner actually held the most influence in affairs of the Rampur. In fact, his study captured a moment during which the village priest, a Brahmin, went to the house of the local landlord to seek his guidance on a family matter (Srinivas 2004 [1991], p. 32-33) – an impossible situation according to the ritualistic conception of hierarchical relations among caste groups. On the basis of his study, Srinivas made an important theoretical reclassification of the caste groups and relations among them; he re-classified the caste of the large landowning families as the landed or dominant caste and argued that they held the most significant position in a village community in any part of rural India (Srinivas 2004 [1991]). In other words, empirical studies on caste relations in rural India have found that they are a particular case of the same patron-client relations found in other parts of the world (cf. Eisenstadt & Lémarchand 1981).

Here, it is important to note that the position of the landed caste group was accessible to members of almost all ritually identified caste groups. Thus, members of any of the ritually classified caste groups – the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras – can be classified as members of the landed caste group if they owned large tracts of land in a region. The landed caste groups of different regions of India are composed of members of different ritually identified caste groups. Members of the Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya caste groups form the significant portion of the landed caste groups in the northern parts of India, whereas members of the Shudra caste groups formed a significant chunk of the landed caste groups in the southern parts of India.⁵

Members of landed caste or patron groups comprised only ten percent of the rural population, while client groups (i.e., small cultivators and landless agricultural laborers) comprised nearly seventy percent. Political parties actively pursued the support of the patron groups to mobilize the client groups in their favor during the general elections. To do so, they either absorbed members of patron groups within the folds of their respective parties (by appointing them to party offices, nominating them for general elections, etc.) or, if they currently controlled the state, gained the patron groups' support from outside by bestowing state resources upon them. In return, patron groups ensured the supply of their clients to their parties or to nominees of the parties they supported.

Following the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, we can argue that the patron groups, who formed a mere ten percent of India's total population, decided the fate

⁵ Interestingly, neither the ritual conception of the caste hierarchy nor the importance of the landed caste is an a-historical fact. These notions related to caste groups began to emerge in the Indian social space during the late periods of the Mughal Empire (1500-1857), and were ossified during the colonial period in India (1857-1947). For details on the history of caste and its contemporary forms, see Frankel 1978; Bayly 2001 [1999]; Jaffrelot 2003; Richards 2004 [1993].

of almost all actors in the field of politics. However, the reason behind the significance of patron groups in politics also made them vulnerable; their significance was dependent on their relations with clients. Thus, any fissure in those relations would have threatened their significance for political actors and, in turn, would have shaken the position of political actors dependent on them. Further, the contradiction between client groups' right to freely vote and their slim chances of translating that right into actual electoral behavior did sow seeds of discontent that, under certain circumstances, would weaken their relations with the patron groups.

Elite's Mass Linkage Strategies

In the colonial period, electoral franchise was limited to the country's socially dominant groups, among whom landed caste members were the greatest in number (Chiriyankandath 2001). INC leaders' increasingly conspicuous presence in the colonial period political scene, as well as their opposition to the left-leaning and socialist leaders' radical solutions to land distribution problems in the country, attracted landed caste members to them (Bose & Jalal, 1998; Bayly 1975; Tomlinson 1976). Not surprisingly, the source of a typical INC leader's colonial period electoral success was his support among the landed caste groups.

At the grassroots level, the INC comprised different factions of landed caste leaders, who competed over party and state resources (Baker 1976; Bayly 1975; Talbot 1986; Reeves 1971). The colonial state's electoral reforms progressively opened elected representatives' access to ministerial offices, and these changes impacted the manner in which the INC's competing factions were organized. As more and more INC leaders

entered ministerial offices, factional leaders started to become organized around the party and ministerial wing leaders (Tomlinson 1976; Low 2006 [1977]). The party wing was led by leaders who occupied party offices but did not participate in legislative assembly elections, whereas the ministerial wing was led by leaders who first competed in elections for the legislative assemblies and were then selected for ministerial offices.

During the late colonial period, both the increasing organizational strength of the INC and its leaders' deepening participation in state offices implied that INC leaders' access to state offices was increasingly influenced by their ties with other leaders inside the party and ministerial wing. Typically, INC leaders used their intricate ties within the party and ministerial wings to access state office resources and distribute them to the members of the landed caste groups (Baker 1976; Reeves 1971). Thus, by the late colonial period, an INC leader's popularity among the landed caste groups (and his resultant chance of winning elections) depended on his ties with members of the party and ministerial wings.

There are qualitatively different two types of ties in politics: Political and Personal ties. Political ties are based on political cost/benefit analysis. Actors politically tied to each other expect a symbiotic flow of material and non-material resources to occur among them. In addition, they expect that they or their trusted associates will be appointed to important offices by the actors to whom they are tied. Since political ties are based on cost/benefit analyses, the opportunistic shift in such ties from one political leader to another is a normal part of the politically tied leaders' expectations of each other. Personal ties, on the other hand, entail a lower expectation of political calculations and a correspondingly higher expectation of personal loyalty. Loyalty, in turn, leads to

expectations of being granted access to important resources irrespective of one's clout among parliamentarians. Furthermore, loyalty implies that such ties will remain stable even when circumstances change. Thus, personal ties are expected by the parties involved to be less flexible than political ties.

In the postcolonial period, the introduction of universal franchise changed the formula for winning elections. In the postcolonial period the rural poor, or clients, who made up the largest electorate, were allowed to vote freely. Thus, now the crucial determinant of a professional politician's fate was no longer to be decided by the landed caste groups but instead by the rural poor. However, the patronage relation between the landed caste groups and the rural poor was still intact. Thus, in addition to maintaining ties with the landed caste groups, a politician also needed to cultivate his popularity among the rural poor. This led to the rise of particular mass popularity as politicians' new resource for mobilizing masses, in addition to their ties with party and ministerial wing leaders.

Taking into account the fact that a typical postcolonial constituency contained 700,000 voters (Butler, Lahiri, & Roy, 1997), it was not possible for a politically active landed caste member to be personally tied to all constituents. However, most of the rural population was organized around patron-client relations. Thus, a politician's popularity among landless agricultural laborers and small farmers with whom he lacked direct ties depended on his relations with the latter's patrons (Weiner 1967, p. 152-153); specifically, good relations with patrons were likely to result in popularity among those patrons' clients. In addition, his personal reputation, or the local history of his family's reputation as patrons, also played an important role in his popularity among the rural

poor. In other words, a typical INC leader's popularity among the masses was likely to be limited to his particular region of social origin. This kind of mass popularity can be defined as *particular* mass popularity.

During the colonial period, the INC also always had a few exceptional political actors (usually among its top leaders) who possessed *universal* mass popularity. Their fame transcended social divisions based on village factions, caste, class, gender, language, and so forth. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru are two important examples of INC leaders in the late colonial and early postcolonial periods with universal mass popularity. These leaders could draw large numbers of people to their public rallies in any part of the country using their personal fame alone.

Thus, in the colonial period, the limitation of the franchise to dominant social groups implied that political actors' ties with party and ministerial wing leaders constituted their primary resource for mass mobilization. In postcolonial India, the introduction of universal franchise added particular and universal mass popularity as two new resources for mass mobilization.

I have identified the Indian political elite as those leaders who possessed vastly disproportionate control over and/or access to mass mobilization resources (cf. Khan 2012). The elite's control over appointment to ministerial offices determined whether or not their claim to political authority would be accepted by fellow politicians, and the key to their success in controlling ministerial appointments was their role in legislative elections. Typically, a member of the elite used his exceptionally abundant mass mobilization resources to lead the party's nominees in legislative elections. If they won, he could claim that they had been elected due to his mass mobilization effort. Hence, he

had the political authority to nominate the party's elected legislature to ministerial offices. By carefully selecting members of the party legislature whose practical sense of politics would cause them to recognize him as their leader, he would establish his political authority.

Data and Method

In this dissertation I use two sources of data: 1) qualitative data on political elite's habitus 2) quantitative data on political habitus of nearly 4000 Indian parliamentarians elected for the seven parliamentary sessions during the 1947-84 period.

To document elite's different political habituses, I have studied their published writings. Some of political elites were prolific writers. Most of their everyday writing activities consisted of corresponding with party workers, political colleagues, close friends and family members. They also regularly wrote for the INC newsletter, party reports and professional journals. In addition, many other writers have published biographies on them. In my study of their published writings and biographies, I have especially focused on their political trajectories – that is, when and how they entered politics. In addition, I have focused on their reflections on various political institutions, such as their opinions on the relation between the INC and the colonial and postcolonial state, the relation between party and ministerial wing leaders, and their role in the INC's electoral preparations.

It is important to note here the manner in which I have studied biographies on Elite. As can be expected, most of their biographers have written with a certain amount of

bias towards them; typically, they portray elite as a trailblazer of Indian politics. In order to overcome this bias in their narratives, I developed a two-point method. First, I chose to examine only those biographies whose authors claimed and are known to have closely interacted with elite. Second, I remained attentive to the authors' observations and made earnest efforts to avoid their glorification of them.

As discussed earlier, elite established his political authority by using his role in electoral victory of party leaders in legislative elections to gain control over ministerial office selection. By selecting those legislators for ministerial offices whose practical sense of politics would recognize his political authority, and not that of his rivals, elite established his political authority. To comprehend how elite used their control over selection of ministers to establish his political authority in postcolonial period, I have examined the pool of party leaders who were formally eligible to become a minister. In postcolonial India only members of parliament are eligible for ministerial offices. Thus, in order to comprehend elite's (informal) criteria for selecting INC parliamentarians for ministerial offices I have examined all INC parliamentarians' practical sense of politics, including those who were selected for ministerial offices for each one of the seven parliamentary sessions held during the 1947-84 period.

Recall that a leader's political habitus is structured by his experiences of using particular mass mobilization resources to gain state offices while reproducing or increasing their legitimate value. Hence, it is reasonable to infer the INC parliamentarians' political habitus by examining data on different kinds of mass mobilization resources they used to gain political offices while reproducing or increasing the legitimate value of their mass mobilization resources. At this point, it is important to

note that an INC parliamentarian was likely to have only three kinds of mass mobilization resources: ties with party wing leaders, ties with ministerial wing leaders and particular mass popularity. He did not possess universal mass popularity, which was available only to the top leadership – specifically, only to Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

A caveat is necessary before I describe the data and method used to study INC parliamentarians' political habitus. The illustration of a leader's political habitus demands an acute focus on his political history. For this reason, I have delved deeply into political biographies of elite. However, it is not possible to do the same for all INC leaders elected for the parliamentary sessions during the 1947-84 period. The most useful records available for studying the parliamentarians' political habitus are their self-descriptions in the *Who's Who of the Indian Parliament* and records of their electoral performance in the *Data Handbook on Parliamentary Elections*. I quantified their political records in these published primary data and used them in conjunction with the political context within which they shaped their careers in order to provide approximate illustration of their political habitus.

I have used the *Who's Who of the Indian Parliament* Volume I (1952-57), II (1957-62), III (1962-67), IV (1967-71), V (1971-77), VI (1979-80) and VII (1980-84) to quantify INC parliamentarians' ties with party and ministerial wing leaders. The *Who's Who of the Indian Parliament* provides records on all national-level political offices occupied by each parliamentarian during his entire political career (e.g., party offices, boards, cooperatives, ministerial offices, etc.). One can safely assume that parliamentarians' interactions with party and ministerial wing leaders in common offices led to the development of their clout among the two wings' leaders. Following this

assumption I computerized and coded records of all INC parliamentarians' common political office affiliations with members of the All India Congress Committee (AICC, the apex body of the INC party wing leaders) and ministers. The result was two sets of parliamentarians' two-mode data sets: Parliamentarians and AICC members – to – Political Offices, and Parliamentarians and Ministers – to – Political Offices. Using Ucinet software package I converted each of these two affiliation data sets into one-mode data sets.

I have used the network analytic concept of nodal degree to examine the INC parliamentarians' ties with ministerial and party wing leaders. The nodal degree is the measure of the number of nodes, or actors, adjacent to an actor in a network structure. Its value can range from 0 to $g-1$, where g is the total number of nodes in the network (Wasserman and Faust, 2006 [1994]). I used Ucinet to study each one of the INC parliamentarian's one-mode data with AICC members (Parliamentarians – to – AICC members) and ministers (Parliamentarians – to – Ministers) to measure their respective nodal degrees, or ties, with party (AICC members) and ministerial wing leaders.

All records related to parliamentary elections held in India during the period of 1952-85 have been published in the *Data Handbook on Parliamentary Elections*. The *Data Handbook* contains records of the INC's nominated leaders for elections, the number of votes polled during each election, and the percentage of total votes received by each INC candidate in each constituency. I have used *Data Handbook* records on the percentage of total votes received by each INC parliamentarian in their respective constituencies in the 1952, 57, 62, 67, 71, 77, and 80 general elections as a measure of their particular mass popularity capital.

I used binomial logistic regression modeling tools in SPSS to analyze how each INC parliamentarian's three mass mobilization resources (independent interval/ratio variable) – ties with party wing leaders, ties with ministerial wing leaders and particular mass popularity– affected his chance of becoming a minister (dependent binomial variable coded as 0 for non-minister and 1 for minister). Logistic regression modeling is the standard method for predicting the effect of changes in independent variables (categorical or interval/ratio) on categorical dependent variables (binomial, multinomial, or ordinal) (DeMaris 1995; Morgan & Teachman 1988). My analysis of the binomial logistic regression modeling of INC parliamentarians' mass mobilization resources as a predictor of their chances of becoming a minister is based on the reasoning that parliamentarians' mass mobilization resources reflected their respective political habitus. Thus, if a parliamentarian's particular kind of mass mobilization resource increased his chances of becoming a minister, this would imply that parliamentarians with a political habitus corresponding to that mass mobilization resource were chosen by Nehru for ministerial offices. Thus, results of binomial logistic regression will illustrate how Nehru and Gandhi used their respective control over ministerial office selection after leading INC candidates to victory in the parliamentary election to establish their authority in politics.

Before ending the discussion on data and methods, I will like to comment on my choice of logistic regression modeling over Bourdieu's preferred method of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). The bi-plot maps generated by MCA depict categorical (row and column) points of discrete variables within a two-dimensional space in such a manner that we can interpret distance among various categories of the discrete

variables as an indicator of association among them. This method is based on interpretation of visualized relations among categorical points in the bi-plot map. For this project, I preferred binomial logistic regression over MCA due to the need to illustrate exactly how parliamentarians' mass mobilization resources increased their chances of becoming a minister.

Chapter 3

Colonial Period Political Structure and the Practical Sense of the INC Elite

Britain took over the administration of India from the East India Company in 1857. Through a series of constitutional acts in 1882, 1892, 1909, 1919 and 1935, the British government progressively increased the administrative participation of elected representatives at the municipal, provincial and national levels, thereby fomenting the growth of the Indian party system.

Within this formal framework of limited democracy, the ideological spectrum of the political parties was divided into left, right and centrist ideologies; however, all of the influential leaders with these different ideological tendencies were positioned within the INC. Indeed, the INC emerged as the dominant party during the colonial period (Misra 1976) and remained dominant throughout the first three decades of postcolonial politics. The party was established in 1885 by a British member of the Theosophical Society, Allan Octavian Hume, as a peaceful means for elites – especially Westernized elites – to vent their frustrations regarding colonial rule (Chandra 1989, p. 61-82). In 1919, under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance, the INC, which had begun as a group of Westernized elites who believed in making changes by petitioning colonial administrators, started to transform into an organization with a social base in rural India capable of organizing powerful mass protests (Sarkar 1989, p. 195-204).

Even though the INC successfully presented itself as a unified party, its internal dynamics were shaped by competition between the party wing, comprising the non-elected INC party office bearers, and the ministerial wing, comprising elected INC leaders in ministerial offices (Tomlinson 1976; Low 2006 [1977]; Weiner 1967;

Kochanek 1968). During the early postcolonial period, the fate of democracy in India – that is, whether India would be able to remain a liberal democracy or would instead move toward single-party authoritarianism – crucially depended upon how the conflict between the INC's Nehru led ministerial and Patel led party wing elite regarding political authority was resolved. These two leaders' different trajectories in the INC during the colonial period shaped their respective political habitus.

When Nehru first attended the INC session in 1912, he was, in his own words, a highly westernized 'prig' (Nehru 1967, p. 39). This was not surprising, given that his father, Motilal Nehru, one of the richest and most successful lawyers in northern India, had been able to afford to provide him with a thorough Western education in both India and Britain. Returning to India after a seven-year stay in Britain, during which he had developed socialist leanings, Nehru joined the INC, within which his father had become a prominent moderate leader. Nehru quickly came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, who, among other INC leaders, regularly visited Motilal's house (which was eventually converted into the INC headquarters) for various political discussions. Gandhi's idea of using the INC to prepare the Indian masses for long-term non-violent struggle immediately appealed to the young Nehru, who was not very enthusiastic about continuing the moderates' strategy of petitioning the colonial administrators for policy reforms. Thus began a close association between Gandhi and Nehru (Brecher 1959, p. 32-84; Brown 2003, p. 30-50, 65-81; Gopal 1976, p. 16-35; Nehru 1967, p. 30-54).

Patel, on the other hand, moved to the highest position within the INC because of his hard work as a party organizer at the grassroots, provincial and national levels. He was born into a middle-class peasant family in Gujarat and was educated in rural schools.

Later, he self-financed his studies by working while studying law, first at Gujarat University and later in London. He entered the field of politics in 1917 and immediately demonstrated finesse in his organizational capabilities; he was adept in gathering both volunteers for party work and party funds from Indian businessmen and large landlords. Gandhi was quick to recognize his skills and made him increasingly responsible for managing important party offices, including the INC president's office in 1931. With Gandhi's support, Patel was able to develop and capitalize on his ties with socially and economically dominant groups to create a robust INC organization. His strongly conservative leanings were perhaps a reflection of his social base for doing politics (Sarin 1972; Ahluwalia 1974; Kulkarni 1969; Punjabi 1962).

The 1930 INC presidential election, in which Nehru and Patel first competed for the high office of INC president, offers a glimpse of the differences between these two leaders' political habitus. At that time, the INC was divided among eighteen Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs). One of the three INC leaders was expected to occupy the office of INC president: Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru or Patel. Among the eighteen PCCs, ten supported Gandhi, five supported Patel, and only three supported Nehru. Gandhi declined the INC leaders' request that he accept the president's office. Following his refusal, it would have been logical for the post to go to Patel, the party's second most popular leader; however, Gandhi publically declared his desire to see Nehru in the president's office. Deferring to Gandhi, Patel withdrew his nomination and thus paved the way for Nehru to become the INC president (Ahluwalia 1972, p.84; Brecher 1959, p. 137).

While Patel did not resist Nehru's appointment to the office of president, he made it clear that he did not agree with all of Nehru's political ideas. He especially disagreed

with Nehru's oft-repeated demand to include socialist policies regarding the re-distribution of land among the formally stated aims of the INC; however, Patel still encouraged his allies (most of whom were conservative members of the party) to provide their full support to Nehru, because he believed that it was the responsibility of the INC party leaders to guide Nehru as the party president (Sitaramayya 1969, vol. II, p. 31-32). This view was also held by Gandhi, who expected that Nehru's responsibilities as the party's chief would blunt the edge of his radical socialist ideals (Tendulkar 1951, vol. II, p.488-89). Nehru did not contest Patel's view on his relation with the INC leaders. He was well aware of his weak position within the party. Thus, even though he had now entered the highest post of the largest party of the country, it is clear from the following statement that Nehru did not quite feel like a leader:

I have seldom felt quite so annoyed and humiliated as I did at that election. It was not that I was not sensible of the honor, for it was a great honor, and I would have rejoiced if I had been elected in the ordinary way. But I did not come to it by the main entrance or even a side entrance; I appeared suddenly by a trap door and bewildered the audience into acceptance.... My pride was hurt, and I almost felt like handing back the honor. (Nehru 1967, p. 145)

From this brief discussion of the first contest between the main protagonists of the postcolonial period, we can note that Patel exhibited an enormous amount of self-confidence and appreciation for the unified INC. He knew that he was the most popular leader in the party after Gandhi. Both his withdrawal from the contest and his publicly stated opinion on the relation between the INC organization and the president's office show that he was confident in his firm grip on the INC as well as certain of the significance of a strong INC organization. A less confident leader might have challenged

Gandhi's preference for Nehru rather than willingly withdraw from the race, which most likely would have resulted in a schism. Thus, during the colonial period, while Patel's source of political strength was his expertise in managing the INC machine of the time, Nehru's source of strength was Gandhi's confidence in him.

After becoming the leader of the party in 1930, Nehru did not pander to the conservative leaders led by Patel in order to strengthen his position within the party; on the contrary, he continued to provoke them in party meetings with radical socialist outbursts, now from the highest position in the party (Brown 2003, p.126). Gandhi's prediction that Nehru's position of responsibility in the party would blunt the edge of his radical socialism did not come true; however, Nehru's position in the party did make him realize the importance of the party's unity in colonial-period politics. Thus, despite his disagreement with the conservative leaders, he did not push for any kind of final showdown with them. Instead, when he felt that confrontations between the socialist and conservative leaders were getting out of hand, he preferred to compromise with the conservative wing rather than risk creating conditions that might lead to a party split. His priorities were clear: independence first, socialism second (Brecher 1959, p. 145).

In 1937, the colonial state's electoral reforms opened the doors of the provincial-level government to the elected representatives, and the INC decided to participate in elections at this level. Patel, who had previously expressed his dislike for both crowds and political speeches (Ahluwalia 1974, p. 75), busied himself raising funds for the INC campaign and controlling the allocation of the party tickets. Meanwhile, Nehru took responsibility for the party's campaigning activities. For the first time, he travelled to the remotest interiors of the country, traversing almost 50,000 miles in five months, and

came into close contact with rural India. His speeches contained appeals for making the INC stronger in order to attain freedom for the country, as well as socialist ideas about the removal of poverty and unemployment and, most importantly, about the redistribution of land. On average, each of his meetings attracted around 20,000 people, most of whom were among the rural poor. In some places, as many as 1,000,000 people came to see him at one time (Brown 2003, p. 127-128; Brecher 1959, p. 227-228).

Thus, for Patel, the INC's participation in the 1937 election became another opportunity to hone his skills for machine politics; for Nehru, on the other hand, it became an opportunity to realize that, while his socialist rhetoric made him unpopular among his conservative colleagues, the same rhetoric made him immensely popular among the rural masses.

The INC won a comfortable majority in all provinces in the 1937 Election and was able to form the government. The popular perception was that Nehru's popularity among the rural masses as a result of his socialist rhetoric was responsible for the INC's success in the 1937 Elections (Brecher 1959, p. 229). While it is true that there was a tremendous outpouring of the rural masses in his public meetings, it is also important to note that the rural poor attending his public meetings, who represented the largest section of Indian population, remained disenfranchised at that time. Thus, even though the rural masses' support must have made Nehru realize his value as a leader of the country, the Patel-led conservative leaders knew that the INC's clientelistic network among the landed caste groups was ultimately responsible for the electoral victories of the 1937 INC candidates. In other words, Nehru was certainly the leader of the country in the eyes of

the masses but not in the eyes of the typical INC leaders, who were likely to view him as a mere crowd-puller rather than as a vote-getter.

After the formation of the provincial-level government, the biggest challenge for the party elite was to manage the increasing incidence of conflicts between the party wing and ministerial wing leaders over the control of the state offices. When the party wing leaders led by Patel and his conservative colleagues asserted their dominance over the ministerial wing leaders (Griffith 1952, p.340), the latter initially resisted. They claimed that, within the parliamentary system, the elected representatives were held primarily responsible for the activities of the state offices and that hence they – rather than the party wing leaders – should have the primary authority over the state offices (Brecher 1959, p.238-241).

Interestingly, it was Nehru (the dominated among the dominant elite) rather than Patel (the dominant among the dominant elite) who clarified the confusion over the hierarchical relation between the party and ministerial wings of the party. On the one hand, Nehru asked party leaders not to expect to participate in the day-to-day workings of the state administrators, as doing so simply would not be practical. On the other hand, he found the ministerial wing leaders' arguments for increased autonomy ridiculous, as state offices were ultimately under the control of the British administration rather than that of the INC ministers (Nehru 1938, p. 65-76, 78-85). Nonetheless, Nehru was very clear about which of the two wings had ultimate authority in colonial period politics:

It is manifest that the Congress is more important than any ministry. Ministries may come or go, but the Congress goes on till it fulfills its historic mission of achieving national independence for India. (Nehru 1938, p. 75)

In summary, the structural conditions of colonial period politics shaped Nehru's practical sense of doing politics in the following manner. While he was acutely aware of the importance of a unified INC for the nationalist movement, he was equally aware of the power of the Patel-led conservative leaders of the party, whose political clientelism among the landed caste groups was the source of the party's organizational and electoral strength. During his early days in the high positions in the party, only Gandhi's blessing insulated him from the conservative leaders' influence in the INC. Later, his campaigning activities made him realize that he was immensely popular among the then-disenfranchised rural poor segment of the Indian population, whose enfranchisement in postcolonial India was likely to become a significant source of political authority for him.

On the other hand, Patel's practical sense of doing politics was shaped by his strength within the party, which, from the perspective of nationalists, was the most important political institution in India at the time. Even his opponents in the party, like Nehru, had to accept this fact; this is evident in Nehru's manner of spelling out the hierarchical relation between the party and ministerial wings of the INC. Thus, Patel possessed mastery over machine politics; however, the efficacy of machine politics to generate his political authority was based on the fact that the landed caste groups, comprising a small section of the Indian population, were the only citizens with franchise during the colonial period. The enfranchisement of the rural poor through full democracy was likely to threaten the landed caste groups' control of politics and, consequently, to negatively affect Patel's political authority.

Postcolonial India: New Political Structure and Old Political Sensibilities

The formal political structure of the colonial period created conditions for Nehru and Patel to keep their differences under control. In the postcolonial period, this condition disappeared. India was now independent, and the ultimate control over state offices was in the hands of the elected representatives. The departing colonial administration invited the 1947 INC president, Nehru, to be prime minister of the country, and Patel was appointed as the home minister. The franchise was now extended to all citizens at least 21 years of age, irrespective of their income, education or gender; hence, the rural poor were now eligible to vote in elections. INC leaders' political clientelism among the landed caste groups could no longer be their only resource for electoral victories. Thus, the INC had completed its historic mission of gaining independence and, as a result, could no longer be called the most important political institution in the country.

These changes were bound to destabilize the already tenuous relation between Nehru – who, as prime minister, was now the leader of the ministerial wing and was immensely popular among the rural masses – and Patel, the undisputed leader of the party wing, who was relatively unknown among the rural masses. Nehru and Patel soon locked horns over various issues. Their different approaches towards the 1947 communal riots between Hindus and Muslims because of the India-Pakistan partition almost led to a split between them.⁶

⁶ Nehru placed strong emphasis on maintaining communal harmony and, whenever possible, criticized Hindu communal leaders for inciting riots. On the other hand, Patel publicly declared that Muslims had lost their right to remain in India since Pakistan had been created for them and argued that Hindus were simply defending themselves in the riots, while Muslims were disturbing communal harmony. Nehru was so incensed by Patel's speeches that he threatened to dismiss him from the council of ministers (Brecher 1959, p. 398).

Gandhi was considerably distressed by Nehru's and Patel's open displays of hostility towards each other. On 30th January 1948, he called Patel to his residence and asked him to promise not to split from Nehru. A few hours later, Gandhi was assassinated. Patel and Nehru, overcome with grief, saw Gandhi's desire for them to work together as his last wish; thus, in honor of Gandhi, they decided to lay aside their differences and cooperate with each other (Tendulkar 1951, p. 305-310).

Nonetheless, Patel started preparing to curtail Nehru's political authority. He intended to implement the tried and tested strategy of colonial period politics to establish his political authority; that is, to demonstrate that his mass mobilization resources were mainly responsible for the election of the INC leaders in the first parliamentary election of postcolonial India in 1952 and, hence, to claim control over the first ministerial appointments of postcolonial India. Using his control over ministerial appointments, he would have ensured the selection of those INC parliamentarians who would recognize his political authority to be relatively higher than Nehru's. Most likely, he would have chosen INC parliamentarians close to the party wing leaders. Thus, even if Nehru had remained in the prime minister's office, Patel would have been viewed by the ministers as their true leader.

In order to successfully implement his strategy, Patel needed to have his nominee elected to the office of INC president, to act as the formal head of the party wing leaders. Indeed, he did succeed in getting his nominee, Purshottam Das Tandon, elected to the INC president's office in 1950 (Kochanek 1968, p. 31). Next, he would have used Tandon to control the composition of two offices that were bound to play important roles

in the INC's preparation for the 1952 general election, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) and Central Election Committee (CEC). However, before Patel could implement the next steps of his strategy, he died of a heart attack in 1950.

Even though Tandon had lost his mentor, he continued to pursue Patel's ambition to reclaim the party wing leaders' high political authority. The infamous and very public confrontation between Tandon and Nehru began in 1950. Not surprisingly, the reconstitution of the CWC and CEC was the main source of contention between the two. Nehru was keen on appointing his close socialist allies to the two offices, but Tandon was completely against his propositions (Kochanek 1968, p. 32-34). The contention became so heated that at one point Tandon bluntly told Nehru that he held his position as prime minister only at the pleasure of the INC (Brecher 1959, p.433). Incensed by Tandon's veiled threat, Nehru resigned from the CWC. Thereafter, Tandon resigned, fearing backlash from party leaders on having affronted Nehru, and Nehru took over the INC's president office (Kochanek 1968, p.49).

The immediate crisis of Indian politics appeared to have ended. The crucial factor that would decide the future of the conflict between the party wing and ministerial wing leaders was the INC's role in the first general election, which was expected to take place in 1952. As an astute leader, it likely did not take Nehru long to realize that if he depended on the INC leaders' political clientelism to win the election, the party wing leaders could then claim that they were the real source of Nehru's power. In such a scenario, while Nehru might have remained as prime minister, the real control over the ministries would have been in the hands of the party wing elite (a scenario similar to the colonial-period relation between the two wings). However, if Nehru could conclusively

demonstrate that he did not rely on the party wing leaders' resources during elections while still leading the party to victory, he could claim that he truly represented the masses and hence gain control over the formation of the first ministerial team of postcolonial India. In this scenario, he would most likely appoint those INC parliamentarians who would recognize his political authority rather than that of the party wing elite.

First General Election and Ministerial Appointments in Postcolonial India

Organizing the first general election in postcolonial India was a challenging administrative task. India had the largest electorate in the world at that time, with around 173 million voters. The Election Commission of India (ECI) was created to undertake the gargantuan task of holding the first general election; more than a million employees were responsible for preparing a total of 2.5 million ballot boxes, 600 million ballot papers, 133,000 polling stations and 196,000 polling booths. The ECI was a relatively independent body of government officials whose chief, the election commissioner of India, had tenure identical to that of the chief justice of the Supreme Court of India. Thus, in constitutional terms, the ECI enjoyed a high degree of immunity from political influence (Kogekar & Park 1956).

The party wing leaders were likely not too enthusiastic about the political immunity of the ECI. As discussed earlier, party wing leaders' source of success during the colonial period was the limitation of the electoral franchise primarily to the landed caste groups. Because of the adoption of universal franchise in postcolonial India, the rural poor could vote for the first time in the 1952 general election. Note that the rural

poor masses worked as clients of the landed caste groups and hence were socio-economically dependent on them. Though patronage relations between the landed caste and the rural poor were still intact in the immediate postcolonial period, there was no certainty regarding the patrons' influence on their clients' voting decisions as long as the clients were able to vote freely in fair elections. The only way landed caste leaders and their allies in the party wing would have ensured that the clients voted according to their wishes would have been to interfere in the election process through illegal acts, such as the use of violence to intimidate voters in areas where the landed caste leaders suspected that their clients' voting intentions were opposed to their wishes. Such interference was not likely to be successful without the cooperation of state officials involved with the first general election, especially the employees of the ECI.

Aware of Nehru's tumultuous relation with the party, the party wing leaders were not too confident about Nehru's sympathy towards their concerns about the political autonomy of the ECI. They tested Nehru's view on the ECI's political autonomy by asking him to delay the 1952 general election, on the pretext of allowing time for the party to recover from the commotion caused by the Nehru-Tandon conflict (Brecher 1959, p. 438). Nehru not only flatly refused to entertain this request but also firmly stated that the political autonomy of the ECI could not be compromised:

It is not possible to change the date of elections at all now. They have been finally fixed after great trouble. This is a matter entirely in the hands of the Election Commissioner and the government does not interfere. (Brecher 1959, p. 439)

Furthermore, sensing the party wing leaders' deeper foul intentions of interfering with elections, Nehru made it clear that free and fair elections were unavoidable. In a letter written to the All India Congress Committee, he stated:

The coming elections are important, but it is far more important to know exactly what we stand for and how we want to function in the future. It is better to keep our soul and lose an election than to win that election in the wrong way and with wrong methods. (Report to All India Congress Committee 1951, p. 18)

For the colonial-period elections, the party machine had been managed by Patel while the campaign activity was managed by Nehru, but for the 1952 election Nehru managed both the party machine and the campaign activities. However, he could only partially participate in preparing the list of the party's nominees for the election. Although Tandon was no longer in the president's office, the conservative wing's tentacles were strongly spread throughout the provincial and grassroots levels of the organization. Thus, they used their organizational strength to fill the party nominee list with their chosen candidates, forcing Nehru to accept the list even though he knew that the political characteristics of most of the nominees were not to his liking. He was quite frustrated by his failure to control the process of preparing the list of nominees (Congress Bulletin 1956, p. 231).

However, Nehru was quite enthusiastic about the party's campaigning activities. Although he was 62 years old at the time, he still traveled to the remotest corners of the country using any available means of transportation. He often delivered as many as nine speeches in a day, in addition to countless roadside speeches. Notably, he hardly mentioned the INC's candidates in his campaign speeches; in fact, in some places he

openly criticized the INC candidate. Rather than support the candidates, he focused on the party's manifesto, explaining to the masses various socialist programs and policies that his government was interested in implementing (Gopal 1979, p.161-162; Brown 2003, p.197-198; Brecher 1959, p.440-441).

Table 1: Party Strength in 1952 Parliament

Party	Member of Parliament
Indian National Congress (INC)	364
Communist Party of India (CPI)	16
Socialist Party (SP)	12
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP)	9
Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS)	3
Other Parties	27
Independent	38
Total	489

The first general election results were outstanding for the INC. Table 1 identifies different parties' strengths in the parliament after the first general elections. From Table 1, we can note that the INC had the highest number of leaders in the parliament – 364 out of a total of 489. We can also see that the number of parliamentarians (16) from the largest opposition party, the Communist Party of India (CPI), was insignificant compared to the number of INC parliamentarians. Under Nehru's leadership, the INC had decisively dwarfed all other parties in the first parliament of postcolonial India.

Within the INC, it was commonly known that Nehru was hostile toward the party wing leaders; this was evident in his refusal to entertain their request to influence the ECI and in his frequent criticism of the INC nominees during his election campaign. Thus, it was not possible for the party wing leaders to ignore the fact that Nehru's popularity among the rural masses had led INC leaders to victory. More importantly, Nehru made it clear that neither the organizational strength of INC nor the political quality of INC nominees was responsible for their electoral performance. In a piece written for Congress Bulletin, he observed that:

It is true to say that the Congress organization as such has not usually played a satisfactory part in many states... where we have won, this was not always due to the Congress organization. Indeed, the Congress organization, as a whole, rather failed in this test.... our choice (of candidates) sometimes was not good. There was almost utter lack of discipline, both among Congress candidates and among Congressmen. (Congress Bulletin 1952, p. 11-16)

For the first time in his political career, Nehru had unambiguously established his political authority in the eyes of the INC leaders (including the party wing elite), as well as the leaders of other parties who were aware of internal conflicts in the INC, by demonstrating that he had not relied on the party's organizational strength to lead the party candidates to victory in the 1952 elections. He successfully demonstrated that his mass mobilization resource (popularity among the rural masses) had been responsible for INC nominees' electoral victory and hence, he had the right to choose which of the 1952 INC parliamentarians would enter ministerial offices.

An examination of the political characteristics of the INC parliamentarians selected for the ministerial offices provide insight into how Nehru used his control over

the 1952 ministerial appointments to establish his authority among postcolonial period Indian politicians. Out of the pool of 364 INC leaders elected for the first parliament of postcolonial India, Nehru selected 20 for his ministerial team. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics on the 1952 INC parliamentarians' mass mobilization resources. A typical INC parliamentarian had entered the 1952 parliament by winning almost 50% of the votes in his constituency. By the time of his election to the first parliament, he had ties with five party leaders but only one minister. In other words, a typical INC parliamentarian was likely to be highly popular among his constituents (a measure of his particular mass popularity) and to be relatively closer to the party wing leaders than to the ministerial wing leaders.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on INC Parliamentarians' Capitals in 1952

N = 314	Mean	Std
Particular Popularity among Masses (%)	49.93	11.71
Ties with Ministers	1.01	3.66
Ties with Party Leaders	5.65	12.88

Table 3 depicts the results of the binomial logistic regression modeling of the INC parliamentarians' three mass mobilization resources as predictors of their chances of becoming ministers. Note that the model chi-square value of the logistic regression model is highly significant, and its value is moderately high. The model indicates that at least one mass mobilization resource significantly affected the INC parliamentarians' likelihood of being selected for ministerial offices. Table 3 reports that a typical INC parliamentarian's particular mass popularity and closeness with party wing leaders were

insignificant in shaping his chances of selection for a ministerial office. On the other hand, every unit increase in his ties with ministers significantly increased his chances of being selected for a ministerial office by a factor of 1.39. Thus the descriptive statistics show that, while the INC parliamentarians were likely to be closer to the party wing leaders than to the ministerial wing leaders, their chances of becoming ministers was positively affected by their closeness to the ministerial wing leaders.

Table 3: Predictors of INC Parliamentarians' Chances of Becoming Ministers

Capital	Exp	Sig.
Particular Popularity among	1.002	0.945
Ties with Ministers	1.393	0.000
Ties with Party Leaders	0.987	0.581
Constant	0.022	
Model Chi Square	62.08	0.000
<i>Df</i>	3	

Since the 1952 ministerial team was the first in postcolonial India, the 1952 INC parliamentarians' closeness with the ministerial wing leaders resulted from their ties with colonial period ministers. As discussed earlier, the ministerial wing leaders had claimed authority over state offices during the colonial period, but the party wing elite had successfully suppressed their claims. During the same period, even though Nehru had been forced to admit that the party wing leaders had higher authority than the ministerial wing leaders, he had made no secret of his hostility towards the party wing elite who were mainly responsible for suppressing the ministerial wing leaders' claim. The first

five years of the postcolonial period re-ignited Nehru's hostility towards the party wing leaders, as evident in his conflicts with Patel and later with Tandon. Further, as the prime minister, Nehru was now the head of the ministerial wing. In other words, the colonial period ministers and Nehru had always faced the party wing elite as the major impediment to their claims to political authority. Thus, by selecting parliamentarians who had been close to colonial period ministers for the first postcolonial ministerial team, Nehru ensured that the 1952 ministers would appreciate his political authority and depreciate the authority of the party wing elite, his main rivals in politics.

After the 1952 general election, Nehru ended the conflict between party and ministerial wing elite which had been re-ignited in 1947 because of the adoption of democratically defined relations among political institutions in postcolonial India. From 1952 onwards, there were hardly any incidents of public arguments between Nehru and the party wing leaders. While there was still friction between them, its expression was now mostly confined to party meetings not accessible to the masses. Thus, while it is true that in 1952 Nehru had established his political authority over state offices in the eyes of professional politicians, he still needed to regularly refresh it in order to ensure that the party wing leaders did not again have courage to publically challenge his political authority.

Nehru continued to use free and fair general elections effectively to keep the party wing leaders under control. Two more general elections were held during Nehru's regime, in 1957 and 1962; in both elections, Nehru successfully led INC nominees to victory and hence claimed control over ministerial appointments. Thus, in the first 17 years of the postcolonial period in India (1947-62), three free and fair general elections

were held, and ministerial offices continuously remained in the hands of the elected political elite. In other words, Nehru's practical strategy to keep the party wing elite distant from state offices laid down solid foundations of democracy in India during the early post-transition period.⁷

⁷ One could challenge the notion of the stability of democracy in postcolonial India by pointing out the example of the Emergency period (1975-77). Indira Gandhi seemingly ended India's rendezvous with democracy in 1975 by imposing Emergency, the only period of political authoritarianism in postcolonial Indian history. It is also interesting to note that Indira Gandhi's 17-year introduction to politics (1947-64) took place from Prime Minister Nehru's house, where, as his only daughter, she performed the role of first lady (Frank 2002). Thus, as Rustow (1970) would argue, she was sufficiently habituated in democratic politics; hence, Indira Gandhi unsurprisingly ended Emergency in 1977 by calling for a general election which was indeed free and fair by all standards. In other words, Indira Gandhi's actions in 1975 do not challenge the main point of this article – that Nehru's pursuit of political authority laid down the foundation of stable democracy in India. In a way, by using a free and fair election to end Emergency, she confirms the importance of Nehruvian period politics for democracy consolidation in India.

Chapter 4

Nehruvian Period Politics and Structuration of Gandhi's Political Disposition

Indira Gandhi was born in 1917 to the Nehrus, a prominent north Indian family. Her grandfather, Motilal, was a rich and successful lawyer. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a lawyer as well, although not as successful as Motilal, who ultimately became the leading young light of the nationalist movement headed by the Congress Party. In fact, all members of the Nehru family were deeply involved with the freedom movement. Most men and women of the Nehru family regularly spent long periods in British jails. As a result, Gandhi had a lonely childhood. She was close to her mother, Kamla Nehru, but her father's long episodes of incarceration kept her distant from him. Kamla died in 1936, and by then Gandhi had become close to Feroze Gandhi, an assistant of her mother, whom she married in 1942. In 1944, Gandhi bore her first son, Rajiv. Two years later, in 1946, her second son Sanjay was born. At this point, Feroze was working as a journalist at the *National Herald*, a newspaper owned by the Nehru family and published in Allahabad. Thus, by 1947, the year of India's independence, 30-year-old Indira was leading the life of a typical Indian house wife. Her life revolved around her husband, her two sons, Nehru, and her two maternal aunts, Krishnahathee Singh and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.

Gandhi did not display any political ambitions when Nehru became prime minister. Krishnahathee Singh had settled down in Bombay and hardly took any interest in active politics. But Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Feroze Gandhi harbored political ambitions. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the most educated and westernized of all women in Nehru's household, had always perceived herself as the rightful inheritor of her brother's

political legacy, perhaps explaining why she never got along with any women closely related to Nehru. She had quite a reputation for tormenting Kamla Nehru, and her acerbic attitude towards Gandhi, her only niece, was well known.

In 1947, Nehru moved from Allahabad, his hometown, to the official residence of the prime minister in Delhi. A widower by then, Nehru felt a need for someone to perform the role of hostess for domestic and international delegates visiting him regularly as well as caretaker for the daily upkeep of the prime minister's house. Gandhi began commuting between Allahabad and Delhi to assist her father. A young mother then, she would also bring along her two sons. Nehru began enjoying the increasing closeness he experienced with his only child, particularly as he had not had much chance to interact with her when she was growing up. As Gandhi's sojourns to Delhi became longer, they slowly began to negatively affect her marital life. Feroze's resentment toward her and his father-in-law began to brew, and he soon developed a reputation for being a philanderer in the elite social circles of Allahabad (see Frank 2002 [2001], pp. 202-203, 241-242). Whether this reputation had any basis in truth or not is irrelevant for our current purposes; nevertheless, this reputation did worsen his marital relations and threaten his marriage.

Although trained as a journalist, Feroze harbored political aspirations. He won a parliamentary seat in the first general elections in 1952. As a self-made politician, he did not feel comfortable being identified as Nehru's son-in-law and never had an easygoing relation with his father-in-law (see Vasudev 1973, p. 245; Jayakar 1992 [1988], p. 105). Furthermore, being a simple parliamentarian meant that he was usually not allowed to be on the same dais as the prime minister and his first lady during most of the formal

occasions in the prime minister's house. Thus, the official protocols of interactions taking place at the prime minister's house created numerous awkward moments that further increased the bitterness in his marital life. For example, consider this description of an official visit of Soviet leaders and the resultant tension in the Nehru family:

When the soviet premier Nikolai Bulganin, and the then first secretary of the soviet communist party, Nikita Khrushchev, addressed a public meeting during a state visit, Indira and Nehru were on the platform, while Feroze and some other MPs were refused entry by security forces. Feroze, enraged, raised the matter in Parliament and Nehru was forced to apologize to him. (Frank 2002, p. 232).

Although Feroze was having a difficult time in the Nehru family, he seemed to have been enjoying his tenure as a parliamentarian. Known for his open personality and rustic sense of humor, he became quite the popular figure among Congress parliamentarians. The fact that many female parliamentarians were becoming a part of his inner circle further fuelled his reputation as a philanderer. Meanwhile, rumors linking his wife to Nehru's personal secretary, O.P. Mathai, and a mystic Yoga guru, Dharendra Brahmachari, started doing the rounds in the parliamentarians' gossip circle. News of arguments between Indira and Feroze over matters of infidelity became commonplace among their personal friends. Furthermore, the fact that Indira remained completely committed to her father's concerns despite the resultant increase in her marital difficulties further enraged Feroze. The following description of a dinner attended by one of Nehru's old acquaintances during this period illustrates the tension in the trio's relations.

On entering the dining-room with them, she (guest) found Feroze seated already at one end of the table. Apart from a cursory nod, he ignored the guest and concentrated on his food, pausing every now and then to contradict his father-in-law's opinion (Nehru) on virtually every subject from the merits of the food to the state of the country. The atmosphere was

explosive, the uncomfortable visitor recalls, even though Indira tried valiantly to steer the conversation into safe channels and kept directing long, pleading looks at her husband in an effort to restrain him. (Masani 1975, p. 95).

Meanwhile, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the only member of Gandhi's family who would become wary of her increasing closeness with Nehru, was representing India at the United Nations. As such, she remained outside India. Strains in Gandhi's family life and the absence of other elder Nehru family members to compete for the leader's trust began to facilitate Gandhi's increasing closeness with Nehru. Gandhi, along with her sons, moved into one of the rooms in the prime minister's house, whereupon she formally adopted the role of first lady. Thus began Gandhi's journey into the world of Indian politics, whose contours were destined to be deeply shaped by Nehru for the next two decades.

Nehruvian Period Politics and Gandhi's Exposure to Indian Politics

Nehru put to rest any doubts that the ministerial wing leaders truly represented the masses in the state by leading the Congress party to success in the first three general elections of the postcolonial period. The history of intense conflict between party wing and ministerial wing leaders during the initial days of postcolonial politics deeply influenced Nehru's approach towards the Congress party leaders. By successfully leading the Congress party in the 1952 general election, Nehru had achieved victory over the party wing leaders who were clamoring for control over state offices. Nonetheless, even after emerging victorious following the intense five-year conflict with party wing leaders, Nehru was not immediately able to undermine their political authority. The Congress

party was the only party with deep social roots across the country, and the party wing leaders played the most important role in maintaining the clientelistic chain among all levels of politics and the landed caste groups in the rural social space, which helped them to mobilize the rural poor in favor of the Congress party candidates during elections.

As an astute politician, Nehru was well aware not only of the importance of the Congress party wing leaders for electoral victories (which contributed to the stability of his high political field position) but also of the potential threat they posed to him. He had already faced their ambitions and their desire to overtake his political authority during his first five years in office. After gaining dominance over the party wing leaders, he needed to ensure that they never again challenged his political authority while also making sure to avoid antagonizing them.

Nehru used democratic processes in the Congress party to limit the party wing leaders' hostility toward the ministerial wing leaders. Specifically, he encouraged regular elections within the party to elect party office bearers, and he accepted party leaders' suggestions for Congress party nominees for various elections (e.g., see Kochanek, 1968; Weiner, 1967). By doing so, he not only ensured the relative autonomy of the party wing from any undue influence of the ministerial wing leaders but also made the party wing leaders believe that, even though they had lost the battle to control state affairs, they still had control over party affairs.

Further, a noticeable feature of Nehru's everyday political practices, and one which made it possible for him to safely mediate conflicts within and between various factions of the party wing and ministerial wing leaders, was his regular and trenchant

criticism of nepotism (e.g., see Brecher, 1959, p. 510, 624; Rotter, 2000, p.129-130). By criticizing nepotism in public life (i.e., party and state offices), Nehru successfully inculcated his image as an impartial arbitrator of political affairs. This image played a crucial role in reproducing his popularity among all factions of the party; hence, it was an important means for him to manage conflicts between the party and ministerial wing leaders. These strategies used by Nehru to stabilize his high political field position in the historically specific political field of postcolonial India played a crucial role in the manner in which Gandhi was exposed to the various mass-linkage strategies of Indian politics during her 17-year stay in Prime Minister Nehru's house.

Gandhi's Early Experiences of Mass Mobilization Activities

In spite of her closeness to Nehru, Gandhi never became a minister during his 17-year rule. Hence, she never faced situations in which she would have interacted with Congress party leaders in and through ministerial offices. Such interactions would have involved managing rivalries with other ministers over scarce state resources or policymaking issues, forming alliances with other ministers in order to strengthen her political authority among ministers, and managing social capital among the party wing leaders by allowing their access to state resources. In other words, while Gandhi must have been discursively aware of the importance of ministerial offices (after all, they had higher symbolic value than party offices, and Nehru led the ministerial wing of the party), she did not face situations in which she would have experienced the importance of ministerial offices to generate political capital.

Perhaps Nehru's unique position in the Indian political field can explain Gandhi's lack of practical political experience in ministerial offices. As discussed earlier, in order to ensure that the defeated party wing leaders did not actively use their resources to destabilize his control over state offices, Nehru had to develop an image as an impartial political arbitrator. This image made him popular among various factions of the Congress party. If he had allowed members of his family to enter the relationally dominant ministerial offices, his carefully nurtured image as an impartial political leader would have faced a serious threat. In turn, such a threat would have seriously undermined his capacity to contain conflicts between the party wing and ministerial wing leaders, which, if allowed to proliferate, would have destabilized his high political field position.

On the other hand, Gandhi's appointment to any of the relationally dominated political offices of the Congress party organization would have neither made Nehru susceptible to charges of nepotism nor adversely affected his universal popularity among leaders. It is therefore not surprising that Gandhi held many offices in the Congress party during her tenure as the first lady of the prime minister's house. In 1953, she led the women's cell of the Congress party. In 1956, she was nominated to the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the highest governing body of the Congress party, as a representative of the women's cell. In the same year, she was elected to the Central Election Committee (CEC), the national-level body of the Congress party that scrutinized all Congress party nominees for the general elections. In 1958, she became a member of the Congress Parliamentary Board (CPB), a body that managed relations between the national and regional governments led by the Congress party. In 1959, she reached the

apogee of the party organization by getting elected to the office of Congress party president.

From Gandhi's occupancy of numerous party offices, one could get the impression that even though she did not get a chance to experience the importance of ministerial offices, she did have many opportunities to experience the importance of party offices. However, the way Gandhi was selected for the party offices minimized her chances of practically understanding the importance of relations between political offices and Congress party leaders' strategies for generating political capital among the rural poor.

A typical Congress party leader aspiring for a party office first had to employ his social capital in politics, among both party wing and ministerial wing leaders, to garner the support of party leaders in order to win election for the office. Next, he had to use the resources of his office to participate in processes leading to the nomination of party leaders for various elections. By playing a role in preparing the list of the party's nominees, he attempted to gain some modicum of political authority over the ministerial wing leaders to facilitate his access to state resources. A typical party wing leader needed to distribute various kinds of state resources among the landed caste members to generate his political clout among the rural poor. In turn, he used his political clout to help ministerial wing leaders win legislative elections. Finally, he prepared to win future elections to important party offices using the aforementioned strategies. In other words, the party office election-winning strategies of a typical Congress party leader entailed an acute comprehension of relations between social capital in politics and mass mobilization

strategies. Conversely, in all instances of Gandhi's selection for party offices, she was unanimously elected by the party leaders.

Ever since their defeat by Nehru's ministerial wing leaders, party wing leaders' access to the resources of high ministerial offices had been minimized. Having Prime Minister Nehru's daughter in important party offices would have definitely increased their access to state offices. Hence, the party wing leaders had good reason to want Gandhi among them. Thus, they ensured that Gandhi did not face any difficulty in getting elected to party offices. The downside of Gandhi's ease of entry into party offices was that she never had to compete for any of those offices; thus, she never encountered opportunities to practically master and employ the strategies of manipulating social capital in politics to generate political capital.

Here it is relevant to repeat the point that political office resources were geared towards exploiting the clientelistic social structure in rural India to generate political capital among the rural poor. One of the most important means for becoming familiar with clientelistic politics was through participation in parliamentary elections. The process of winning a parliamentary election and sustaining one's popularity among constituents during the five-year duration of a parliamentary session made it necessary for a parliamentarian to engage with the reality of clientelistic politics. Thus, even if a political leader had not held a ministerial office and had no experience of winning party offices, by competing for a parliamentary seat he was bound to become sensitized to the importance of political offices for generating political capital among his constituents.

Election to the parliament was a formally required step towards entering ministerial offices. Because Nehru would have not allowed her to stake claim over ministerial offices, Gandhi likely did not believe it was worth the effort to compete for the parliamentary election. It is therefore unsurprising that Gandhi did not compete for a parliamentary seat in any of the three parliamentary elections held during the 17-year Nehruvian era. As a result, she remained bereft of a realistic understanding of rural clientelistic politics.

As an evidence of Gandhi's lack of comprehension of relation between Congress party leaders, landed caste groups and rural mass mobilization strategies consider the example of her failure to implement a highly ambitious cooperative farming program across the country. After being elected to the office of Congress party president in 1959, Gandhi seriously attempted to start farming cooperatives all across India. She organized training camps to teach Congress party workers how to establish the farming cooperative movement. However, her efforts failed to inspire the Congress party workers. According to one estimate, the Congress party would have needed to recruit and train approximately 70,000 party workers to establish farm cooperatives in every region of India (Jaffrelot 2003, p. 46). Yet only 110 workers volunteered for training in the Madras training camp (Malhotra 1991 [1989], p. 62). Later, when Gandhi reflected on why the Congress party's efforts to implement the cooperative farming program had failed, she remarked: "Absolute collectivism will never work in India. Our vast peasantry is too individualistic" (Vasudev 1974, p. 283).

To understand why Gandhi failed in her efforts to implement the cooperative program using the Congress party, we need to take into account the fact that the Congress

party leaders' key to success in politics was their alliance with the landed caste. Landed caste groups mobilized their clients in favor of the Congress party leaders in exchange for various agricultural economy-related resources. Implementation of the cooperative farming program by the Congress party workers would have caused the landed caste groups to lose their ownership of the land as well as their status as patrons of their village communities. In other words, the Congress party workers' success in implementing the cooperative farming program would have obliterated the very foundation of party's political capital. Thus, it was not the "individualistic peasant" that ensured that the cooperative farming was doomed from the beginning, but rather the Congress party leaders' sense of the real-politick.

As discussed earlier, the political field is a field of contest in which leaders in various political field positions challenge each other's symbolic authority. Thus, any error in a politician's comprehension of political practices should invite immediate rebuke by other politicians. Interestingly, there are no recorded instances of Congress party leaders' criticism of Gandhi's attempts to implement cooperative farming program. In fact, Gandhi's misinterpretation of Indian politics was more than often readily accepted by Congress party leaders. To comprehend the reasons why Congress party leaders avoided questioning Gandhi's skewed view of politics, we need to examine how their relation with Nehru influenced their perception of Gandhi as a political leader.

Since a typical Congress party leader did not have access to universal mass popularity capital and had relatively low chances of becoming a minister, he was likely to have developed a political disposition for using party offices and particular mass popularity capital to generate his political capital. At the same time, however, he was

likely to perceive the symbolic value of universal mass popularity capital and ministerial offices as higher than the symbolic value of party offices and particular mass popularity capital. Having seen Gandhi as almost Nehru's shadow in the political field during the entire duration of his rule, Congress party leaders perceived Gandhi's presence among them as an extension of Nehru's symbolic power in politics, which was based on universal mass popularity and ministerial offices. As a result of this perception, they were likely to be as deferential towards Gandhi as they were towards Nehru.

In fact, Congress party leaders expressed their respect towards Gandhi by affectionately addressing her using familial terms such as *beti* (daughter) or *bahen* (sister). Likewise, she addressed them with corresponding categories of familial relations. Here it is relevant to note that, whereas in familial relations the notion of loyalty is (ideally) paramount, in political relations the rational calculation of political loss or gain is paramount. During everyday political interactions, typical leaders usually addressed each other using familial terms [*bhaiya* (brother), *babu* (father), *Chacha* (father's brother) etc] while being acutely aware of the political features of their relations with each other. But because Gandhi never practically encountered situations in which she would have learned the importance of social capital in politics for generating political capital, she did not perceive the political features of her seemingly familial relations in politics.

Gandhi got the first few opportunities to get acquainted with the strategies of universal mass popularity while engaging with Nehru's election campaign for the Congress party. She was accompanying Nehru on his electoral campaign in Himachal Pradesh, a hill state in the north India, during the first general election. While campaigning, Nehru came across a conflict in his public appearance schedule. He was

supposed to give a speech in a small town of Himachal Pradesh, Chamba. But an earlier public appearance engagement would not have allowed him to reach Chamba on the same day. Indira asked Nehru if she could take his place. Nehru liked the idea, and thus Indira Gandhi made her first public appearance for mobilization of the masses in support of the Congress party during the 1952 general election. An excerpt from a letter Nehru wrote to Edwina Mountbatten, wife of the last viceroy of India, provides us with a glimpse of Indira's electoral campaign activities during the 1952 general election.

One of the surprises of this election... has been the very fine work done by Indira. She worked terribly hard. In Delhi she used to go out at 8 in the morning and return about 11 at night addressing numerous small meetings and groups. She is reported to be effective speaker and is in great demand (quoted in Frank 2002, p. 231).

Gandhi took full charge of the electoral campaign of Nehru in his parliamentary constituency, Phulpur, during the 1957 general election. She visited at least ten to twelve villages in a day and ended up visiting nearly 1,100 villages of Phulpur by the end of campaign. In 1957, she also started getting invitations to campaign for the Congress party in other regions of the country.⁸ The circumstances in which she agreed to campaign in Gujarat, a region in the western part of India, demonstrated her enthusiasm for making public appearances.

Members of the Gujarat's unit of the Congress party were keen to have Indira Gandhi as their lead campaigner. At the time of the election there was an ongoing

⁸ Details of Indira Gandhi's electoral campaign for the 1957 general election are given in Frank 2002, p. 241, Vasudev 1974, p. 254.

agitation in Gujarat to include Bombay within its region of governance. The agitation for the 'Mahagujarat' was threatening to explode into a violent movement. Senior leaders of the Congress party from Gujarat expressed their concerns for safety and wellbeing of Indira Gandhi. When they communicated their concerns to her, she replied to them that she was willing to campaign for Gujarat's unit of the Congress party only on one condition:

I'll go in an open car. Nobody will throw stones. I'll travel in an open car not only from the place of residence to the meeting, but through the city (quoted in Vasudev 1974, p. 256).

Her zest for mass appeal politics was reflected in her sense of achievement when she found more and more people coming to her meetings in regions outside the Hindi speaking regions of the country. While describing her experience of the election campaign in Punjab to Nehru, she wrote: "Punjab was strenuous and most exhilarating, too. I had 100,000 people in Rohatak just for me- imagine that" (quoted in Frank 2002, p. 241).

Inder Malhotra, a veteran journalist who had the opportunity to cover public appearances and speeches of Indira Gandhi, provides us with some interesting observations. According to him, neither was Gandhi an impressive orator, nor did her speeches have any depth. Furthermore, her squeaky voice did not help her to command any authority in public meetings (Malhotra 1991 [1989], p. 103). But Katherine Frank, one of the recent biographers of Indira Gandhi, illuminated those aspects of her performance during public appearances that, to an extent, can explain her popularity among the masses. Indira Gandhi usually arrived at her meeting with a large entourage of

both young and senior local Congress party leaders, who looked for any opportunity to demonstrate their deference to her. She made sure that she started and ended her speech in a local dialect of the region. Furthermore, she always made sure that she wore locally made saris the way they were worn by the local women. During her close interaction with a region's masses, she tried to follow the local etiquette, especially while dining with them, and always ate the local cuisine. She avoided making any ideological declarations or references to any planned vision for the future of the country during her speeches. Instead, she attempted to make maternal association with the masses, without giving off any hint of political reasons behind her public appearances (Frank 2002, p. 301-302).

Biographies of Indira Gandhi show that her experiences of the world of politics as the first lady of the Prime Minister's house kept her distant from the logic of clientelistic politics. However, it did saturate her with opportunities to master the logic of universal mass popularity. Thus, we can argue that Indira Gandhi's habitus was structured by the strategies of universal mass popularity for mobilizing masses. Not surprisingly, in the post-Nehruvian period, in addition to displaying a strong penchant for using universal mass popularity capital and devaluing party offices, Gandhi displayed a strong penchant for appreciating Congress party leaders' loyalty towards her more than their political competence (based on either social capital in politics or mass popularity).

Particularities of Indira Gandhi's Political Habitus

Studying Gandhi's political life in the post-Nehruvian period shows that the stability and strength of the party were not her highest priorities. During the Gandhian

era, there were three major splits in the party, in 1969, 1977, and 1978. Here it is interesting to note that during the Nehruvian era, the unity of the Congress party was not threatened even in the severest periods of conflict between the party and ministerial wings. Conversely, after every split during the Gandhian era, Gandhi further weakened her share of the already weak party organization. Under her directions, internal party elections to choose party office holders were suspended. In lieu of elections, she nominated members of her clique of personal friends and relatives, popularly known as kitchen cabinet, to important party offices. Not surprisingly, her political practices encouraged a culture of sycophancy among Congress party leaders towards Nehru-Gandhi family members which is still strongly prevalent in the current Congress party.⁹

It is well known that populist politics geared towards the poor masses was the main source of Gandhi's political strength during her entire political career.¹⁰ Noticeably, like Gandhi, Nehru also considered the improvement of the rural poor's living conditions to be one of his major concerns; however, he did not develop populist slogans about this issue in order to win elections. Perhaps he was well aware that any haste in using such an issue to gain mass popularity would have threatened the fortunes of those Congress party leaders who used their political offices to generate political capital by exploiting the rural poor's clientelistic relations with the landed caste groups. In other words, Nehru's mass-

⁹ Gandhi always relied on a clique of relatives and personal friends, known as the 'kitchen cabinet,' for deciding on important state and party matters. Since late 1960s Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Karan Singh, S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, C. Subramaniam, and Raj Bahadur were the prominent members of her kitchen cabinet. From mid-1970s onwards Sanjay Gandhi, Bansi Lal, Hem Chand, Navin Chawla, R.K. Dhawan, and V.C. Shukla were the prominent members of her kitchen cabinet. For details on Gandhi's kitchen cabinet members, see Bhatia 1974, p. 190; Frank 2002, p. 401.

¹⁰ Gandhi developed the populist political rhetoric of 'garibi hatao' ('remove poverty') during her second term in the prime minister's office (1969-71). She initiated strongly left-leaning state policies and publicly classified herself as a pro-poor leader and her rivals as pro-rich leaders. She even changed the symbol of her party to fit it more to her political rhetoric of 'garibi hatao.' For details on Gandhi's populist political rhetoric see Singh 2012a.

popularity-generating strategies took into account the importance of party offices/social capital in politics for generating political capital.

Conversely, Gandhi was not at all sensitive to the importance of political offices for mobilizing the rural masses. Hence, instead of using state resources via Congress party offices to please the landed caste groups so that they, in turn, would influence the rural poor to vote for Congress party leaders, she appealed directly to the rural poor. By developing a political rhetoric which explicitly recognized the political power of the rural poor – an unprecedented electoral strategy in Indian politics – she challenged the importance of Congress party leaders' political offices for generating political capital.

Gandhi's political practices devaluing the significance of Congress party offices also demonstrated her scant attention to the importance of maintaining stability in the rural social structure. Congress party leaders maintained the stability of the rural social structure by contributing to the reproduction of the dominant status of the landed caste groups in relation to the landless caste groups. In turn, the landed caste groups ensured the support of the rural poor to the Congress party candidates during elections. Thus, Gandhi's weakening of the Congress party deeply shook the clientelistic chain of resource exchange from the grassroots level upwards to the highest political offices. The ensuing instability in the social structure was evident in the numerous riots, industrial strikes, regional autonomy movements, and sub-nationalist movements which marred the entire duration of Gandhi's rule. In fact, one of the biggest political movements in the

country after independence, the JP movement, occurred during the height of Gandhi's domination in Indian politics, in 1973-75.¹¹

According to Bourdieu, the possibility of change in a subject's habitus is highest when she faces a crisis (i.e., when her categories of perception no longer match the objective relational structure of the field). Gandhi's moment of crisis was the period immediately after Nehru's death in 1964, which returned the Congress party wing leaders to the forefront of Indian politics. A clique of party wing leaders, known as the Syndicate, was instrumental in getting Gandhi nominated to the prime minister's office in 1966 (as they had been in nominating her predecessor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, after Nehru's death).

The increasing prominence of the party wing leaders tilted the balance of the symbolic order towards the party offices and social capital among party leaders. Thus, while Gandhi expected that her universal mass popularity capital was sufficient for her to claim political authority, the party wing leaders thought otherwise. The dissonance Gandhi experienced between her categories of experiencing the political world and the objective reality of the politics of the immediate post-Nehruvian period made her recognize the newly lowered symbolic value of universal mass popularity capital, as well as the importance of social capital in politics, in the immediate post-Nehruvian period (Singh 2012a).

¹¹ In 1973, food riots were reported across many regions of the western state of Maharashtra and its neighboring southern state of Karnataka. In May 1973, there was a violent mutiny in the provincial army of India's largest state, the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, which was suppressed only when armed forces were called in. In Bombay, the financial hub of the country, there were 13,000 industrial strikes during the 1973-74 period. A rioting incident in an engineering college of Gujarat triggered the JP movement, the largest political movement in the country after independence in 1947. During Gandhi's later period of dominance, various sub-nationalist movements and extreme left-wing movements emerged. For details on important countrywide unrest during Gandhi's reign, see Singh 2012b.

It is well known that from the beginning of her first term in the prime minister's office (1966-67), Gandhi relied on the politically weak members of her kitchen cabinet to deal with various political matters. When she faced mounting pressure from the Syndicate members to grant them greater access to state offices, she started developing social capital among Syndicate members' powerful rivals. She offered ministerial offices to prominent rivals of the Syndicate in exchange for their political alliance with her against the Syndicate.¹² However, after leading her party to success in the 1971 general election Gandhi failed to maintain political relations with those allies who had helped her against the Syndicate. Instead, she used various coercive means (including instances of blackmailing, spying, etc.) to keep them under her control (e.g., see Singh, 2012b). In the later part of her political career, she displayed a similar pattern of opportunistically using social capital in politics. Thus, we can argue that while Gandhi's practical experiences of the importance of social capital in politics during the post-Nehruvian period restructured her political habitus, populist politics remained the foundational structure of her political habitus.

¹² Gandhi's two prominent political allies were Y.B. Chavan and Jagjivan Ram who were both known for their high volume of social capital in politics. Both of them were also known for their rivalry with important members of the Syndicate. In the late 1960s Gandhi brought them to prominence by inducting them into important ministerial offices and allowing them to use their offices to gain control over their respective region's unit of Congress party. Later, these two leaders played an important role in helping Gandhi engineer a split in the Congress party in order to remove the Syndicate and their supporters from the party. For details on Gandhi's political alliances with these leaders see Singh 2012a; Singh 2012b.

Chapter 5

Indira Gandhi's Quest for Political Authority

In the early 1960s, the most important figures among the Congress party leaders were Atulya Ghosh, K. Kamraj, S.K. Patil, N. Sanjivva Reddy, S. Nijalingappa, and Biju Patnaik. When they formed a clique, publicly known as the Syndicate, they became the most powerful group of Congress party leaders. In 1963, Kamraj was elected as president of the Congress party; in the same year, the Syndicate got almost all of their supporters elected to the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the highest administrative body of the Congress party.

Nehru's death in 1964 provided the Syndicate their first opportunity to openly demonstrate their increasing influence in the party. Morarji Desai, the finance minister in Nehru's ministerial team, who also had a strong following in the western regions of the country, was an aspirant for the prime minister's post. The Syndicate, meanwhile, decided to support the candidacy of Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was also a minister during Nehru's reign but did not have a strong presence either within or outside his region's unit of the party (Uttar Pradesh). When Desai learned of the Syndicate's choice, he withdrew from the contest. Shastri was successfully nominated as Nehru's successor in the prime minister's office, and Desai was rewarded for his restraint with a nomination for finance minister (Srivastava 1995, p. 83-88).

The Syndicate's influence within the party was clearly evident in how easily they nominated their candidate for the prime minister's office. Furthermore, by successfully placing their nominee in the prime minister's office, the Syndicate had begun creating

conditions for themselves to attain higher authority than ministers over the state offices. Thus, Gandhi was bound to face a post-Nehruvian period in which those poised to play the role of the dominant elite were those who believed that politics-specific social capital was a more efficient means of generating political capital and attaining control over state offices than mass-popularity capital. Since Gandhi had developed a disposition for using mass-popularity capital she was certain to face unprecedented difficulties in her political life during the post-Nehruvian period.

Gandhi in Ministerial Offices, 1964-67: Experiences of a Woman Executive

At the beginning of the post-Nehruvian era, Gandhi believed that her family lineage-based-capital of mass popularity was a good enough reason for her to expect deference from senior leaders. She expected the party's elites to appoint her to the foreign affairs ministry, which had been led by Nehru when he was prime minister. Contrary to her expectations, however, Shastri appointed her to the low-ranking information and broadcasting ministry. He kept the ministry of foreign affairs under his charge, later transferring it to Sardar Swaran Singh, a senior member of his ministerial team (Malhotra 1991 [1989], p. 82-83).

Gandhi's expectation that her colleagues would respect the mass popularity that she had accumulated as Nehru's close confidante for almost two decades was clear in the way she handled a language riot crisis in 1965. During the early decades of post-independence politics, the possibility that Hindi (a language spoken by the people of north India) would become the only official language of the Indian state had led to

numerous anti-Hindi agitations in the southern parts of India. Early in 1965, one such agitation in the southern region of Madras became particularly violent. While Shastri and his confidantes were planning a strategy to deal with the riots, Gandhi autonomously rushed to Madras and began negotiating with the riot leaders. Shastri expressed his displeasure over Gandhi's intrusive and presumptuous efforts during a conversation with Inder Malhotra, a political journalist. As related by Malhotra, Gandhi became indignant when she heard about Shastri's displeasure, saying:

I do not see myself as a mere 'minister for information and broadcasting,' but as one of the leaders of the country. Do you think this government can survive if I resign today? I am telling you it won't. Yes, I have jumped over the prime minister's head, and I would do it again whenever the need arises (quoted in Malhotra, 1989 [1991], p. 84).

In this statement, Gandhi classified herself a 'leader' of the country; however, her appointment to a low-ranking ministry and the elite's low evaluation of her political practices show that the incumbent elite thought of her otherwise. In other words, descriptions of Gandhi's everyday political life during the initial post-Nehruvian period show that she was still basing her political practices on the Nehruvian-era ideal, in which a mass-popularity-based political disposition was highly respected. She did not yet realize that the party's leaders, known for their disposition for implementing politics specific social capital to generate political capital, were now the dominant elite.

Note that in the above quote, Gandhi describes her position as a 'mere' minister of information and broadcasting, demonstrating that she believed her lack of authority was the result of being in a low-ranking ministry. However, she was mistaken about the cause of her lack of authority. The Syndicate viewed leaders with extensive experience in manipulating politics specific-social capital as the only true politicians and the high party

offices (especially the president's office) as having higher symbolic value than *any* ministerial offices, including the prime minister's office. Gandhi did not realize until she became prime minister that all ministerial offices were less valued by the incumbent elite (i.e., the Syndicate) than high-ranking party offices.

Prime Minister Shastri died in the early hours of January 11, 1966. Gulzarilal Nanda, a senior member of Shastri's cabinet, was appointed as the caretaker prime minister until the new successor was selected. In the interim between Shastri's death and the selection of a new prime minister, Morarji Desai defied the Syndicate's authority by openly declaring his candidacy without their approval. Nanda also declared his candidacy. The Syndicate began to consider the idea of nominating Congress party president Kamraj as the next prime minister. Meanwhile, Gandhi began conducting backdoor maneuvers to secure her candidacy; however, she kept a low profile during all phases of the new succession struggle.

On the night of January 13, Kamraj declared his disinclination to be the party's nominee. Instead, to everyone's surprise, he expressed his favor for Gandhi, the most politically inexperienced candidate in the succession race. Contrary to his actions in the previous contest for the prime minister's office, this time Desai did not withdraw from the succession struggle. The Syndicate's members called a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP), a body composed of all the Congress party members in the parliament, to decide the two candidates' fate by secret ballot. The CPP members voted in favor of Gandhi, and, on January 24, 1966, she was sworn in as the first woman prime minister of India.

We can interpret the Syndicate's support for her nomination as their acknowledgment of her lineage-based capital of mass popularity. However, the fact that Kamraj preferred to remain Congress party president despite the opportunity to enter the prime minister's office is strong evidence of the lower symbolic valuation of the prime minister's office at the time. It is clear from the history of conflict between party wing and ministerial wing leaders that the former did not believe mass popularity to be the sign of a true politician. Therefore, it seems that the Syndicate nominated Gandhi to the prime minister's office because her symbolically lowered political disposition for mass popularity was the right fit for the now-devalued prime minister's office. Thus, contrary to Gandhi's expectations, the prime minister's office was not likely to afford her the kind of symbolic authority it had provided during the Nehruvian era.

A particularly disturbing incident that occurred just a month after Gandhi was sworn in as prime minister illustrates how Congress party members perceived her authority. A meeting of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), a body of the Congress party's regional units' delegates at Jaipur was called to discuss the possibility of deregulating the policy for restricted movement of agricultural products from one region to another in the wake of a serious food crisis plaguing the country. Gandhi's government, however, was not yet interested in releasing the agricultural products market from its control. Gandhi tried to change the opinion of the AICC delegates by promising them a quick re-examination of the food zone policy. Furthermore, as might be expected from a politician practicing mass-popularity politics, she declared that she would not eat rice as long as the people of rice-deficient regions, such as Kerela, did not have a sufficient amount of rice on their tables (Frank, 2002, p. 295; Malhotra, 1991 [1989], p.

92). Such rhetoric in a mass meeting would likely have caused the audience to break into applause and cheering in her support. At the AICC meeting, on the other hand, eyewitness accounts state that she was almost pushed from the stage by angry AICC delegates demanding an immediate end to the government's control over the agricultural market (Jayakar 1992 [1988], p. 136).

Interestingly, the biographical descriptions of Gandhi's interactions with the Syndicate's members and other elites show that they usually did not indicate to her that they believed their authority was greater than hers; in fact, they were quite protective of her, often referring to her affectionately as their *beti* (daughter) or *bahen* (sister). Bourdieu might have described their usage of these gender identifications during their interactions with her as an instance of 'symbolic violence,' where a dominant actor uses culturally consecrated methods of relating to dominated actors, hiding the former's dominant position so as to reap higher profits from their relation with the latter (e.g., see Bourdieu 2000 [1997], p. 204-205; Bourdieu, 1999 [1991], p.67-69). The culturally consecrated gender roles the Syndicate members tried to impose on Gandhi came with expectations of obedience and pliability. Perhaps they thought it would be easier and more profitable for them to control her if they developed a protective father-obedient daughter relationship with her rather than a superior-subordinate relationship.

Acts of symbolic violence are successful only when the dominated actor accepts the cultural conventions adopted by the dominant actor to relate to them (Bourdieu 2001 [1998]). Gandhi, however, made all possible efforts to distance herself from any gender-based identity. In fact, in a strikingly revealing conversation with her close friend, Pupul Jayakar, when she was still working as the first lady, she reportedly stated that she had

little interest in romance and lacked “womanly wiles” (Jayakar 1992, p. 367). She maintained a similar self-perception after being appointed to the prime minister’s office. When asked by a foreign journalist how she felt about being India’s first ‘woman’ prime minister, she reportedly responded that she would like to be recognized simply as a prime minister rather than as a man or woman prime minister (Vasudev 1974, p. 345).

Gandhi did try to live up to her self-classification as a leader of the country. Soon after the debacle in the AICC Jaipur session, which had been called to search for a solution to the Indian food crisis, she undertook a trip to the United States. She reportedly charmed President Lyndon Johnson, who assured her that India would soon receive three million tons of food and \$9 million in aid (Frank 2002, p. 296-297). Gandhi believed that her first foreign trip as prime minister made her a successful leader in international politics; however, upon returning to India, she faced caustic criticism from both her colleagues and opposition leaders for making the country vulnerable to the United States’ influence. V.K. Krishna Menon, who had once been Nehru’s close friend, sarcastically remarked in reference to Gandhi’s trip that “personal success is not the same as policy” (Jayakar 1992, p. 143).

The contradiction between Gandhi’s self-classification as a ‘leader’ and the Syndicate’s perception of her merely as a *beti* was a surprise for her. Difficulties she faced while claiming political authority also began to attune her political disposition to new shifts in the symbolic order. Not surprisingly, she started developing political maneuvering strategies which did not deviate from the Syndicate’s rules for evaluating the symbolic value of political practices (i.e., strategies based on the manipulation of social capital in the party).

By the end of 1967, aside from the Syndicate, there was also a group of powerful leaders who had yet to align themselves with either of the existent cliques. Prominent among them were Y.B. Chavan, Darbara Singh, Jagjivan Ram, Mohan Lal Sukhadia, C.B. Gupta, Brahmananda Reddy, and Swaran Singh. Gandhi began to draw upon as many of these 'neutral' elites as possible for support in developing a bulwark against the Syndicate's members. When Gandhi expelled Gulzarilal Nanda from her ministerial team on the pretext of his failure to control a rally of right-wing Hindu party leaders in Delhi, she appointed Y.B. Chavan as her new minister of internal affairs (Vasudev 1974, p. 398). Chavan, a political heavyweight from Maharashtra, was in perpetual contest with S.K. Patil, another influential leader from Maharashtra and a significant member of the Syndicate, over control of their region's unit of the Congress party.

As discussed earlier, while Gandhi's populist emotional appeals to the masses had reflected mass-popularity political strategies, these new efforts at establishing ties with powerful leaders inside the party reflected her implementation of politics specific social-capital-based political strategies. Thus, by appointing Y.B. Chavan as the new minister of internal affairs, Gandhi had started challenging the Syndicate by using strategies for which they were better known than she was.

Political Rise

The Congress party had participated in the 1952, '57, and, '62 general elections under the leadership of the Nehru-led ministerial wing's elites. In the 1967 general election, it participated for the first time under the leadership of the party-wing elites.

There were two significant components of the Congress party's electoral preparations: selection of the party's nominees and the party's electoral campaign. The regional units of the Congress party across the country, which were known as Pradesh Congress Committees (PCCs), prepared the list of the party's nominees for parliamentary seats from their respective regions. The PCCs sent their list of nominees to the Central Election Committee (CEC), a national-level office of the Congress party that gave final approval to all Congress party nominees for the general elections. Almost all leaders of the 1967 CEC were the Syndicate's nominees (Morris-Jones 1971). Furthermore, because the last elections for the high offices of PCCs across the country had been held under Syndicate's supervision in 1965, the Syndicate exerted strong influence in all PCCs as well (Morris-Jones 1971). Not surprisingly, descriptions of the Congress party's preparation of its nominee list for the 1967 election point out the Syndicate's' decisive role in its finalization (e.g., Malhotra 1989, p. 102; Jayakar 1992, p. 147).

None of Gandhi's strategies for asserting her symbolic authority (e.g., self-classification as a leader, shaping her image around her success in international politics) gave her leverage in the crucial selection process for the Congress party's nominees for the upcoming election. The Syndicate, however, did allow Gandhi to play a significant role in the party's electoral campaign—a mass mobilizing practice which they believed had lesser efficacy than politics specific—social capital for generating political capital and claiming authority over state offices. In the 1967 election, Gandhi was contesting for a parliamentary seat for the first time and was thus deeply involved with the electoral campaign in her constituency, *Rai Bareilly*. But almost all regional units of the Congress party invited Gandhi to campaign for the party in their regions as well. She eventually

covered nearly 35,000 miles of the country, most of it in an open jeep, addressing hundreds of public meetings in nearly every corner of India. It was during this election campaign that Gandhi started projecting herself as the champion of the poor, an election campaign rhetoric which eventually translated into her image as 'Mother India' (see Bhatia, 1974, p. 197-200; Frank, 2002, p. 301-304; Jayakar, 1974, p.400-423; Malhotra, 1991 [1989], p. 103-105).

The Syndicate's electoral strategies, however, failed to benefit the Congress party leaders. The party lost nearly 21% of its seats in the national parliament (see Table 1); it won enough seats to bid successfully to form the national government but lost control over the six regional governments. Shockingly, Kamraj lost the election of his parliamentary constituency to a relatively unknown newcomer of a regional party and Syndicate members Patil and Ghosh also lost the elections of their respective parliamentary constituencies. However, Gandhi and her allies, her family friends or party leaders not favored by the Syndicate, successfully won seats in the parliament.

The Congress party leaders met on February 27, 1967, to discuss the election results. During the meeting, S.K. Patil, an important member of the Syndicate, blamed Gandhi's leadership for the party's dismal electoral performance. Gandhi, supported by her new ally Chavan, delivered a forceful reply to Patil's attack, blaming the party wing's elites for the losses. She proceeded to argue that the election results had proven that the masses had rejected the 'older' leadership in favor of a new generation of leaders. Before the bickering among the elites got out of control, Kamraj stood and took personal

responsibility for the party's losses. This was Gandhi's first major public victory against the Syndicate.¹³

Still the Syndicate's authority could not be completely dismissed. Though the party had suffered losses under their leadership, most of the successful party candidates had been nominated for elections by them. In other words, their social capital inside the party was almost intact, even though they could no longer claim its high symbolic value. Furthermore, while their symbolic authority had suffered a relative decrease, Gandhi had yet to lead the party to victory in elections and establish the higher symbolic value of her mass popularity capital. Interestingly, in the new situation the Syndicate and Desai became allies. They were willing to re-nominate Gandhi to the prime minister's office under the condition that Gandhi both induct Desai as the deputy prime minister and reappoint him to the finance ministry. Perhaps the Syndicate's members were hoping that Desai would be 'their man' in the new ministry. Along with her allies, who were now known as her 'kitchen cabinet,' Gandhi agreed to re-nominate Desai to the finance ministry and also give him the title of deputy prime minister, but he was neither allowed any say in the ministry formation nor given any formal powers as deputy prime minister. The Syndicate's members were likewise not permitted to participate in the formation of the 1967 ministerial team.

Desai's position in the new government, as a deputy prime minister without any formal powers, symbolized a new balance in the relationship between Gandhi and the Syndicate. On the one hand, it can be argued that Desai was able to enter Gandhi's government because of the Syndicate's remaining social-capital-based political authority

¹³ Details of this Congress party meeting are given in the Congress party's Report of the General Secretaries 1967.

in the Congress party. On the other hand, the reduction of Desai's official post to a mere ceremonial position in the cabinet can be interpreted as a sign of the relative increase in the symbolic value of Gandhi's mass popularity capital.

It did not seem likely that the Syndicate's political authority would rebound. The key reason for the Congress party's nearly two decades of electoral success since the country's independence was its leaders' strong and stable relationship with the landed caste groups who supplied their clients' votes in exchange for various resources. In 1961, landless agricultural laborers and small cultivators constituted 61.69% of the total rural population. By 1971, that percentage had increased to almost 70% (Frankel 1978, p. 493). At roughly the same time, the annual rate of growth of agricultural production decreased from 3.57 to 2.36 million tons (Chaudhuri 1979, p. 47). Following the ethnographic studies showing that agricultural produce was a primary commodity of exchange between landed caste groups and their clients (Gould 1977, p. 287-292; Scott 1977), one might hypothesize that an increase in the client groups' population would have led to an increase in the amount of agricultural produce distributed by the landed caste groups. However, the decrease in the growth rate of agricultural production suggests that landed caste groups were losing the necessary resources to ensure the services and loyalty of their clients, making it difficult for them to ensure their clients' votes for the Congress party's leaders. The Syndicate's failure to mobilize the masses during the fourth general election, in spite of having firm control of the social capital in the party—the essential resource for gaining the political favor of rural landed caste groups—can be seen as important evidence in support of this hypothesis.

One could further argue that by the 1970s, the landless laborers and cultivators who constituted nearly 70% of the rural client population, and whose political choices had been determined by their relations with landed caste groups in the first two decades of postcolonial politics, were on the verge of emerging as an independent category of voters. The Syndicate's members, however, lacked both Nehru's mass popularity and the political disposition to directly communicate with the masses. Gandhi, on the other hand, not only had inherited Nehru's fame, but also had developed a deep political disposition for mass-popularity rhetoric. Though she had only recently submitted to social-capital-based political strategies, she was more likely than the Syndicate to develop political repertoires of slogans, posters, rhetoric, appearances, mannerisms, and political practices that would effectively mobilize the new category of electorates.

Perhaps Gandhi had inklings about the changing dynamics of relations in the rural social space as a result of her campaign activities in the last general election. Furthermore, the Syndicate's loss meant that the rules for evaluating the symbolic values of political practices no longer unambiguously favored their politics-specific-social capital-based style. Although Gandhi was yet to prove the efficacy of her mass-popularity-based political disposition to successfully mobilize the masses, she was now in a position, relative to the Syndicate, where she would have felt more comfortable with her political disposition than before. Thus began her experiments with populist politics.

Gandhi took the bold step of nationalizing almost all important private industries and financial institutions in 1969. Her aim in making this dramatic change in state policies toward the private market may have been simultaneously to irk the already hostile and symbolically weaker Syndicate, who were known to be close to major

industrial houses of the country, and to gain the attention of the potentially powerful emerging category of poor rural voters.¹⁴ She also reversed the Indian government's earlier policy of providing privy purses to the former princes who had agreed to dissolve their states into the Indian federation after independence. The Syndicate did not look favorably upon Gandhi's audacity in hurting their supporters among the rich and powerful in the country. Not surprisingly, they vehemently criticized the government's new policies, to which Gandhi's kitchen cabinet members gave equally spirited replies (e.g., see Frank 2001, p. 307-320).

In 1969, the increasing animosity between the Syndicate and Gandhi's kitchen cabinet led to the first major split in the Congress party after independence. The Syndicate's members and their supporters, constituting almost the entire party wing, formed their own party, the Congress party (Organization), or Congress (O), and moved to the right-wing opposition parties' bench in the parliament. The kitchen cabinet named its share of the Congress party the Congress party (Requisitionist), or Congress (R). Having demonstrated a strong pro-poor inclination in developing new state policies, Gandhi easily found support among the Socialist and Communist party leaders in the parliament. The Congress party was able to maintain its majority in the parliament, and Gandhi was able to remain in the prime minister's office.¹⁵

Gandhi's political practices after the 1967 general elections demonstrated her new mastery over the post-Nehruvian symbolic order of the Indian political field. She initiated

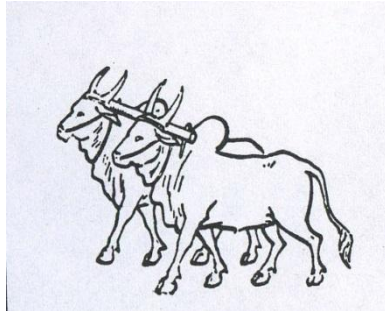
¹⁴ For the 1967 elections, the Syndicate-led Congress party received the largest donation ever made to a political party in India since independence, almost eight million rupees, from industrialists and business owners. For details, see *Economic Times* 1967 (Bombay), December 5, 1967.

¹⁵ For details on the significant events preceding the 1969 split in the Congress party, the respective strategies of the Congress (R) and the Congress (O) members in the parliament, and their political allies among the opposition parties, see Hardgrave 1970; Bhatia 1974, p. 219-229; Malhotra 1991 (1989), p. 114-124.

state policies that tapped into her symbolically charged rivalry with the Syndicate in such a manner that their public attacks only contributed to her image as a messiah of the poor. Furthermore, her government managed to complete its term in spite of splitting from the Syndicate. It appears that Gandhi, having sensed the lowered symbolic value of the Syndicate members' political disposition, had unleashed the full prowess of her political disposition. All that she needed now was an unquestionable demonstration of the masses' support for her political strategies.

The Congress party participated in the 1971 general elections under Gandhi's leadership. She and her allies handpicked almost all Congress candidates for election. Gandhi, the star campaigner of the party, began actively constructing a new identity for the growing population of rural peasants as the *garib*, or 'the poor.' She pursued their support for her political views by encapsulating her regime's newly created pro-poor policies in the slogan of *garibi hatao*—literally, "remove poverty." This simple yet powerful rhetoric, which had never been used within popular political discourse, became the cornerstone of Gandhi's election campaign.

Figure 1: Election Symbols of the Indian National Congress (INC) and Congress (R) Parties



INC 1952-67



Congress (R) 1971

In fact, during the 1971 general election, the Congress party adopted a new election symbol, the image of a cow caring for her calf, which was more consistent with Gandhi's aspirations to relate to the new category of rural voters (see Figure 1). While the earlier symbol of a pair of bulls may have appealed to the landed caste farmers former Congress party leaders had mobilized using their social capital in the party, the image of a cow caring for her calf evoked a strong sense of the hallowed relationship between a mother and her young child. It is quite reasonable to infer that, by adopting a new election symbol that would be visible across India in the Congress party's campaign posters, Gandhi was trying to visually evoke a maternal relationship with the politically 'younger' groups of rural electorates. Thus, the new election symbol was in perfect harmony with her 1967 election campaign speeches, in which she had addressed the rural peasantry as her youngest and weakest 'children,' whom she most needed to protect.

Table 4: Seat Distribution of Political Parties in Parliament, 1952-71

Election Year	Total Seats	Cng/CngR	Cng O	CPI	CPM	SO C	PSP/KM PP	SSP	SWA	BJS	Oth Parties	Ind
1952	489	364		16		12	9			3	27	38
1957	494	371		27			19			4	31	42
1962	494	361		29		6	12		18	14	34	20
1967	520	283		23	19		13	23	44	35	45	35
1971	518	352	16	23	25		2	3	8	22	53	14

Cng = Congress Party	Cng R = Congress (Requisitionist)	Cng O = Congress
CPI = Communist Party	CPM = Communist Party of India	SOC = Socialist Party
PSP = Praja Socialist	KMPP = Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party	SSP = Samyukta Socialist
SWA = Swatantra Party	BJS = Bhartiya Jana Sangh	IND = Independent

Gandhi's strategic use of the symbolic powers of state offices to classify divergent social groups into rich and poor classes, coupled with her projection of her image as the protector of the poor and that of the Syndicate as pro-rich 'old leaders,' succeeded in electorally mobilizing masses during the 1971 elections. The ruling Congress party won 27% more seats in the parliament than in the previous election, regaining control of the national government, while the Syndicate-led Congress (O) won only 16 seats (see Table 4). To put it simply, after the 1971 general election, changes in the symbolic order of the Indian political field since Nehru's death in 1964 had begun to solidify in such a way that Gandhi's political habitus for manipulating mass popularity to gain political capital now commanded the highest symbolic value. At this point, she needed to strategically use her assured access to the highest state office (i.e., the prime minister's office) to cement her newly established symbolic authority in politics among the ruling party leaders.

Cementing Authority

The incumbent elites of the ruling party secured their authority within the political field first by hand-picking their party's candidates for the parliamentary elections and later by controlling the selection processes of their party's leaders for the highest state offices (i.e., ministerial offices). Not surprisingly, they looked for specific political characteristics in their parliamentarians and ministers to ensure that their authority would be accepted by them. In the 1967 general election, 303 of the Congress party's leaders, most of who were nominated as Congress party candidates by the Syndicate's members, were successfully elected for the 553-member parliament. In the 1971 general election, when Gandhi was fully in charge of the Congress party's electoral preparation, the number of Congress party parliamentarians increased to 372.

Table 5 shows the mean values of the 1967 and 1971 Congress parliamentarians' 16 different office-holding experiences in national, regional, and grassroots-level politics. It also shows their total office-holding experiences in the three levels of political offices and the percentage differences between their total office experiences. We can begin comparing the characteristics of the Congress party parliamentarians in each of the two sessions, by examining the changes in their total political experiences at each of the three levels of political offices.

In Table 5, note that the 1971 Congress party parliamentarians had less experience in all three types of political offices than the 1967 parliamentarians. However, the steepest decrease was in their grassroots office experience, which was almost 30% lower than that of their colleagues in the previous session. Furthermore, the standard

deviation from the mean value of their respective experiences in the grassroots offices was almost 22% less than the value from the previous session. These differences show that the 1971 session's parliamentarians were politically less mature than their colleagues in the previous session. They were especially less experienced in grassroots politics, indicating that they were likely to have a relatively weaker grasp of strategies for mobilizing rural masses during elections than their predecessors.

Table 5 also provides details of the mean value of the 1967 and 1971 session Congress party parliamentarians' experiences in different types of offices within each of the three different categories of offices. Upon close examination, we can see that, compared to the 1967 Congress party parliamentarians, the 1971 parliamentarians had lower or nearly the same experiences in almost all state and party offices in national, regional, and grassroots-level politics. However, notice that their few office experiences (depicted in the boldface in Table 5) were higher than those of the 1967 parliamentarians. In spite of their lower overall political experience, their experiences in the national ministerial offices, regional legislative assemblies, regional cooperatives, and municipality offices were higher than those of the 1967 parliamentarians. A common feature of these offices is that they are all state offices. In other words, while the 1971 Congress parliamentarians were younger in terms of their political experiences than their 1967 colleagues, especially with regard to their experiences with rural mass mobilization strategies, they had higher experiences in state offices than party offices in all three categories.

After the 1967 succession struggle, in which the Syndicate's members accepted blame for the party's losses, Gandhi selected a team of 50 ministers out of the pool of 303

Congress party parliamentarians. In 1971, when she was fully in charge of selecting the party's leaders for the parliamentary elections as well as the members of her ministerial team, she chose 53 parliamentarians out of the pool of 372 for ministerial offices.

Table 5: Political Experiences of Congress Party Parliamentarians, 1967 and 1971

	1967		1971	
National Offices	Mean	Std	Mean	Std
Member of Parliament	1.26	1.363	1.08	1.376
Parliamentary Committee	0.72	1.521	0.61	1.458
All India Congress Committee	0.477	1.103	0.477	1.027
National Minister	0.39	1.199	0.46	1.357
National Board	0.26	0.734	0.22	0.736
Congress Parliamentary Party	0.15	0.616	0.132	0.458
Total	3.261	3.861	2.988	3.832
Percentage Change			-8.371	-0.751
Regional Offices				
Regional Congress Committee	0.90	1.238	0.646	0.990
Regional Board	0.80	1.587	0.56	1.278
Member of Legislative Assembly	0.61	1.00	0.70	1.076
Regional Minister	0.25	0.874	0.21	0.691
Legislative Committee	0.16	0.691	0.16	0.630
Congress Legislative Party	0.08	0.388	0.07	0.342
Regional Cooperative	0.04	0.285	0.23	0.934
Total	2.832	3.093	2.572	3.130
Percentage Change			-9.180	1.196
Grassroots Offices				
District Congress Committee	0.70	1.203	0.548	0.957
District Council	0.30	0.714	0.07	0.294
Municipality	0.167	0.509	0.20	0.721
Total	1.164	1.606	0.820	1.247
Percentage Change			-29.552	-23.252

Table 6: Predictors of Congress Party Parliamentarians' Chances of Becoming Ministers

	1967		1971	
National Offices	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Member of Parliament	0.019	0.400	0.629	0.917
Parliamentary Committee	0.014	1.895	0.359	0.861
All India Congress	0.407	1.365	0.805	0.943
National Minister	0.000	12.836	0.000	2.404
National Board	0.407	0.663	0.253	1.337
Congress Parliamentary	0.476	1.507	0.339	1.474
Regional Offices				
Regional Congress	0.289	1.349	0.705	1.092
Regional Board	0.288	0.666	0.137	1.238
Member of Legislative	0.190	0.594	0.584	0.890
Regional Minister	0.003	2.727	0.003	2.128
Legislative Committee	0.229	0.228	0.341	0.391
Congress Legislative Party	0.026	6.339	0.439	1.507
Regional Cooperative	0.760	1.454	0.857	0.957
Grassroots Offices				
District Congress Committee	0.246	0.600	0.221	0.705
District Council	0.629	0.645	0.319	0.322
Municipality	0.995	0.000	0.830	1.063
Constant	0.000	0.053	0.000	0.068
Model Chi-Square	124.514	0.000	78.505	0.000
<i>Df</i>	16		16	

Table 6 depicts the results of the binomial logistic regression modeling of the 1967 and 1971 Congress party parliamentarians' various types of office-holding experience (independent interval/ratio variable) among the three levels of political offices as predictors of their chances of becoming a minister (dependent categorical variable). Although the model chi-square value of the logistic regression models for both the 1967 and 1971 sessions is highly significant, its value for the former session is higher than its value for the latter session. In other words, while the binomial logistic regression model better fits the 1967 parliamentarians' data than the 1971 parliamentarians' data, both models indicate that at least one form of office experience of both sessions' parliamentarians significantly affected their likelihood of being selected for ministerial offices.

From Table 6, we can see that among the Congress party parliamentarians' experiences of holding various types of national political offices in 1967, election to the parliament significantly decreased their chances of becoming a minister, by a factor of 0.400. However, each unit increase in their parliamentary committee experiences increased their chances of becoming a minister by a factor of 1.895. The national office-holding experience that made the greatest impact on their chances of becoming a minister was previous membership in the national ministerial team. In fact, each unit increase in their prior experiences in the national ministry increased their chances of becoming a minister in 1967 by a factor of nearly 13. Their prior experiences in regional politics also affected their chances of becoming a minister. In 1967, a Congress party parliamentarian's chances of becoming a minister rather than remaining in the pool of ordinary parliamentarians increased by a factor of 2.727 for each unit increase in his

experiences in regional ministerial offices. It also increased by a factor of 6.339 for each unit increase in his prior office occupancy in the Congress Legislative Party. Grassroots politics did not play a significant role in selection for the ministerial team.

From the binomial logistic regression model for the 1971 parliamentary session, it appears that, as in the 1967 session, only regional and national-level office experience affected a parliamentarian's chances of becoming a minister. Interestingly, only ministerial offices remained significant for the 1971 parliamentarians' chances for upward political mobility. Specifically, a Congress party parliamentarian's chances of becoming a minister increased by a factor of 2.128 for each unit increase in her prior occupancy of a regional ministerial office and by a factor of 2.404 for each unit increase in her prior occupancy of a national ministerial office.

Binomial logistic regression modeling shows that, in 1967, when Gandhi's choices for selecting her ministerial team were limited to a pool of parliamentarians nominated by the Syndicate's members for parliamentary elections, she exhibited a negative acknowledgement of parliamentary experience. Interestingly, most of the 1967 parliamentarians had parliamentary experience in one or more of the three parliamentary sessions held during the Nehruvian era (1952-57, 1957-62, and 1962-67). Since Nehru had been known for not interfering with the party wing leaders' list of nominees for the parliamentary elections in their respective regions (Kochanek 1968), the 1967 and 1971 sessions' parliamentarians who had been elected to a previous parliamentary session were likely to have been dependent on the party wing leaders for their entry into national politics. Once inside the parliament, however, their nominations to national ministerial offices and parliamentary committees had been decided by Nehru's ministerial wing. In

other words, an examination of how parliamentarians' experiences in national politics shaped their chances of becoming ministers shows that Gandhi tended to disfavor parliamentarians who were likely to be close to the party wing leaders and to favor parliamentarians who had previously been either part of or dependent on the ministerial team.

Gandhi exhibited the same pattern of preference in regards to parliamentarians' previous regional office experiences. She viewed their prior experiences in regional ministerial offices and legislative party offices positively, because membership in these offices entailed closeness to the ministerial wing rather than the party wing of the Congress party's regional units. In 1971, when she had autonomy in choosing her ministerial team from the pool of parliamentarians she had nominated for parliamentary elections, she specifically chose only those parliamentarians whose prior experience in regional and national ministerial offices was relatively higher than others'.

In order to gauge how useful these results are in helping to understand how Gandhi consolidated her growing political authority, it is important to recall that ruling party leaders' prior office experiences reflected their aspirations for particular kinds of political offices. By choosing as candidates for parliamentary election ruling party leaders with lower political experience (especially in mobilizing masses) but higher state office experiences, Gandhi was ensuring that the party leaders elected to the parliament would recognize her capital of mass popularity as their primary source for mobilizing masses, especially during parliamentary elections, and their access to high state offices. Among the ruling party leaders elected to the parliament, by choosing those leaders who were known to be close to the Nehru-Gandhi family for ministerial offices Gandhi ensured that

the ruling party's high state office occupants perceived her capital of Nehru-family-based-mass popularity to be a more important source for gaining high state offices than party president's capital of popularity among politicians. Furthermore, her choice of ruling party leaders for high state offices ensured that the younger leaders of the ruling party aspiring for a political career would have perceived party leaders with long state office experience and closeness to Nehru family, not with long party office experience and closeness to party president, as competent leaders of the ruling party.

From 1971 onwards, Indira Gandhi remained the dominant force in Indian politics. During her reign, India witnessed some of its most glorious achievements, including self-sufficiency in agricultural production and advancements in peaceful uses of nuclear and space technology. After the success of the Indian armed forces in the Bangladesh Liberation war, she was hailed by the opposition party leaders as the goddess *Durga*. However, India also faced one of its darkest moments during her reign when, in 1975, Gandhi suspended almost all major institutions of democracy by imposing the state of Emergency. She lost power in the general election after the Emergency in 1977, only to regain it in 1980. In 1984, her almost two-decade political career ended tragically when she was assassinated by her own bodyguards. Not surprisingly, she is still popularly viewed as a politician with uniquely fierce political agency who radically transformed Indian politics.

Chapter 6

The Network Structure of Indian Politics in 1971

The first two decades of post-independence Indian politics (1947-67) has been widely described as an example of a multiparty system dominated by one party; specifically, it has been called the Congress party system (Kothari, 1964; Manor, 1997; Morris-Jones, 1978). The Congress party's leaders controlled not only the central government but also almost all of the country's regional governments. Leaders of the opposition parties used their ties with Congress party politicians to gain access to various state resources. The Congress party elite, led by Prime Minister Nehru (1947-64), did not attempt to block this use of Congress party politicians, as it reduced opposition parties to pressure groups, helped Congress party leaders to avoid confrontation with the leaders of opposition parties, and caused the latter to believe that their lack of direct control over state offices did not equal a lack of political authority. By occasionally favoring one party over another, Congress party politicians also ensured that the different levels of access to state resources granted to opposition parties' leaders further exacerbated the ideological differences among them.

After Nehru's death in 1964, an elite clique known as the Syndicate gained prominence inside the Congress party. This tightly knit group of leaders had immense clout among politicians inside both the Congress party and the opposition parties. They displayed their political dominance by playing the pivotal role in nominating Nehru's successor Shastri to the prime minister's office in 1964, as well as Shastri's successor, Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi, in 1966. During Shastri's brief tenure, the Syndicate did not face any serious challenge to their political authority, but they could not exercise their

political authority as easily during the first term of Gandhi (1966-67), who had inherited Nehru's mass popularity.

The Syndicate perceived Gandhi as to be an insolent executive and prepared to replace her, or at least to tame her, by orchestrating every aspect of the Congress party's preparation for the general election in 1967 – from the candidate nomination processes to the distribution of economic capital and the delegation of responsibility to leaders for the party's campaign activities. However, not only did the Congress party suffer an unprecedented loss of seats in the national parliament under the Syndicate's leadership (see Table 7), but also its leader Kamraj, the president of the Congress party, was defeated in the parliamentary election. After the disastrous 1967 election, the Syndicate uneasily re-nominated Gandhi to the office of prime minister. A bitter struggle between Gandhi and the Syndicate soon ensued, culminating in 1969 when the Congress party split into the Gandhi-led Congress (R) and the Syndicate-led Congress (O).

Table 7: Distribution of Party Leaders in the 1952, '57, and '62 Parliamentary Sessions

Year	Total Seats	Cng	CPI	SOC	PSP/K MPP	SWA	BJS	Other Parties	Ind
1952	489	364	16	12	9	0	3	27	38
1957	494	371	27	0	19	0	4	31	42
1962	494	361	29	6	12	18	14	34	20

Cong (O) = Congress (O)	Ind = Independent	ML = Muslim League
DMK = Dravida Munnetra	SWA = Swatantra	KCn = Kerela Congress
CPM = Communist Party of	BJS = Bhartiya Jana Sangh	PSP = Praja Socialist Party
TPS = Telengana Praja	RSP= Revolutionary Socialist	
CPI = Communist Party of	SSP = Samyukta Socialist Party	

During the 1971 parliamentary election, Gandhi, who was already popular among the rural masses as Nehru's daughter, developed the political slogan of *garibi hatao*, or 'remove poverty. Her strategy of employing this populist rhetoric worked; the Congress (R) won 372 seats in the 1971 parliament, 24% more than it had won in the previous general election, while the Syndicate's Congress (O) won only 16 seats (see Table 7).

Table 8: Ruling Parliamentarians Tied to Cabinet Ministers

Cabinet Ministers	Ruling Parliamentarians Tied to Cabinet Ministers
I. Gandhi	85
Personal Friends	
F. Ahmed	57
M. Kumramangalam	41
S. Ray	48
C. Subramaniam	37
K. Singh	23
R. Bahadur	37
Political Allies	
J. Ram	101
M. Haque	80
K. Hanumanthaiya	79
Y. Chavan	49
S. Singh	45
H. Gokhale	44

Gandhi appointed her most trusted friends as cabinet ministers, the highest ranking ministers in the government. Some were personally known to her because of familial relations, while other became close to her during her struggle against the Syndicate beginning with her first term in the office in 1966. Her close personal friends among the cabinet ministers were Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Karan Singh, S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, C. Subramaniam and Raj Bahadur, while the political allies who became close to her when they chose to join her rather than the Syndicate after the 1969 Congress party split were Jagjivan Ram, Yashwantrao Chavan, Swaran Singh, Moinul Haque, H. R. Gokhale and K. Hanumanthaiya.

Table 8 illustrates cabinet ministers' ties with the ruling parliamentarians. We can see that, on average, each of Gandhi's personal friends had ties with approximately 40 ruling parliamentarians, while each of her political allies had ties with approximately 66 ruling parliamentarians. Furthermore, we can also note that the largest group of ruling parliamentarians (101) had ties with Gandhi's political ally Ram, while only the second-largest group (85) had ties with Gandhi herself.

Table 9 contains data on cabinet ministers' ties with the opposition parties' parliamentarians. The opposition parties are arranged in columns by the number of their parliamentarians' ties with cabinet ministers, in descending order from left to right. When we look at the left-side columns, we can note that, among all opposition parties, only Congress (O) parliamentarians had ties with all of Gandhi's personal friends and political allies. The Congress (O) parliamentarians are followed by parliamentarians from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Communist Party Marxist (CPM), Telengana Praja Samiti (TPS), and Communist Party of India (CPI), and finally by independent

S. Singh	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H. Gokhale	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Cong (O) = Congress (O)	Ind = Independent	ML = Muslim League
DMK = Dravida Munnetra	SWA = Swatantra	KCn = Kerela Congress
CPM = Communist Party of India	BJS = Bhartiya Jana Sangh	PSP = Praja Socialist Party
TPS = Telengana Praja Samiti	RSP= Revolutionary Socialist Party	
CPI = Communist Party of India	SSP = Samyukta Socialist Party	

When we look at the right-side columns of Table 9, we can note that the Swatantra party (SWA) parliamentarians had ties with only two cabinet ministers, while the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) parliamentarians had ties with only one cabinet minister. Finally, parliamentarians of the Praja Socialist Party (PSP), Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP), Muslim League (ML) and Kerela Congress (KCn) had no ties with any cabinet ministers.

During the 1971-75 period, Prime Minister Gandhi and her cabinet ministers met on an almost weekly basis to discuss important matters of state governance and hence had close interactions with each other. Thus, the manner in which Gandhi's relationship with each of her cabinet ministers unfolded was crucial in determining the evolution of the entire network structure of Indian politics during the 1971-75 period.

Note that Gandhi had lived up to the expectations of her personally tied cabinet ministers by choosing them as the highest-ranking ministers in spite of their lack of serious clout among parliamentarians. Also, Gandhi's politically tied cabinet ministers had supported her during the 1969 split in the party; in exchange, Gandhi had appointed them as her cabinet ministers in 1971, the year she decisively led her party to electoral

victory and gained ultimate political authority. Thus, she had also lived up to the expectations of her politically tied cabinet ministers. In other words, one can infer that Gandhi appeared to be ready to nurture her relations with both personally and politically tied cabinet ministers in 1971. However, how it evolved during her assigned tenure in the office, 1971-75, depended on whether she lived up to expectations of her cabinet ministers during every day interactions with them.

Gandhi did not have to worry too much about maintaining her relations with friends among the cabinet ministers, because unfaltering loyalty is the key element of personal ties. However, she could not equally take for granted the loyalty of her politically tied ministers. For these cabinet ministers, it was important to have access to state resources to pass on to their supporters among parliamentarians. Thus, Gandhi needed to regularly live up to the expectations of her politically tied cabinet ministers by ensuring their easy access to state resources. If she had failed to do so, she would have threatened her political allies' clout among parliamentarians, which was their primary source of political authority. This could have prompted them to reconsider their ties with Gandhi, as political ties are based on cost/benefit analysis rather than on loyalty.

The Elite's Authority Reproduction Strategies and Changes in the Political Network

As we noted earlier, Gandhi's source of political authority was her popularity among the masses as Nehru's daughter. However, during her early days in post-Nehruvian politics, some did not accept her political authority, especially those who viewed political ties as the primary source of political authority. Perhaps for this reason,

she eventually found herself in a position to confront her political benefactors in the Congress party, the Syndicate leaders, who were known for their expertise on political ties. Her bitter conflict with the Syndicate had made her wary of leaders known for using political ties to gain political authority. Thus, Gandhi not only used her popularity among the masses as her source of political authority but also distrusted leaders with a great deal of clout in politics.

Observers of the Gandhian regime have noted that Gandhi, along with her personal friends among the cabinet ministers (Ahmad, Kumramangalam, Bahadur, Ray, K. Singh, and Subramaniam), began to operate as the final authority in state affairs immediately after the 1971 general election. Journalists started referring to her clique of personal friends as her 'kitchen cabinet.' In fact, Stanley Kochanek (1976), a leading scholar of Congress party during the Nehruvian and Gandhian periods, described the Congress party during this period in politics as a highly centralized party in which effective power was in the hands of Gandhi and her clique of personal friends. Soon, Gandhi and her kitchen cabinet began devaluing her political allies' authority in politics. A perfect example of how Gandhi treated these allies is the way she handled her most important political ally among the cabinet ministers, Ram, who headed the defense ministry.

After the general election in 1971, the biggest challenge faced by the Indian state was war with Pakistan over Bangladesh.¹⁶ In the process of planning and executing war

¹⁶ Pakistan received the region of East Bengal during India's partition in 1947. The political elite of Pakistan did not get along with the Bengali-speaking political elite of East Bengal. In Pakistan's general election in December 1970, a party from East Bengal won the majority in the parliament. Refusing to accept the results, the Pakistani elite arrested the top leadership of the winning party and conducted a military raid of East Bengal. The ensuing chaos in East Bengal led to the entry of huge waves of refugees into the neighboring Indian regions of West Bengal and

strategy, Gandhi completely sidelined Ram. When the Pakistani army surrendered, Ram recommended more aggressive action against Pakistan, while Gandhi preferred a ceasefire. Gandhi reportedly ‘silenced’ the disgruntled Ram and announced a ceasefire with Pakistan during the last cabinet meeting called to discuss the war (see Frank, 2002, p. 342; Malhotra, 1991 [1989], pp. 140-141).

Gandhi also began to thwart Ram’s expectations of political ties between them by elevating the political status of rival junior leaders from his region, Bihar. For example, much to Ram’s resentment, Gandhi began grooming L. N. Mishra, a young leader from his home state, as one of her most trusted political lieutenants. Furthermore, she did not take Ram into her confidence while appointing leaders to the party and state offices of his region. In fact, after the 1972 assembly election in Bihar, she personally appointed the chief minister of Bihar without consulting Ram (Malhotra, 1991 [1989], pp. 148-149).

As discussed earlier, a majority of the ruling parliamentarians were dependent on their relationships with Gandhi’s political allies, especially Ram, rather than on their relationships with her personal friends. Thus, the kitchen cabinet’s efforts to undermine their political allies’ authority in state affairs restricted those allies’ followers’ access to state resources.

Observers of this period of Indian politics have noted that the kitchen cabinet members, who were aware of frustrations among the ruling party leaders, adopted confrontational relations with the leaders of opposition parties (Hart, 1988; Manor, 1997). Their hope was that this confrontational approach would avoid the possibility of any

Assam. India lodged a formal complaint at the UN against the Pakistani army’s actions in East Bengal, but the United States and China warned India not to interfere in the internal matters of Pakistan. Disregarding this warning, Gandhi ordered the swift action of armed forces. Pakistan’s army surrendered to the Indian army before Chinese and American warships could reach India.

large-scale defection of the ruling party leaders to the opposition parties, whose leaders had maintained amicable ties with them during the Nehruvian period. Thus, the kitchen cabinet members viewed with suspicion any non-confrontational interactions between ruling party parliamentarians and opposition party leaders. They were especially suspicious of interactions between their political allies among cabinet ministers and opposition parties' leaders.

While it is true that Congress (O) parliamentarians had ties with all of Gandhi's personally and politically tied cabinet ministers (see Table 4), this did not lead to any confusion among the kitchen cabinet members about the grave threat that Congress (O) leaders posed to keep Congress party parliamentarians in the party. As discussed earlier, Congress (O) was formed by the Syndicate, Gandhi's former rivals in her party, who were known to be experts in manipulating their clout among politicians to gain political authority. Thus, the kitchen cabinet members were likely to be very suspicious of any relations between their political allies and Congress (O) leaders.

Among the opposition parties' parliamentarians who had ties with Gandhi's friends and political allies, DMK and CPM parliamentarians had ties with all of her political allies. Thus, Gandhi's kitchen cabinet members were likely to be highly suspicious about their political allies' interactions with DMK and CPM leaders, as well as Congress (O) leaders. Based on this reasoning, we can infer that, as Gandhi's 1971 reign progressed, those likely to face a high level of difficulty in accessing state resources included her political allies among cabinet ministers as well as Congress (O), DMK and CPM leaders. It was in this political environment that the JP movement emerged to challenge Gandhi's political authority.

1973-75: The JP Movement Strikes the Elite's Political Ties with Opposition Parties

By the mid-1970s, a series of natural and political crises presented Gandhi with the gravest political challenge she had faced so far. Severe drought, high inflation, and food scarcity that had increased since the early 1970s began to spark riots and strikes across the country (see Franda 1976, p. 3-6; Moraes 1980, p. 198-199; Frank 2002, p. 348; Malhotra 1991 [1989], p.154; Dhar 2000, p. 239-244). Until early 1974, such agitations were neither well organized nor necessarily related. By the year's end, however, they had begun to be clustered under an umbrella known as the "JP movement." At the helm of the movement was Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), a leader with pan-India mass appeal who had founded the first socialist party in India, the Praja Socialist Party (PSP).¹⁷

Leaders of Congress (O), which was ideologically a right-wing party, were the first among the opposition parties' leaders to support the JP movement. They were quickly joined by leaders of BJS, another right-wing party. The SSP leaders, whose radical socialism had earlier kept them away from the Congress (O) and BJS leaders, also supported the movement. Soon the Congress (O), BJS, and SSP leaders were joined by leaders of the right-wing SWA, socialist PSP and radical left-wing CPM and RSP parties.

¹⁷ Jayaprakash Narayan came to prominence in Indian politics when he was leading the Congress party during the last phase of the nationalist struggle called the 'quit India' movement. He acquired the mythological image of a hero known for using his cunning to dodge the colonial police, as well as efficiently attacking them whenever an opportunity arose. His political significance in the Congress party can be gauged by the fact that Nehru had once publicly declared him to be his successor to the prime minister's office. However, during the early years of post-independence politics, he became disillusioned with the Congress party's lackadaisical approach toward poverty relief programs. Before the first general election in 1952, he formed the Praja Socialist Party in the hope of developing it as an alternative to the Congress party, but he lost faith in it due to incessant internal bickering and its miserable performance in the first general election. He resigned from the PSP and left institutional politics altogether to join Acharya Vinobha Bhave's *Sarvodaya* movement (whose purpose was to persuade the landed caste groups to donate their land to the poor villagers) before giving the fateful call for *Sampoorna Kranti*. For details on Jaya Prakash Narayan's political biography, see Bhattacharjea (2004).

Among all regional parties, only the DMK leaders are known to have supported the JP movement.

The coming together of these ideologically different opposition parties can be comprehended by recalling that their leaders were relatively very close to kitchen cabinet members' political allies among cabinet ministers. Since, kitchen cabinet members had blocked their political allies' access to state resources, Congress (O), DMK, and CPM leaders' access to state resources was most likely also blocked. Leaders of SSP, PSP, BJS, SWA, and RSP had very little chance to gain access to state office resources because they did not have ties with cabinet ministers. Thus, as Gandhi's reign progressed, these ideologically different opposition parties suffered equally at the hands of the kitchen cabinet, and their leaders were therefore unsurprisingly attracted to the JP movement.

The only exception to this trend was the CPI, whose leaders vehemently opposed the JP movement. In fact, they, along with the ruling party leaders, organized protest activities against the JP movement. To understand by the CPI leaders choose to oppose the JP movement in spite of being part of opposition parties, it should be recalled that in comparison to all other opposition parties' parliamentarians, the CPI leaders were relatively farthest from Gandhi's politically tied cabinet ministers. Hence, they were likely to appear least threatening to the kitchen cabinet. Perhaps for this reason, CPI leaders most likely had relatively easier access to state resources during Gandhi's reign than other opposition parties' leaders. Thus, the CPI leaders were repelled by the JP movement, while Congress (O), BJS, SWA, SSP, PSP, CPM, RSP, and DMK leaders embraced it.

June 1975: The JP Movement Strikes the Elite's Political Ties with Cabinet Ministers

In June 1975, the Allahabad high court judge found Gandhi guilty of electoral malpractice during the 1971 general election.¹⁸ As a result, though she was allowed to remain in the prime minister's office and retain her current membership in the parliament for the next six months, she was banned from participating in parliamentary elections for the next eight years. Gandhi's lawyers immediately filed an appeal at the Supreme Court challenging the Allahabad high court judgment. In the meantime, JP started publicly provoking Gandhi's political allies among the cabinet ministers, especially Ram, to force her out of the prime minister's office.

While this was a grave crisis for Prime Minister Gandhi, it did not automatically entail a dramatic action like imposing emergency. Gandhi could have begun to salvage her political career by amending the very electoral laws that threatened her. Such electoral law amendments could have been carried out only in the parliament. Gandhi had two options of carrying out necessary electoral law amendment within democratic framework. Her first option was to resign, nominate one of her party loyalists to the prime minister's office, and get the requisite bills passed in the parliament. In the meantime, she could have taken over the reign of the party, led it in the general election due the following year (1976), and capitalized on her long-standing mass appeal to

¹⁸ Gandhi had been accused by her opponent from her parliamentary constituency of illegally using a government officer, Yashpal Kapoor, for election in 1971. Justice Jagmohan Sinha of the Allahabad high court found her guilty of the charges.

reclaim the seat of power. This strategy, surely, would have taken the wind out of the JP movement's sails.

On June 18, Gandhi called a meeting of all top Congress party office bearers and ministers to explore this option. She discussed the possibility of resigning from her office and suggested two of her kitchen cabinet ministers as possible replacements. In the meeting, Ram reportedly responded by exhorting Gandhi to stay in the office but also suggesting that, if she did resign, he was a more suitable candidate than her two nominees (see Franda, 1976, pp. 8-10; Vasudev, 1977, p. 38). To make matters worse for Gandhi, a week later, on June 25, the Supreme Court rendered a judgment that did not completely exonerate her from the Allahabad court's judgment. Interpreting this as a vindication of their stand on Gandhi, the JP movement leaders immediately repeated their demand for Gandhi's resignation, publicly appealed again to Ram to break his alliance with her, and announced new plans for countrywide protest activities.

In the wake of JP's repeated public appeals to Ram to leave Gandhi's government, as well as Ram's disagreement with Gandhi in the June 18 meeting, the kitchen cabinet members most likely realized that alliances had begun to form between their political allies and the JP-led opposition parties. Had Gandhi resigned at this point and managed to advance one of her nominees into the office, disgruntled leaders led by Ram likely would not have found it too difficult to isolate her and her nominee, in which case either she could have ejected the rebel leaders from the Congress party or the rebel leaders could have done the same to her and her supporters. In either case, a split in the Congress party would have been inevitable, after which insurrectionary Congress leaders could easily have joined opposition party parliamentarians to gain governmental control.

Gaining entry to the seat of power, they then would have ensured that the Allahabad high court pronouncement was judiciously implemented.

Gandhi's second option within the democratic institutional framework was to remain in office while securing the necessary amendments to the electoral laws to secure her political future. With a meeting session of the current parliament only a few weeks away, the Congress party had more than enough parliamentarians to ensure that these amended electoral laws would have passed smoothly in the parliament. However, if Gandhi had participated in the coming session of the parliament under the current circumstances, the opposition parties' leaders would have used their interparty ties to encourage the defection of the Congress party leaders, particularly Ram. In this scenario, Gandhi would have faced a prospect similar to the one she would have faced if she had resigned and nominated one of her loyal leaders to the office.

Thus, it was quite clear to the Gandhi-led kitchen cabinet members that the JP movement leaders were very close to smashing their already fractured ties with their political allies. Biographical descriptions of Gandhi's interactions during these tense days reveal that it was her personally tied cabinet minister, Siddhartha Ray, a lawyer by profession, who suggested that she use provisions for the state of Emergency to remain in office and suspend all democratic procedures (Jayakar, 1992, p. 206-207).

It did not take Gandhi long to realize the significance of Ray's suggested solution for her political survival. She was certainly aware that all the political processes threatening her authority were actually features of everyday political life in a healthy democracy. JP movement leaders were using their freedoms of speech, free association,

and mass mobilization to voice what they perceived as the masses' frustrations and provoke dissatisfied Congress parliamentarians. The judiciary had shown exemplary courage in upholding its autonomy from the political sphere by passing a judgment against the high-profile political elite, Gandhi. Political elites within the ruling party were enacting the democratic process as they maneuvered and searched for a new candidate to replace a disgraced leader. Thus, the suspension of these and other everyday features of democracy would have put an end to what appeared to Gandhi and her clique to be utter political and social disorder.

On the night of June 25, Gandhi sent a letter to President Fakhruddin Ahmad, requesting his approval to declare the state of Emergency. Ahmad, who was Gandhi's loyal friend and who in 1971 had been her personally tied cabinet minister, approved the request the same night. In the early morning of June 26, 1975, the state of Emergency was declared. Almost all leaders of the opposition parties involved with the JP movement, as well as the ruling party's leaders known to be sympathetic toward it, were arrested. Law enforcement agencies were granted the power to detain individuals without any formal warrant. Citizens' rights to go to the courts on civil liberties issues and to assemble in public spaces were suspended, and strict rules of censorship were imposed on the print media. Few weeks later, a parliamentary session was called in which new bills proposed changes in electoral laws—the same laws that placed Gandhi in judicial trouble were now changed to absolve her of all charges of electoral malpractice.

Interestingly, when the state of Emergency ended in 1977, Jagjivan Ram, along with a large number of Congress party parliamentarians, split from the Congress party to form a new party called Congress for Democracy (CFD). The CFD formed an alliance

with all opposition parties who had been involved with the JP movement. Their alliance, the Janta Party, defeated Indira Gandhi's Congress (R) in the 1977 election and gained control of the central government. Desai became prime minister, and Ram was appointed deputy prime minister. The new ruling elite established the Shah Commission to publically examine all cases of excesses committed by the Gandhi-led elite during the Emergency period. If the Janta government had not collapsed under the pressure of its own coalition partners, Gandhi's political career most likely would have formally ended, as she had anticipated in the tense days of June 1975.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The main problem posed at the beginning of this dissertation research was why political elites are interested in institutionalizing democracy. The modernization and class structure theories of democracy do not see this as a problem, as their focus on the societal conditions necessary for democracy prevents them from appreciating the role of political elite's interest in democracy consolidation processes. Among scholars recognizing the importance of politics for democracy, those who focus on political structure assume that an examination of the quality of the political structure, in terms of party system institutionalization or adopted constitutional system (i.e., parliamentary or presidential system), would be sufficient to answer this question.

On the other hand, those who recognize the importance of the political elite would be satisfied by an answer involving an examination of either the normative commitment of the incumbent elite to democratic ideals or their democratically inclined point of view. Since neither group of scholars appreciates the importance of the relation between political structures and agency, they would not be able to recognize the threats posed to the future of democracy in a newly democratized country because of the simultaneous presence of new political structures and old political elite.

The resultant weaknesses of the political structure and elite agency theories of democracy are evident in studies on Indian democracy – a well-known negative case (cf. Emigh 1991) of modernization and class structure theories of democracy. Lacking a strong conceptualization of the relation between political structure and elite agency, scholars studying Indian democracy inaccurately represent the INC-dominated Indian

party system and the INC elite's agency as unrelated and static objects. In doing so, they fail to recognize that the combination of the organizationally strong INC, and its elite's close ties with landed classes and bureaucrats created high chances of precipitating single-party authoritarianism during the early post-transition period. And just when it appeared that democracy was getting institutionalized, Indira Gandhi led elite imposed Emergency, and this time India appeared to be drifting towards single party-authoritarianism.

Among contemporary scholars, Bourdieu has provided one of the most potent solutions to the structure/agency duality problem. He shows that the practices of social actors submerged within the necessities of their spatially and temporally limited everyday situations are shaped by their habitus. In simple terms, habitus refers to mastery over the usage of various resources to achieve collectively consecrated goals of a historically specific structured social world. Furthermore, there is a symbolic dimension to this seemingly material quest of social actors. Taking cues from Weber, Bourdieu claims that social actors, in addition to using their resources to attain material ends specific to their historically structured social space, also use them to claim symbolic capital, or authority, specific to that social space. In the sphere of institutional politics, habitus refers to mastery over the usage of various mass mobilization resources to gain political authority over state offices within historically specific political structures. Thus, in order to comprehend the role of the Indian political elites in democracy consolidation processes, we must first examine their political habitus.

In this dissertation research, I have adopted Bourdieu's insights on the habitus of social actors to explain why incumbent elite were interested in honoring democratic

institutions during the early years of postcolonial India and why they became disinterested in democracy during the late 1970s. Using Bourdieu's insights to empirically examine the Nehruvian (1947-71) and Gandhian (1971-77) periods of Indian democracy, I show during the Nehruvian period, democracy was consolidated because procedural features of democracy facilitated Nehru's efforts to defeat his political rivals' attempts to gain political authority over state offices. However, in spite of having gained ultimate political authority, Nehru was regularly challenged by his rivals in the ruling party. In order to stabilize his position, Nehru not only accommodated his defeated rivals in politics but also effectively used rhetoric against corruption and nepotism among ruling party leaders to check their threats to his political authority. Under these circumstances of postcolonial politics, Indira Gandhi – Nehru's only child and primary caretaker, and the future prime minister of India – learned the basics of Indian politics. Because of the specific structural conditions of politics in the Nehruvian period, she was exposed to populist mass mobilization resources and remained insulated from political network-based clientelistic mass-linkage strategies; as a result, she developed an enduring disposition for populist politics.

Gandhi's populist politics-based political authority was challenged by her rivals, a clique of political elites known as the Syndicate, who were experts in using political ties to mobilize masses. Hence, during the 1966-71 period, she lacked political authority despite her position in the prime minister's office. However, in the 1971 general election, Gandhi established her political authority by using the populist political rhetoric of '*garibi hatao*' (remove poverty) to lead her party to a definitive victory. Gandhi's efforts to reproduce her populist politics-based political authority deeply weakened other

political elites' ties with parliamentarians of both the ruling party and opposition parties. When a small-scale student movement in 1973, known as the Jaya Prakash (JP) movement, gained the support of both opposition party leaders and the disgruntled ruling party elite in 1973, Gandhi's clique realized that the JP movement had the potential to use the procedural features of Indian democracy – free and fair elections and political and civil liberties – to collapse their entire political network. Comprehending that these features of democracy were proving to be disadvantageous to them in their efforts to thwart the challenge to their authority posed by the JP movement, the Gandhi-led ruling elite imposed the state of Emergency.

The general lesson to be learned from my study is that the elite's role in democratization processes is shaped by their political habitus. When democratic institutions provide the incumbent elite with an advantage in contest with their immediate rivals over political authority, they follow the rules of democratic politics. On the other hand, they tamper with those rules when democratic institutions appear to hinder their efforts to gain political authority. Furthermore, my research shows that the elite's political habitus is structured by historically specific political structures. The elite's political habitus and political structures are malleable objects. The shape of political structures regularly alters because of the elite's changing strategies for winning intraparty conflicts. Hence, the political environment in which the elite's political habitus is conditioned also changes. In the changing political milieu, the existent elite's political habitus is reconfigured as that of the new generation of political elite, who have differing interests in democratization processes, becomes mature.

Some might be skeptical of the generalizability of this insight from the case of India, arguing that political clientelism and populist politics are present only in developing countries. It could also be argued that India is a unique case because its democratic institutions are a result of British colonialism. In addition, it is a fact that India adopted the parliamentary system (another instance of British influence), which is widely believed to be more beneficial than the presidential system for newly democratized developing countries. Hence, for these reasons, one could argue that the general lesson drawn from the Indian case is limited to similar cases only.

These points of skepticism, however, appear weak in the wake of current studies on the link between political parties and citizens, which show that political clientelism and populism are also important components of politics in developed countries (cf. Kitschelt 2000; Lupu & Reidel 2012; Weitz-Shapiro 2012; Tavits 2012). More importantly, the main point of this study is that professional politicians' usage of mass mobilization resources plays an important role in shaping their conflict with each other over political authority, not that their usage of only political clientelism and populist politics shapes their conflict with each other. It is not difficult to see that the availability of a particular kind of mass mobilization resource is dependent on the specific political structure of a country, which, in turn, could be a result of that country's history of colonialism or presidential or parliamentary system. In fact, this study shows that the change in the political structure of India – from the British colonial political structure to the democratic postcolonial political structure – introduced two mass mobilization resources (particular and universal mass popularity) beyond the political resources available from the colonial period (political clientelism based on ties with party or

ministerial wing leaders). Thus, I argue that insights gained from the Indian case will prove relevant to the study of newly democratized countries as well as well-established democracies, with or without a history of British colonialism or a parliamentary or a presidential system.

The empirical application of Bourdieu's insights on democratization processes in India also sheds new light on the notion of political structure. In his conceptual work on politics, "Elements for a Theory of the Political Field," Bourdieu uses elites' mass-linkage strategies as the fundamental structural component of institutional politics. He identifies two sources of a politician's mass linkages: ties with professional politicians and popularity among the masses (Bourdieu 1999 [1991], p. 194-195). He reasons that in order to gain a political office, a leader must first compete with his colleagues inside the party apparatus; only after doing so can he compete with leaders from other parties to mobilize the masses (Bourdieu 1999 [1991], p. 196). A leader's success in gaining a party office is dependent on his popularity among his colleagues, which can be described as his ties in politics. In addition to using his ties in politics, a leader can also mobilize masses using his personal fame, which he may possess as a result of either his success in another field (law, movies, medicine, etc.) or his personal charisma (Bourdieu 1999 [1991], p.194-196).

It is important to recognize that, while Bourdieu's notion of personal fame echoes well-understood ideas of charismatic and populist elite-mass linkages, his notion of ties in politics as a source of mass mobilization differs from the available understanding of clientelistic politics. However, this difference is only a matter of focus. Mainstream studies on clientelistic politics usually focus on the ties between local leaders and their

clients in the social space, while the ties among leaders located in higher echelons, which modulate the flow of resources from state offices to grassroots levels, remain in the background. Bourdieu puts ties among leaders in the foreground and relegates ties between grassroots leaders and their clients to the background.

A more important distinguishing feature of Bourdieu's conception of politics is his depiction of the contest among elites for political authority. Like political system theorists (cf. Duverger 1954; Sartori 1976; Laakso & Taagepera 1979), he argues that the structure of institutional politics is shaped by the struggle among professional politicians for legitimate authority over the state. However, unlike political system theorists, who remain focused only on interparty competition, Bourdieu shows that this struggle also is the key feature of the intraparty competition among elites.

Here it is important to note that intraparty competition is not entirely unrecognized in political system theories. For example, in their studies of Latin America's political elites, Mainwaring and his colleagues have examined intraparty competition and its consequences for the well-being of a democratic political system (Mainwaring & Scully 1995; Mainwaring & Torcal 2006). However, in their studies, competition among leaders within a party is presented as pathology of party organizations, which, if not controlled, could lead to the de-stabilization of democracy. In contrast, Bourdieu accepts that competition within the party is a fundamental part of everyday life in politics. Hence, following Bourdieu's insights we can argue that intraparty conflict among elites of the ruling party, and not the interparty conflict among different parties, forms the foundation of political structures.

There is yet another important lesson to be learnt from Bourdieu's insights. Intraparty elite conflict is not simply for formally occupying state offices. It is, at the same time, to establish authority over state offices in the point of view of professional politicians. Here it is important to recognize the point that in mainstream political sociology and political science literature, the question of political authority is always answered from the point of view of the masses. The usual argument is that the party, or a leader that wins an election, is seen as the legitimate claimant of control over state offices and hence has the highest authority in politics (cf. Huntington 1991; Mainwaring 1992, p. 304-308). Bourdieu's idea of symbolic value refers to the legitimate value of resources from the point of view of a field's inhabitants. In politics, symbolic value refers to the legitimate value of mass mobilization resources and to the resulting political authority from the point of view of professional politicians. Thus, following Bourdieu, we can recognize the importance of the fact that a leader's or a party's claim over political authority needs to be viewed as legitimate by both the masses and professional politicians.

The difference between the masses' and professional politicians' point of view on the legitimacy of a leader's or a party's claim over political authority becomes clearly visible in those exceptional instances in history when a leader or a party winning the popular vote was not allowed by the incumbent elite to assume power. An example of such an instance is the 1970 election in Pakistan. Pakistan had received the region of East Bengal during India's partition in 1947. In Pakistan's general election in December 1970, a party from East Bengal won the majority in the parliament. Refusing to accept the results, the leaders of Pakistan arrested the top leadership of the winning party and

conducted a military raid of East Bengal. The ensuing chaos in East Bengal, and India's interference in the matter, led to the formation of Bangladesh.

To conclude, I present well-known economist and political philosopher Amartya Sen's (1999) passionate defense of democracy as a universal virtue. He argued that only in a democratic regime can ordinary citizens experience the freedom necessary for the overall development of self; that only in a democracy are citizens provided with effective powers to communicate and to be heard by the leaders; and that only in a democracy can ordinary people participate in public discussions on the state's role in preserving or changing important social values.

These virtues of democracy make it highly desirable in the masses' popular imagination of politics. Nonetheless, numerous historical illustrations of the difficult journey toward the now-established democracies of developed countries, as well as abundant examples of failed democratization attempts in developing countries, show that the virtues of democracy alone are not sufficient for the successful democratization of a state. However, the case of India shows that democracy's chance of survival in a newly democratized country significantly increases if the virtues of democracy are imagined by the endogenous elite in state offices to be an important means for gaining political authority over their rivals.

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