PARTY POLITICS IN A NON-WESTERN DEMOCRACY:
A TEST OF COMPETING THEORIES OF PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE,
GOVERNMENT FORMATION AND GOVERNMENT STABILITY IN INDIA

by

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation will address the ongoing debate in Comparative Politics about the virtues and pathologies of rational choice theory by testing competing hypotheses and predictions to account for three aspects of party politics in India: the transformation of the Indian political party system from a predominant to an even multiparty system; the politics of government formation; and the politics of government stability.

Overall, the dissertation will pursue two arguments. First, rational choice models and predictions can account for the empirical cases more consistently than hypotheses and predictions derived from other paradigms. Second, by using India as the case on which to test competing theories, it will be shown that non-Western political phenomena are not sui generis and they may be accounted for in terms of comparative theory the same way as Western phenomena have been.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

THE THEORETICAL PROBLEM: RATIONAL CHOICE AND ITS CRITICS

The economic approach to politics, also known as rational choice, has gained tremendous popularity in the recent comparative politics literature. While in 1952 there was not a single article in the rational choice vein published in the leading journal of the profession, the *American Political Science Review*, by 1992 approximately 40% of the articles published in the journal were written in this paradigm.\(^1\) However, rational choice has attracted just as much criticism as it has gained followers since the publication of its foundational theoretical works by Hotelling\(^2\), Arrow\(^3\), Downs\(^4\), Buchanan and Tullock\(^5\), Black\(^6\), and Olson\(^7\).

The distinctive characteristic of rational choice theory is the assumption that there is an optimal correspondence between the ends that individual political actors choose to pursue and the means they choose to pursue those ends with.\(^8\) In contrast, the earlier dominant paradigms in comparative politics have either ignored the importance of actors or assumed the absence of any optimal correspondence between means and ends. Examples of the former include systems analysis, functionalism, structuralism and modernization theory that explain social and political phenomena by reference to the

system, howsoever it is defined, as a whole. While individual rationality is not necessarily denied by these macroscopic theories, it is ignored as irrelevant and unimportant. Theories that are interested in the individual but deny the significance of rationality locate the source of individual actions either in impulsive motives, such as relative deprivation, or "theoretical constructs, which may be inaccessible to both the observer and the actor," such as national culture or inertia.

Reduced to the very basics, rational choice theory rests on the following assumptions:

- political actors pursue certain goals that they set for themselves;
- the goals set by political actors reflect the actors' self-interest;
- political actors are conscious of the choices they are making;
- the individual is the basic political actor;
- the ordering of the actor's preferences are both consistent and display some degree of stability over time;
- when presented with a range of options to choose from, individual political actors choose the alternative that is expected to yield the highest utility in terms of the actor's preferences;
- actors have information about the alternatives available to them as well as the consequences of their choices among these alternatives.

It must be emphasized that the preferences of a rational actor must be both non-contradictory and transitive. Rationality is incompatible with contradictory preferences, where contradiction means the conjunction of a proposition and its negation, because they reflect the actor's inability to reason. If actors held contradictory preferences then it

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9 Tsebelis, Nested Games, p. 19-20.
11 Tsebelis, Nested Games, p. 22.
would be impossible to find an optimal correspondence between their means and ends because they could choose any, rather than the optimal, tool to attain their goal.

Transitive preferences simply mean that given three options, $a, b,$ and $c$, a rational actor will prefer $a$ to $c$ if he/she prefers $a$ to $b$ and $b$ to $c$. If an actor did not hold transitive preferences then it would be impossible for him/her to find the optimal, or least costly, means to attain his/her goal. For instance, suppose that an actor preferred $a$ to $b$, $b$ to $c$ but $c$ to $a$. This actor would be willing to give up option $a$ in favor of $c$ and incur the costs involved, however, he/she would also be willing to further trade option $c$ for $b$, and again $b$ for $a$. By the end, the actor has incurred significant costs, yet ended up with the same option as he/she started out with, i.e. option $a$. In contrast, if the actor held transitive preferences, then he/she is rational and would not incur these costs in vain. Provided that he/she prefers $a$ to $b$, $b$ to $c$, and $a$ to $c$, the actor will not give up $a$ once attained because there is no other option preferred to it.

Practitioners of rational choice theory stress the methodological advantages inherent in this paradigm. According to Ferejohn, the assumption of utility maximization forces the analyst to come up with systematic rather than ad hoc explanations.\textsuperscript{13} For example, suppose that an actor has to make a choice from the following set of alternative options \{$a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_n$\}. According to the principle of utility maximization, an explanation has to show why the actor prefers $a_n$ to $a_{n+1}$ for any $n$. However, if the utility maximization principle is not satisfied then the actor may prefer $a_n$ to $a_{n+1}$ but also $a_n$ to $a_1$. In this case, the actor has chosen an option for which there existed a superior, or more preferred alternative. Accordingly, the analyst has to uncover the reason why the more preferred option was not chosen, which, however, leads to an ad hoc and not a systematic explanation.

account.

In the same vein, Tsebelis claims that rational choice theory offers theoretical clarity and parsimony.\textsuperscript{14} Outcomes are expected to be the result of deliberate rational choices rather than mistakes. This refusal of allowing for mistakes made by a rationally acting agents eliminates ad hoc explanations by forcing the analyst to refine the model and subject it to further empirical tests if the predicted outcome does not correspond with reality. Therefore, rational choice theory leads to the cumulating wisdom much more than any other paradigm where the infallibility of the theory is taken as a given.

In addition, Tsebelis notes three other methodological advantages of rational choice theory: equilibrium analysis; deductive reasoning; and the interchangeability of individuals. Equilibrium analysis treats repeated political patterns as cases of equilibrium, meaning the individual actors are engaged in a situation or a relationship from which they have no incentive to depart. In other words, recurring patterns of behavior reflect the optimality of the particular course of action taken by the actor.\textsuperscript{15} Deductive reasoning challenges the dominant, inductive, method of research in political science. The difference between inductive and deductive methods of inquiry lies in the relationship between theory and an empirical problem. Whereas inductive research proceeds from setting an empirical problem to explaining it by invoking whatever theoretical tool appears to be the most apt at providing a sound explanation, deductive research follows the exactly reverse process: first, it specifies a theoretical model and then it proceeds to applying it to an empirical problem. While the inductive method gives a wide scope of freedom to the researcher in deciding what explains the dependent variable of his/her research, the deductive method imposes strict theoretical constraints on the researcher at the very outset. According to Laver, “the essential purpose of the rational choice approach is ... to construct a logically coherent potential explanation of the phenomenon

\textsuperscript{14}Tsebelis, \textit{Nested Games}, p. 40.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 41-2.
under investigation"\textsuperscript{16}, whereas the purpose of the more traditional empirical-inductive approach is to "generate plausible and robust general statements that are consistent with observed empirical patterns"\textsuperscript{17}.

Finally, individuals are interchangeable in rational choice accounts because their only characteristic that is assumed is rationality. Therefore, in a rational choice model it does not matter what religious, ethnic, linguistic group or gender the actor comes from because all actors seek to find an optimal mix of means to reach their goals. By allowing for the interchangeability of individuals, rational choice theory moves very close to Przeworski and Teune's requirement that a general theory in comparative politics must substitute variables for proper names.\textsuperscript{18}

While the number of its adherents has grown significantly over time, rational choice theory has also attracted a lot of criticism and challenge. The single most comprehensive criticism of rational choice to date has been offered by Green and Shapiro's earlier cited work.\textsuperscript{19} The summary of their position is that

To date, a large proportion of the theoretical conjectures of rational choice theorists have not been tested empirically. Those tests that have been undertaken have either failed on their own terms or garnered theoretical support for propositions that, on reflection, can only be characterized as banal: they do little more than restate existing knowledge in rational choice terminology.\textsuperscript{20}

In other words, the authors contend that rational choice theory is too detached from the real political world; it aims only at theoretical sophistication; and in the rare case when it


\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p.5.


\textsuperscript{19}Earlier critics of rational choice theory confined themselves to articles or chapters in edited collections rather than a book-length treatment of the subject as Green and Shapiro have done. In particular, see the following works: Monroe, ed., \textit{The Economic Approach to Politics...}; Jeffrey Friedman, ed., \textit{The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). The latter is a collection of scholarly reactions to Green's and Shapiro's work.

\textsuperscript{20}Green and Shapiro, \textit{Pathologies of Rational Choice}, p. 6.
is applied to real empirical settings, rational choice theory offers little if any insight. Because rational choice research is theory- rather than problem-driven it fails to advance our understanding of the real political world.

On the basis of this argument, Green and Shapiro identify three specific methodological pathologies of rational choice. First, they charge that rational choice theorizing has been done in an essentially post-hoc fashion. Rather than offering either new evidence about or a more plausible account of an empirical problem, practitioners of rational choice tend to simply resort to reconstructing an already known story in terms of rational choice terminology. Furthermore, rational choice, according to the authors, can hardly be called a unified theory at all, since different rational choice models often offer conflicting predictions about the same dependent variable.

Second, because rational choice is preoccupied with the sophistication of theory it rarely ever offers any suggestions for the application of its models and the operationalization of its variables. In addition, rational choice works with too many unmeasurable terms, such as individual tastes and preferences, and offers predictions which are very vaguely operationalized if at all.

Third, practitioners of rational choice are biased both in their selection and interpretation of evidence. In their exclusive search for theory-confirming evidence, they also tend to project the evidence itself from the theory thereby forcing the empirical data to fit their theoretical predictions and models. Closely related to this is what Green and Shapiro call the arbitrary domain restriction of rational choice: recognizing its inherent limitations, rational choice theory is applied to modeling only certain kinds of political behavior while entirely ignoring a range of other domains.

This dissertation does not seek to do justice to either the pro- or the contra side of the rational choice divide. However, what it does seek to establish is how rational choice models and accounts fare vis-a-vis their competitors when predicting and explaining particular political phenomena. Instead of making an a priori commitment to either
approving or rejecting rational choice theory, this dissertation seeks to engage in a genuine test of the merits of the theory in comparison with its rival paradigms.

THE EMPIRICAL PROBLEM: PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE, GOVERNMENT FORMATION AND GOVERNMENT STABILITY IN INDIA

The Indian national party system had been characterized by the dominance of the Indian National Congress Party from the first post-Independence elections held in 1952, until 1989. The Congress Party, and its various incarnations born out of the multiple fissions that the organization went through, won each but one of the eight national general elections held in that period. It lost at the polls only in 1977 when a coalition of five opposition parties defeated the Congress and formed a government under the Janata Party name with a small regional party, the Akali Dal. In the next election, the Congress Party reasserted its dominance by winning the 1980 polls with a convincing margin only to increase it further in 1984. However, a fundamental transformation has taken place in the party system starting with the ninth general elections in 1989. This transformation has three important characteristics.

First, in sharp contrast with the pattern of single party majorities winning the general elections, the 1989 election was the first, followed by the elections of 1991 and 1996, in a string of successive elections resulting in hung parliaments in which neither the Congress nor any other party managed to win a majority of the seats.

The second important characteristic pertains to the increase in the number of coalition governments that political parties form. Whereas of the 10 different cabinets formed before 1989, 7 were that of a single-party majority type, and one each of the single-party minority, coalition majority and coalition minority types, the number of coalition governments in the post-1989 period has sharply increased: of the 6 post-1989 cabinets 4 were formed by coalitions of parties, although none of them commanded a majority of the parliamentary seats, and 2 were formed by single parties, both of which
were also in minority.

The third important characteristic relates to the stability of the governments that were formed in these hung parliaments. With the sole exception of the cabinet formed by the Indian National Congress(I) Party after the 1991 election, no government managed to last for a full term in office. While there were 10 different cabinets formed in the first eight parliaments, an average of 1.25 cabinet for every legislature elected, there have been 6 different cabinets formed in the three legislatures elected since 1989, an average of 2 cabinets for every legislature elected.

These changes in the Indian party system have important implications for students of both comparative and Indian politics for two reasons. The first comparative implication of the changes is that they challenge the conventional assertion that the Westminster-style parliamentary democracy, based on the single-member simple plurality electoral formula, the institutions of which India adopted, promotes the formation of stable single-party majority governments. This conventional wisdom also holds that in the rare occurrence of a hung parliament, the largest party would form a minority cabinet rather than share power in a coalition. The second comparative implication of the changes is that they are making the Indian party system more akin to the established party systems of most Western European countries where fragmented party systems, hung parliaments and coalitions governments are the normal features of party competition. This is of particular importance from the perspective of comparative theory given that the theories that have been formulated to explain party system fragmentation and coalition politics have been developed in the context of Western Europe making them vulnerable to accusations of an inherent socio-cultural bias. It is plausible that comparative theories of party system fragmentation and coalition government are essentially theories designed to explain empirical observations in the Western European socio-cultural milieu. That India, a country outside the boundaries of this socio-cultural context, is providing an increasing number of observations for the
dependent variables of party system fragmentation and coalition government, raises the
important question whether the independent variables posited in the theories designed to
explain these variables in Western Europe would also account for the dependent
variables in India? In other words, India does provide a good context to test the main
comparative theories of party system fragmentation and coalition politics.

There are two main reasons why coalition government is an unusual phenomenon
in countries that have adopted the institutional framework of Britain’s Westminster-style
parliamentary democracy. First, this type of democracy employs the single member
simple plurality electoral formula which tends to produce electoral outcomes in which
one party wins an absolute majority of the parliamentary seats. Table 1.1 illustrates the
election outcomes in the four largest and most established parliamentary democracies that
have used this electoral system: the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and India.
As the Table shows, of the 60 elections that have been held in these countries since the
end of the Second World War, only 10 resulted in hung parliaments. Furthermore, it is
worth noting that of these 10 instances 6 took place in Canada, 3 in India, 1 in the United
Kingdom and none in New Zealand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th># of elections</th>
<th># of hung assemblies elected</th>
<th>Mean % of seats held by the largest party</th>
<th>Mean % of seats held by the first two parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>84.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, in hung Westminster-style parliaments political parties have tended to
form single party minority rather multiparty, read coalition, majority governments, see
Table 1.2. Of the 65 cabinets that were formed in the 60 legislatures elected in the four
countries 59 were formed by a single party. Once again, the main reason for this has been the expectation, based on the tendency of the electoral formula to produce majority winners most of the time, by political parties that there will be a majority winner in the next election anyway. With this expectation in mind, there is indeed little incentive for political parties to enter into costly negotiations and build a coalition governments which might prove to be an electoral liability in the next election.

Table 1.2 shows the record of the four Westminster democracies in terms of the types of government formed since the Second World War. The Table clearly illustrates that although Canada has had a noticeable record of hung parliaments, political parties did not form coalition governments in any of these legislatures. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, although the general election of February 1974 failed to provide either of the two large parties, Conservative or Labor, with a majority of the parliamentary seats in the House of Commons, the Labor Party, which did win the most seats in that election formed a single party minority government.\footnote{It is important to point out, however, that the idea of coalition building was not absent in Britain at the time. The outgoing Conservative Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Heath, did invite the Liberal Party to a series of negotiation about the possibility of forming an anti-Labor coalition cabinet. In the end, the talks broke down, and the pattern of single-party government in Britain was maintained.}

| Table 1.2: PARLIAMENTS AND GOVERNMENTS IN FOUR WESTMINSTER DEMOCRACIES, 1945-97 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Country        | Single-party parliament majority | Coalition parliament majority | Single-party parliament minority | Coalition parliament minority | Coalition parliament majority |
| Canada         | 11               | 0               | 6               | 0               | 0               |
| India          | 7                | 1               | 3               | 5               | 0               |
| New Zealand    | 17               | 0               | 0               | 0               | 0               |
| Britain        | 14               | 0               | 1               | 0               | 0               |
| Total          | 49               | 1               | 10              | 5               | 0               |
The Table reveals that India indeed deviates from the other established Westminster democracies by being the only one that has seen the formation of multiparty governments in the period examined. In addition, in India’s hung parliaments, political parties have formed multiparty governments more often than single party cabinets.

The changes in the pattern of party competition in India have significant implications for students of Indian politics as well. First, the changes have led a number of scholars to herald the beginning of a new era in the Indian party system. For example, applying Giovanni Sartori’s typology of party systems Mahendra Prasad Singh noted that the 1989 election marked a shift from a predominant party system to the type that Sartori called polarized pluralism. In contrast with a predominant party system featuring one large party winning successive national elections with comfortable margins, polarized pluralism is characterized by a fragmented legislature in which the level of ideological conflict among parties is very high resulting in highly unstable government coalitions.

Another noted scholar of the Indian party system, Yogendra Yadav, argued that since 1989 the Indian party system has entered a phase aptly called the “post-Congress polity”. Yadav argues that increased volatility and fragmentation of the party system as well as the loss of the Congress Party’s ability to win legislative majorities in national elections has resulted in the emergence of a distinctively new kind of party system. A main feature of the “post-Congress polity”, according to Yadav, is the reflection of the multiple bipolarities of the subnational party systems in the configuration of the national party system. Multiple bipolarities refers to the presence of two main partisan poles around which party competition revolves in each state of the country. Since these bipolarities are regionally specific with different parties representing the poles in the different regions of the country, the aggregation of these subnational patterns at the

---
national level yields a highly fragmented picture. It is worth noting, however, that while Yadav claims this system of multiple bipolarities to be the hallmark of the post-Congress polity, the Congress Party does remain one of the local poles in each region and state of India with the exception of the large states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the North. This suggests that the Congress still continues to be an important electoral force to reckoned with even thought its dominance may now be a matter of the past.

While the changes captured by the terms polarized pluralism and post-Congress polity highlight what is new and different in the party system, they overlook some important continuities in the logic and dynamics of party competition. For example, while the election of hung parliaments is certainly a novel phenomenon at the national level, the lower house of the national parliament was hung before as a result of splits in the political party that had won a majority of seats in the election. This had happened in the national legislature twice prior to 1989: for the first time in 1969 when the governing Indian National Congress Party was split between two rival factions, and for the second time in 1979 when the governing Janata Party was split between its two factions. In addition, such splits have also occurred on numerous occasion before at the subnational level. This suggests that political actors had already had experience in forming and maintaining governments in hung parliaments before the election of such assemblies became a recurring pattern of the party system as of 1989.

Another important continuity easily overlooked by focusing on the decline of the Congress Party and the transformation of the predominant party system pertains to the continued importance of the role of the Congress(I) Party itself in national politics. As Chapter 5 will elaborate in more detail, by its position as a center party, the Congress continues to occupy the pivotal position of determining government stability in the current party system. In other words, so long as the Congress remains a center party and the national legislature remains divided, no cabinet can survive for long without the Congress Party’s explicit or implicit support. Conversely, the Congress remains in a very
strong position to form a stable government because its center position allows it to divide the opposition which thus cannot overthrow it. In sum, although the Congress is no longer a dominant party in terms of its numerical strength in the national legislature, it still remains the pivot of the party system around which the system's dynamics revolve. As such, it is perhaps a bit too early to talk about a post-Congress polity at this juncture.

Given the comparative and India-specific implications of the changes outlined above, the dissertation will seek to provide an answer to three questions:

1. Why has the predominant party system been replaced with a fragmented party system featuring hung parliaments since 1989?

2. Why have political parties formed single-party minority, coalition minority and coalition majority governments in India's hung national parliaments?

3. Why did some governments that political parties formed in India remain stable while others have failed to last for their full term in office?

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study seeks to eliminate the two methodological problems that are often encountered in comparative politics: the problem of too many variables and too few cases, noted by Lijphart\textsuperscript{24}, and the problem of selection bias noted by Geddes\textsuperscript{25}.

According to Lijphart the scientific study of comparative politics is plagued with the problem of too many variables and too few cases. This means that when the number of cases to be compared is too few and the cases are too different on a range of background variables, it becomes very difficult to provide a robust comparative explanation for the dependent variable in question. The simple reason is that the number

\textsuperscript{24}Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method", \textit{American Political Science Review} 65 (1971), pp. 682-93.

of possible explanations for the dependent variable increases with every background variable on which the cases differ. Collier also notes that as "the number of explanatory factors approaches the number of cases, the capacity to adjudicate among the explanations through statistical comparison rapidly diminishes."\textsuperscript{26}

Lijphart’s solutions to the problem of many variables and small N included calls for increasing the number of N as well as for the pursuit of the comparable cases strategy, i.e. a research strategy that rests on the selection of cases that are both similar on most variables that are not central to the study and different in terms of the key variables that the analysis focuses on. In this, Lijpahrt advocates a highly controlled method of comparison similarly to Eggan\textsuperscript{27} and Stinchcombe\textsuperscript{28}. In contrast, Przeworski and Teune\textsuperscript{29} have argued that pursuing highly controlled comparison, in what they called the strategy of most similar systems, may lead to the problem of overdetermination. Przeworski and Teune were concerned that too much control in the selection of cases may result in the choice of cases which are so similar that most rival explanations will explain the dependent variable, thus leaving the researcher with no clue to decide which explanation is the best. The solution that they suggest is to pursue a "most different" cases strategy whereby the cases to be compared are very different in terms of a wide range of background variables but are similar on the dependent variable. This approach was challenged by Geddes\textsuperscript{30} who argued that if the cases, no matter how different, are chosen

\textsuperscript{27}Fred Eggan, “Social Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Comparison”, \textit{American Anthropologist} 56 (1954), pp. 743-63.
\textsuperscript{30}Geddes, “How the Cases You Choose...”
solely on the basis of their similarity on the dependent variable, the research suffers from a selection bias which reduces the power of the explanation. Geddes suggested that one way in which such a bias may be avoided is by increasing the variation on the dependent variable, for example through internal comparison of the same case, such as an inter-temporal comparison of observations within the same system.

In this study, both sides of the "too many variables and small N" problem will be alleviated. The problem of too many variables is reduced by controlling for a significant range of background variables of each observation given that the cases are selected from the national party system of one and the same country, India. The other side of the problem, i.e. small N, is alleviated as much as possible by extending the time horizon of the study over the entire history of Independent India's party politics. By so doing, all instances of each dependent variable are examined, resulting not only in a larger N than what a study focusing solely on the post-1989 scene would yield but also variation in the dependent variable. For example, an explanation that can account for the formation of governments of all types in India is certainly more powerful than one that could consistently explain the formation of the post-1989 coalitions but would fail to account for the pre-1989 instances.

With these methodological considerations in mind, the ensuing chapters will be structured in the following way:

- Chapter Two will provide the empirical information about the history of the Indian party system, government formation and stability in Independent India.
- Chapter Three will examine the transformation of the Indian party system from predominant to bipartism in 1977, from bipartism back to predominance in 1980 and from predominance to an even multiparty system in 1989. The chapter will especially seek to contrast the inability of the Congress Party to make an electoral comeback since its loss in 1989 with the re-equilibration of its electoral dominance in 1980 following its defeat in 1977.
• Chapter Four will seek to account for the formation of different types of governments in India: single party majority by the Congress Party from 1952 through 1969, in 1971, and again in 1980 and 1984; single party minority by the Congress (Ruling) in 1969, the Samajwadi Janata Party in 1990, and the Congress (I) in 1991; coalition minority by the Janata Party (Secular) and the Congress in 1979, the National Front in 1989, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena in 1996, the United Front (Gowda) in 1996, and the United Front (Gujral) in 1997; and coalition majority by the Janata Party and the Akali Dal in 1977.

• Chapter Five will seek to contrast and explain the differential durability of the various Indian governments. The variation in the dependent variable, government durability, in this chapter is provided by the contrast between the stability of the Congress majority governments of 1952, 1957, 1962, 1971, 1980, 1984 and 1991 and the failure of all other governments to last their full term in office.

• Chapter Six will attempt to weave together the three analytical themes of the earlier chapters. By drawing on George Tsebelis' theory of nested games, it will offer a rational choice model in which the three themes can be united.

COMPARATIVE STUDIES ON THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM AND COALITION POLITICS

An important reason that makes a comparative study of India very important pertains to the divergence in the evolution of the comparative party politics and the Indian party politics literatures. To put it plainly, while comparativists have paid only scant attention to the applicability of their models and theories to the Indian context, India specialists have likewise pursued their inquiries in isolation from the research agenda of the comparative party politics literature.

Notwithstanding this general divergence of the two literatures, there have also been four noteworthy attempts to bridge the gap between them. The first and classic
exception among comparativists is provided by William Riker. Although his account will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3, it is important to stress here his awareness of the importance of Indian exceptionalism in the study of party system fragmentation. In his 1976 article Riker proposed an ingenious theory on the number of political parties in single member simple plurality electoral systems.

According to Riker, it is the presence/absence of an underlying ideological dimension and the location of both voters, who are assumed to be rational and to vote either strategically or sincerely, and parties along this dimension, that determine the number of parties. Riker reviews a number of possible scenarios and finds that it is possible for the party system to reach equilibrium with one dominant and many tiny parties under the single member simple plurality formula, provided that there is an underlying ideological dimension and that the dominant party occupies the center of it. Riker cites India as the quintessential empirical example of such a case noting that although India employed the single member simple plurality formula, instead of a two-party system there emerged a dominant party system featuring the Indian National Congress Party as the dominant actor surrounded by a plethora of small parties in both the electoral and the legislative party systems. In a later review of the literature on the development of political science since Duverger’s Law, Riker re-emphasized the importance of Indian exceptionalism. In sum, Riker’s contribution not only helped to clarify and refine Duverger’s Law, by highlighting the case of India it also provided a truly comparative theory of the emergence of one-party dominance in a competitive multiparty democracy.

While Riker’s mentioned works have become classics in the literature on comparative party systems, comparativists have failed to recognize that the Indian party system has since moved on from one party dominance to becoming a genuine multiparty democracy thus providing a different kind of exception to Duverger’s Law. Whereas prior to 1989 the Indian party system did not have enough large parties to be classified as
a two-party system, since 1989 the party system has become so fragmented that the number of significant parties has exceeded two. While this transformation of the party system has led India specialist scholars to herald the beginning of a new era in Indian politics, comparativists have as yet failed to appreciate the theoretical significance of this change.

The other three works that have attempted to link studies of the Indian party system with the comparative literature are provided by Paul Brass, Subrata Kumar Mitra and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita who have tried to account for the formation and instability of the coalition governments that were formed in India at the subnational level.

Paul Brass made an explicit attempt to statistically test a set of hypotheses derived from a study on government stability in Western Europe by Taylor and Herman in the context of the Indian states. He found that most hypotheses put forth by Taylor and Herman were supported by the Indian data, “but in all cases at lower levels of explanation than in their study” (1404). Specifically, Brass found it confirmed that just as in Western Europe, one-party majority governments tend to outlast coalition governments in the Indian states as well. However, Brass also found that unlike in Western Europe, the standard deviation from the mean degree of stability within each type of government is significantly greater in the Indian states than in Western Europe (1389). This implies that Indian state government follow the predicted pattern of stability much less consistently than Western European national governments.

33Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Strategy, Risk and Personality in Coalition Politics: The Case of India (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975)
Bruce Bueno de Mesquita’s work on subnational coalitions in India goes a long way towards bringing India and comparative politics closer to one another. Mesquita set out to go beyond traditional works on Indian party politics in two senses. First, whereas previous studies on party politics had either focused on all parties in one selected state of India or one political party across all or most states, Mesquita analyzes the interaction among several parties in several states in the processes of coalition building, maintenance and termination and the electoral performance of coalition members. Second, Mesquita also consciously wants to provide a comparative explanation for his observations. As he claims, his theory suggests an explanation ...without exploring the very complex patterns of caste, regional and linguistic influences on voter preferences. Instead, the exchange of legislative seats is accounted for with considerable precision, from knowledge of the strategic preferences of decision-makers, the organizational capabilities of their parties, and differences in the level of need for achievement possessed by the leaders of each party.

Thus, Mesquita explicitly sets out to avoid explaining away his dependent variables in terms of unfalsifiable idiosyncratic variables. However, at the same time he fails to compare his explanation with competing rival accounts of coalition politics offered either in the Indianist or the comparative literatures. Thus, no matter how insightful his analysis the reader is left uncertain whether his explanation is indeed superior to what has already been offered in other literatures.

A similar rational choice approach to coalition politics at the subnational level is offered by Subrata Kumar Mitra. Mitra found that the

\[3\]stability of the formation and maintenance of winning coalitions, particularly in terms of the spatial location of the position of the cabinet have been shown to be a the magnitude of factionalism within the winning coalition. It was shown that a stable outcome equivalent to cabinet stability exists when all the players use one overall dimension (i.e. an ideological dimension) rather than issues of individual

\[36\]Ibid.
While retaining the importance of the impact of ideological dimensions on government formation and stability, which has been established in the comparative literature, Mitra also went a step further by systematically including the additional variable of factionalism in his analysis. In so doing, Mitra actually preceded comparativists who have only recently started looking at the importance of this variable.37

The model that emerges from Mitra’s analysis constitutes a milestone in the literature on Indian party politics even though it has been largely marginalized. The model that he constructed to explain government stability combines elements of two distinct schools of thought in the comparative literature: the so-called ‘attribute’ and spatial schools. In brief, he argues that the probability of a complete structuration of the electorate, with a completely structured electorate meaning that all voters position themselves along a single dimension of conflict, is negatively related to the fragmentation of the parliamentary party system, which, according to the “attribute” school of thought is positively related to cabinet instability. At the same time, the probability of a completely structured electorate also increases the probability that the legislative party system will also be unidimensional and factionalism reduced to the minimum, which is negatively related to cabinet instability, according to the spatial school of thought. In sum, a completely structured unidimensional electorate will promote cabinet stability, according Mitra’s model.

Apart from these attempts, the current state of scholarship on party politics in India remains within the tradition of area-studies offering little connection with the theoretical advances made in the comparative literature.

CHAPTER TWO: PARTY POLITICS IN INDEPENDENT INDIA


The first three post-Independence elections resulted in massive victories by the Indian National Congress Party. Although the Congress party did not win a majority of the popular vote cast in any of these three elections, it consistently won a majority of the seats in the Lok Sabha. According to parliamentary convention, the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, in each instance Jawaharlal Nehru, was invited by the President of the Republic to form a government in each of these Lok Sabhas.

The preeminent position of the Congress was clearly reflected in the difference between the share of the popular vote won by the Congress and the second largest party: in the 1952 elections the difference was 43.4%, in 1957 it was 37.4%, and in 1962 it was still very high at 34.8%. In terms of legislative size, the dominance of the Congress was even more starkly reflected: in the first Lok Sabha the Congress had 71.2% more seats than the second largest party in the Lok Sabha, in 1957 it had 69.6%, and in 1962 it had 67.2% more seats than the largest opposition party.

The Congress Party enjoyed a similar degree of dominance at the subnational level as well. Of the 42 state elections, all but two of which were held concurrently with the national polls, during this period only four resulted in the formation of non-Congress governments: in 1957 the Communist Party of India, in 1960 the Praja Socialist Party formed governments in the state of Kerala, in 1963 the Maharashtra Gomantak party formed a government in Goa, and in 1964 the Naga Nationalist Organization formed a government in Nagaland.

Thus, the first decade and a half of India's post-Independence party politics was characterized by the weakness of intense inter-party competition. Given the Congress Party's dominance over both the electoral and the legislative spheres Kothari aptly
labeled it the Congress system. According to Kothari's analysis, the role of the opposition parties in this system was not to constitute and offer a real alternative to the Congress government but rather to

...constantly pressurize, criticize, censure and influence it by influencing opinion and interests inside the margin and, above all, exert a latent threat that if the ruling group strays away too far from the balance of effective public opinion, and if the factional system within it is not mobilized to restore the balance, it will be displaced from power by the opposition groups.

In turn, what allowed the Congress to respond to these pressures and remain in power for so long without interruption was its internal plurality, flexibility, internal competitiveness and its capacity to absorb rival movements thus preventing the opposition parties from growing.

Kothari's analysis of the working of the Congress system is problematic because it does not clarify why the opposition parties would want to keep criticizing and pressurizing the dominant party in such a way that would allow the latter to remain in power at their own expense! Intuitively it would appear to be more logical for the opposition parties to actually work towards pressuring the dominant party to move away from the "effective balance of public opinion" so that they themselves could enter into office. Nonetheless, his model offers a good description of the early Indian party system that was indeed dominated by the Congress Party. In the period of the Congress system, the formation of single-party majority governments was the norm as the Congress Party consistently won legislative majorities in the national elections. In this period, coalition politics at the national level was non-existent.

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40Ibid., p.6.
2.2 THE FOURTH LOK SABHA, 1967-71: SPLIT IN THE GOVERNING PARTY AND THE FIRST MINORITY GOVERNMENT

The general election of 1967 was an important landmark in India’s electoral history for two reasons. First, the Congress Party was badly weakened in the election both in terms of the popular vote it mustered as well as the legislative seats that it won. For the first time since Independence, the Congress Party barely managed to win more than 40% of the total national vote. In addition, for the first time it failed to secure a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha: by winning 54% if the seats in the house the Congress still enjoyed a thin majority, however, its size paled in comparison with the party’s strength in the earlier parliaments.

Second, the dominance of the Congress Party was also shattered in the 1967 election at the subnational level. The Party failed to win a majority of the seats in the State Assemblies of Bihar, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Except for Rajasthan where civil violence erupted in the aftermath of the elections and President’s Rule was imposed by the national government, the non-Congress parties managed to exploit the weakness of the Congress and formed governments in these states. In short, the 1967 election left the Congress in a badly weakened state at the national level and out of power in some of the largest states of the country.

The Congress Party had also been suffering with internal problems since the death of its long-time leader and Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, on May 27, 1964. After Nehru’s death a group of state-level party bosses, called the Syndicate, united behind K. Kamaraj, president of the Congress Party, to ensure the election of Lal Bahadur Shastri as

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41 Much of the discussion in this section is based on *Keesing’s Contemporary Archives* (1970), pp. 23767-9.
Nehru's successor in the Prime Ministerial berth. Following Shastri's death after only two years in office, the Syndicate also engineered the succession of Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, following a bitter contest with Morarji Desai, the Congress Party's strong man from the state of Gujarat.

The 1967 election weakened the position of the Syndicate very badly. Kamaraj himself as well as nine ministers in the national cabinet and four other Chief Ministers, the equivalents of the Prime Minister at the state level, failed to retain their seats. The weakening of the Syndicate, however, strengthened the position of both Indira Gandhi, who had been seeking to distance herself from the influence of the bosses, and Morarji Desai, who never gave up on his ambition to become the Prime Minister. The apparently inevitable confrontation among the three players led to the split of the Congress Party and the government losing its majority in the Lok Sabha.

The series of events that led to the open split between the Syndicate and Indira Gandhi started with the All-India Congress Committee session held in Bangalore on July 10, 1969. The night before the session, the Congress Working Committee held a meeting to draft a resolution on the Congress government's economic policy to be presented for ratification to the session the next day. The Industrial Development Minister, Mr. Fakhrulddin Ali Ahmed, delivered the Prime Minister's memorandum on economic policy, as Indira Gandhi was unable to attend the pre-session meeting. The Prime Minister's memorandum put forward the following proposals:

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44 The All-India Congress Committee represents a layer in the decision-making structure of the Congress Party. The Committee is made up of one eighth of each state's delegation to the Annual Congress Session and elected by only the delegates from the given state. The All-India Congress Committee elects seven members of the Congress Working Committee, the highest executive organ of the party. The Working Committee also includes the Congress President who appoints thirteen members of the Committee at his/her discretion. The President of the Congress Party is elected by all delegates to the Annual Congress Session for a two-year term. See, Stanley A. Kochanek, *The Congress Party of India* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. xxii.
• a ceiling on unproductive expenditure and conspicuous consumption by corporate bodies;
• nationalization of private commercial banks and a change in their credit policy to make it more favorable to new entrepreneurs, especially in less developed regions;
• expeditious appointment of a monopolies commission, more autonomy and professionalization of the public-sector enterprises, reserving consumer industries for the small-scale private sector and banning the entry of big business into this field;
• providing more avenues of employment to the young and educated;
• disallowing foreign capital in areas where local technical know-how was available;
• special assistance to small agriculturists and farm cooperatives, and the legislation and implementation of a more vigorous scheme of land reforms aimed at protecting the rights of tenants, distribution of surplus land yielded by placing ceilings on land holdings and of government wastelands among the landless, prevention of the alienation of landholdings belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, and a wage review for agricultural laborers to give them a share in the increased agricultural yields in areas where the "green revolution" had made some headway.  

This memorandum constituted a radical departure from the policy that the All-India Congress Committee had adopted the year before, in 1968, at Jabalpur. In particular, what made it radically different was the inclusion of the clause calling for the nationalization of banks. Apart from its ideological implications, bank nationalization was a critical issue also because banking regulation belonged to the jurisdiction of the national government. In contrast, the other provisions, as well as those of the Jabalpur resolution, were about matters that were under state jurisdiction and thus they allowed the Syndicate-controlled state Congress units to exercise considerable discretion in changing

and moderating the policy resolution of the national party organization at both the legislative and the policy implementation stages.\textsuperscript{46} In other words, Indira Gandhi’s call for bank nationalization sought to give greater control to the national party organization over party policy, and since the party was also in office at the national level, to the national government over public policy.

Although formally the Working Committee unanimously accepted Indira Gandhi’s proposals, the Syndicate joined hands with its former archenemy, Morarji Desai, in criticizing the plan on bank nationalization. Desai, who was both Finance and Deputy Prime Minister at the time warned that he would rather resign than give his name to the implementation of the plan.\textsuperscript{47} Nonetheless, indicative of the power of Indira Gandhi’s group, the Working Committee got Desai to actually move the resolution to the All-India Congress Committee.

Apart from economic policy, nominating the party’s official candidate for the looming Presidential election was another prominent issue that the Bangalore session had to deal with. The Syndicate’s favorite for nomination was one of its own members: the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr. Sanjiva Reddy. In contrast, the Prime Minister and her supporters preferred the nomination of either Acting President V. V. Giri,\textsuperscript{48} or Jagjivan Ram, the Food and Agricultural Minister, or Swaran Singh, the Defense Minister, for the post. Although the majority of the Working Committee preferred Sanjiva Reddy’s nomination the Prime Minister issued a warning that such a sensitive issue should be settled by consensus rather than majoritarian decision-making. Eventually, as the two sides failed to reach a compromise, Indira Gandhi suggested to the new president of the Congress Party, Mr. Nijalingappa, that Reddy’s nomination by the Congress Party should

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 64.
\textsuperscript{47}Singh, \textit{Split in a Predominant Party}, p. 64-5.
\textsuperscript{48}In the 1967 Presidential election Zakir Hussain was elected President and V. V. Giri Vice-President. The latter assumed the position of Acting President after the untimely death of President Hussain in May 1969.
be made public.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Bangalore session, Indira Gandhi announced on July 16, 1969 that she removed Morarji Desai from the Finance portfolio which would now be under her own direct charge. According to Mrs. Gandhi, the reason behind the removal of Mr. Desai was his apparent lack of commitment to implementing the economic policy resolutions arrived at Bangalore, most importantly the policy on bank nationalization. In reaction, Mr. Desai resigned from his post as Deputy Premier as well.49

On July 19, just a week before the parliamentary session was to start, the Prime Minister advised acting President Giri to promulgate the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Ordinance, which effectively nationalized 14 of the major banks of the country.

The opposition parties were divided in their reaction to the ordinance. The right-wing Swatantra Party and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh were clearly against it whereas two farmers’ parties, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal and the Akali Dal, and also the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, the party advocating the interests of the state of Tamil Nadu, and all the left parties including the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Samyukta Socialist Party and the Praja Socialist Party, expressed their unreserved approval.

The conflict over bank nationalization was hardly over when the Congress had to deal with the other divisive issue, namely the Presidential nomination, as election to Rasthrapati Bhavan, the Presidential Palace, was scheduled for August 16. The President of the Republic in India is elected by an electoral college using a somewhat complex formula that involves both the national and the state legislatures.50 This was of particular

49 Ibid., pp. 66-7.
50 According to Article 54 of the Indian Constitution, The President shall be elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of -- (a) the elected members of both Houses of Parliament; and (b) the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of the states.
importance at the time since the results of the 1967 national and state elections left the Congress Party in a significantly weakened position in the Presidential electoral college. As Table 2.1 shows, the Congress Party did not actually have a majority therein. This meant that the enforcement of party discipline was imperative for both the Congress and the opposition to ensure the election of their respective Presidential candidates.

TABLE 2.1:
THE NUMBER OF VOTES CONTROLLED BY THE CONGRESS PARTY AND THE OPPOSITION IN THE 1969 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL COLLEGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Congress Party</th>
<th>Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lok Sabha</td>
<td>296946</td>
<td>233064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajya Sabha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidhan Sabhas</td>
<td>235771</td>
<td>302396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College total</td>
<td>532717</td>
<td>535460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The figures are the author's own calculation based on information in Butler, Lahiri and Roy, *India Decides*, various tables.

Furthermore, Article 55 sets out the actual method of selecting the President.

(1) as far as practicable, there shall be uniformity in the scale of representation of the different States at the election of the President. (2) For the purpose of securing such uniformity among the States inter se as well as parity between the States as a whole and the Union, the number of votes which each elected member of Parliament and of the Legislative Assembly of each State is entitled to cast at such election shall be determined in the following manner;

(a) every elected member of the Legislative Assembly of a State shall have as many votes as there are multiples of 1000 in the quotient obtained by dividing the population of the State by the total number of the elected members of the Assembly;
(b) if, after taking the said multiples of one thousand, the remainder is not less than five hundred then the vote of each member referred to in sub-clause (a) shall be further increased by one;
(c) each elected member of either House of Parliament shall have such number of votes as may be obtained by dividing the total number of votes assigned to the members of the Legislative Assemblies of the States under sub-clause (a) & (b) by the total number of the elected members of both Houses of Parliament fractions, exceeding one half being counted as one and other fractions being disregarded.

The election of the President shall be held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and the voting at such election shall be by secret ballot.
The debate within the Congress Party about the issue of Presidential candidate nomination accelerated when on August 11 two backbenchers of the party, Arjun Arora and Shashi Bhusan, resigned in protest against Nijalingappa’s appeal to the opposition Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties to support Reddy’s candidacy. The Prime Minister supported the two backbenchers in their demand that there be no party whip imposed on the Presidential vote and that legislators could vote according to their conscience instead. Indira Gandhi’s faction was particularly worried that a candidate backed by the Syndicate and the right-wing opposition might occupy Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Presidential palace, because these parties favored a constitutional arrangement that would give greater powers to the President.†

Moreover, although the Indian President’s powers are highly circumscribed and are largely ceremonial as long as there is a solid majority party government in office in the Lok Sabha, in case of a hung parliament the President’s position becomes much more important as he/she can decide whom to invite to form a government. Since the Prime Minister’s position in the Lok Sabha was becoming increasingly tenuous as tensions within her governing party were mounting, it was very important for her that Rashtrapati Bhavan would be filled by her supporter.

The Presidential contest came down to a race between two candidates: Sanjiva Reddy, the official nominee of the Congress Party who was also supported by the right-wing parties, and V. V. Giri, running as an Independent and supported by those Congress legislators who were in favor of the conscience vote as well as the left-of-center parties.

At the state level, only in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh were the state units of the Congress Party in favor of Giri’s candidacy. In each of these states the

†The Swatantra and the Jana Sangh had already indicated their preference for a stronger Presidency when they had petitioned Giri to withhold the Bank Nationalization Bill. See, Singh, Split in a Predominant Party... , p. 73.

‡Although the leader of the Congress legislature Party in Punjab, Harinder Singh, floated a “vote Reddy” circular to his party’s representatives he refrained from issuing a formal whip. Singh, Split in a Predominant Party, p. 78.
Chief Minister/Congress Legislature Party Leader as well as the president of the state party organization opted for free conscience voting in the presidential election. In the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal, the leader of the Congress Legislature Party and the leader of the party organization took conflicting positions on the issue. In the remaining states, both the Congress Legislature party and the party organization were in favor of a whipped vote, which meant a vote for the Syndicate-backed Sanjiva Reddy.

On August 16, V. V. Giri won the Presidential election by securing 50.2% of the votes against Sanjiva Reddy’s 48.5%. On September 19, Congress MPs close to the Syndicate filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the outcome of the Presidential election. Furthermore, Morarji Desai made public announcements about the possibility of overthrowing Indira Gandhi’s cabinet. In turn, the Prime Minister removed four pro-Syndicate members of her cabinet as well as started a signature campaign in order to convene a special session of the All-India Congress Committee that would have the authority to suspend Nijalingappa’s term as party president.

The Congress Working Committee was going to hold a meeting on November 1 to address the issue of party unity. However, the day before the meeting Nijalingappa had withdrawn the invitation to three pro-Indira Gandhi members of the Committee to attend. These members along with the Prime Minister held a parallel Working Committee meeting at her residence where it was resolved that the special session of the All-India Congress Committee be convened. On November 12, the Syndicate-led Working Committee officially expelled Indira Gandhi from the Congress Party and instructed the Congress Parliamentary Party, consisting of all Congress members in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, to choose a new leader. In the meantime the pro-Indira Working Committee

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54Butler et al., *India Decides ...*, p. 60. Note that Giri secured this majority only on the second ballot as the first preference votes did not yield a majority winner.
Committee resolved that Indira Gandhi’s expulsion was not only illegal as per the rules and regulations of the Congress organization and the Congress Parliamentary Party, but it is also a disastrous move with far-reaching political and constitutional implications. ... Mrs. Indira Gandhi continues to be the leader of the party unless the party expresses no confidence of the leader. As long as she continues to enjoy the support of parliament, she is entitled to function as the Prime Minister. It will be the saddest day for Indian democracy if a small group of men, without even having the mandate of the organization for this purpose, should dare take a step with a view to displacing the Prime Minister. This is against all canons of parliamentary democracy. It is our considered view that these gentlemen have no legal or political authority to remove the Prime Minister of the country.\(^5\)

The Congress Parliamentary Party met on November 13 and passed a vote of confidence in Indira Gandhi, however, only 330 of the total 427 members attended the meeting. It was not surprising at all to see the Congress Parliamentary Party side with the incumbent Prime Minister because both the bank nationalization and the Presidential nomination battles clearly showed that Indira Gandhi was stronger than the Syndicate. Congress representatives decided to stay with Indira Gandhi simply because she was more likely to retain her hold on power and be able to reward her supporters.

Three days later, on November 16, the Congress Parliamentary Party officially split thus depriving the incumbent government of its majority. On that day, 60 Lok Sabha Congress representatives and 36 Rayja Sabha Congress representatives met and elected Ram Subhag Singh as the party’s leader in the Lok Sabha, S. N. Mishra as the party’s leader in the Rajya Sabha, and Morarji Desai as the chair of the Congress Parliamentary Party. This group came to be called the Congress Party (Opposition), although soon thereafter the name was changed to Organization Congress. The pro-Indira Gandhi group retained the Congress party label but it soon came to be referred to as the Congress Party (Ruling). The Congress (Ruling) initially had the support of 210 Congress representatives in the Lok Sabha, which soon swelled to 221 and 92 members in the Rajya Sabha respectively.

TABLE 2.2: 
THE CHANGING POSITION OF THE CONGRESS PARTY IN THE FOURTH LOK SABHA, 1967-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th># of seats after the election</th>
<th>% of seats after the elections</th>
<th># of seats after Congress split</th>
<th>% of seats after Congress split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress (Ruling)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>42.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress (Opposition)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The United Independent Group consisted of the Akali Dal, the Moslem League, and the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The opposition parties welcomed the split in the Congress. The right-wing Bharatiya Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party both looked forward to the possibility of forming a new coalition government of the democratic, read non-Communist, opposition parties. The Praja Socialist Party pledged its conditional support to the government "judging every issue on its merits" and called on Indira Gandhi to consolidate the democratic socialist forces of the country. The Communist Party of India, CPI, also offered its conditional issue-based support to the government and called for unity of the left parties in Parliament. In a statement issued by the party on November 26, it explicitly identified the coalition of the Syndicate, i.e. the Organization Congress, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party as the main enemy to fight. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) also committed itself to providing issue-based support for the minority government and stated that it would certainly not vote in favor of a no confidence motion against the Prime Minister. The party further stated that its support for the government would depend on the latter's implementation of specific policies, such as the normalization of relations with China, reduction of the country's dependence on foreign aid, and progressive economic and political reforms. The only party that was highly divided over the issue of extending support to the Congress (Ruling) was the Samyukta Socialist Party. The moderate faction of the party called for adopting a position of general

support and specific issue-based opposition whereas the more radical faction, led by Madhu Limaye, insisted that the party should continue its position of "general opposition and specific support." 58

On November 17, Piloo Moody of the Swatantra Party moved a motion of no-confidence in the government. The motion was rejected by 306 against and 140 in favor. Those voting in favor included 57 Congress (O) members, the BJS, the Swatantra Party, the Praja Socialist and the Samyukta Socialist Parties and some Independents. The Congress(R)'s 209 members, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham and some Independents voted against the motion.

The Congress(R) government could have continued in office as long as it was not defeated on a vote of confidence on the floor of the Lok Sabha. Although the minority Congress(R) government was successful in maintaining the legislative coalition that allowed it to continue in office, it chose to dissolve the Lok Sabha in December 1970 and call new elections to be held in the spring of 1971, a year before they would have been due.

The chain of events leading to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha began on May 18, 1970 when Home Minister Y. B. Chavan introduced a constitutional amendment bill in the lower house seeking to replace Articles 291, 362 and Clause 22 of Article 366. These Articles defined the relationship between the Government of India and the former princely rulers with whom the Government of India entered into a covenant after Independence. 59

59 The Articles contained the following the provisions:

Article 291. Where under any covenant or agreement entered into by the Ruler of any Indian State before the commencement of this Constitution the payment of any sums, free of tax, has been guaranteed or assured by the Government of Dominion of India to any Ruler of such State as privy purse, (a) such sums shall be charged on, and paid out of, the Consolidated Fund of India, and (b) the sums so paid shall be exempt
Although the decision to abolish the privy purses was taken by the Congress Party prior to its split, the leader of the Congress (Opposition), Morarji Desai strongly opposed this constitutional amendment bill. He agreed that privy purses should be abolished; however, he also demanded that adequate compensation be made to the princes. In addition, he argued that Article 363 which excluded all covenants between the Government and the princes from the jurisdiction of the courts, should also be amended in light of the other proposed amendments. Desai argued that once the princes were stripped of their titles they should have the fundamental right to go to the court like any other citizen of the country. The Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh also opposed the Minister’s proposed bill, while the two Communist Parties supported it by demanding that no compensation should be made to the princes at all. P. Ramamurthi of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) went so far as to claim that the President of the Republic should simply scrap all the purses and privileges by executive order under the terms of Clause 22 of Article 366 which indeed gave the President the power of

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Article 362. In the exercise of the power of Parliament or of the Legislature of a State to make laws or in the exercise of the executive power of the Union or of a State, due regard shall be had to the guarantee or assurance given under any such covenant or agreement as is referred to in Article 291 with respect to the personal rights, privileges or dignities of the Ruler of an Indian State.

Article 366 (22). ‘Ruler’ in relation to an Indian State means the Prince, Chief or other person by whom any such covenant or agreement as is referred to in clause (1) of Article 291 was entered into and who for the time being is recognized by the President as the Ruler of the State, and includes any person who for the time being is recognized by the President as the successor of such Ruler.

60This Article reads as follows:

Article 363. Notwithstanding anything in the Constitution ...neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall have jurisdiction in any dispute arising out of any provision of a treaty, agreement, covenant, engagement, sanad or other similar instrument which was entered into or executed before the commencement of the Constitution by any Ruler of an Indian State and to which the Government of the Dominion of India or any of its predecessor Governments was a party and which has or has been continued in operation after such commencement, or in any dispute in respect of any right accruing under or any liability or obligation arising out of any of the provisions of this Constitution relating to any such treaty ...

---
For a constitutional amendment bill to become law it had to be passed in both Houses of Parliament by a majority of the total membership and two-thirds of the members present and voting. On September 2, 1970 the bill was put to a vote in the Lok Sabha. With 488 members of the total membership of 518 present, the government needed to secure at least 326 to have its bill passed. With a margin of just eight votes the government managed to do so and the bill was passed in the Lok Sabha with 334 votes in favor and 154 against. The Congress (Ruling) was joined by the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Praja Socialist Party, the Samyukta Socialist Party, three members of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, one member of the Swatantra Party and 26 Independents in supporting the bill. Those voting against the bill included the Congress (Opposition), the Swatantra Party, the Jana Sangh, the Akali Dal, eight members of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, six members of the Congress (Ruling) and 14 Independents.

The passage of the bill in the 240 member Upper House, the Rajya Sabha, promised to be a much more difficult task. As a result of the Congress split, the governing party’s share of the upper house seats dropped from 60% in August 1969 to 41.3% in February 1971, as shown in Table 2.3.

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61 Two-thirds of 488 is 326 which is also greater than 259, which is one half of 518.
TABLE 2.3:
THE PARTY-WISE COMPOSITION OF THE RAJYA SABHA, 1966-70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INC/INC(R)</td>
<td>166 (69.7%)</td>
<td>166 (69.2%)</td>
<td>140 (58.3%)</td>
<td>144 (60.0%)</td>
<td>99 (41.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42 (17.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>8 (3.4%)</td>
<td>7 (2.9%)</td>
<td>8 (3.3%)</td>
<td>9 (3.8%)</td>
<td>9 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>6 (2.5%)</td>
<td>7 (2.9%)</td>
<td>4 (1.7%)</td>
<td>4 (1.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>6 (2.5%)</td>
<td>7 (2.9%)</td>
<td>4 (1.7%)</td>
<td>4 (1.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJS</td>
<td>6 (2.5%)</td>
<td>6 (2.5%)</td>
<td>11 (4.6%)</td>
<td>10 (4.2%)</td>
<td>10 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWA</td>
<td>10 (4.2%)</td>
<td>13 (5.4%)</td>
<td>16 (6.7%)</td>
<td>13 (5.4%)</td>
<td>13 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMK</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
<td>4 (1.7%)</td>
<td>5 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKALI DAL</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEPS.</td>
<td>10 (4.2%)</td>
<td>7 (2.9%)</td>
<td>9 (3.8%)</td>
<td>9 (3.8%)</td>
<td>13 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS</td>
<td>13 (5.5%)</td>
<td>16 (6.7%)</td>
<td>19 (7.9%)</td>
<td>21 (8.8%)</td>
<td>24 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOMINATED</td>
<td>12 (5.0%)</td>
<td>11 (4.6%)</td>
<td>12 (5.0%)</td>
<td>12 (5.0%)</td>
<td>11 (4.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VACANCIES</td>
<td>4 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>10 (4.2%)</td>
<td>2 (0.8%)</td>
<td>3 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>238 (99.9%)</td>
<td>240 (100%)</td>
<td>240 (100.2%)</td>
<td>240 (100.3%)</td>
<td>240 (100.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Butler et al., p. 63.

Moreover, the combined share of upper house seats held by those parties that supported the bill in the Lok Sabha was only 121 seats, or 50.4% which was sufficient to guarantee the passage of the bill in the upper chamber only if no more than 181 members turned out to vote. This situation provided an incentive for the opposition to ensure that the house would be fully attended on the day of the vote: the more members the opposition could turn out over and above 181, the more difficult the government’s position would be as it would have to engage in costly last-minute negotiations to secure the requisite support that the passage of the bill required. On the other hand, the governing party and its allies had to make sure both that all their members would be present and that they can persuade

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63 Again, since the passage of the bill required the support of one-half of the total membership of the chamber and two-thirds of those present and voting, 121 votes would not have been sufficient if every member had turned out. In that case, a minimum of 161 votes would have been necessary. With 181 members voting, however, 121 votes, which is greater both than one half of 240 and than two-thirds of 181, would have been sufficient for the governing party and its supporters to have the bill passed.
as many opposition members as possible to abstain from attending.\textsuperscript{64}

The bill was put to a vote in the upper chamber on September 5, 1970 in the presence of 224 members. Thus, the bill needed to be supported by at least 150 members in order to pass. Although by and large political parties followed the same pattern of voting as they did in the Lok Sabha, there were minor deviations, which, in the end, made all the difference: each member of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal and one member of the Congress (Ruling) voted against the bill while the Akali Dal, two members of the Congress (Opposition) and one member of the Swatantra Party voted in favor of the bill. The tally was thus 149 in favor and 75 against the bill. Although the bill clearly enjoyed the support of the majority of the Rajya Sabha, by a margin of one vote it failed to be passed by two-thirds of the members present and voting.

Following the failure to have the constitutional amendment bill passed, the Congress (Ruling) cabinet decided to hold an emergency meeting. It was decided that notwithstanding the failure of the bill, the President should de-recognize princely privileges by an executive order under the terms of Clause 22 of Article 366. The same evening the President’s signature was obtained and de-recognition took effect. Justifying this measure, Y. B. Chavan told the Rajya Sabha:

The President has under the Constitution the unquestioned power to derecognize the rulers. During the debate in parliament it was even urged by some members [read the Communists] that the Government should have resorted to this power instead of bringing in the Constitution Amendment Bill. ... The Government is fortified in the belief that there is widespread support in the country for putting an end to an outmoded and antiquated system which permitted the enjoyment of privileges and privy purses by a small section of our people without any corresponding social obligation on their part. ... During the course of the debate in Parliament even many of those who opposed the Constitution Amendment Bill expressed themselves in favor of the abolition of privileges and privy purses.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{64} In its frantic effort to ensure full attendance the Jana Sangh had one of its members brought into the chamber from the hospital on a stretcher, while a member of the Samyukta Socialist Party was escorted by a police guard due to having been recently arrested.

Almost immediately, seven of the now de-recognized rulers submitted a petition to the Supreme Court against the President’s order. In its ruling on December 15, 1970 the Court rendered the President’s order ultra vires the Constitution and restored the rights and privileges of the princes. In two weeks’ time, on December 27, upon the advice of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the President dissolved the Lok Sabha and ordered fresh elections although they were not due to be held until early 1972. In statements after the announcement was made, Indira Gandhi acknowledged that her party wanted to end the situation of having to rely on the support of small parties in order to provide effective governance. A new election, to be fought on the issue of social justice and egalitarianism of which the Congress (Ruling) projected itself to be the champion, might give the party the opportunity to regain its majority.

An important consequence of the early dissolution of the Lok Sabha was the decoupling of national and subnational elections. In the past, elections for both the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas had been held concurrently and therefore, their terms would also expire at the same time. From time to time, there would be a few states where elections would have to be held off-schedule because of the imposition of President’s Rule or the dissolution of the state assembly by the central government. However, as Table 2.4 shows, until 1967 most Vidhan Sabhas had been elected simultaneously with the Lok Sabha.

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67 Ibid., p. 24409.
68 Ibid., p. 24427.
TABLE 2.4:
CONCURRENT AND NON-CONCURRENT NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL ELECTIONS IN INDIA, 1952-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lok Sabha election year</th>
<th># of subnational legislatures</th>
<th># of subnational units with concurrent Vidhan Sabha election</th>
<th># of subnational units with non-concurrent Vidhan Sabha election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Subnational unit refers to both states, territorial councils, and union territories that had popularly elected legislatures at the time. In 1962 there were no concurrent elections in Kerala and Orissa, in 1967 in Nagaland and Pondicherry. The states where there were concurrent elections after 1971 are: 1971: Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal; 1977: Kerala; 1980: Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa-Daman and Diu, and Pondicherry; 1984: Tamil Nadu, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa-Daman and Diu; 1989: Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Sikkim, and Uttar Pradesh; 1991: Assam, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry; 1996: Assam, West Bengal, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry.

Sources: Butler et al., *India Decides* ... various tables, and Aggarwal and Chowdhry, *Elections in India* ..., pp.52-59.

2.3 THE FIFTH LOk SABHA, 1971-7: EMERGENCY RULE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The fifth general election vindicated Indira Gandhi as she led the Congress(Ruling) to a massive victory. The party won 44% of the popular vote and 68% of the Lok Sabha seats. It was indicative of the party's strength that it could stage this remarkable performance without engaging in electoral coordination with other political parties on a national scale. Locally, however, the Congress(Ruling) did make seat adjustments with various parties. For example, in the state of Kerala, the Congress(Ruling) and its partner in the United Front coalition cabinet, the Kerala Congress,
entered into an agreement not to field candidates against one another. Mrs. Gandhi’s party concluded similar deals with the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham in Tamil Nadu, and with the Communist Party of India in a number of different states.69

Of the opposition parties, the Opposition Congress, the Samyukta Socialist Party and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh formed a national alliance that would field one jointly supported candidate in each constituency. The Swatantra Party was hesitant about joining, however, after having been assured that the alliance would not form an electoral pact of any sort with the Communist Parties, it decided to cooperate. This caused some uneasiness in the alliance because Madhu Limaye, leader of the Samyukta Socialist Party, claimed that his party had entered the alliance in the first place on the basis of the understanding that it would be allowed to engage in electoral coordination with the Communist parties on its own.70

With the solid majority of the Congress(Ruling), the Fifth Lok Sabha promised governmental stability. Ironically, however, it was exactly during the term of this legislature that the suspension of democracy and the imposition of Emergency rule, the most dramatic and traumatic event in the history of India’s party politics, took place.

The new Congress(Ruling) administration found itself unable to cope effectively with rising inflation and increasing food shortages, both caused by the war with Bangladesh, the drought of 1972-73 and the world energy crisis.71 The economic crisis quickly led to a political one as anti-government protests and demonstrations were becoming an every-day occurrence all over the country. Political instability was at its worst in the states of Gujarat and Bihar. In the former, a massive student agitation led to the resignation of the state’s Congress(Ruling) government and the imposition of President’s Rule on the state. In Bihar, a movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan went

70Ibid.
beyond demanding the resignation of the state Congress (Ruling) government and called for a total transformation of the entire society, a total revolution that would benefit the disadvantaged sectors of the society.\textsuperscript{72}

The crisis that beset the national government was further compounded by the delivery of the Allahabad Election Tribunal’s verdict on June 12, 1975 in the \textit{Raj Narain versus Indira Gandhi} case. Mr. Raj Narain, who had been defeated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the Rae Bareli electoral district in Uttar Pradesh state in the 1971 general election, sued the Prime Minister for corrupt electoral practices. The tribunal found her guilty and consequently ruled to unseat and disqualify her from participating in electoral activity for six years. The Prime Minister’s subsequent application to the Supreme Court of India for an unconditional stay of the judgment was turned down on June 24 by Justice Krishna Iyer, who, however, also ruled that the Prime Minister could retain her seat but could neither vote nor participate in parliamentary proceedings until the Court would properly convene and rule in her case.\textsuperscript{73}

Justice Iyer’s decision was announced on the same day when the Gujarat state elections were concluded. This state election was won by the Janata Morcha, an electoral alliance formed by the Congress (Organization), the Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Socialists, and the National Labor Party (Majur Mahajan) who now felt encouraged to work towards forming a similar alliance for the next national election which was less than a year away.\textsuperscript{74} The following day, on June 25, a massive rally was organized in New Delhi under the leadership of Morarji Desai and Jayaprakash Narayan to demand the immediate resignation of the Prime Minister. In response, upon Indira Gandhi’s advice, the President of the Republic, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed issued a proclamation of

\textsuperscript{73}Hardgrave and Kochanek, \textit{India: Government and Politics}, p.260.
\textsuperscript{74}Although the Janata Morcha did not win a majority of the seats in the Gujarat Assembly, it was able to form a government with the assistance of the Kisan Mazdoor Lok Paksha led by Chimanbhai Patel.

The President convened an Emergency session of the lower house where the Speaker suspended regular parliamentary proceedings and ruled that only government business would be transacted during this session. This made it very easy for the Congress government to have three constitutional amendment bills, each aiming at increasing the autonomy of the executive from both the legislature and the judiciary, passed. In particular, the 39th Constitutional Amendment made the President’s proclamation of Emergency non-challengable in any court of law. In addition, it also stipulated that the President may issue multiple proclamations at the same time. The 40th Amendment sought the creation of a parliamentary authority with exclusive jurisdiction to try matters pertaining to the election of the President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the lower house. The Amendment made the law establishing this authority non-challengeable in any court of law. The 41st Amendment extended the immunity the President had enjoyed from criminal investigations to covering the Prime Minister.

Besides these amendment bills, the government also secured the passage of a number of laws that enabled it to incarcerate opposition leaders and enhance its control over the polity.

Among the opposition parties only the CPI hailed the imposition of the Emergency. The CPI was keen on retaining the support of the Congress Party for the sake of continuing their coalition in the state of Kerala where the CPI supplied the head of the state government in spite of its junior status. The CPI(M), which had constituted the united Communist Party of India with the CPI until their split in 1964, opposed the Emergency. However, the party did not join the BLD, the Socialist Party, the BJS and the Congress(O) when they agreed on January 4, 1976, the day before the commencement of the Winter session of parliament, to form a joint parliamentary bloc, called the Janata Front, to coordinate their legislative efforts against the Congress(Ruling) in both houses of parliament. This move towards creating a joint front against the government was
especially important because there were no recognized opposition parties in the lower house which gave the governing party a major procedural and tactical advantage during house deliberations.\textsuperscript{73}

On January 5, 1976 the cabinet resolved to advise the President to extend the term of the lower house by one year.\textsuperscript{76} This meant that elections would not be held as scheduled in March 1976 when the regular term of the house expired. The government dealt a similar blow to the Tamil Nadu and Gujarat State Assemblies, the only two states where the Congress (Ruling) was not in office. Although the term of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was due to expire in March 1976 concurrently with the original term of the Lok Sabha, the Congress (Ruling) government advised the President to dissolve it and impose President's Rule on the basis of corruption charges that the state governor filed about the state government. In Gujarat, in early March 1976 the KMLP, on whose external support the Janata Morcha coalition depended, dissolved itself. With most of the 12 KMLP legislators joining the Congress (Ruling) Party and with a number of Janata Morcha legislators crossing the floor, the government lost a budgetary vote and resigned. President's Rule was proclaimed on March 12 although the state assembly was only suspended but not dissolved.

\textsuperscript{73} According to house rules, a parliamentary group is accorded recognition as a party, and consequently its leader becomes the leader of the Opposition, by meeting three criteria. First, it must comprise at least one tenth of the membership of the house so that it could constitute quorum on its own; second, it must subscribe to a set of clearly identified ideological principles; and third, it must have an extra-parliamentary organization.

Being a recognized parliamentary party as opposed to merely being a group has two main advantages. First, only recognized parties are being allotted office space in the house which makes their presence and liaison permanent even between parliamentary sessions. Second, the leader of the opposition has some influence over the legislative agenda in terms of tabling motions, consulting with the Speaker about the order of the day etc. However, as long as there is no recognized opposition party in the house, the input of the opposition in parliamentary proceedings can be much more easily manipulated by the Speaker.

\textsuperscript{76} According to Article 83 of the Constitution, the President could extend the term of the lower house under Emergency for one year at a time but it cannot be extended beyond six months after the proclamation has been lifted.
In the wake of these events, the BLD, the Socialist Party, the Jana Sangh and Congress(Organization) held a meeting in New Delhi where they adopted a statement that went beyond the idea of a united front by calling for the creation of a united party whose primary objective should be “the restoration of democracy, democratic values and civil liberties” through peaceful means. The meeting set up a Steering Committee comprising one member from each of the four parties and instructed it to complete the integration of the four parties in two months.

During these two months, the respective decision-making authorities of the four parties deliberated on the merger proposal. The Working Committee of the Congress(O) arrived at a consensus that “the Congress-O should neither merge with the Ruling Congress nor with any other party, nor should it dissolve itself to form a united opposition party.” At the same time, the Committee also recognized that coordinating candidate nomination and electoral strategy with the other parties was very important in order to avoid the splitting of the anti-Congress vote. Similarly, the Working Committee of the BJS passed a resolution stating that the party was generally in favor of the merger but that its final decision in this regard should wait until all the party’s leaders were released from jail. The Socialist Party insisted that before a complete merging of the parties’ identities took place their respective auxiliary organizations must also be satisfactorily reconciled. Of the four parties, the BLD was the only one that consistently maintained a position in favor of the merger. In doing so, however, the party emphasized that it wanted the new party to adopt the BLD’s industrial and agricultural

78 Limaye, p. 131.
79 The BLD itself came into existence in May 1974 as a result of the merger of seven parties. These parties were the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, the Swatantra Party, a faction of the Samyukta Socialist Party led by Raj Narain and Karpoori Thakur, the Utkal Congress, the Kisan Mazdoor Party, the Kshatriya Loktantrik Sangh, and the Punjab Farmers’ Union. In September 1974, a faction of the United Goans Party also joined the BLD. See, *Political Parties of Asia and the Pacific* (Westport: Greenwood press, 1985), p.304.
Frustrated with the indeterminate outcome of the series of meetings among the four parties, the Congress(O) and the BLD engaged in bilateral talks about the merger during the fall of 1976. The Congress(O) wanted the new party to be organized according to its own constitutional structure and retain the word Congress in the new party's name. The BLD in exchange wanted to ensure that its agricultural and industrial policies would be accorded priority among the new party's objectives and also wanted to fill the new party's presidency. However, the agreement failed to be realized because the Congress(O) Working Committee was similarly adamant about providing the new party's president.

On October 30, 1976 the President, on the Prime Minister's advice, ordered another one-year extension of the term of the lower house. However, in the hope of catching the opposition unprepared, the Prime Minister suddenly advised the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha on 18 January 1977 and order new elections to commence on March 16, 1977. The Janata Front applied to the Election Commission for a new symbol on which to contest the election, however, its application was turned down. At the same

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80 In the meanwhile, the Congress(Ruling) government secured the passage of the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha on November 11. The Bill intended to further strengthen the executive vis-à-vis both the opposition and the other branches of government. Its most important provisions were the following: a ban on anti-nationalist organizations; the President was bound to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers; the regular term of the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas was increased from five to six years; the President may disqualify members of parliament and members of legislative assemblies on the grounds of corruption changes; only the Supreme Court may rule a law enacted by the central government to be unconstitutional and in order to do there has to be a 2/3 majority on the Court; the central government may send armed forces into the states without the consent of the state government; the President may proclaim Emergency over selected parts of the country; no constitutional amendment was subject to judicial review; President's Rule may be imposed on a state legislature for one year without the approval of the national parliament; the President may repeal a constitutional amendment within two years of its enactment by proclamation.

81 Party symbols play a very important role in elections because of the high rate of illiteracy among the electorate. Symbols are allotted to recognized political parties only. Recognition of political parties was regulated by the Election Symbols (Reservation and
time, the Commission maintained that nothing prevented the Front members from running their candidates on a symbol already owned by a recognized party. Without recognition, however, the candidates run by the Front could only be classified as Independents.

In the light of the Commission’s ruling, the four parties agreed that their candidates would contest the election on the BLD symbol all over the country with the exception of the southern state of Tamil Nadu where the Congress(O) symbol would be used. They also established a 27-member National Executive to take charge of the affairs.

Allotment) Order of 1968. According to paragraph 2 of the Order,

a political party shall be treated as a recognized political party in a State, if and only if either the conditions specified in clause (A) are, or the condition specified in clause (B) is fulfilled by that party and not otherwise, that is to say --

(A) that such party --
(a) has been engaged in political activity for a continuous period of five years; and
(b) has, at the general election in that State to the House of the people, or, as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly, for the time being in existence and functioning returned --

either (i) at least one member to the House of people for every twenty-five members of that House or any fraction of that number elected from that State; or (ii) at least one member to the legislative Assembly of that State for every thirty members of that Assembly or any fraction of that number;

(B) that the total number of valid votes by all the contesting candidates set up by such party at the general election in the State to the House of the people, or as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly for the time being in existence and functioning (excluding the valid votes of each such contesting candidate in a constituency as has not been elected and has not polled at least one-twelfth of the total number of valid votes polled by all the contesting candidates in that constituency) is not less than four per cent of the total number of valid votes polled by all the contesting candidates at such general election in the State (including the valid votes of those contesting candidates who have forfeited their deposits.)

The Order further points out that if a party gains recognition according to these rules in four or more states then it is classified a national party and can use the same symbol throughout the entire county. Other recognized parties can use their symbol only in the states where they are recognized.
of the new party which was agreed to be officially inaugurated under the name Janata Party after the election. On February 2, Defense Minister Jagjivan Ram resigned from the Congress(Ruling) cabinet and formed a new party, the Congress For Democracy (CFD). The CFD entered into electoral coordination with the Janata and also fielded its candidates under the BLD symbol.

2.4 THE SIXTH LOK SABHA, 1977-80: TWO UNSTABLE COALITION GOVERNMENTS

The general election resulted in a narrow Janata majority as Table 2.5 shows. Although the five original constituents of the Janata Party had contested the elections on the same symbol, except in the state of Tamil Nadu, according to unofficial reports the approximate seat shares won by the Janata's respective components were as follows: the Jana Sangh had about 90 seats, the Bharatiya Lok Dal had 68, the Congress(O) had 55, the Socialists had 51, the Congress for Democracy had 28 and the remaining 6 seats of the Party were held by dissident individual ex-Congressmen.82

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th># of seats after the election</th>
<th>% of seats after the election</th>
<th># of seats after Janata split</th>
<th>% of seats after Janata split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>54.60%</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>38.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party (S)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>14.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>28.50%</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIADMK</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAD</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>99.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82 The Hindu (June 24, 1978)
On March 24 the Janata parliamentary group selected Morarji Desai, the leader of the Congress(O), as its Prime Ministerial nominee who was then duly invited by the President to form a government by virtue of leading the largest party in the house. The four-party alliance and the CFD agreed that the new cabinet would comprise 2 members from each of the five parties as well as from the Shiromani Akali Dal that contested the election in alliance with the Janata in the state of Punjab. However, the new Prime Minister submitted a list of 19 cabinet members to the President. The list gave 6 portfolios to the Congress(O), 4 to the BLD, 3 each to the BJS and the Socialists, 2 to the CFD and 1 to the SAD.

In the aftermath of the election, the CFD tried to win over legislators from the defeated Congress(Ruling) Party in order to increase its weight in the Janata coalition which was particularly in need of improving its position in the upper house where the Congress(Ruling) Party still had an overwhelming majority, as Table 2.6 shows. However, the Prime Minister stood resolutely against admitting Congress(Ruling) defectors in the coalition.

### TABLE 2.6:
THE PARTY-WISE COMPOSITION OF THE RAJYA SABHA AS OF MARCH 1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF SEATS</th>
<th>PERCENT OF SEATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress Party</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>58.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress(O)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKD</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMK</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADMK</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akali Dal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominated</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Butler et al., *India Decides...*, p. 63

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83 Officially, the Janata Party did not come into existence until only May 1, 1977.
Although the entire tenure of the Janata Party in office was characterized by an uneasy relationship among its original constituents, the process leading up to the cabinet’s collapse started with Prime Minister Morarji Desai’s decision to remove Charan Singh, leader of the BLD faction, from the Home Ministry and expel him from the cabinet in June 1978. According to Desai, the reason for this decision lay in Singh’s criticism of the cabinet in public which broke the principle of collective responsibility. According to Singh, however, the real reason was twofold: first, as Home Minister he had led an investigation into the alleged corrupt practices of the Prime Minister’s son, Kanti Desai. Second, Singh believed that he was also becoming too much of a threat to the Prime Minister’s position. To mark his 77th birthday, Singh and his supporters organized a mass peasant rally in the heart of New Delhi on December 23, 1977 as a show of strength. The rally was supported by the erstwhile Bharatiya Kranti Dal and the Akali Dal, the Janata Party’s coalition partner, whose leader Prakash Singh Badal was holding the Agriculture portfolio.

On January 24 1979 Singh was re-admitted into the cabinet as Deputy Premier and Finance Minister. The Prime Minister also appointed Jagjivan Ram, the leader of the Congress for Democracy, as Deputy Premier and left him in charge of the Defense Ministry.

In December 1978, O. P. Tyagi, a member of the Jana Sangh faction, introduced the Freedom of Religion Bill, in the Lok Sabha. The bill which sought to make religious conversions by the use of “force, fraud and inducement” a criminal offense outraged the Christian community which played a significant role in running and providing for schools and hospitals, which could be easily construed to be inducements. Although the Prime Minister dropped the bill in May 1979 after a mass demonstration by a Christian group in New Delhi, he claimed that his government would soon re-introduce a similar bill in the
In April, the Prime Minister made yet another religion-sensitive announcement when he proposed to introduce a constitutional amendment bill in order to make cow protection a concurrent subject, i.e. an issue area about which both the state and the national governments could legislate. Furthermore, he announced that this amendment would then soon be followed by a law that would ban cow slaughter in the entire country.

This proposal was sensitive because for Hindus, constituting the religious majority in the country, the slaughtering of cows is sacrilege, however, cow eating was perfectly acceptable for the other religious communities. Thus, by banning the killing of cows the government was in effect proposing to impose Hindu dietary habits on the minority communities which was in violation of the country’s constitutionally guaranteed secular principles. Furthermore, as critics pointed it out, cow protection made no economic sense as it already resulted in millions of old and diseased cows wasting land and fodder and reducing the milk-yield of the country’s live cow stock. In addition, for many poor people, cow meat was the only affordable high-protein food stuff.

At the time this Constitutional Amendment Bill was proposed, in only two states, Kerala and West Bengal was cow slaughter permitted. It is important to note that it was in these two states that the two Communist parties, the arch enemies of the Jana Sangh, were very strong. On May 18, 1979 the Lok Sabha passed the bill despite the opposition of the Communist parties, the Congress, the Muslim League, the ADMK, the Forward Bloc and even the Socialist faction of the Janata Party itself.

The second half of 1978 and the first half of 1979 were marked by a series of some of the worst communal riots in a long time between Hindus and Muslims. The

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86Ibid.
incident led to repeated demands by members of the BLD and the Socialist factions of the Janata Party that the Janata should sever all ties with the paramilitary Hindu fundamentalist organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS). This, however, was easier said than done because of the Jana Sangh's close relationship with that organization.  

As a direct outcome of the tension between the Jana Sangh and the rest of the Janata factions, the governments of the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana, each of which was dominated by the Bharatiya Lok Dal group, collapsed. In Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister N. R. Yadav dismissed all 15 Jana Sangh ministers from his cabinet. In a subsequent vote of confidence taken by the Janata Legislature Party, he lost and resigned. His successor, Banarasi Das, was a member of the Congress(O) faction who appointed a cabinet including no Jana Sangh member. In the state of Bihar, Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur resigned after the Jana Sangh engineered his defeat on a confidence vote held by the Janata Legislature Party. The next Chief Minister, Ram Sunder Das, belonged to the Socialist faction. His cabinet included members from each of the Janata constituents with the sole exception of Thakur's BLD. Finally, in Haryana, Chief Minister Devi Lal was forced to seek a vote of confidence in the Legislature Party after he dismissed his cabinet's Jana Sangh ministers. Instead of seeking a vote, Lal resigned and was succeeded by Bhajan Lal, a member of the Congress for Democracy group supported by the Jana Sangh.

Following these changes in the state governments, the BLD increased its efforts against the Jana Sangh in the national party. On April 2, Raj Narain, a senior BLD leader, demanded once again that the Party officially break all ties with the RSS. In protest, the Jana Sangh group retorted that should the Party proceed to do so, the Jana Sangh would

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87 Being a very well organized paramilitary group the RSS provided indispensable assistance to the BJS in terms of electoral mobilization.

exit from the Janata Party. Furthermore, the Jana Sangh gathered the support of 100 Janata Party MPs demanding the expulsion of Raj Narain and Banarasi Das, the BLD’s only remaining Chief Ministers, from the party organization.89

On May 17, a conference was convened by Madhu Limaye, a member of the Socialist faction and one of the general secretaries of the Janata Party, about the possibility of forming a “third force” that would be opposed to both the authoritarianism of Indira Gandhi and the communalism of the RSS. The conference was attended by representatives of the Congress, the two Communist Parties, the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and the Peasant’s and Workers’ Party and the anti-RSS members of the Janata Party. These parties resolved to commit themselves to cooperating in the Lok Sabha “on issues of common concern such as national unity, democratic freedoms, communal harmony and social justice”.90 Soon after the conference, Raj Narain left the Janata Party and started a new parliamentary group called the Janata Party (Secular).

On July 10, Y. B. Chavan, the Leader of the Opposition, tabled a no-confidence motion against the government accusing it of tearing apart the country’s secular fabric. Meanwhile, an increasing number of BLD and Socialist members of the Janata defected to join Raj Narain’s group in the House. By July 11 the number of defectors reached 49, depriving the Janata cabinet of its majority in the Lok Sabha.91 At this point, for the government to survive it had to have the support of both the Anna-DMK92 and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), see Table 2.5. Although the former did lend its support to the Janata Party, the latter resolved that it would never support a party in government that contained communal elements in its ranks.

89Ibid., p. 29971.
91Ibid.
92The Anna-DMK was formed by defectors from the DMK led by party treasurer M. G. Ramachandran in 1972.
In the evening of July 15, 1979 the day before the vote on the no-confidence motion was due to be held, Prime Minister Morarji Desai submitted his resignation to the President Sanjiva Reddy who asked him to remain in office in a caretaker capacity until a new government was formed. By this time, the Congress(Ruling) had also split as a result of the deepening rift between those Congressites loyal to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and those who blamed the party’s rout in the 1977 elections on her Emergency regime. The latter group was led by Brahmanand Reddy, and although it was in a minority in the All-India Congress Committee, it did control a majority of the Congress(Ruling)’s members of parliament. In contrast, Indira Gandhi’s group was stronger in the party organization. The Reddy-group, led by Y. B. Chavan in the Lok Sabha, expelled Indira Gandhi from the party, in reaction to which, on January 2, 1978, Indira Gandhi and her loyal supporters convened to form the Congress(I).

Following the resignation of Morarji Desai, President Reddy invited Chavan, as the leader of the largest opposition party, to form a government on July 18. As a result of the various permutations that had taken place within and among the different parties the composition of the Lok Sabha changed significantly since the election as shown in Table 2.5. The Janata Party now had only 206 seats in contrast with the 298 it had won in 1977, the Janata Party (Secular) had 76 seats, the Congress 75, the Congress(I) 71, and 11 smaller parties accounted for 77 seats while there were 33 Independents as opposed to only 9 that had been elected as such. Since five seats were vacant, for a new government to have a majority it would have had to control at least 270 seats.

It is worth mentioning that Indira Gandhi herself was expelled from the Lok Sabha after the House Privileges Committee ruled that she was guilty of breach of privilege and contempt of the Lok Sabha as she had misused her Prime Ministerial office to protect her son’s business dealings. The Lok Sabha accepted the report and passed a motion proposed by Prime Minister Morarji Desai to expel Indira Gandhi from the House on December 19, 1978. In a later by-election Indira Gandhi regained her seat by winning the Chikmagalur constituency in Karnataka. See, Keesing's Contemporary Archives (1979), p. 29965.

The “I” in the brackets stood for nothing other than the leader of the new party, Indira!
The same day, the Janata Parliamentary Party executive held a meeting where suggestions had been made to remove Morarji Desai from the party’s leadership.\textsuperscript{95} Jayaprakash Narayan himself, the revered leader of the movement that led to the creation of the Janata Party, extended an appeal to Desai to step down and give way to Jagjivan Ram. However, Desai refused to resign and stayed on as the leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party.

On July 22, Chavan advised the President that he was unable to form a government. However, he had formed an alliance with Charan Singh’s Janata Party (Secular) with the objective of forming a coalition government in which Charan Singh would be the Prime Minister and Chavan the Deputy Prime Minister. In the meanwhile, Morarji Desai also staked a claim to form a government on behalf of the Janata Party. In turn, the President asked both Desai and Singh to provide him with a list of supporters within two days in order to determine who would be in a position to form a majority-based government. During those two days, the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress(Reddy) alliance was promised the support of the Congress(I), a 15-member Socialist group, the CPI, the Muslim League and the Peasants’ and Workers’ Party. The Janata Party was promised to be supported by only the ADMK. The CPI(M), the Forward Bloc and the Revolutionary Socialist party remained non-committal.\textsuperscript{96}

The support that the Congress(I) extended to the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress alliance was received uneasily by the Socialists who had declared on July 24 that they would not support a government that depended on the assistance of the Congress(I). In an effort to deflect the Socialists’ criticism, Charan Singh issued a communiqué clarifying his position concerning the acceptance of the Congress(I)’s assistance:

In this task of forming a Government, I have relied mainly on my colleagues of the Janata (S) and the Congress as well as the progressive forces. I would like to make it clear that the support of Cong.(I) came to me unconditionally while I and my colleagues

\textsuperscript{95}Madhu Limaye, \textit{The Great Janata Experiment}, pp. 497-99.
\textsuperscript{96}\textit{Keesing's Contemporary Archives} (1979), p. 29972.
were engaged in the task of forming a viable, progressive, democratic and secular government.

It would indeed be unfortunate if in this great task of giving the nation a truly dynamic Government, support of Cong. (I) from outside is made much of. This may lead to reinstalling a Government which would be totally under the baleful influence of fascist communal elements.

I would like to assure that nothing has been done by me to compromise my relentless fight against communalism and authoritarianism.

I, therefore, appeal to all my colleagues in the parliament to consider the situation with great care.97

On July 24, Singh and Desai submitted their respective lists of supporters to the President. However, both lists contained the names of 279 supporters with 42 being included in both. Curiously, both lists included the Akali Dal and Desai’s list also included 21 Congressmen who later denied that they had given their consent to be listed as Janata supporters. After closer inspection, the President determined that the Janata Party had the legitimate support of only 238 MPs while the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress combine was supported by 262 MPs. On July 26, President Reddy invited Charan Singh to form a government even though he could not prove with certainty that he would have majority support in the Lok Sabha. The President instructed Singh to seek a vote of confidence by the third week of August. On July 28, Charan Singh was sworn in as Prime Minister with his cabinet comprising six ministers from the Janata Party (Secular), seven from the Congress, one from the Socialist group and one from the CFD-S. Thus, a coalition minority government was formed.98

As soon as the cabinet was sworn in, the coalition partners engaged in a frantic search for allies and additional participants in order to survive the confidence vote. On August 8, 1979 the ADMK announced that it would support the government and eleven days later two of its members were inducted in the cabinet: Aravinda Bala Pajanor received the Petroleum and Chemicals portfolio and Sathiyavani Muthu was given the ministry of Social Welfare. The Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India

98Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, p. 29972.
(Marxist) as well as a number of small leftist parties also pledged their support to the coalition on August 16.99

However, there were two developments that were gradually overshadowing the apparent progress that the coalition was making in terms of expanding and consolidating its majority in the House. The first was the split in the Congress(Reddy). On August 19, just one day before the vote of confidence was scheduled to be taken, eleven members of the Congress(Reddy) Parliamentary Party resigned protesting against the underrepresentation of social minorities among the Congress ministers who were given portfolios in the coalition cabinet. Although the Congress ministers submitted their resignations in response to these protests, the dissidents broke away from the Party and formed the Indian National Congress (Real) threatening to vote against the government the next day.100

A more troubling development was the changing attitude of the Congress(I) towards the coalition. On July 29, the day after the cabinet was sworn in, the Congress(I) announced that it had provided unconditional support only for the formation of the coalition cabinet, however, as far as the continuation of the government in office was concerned the Congress(I)'s support "was not totally unconditional."101 In particular, the Congress(I) specified two conditions for the continuation of its support. First, the coalition would have to consult the Congress(I) on every major policy decision, and second, no Congress member might be included in the cabinet who had been an opponent of Indira Gandhi in the past.102 The latter condition was a veiled demand to remove two cabinet ministers in particular from their posts, T. A. Pai and Karan Singh, both of whom had made depositions against Indira Gandhi before the Shah commission that had been

100Keesing's Contemporary Archives, p. 29973.
102Keesing's Contemporary Archives, p. 29973.
appointed by the Desai government to inquire into excesses committed during the Emergency.

Although it was not until the end of July that the Congress(I) would start criticizing the government openly, the party’s commitment to supporting the coalition was never really credible. The first indication of this was revealed by President Reddy who had informed Madhu Limaye, one of the general secretaries of the Janata Party and leader of the Socialist faction, that no sooner had the crisis caused by the split of the Janata Party broken out than Indira Gandhi indicated to him that her party was aiming at a mid-term poll and that the Congress(I)’s support to the Janata Party(Secular)-Congress(Reddy) coalition was merely a stop-gap measure.\textsuperscript{103}

In addition, while extending support to the coalition at the national level, the Congress(I) cooperated with the Janata Party against the Janata Party(Secular) in the Bihar and Uttar Pradesh State Assemblies. In the Bihar Vidhan Sabha, the Janata Party (Secular) Legislature Party, led by former Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur, had submitted a motion of no-confidence against Chief Minister Ram Sunder Das’ Jana Sangh-dominated Janata cabinet. Although Thakur expected the Congress(I)’s cooperation so that they would jointly oust the government from office, the latter refused to do so and voted against the motion, saving the Janata government. Similarly, in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, the Congress(I) also refused to cooperate with the Janata Party (Secular). The Party joined hands with the Jana Sangh-led Janata Legislature Party in an effort to topple the Janata Party (Secular) government of the state headed by Chief Minister Banarasi Das. In this case, however, the Congress(I) and the Janata failed in their effort as the Das government survived the censure motion by a narrow margin of 21 votes.\textsuperscript{104}

The same day when the censure vote was taken in the Bihar Assembly, C. M. Stephen, the leader of the Congress(I) Parliamentary Party, met Jagjivan Ram, the new

\textsuperscript{103}Limaye, \textit{The Collapse of the Janata Experiment} ... p. 513.
\textsuperscript{104}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 515.
leader of the Janata Party who had recently replaced ex-Prime Minister Morarji Desai. The two leaders agreed that their parties would coordinate their legislative strategies in the Lok Sabha as well. Stephen once again confirmed that the Congress(I)’s support to the coalition pertained only to the formation but not necessarily to the continuation of the cabinet in office. On August 6, Jagjivan Ram announced that his party would welcome the Congress(I)’s assistance in toppling the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition cabinet.\textsuperscript{105} He further stated that

When this government falls, the President will have no option but to invite the Leader of the Opposition [read Jagjivan Ram] to explore the possibility of forming a new Government, and I am confident that by then we would have sufficient strength to form a stable government. Let those Congressmen who have revolted come together, and I invite them to come under the banner of my party.\textsuperscript{106}

In the morning of August 20, the day of the confidence vote, the Congress(I) announced that it would vote against the coalition. Since the Congress(I) and the Janata Party held a majority of the seats in the House, it was certain that the coalition cabinet would not survive the vote. Prime Minister Charan Singh submitted his resignation to the President and advised him to dissolve the Lok Sabha and order mid-term elections.

Jagjivan Ram called on the President on August 22 staking a claim to form a government. Ram indicated that since Charan Singh had never enjoyed the confidence of the Lok Sabha he was not a Prime Minister proper and therefore his advice was not binding on the President, i.e. the House ought not to be dissolved. Furthermore, Ram also indicated to the President that with the support of the ADMK and other smaller parties the Janata was in a position to muster a majority and form a stable government. However, the President refused to entertain Ram’s proposal, ordered the dissolution of the House and asked Charan Singh to serve as caretaker Prime Minister until January when the

\textsuperscript{105}Limaye, \textit{The Collapse of the Janata Experiment}, p. 515.
elections could be held. In turn, the Janata Party announced that it would introduce an impeachment motion against the President in the Rajya Sabha. However, the President prorogued the upper house on August 25.\textsuperscript{107}

2.5 THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH LOK SABHAS, 1980-89: CONGRESS DOMINANCE RESTORED

The seventh general election resulted in a landslide victory by the Congress(I) Party. As in previous elections, the Congress(I) did not form electoral alliances with parties at the national level, however, it engaged in a successful coordination of electoral strategy with selected political parties at the local level in different states. The most important of these Congress(I)-allied parties were the DMK in Tamil Nadu, the National Conference in Kashmir, the Moslem League and the Kerala Congress (Joseph Group)\textsuperscript{108} in Kerala.\textsuperscript{109}

The Congress(I)'s alliance with the DMK was particularly interesting and indicative of the party's renewed ability to build winning electoral coalitions. As mentioned earlier, the Congress had formed an electoral alliance with the DMK before during the 1971 general elections in Tamil Nadu. However, the relationship between the two parties soured after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had the DMK state government removed and President's Rule imposed on Tamil Nadu in 1975. Thus, in the 1977 general


\textsuperscript{108}The Kerala Congress split into two factions in July 1979: the pro-Congress(I) Kerala Congress(Joseph) and the pro-Communist Kerala Congress (Mani). See, \textit{Keesing's Contemporary Archives} (1980), p. 30255; and \textit{Political Parties in Asia and the Pacific}, p. 345.

\textsuperscript{109}\textit{Keesing's Contemporary Archives} (1980), pp. 30325-30327.
election the DMK allied with the Janata Party, however, their alliance failed badly as the Congress(Ruling)-ADMK combine won 32 of the 39 seats that were contested in Tamil Nadu. In the 1980 election, Mrs. Gandhi’s Congress(I) and the DMK formed an alliance once again resulting in a spectacular performance in the state: of the 39 seats the Congress(I)-DMK alliance won 36!

The Congress(I)’s alliance did not work out as well in Kerala where the triple alliance of the Congress(I), the Moslem League and the Kerala Congress (Joseph Group), also called the United Democratic Front, won 8 of the states’ 20 Lok Sabha seats while the remaining 12 seats were won by the Left Democratic Front including the Congress (Urs), the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India and the Kerala Congress (Mani Group). In the previous election of 1977, Mrs. Gandhi’s Congress(Ruling) performed significantly better in the state as it managed to win 11 of Kerala’s 20 seats. In Kashmir, the front of the Congress(I) and the National Conference won 4 of the state’s 6 Lok Sabha seats, although only 1 went to the Congress(I).

Overall, the Congress(I) won 42.7% of the popular vote and 66.7% of the Lok Sabha seats in the 1980 election. Including its electoral partners, the Congress(I)-alliance controlled 71% of the seats in the lower house of parliament. The Congress(Urs) performed miserably by winning a mere 13 seats. Of the Janata fragments, the Charan Singh-led Janata Party(Secular) outperformed the Janata Party by winning 41 seats as opposed to the latter’s 31. Even though the Janata Party fielded a candidate in almost every constituency, unlike the Janata Party (Secular) which ran candidates in only 294 of

110Mr. Devraj Urs left the Congress(I) shortly before the 1980 elections and became president of the Congress(Singh), which was the continuation of the Congress(Reddy). The name change reflected the assumption of the party’s leadership by Swaran Singh. Once Urs joined and became president of the party, the Congress(Singh) was renamed Congress(Urs). See, Political Parties of Asia and the Pacific, p. 337.

111Based on Keesing’s Contemporary Archives (1980) pp. 30325-7, and Butler, Roy and Lahiri, India Decides, various state tables.

112It is worth noting that at the time of the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, the Congress(I) had only 80 and the Congress(Urs) 56 seats.
the 529 electoral districts, and formed electoral alliances with important local parties, such as the ADMK in Tamil Nadu and the Akali Dal in Punjab, it fared miserably at the polls.

The election was followed by the formation of a Congress(I) majority government with Indira Gandhi at its head on January 14, 1980.

The massive defeat of both Janata fragments at the polls led to further splintering in their ranks. First, the Janata Party (Secular) broke up between followers of Charan Singh, the former Prime Minister, and Raj Narain, the founder of the party. The latter joined hands with H. N. Bahaguna, the leader of the CFD faction that defected from the Janata Party when the Janata Party (Secular) was formed in 1979, to form the Socialist Democratic Party. Second, the Janata Party suffered two separate splits as first its leader, Jagjivan Ram, and his faction left the party to join the Congress(U) and then as the Jana Sangh members quit it and formed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in December 1980.

The Congress(I) government remained firmly in power throughout the term of the Lok Sabha even surviving the terrible assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984. Within just a few hours of her death the Congress(I) Parliamentary Board recommended to President Zail Singh to appoint Rajiv Gandhi, son of the slain Prime Minister, as the new head of government. The President complied with the advice

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113 The leadership of the Janata Party was assumed by Chandra Shekhar after Jagjivan Ram's departure.
114 The BJP was very keen on distancing itself from its predecessor, the BJS, and its radical Hindu militancy. To this end, the BJP adopted the following five basic commitments as its founding principles: Gandhian socialism, nationalism and national integration, democracy, positive secularism and value-based politics. This platform clearly suggested that the BJP was trying to capture the center of the political space by incorporating the traditional positions of both the left (socialism, secularism) and the right (nationalism and value-based politics the latter being a veiled reference to Hindu values). See, Yogendra K. Malik and V. B. Singh, Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 1994), pp. 37-38; and Bharatiya Janata Party, Our Five Commitments (Delhi: Asiatic Printers).
and appointed Rajiv Gandhi the same day. On November 2, the Congress(I) Parliamentary Party elected Rajiv Gandhi as its leader, and on November 12, the Congress(I) Working Committee along with Congress(I) Chief Ministers and state party presidents elected him as co-president of the party.\textsuperscript{115}

The eighth general election held in 1984 resulted in the best electoral performance of the Congress(I) ever both in terms of the share of the popular vote it mustered, 48.1\%, as well as the share of Lok Sabha seats it won, 76\%. As before, the Congress(I) refrained from entering electoral alliances on a comprehensive national scale, however, it did continue its tradition of local alliances with selected political parties. In yet another curious twist of relationships, the Congress(I) allied with the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu. The partners swept the state by winning 37 of 39 seats. Similarly, this time the Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front in Kerala also improved on its earlier performance: in contrast with the 8 seats that the front had won in 1980, it succeeded in winning 17 of the state’s 20 seats in 1984! In fact, the Congress(I) Party gained more seats in every state of the country than it had in 1980 with the exception of Andhra Pradesh, the only state where it lost miserably, Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.\textsuperscript{116}

The opposition was utterly devastated in the election. The largest opposition party emerging was the Telugu Desam (TD), a state party recognized and running candidates only in the state of Andhra Pradesh, with a mere 30 seats. Of the national parties\textsuperscript{117}, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) won the most seats, 22 of the 64 that it contested.

The proposed cabinet list that Rajiv Gandhi submitted to President Zail Singh reflected the young Prime Minister’s attempt to establish firm control over the

\textsuperscript{115}The other president of the Congress(I) party was Mr. Kamlapathi Tripathi.

\textsuperscript{116}Compared to its performance in 1980, the Congress(I) lost 35 seats in Andhra Pradesh, 1 in Gujarat, 3 in Karnataka, 6 in Punjab, and 1 in Dadra and Nagar Haveli. See, Butler, Roy and Lahiri, \textit{India Decides}, pp. 110-111.

\textsuperscript{117}For a definition see page 29, footnote 44.
government as more than half of his proposed cabinet consisted of newcomers. While a majority of his ministers with cabinet rank were incumbents, at the rank of ministers of state he nominated 16 newcomers while retaining only 9 incumbents. In a further attempt at establishing his authority, Rajiv Gandhi secured the passage of the Fifty Second Amendment to the Constitution, which laid down very strict rules about defections, splits and mergers in the legislature.

The novice Prime Minister was keen

118 Of the 15 ministers with cabinet rank, there were six novices: Abdul Gafoor in the Works and Housing portfolio, Ashoke Sen in Law and Justice, Bansi Lal in Railways, H. K. L. Bhagat in Parliamentary Affairs, and K. C. Pant in Education. See, Keesing’s Contemporary Archives (1985), p. 33466.

119 This Amendment established the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution which specified in paragraph 2 that a member of a legislature, state or national, belonging to any political party shall be disqualified for being a member

(1b) if he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by the political to which he belongs or by any person or authority authorized by it in his behalf, without obtaining, in either case, the prior permission of such political party, person or authority and such voting or abstention has not been condoned by such political party, person or authority within fifteen days from the date of such voting or abstention;

(2) An elected member of a House who has been elected as such otherwise than as a candidate set up by any political party shall be disqualified for being a member of the House if he joins any political party after such election.

Furthermore, paragraph 3 of the Schedule states that

Where a member of a House makes a claim that he and any other members of his legislature party constitute the group representing a faction which has arisen as a result of a split in his original political party and such a group consists of not less than one-third of the members of such legislature party,

(a) he shall not be disqualified under sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 2 ...

(b) from the time of such split, such faction shall be deemed to be the political party to which he belongs for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 2 and to be his original political party for the purposes of this paragraph.

Finally, according to paragraph 4 of the Schedule,

(1) a member of a House shall not be disqualified under subparagraph (1) of paragraph 2 where his original political party merges with another political party and he claims that he and any other members of his original political party

(a) have become members of such other political party or, as the case may be, of a new political party formed by such merger; or

(b) have not accepted the merger and opted to function as a separate group ...
on ensuring that party discipline would be strictly observed and enforced during his
tenure and that he would not have to face the situation that his mother, Indira Gandhi, did
when the governing party split in 1969.\(^{120}\)

Interestingly, even though the non-Congress parties were never so weak in the
Lok Sabha as they were after the 1984 election, it was during the term of this parliament
that they managed to establish a cooperative framework that would leave a much longer
lasting impact on party politics than the brief interlude of the Janata Party did.

The revival of the parliamentary opposition originated in conflicts within the
Congress(I) Party, similarly to the process that had started with the split of the Congress
party in 1969 and culminated in the eventual creation of the Janata Party in 1977. This
time, the protagonist was V. P. Singh, Rajiv Gandhi’s Finance Minister.\(^{121}\) Singh was
given a broad mandate by the Prime Minister to eliminate corruption and cleanse the
economy. However, when Singh got engaged in probing the illicit finances of individuals
with close connections to the Prime Minister, he was quickly re-assigned to the Defense
portfolio. As Defense Minister, Singh appeared to continue his crusade against corruption
when he ordered an inquiry into alleged irregularities committed in the government’s
purchase of two submarines from Germany on April 9, 1987. The Prime Minister

\(^{2}\) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph, the merger of the
original political party of a member of a House shall be deemed to have taken place if,
and only if, not less than two-thirds of the members of the legislature party concerned
have agreed to such merger.

\(^{120}\)Hardgrave and Kochanek note that there have been “more than 2,700 recorded cases
since 1967, most within the state assemblies. Congress had been the principal
beneficiary, with as many as 1,900 defections to Congress. ... Between March 1967 and
June 1968, the high days of defection, 16 state governments were brought down by
defections. Of the 438 legislators who changed parties during this period, 210 were
rewarded with ministerships.” See, Hardgrave and Kochanek, *India: Government and
Politics*, p.273. As shown earlier, defections played an important role in the
destabilization of the Congress government in the Lok Sabha in 1969 as well as in the
collapse of both the Janata Party-Akali Dal and the Janata Party(Secular)-
Congress(Reddy) governments.

denounced Singh’s effort and, as a result, the Defense Minister resigned from the cabinet on April 12. Shortly thereafter he was officially expelled from the Congress(I) Party along with three other former ministers who had also resigned from their posts.\textsuperscript{122}

Following Singh’s departure from the Congress(I), eleven opposition parties met in New Delhi to deliberate about a coordinate position against the government. While the meeting succeeded in drafting a joint appeal to fight corruption in government and to demand a parliamentary inquiry in the government’s defense dealings, it failed to accept a proposal that was put forth to create a confederation of anti-Congress(I) parties.\textsuperscript{123} Later on in September, ten opposition parties met at Surajkund, Haryana, where they resolved to start a joint campaign demanding the resignation of the Congress(I) government and the call of early elections. The ten parties attending the meeting were the Lok Dal (Bahuguna), the Telugu Desam, the BJP, the Janata Party, the Congress(S), the Asom Gona Parishad, the Akali Dal (Badal), the DMK, the National Samajwadi Congress, and the Nagaland National Party.\textsuperscript{124} Noticeably, none of the left parties were invited to the meeting indicating that similarly to the process of opposition consolidation in 1975-77, the Communist parties were no less liked by most opposition parties than the Congress(I) itself.

In particular, the relationship between the Communist parties and the BJP was especially strained. Whereas the BJP had always considered the Communist Parties anti-national, the Communist parties rejected the BJP’s Hindu nationalism, no matter how veiled it was. A recent report of the BJP Working Group surveying party members’ opinion about the party’s relationship with other parties had concluded the following: the party must never merge with any other party; the BJP must fight the election on its own

\textsuperscript{122}These were Arun Nehru, former Rajiv confidante and Minister of State for Defense, V. C. Shukla, and Arif Mohammed Khan, Minister of State for Industry and Company Affairs. The wave of ministerial departures continued further as Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, Minister of State for Tourism, also resigned in July 1987.

\textsuperscript{123}\textit{Asian Recorder} (1987), 19544.

\textsuperscript{124}\textit{Ibid.}, 19728.
manifesto and its own symbol; and finally the BJP must never have any truck with the two Communist parties and the Muslim League. However, party members were in favor of coordinating candidate nomination with other opposition parties on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity. Similarly, shortly before the 1989 election, the BJP reiterated its position regarding the Communist parties in a resolution of the party’s National Executive: “The ouster of this corrupt and worthless Government is the No. 1 issue before the people and should take precedence before everything else. The BJP is prepared to co-operate with all democratic and nationalist [read non-Communist] parties on this issue [italics added].”

The two Communist parties were no less antagonistic against the BJP. The electoral manifestos that the two parties issued before the 1989 election harshly condemned both the BJP and the ruling Congress(I) for stirring communal conflicts all across the country. The CPI(M) manifesto in 1989 clearly identified that the party had two objectives in the election: to defeat the Congress(I) Party and isolate the communal forces [read BJP]. The CPI also declared that its objective was “the end of the rule of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I), the defeat of communal and secessionist forces and the preservation of secular democracy.” Furthermore, the CPI also stated that it would oppose any government of which the BJP was a partner.

\[125\] It was the traditional policy of the BJP, and its predecessor the BJS, not have any sort of cooperation with the Communists under any conditions. For instance, in 1966 the General Council of the BJS, the predecessor of the BJP banned “any sort of alliance with the Communist Parties, which have nothing in common with the Jana Sangh and which misuse the democratic process only for uprooting democracy.” Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Party Documents (New Delhi: BJS central Office, 1973), volume 4, p. 109

\[126\] Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Resolutions of the National Executive Meeting in Ahmedabad, October 7-9, 1988, pp. 15-6.

\[127\] The Statesman (November 1, 1989) p. 7. Jyoti Basu, leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Chief Minister of West Bengal, went on record at a rally held in New Delhi in December 1987 claiming that to remove the Rajiv Gandhi government “we shall have to unite democratic and Leftist forces. All parties, except the communal BJP can come together. Even those coming out of the Congress(I) are welcome. We are ready to provide leadership.” Asian Recorder (1987), 19833.
A few days after the conclusion of the Surajkund conclave, prominent ex-
Congress(I) leaders who had been recently expelled from the party launched the Jan
Morcha, an allegedly non-political forum, under V. P. Singh’s leadership on October 2,
1987. The efforts of the opposition were revealed by the Rajya Sabha election in March
1988. Reflecting the growing strength of the opposition at the state level, the
Congress(I) lost seven seats in the upper house bringing the total number of its seats to
141. In addition, the largest of the Congress(I)’s allies in the upper house, the AIADMK,
split and the larger of the two successor parties sided with the opposition. Thus, the
Congress(I) had to create more alliances in the upper house so that it would have the two-
thirds majority required for the passage of any constitutional amendment bill that the
government would seek to have passed.

In August 1988 the Telugu Desam, the Janata Party, the Congress(S), the DMK,
the AGP and the Janata Morcha agreed to form a federation called Rashtriya Morcha, or
National Front under the leadership of V. P. Singh and N. T. Rama Rao, the leader of the
Telugu Desam. The participating parties agreed that the AGP, the DMK and TDP
would be recognized as the dominant parties of the Front in the states of Assam, Tamil
Nadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively. It was in these states that these parties had their
electoral support concentrated and formed state government alternating with the
Congress(I) and its allies. Shortly thereafter, the Jan Morcha merged with the Janata

\[128\] Asian Recorder (1987), 19728.
\[129\] Of the major states, the Congress(I) was in opposition in Andhra Pradesh, Assam,
Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. This was
particularly important because seats in the Rajya Sabha are filled by the representatives
of the states who are chosen by the respective State Assemblies using the single
transferable vote formula, as specified in paragraph 80 and the Fourth Schedule of the
Constitution.
\[130\] The AIADMK split between those who followed the wife of the party’s deceased
leader and those who sided with his mistress. Eventually, the latter would become the
more prominent of the two.
Party as well as the warring factions of the Lok Dal to become the Janata Dal.¹³²

The creation of the Janata Dal and the National Front signaled the entry of a potentially very strong new player in the party system that could challenge the Congress(I)’s in two ways. First, being an amalgam of the non-Congress(I) centrist national parties, the Janata Dal challenged to invade the Congress(I)’s position in the ideological space of the party system. Second, by forming an alliance with some of the most formidable local opponents of the Congress(I), the Janata Dal could also destabilize the Congress(I)’s electoral bases in those areas where its centrist appeal might otherwise not yield the desired benefits. The National Front parties agreed to run on a common platform in the next general election and continue their cooperation if elected to power. Thus, a clear commitment was made to the possibility of forming a coalition government in the aftermath of the polls.

However, in order to ensure the defeat of the Congress(I), the National Front had to arrive at an electoral understanding with the Communist-led Left Front, and the BJP on the right. In the end, this effort failed as neither the Left nor the Right wanted to cooperate with one another in the election. This meant, that the National Front had to engage in separate coordination with the two sides respectively, which, however, only weakened it because it had to make compromises in two different directions.

Nonetheless, the opposition parties had made huge progress in terms of consolidating their ranks and offering a potential alternative to the Congress(I). In addition, it must also be noted that the opposition parties were very successful in coordinating their strategies in the two houses of parliament as the term of the eighth Lok Sabha was drawing to its close. In July 1988, fifteen parties, including both Communist parties as well as the BJP!, signed a memorandum of understanding to oppose the Congress(I) in a concerted fashion. After organizing a number of demonstrative walk-outs from both houses, the opposition

parties managed to defeat the government-sponsored Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika Bills, both of them requiring an amendment of the constitution and therefore a two-thirds majority in both houses.\(^{133}\)

2.6 THE NINTH LOK SABHA, 1989-91: THE JANATA FAILURE REPEATED

The 1989 general election was the first ever in India’s electoral history that produced a hung parliament. Although the Congress(I) Party remained the single largest party in the Lok Sabha it only held 36.3% of the seats. As in earlier elections, the Congress(I) formed alliances with parties at the local level, most importantly with the AIADMK (Jayalalitha) in Tamil Nadu and the Moslem League and the Kerala Congress (Mani) in Kerala. In both states, the Congress(I)-led alliance did very well: the Congress(I)-AIADMK grabbed all but one of the seats in the state, while the United Democratic Front won all but three seats in Kerala.\(^{134}\)

The National Front arrived at a perfect coordination of its members by determining which one of them would stand the best chance to defeat the Congress(I) in each district and ensuring that other members of the alliance would not run in that district. In total, the National Front ran candidates in 315 of the 528\(^{135}\) districts making adjustments with the BJP and the Left Front in the remaining 213. Whereas the Left and the BJP had no electoral understanding whatsoever and they each ran candidates wherever they believed they would have a chance of either winning or at least hurting the other’s chances of doing so, the Janata Dal and the BJP achieved a remarkable degree of cooperation: of the 252 seats in the Northern Hindi belt where both parties were very


\(^{134}\)The Congress(I) won 27 seats, the AIADMK won 11 seats in Tamil Nadu. In Kerala, the Congress(I) won 14, the Moslem League 2, and the Kerala Congress(Mani) 1 seat. See, Butler, Roy and Lahiri, *India Decides*, pp. 100-101.

\(^{135}\)Although the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha was 543, elections were not held in Assam at the time. Therefore, only 529 seats were contested in 1989.
In total, the three opposition blocs, i.e. the National Front, the Left Front and the BJP, fielded an average of 1.2 candidates in each electoral district in the 1989 election. In stark contrast, the same parties, or their predecessors, had fielded an average 1.6 candidates per district in 1984 and 2.1 in 1980. In 1977, these predecessors of these parties had run an average 1.1 candidate per district.\(^\text{137}\) This shows that the opposition parties were quite successful in recreating the electoral coalition that brought defeat to the Congress(I) in 1977. Of course, the big difference between the two elections is that the 1977 electoral coalition was much more concentrated than the one formed in 1989. Whereas in 1977 there was one party, the Janata contesting on the BLD symbol, opposing the Congress(I) in 75% of the districts, in 1989 the opposition party that competed against the Congress(I) in the most district was the Janata Dal fielding a total of 243 candidates. This fragmented nature of the electoral coalition that the opposition parties formed clearly suggested that unless the Congress(I) won a majority of the seats, the ninth Lok Sabha would be a hung parliament simply because none of the opposition parties ran the sufficient number of candidates that would have given it at least a mathematical possibility to win a majority.

Indeed, the ninth Lok Sabha was a hung parliament. While there was no clear winner in the election in the absolute sense of the term, the Janata Dal was the most successful national party in terms of the rate of its candidates’ victory: 58% of the Dal’s candidates were elected in contrast with just 39% of the Congress(I), 38% of the BJP, 24% of the CPI and 51% of the CPI(M) candidates. Interestingly, the regional, or state-, parties that belonged to the opposition camp scored a major failure. The DMK’s victory

\(^{136}\text{Statesman} (November 4, 1989), p.1.\)

\(^{137}\)The actual figures are as follows: 656 candidates for the 529 in 1989; 875 candidates in 541 districts in 1984; 1092 candidates in 529 districts in 1980; and 594 candidates in 543 districts in 1977.
rate was 0%\textsuperscript{138} and the Telugu Desam's 6%. In contrast, the Congress(I)'s regional allies performed very well: the AIADMK, the Moslem League and the Kerala Congress(Mani) had a victory rate of 100% each.\textsuperscript{139}

Concurrently with the national election in November 1989, the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh also held State Assembly elections. The opposition parties succeeded in defeating the Congress(I) and forming a non-Congress government only in Uttar Pradesh where the election produced a hung assembly with the Janata Dal being the single largest party. In the other two states the Congress(I) managed to win comfortable majorities in the Vidhan Sabha. Not surprisingly, the Congress(I) also won the overwhelming majority of the Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Following parliamentary convention, the President of the Republic, R. Venkataraman, invited Rajiv Gandhi, the leader of the largest party, to form a government. However, the Congress(I) declined the invitation, arguing that the electorate had clearly spoken and wanted a change in government.\textsuperscript{140} However, there were also voices suggesting that the Congress(I) leadership expected differences among the opposition to surface any time soon rendering any non-Congress government that might form to be potentially unstable. The Congress(I) would then be in a more advantageous position and could even form a government on its own once it faced a divided opposition again.

Following the Congress(I)'s decision to refrain from forming a government, the National Front appointed a committee to solicit and negotiate the support of the BJP and the Left for a National Front government. The committee comprised N. T. Rama Rao, leader of the Telugu Desam Party, V. P. Singh, the leader of the Janata Dal, Devi Lal,

\textsuperscript{138}Not one of the party's 31 candidates was successful in 1989.
\textsuperscript{139}Butler, Roy and Lahi, India Decides, pp. 100-101.
Ajit Singh and Arun Nehru, each being a senior Janata Dal official. While the Left appeared to be quite ready to provide support to the government from the outside, i.e. without formally taking up any ministerial portfolios, the BJP expressed two concerns. As L. K. Advani, the president of the BJP wrote to Rao and Singh,

(i) The National Front and the BJP fought these elections on two separate manifestos, not on a common manifesto. A manifesto is a party’s solemn commitment to the people. Our two manifestoes have several common features, such as grant of autonomy to Akashvani and Doordarshan, enactment of a Right to Information Act, incorporating Right to Work as a fundamental right in the Constitution, elimination of corruption by the creation of an institutional watchdog like the Lokpal, taking steps to give debt relief and ensure remunerative prices to the farmer, etc. But there are aspects on which the two manifestoes differ. We would like the N. F. government to confine its governmental programme to issues on which we agree.

(ii) The main constituent of the National Front is the Janata Dal. Ever since its launching, J. D. leadership, by its utterances and actions, has been consciously trying to convey to the people an impression that it regards the BJP as a communal party, and that it would rather sit in the opposition than ever share power with it. The J. D.’s public postures have thwarted the building up of any abiding relationship of trust and friendship between our parties. If it is acknowledged by the J. D. that though the J. D. and BJP differ on issues like Art. 307, Uniform Civil Code, Human Rights Commission, Ram Janmabhoomi, etc., the J. D. does not regard the BJP as communal, that would go a long way in removing misgivings in our rank and file.

I hope the N. F. will take note of these reservations and exert to obviate them. The BJP is keen to see that the Ninth General Election marks the end of Congress rule in New Delhi. It is, therefore, that even while expressing these reservations, we have not made our support to you conditional to your agreeing to remove them. In response to your letter, the BJP wishes to convey to you its readiness to give general but critical support to the N. F. government.

Having thus secured the support of both the BJP and the Left, the National Front proceeded to form a government. Upon swearing in the new cabinet the President indicated that the new Prime Minister, V. P. Singh would have to prove within one month that his government enjoyed majority support in the Lok Sabha. The new government included the Janata Dal and its tiny National Front partners each of which received one

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Ibid., pp. 55-6.
Ibid., p. 59.
Soon after the formation of the government, subnational elections were due to be held in Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Pondicherry and Rajasthan. The former opposition parties

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<td>0:10</td>
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<td>9:31</td>
<td>13%:36.4%</td>
<td>237:277 (324)</td>
<td>39:123</td>
<td>11.6%:25.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>12:14 (26)</td>
<td>12:11</td>
<td>30.5%:27.8%</td>
<td>143:147 (182)</td>
<td>67:70</td>
<td>26.7%:29.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>4:2 (4)</td>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>45.3%:7.2%</td>
<td>51:17 (68)</td>
<td>46:11</td>
<td>41.8%:10.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>33:11 (40)</td>
<td>27:4</td>
<td>39.7%:8.3%</td>
<td>269:115 (320)</td>
<td>220:28</td>
<td>39.1%:7.7%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10:05</td>
<td>23.7%:11%</td>
<td>104:214 (288)</td>
<td>42:24</td>
<td>10.7%:12.7</td>
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<td>63:139 (147)</td>
<td>2:123</td>
<td>3.6%:53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>128:120 (200)</td>
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<td>0:4</td>
<td>0.5%:0.1%</td>
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</table>

Source: Butler et al, various state tables.

Note: The numbers in the brackets in the second and fifth columns indicate the number of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha seats respectively available in the given state.

Although the AGP had no representatives in the Lok Sabha, given that there were no elections held in Assam, one of the party’s representatives in the Rayja Sabha was included in the cabinet.
did very well in each of these states in the 1989 parliamentary election with the exception of two tiny states of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, where the Congress(I) grabbed both seats that it contested in each, Pondicherry, where the Congress(I) won the single seat contested, and Maharashtra, where the Congress(I) won a majority of the 48 seats.

As Table 2.7 illustrates, the BJP outperformed both the National Front and the Left in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra both in terms of the share of the popular vote it polled as well as the number of seats it won. On the other hand, the Janata Dal performed the best of the three allied blocs in Bihar and Orissa. In the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan the BJP and the Janata Dal won almost the same number of seats although in both states the BJP’s share of the popular vote was slightly higher than that of the Janata Dal. The Left commanded only a negligible presence in any of these states.

In exchange for its support of the National Front government in the Lok Sabha, the BJP expected the Front to help it win the elections, by agreeing to electoral alliances, and form state governments in the states where it had done so well in the parliamentary election. In four states, however, this cooperation was very difficult to achieve. In Maharashtra, the BJP was already committed to cooperating with a local party, the Shiv Sena, known for its virulent position against the Left. By agreeing to support the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance, the National Front would have risked to lose the support of the Left Front in the Lok Sabha. In Orissa, the local Janata Dal unit was unwilling to cooperate with the BJP, however, the BJP did not see it worthwhile fielding the maximum number of candidates in the state given its negligible electoral base there. In Gujarat and Rajasthan, the problem that the parties ran into was that they both performed very well in the Lok Sabha polls in these states. Thus, when it came to negotiating the electoral alliance for the 1990 Vidhan Sabha election, both parties claimed that they could have performed even better had they not had a seat adjustment with the other. The BJP

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146 *Sunday* (January 28-February 3, 1990), pp. 30-1.
further stressed that it was now the Janata Dal’s turn to reciprocate the BJP’s assistance to the national government in the Lok Sabha. This argument, of course, did not appeal to the local units of the Janata Dal in these states. Eventually, the talks on alliance building in Gujarat and Rajasthan broke down and the two parties ran candidates on their own. Following the elections, the Janata Dal formed a minority government in Bihar with the external legislative support of the BJP, while the BJP formed minority governments in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh.

The relationship between the Janata Dal and the BJP was far from amicable at either the national or the subnational levels. In particular, the major issue that divided the two parties was the disputed construction of a Hindu temple at Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Ram, a Hindu deity, on the site of the Babri Masjid mosque, a revered site of the Muslims. The BJP had supported the temple construction movement led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (the World Hindu Federation) that had set October 30, 1990 as the date when the demolition of the mosque and the construction of the temple should commence.

The President of the BJP, Lal Krishna Advani announced in July that

The BJP will participate in full strength in any agitational program that might be launched by the VHP for the construction of the temple. Any attempt at settling the VHP’s plans will snowball into ‘the greatest mass movement this country has ever witnessed. We will see to it that with the support of nationalist forces, the Sri Ram temple is constructed.’

The BJP’s position was especially troubling for the Janata Dal government in Uttar Pradesh, the state where the disputed site was situated, because it received substantial electoral support from the Muslim community in the previous election, as shown in Table 2.8, which had to be reciprocated by his government’s protecting the community’s interests against the agitation of Hindu fundamentalists.

\[147\] Sunday (July 15, 1990), p. 42.
TABLE 2.8:
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SEATS WON BY PARTY BY MUSLIM POPULATION PROPORTION IN THE 1989 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS IN UTTAR PRADESH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Muslim population 20-50%</th>
<th>Muslim population &gt; 50%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>16 (66.7%)</td>
<td>34 (59.6%)</td>
<td>50 (61.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>3 (12.5%)</td>
<td>12 (21.1%)</td>
<td>15 (18.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>3 (12.5%)</td>
<td>5 (8.8%)</td>
<td>8 (9.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2 (8.4%)</td>
<td>6 (10.5%)</td>
<td>8 (9.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24 (100.1%)</td>
<td>57 (100%)</td>
<td>81 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Under pressure from Mulayam Singh Yadav, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister V. P. Singh announced on July 28, 1990 that the VHP’s unilateral deadline of October 30 would not be tolerated by the national government. The BJP finally decided to withdraw its support from the Janata Dal government in Uttar Pradesh, which, however managed to remain in office by mustering additional support from small parties and Independents.148

The second contentious issue which soured the relationship between the Janata Dal and the BJP was concerning the issue of reserving national government jobs for members of the so-called Other Backward Castes. When pledging its support to the National Front after the election, the BJP expected that the government would consult it on major policy issues. However, in August 1990 the Prime Minister announced, without prior consultation with either the Left or the BJP, that his government decided to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission by seeking to reserve 27% of all central government jobs to members of the Other Backward Castes on top of the

148 Sunday (June 8, 1990), p.12.
22.5% that was already reserved constitutionally for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.\textsuperscript{149}

The sudden announcement of the new reservation policy upset the BJP not only because it was not consulted but, more importantly, because, of the potential impact of this policy on its own electoral prospects in the future. Since the forging of a pan-Hindu unity transcending the multifarious cleavages dividing the community was central to the center of the BJP's political and electoral strategy, the National Front government's reservation policy explicitly seeking to divide the Hindu community along caste lines by pursuing the social, economic and political empowerment of the backward castes, posed a direct challenge to it.

Apart from the temple and the reservation issues, the BJP was also apprehensive about what it perceived to be the appeasement of the Muslim community by the National Front government. The declaration of the prophet Mohammed's birthday as a public holiday; the Prime Minister's frequent consultations with the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid of Delhi; the dismissal of Jagmohan, the governor of Jammu and Kashmir who was cracking down on Muslim fundamentalists in that state; and the failure to stand up decisively against Pakistan's interference in the affairs of Kashmir and Punjab were all issues that the BJP complained about.\textsuperscript{150}

In immediate response to the announcement of the Mandal policy, the BJP

\textsuperscript{149}It is worth noting that this announcement came shortly after the Prime Minister had removed his Deputy Prime Minister, Devi Lal, from the cabinet in July over allegations of the latter's involvement in electoral misconduct in the state assembly elections of Haryana state. Devi Lal had been at odds with Prime Minister V.P. Singh ever since the latter had defeated him in the race for the National Front's leadership right after the elections. Since Lal was widely regarded as a prominent leader among the Other Backward Castes the new reservation policy was intended to cut into his political-electoral base and weaken his political position against the Prime Minister. \textit{India Today} (September 15, 1990), pp. 31-2.

\textsuperscript{150}\textit{Sunday} (July 25, 1990), p.68.
executive resolved to launch a rath yatra\textsuperscript{151}, a march through the country, to reach Ayodhya by October 30 and begin the construction of the temple there. The BJP leadership concluded that the temple issue would unite Hindus regardless of caste and class divisions that the Mandal policy was aiming to institutionalize.\textsuperscript{152}

As October 30 was approaching the Prime Minister maintained that the High Court’s order to uphold the status quo would be enforced. When Lal Krishna Advani and his entourage were about to enter the state of Uttar Pradesh in the final stage of their yatra, they were arrested by the police force of the state of Bihar on October 23. The BJP immediately notified the President of the Republic that the party no longer supported the National Front government in office.\textsuperscript{153} In turn, the President instructed V. P. Singh to seek a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha on November 7.

Two days before the vote was to be taken, on November 5, the Janata Dal split between the factions loyal to the Prime Minister and those following former Deputy Premier Devi Lal and his ally, Chandra Shekhar.\textsuperscript{154} The dissidents, who had the support of about 60 Janata Dal members of Parliament, formed a new party, called the Samajwadi Janata Dal, or Janata Dal Socialist, and issued a statement demanding the Prime Minister’s resignation. In the meanwhile, the Congress(I) expressed its support for the new party and stated that it was willing to support “the Janata Dal minus V. P. Singh” in office.\textsuperscript{155} On November 7, with the BJP, the Congress(I) and the Samajwadi, as well as some other parties, voting against it, the National Front government lost the confidence vote by 346 against and only 142 in favor.\textsuperscript{156}

Following the collapse of the National Front cabinet, the Congress(I) was again

\textsuperscript{151}The phrase literally means “pilgrimage by chariot”.
\textsuperscript{152}Y. Malik and V. B. Singh, Hindu Nationalists in India, p. 87; India Today (October 15, 1990), p. 35.
\textsuperscript{153}Ibid., p. 88.
\textsuperscript{154}See footnote 114 for a brief description of the origin of this factional conflict.
\textsuperscript{156}Frontline (November 10-23, 1990), p. 6.
invited by the President to form a government by virtue of its still being the largest party in parliament. However, once more the party declined to do so. Instead, the Congress(I) pledged its external support to a government to be formed by the Samajwadi Janata. The Congress(I) made its offer credible by having extended support to the minority Janata Dal state governments in Gujarat, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, whose hold on office became precarious after the BJP had severed its ties with the Janata Dal at all levels of government.\textsuperscript{157}

Following the Congress(I)'s declination of the President's invitation to form a government, the President duly approached the numerically next largest parties, the BJP and then the CPI(M) to see if they were interested or able to form a government.\textsuperscript{158} However, both parties, and the blocs they led, unanimously refrained from accepting the invitation indicating that they would prefer the dissolution of the house and the holding of new elections. At that moment, Chandra Shekhar proposed that his tiny Samajwadi Janata Party would be able to form a government with the assistance of the Congress(I) and its allies. The President accepted Chandra Shekar's proposal, swore in both him as Prime Minister as well as his cabinet ministers on November 10 and instructed him to have his cabinet prove its majority within a couple of weeks in the House. With the assistance of the Congress(I), the minority Samajwadi Janata Party government won the vote of confidence on November 16, 1990 with 280 members of the Lok Sabha voting in favor, 214 voting against the new government while 11 abstained and 17 were absent.\textsuperscript{159}

The Congress(I) wasted no time trying to exploit its position by forcing Samajwadi leaders in Gujarat, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, whose governments it was supporting, to pressure their party's national leadership to fall in line with the

\textsuperscript{157}The BJP had withdrawn its support to the Janata Dal governments in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh some time before it had done so at the national level. See, \textit{Sunday} (July 29, 1990), p. 14; also \textit{Frontline} (November 24-December 7, 1990), pp. 14-5.
\textsuperscript{158}\textit{Frontline} (November 24-December 7, 1990), p. 9.
\textsuperscript{159}\textit{Frontline} (November 24-December 7, 1990), p.5.
Congress(I)'s demands and preferences in the national legislature. This, of course, led to tension between the Samajwadi Janata Party's national and subnational leadership as the former sought to maintain its autonomy from the Congress(I) Party's dictates as much as possible. For example, the Chandra Shekar government authorized the use of Indian airports by American warplanes during the Gulf War, ignoring the protest of the Congress(I) Party that did not want to hurt the sentiments of the Muslim electorate in the country. However, the cabinet could not exercise such autonomy on most decisions. Thus, for example, it had to obey the Congress(I)'s instructions to dismiss the government and impose President's Rule on the state of Tamil Nadu even though the Governor of the state had not filed a request to this end with the central government, as the Constitution required.

With time the state units of the Samajwadi Janata became increasingly weary of the Congress(I) and its alleged attempts at de-stabilizing their governments. Fearing that the Congress(I) would instigate dissidence within its ranks, the Samajwadi government of Haryana ordered plainclothes policemen to maintain round-the-clock surveillance on the residence of Rajiv Gandhi, President of the Congress(I) Party, in order to identify Samajwadi legislators from Haryana who might be contacting the Congress(I) leader. Having found out about this, Rajiv Gandhi demanded the dismissal of Om Prakash Chauthala, the Chief Minister of Haryana and general secretary of the national Samajwadi Janata Party. To add weight to the demand, Gandhi ordered the suspension of his party's support to the Samajwadi government in the national legislature until the demand was met. Since all this happened as the vote was about to be taken on the

161At the time, the DMK, a member of the National Front, was in office in Tamil Nadu. The Congress(I) used its leverage at the national level to please its local ally, the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu which was the main opposition party to the DMK government.
162In addition, Chauthala was also the son of Devi Lal, the leader of the rebel faction of the Janata Dal that came to form the Samajwadi.
motion of thanks to the President’s speech, a vote classified as a matter of confidence, the very survival of the Chandra Shekhar government was at stake. The Prime Minister decided not to bow to the Congress(I) Party, advised the President to dissolve the house and to order new elections and subsequently resigned from his post on March 6, 1991. The President accepted Chandra Shekhar’s resignation and asked him to remain in office in a caretaker capacity until the new elections were over.

2.7 THE TENTH LOK SABHA, 1991-96: A STABLE MINORITY GOVERNMENT

In the 1991 election the National and Left Fronts coordinated their candidate nominations just as they had done two years before. However, the BJP and the Congress(I) contested on their own, forming only local alliances with their respective regional supporters. Although the Congress(I) won 35 seats more than it had in the 1989 elections, it failed to win a majority of the seats in a number of large states including Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Nevertheless, the party still emerged from the election as the single largest party in the Lok Sabha.

The biggest gains in the election were made by the BJP. In contrast with the 86 seats it had won in the previous election, in 1991 it managed to win 120. However, the BJP’s performance did not mean that the party was gaining increasing support on a nation-wide scale. Quite the contrary, the BJP’s gains were made almost exclusively in Uttar Pradesh where the party won 51 of the states’s 85 seats in 1991 compared against the mere 8 seats it had won in the state in 1989. In all other states, except for Gujarat and Delhi, the BJP actually won fewer seats in 1991 than it had in 1989.

An important event during the election campaign was the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the leader of the Congress(I), on May 21, the day after the

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165 Butler, Lahiri and Roy, India Decides, pp. 114-5.
first of the three scheduled days of voting was concluded. Prior to his assassination, the Congress(I) was heading towards an electoral defeat that seemed to be worse than the one it had suffered in 1977. In the first phase of the election, held prior to Rajiv Gandhi's death, the Congress(I) Party won a mere 32% of the votes and only 25% of the seats.\footnote{Lloyd I. Rudolph, “Why Rajiv Gandhi’s Death Saved the Congress: How an Event Affected the Outcome of the 1991 Election in India”, in Harold A. Gould and Sumit Ganguly, eds., \textit{India Votes: Alliance Politics and Minority Governments in the Ninth and Tenth Elections} (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 436-54.} After his death, however, the Congress did remarkably well by winning 39.3% of the votes and 62.2% of the seats that were contested in the post-assassination phases of the election. As Table 2.9 shows, the fortunes of the Congress(I) revived considerably vis-à-vis those of the other main parties after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. The assassination, as Rudolph argues, was a major event because by “reframing the meaning of the campaign and the choices it offered\footnote{Tbid., p. 440.} it influenced undecided marginal voters who in turn could generate a counter-wave of sympathy in favor of the Congress Party.

\begin{table}[h!]
\centering
\caption{The Impact of Rajiv Gandhi’s Assassination on the Electoral Performance of the Major Parties in the 1991 Lok Sabha Elections}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Party & \% of candidates elected before assassination & \% of candidates elected after assassination & \% of vote before assassination & \% of vote after assassination \\
\hline
Congress(I) & 24.80\% & 62.20\% & 31.90\% & 39.30\% \\
BJP & 27.30\% & 40.10\% & 22.90\% & 18.50\% \\
Janata Dal & 28.30\% & 12.10\% & 12.20\% & 11.20\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

The day after Rajiv Gandhi’s murder, when the results already showed that the country would be heading towards electing yet another hung parliament, President Venkataraman proposed that a National Government be formed after the polls. Although some senior BJP and Congress(I) leaders, in particular Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Vasant Sathe respectively, received the proposal favorably the idea was quickly rejected by all
parties. The main argument against the formation of a National Government was that this idea was based on European experience where political parties ... operate on minimum consensus among themselves even in normal times, and in exceptional circumstances they can come together on the basis of such a consensus. Therefore, the essence of National Government lies in minimum policy and programmatic consensus among the major political parties of a country.

It has been further argued that such a thing does not exist in India. The major political parties in India are competing against one another and every major political party is confronting opponents with opposite policies and programmes. The Congress(I), the Janata Dal, the National Front, the BJP and the Left political parties, with their conflicting ideologies, cannot be expected to sit together to evolve a common economic strategy for India. If the Left parties were against the IMF loan, all other centrist parties agreed on its necessity. The BJP opposed the introduction of the Places of Worship (Special provisions) Bill while all other parties supported it.168

Concurrently with the national polls, the states of Assam, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and the Union Territory of Pondicherry also held elections to their Vidhan Sabhas. The Congress(I) performed very well in these elections. It won majorities and went on to form governments in Assam, Haryana, Pondicherry, and Kerala.169 In Tamil Nadu, the Congress(I)’s electoral ally, the AIADMK, formed a majority government, whereas in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal the Congress(I) performed very poorly. In the former state the BJP, while in the latter the CPI(M)-led Left Front, formed governments.

Following the election, the President invited the leader of the Congress(I), Narasimha Rao, to form a government by virtue of his party’s being the largest in the Lok Sabha. Since the Congress(I) was not in a majority position its decision whether to accept or decline the invitation was sensitive to the other parties’ attitudes to the formation of a Congress(I) government.

169In Kerala, it was the Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front that won a majority and formed a coalition government.
The BJP pledged that it would act as an effective and responsible opposition to a Congress(I) government. The party leadership made it clear that although by being the official opposition the BJP regarded it to be its duty to vote against the Congress(I) should it attempt to form a government, it wanted no early elections and preferred the cabinet to last a full term in office. It was reported that Narasimha Rao and Lal Krishna Advani, the respective leaders of the Congress(I) and the BJP, agreed on a compromise package: while the BJP would support the Congress(I)’s economic policy initiatives in the Lok Sabha, the Rao government would in turn provide assistance to the state governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh each controlled by the BJP.

The non-BJP parties were ambivalent about the formation of a Congress(I) government. On the one hand, they also wanted government stability and no more elections after just having been through two rounds in as many years. On the other hand, however, the National and Left Fronts were also concerned that the Congress(I) might be able to develop a strong record in office and improve its reputation among the electorate. Furthermore, the parties were also concerned that a Congress(I)-led national government would make subnational governance difficult in West Bengal, where the CPI(M)-led Left Front had controlled the state government for the last 20 years, and in Bihar and Orissa, both controlled by the Janata Dal. It was reported that the Congress(I) leadership did pressure the National Front to cooperate with its government by threatening to dismiss the Bihar government marred by severe law and order problems. Eventually, both the National Front and the Left Front decided to support a Congress(I) on an issue-to-issue basis.

170*India Today* (July 15, 1991) p. 43.
With all these developments in the background, Narasimha Rao accepted the President's invitation to form a government. His minority administration passed the vote of confidence, as instructed by the President, on July 15 with 241 legislators voting in favor, 111 against the government and 112 abstaining.\(^{175}\) The margin by which the Congress(I) fell short of a majority in the Lok Sabha improved slightly after by-elections in November 1991 and the holding of elections in Punjab in February 1992. Of the 15 Lok Sabha seats that were contested in the by-elections the Congress(I) won 8. In Punjab, with the Shiromani Akali Dal, the main opposition party to the Congress(I) in the state, boycotting the polls, the Congress(I) won 12 of the 13 seats.\(^{176}\)

The Congress(I) managed to remain in office for the entire duration of its term by constantly seeking out new alliances with different parties on each issue that had to be voted on. For example, to have its own nominee, Shivraj V. Patil, elected as Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Congress(I) made a deal with the BJP right after the election.\(^{177}\) However, the BJP voted against the government on its investiture vote while both the National and the Left Fronts abstained.\(^{178}\) On March 9, 1992, the Congress(I) secured to have its motion of thanks to the President’s speech opening the budget session of parliament passed even though neither the BJP, nor the National nor the Left Front supported it. In the face of 231 votes against the motion, the government rallied 269 votes in support of its motion, while 32 legislators abstained. Among those abstaining were 9 Telugu Desam representatives who openly declared their support for the Rao government in defiance of their party’s official position.\(^{179}\)

Although the relationship between the Congress(I) and the BJP quickly moved from consensual cooperation to bitter opposition, the Rao government managed to

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\(^{176}\)Ibid.

\(^{177}\)India Today, July 31, 1991, p. 25.


survive the rift. In order to embarrass the government, Arjun Singh, a factional opponent of Narasimha Rao in the Congress(I) Party, issued a sharp criticism of the BJP arguing that the Congress(I)'s traditional policy of secularism was at odds with the party cooperating with the BJP in the Lok Sabha. In order to preserve unity within his own party, Rao echoed that communal parties have no place in a secular state, which was how the Constitution defined India, and went even further by calling for a legal ban on non-secular parties. However, by so doing he also encouraged the hard-liners within the BJP, led by Murli Manohar Joshi, who had criticized the party's moderate wing for its cooperation with the Congress(I). At its May 1992 meeting in Gandhinagar, the BJP National Council reaffirmed the party's commitment to Hindu nationalism in general and the construction of the temple at Ayodhya in particular.

On December 6, 1992 thousands of volunteers mobilized by the BJP, the RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) demolished the Babri Masjid, the mosque, precipitating communal riots all over the country. In response, the Congress(I) government banned the RSS and the VSP, authorized the arrest of over 5000 BJP party officials, and dismissed the four state governments controlled by the BJP. When the BJP sponsored a no-confidence motion against the government, the Left voted with the Congress(I) while the National Front helped the government by abstaining.

The alienation of the BJP left the Congress(I) in a precarious position. As long as the issue of secularism versus communalism did not surface in the Lok Sabha, the government could count on the BJP's support on economic policy issues. However, the Ayodhya incident broke this arrangement leaving the government vulnerable to attacks from both the right and the left. Nonetheless, the Congress(I) managed to remain in office

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180 Singh waged his attack at the famous Tirupathi session of the All India Congress Committee in April 1992. See, Malik and Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India*, p. 92.
182 *Malik and Singh, Hindu Nationalists in India*, p. 95.
by taking advantage of the fragmentation of the party system and securing the ad hoc support of small splinter groups from time to time as political expedience required. Thus, the Congress(I) survived the no-confidence motion sponsored by the BJP as well as both the National and Left Fronts in July 1993 as the 3 member Samajwadi Party (Mulayam) and the 6 member BSP abstained while 4 members of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and 7 members of the Janata Dal (A) voted with the government against the motion.¹⁸⁴

2.8 THE ELEVENTH LOK SABHA, 1996-97: THREE UNSTABLE MINORITY GOVERNMENTS

Similarly to the 1991 polls, the 1996 election was a triangular fight among the National Front-Left Front, the Congress(I)-, and the BJP-led alliances. By winning a mere 26.4% of the seats and 28.8% of the popular vote, the Congress(I) showed its worst ever electoral performance since Independence. While it still remained the largest party in terms of its share of the popular vote, it was only the second largest party in terms of its share of the Lok Sabha seats after the BJP, which won 34.2% of the seats but only 20.3% of the votes.¹⁸⁵

Shortly before the elections, a number of influential leaders had left the Congress(I) over their disagreements with Narasimha Rao and formed new political parties: the Congress (Tiwari), the Karnataka Congress, the Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress and the Tamil Maanila Congress.¹⁸⁶ Whereas the Tamil Maanila Congress

¹⁸⁴India Today, August 15, 1993, pp. 38-42. Allegations that the Rao government literally bought the support of the JMM on this vote were confirmed in police investigations in 1996. These investigations precipitated the resignation of Rao from the Congress(I) leadership.
¹⁸⁶The Congress(Tiwari) was formed by Arjun Singh and N. D. Tiwari who had criticized Rao’s leadership for abandoning the party’s traditional leftist and secular policy position. The Karnataka Congress was formed by former Chief Minister Bangarappa who left the party because Rao supported his factional enemies in the state party leadership. The Tamil Maanila Congress was formed in March 1995 by a faction, led by G. K. Moopanar,
entered into an electoral agreement with the National Front in the state of Tamil Nadu, the other parties did not ally with either the BJP or the National Front-Left Front.\textsuperscript{187}

Concurrently with the national election, State Assembly elections were also being held in the states of Assam, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, and in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. In these state elections, the Congress, that had controlled each of the outgoing state governments except for that of West Bengal, fared miserably. In Haryana, the BJP-Haryana Vikas Party alliance won, while in the rest of the states various members of the National Front-Left Front triumphed. In Assam they were the Asom Gona Parishad in coalition with the Autonomous State Demand Committee, the CPI, the CPI(M) and the UPPA; in West Bengal and Kerala it was the Left Front, and in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry they were the DMK in coalition with the TMC and the CPI. In Tamil Nadu the coalition also included the INL and the All India Forward Bloc (Ayyannan Ambalam).

The BJP formed electoral alliances with the Shiv Sena, the Samata Party\textsuperscript{188} and the Haryana Vikas Party. These alliances, however, were quite contradictory. In the state of Haryana, the BJP entered into an electoral agreement with the Haryana Vikas Party both for the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha polls. However they both ran candidates against candidates fielded by the Samata Party in each of the ten constituencies of the state. In six of the ten constituencies the BJP ran against a Samata candidate and in four

\textsuperscript{187}The only exception is the Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress that fielded only one candidate, the party’s leader Madhav Rao Scindia, in whose favor both the BJP and the National Front-Left Front withdrew. Meenu Roy, \textit{India Votes} ... p. 85.

\textsuperscript{188}The Samajwadi Janata Party, that had formed a short-lived national government in 1990, merged into the Samata Party in the spring of 1996 shortly before the elections.
constituencies the Haryana Vikas conflicted with the Samata. In contrast, the BJP arrived at a perfect coordination of its candidate nomination with the Samata Party in Bihar where the former fielded 32 and the latter 22 candidates. Although the two parties did not run a joint campaign in Andhra Pradesh they did not field candidates against one another either. However, in every other state where the Samata entered the fray, these states being Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and the Union Territory of Chandigarh, the two parties did nominate candidates running against each other’s. The BJP and Shiv Sena, similarly to the BJP-Haryana Vikas Party alliance arrived at perfect coordination in the state of Maharashtra. The BJP nominated 24 and the Shiv Sena 20 candidates, none in the same constituency.

The BJP failed to renew its traditional alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal in the Punjab although the two parties had had a long history of both electoral and legislative cooperation in that state. Nevertheless, although the two parties ran candidates against each other in 3 of the 12 constituencies in Punjab, the Akali Dal offered its support from the outside to a BJP government, if one could be formed, in the Lok Sabha.

The National and Left Fronts formed the United Front after the elections even though their various members did not cooperate with one another consistently in the electoral stage. In particular, while the principal parties of both Fronts, the Janata Dal and the CPI(M) respectively, sought to continue their partnership, they ran into a number of conflicts during their effort to build and expand the joint alliance.

First, the National Front was not interested in cooperating with the Samajwadi Party. Ever since the latter caused the collapse of the incumbent National Front government in the Lok Sabha in 1990 and went on to form a government relying on the support of the Congress(I), the relationship between the two parties had been sour. Therefore the Janata Dal was in favor of forming an electoral alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party, which was the main opponent of the Samajwadi Party in the state of Uttar
Pradesh. However, the Left Front found cooperation with the Bahujan Samaj totally unacceptable because the party had relied on the support of the BJP, the arch enemy of the Left, to form a government the year before. Ultimately, the Left Front prevailed and the National Front agreed to engage in electoral coordination with the Samajwadi Party.

Second, the question of admitting the Akali Dal (Badal) into the alliance also caused friction between the National and Left Fronts. Whereas the Left wanted to have no truck with a communal party, the National Front was aware that in order to defeat the Congress(I) in Punjab, the formation of an electoral alliance with the Akali Dal was imperative. However, once again the Left prevailed and the Akali Dal (Badal) entered into an alliance with the BSP. The two parties virtually swept the polls in Punjab by winning 11 of the 13 seats contested there.

The third source of friction between the National and the Left Fronts was caused by the split in the Telugu Desam, one of the founding parties of the National Front, whose ex-leader, N. T. Rama Rao had been the Front’s convener. In August 1995 Chandrababu Naidu, Rama Rao’s son in-law masterminded the replacement of Rao as leader of the Telugu Desam legislature party in the Andhra Pradesh State Assembly. As a result, the party split into two rival factions, one led by Naidu and the other by Rao, and following his death in January 1996, his widow Laxmi Parvathi. In the national polls, the National and Left Fronts ended up forming different alliances with the splinter parties of the Telugu Desam: the left cooperated with Naidu, whereas the National Front

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189 Although the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party had contested the state election of Uttar Pradesh in alliance in December 1993, and subsequently formed a coalition government headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav, their cooperation broke down in the summer of 1995 when the Bahujan Samaj Party withdrew from the coalition causing its collapse. In the aftermath, the Bahujan Samaj Party was assisted by the BJP from the outside to form a minority government in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha.
191 The avowed purpose of the Akali Dal is to represent the aspirations of the Sikhs in the state of Punjab.
cooperated with Parvathi. Of the two alliances the former proved to be more successful, however, the inability of the two Fronts to overcome their divisions contributed to the Congress(I) relatively strong electoral performance in the state. Of the 41 seats contested, the Congress(I) won 22, the Telugu Desam (Naidu) bagged 16, while the CPI, the CPI(M) and MIM won 1 seat each.  

Fourth, in the state of Tamil Nadu, the National and Left Fronts were divided not only between but also within themselves. As for the Left, two of its constituents, the CPI and the Forward Bloc, entered into an agreement with the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, which had already had an understanding with the Janata Dal, the Tamil Maanila Congress, and the Indian National League. In contrast, the CPI(M) formed an alliance with the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazagham. The Congress (Tiwari), which eventually, came to enter the United Front, allied with the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a splinter party from the DMK.

Lastly, in Maharashtra state, the National Front-Left Front combine formed two separate alliances. Whereas the Janata Dal entered into electoral coordination with the Peasants’ and Workers’ Party and splinter factions of the Republican Party of India, the Left Front allied with the Samajwadi Party and a new party born of the merger of a faction of the Republican Party of India and the Bahujan Maha Sangh.

As the BJP emerged from the election as the single largest party in the legislature, the President invited it to form a government on May 15. Throughout the campaign the BJP had indicated that it would not seek to form a government unless it would win at least 220-225 seats in the Lok Sabha. Thus, it came as quite a surprise when the BJP accepted the President’s invitation even though it won only 161 seats. On May 16 Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the BJP’s parliamentary leader, was sworn in as Prime Minister. His

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193 Roy, India Votes, p. 114-8 and 229.
194 Ibid., p.93.
cabinet ministers including one member of the Shiv Sena were also sworn in at the same
time. The Shiromani Akali Dal, the Haryana Vikas Party and the Samata Party offered
their support to the government without accepting any ministerial portfolios. President
Shankar Dayal Sharma instructed Vajpayee to prove his cabinet’s majority by May 31.196

Vajpayee claimed that the party decided to proceed with forming a government in
order to keep the Third Front, which by then had been renamed the United Front, and the
Congress(I) polarized. In particular, the BJP hoped that it would be able to secure the
support of parties like the DMK, the TMC, the TDP, and AGP by appealing to their
subnational record of opposition to the Congress(I) as well as offering them a chance to
share power at the national level by participating in the BJP-led cabinet.197 The BJP also
sought to gain the cooperation of the Congress(I): in exchange for the Congress(I)
abstaining from voting on the confidence motion the BJP was ready to support the re-
election of Shivraj Patil of the Congress(I) as Speaker of the Lok Sabha.198 In addition,
Vajpayee also claimed that

when the president invited me [Vajpayee] to form a government, the political
situation was fluid. The regional parties were keeping their options open. We [the
BJP] wanted to make an honest effort to form the government in the light of the
people’s mandate, with the help of regional parties on the basis of a common
minimum programme.199

The fluidity of the political scene, however, started to thicken as the National
Front, the Left Front, and the four ex-Congress(I) splinter parties formed the United Front
which tabled a no-confidence motion against the BJP government on May 22. The
debates on the motion took place on May 27 and 28. As not a single party seemed to
change sides during the debate, it became apparent that the BJP government would not
survive the vote. Before the motion would have been put to a vote, Vajpayee tendered the

196Roy, India Votes, p. 250.
resignation of his government to the President after only 13 days in office.\footnote{Roy, \textit{India Votes}, p. 253.}

Following the resignation of the BJP cabinet and the expressed disinterest of the Congress(I) in forming a government, the President invited H. D. Dewe Gowda, the leader of the United Front, to form a cabinet. Gowda and his cabinet were sworn in on June 1 and with the support of the Congress(I) the new government won the vote of confidence on June 12.\footnote{\textit{India Today} (June 15, 1996), p. 28.}

Although the Congress(I) and the two largest constituents of the United Front, the Janata Dal and the CPI(M), ran a campaign heavily attacking each other their policy programs also contained some overlaps. Thus, on the one hand the Janata Dal accused the Congress(I) of being “fossilized by family rule and the profligacy of power”, of being involved in a number of scams connected to the disinvestment of public sector enterprises, of having bribed minor parties to sustain the previous minority Congress(I) government in office by voting for it or abstaining on crucial votes of confidence, and of creating communal tension between the Muslim and Hindu communities by first allowing the demolition of the Babri Masjid by Hindu militants and then not meting out the appropriate penalties on them.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 28.} Similarly, the CPI(M) also dismissed the record of the outgoing administration by calling it a “bonanza for big business and misery for the masses” and “unabashed succumbing to the pressures of US imperialism.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 28.} The Congress(I) accused the Janata Dal of triggering caste conflicts, particularly in the state of Bihar, and the entire opposition of propagating the idea of an inward-looking premodern India, and failing to provide stable national governments in the past.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 28.}

On the other hand, both sides agreed that economic growth had to be slowed down for the time being in order to put into effect programs and policies that would
redistribute a share of the wealth to the poor masses. In addition, both the United Front and the Congress(I) agreed that the distribution of resources available to the central and the state governments should be improved and be made more equitable, and that minorities’ rights should be accorded greater attention and priority. Finally, the United Front wholeheartedly subscribed to the idea put forward by Manmohan Singh, the Finance Minister in the outgoing Congress(I) government, that the small-scale sector of the economy must be strengthened and relied on for economic growth, employment creation and import-substitution.205

The United Front parties established a Steering Committee that was in charge of coordinating the legislative strategies of the Front members. Parties that declined to enter the government formally, most conspicuously the CPI(M), were also given representation and say in the Committee’s decision-making.206 In addition, the Front and the Congress(I) also created a coordination committee in order to develop and pursue a common agenda, however, it was agreed by both parties that their respective leaders, Dewe Gowda on the one hand and outgoing Prime Minister Narasimha Rao on the other, should have a great deal of flexibility in shaping the relationship.

The cabinet that was sworn in on June 1 included ministers from only 9 parties: the Janata Dal, the Samajwadi Party, the DMK, the TDP, the AGP, the INC(T), the MPVC and the KCP. Similarly to the Congress(I), the four parties of the Left Front as well as the IUML, the JMM, the MIM, the MGP, the UGDP, the ASDC, the SDF, the KEC and 3 Independents provided external support to the coalition. On June 28 the cabinet was expanded and the other members of the United Front, with the exception of the CPI(M), also took up ministerial portfolios.207

Soon after the United Front took office in May 1996 the Congress(I) underwent a change in its top leadership. The President of the Party, Narasimha Rao, resigned from his post under increasing pressure from the Congress(I) Working Committee which blamed Rao for alienating important Congress(I) politicians that in turn had contributed to the Congress(I)'s debacle in the 1996 parliamentary elections. His successor was the long-time treasurer of the party, Sitaram Kesri.

Amongst the first measures that Kesri took was to lure back the party's rebels that now belonged to the United Front. The first to return was the Karnataka Congress Party, followed by the Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress and the Indian National Congress (Tiwari). Although the Tamil Maanila Congress was also intensely lobbied it did stay with the United Front. In defense against the Congress(I)'s maneuvers, Prime Minister Deve Gowda sought to maintain his government's autonomy and refused to yield to the various demands posed by the Congress(I), which expected to be consulted on government policy in reciprocation for the legislative support it was extending to the cabinet.

There were two particularly important cases in point that severed the relationship between the United Front and the Congress(I). The first one was the Vidhan Sabha election in the state of Punjab. This election was particularly important for Kesri as it offered him the opportunity to demonstrate his ability to lead the party to electoral success. The Congress(I) demanded that the United Front help it by forming an electoral alliance against the Shiromani Akali Dal, which had boycotted the last state election in 1992, which entered into an alliance with the BJP. However, the United Front refused to do so and the election resulted in a humiliating defeat for the Congress(I) as its seat share dropped from 74.4% to 11.9% in the new Assembly.

Although Punjab was not an important state for the United Front, it was for the

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208 *India Today* (February 28, 1997), pp. 56-61.
Congress(I), which was in power in only two major states: Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. The non-compliance of the United Front with the Congress(I)'s request also added to the growing tension within the Congress(I) Party. The local Congress(I) units in those states where a United Front constituent was in power, namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, felt increasingly uneasy about their party's national wing maintaining their opponents in power at the national level.209

The second clash between the Front and the Congress(I) took place in Uttar Pradesh, where the state election held in September 1996 had resulted in a hung assembly. The Congress(I) had contested the election as the junior partner in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party, the party whose withdrawal had caused the collapse of the coalition government dominated by Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party the year before. The Congress(I) demanded that the United Front support the formation of a Bahujan Samaj-Congress(I) coalition government with the former providing the Chief Minister. This proposal, however, was unacceptable to the United Front because of the antagonism between the Samajwadi Party, its principal constituent in Uttar Pradesh, and the Bahujan Samaj Party.210 As no combination of parties managed to put together a working majority, the central government imposed President's Rule on Uttar Pradesh.

On March 19, after six months of incessant negotiations, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the BJP agreed to form a coalition cabinet with the Chief Ministership rotating between the two partners.211 No sooner did the news break, the Congress(I) started courting the Tamil Maanila Congress in an effort to topple the United Front government. Acting as Kesri's personal envoy, senior Congress(I) leader K. Karunakaran, a former Chief Minister of Kerala state, was reported to have offered G. K. Moopanar, the leader of the Tamil Maanila Congress, the Prime Ministership should it form a coalition with the

209Frontline (April 18, 1997), p. 5
210See footnote 153.
211Frontline (May 2, 1997), p. 15.
Congress(I). On March 29, Karunakaran told a press conference that Moopanar’s response to the offer was positive. The next day, Sitaram Kesri notified President Sharma that the Congress(I) had decided to withdraw its support from the United Front cabinet in the Lok Sabha. In turn, President Sharma instructed Deve Gowda to hold a vote of confidence by April 7. The confidence motion, which was put to a vote on April 11, was defeated by 190 in favor and 338 against as the Congress(I) joined the BJP in voting against it. Consequently, Prime Minister Gowda submitted his and his cabinet’s resignation to the President.

As soon as the Gowda cabinet was instructed by the President to seek a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha, the BJP floated the idea of extending its alliance and forming a National Democratic Front including more regional parties in an effort to make another attempt at forming a government. At the meeting of the party’s national executive, a few days before the confidence vote, Lai Krishna Advani openly identified the Congress, the Communist parties, the Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal as the BJP’s adversaries with whom the party could not form an alliance of any sort. In an effort to court the support of the regional and other minor parties, Advani called on his party to “debunk the propaganda that the BJP was an anti-Dalit and anti-minority party.” He further called on his party to identify more strongly with regional sentiments and concerns without consenting to regional chauvinism and to strengthen the party’s ties with its present regional allies.

The BJP’s claim to be more sensitive to the interests of minority and regional parties was made credible by the party’s successful cooperation with the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Bahujan Samaj Party to form coalition governments in the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh respectively. In any event, there was no significant response from the other

215 Ibid., p. 19.
regional parties in the United Front to the BJP’s proposal to form a broader front and thus the BJP leadership decided not to stake an official claim to form a government.

The Congress(I) was also interested in exploring the option of forming a government. At first, the party demanded that the United Front assist it to form a government with the party’s president Sitaram Kesri becoming Prime Minister. As the United Front did not agree, the Congress(I) proposed the formation of a Congress(I)-United Front coalition in which the two partners would have an equal standing, however, the United Front could provide the Prime Minister. Finally, upon the leaking of two letters sent by the United Front to the President indicating the Front’s determination to prevent both the BJP and the Congress(I) from entering office, the Congress(I) Working Committee decided on April 14, 1997 to renew its support to the Front rather than risk new elections. The only conditions that the Congress(I) posed was that Gowda had to be replaced as Prime Minister first.\(^{216}\)

The Congress(I)’s preferred candidate for the United Front leadership was G. K. Moopanar, leader of the TMC. The Congress(I) would have liked to see Moopanar leading the United Front not only because of his strong links with his old party but also because Moopanar had made hints in the past at allowing the Congress(I) to share power with the United Front at the right time.\(^{217}\) However, exactly for this reason, Moopanar was not acceptable to the other members of the United Front who shared a strong anti-Congress position in common. Furthermore, M. Karunanidhi, the leader of the DMK and Chief Minister of the state of Tamil Nadu was also concerned that if Moopanar were Prime Minister, the balance of powers between TMC and the DMK, who formed coalition government in Tamil Nadu, might be upset.

In the end, I. K. Gujral, a senior member of the Janata Dal and Minister of External Affairs in the Gowda cabinet, was chosen to follow Gowda as the leader of the

\(^{216}\) *Frontline* (May 2, 1997), pp. 4-9.
United Front. The Congress(I) accepted him and a new United Front cabinet was sworn in and won a vote of confidence on April 21.

The reformed United Front cabinet with I. K. Gujral at its helm did not last long in office. While the government survived the breaking away of a faction led by Laloo Prasad Yadav\(^{218}\) and the embarrassment that President Narayanan’s refusal to impose President’s Rule on Uttar Pradesh caused\(^{219}\), it collapsed after the publication of leaked excerpts from the report of the Jain commission, investigating the assassination of former Congress(I) Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, led to the Congress(I)’s withdrawal of support once again. According to the leaked information, the Jain commission accused the DMK for maintaining connections with and providing support to the Sri Lankan rebel group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that had plotted the assassination.

In immediate response to the publication of these excerpts the Congress(I) demanded on November 20 that it would withdraw its support from the United Front

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\(^{218}\) On July 3 Laloo Prasad Yadav, the national president of the Janata Dal and Chief Minister of the state of Bihar was defeated in the party’s national leadership contest by Sharad Yadav who won 691 votes against Laloo’s 58. Protesting that the voting was rigged Laloo Yadav rejected the result, broke ranks with the Janata Dal and floated a new party called the Rashtriya Janata Dal. The formation of this new party did not pose an immediate threat to the United Front coalition cabinet because Laloo could only muster the support of 16 Janata Dal legislators in the Lok Sabha, all from his home state of Bihar, and 8 members of the Rajya Sabha. Later on at the end of the month, Laloo was arrested on charges of his involvement in an animal fodder scam in Bihar. Upon his arrest, Laloo appointed his wife, Rabri Devi as Chief Minister of Bihar, who was later confirmed in her post by a vote of confidence passed by the Bihar Vidhan Sabha.

\(^{219}\) In October 1997 when President K. R. Narayanan rejected the Prime Minister’s advice to impose direct President’s Rule on the state of Uttar Pradesh. Gujral sought the imposition of President’s Rule on the state in the aftermath of the collapse of the Bahujan Samaj Party-BJP coalition government there and the popular violence it had sparked. Although the Bahujan Samaj Party had withdrawn from the coalition on October 19, barely a month after it had transferred the rotating Chief Ministership to the BJP on September 21, in the subsequent vote of confidence on October 21, the BJP cabinet survived as the opposition parties, prominently the Bahujan Samaj and the Congress(I), boycotted the session. President Narayanan’s refusal to heed the Prime Minister’s advice forced the cabinet to reconsider its position and on October 22 it resolved no to pursue the imposition of President’s Rule on the troubled state.
unless the DMK were expelled from Front and excluded from the cabinet. The Congress(I) claimed that it could not justify supporting a government a constituent party of which had been directly responsible for the assassination of the Congress(I)'s former leader. After Gujral refused to bow to the Congress(I)'s demand on November 24, Sitaram Kesri notified the President of his party's terminating its support of the United Front cabinet as of November 28.\textsuperscript{220}

The decision of the Congress(I) leadership infuriated the party's MPs, many of whom were novices in the Lok Sabha and who were concerned that new elections might be called in resolution of the crisis. The MPs resented that after having incurred huge electoral expenses only 20 months ago now they were risking the loss of their seats by having to go through the costly electoral exercise once again. A number of Congress MPs demanded that the party automatically renominate them if elections were called and that the official list of candidates be published early so that there would be sufficient time to campaign.\textsuperscript{221}

Sensing the resentment of many Congress(I) MPs, the BJP tried hard to win their support over and experiment with the formation of a new BJP cabinet in the Lok Sabha. On December 3, Lal Krishna Advani had told a press conference that his party has had the support of 40 Congress MPs who were ready to break ranks with their party. Although, as Advani noted, it had never happened before that so many Congress(I) MPs would express their dissatisfaction with their party's leadership and their readiness to join another political party in the Lok Sabha, this number was not sufficient to avoid the penalties under the Tenth Schedule. Thus, the BJP resolved that if it could not get Congress(I) representatives to change sides, it would recommend to the President that the Lok Sabha be dissolved and new elections be held.\textsuperscript{222}

\textsuperscript{220}Keesing's Contemporary Archives (1997), p. 41914.
\textsuperscript{221}The Hindustan Times, www2.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/041297/detFR003.htm
\textsuperscript{222}Ibid.
Congress(I) leaders who were adamant against the holding of new elections tried to work out a compromise formula with the United Front. In particular, Sharad Pawar, the leader of the Congress(I) Legislature Party met with A. B. Bardhan of the Communist Party of India suggesting that if the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham withdrew from the coalition briefly until it was cleared of the Jain Commission’s indictment then a rapprochement between the Front and the Congress(I) could be possible. However, no agreement on the formula could be achieved.\(^{223}\)

In the evening of December 3, the cabinet decided to advise the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha and order fresh elections. The President concurred and asked I. K. Gujral to remain in office in caretaker capacity until the new government was formed.

\(^{223}\)The Hindustan Times, www2.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/041297/detFR004.htm
CHAPTER THREE: PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE

The Indian National Congress Party dominated the national party system of Independent India from 1952 until 1989. With the sole exception of 1977, the party won legislative majorities in every general election in this 37 year period. Although the Congress Party was defeated in 1977 it quickly regained its dominant position in the subsequent election held in 1980. In contrast, since 1989 the Congress Party’s share of the popular vote has shown a secular decline and the party has repeatedly failed to win a majority of the seats in the Lok Sabha. The decline of the dominant party has been accompanied by the inability of any other party to win a legislative majority thus ushering in a period of successive hung parliaments in India. This change in the pattern of election outcomes has led scholars to herald the arrival of genuine multipartism in India’s national party system.²²⁴

This chapter seeks to explain the transformation of the Indian party system from predominance to competitive multipartism. It will argue that whereas the main Indologist and comparative theories of party system change fail to provide an adequate and consistent account for changes in the format of the party system, an extension of William Riker’s theory of sophisticated and sincere voting under the single-member-simple plurality electoral formula does provide such an explanation.²²⁵ In particular, the chapter will demonstrate that both the recovery and the decline of the Congress after the 1977 and the 1989 elections respectively are the result of such voting behaviour. Furthermore, the chapter will also show the importance of institutions and elites: the former determined the actual form of electoral cooperation that the opposition elites adopted, merger in 1977 and alliance in 1989, and the latter in turn created the context for both sophisticated and

sincere voter choice.

3.1 CONCEPTUALIZING THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE


The first period was characterized by the Congress Party’s winning majorities in both the national and subnational elections, as shown in Figure 3.1. Although the Congress never received a majority of the popular vote cast it managed to benefit from the seat bonus that the single-member simple plurality electoral system conferred on it as a large party with solid nation-wide following.²²⁷ The election of 1967 marked the beginning of the first coalitional period.


²²⁷ The single member simple plurality system tends to reward disproportionately large parties with solid support all across the country and regionally concentrated small parties. The logic of this is quite simple. According to this electoral formula, in each electoral district the candidate with the largest number of votes wins the single seat that is being contested. Since a candidate does not need to have majority support in the district in order to win, a party whose candidates may win in a majority of the districts may thus end up securing less than a majority of the popular vote across all those districts. In this situation, the party will receive a seat bonus, i.e. its share of the parliamentary seats will exceed its proportional share of the vote. Regionally concentrated parties also tend to receive a seat bonus from this electoral formula because by winning most of the seats in the region of their influence their share of the total legislative seats will be bound to exceed their share of the total popular vote.
As described in the previous chapter, the Congress failed to win majorities in a number of state elections, that were held concurrently with the national polls, and it also lost its majority in the Lok Sabha. The 1971 election brought the Congress (Ruling) back to dominance, however, it gave way to an fragile and unstable two-party system in 1977 when the Janata Party formed an alternative majority government for the first time. Once again, however, the Congress, this time named the Congress(I), reasserted its dominance in the 1980 election. This period of the third Congress dominance lasted until 1989, the first general election that would produce a hung parliament. Since 1989, the Indian party system has been acknowledged to have moved to the stage of genuine multipartism.

The application of comparative typologies to identifying changes in the format of Indian party system yields a similar periodization. The single most influential such typology has been offered by Giovanni Sartori who claims that the two most important dimensions according to which party systems can be distinguished are the number of parties in the system and the degree of its ideological polarization. Although Sartori

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treats polarization as an independent dimension of analysis, he also maintains that it is strongly correlated with the number of parties. Accordingly, he argues that most party systems with many parties will be more polarized than party systems that are characterized by the presence of a smaller number of parties. Of the various types of party systems that his framework identifies, Sartori considers the predominant party system, the two-party systems, the moderate pluralism and the polarized pluralism types to be the most common ones.

FIGURE 3.2: SARTORI’S TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of relevant parties</th>
<th>Low polarization</th>
<th>High polarization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Predominant</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tw-partism</td>
<td>Two-party polarized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Moderate pluralism</td>
<td>Limited but polarized pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>Segmented multi-partism</td>
<td>Polarized pluralism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For the present purposes, the numerical classification of party systems is more important than the ideological one. To count the number of parties in a system, Sartori proposes his famous counting rule based on the relevance of a political party. A party is relevant, according to Sartori, when it has either a coalition or a blackmail potential. With regard to the former, a party has coalition potential "no matter how small it is, if it finds itself in a position to determine over time, and at some point in time, at least one of the possible governmental majorities."229 As for blackmail potential, Sartori’s definition is somewhat less precise. He claims that a party has blackmail potential when “its existence, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the direction of the competition - by determining a switch from centripetal to centrifugal competition either leftward, rightward, or in both directions - of the governing-oriented parties.”230

230Ibid., p. 123.
Parties with coalition potential are relatively easy to identify: any party that is a member of a governmental majority has to be counted as such. In the case of single-party majority governments only the governing party has coalition potential. In cases of single-party minority governments, the number of parties with coalition potential includes all those parties whose legislative support is vital for the survival of the government in addition to the governing party itself. According to the same logic, when a majority-coalition government is formed, all coalition partners have to be considered relevant. On the other hand, when the government is a minority-coalition one, the coalition partners as well as the parties extending legislative support but not formally joining the government have to be counted.

With regard to blackmail potential, Sartori clearly uses this criterion in order to allow for counting all parties that are large enough to matter but that have not been part of the governing coalition, either from the inside or the outside. Ware does away with the vagueness of this concept and proposes that any party that has at least 3% of the seats in the legislature should be considered relevant. In sum, then it is useful to think about relevance in terms of Ware’s 3% rule of thumb coupled with the notion of coalition potential. In other words, parties with more than 3% of the seats must be considered relevant as long as they are part of a governing coalition.

The concept of relevance assumes real significance only in multiparty systems. Therefore, a predominant party system is defined as such not because there is just one party that meets the aforementioned criteria but because there is one party that controls the legislature over time. Similarly, there may be more than just two relevant parties in a two-party system, which for Sartori, is defined as the alternation in office by two parties. Multiparty systems with 3 to 5 relevant parties are considered to be “limited pluralism”

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while those with more than 5 parties are the “extreme pluralism” party systems. Figure 3.3 plots the evolution of the Indian party system according to Sartori’s model.

FIGURE 3.3:
THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM IN TERMS OF SARTORI’S MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>System type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952-1977</td>
<td>Predominant party system (The Congress Party formed every government in this period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>Predominant party system (The Congress(I) reasserted its dominance and formed both governments in this period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-present</td>
<td>Extremely plural party system (The number of relevant parties in this period is about 25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sartori’s counting rule is not the only one that has been offered in the literature. For instance, Douglas Rae’s famous fragmentation index or Laakso and Taagapera’s effective number of parties are measures that have been widely used by scholars. The former is an index that calculates fragmentation by deducting the sum of each party’s squared vote or seat share, expressed in decimal format, from unity:

\[ 1 - \sum p_{i,t}^2 \]

where \( p_{i,t}^2 \) is the percent of the vote or seat obtained by party \( i \) in election \( t \). The effective number of parties index calculates fragmentation by dividing the sum of each party’s squared vote or seat share, expressed in decimal format, into unity:

\[ 1 + \sum p_{i,t}^2 \]

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Figure 3.4 plots the evolution of the Indian party system in terms of these two measures.

FIGURE 3.4:
THE FRAGMENTATION AND THE EFFECTIVE NUMBER OF PARTIES IN THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM, 1952-96

Note: ENP stands for the effective number of parties. The values are based on parties share of parliamentary seats. The scores are based on the author’s calculations.

Both trend lines indicate the gradual move toward a more fragmented party system in India. However, unlike Sartori’s framework, both the Rae and the Laakso-Taagapera indices take the relative sizes of parties into consideration. Another such classificatory device building on the relative size of parties is offered by Ware. While Ware’s notions of predominant and two-party systems are essentially the same as those of Sartori, he breaks down the multiparty types into four distinct groups: two-and-a-half party systems (defined by the absence of a majority party, and the two largest parties’ winning at least 80% of the seats such that the third party is large enough to hold the balance of power, i.e. to give one of the two largest ones a majority); systems with one
large and several small parties (defined by the presence of a large party winning at least 45% but not more than 50% of the seats); systems with two large parties (defined by two parties' winning at least 65% of the seats such that no other party holds more than 14%); and even party systems (defined by the largest party winning not more than 45% of the seats such that the two largest parties win less than 65% of the seats in total). According to Ware's classification, the Indian party system has moved from predominance to two-partism in 1977, back to predominance from 1980 to 1989, and to an even party system since 1989, as Figure 3.5 illustrates.

**FIGURE 3.5:**
THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM IN TERMS OF WARE'S CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>System type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952-1977</td>
<td>Predominant party system (The Congress Party formed every government in this period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1980</td>
<td>Two-party system (The Janata Party formed an alternative majority government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>Predominant party system (The Congress(I) formed both governments in this period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-present</td>
<td>Even party system (In 1989, the largest party was the Congress(I) with 37.7% of the seats. The two largest parties were the Congress(I) and the Janata Dal, together they controlled only 64.2% of the seats. In 1991, the largest party was again the Congress(I) winning 42.7% of the seats. The two largest parties were the Congress(I) and the BJP, together they controlled 64.8% of the seats. Finally, in 1996, the largest party, the BJP won 29.6%, and the two largest parties, the BJP and the Congress(I), only 55.4% of the seats.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, in slight contrast with the conventional periodization proposed in the Indologist literature, comparative typologies of political party systems identify four rather
than six stages in the development of the Indian party system. The next section will seek to explain why the transition from one to another type of system took place.

3.2 EXPLAINING PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE: THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM OF THE INDOLOGIST LITERATURE

The conventional explanation for the period of Congress dominance is provided by Rajni Kothari\(^\text{235}\) who claims that the Indian National Congress became a dominant party because it was the exclusive legatee of the national consensus forged during the nation’s struggle for Independence from Britain’s colonial rule. As the Congress was the main protagonist of the Independence movement it managed to appeal to and forge political capital from the patriotic sentiment of the electorate. In addition, Kothari also emphasizes the importance of the Congress Party’s organizational and distributive superiority vis-à-vis its competitors. According to him, the Congress put together winning coalitions of diverse communities and social groups both horizontally and vertically from the local to the national level through an elaborate network of faction chains. The Congress used its organizational machinery not only to mobilize at election times but more importantly to distribute particularistic benefits to groups whose electoral support it targeted.

Chibber and Petrocik have noted that India’s social complexity and territorialized cleavage structure encouraged the Congress to form a broad-based electoral coalition.\(^\text{236}\) In particular, Chibber and Petrocik have found that in each state of the country a different combination of social groups formed the electoral base of the Congress Party. What held these very different social groups together in one party was the flow of patronage and particularistic benefits that control over the institutions of government and administration

afforded the Congress Party. In contrast, opposition parties had no such access to patronage which prevented them from aggregating into one party at the national level as they did not have the glue, i.e. patronage, that could have held their diverse social coalitions together. Thus, opposition parties remained locally confined, each representing its particular social group or social coalition in the state or region where it commanded influence.

As a direct consequence of this electoral strategy appealing to a diversity of groups, the Congress had to become more of a pragmatic than an ideological party. This ideological and organizational pragmatism supposedly allowed the Congress to respond to changes and challenges in a flexible manner. At the same time, fearing absorption by the dominant party, the opposition parties were forced to become tighter-knit, more disciplined and ideological than the Congress. In turn, ideological rigidity further perpetuated the dominance of the Congress Party by making electoral coordination among the ideologically opposed non-Congress parties very difficult.

The late 1960s marked the beginning of what Manor calls the de-institutionalization of the political and party systems in India. Electoral and party politics had supposedly become much more volatile than before as a result of the increased personalization and centralization of authority in the hands of Indira Gandhi. Numerous studies amassed evidence to show the organizational decline of the Congress. Elections allegedly became plebiscitary affairs in which the personality of the leader, read Indira Gandhi, weighed more heavily on voters’ behavior than substantive policy programs.

It is this emphasis on the volatility of the electorate and the shifting alignments of social groups that became the conventional paradigm of studying Indian elections and the

evolution of the party system. The drop in the Congress Party’s share of the popular vote in the 1967 election was generally attributed to the demographic change affecting the electorate. By 1967 two decades had passed since Independence which meant that there were many new voters with little association with and memory of the pre-Independence times. For them, the Congress Party was just one of the many political options to choose from rather than a symbol of national pride and assertion. According to Morris-Jones this change in the demographic structure of the electorate created a market polity with increased competition among political parties.239

The reassertion of power by the Congress Party in the 1971 election has been conventionally explained to be the result of a massive wave in favor of the leader of the Congress Party, Indira Gandhi, and her populist program to eradicate poverty (garibi hatao). A scholarly consensus emerged to consider this election as a critical realigning one as minorities and the underprivileged masses flocked to the Congress en masse responding to Indira Gandhi’s populist appeal. The populist program was supposed to have created a nation-wide wave in favor of the Congress. It was argued that a new model of politics was emerging in which the distribution of patronage at the local level lost its relevance as a factor determining electoral behavior to wave-making issues.240

The Congress Party’s loss in the 1977 election has been said to be the result of an anti-Congress wave. Allegedly, the electorate turned against the party because of the excesses of the Emergency regime imposed by the Congress government in 1975. In


particular, the Muslim and the Scheduled Caste communities were reported to have abandoned the Congress party in significant numbers.\textsuperscript{241}

The 1980 election resulting in a Congress revival has been explained to be the result of a pro-Congress wave after the Janata failed to provide a stable government. Just as the 1971 and the 1977 polls, this election has also become regarded as a realigning critical election because the Congress supposedly forged a new electoral coalition that allowed it to win.\textsuperscript{242} The 1984 election has not been regarded a critical election because it continued the dominance of the Congress Party. The dominant issue that was said to decide in favor of the Congress was the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Supposedly, voters flocked to the Congress out of sympathy for the son of the deceased leader, Rajiv Gandhi, who took over the leadership of the Congress.

In the post-1989 period national issues have been argued not to be relevant any longer as no political party has managed to sweep the national polls. Instead, elections have been claimed to be decided by regional issues and shifts in favor of one or another political party. This is exactly the reason why the post-1989 party system has seen the rise to prominence of a significant number of small regionally concentrated parties.\textsuperscript{243}

The 1991 election is a partial aberration in this regard. Rudolph has argued that in the absence of a favorable electoral wave and a de-institutionalized party machinery the Congress(I) was heading towards an electoral defeat in the first pre-assassination phase of that election that, if continued unabated, would have been worse than the one the Party had suffered in 1977. However, as a result of the outpouring of the electorate’s sympathy


with the terrible demise of its leader, the Congress(I) Party improved its performance in the remaining second and third phases significantly.

The conventional interpretation of the evolution of the party system has acknowledged that the electoral performance of the Congress Party has never been evenly distributed across the regions of the country as Figures 3.6 and 3.7 illustrate.

FIGURE 3.6:
THE REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF THE CONGRESS PARTY’S ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE, 1952-96

Source: Authors’ calculations based on data from Butler, Roy and Lahiri, India Decides, various tables

Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of the seats that the Congress Party won in a given region as a share of all seats won by the party in the particular election year. The data highlight that historically the Congress Party’s electoral stronghold was the Northern region of the country known as the Hindi Heartland. Although the Congress was

For the purposes of examining the regional pattern of the Congress Party’s performance five geo-political regions have been identified. The first, the Hindi Heartland, consists of the states of Bihar, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The second, the South, includes the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu as well as the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Pondicherry. The third region is the Northwest containing the states of Haryana, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir as well as the Union Territory of Chandigarh. The fourth region is the West
defeated badly in this region in the election of 1977 it quickly regained its strength there by the next poll.

Since 1989, however, the Hindi Heartland has no longer constituted a reliable electoral terrain for the Congress Party. As the Figure shows, the Congress has become stronger in the South than in the Heartland over the last three electoral cycles since 1989. Prior to 1989, the Congress Party won 43.4% of its total seats in the Hindi Heartland on average, and only 27.3% in the South including the election of 1977. Excluding that election, the figures slightly change to 49% in the Hindi Heartland and 22.5% in the South. Since 1989, however, the percentage of its total seats that the Congress Party has won in the Hindi Heartland has dropped below this historical average to a mere 25.7% whereas the corresponding figure for the South has risen to 39.7!

The region-wise performance of the Congress Party may also be examined by looking at the actual percentage of seats that the Party won in each region, as in Figure 3.7. Again, the data clearly reveal that of the two larger regions, i.e. the Hindi Heartland and the South respectively, the Congress has been fundamentally weakened in the former as of late. Whereas prior to 1989 the Congress managed to win an average of 75.8% of the seats in the Hindi Heartland, not counting the election of 1977, since 1989 the Party has been able to win only an average of 20.5% of the seats there. In the South the Party’s post-1989 performance has not changed much from its historical average. Prior to 1989 the Congress has won 61.4% of the seats in the South on average while in the post-1989 period this figure has slightly dropped to 60.5%. These statistics suggest that the overall national decline of the Congress Party since 1989 has been largely due to its electoral slippage in the Hindi Heartland, the region that alone accounts for almost half of all

consisting of the states of Goa, Gujarat and Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Finally, the fifth region is the East encompassing the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal as well as the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
parliamentary seats.

FIGURE 3.7: THE CONGRESS PARTY'S ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE IN THE REGIONS, 1952-96

3.3 TESTING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Kothari's thesis explaining the dominance of the Congress Party in the early post-Independence period with reference to the legacy of the national consensus forged during the Independence movement offers an idiosyncratic explanation that does not help in understanding the evolution of the party system through the various stages in a consistent manner. According to this explanation the so-called Congress system could only last as long as the political generation to whom the Independence movement was a salient electorally mobilizing issue was alive and constituted a majority of the electorate. As Figure 3.8 shows, the 1967 general election was the last one in which the majority of the eligible electorate would have personal memories of the pre-Independence era and, perhaps, association with the Congress Party.
Thus, if the 'national consensus' explanation were correct and consistent, then the Congress should have been dominant from 1952 through 1967 and should have experienced a secular decline in its electoral fortunes thereafter. However, as Figure 3.8 also reveals, there has been no strong association between the two variables. Although until the 1967 election the Congress' vote share, shown by the dashed line, seemed to follow the decline in the number of those voters who had been 16 years of age or older at the time of Independence, this relationship was interrupted in 1971, when the Party's vote share suddenly increased and disappeared entirely after 1977. In spite of the gradual decline in the size of the mentioned segment of the electorate, the Congress Party managed to increase its share of the popular vote in the 1980s.

The relationship becomes even weaker if the Congress Party's vote share is
indexed against electoral turnout. This measure is more robust because it shows the overall level of Congress support amongst the entire electorate not only those who actually turned out to exercise their franchise. After all, the poor relationship between the two variables, if one relied only on the percent of the votes polled by the Congress Party, may be the result of the inability and/or unwillingness of those voters who were 16+ in 1947 to turn out to vote on election day.

However, as the dotted line in Figure 3.8 shows, the electoral base of the Congress, in terms of the percentage of eligible enfranchised voters who voted for the party in the various elections, has not fluctuated much over the years. Whereas the standard deviation of the Congress Party’s share of the votes cast between 1952 and 1996 is 5.48, the standard deviation of the Party’s share of the total eligible electorate for the same years is 3.34. It is also interesting that in the 1967 and 1971 elections the Congress Party actually received the support of a larger segment of the total electorate than in the first two post-Independence elections.

The parallel thesis that explains Congress dominance in the early stage of the party system with reference to the broad social-electoral coalition the party forged suffers from both circular reasoning and ad hocery. First, regarding the issue of particularistic benefits, the distribution of which supposedly held the Congress coalition together, it is not clear whether it was control over the institutions of government and the consequent distribution of the spoils of office that enabled the Congress to maintain its widely based electoral coalition or the other way around. Either way, however, this explanation would suggest that the Congress could lose electoral support only if it failed to deliver the goods to its supporters. However, it is hard to see why the party would do so. On the other hand, had the party consistently kept on delivering benefits to its constituents then its hold on office should have been perpetual.

The problem of ad hocery is just as troubling. Although the social structure of the country may well encourage the formation of a broadly based party it is not at all clear
why there would be only one such party formed. If Chibber and Petrocik are correct in concluding that the Congress is just as diverse in terms of the social composition of its electoral coalition as the opposition taken en bloc, then it is difficult to see why the Congress would have managed to aggregate these divergent streams and groups in one coalition whereas the opposition has failed to do so. Again, as mentioned, the explanation offered is that the Congress, as the governing party, can distribute patronage and thus hold diverse interests together. At this point, however, the reasoning once again becomes circular. It suggests that being in office allows the Congress to forge a broad electoral coalition which in turn perpetuates the party’s hold on office. However, the explanation does not reveal how the Party got into office to begin with.

The conventional thesis that the post-Congress system evolution of the party system has been driven by volatile electorates responding to plebiscitary campaigns, issues and personalities has been convincingly debunked by Vanderbok.245 He finds that

Contrary to the dominant model of Indian politics, which posits the Congress as a master manipulator of bloc voting, and despite a large literature that portrays regular crises and realignments in the Indian electorate, circumstantial evidence does not indicate that any realignments have taken place, particularly if realignment is defined as an enduring shift in the propensity of identifiable groups to change their political orientation. Instead, there seem to be large, enduring and different groups that regularly mobilize in favor of the Congress or opposition banners in the various regions of the nation. The Congress is relatively consistent in its ability to mobilize and relatively unable to expand on its base. The opposition base, too, is stable but opposition parties experience comparatively wider swings in their ability to bring new voters into the system and then keep them over time. The result is a situation of contained volatility.246

Vanderbok arrives at this conclusion by assessing the performance of the Congress Party vis-à-vis the opposition over time not in terms of the actual shares of the vote, and seats, they received, which has been the methodology followed in the conventional literature, but in terms of their share of the mobilized vote, i.e. the parties’

245 Vanderbok, “The Tiger Triumphant”
246 Ibid., p. 259.
share of the support of the total eligible electorate.

Figure 3.9 clearly shows that the Congress Party’s electoral performance over time has been far less volatile than that of the opposition. The standard deviation of the Congress Party’s aggregate mobilized vote across the eight elections that Vanderbok considers is 2.8 in contrast with the 4.6 for the opposition. Figure 3.9 also sheds doubt on the existence of both the Indira wave in 1971 and the anti-Indira wave in 1977. In neither of these elections did the Congress Party’s electoral performance, in terms of vote mobilization, deviate from the normal trajectory. Thus, the extent to which these elections can be called re-aligning is seriously questioned by Vanderbok’s finding. Curiously, it is the 1984 election, which the conventional literature does not classify as a critical or re-aligning election because it merely continued the dominance of the Congress Party, that appears to deviate from the historical pattern.

**FIGURE 3.9:**

Source: Vanderbok, “The Tiger Triumphant,” pp. 242-3

Looking at the performance of the opposition overtime, the picture changes significantly. As the data in Figure 3.9 indicate the opposition’s electoral performance
has been significantly more volatile than that of the Congress. On the basis of these findings, Vanderbok plausibly concludes that "variations in Congress party performance have been due less to what the Congress does than to the ability of the opposition to mobilize voters. It is opposition volatility of mobilization that is the driving force behind shifts in the party's electoral fortunes."

Vanderbok also refutes the conventional wisdom that the Congress' electoral stronghold has been in the Northern Hindi Heartland. Figures 3.10 and 3.11 compare the Congress Party's and the opposition's performance in the Hindi and the non-Hindi speaking regions over time.

FIGURE 3.10:
THE ACTUAL AND MOBILIZED VOTE OF THE CONGRESS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES IN THE HINDI HEARTLAND, 1952-84


247Vanderbok, "The Tiger Triumphant..." p. 246.
The charts clearly demonstrate that the Congress has actually been stronger electorally in the non-Hindi speaking areas. Across the eight elections from 1952 through 1984, the Congress Party's mean mobilized vote share is 20.75% in the Hindi states as opposed to 25.62% in the non-Hindi states as shown in Table 3.4. The Party's share of the valid vote in the non-Hindi areas also exceeds that in the Hindi-speaking region by an average of 1.75%; whereas the Congress has mustered 42.5% of the valid votes cast in the Hindi-speaking regions it has won 44.25% of the valid vote in the non-Hindi states.

Finally, the electoral support that the Congress has mobilized in both regions over time has shown much less volatility than that mobilized by the opposition. The standard deviation of the Congress Party's mobilized vote in the Hindi speaking region is 4 as opposed to the opposition's 6.4. In the non-Hindi areas the opposition's mobilized support has been more stable as suggested by a standard deviation of 3.5. However, this is still higher than the standard deviation of the Congress' mobilized vote in the same region, which is 3.

Although Vanderbok's contribution is indispensable in that he has highlighted
how misperceived and misinterpreted the development of the Indian party system has been, it does not offer an alternative explanation that can be used to provide an consistent account of the history of the party system.

3.4 COMPARATIVE THEORIES OF PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE

One of the most influential, and controversial, theories on party systems has been offered by Maurice Duverger. According to Duverger, the number of parties in a party system is determined by the electoral formula, i.e. the rules that convert the votes electors cast into legislative seats. He claimed in what later William Riker called Duverger's Law that “the simple-majority single ballot system favors the two-party system”. In what Riker called Duverger's Hypothesis, Duverger states that “the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favors multipartism.”

Duverger offers two reasons why the simple plurality system may favor a two-party system. The first is what he calls the mechanical factor, which simply means the automatic elimination of all but the winning candidate in an electoral district. Since there is only one winner, which is indicated in the more apt term “single-member simple plurality system”, in a given district, all the votes that have been cast for candidates other than the winner are wasted. The second reason is the psychological factor which means that voters seek to avoid wasting their votes and will support candidates that stand a reasonable chance to win. Since there is only one seat to be won, these factors favor the consolidation of the electorate behind two candidates. This kind of voter behavior is called tactical or strategic voting.

In exposing the effect of proportional representation and the majority run-off

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250Duverger, Political Parties, p. 217.
251Ibid., p. 239.
systems on the format of the party system, Duverger follows a similar logic. Proportional representation by definition reduces the amount of wasted votes by rewarding every candidate in proportion to the number of votes he/she mustered. In majority run-off systems there is a single winner, similarly to simple plurality and in contrast with proportional representation, that is determined on a second ballot after weak candidates are eliminated from the race on the basis of their returns on the first ballot.\(^{253}\) This formula encourages the fragmentation of the party system because candidates are eliminated only after the results of the first round are known.

Duverger’s theory has been tested, critiqued and refined time and time again.\(^{254}\) An important extension of Duverger’s theory has been related to the problem of cross-district linkage. Duverger recognizes that his theory about strategic voting in simple plurality systems is limited to local, i.e. district-level dynamics. In other words, the logic of strategic voting that he posits predicts the consolidation of bipartism only at the district but not the national level. According to him, national bipartism automatically follows the evolution of district-level bipartism because “increased centralization of organization within the parties and consequent tendency to see political problems from the wider, national standpoint tend of themselves to project on to the entire country the localized two-party system brought about by the ballot procedure.”\(^{255}\)

Leys’ criticism of Duverger led him to offer an alternative argument about the

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\(^{253}\)There may be variations on the actual rules of entry into the second round. For example, in French elections, only the top two candidates proceed from the first round and the winner, by definition, will have a majority on second ballot. In contrast, in Hungary, candidates winning at least 15\% of the votes in the first round can enter the second round where the winner needs to secure only a simple plurality of the votes.\(^{254}\) For an excellent overview of the various streams of criticism that Duverger’s Law and Hypothesis have been subjected to, see Gary W. Cox, *Making Votes Count*, chapter 2. The classic empirical study on the relationship between electoral formulae and party system format is Douglas Rae, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). Also see, André Blais and R. K. Carty, “The Psychological Impact of Electoral Laws: Measuring Duverger’s Elusive Factor”, *British Journal of Political Science* 21 (1991), pp. 79-93.\(^{255}\) Duverger, *Political Parties*, p. 228.
nature of strategic voting and linkage.\textsuperscript{256} According to him, strategic voting does occur, as Duverger predicts, but it is in favor of the two parties that have the greatest chance to win nationally rather than in favor of the two locally most viable parties, or candidates.\textsuperscript{257} Another argument offered by Sartori tries to explain cross-district linkage by the degree to which the party system is structured and is composed of highly developed mass parties.\textsuperscript{258} Although Sartori himself remains vague on these terms, it is plausible that the national two-party system will tend towards bipartism if mass parties field candidates in every district in each of which the logic of strategic behavior drives the system towards local bipartism.

Cox offers an instrumental explanation of linkage. According to him, individual politicians have an incentive to link and run on the same party label across districts because of the advantage that the economies of scale provide them in the attainment of some important task in the legislature. Cox offers four potential versions of this argument.\textsuperscript{259} First, politicians may link when motivated by the prospect of controlling government policy.\textsuperscript{260} The party history literature that distinguishes between internally and externally created parties supports this point. The birth of internally created parties was the result of legislators' desire to affect government policy in parliament. In order to enhance their future prospects and continuity such parties had an incentive to organize and mobilize the electorate on a wide-scale. Similarly, externally created parties, such as the ones born out of nationalist, independence or trade union movements etc., were the

\textsuperscript{256} Colin Leys, "Models, Theories and the Theory of Political Parties," 	extit{Political Studies} 7 (1959), 127-46.
\textsuperscript{257} Ibid., p. 142.
\textsuperscript{259} Cox discusses the incentives that the office of a strong president and that of a strong prime minister provide for linkage separately. Therefore, he mentions five potential versions of his linkage argument, see 	extit{Making Votes Count}, p. 186. However, for the purposes of highlighting the logic of the argument there is no need to separate the two.\textsuperscript{260} Cox, 	extit{Making Votes Count}, p. 187.
extension of an already existing network of linkage. That such movements were
converted into political organizations is plausible because of their interest in capturing
government office and being in direct control of policy rather than just pressuring it from
the extra-parliamentary arena.

Second, linkage may be driven by parties' pursuit not of government policy in
general but the most important executive office in particular, for example the Presidency
or the Prime Ministership. The more powerful these offices are, the stronger the
procedure by which these offices are filled, the more strongly legislative and executive
offices are linked the greater the incentive for politicians seeking to capture these offices
will be.

Third, politicians may want to link up and create large national parties when there
is an upper tier of seat allocation that rewards broadly based parties. Finally, the
dynamics of campaign finance may also encourage linkage as donors will want to
provide funds to parties that stand a realistic chance to affect national policy in their
favor. Similarly, campaign finance regulations may explicitly encourage linkage by
tyling the provision of public funds to electoral largesse.

As for voters, Cox claims that they have to weigh both the local and the national
competitiveness of their preferred party. No matter how competitive nationally a party is,
voters will not have an incentive to vote for it in a given district unless its candidates
stand a reasonable chance to win there. “The reason is that a vote that cannot change a
local outcome cannot a fortiori change the national outcome, and thus has no
instrumental value either at the local or the national level.” Furthermore, it may make
sense for voters to support a party that nationally is not but locally is competitive.

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262 Ibid., p. 192.
263 Ibid., p. 192.
264 Ibid., p. 183.
The reason is that electing a nationally hopeless party's candidate increases the probability of a hung parliament (and thus perhaps the probability of participation in a coalition government), and decreases the probability that one of the nationally competitive parties will secure a majority, both things that some instrumentally motivated voters may want to do.\textsuperscript{265}

The strongest criticism of Duverger's theory has been put forth by the sociological school of political scientists. The central argument of these critics is that institutional forces play a minor role in shaping the party system compared to the importance of social cleavages.\textsuperscript{266} The essential thrust of the social cleavage theory is that cross-cutting cleavages increase while overlapping cleavages reduce the number of political parties. If the cleavages that run across a society overlap with one another, meaning that the same social groups would consistently be on the same side of each fault line, then the cleavage structure is simple and the drive towards multipartism is restrained. On the other hand, if the politically salient social cleavages cut across one another it will be impossible to maintain politically homogeneous large social groups. For example, in countries with sharply politicized and cross-cutting religious and linguistic cleavages religious communities will be divided by the different language their members speak while the linguistic communities will be divided along denominational lines.

According to the cleavage theory of party systems, such social structure provides a fertile ground for multipartism as there are multiple well delineated hunting grounds that parties can target to build an electoral base on.\textsuperscript{267}

\textsuperscript{265}Cox, \textit{Making Votes Count}, p. 183.


\textsuperscript{267}For a long time India has been considered to be an exception to the social cleavage
3.5 A TEST OF TWO THEORIES

If Duverger’s Law held the key to understanding the transition from a pattern of majority to hung parliaments in India, then there should have been a change in the electoral formula that could precipitate such a transition. However, while there were changes in India’s electoral formula, they took place a long time before the transition to a fragmented party system and pattern of hung parliaments.

The single-member simple plurality electoral system was not really in place until only the third parliamentary elections in 1962 because of the presence of a number of double-member districts in the first two polls. In 1952, of the 489 national parliamentary seats 172 were filled by the top two candidates in the 86 double member constituencies and 3 by the top three finishers in the single triple member constituency in the state of West Bengal. In 1957, the number of double-member constituencies was increased to 91 and the number of parliamentary seats filled by candidates from such districts jumped to 182. At the same time, the triple-member seat in Bengal was abolished. In December 1960, the Indian Parliament passed the Abolition of Two-Member Constituencies Act which divided each of the existing 91 double-member districts into single-member ones. From then onwards every parliamentary seat has been awarded according to the single-member simple plurality formula. Therefore, since there has been no change in the electoral formula towards a more proportional allocation of seats among political parties, Duverger’s law cannot account for the fragmentation of the Indian party system. In addition, it is also worth mentioning that according to Duverger’s law, the fragmentation of the party system should have been the greatest in the first two national elections.

theory in light of the fact that the country’s enormous degree of social heterogeneity was not reflected in a corresponding degree of party system fragmentation. However, in an important study Chibber and Petrocik have shown that this puzzle of Indian politics could be explained by the heterogeneous nature of the electoral coalitions that have supported the dominant Congress Party. See, Pradeep Chibber and John R. Petrocik, “The Puzzle of Indian Politics: Social Cleavages and the Indian Party System”, *British Journal of Political Science* 19 (1989), 191-210.
because the number of non-single member districts was the largest then. However, as Figure 3.4 illustrates, the party system was actually the least fragmented in those two foundational elections.

According to the social cleavage theory, the fragmentation of the Indian party system must be the result of fundamental changes in the structure of politically salient cleavages in Indian society which should be reflected in changes in electoral behavior. The conventional measurement of such change is the Pedersen index of volatility which calculates the difference in parties’ share of the popular vote between two elections summed across the entire party system.\textsuperscript{268} Thus, if the fragmentation of the Indian party system were caused by rising rates of electoral volatility, which reflects the changing cleavage structure of the country, then the Pedersen index should show rising values towards the end of the 1980 and the beginning of the 1990s.

Figure 3.12 clearly shows that this has not been the case. Whereas electoral volatility was on the rise between 1967 and 1977, it has been declining steadily ever since. Therefore, the fragmentation of the party system as of 1989 cannot be attributed to the kind of change in electoral behavior that the social cleavage theory suggests.

\textsuperscript{268}The Pedersen index is the following:

\[ \sum_{t=1}^{n} |\Delta p_{i,t}| \]

where \( p_{i,t} \) is the percent of the vote received by party \( i \) in election \( t \), and \( n \) is the number of parties competing in the two elections considered. See, Mogens N. Pedersen, “On Measuring Party System Change: A Methodological Critique and a Suggestion”, \textit{Comparative Political Studies} 12 (1980), pp. 387-43; and “The Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility”, \textit{European Journal of Political Research} 7 (1979), pp. 1-26. According to Bartolini and Mair’s revision, if two or more parties merge between elections then the vote total of the individual parties in the pre-merger election is compared with the vote total of the new party in the post-merger election. Similarly, if a party splits into fragments between two elections then the united party’s share of the vote is compared with the vote total of the individual fragments in the post-split election. See, Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair, \textit{Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability: The Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
3.6 STRATEGIC VOTING AND LINKAGE

In his seminal article published in 1976 William Riker sought to formalize the theoretical conditions under which the single-member simple-plurality electoral formula produced a two-party system, as predicted by Duverger. Riker found that Duverger’s law could work only either if party competition were not structured by ideology, or the center party had no chance of winning; or the center party had a reasonable chance to win but it was an expected first loser in the race, and it only faced one other party in the contest. On the other hand, if either the center party were an expected first loser but the party system contained more than just two parties; or the center party were the expected winner of the race then instead of consolidating around two parties, the system will be perpetually fragmented at the district level.

There are three fundamental assumptions behind Riker’s analysis with regard to the behavior of individual voters. First, similarly to Duverger, Riker expects that voters will not want to vote for parties that have no reasonable chance to win. Second, however,
Riker allows for the presence of sincere voters, i.e. voters who are committed to voting for the party of their first choice no matter what. Finally, Riker also allows for the presence of disillusioned voters who will desert the largest party because of their disappointment when the party they supported does not provide them with the benefits and rewards they had anticipated. Thus, assuming a hypothetical party system with three parties, A, B, and C, where C may stand for any further number of parties above 3, the preferences of voters, N, may be schematized as follows.

\[ \begin{align*}
N_{A1}: A &> B > C \\
N_{B1}: B &> A > C \\
N_{C1}: C &> A > B \\
N_{A2}: A &> C > B \\
N_{B2}: B &> C > A \\
N_{C2}: C &> B > A.
\end{align*} \]

In the absence of an ideological dimension Riker finds that a two-party system is guaranteed to emerge even when all three, or \( n \), parties enter the race in the first place. For example, if the first election produces an outcome \( A > B > C \) then in the second election voters \( N_{C1} \) will cast their ballots for A while voters \( N_{C2} \) will vote for B given that C has no chance to win. As Cox notes, this may not happen immediately when B and C muster very similar shares of the popular vote because voters \( N_{C1,2} \) may believe that the party of their first choice may stand a chance to win. However, the relative difference in the two party's strengths should become clear over time eventually resulting in the emergence of a two-party system.\(^{269}\) At the same time, A may suffer from disillusioned voting and may lose voters either to B or C. Again, once it becomes clear whether B or C is larger the extent of disillusioned voting will change: only those \( N_A \) voters will desert the party of their first choice whose second preference party has a realistic chance to win. Thus, if C is very small without any hope of winning, then disillusioned voting will originate solely from among voters \( N_{A1} \). In sum, permanent multipartism may not emerge under the single-member simple-plurality formula when ideology is absent from the party competition.

\(^{269}\)Cox, *Making Votes Count*, p. 32.
The situation is quite different when ideology becomes an important factor to consider. Assuming that there is a single ideological dimension along which both parties and voters locate themselves such that A is in the center, B is on the left and C is on the right, both disillusioned and strategic voting are made more difficult because voters will now have to consider not only the relative sizes of but also the relative ideological distance between the parties. In a nutshell, the presence of an ideological dimension implies that voters will not vote for the party of their second choice, whether out of disillusionment or strategy, unless it is located next to the party of their first choice along the ideological spectrum. 270

If the ranking of parties after an election at time $T_1$ is $C > B > A$, that is the center party is the smallest, then the effect of disillusioned and strategic voting is not different at all from what they are like in a non-ideological context. Disillusioned voters $NC_1$ can flee to A while $NC_2$ will have to stay with C because the ideological distance they would have to travel to vote for the party of their second preference is too far. At the same time, the effect of disillusioned voting is reduced, or even canceled out, because strategic voting by both $NA_1$ and $NA_2$ is unlimited. The outcome is the eventual desertion of the small center party resulting in a two-party system.

When the center party, A, is the middle party then the party system cannot transform into a two-party system unless it started out as such. When multiple parties enter the race at time $T_1$ and the result is $B > A > C$ then both disillusioned and strategic voting are half prohibited. Disillusioned votes can only be cast by $NB_1$ whereas strategic votes can only be cast by $NC_1$. Since both would benefit the center party, it is quite likely that A would grow and might even win the next election at $T_2$. However, both B and C would continue competing because a part of their electoral base remained intact. In contrast, if the system started out as a two-party system such, for example, that $B > A$ at

270Riker, ""The Number of Political Parties,"" p. 101.
\(T_1\), then bipartism would remain intact. Strategic voting would not take place at all, while disillusioned voters \(NB_1\) would flee to \(A\).

Finally, if \(A\) emerged as the largest party after the race at \(T_1\), further supposing that \(B > C\), then the result would be perpetual multipartism. Since the largest party is in the center there is no limitation on disillusioned voting, however, strategic voting is only half allowed. Thus, the smallest party, \(C\), would not disappear and multipartism would continue. Furthermore, even if the system started out as a two-party race between \(A\) and \(B\) such that \(A > B\) at \(T_1\), a new party \(C\) would certainly enter the race at \(T_2\) because there would be a body of disillusioned voters seeking to flee \(A\) towards the right. According to Riker, this last scenario was a perfect representation of how the India party system operated during the Congress-dominant era. The largest party, the Congress was in the center which meant that disillusioned voters could always leave it both to the left and to the right. However, the disillusioned vote that the center party loses gets divided between the left and right parties, \(B\) and \(C\) above, making it highly probable that the center party will still remain the largest of all. In addition, the center party further benefits from the strategic vote that some supporters of the hopeless party would cast for it. In sum, Riker's model accounts for the perpetual fragmentation in the India party system dominated by the large center party as the endogenous outcome of a model based on the principles of strategic and disillusioned voting.

This essentially district-level model has significant implications for the phenomenon of majority and hung parliaments in India. According to the last theoretical scenario described, the center candidate or party of every district has a great probability to win. Therefore, it makes perfect sense for them to link across the districts and form one party in order to ensure that it would emerge the largest political force in the parliament after all races are completed in the districts. At the same time, a similar aggregation of the left and right parties may take place with much less likelihood simply because it would not yield any significant benefits. Even if all left and all right parties aggregated and
linked across the districts, so long as the center candidates are the largest at the district level, they can at most emerge as large opposition parties at the national level. This, however, is hardly an incentive to incur the high transaction costs of linkage in an executive dominated parliamentary system that gives the opposition little effective say in policy making. Therefore, the model can quite plausibly account for the asymmetrical aggregation that has characterized India’s party system for the most part: a consolidated center facing a fragmented left and right.

Riker’s model suggests that any change resulting in the decline of the center party at the district, and consequently at the national, level has to come from exogenous sources. Since the key to the defeat of the center party at the district level is to ensure that disillusioned voting, which is fleeing the center, is maximized, while strategic voting, which is benefiting the center, is kept to a minimum at the same time, the off-center parties have to engage in a difficult coordination exercise in each district to attain these twin ends. In other words, to defeat the center party in the districts, the off-center parties have to ensure that they consolidate behind the candidate or party that has the greatest likelihood to attract the disillusioned vote from the center while having the smallest likelihood to suffer from strategic desertion. This requires both strategic entry in and abstention from the race, in other words, the formation of an ends-against-the-center coalition in as many districts as possible.²⁷¹

To illustrate this point in terms of the schematic model, suppose that B and C arrived at an agreement to coordinate the nomination of their candidates in the various districts with the defeat of the center, A, candidates in as many districts as possible in mind. Further, suppose that the distribution of voters, according to their preference ranking of parties, at T1 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Party A</th>
<th>Party B</th>
<th>Party C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA₁</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA₂</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and that the disillusioned voter group were NA₁.

Given these pieces of information, it makes sense for C to abstain from the race. By so doing, the subjective ranking of the candidates by the six groups of voters will change at T2 as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N₁₁</td>
<td>A&gt;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N₁₂</td>
<td>A&gt;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N₂₁</td>
<td>B&gt;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N₂₂</td>
<td>B&gt;A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While N₁ is now forced to make a decision between either supporting B, which is ideologically costly, or abstain, which, however, will only help A who is N₁'s least preferred option.

If NC₂ decides to vote strategically, rather than abstain, then B will end up having 45% of the vote, while, however, A will also benefit from the strategic vote cast by NC₁ in its favor which may increase its vote total to 55%. At the same time, since the NA₁ group of voters is disillusioned they are likely to switch their support to B, which will now have a total of 65% of the vote and will win the contest. Had the disillusioned camp of voters been NA₂, disillusioned voting probably would not have taken place at all because these voters would not have had a candidate, or party, to cast their vote for given the abstention of C.

In sum, in order to build an effective ends-against-the-center coalition the off-center parties have to have sophisticated intelligence about the distribution of voter support. More specifically, they have to know the expected size of the disillusioned and
strategic vote relative to one another. The threshold vote share above which A can not be
defeated is 50%. Evidently, should candidate A be expected to receive more than half of
all the votes cast in a district he or she may no longer be beaten rendering the cooperation
of off-center parties futile. However, so long as A is expected to receive less than 50% of
the vote there is always a theoretically possible level of coordination at which the off-
center parties may defeat it.

The degree of coordination that the off-center parties need to reach in order to at
least tie with the center party in a given district is given by the following formula:\footnote{This formula is based on the Index of Opposition Unity constructed by Butler, Lahiri, and Roy. See, David Butler, Ashok Lahiri and Prannoy Roy, \textit{A Compendium of Indian Elections} (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1984).}

\[ A_x^{1/(1-A_x^t)} \]

where \( A_x \) is the percent of the vote, expressed in decimal form, received by candidate A
in district X in an election held at \( t \) point in time. For example, if A is expected to receive
35% of the vote in election T1 in district X, then the non-A parties have to engage in a
54% degree cooperation, meaning that the largest non-A party in the district should
receive no less than 54% of the non-A vote, which, of course will translate into 35.1% of
the total vote.

As Figure 3.13 shows, connecting all the points at which the largest non-A
candidate can tie with A yields the Tie Curve. At any point above the curve A is defeated
and at any point below the curve A wins. The slope of the curve suggests that with every
percentage point increase in A’s share of the vote electoral coordination among the non-
A candidates will become more and more difficult. Similarly, the weaker candidate A is
expected to be in a given election in a given district, the less difficult electoral
coordination among the non-A candidates will be because the largest non-A candidate
will not have to have as much of the total non-A vote concentrated in him/her.
Whereas the formation of effective ends-against-the-center electoral coalitions determines the outcome of center-dominated multicandidate races at the district level, the aggregate outcome at the national level depends on the cross-district linkage that these off-center parties manage to attain. If the off-center parties ensure that their victorious candidates run on the same party label in a majority of the districts then a majority parliament will be elected with the largest off-center party controlling the majority of the seats, i.e. the center-dominated party system is transformed into a two-party system. However, if the off-center parties fail to run their successful candidates on the same label in a majority of the districts then a hung parliament will emerge and the party system is transformed into a competitive multiparty format.

In essence, one can think of three possible electoral outcomes in a center-dominated multiparty system depending on the effectiveness of the off-center parties'
cooperation at both the district and the cross-district levels, as illustrated in Figure 3.14.

FIGURE 3.14:
POSSIBLE TRANSFORMATIONS OF A CENTER-DOMINATED multipartY SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective EACC at district level</th>
<th>Ineffective EACC at district level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective EACC at cross-district level</td>
<td>Majority parliament dominated by largest off-center party. Two-party system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective EACC at cross-district level</td>
<td>Hang parliament. Competitive, even multiparty system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective EACC at cross-district level</td>
<td>Majority parliament dominated by center party. Predominant party system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: EACC stands for ends-against-the-center coalition

As the Figure suggests, a truly effective ends-against-the-center coalition requires the cooperation of the off-center parties not only at the district but also at the supra-district levels. If the latter fails, then depending on the off-center parties’ success to form an effective anti-center coalition at the district level, either a hung parliament or a majority center-dominated parliament may emerge. Finally, even though the off-center parties may link effectively across the districts, they will be unable to dominate the parliament because of their failure to build an effective electoral coalition at the district level.

While ineffective cross-district linkage by the off-center parties reduces the likelihood of the election of a majority parliament, it increases the national viability of each off-center party individually, provided of course that they have engaged in effective coordination at the district level resulting in the displacement of a sufficiently large number of centrist candidates. This is very important because as recent advances in both formal theoretical and empirical research have shown, voters take into consideration not only the local viability of candidates but also the national viability of their parties when deciding whether and for whom to cast a strategic vote.

Cox notes two ways in which national considerations may affect voters'
assessment of a candidate’s local viability. On the one hand, the national viability of a candidate’s party may serve a tie-breaking function when the voter is not quite decided about his/her preference between two candidates. On the other hand,

another way in which lack of national viability may contribute to a party’s fall is via a drying up of contributors. Here, the logic may well be more national than local: favor-seeking contributors have no reason to contribute to locally hopeless candidates ..., but neither do they have much reason to contribute to locally viable candidates from nationally unimportant parties. In order to get a return on their investment, the candidate must not only win a seat but also be able to do something with that seat once in parliament.273

To incorporate this insight in the Rikerian model, suppose that the country had five districts: P, Q, X, Y and Z. Further suppose that B and C, located on the left and the right of the ideological dimension respectively, had formed an electoral coalition against A, that was in the center, in election T₁ in each of the five districts such that C fielded the coalition candidate in P and Q while B ran the coalition candidate in X, Y and Z. In each district the coalition was successful in defeating A with the exception of X where A prevailed. Following the election, B and C formed a coalition government.

In the subsequent election T₂, the ends-against-the-center coalition of B and C is no longer together and both parties run their own candidates separately in each of the five districts. Although C had been a third party candidate in each district prior to election T₁, it would no longer be considered such because of its strong performance nationally in election T₁ and because voters do care about the outcome of the elections in the country as a whole as well as the local circumstances.

In districts X, Y and Z, where B had been the coalition candidate in election T₂ and where C had abstained, both \( N_{C1} \) and \( N_{C2} \) voters will have an incentive to vote for C in election T₂. \( N_{C2} \) voters will once again have the option to vote sincerely for C, whereas

N_{c1} voters who otherwise had voted for A can also vote sincerely for C because the proven national viability of C no longer makes them feel that their sincere vote for C is wasted. In districts P and Q where C had been the coalition candidate and where B had abstained, the same dynamics would take place with the result that both N_{b1} and N_{b2} voters will support B in election T_2 whereas N_{c1} and NC2 voters will vote for C.

The overall outcome of these dynamics will be the evening out of voter support among the three candidates. It is important that the only candidate who loses votes is A and he/she loses precisely that strategic vote that is now cast sincerely for the former third party, C, whose national viability has now made it a rational choice for voters to support. Finally, the weaker electorally A becomes the less coordinated the non-A forces have to be in each district in order to defeat it. Thus, as A loses strategic voters whose support it had enjoyed in the past, on top of whatever disillusioned vote it also loses, it becomes easier for the ex-coalition partners to defeat it even though they are no longer explicitly united and coordinated.

For these processes to take place, it is very important that C, the originally unviable third party candidate, proved relatively successful in election T_1. For example, suppose that the coalition were successful in defeating A only in districts X, Y and Z. If so, then in election T_2 with B and C running separately in each district again, only B will remain regarded as a viable competitor against A. While the re-entry of C in these districts in election T2 will provide an incentive for N_{c2} voters to return to C and cast their sincere vote for them, N_{c1} voters will not perceive C any more viable nationally than it used to be before! Thus N_{c1} will keep supporting A and the Rikerian equilibrium is restored.

Similarly, the re-entry into the race by B in districts P and Q in election T_2 would allow N_{b1} and N_{b2} voters to support their favorite candidate once again. Although C may have come close to defeating A in these districts and there may have been a good chance that he/she would actually succeed in doing so at the next polls, the re-entry of B and the
transfer of $N_{B_2}$ voters from C to B would certainly prevent this. Had C defeated A in election $T_1$ in these districts and had C formed a coalition government with B, the party's national viability would have improved which in turn would have balanced the movement of $N_{B_2}$ by retaining the support of both $N_{C_1}$ and $N_{C_2}$ voters. However, because of its failure, C will lose $N_{B_2}$ to B and $N_{C_1}$ to A in both P and Q with the likely result that the Rikerian equilibrium is restored.

The foregoing theoretical discussion suggests that the direction of the transition from a center-dominated party system is the result of the effectiveness of the coordination among the off-center parties at the district and the cross-district, or national, levels. Whereas the emergence of a two-party system reflects effective off-center coordination at both levels, a movement towards a more even multiparty system reflects the fact that off-center parties failed to coordinate their strategies effectively across the districts, however, at the district level they coordinated well enough to deprive the center party from winning the election.

3.7 A STRATEGIC COOPERATION EXPLANATION OF CHANGES IN THE INDIAN PARTY SYSTEM

It has been well established in the literature on the Indian party system that the Congress Party has been in the center of the competitive political space. While this assertion has been developed primarily on the basis of analyses of the party's policy resolutions, campaign strategies and alliances with other parties, Huber and Ingelhart have recently provided an empirically more objective support to it. According to the findings of a survey of country experts, the Congress Party stands squarely in the middle of the left-right spectrum, as Table 3.1 shows. In addition, as mentioned already, Riker himself deemed that the Indian party system was a natural analogue for his model of a center-dominated multiparty system.

If so, then the explanation of the emergence of hung parliaments in post-1989 India must lie, as per Figure 3.14, in the asymmetric coordination of the non-Congress
parties at the district and the supra-district levels: whereas they are able to defeat the Congress locally they are unable, or unwilling, to form a majority alternative to it in the national parliament. This stands in sharp contrast with the outcome of the 1977 election when the non-Congress, i.e. off-center, parties succeeded in coordinating both locally and nationally, resulting in a majority parliament dominated for the first time by an off-center party, the Janata.

TABLE 3.1:
THE IDEOLOGICAL LOCATION OF INDIA POLITICAL PARTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>LEFT-RIGHT SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIADMK</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC(I)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMK</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>8.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUML</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The locational figures refer to the parties' position on a 10-point scale. The higher the score the closer the party is to the right. Source: Huber and Inglehart (1995: 98-99).

In four of the eleven general elections, specifically in 1977, 1989, 1991 and 1996, the non-Congress parties succeeded in arriving at a high enough degree of coordination that was sufficient to defeat the Congress candidates in a majority of the districts as shown in Table 3.2. The Table compares the degrees of opposition coordination that would have been necessary just to tie with the Congress in the majority of the districts in each election with the actual degree of coordination that the opposition parties arrived at. Clearly, in each of these four elections the non-Congress parties managed to coordinate their electoral strategies far above the degree of coordination that would have been necessary to just tie with the Congress. Accordingly, they were rewarded for their cooperation as the Congress Party lost its historical majorities in these elections.
TABLE 3.2:  
ELECTORAL COORDINATION AGAINST THE CONGRESS PARTY, 1962-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election year</th>
<th>% Congress vote</th>
<th>RDC</th>
<th>ADC</th>
<th>RDC-ADC</th>
<th>% Congress seat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-37.3</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-11.7</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>-8.5</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-21.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The first column shows the percentage of the popular vote obtained by the Congress Party in each election; RDC stands for the Required Degree of Coordination that is necessary for opposition parties to reach in order to at least tie with the Congress Party at a percentages of the vote the Party won in each election; ADC stands for the Actual Degree of Coordination that opposition parties arrived at in each election; the third column shows the difference between the Required and the Actual Degrees of Coordination; the last column shows the percent of the seats the Congress Party won in each election.

Source: Butler, Lahiri and Roy, *India Decides*, various tables and author’s calculations.

FIGURE 3.15:  
THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CONGRESS PARTY AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NON-CONGRESS COORDINATION

![Graph showing the performance of the Congress Party and the effectiveness of non-Congress coordination]
Figure 3.15 further illustrates the positive relationship between the Congress Party's electoral performance, in terms of the percentage of the seats won and the closeness to which the opposition parties approximated the level of coordination at which the dominant party could be defeated.

As suggested earlier, the weaker the centrist Congress Party, in terms of its share of the votes cast, is expected to be, the smaller the degree of electoral coordination that the non-Congress parties have to arrive at in order to defeat the Congress candidates. Thus, although the actual degree of electoral coordination by the non-Congress parties increased by only 3 percent between 1984 and 1989, this small increase was effective enough given the large decline in the percentage of the vote that the Congress received between these elections. On the other hand, in 1977 the opposition parties reached such a high level of electoral coordination, at 90%, that it would have allowed them to tie with the Congress even if the dominant party had increased its share of the vote up to 47.4! The sudden decline in the percentage of the vote mustered by the Congress Party in both the 1977 and 1989 elections made the task of the opposition significantly easier. Whereas in 1971, the last election prior to 1977, the Congress won 43.7% of the popular vote it only managed to win 34.5% six years later. Similarly, in 1984, the last election prior to 1989, the Congress won 48.1% of the votes cast in contrast with a mere 39.5% five years later in 1989.

The dynamics of how effective ends-against-the-center coalitions work can be examined by looking at a couple of actual examples. For instance, as Table 3.3 shows, Pilibhit constituency displayed a classic Rikerian scenario in 1971 as the centrist Congress prevailed over a divided off-center opposition. The fact that the Congress' vote share was well below 50% suggested that the party's candidate was potentially defeatable. In the 1977 election, the opposition parties, that had run candidates separately

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274 Each of the following constituency tables are based data in Butler, Lahiri and Roy, *India Decides*. 
against the Congress six years before, were partners in the Janata coalition and ran a united candidate on the BLD ticket. As expected, this resulted in a spectacular victory of the coalition over the Congress candidate. That the Congress' vote share dropped and the BLD candidate's vote share rose far above the combined vote share of the INCO, BJS and BKD in 1971 means that there was a large scale disillusioned desertion of the Congress candidate.

**TABLE 3.3:**
**PILIBHIT CONSTITUENCY IN 1971 AND 1977**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress(O)</td>
<td>24.70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJS</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKD</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLD</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, Mahasamund constituency also displayed a classic Rikerian scenario in the 1984 election, however, five years later, the BJP and the Janata Dal had an agreement not to run candidates against one another in the district. According to the inter-party arrangement the Janata Dal ran a candidate against the Congress(I) in this constituency and, although barely, managed to win.

**TABLE 3.4:**
**MAHASAMUND CONSTITUENCY IN 1984 AND 1989**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>1989</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The recovery of the Congress Party in 1980 was inherent in the way its defeat was brought about three years before, i.e. in the merger of the opposition parties. Because the five parties had merged and run candidates on the same ticket, there was only one party, the Janata, that derived gains from the defeat of the dominant party in terms of enhanced national viability and visibility. However, once the party disintegrated, it became unclear to the voters which Janata fragment, if either, had or could have the potential to be an alternative to the Congress in the next election.

In terms of the convention used earlier, the distribution of voters' preference among the parties involved went through the following changes as a result of the split:

\[ N_{JP}: \text{JP}>\text{INC} \quad ----> \quad N_{JP1}: \text{JP}>\text{JPS}>\text{INC} \]
\[ ----> \quad N_{JP2}: \text{JP}>\text{INC}>\text{JPS} \]
\[ ----> \quad N_{JPS1}: \text{JPS}>\text{JP}>\text{INC} \]
\[ ----> \quad N_{JPS2}: \text{JPS}>\text{INC}>\text{JP} \]

\[ N_{INC}: \text{INC}>\text{JP} \quad ----> \quad N_{INC1}: \text{INC}>\text{JP}>\text{JPS} \]
\[ ----> \quad N_{INC2}: \text{INC}>\text{JPS}>\text{JP} \]

The split of the Janata Party had three important effects on the dynamics of voting. First, \( N_{JP1} \) and \( N_{JPS1} \) voters had an incentive to vote for their sincere first choice candidates. With the Congress(I) being in the center and the coalition no longer forcing them to make an ideologically costly choice, these voters could now switch their support to their most preferred candidates. Second, the split also created an incentive for \( N_{JP2} \) and \( N_{JPS2} \) voters to vote strategically in favor of their second choice, the Congress, because they could not be sure whether their first choice candidate would be strong enough to defeat their least liked candidate, i.e. either that of the Janata Party (Secular) or that of the

\[^{275}\text{In the following JP stands for Janata Party, JPS for Janata Party (Secular), and INC for Congress.}\]
Janata Party. Third, the split left the $N_{INC1}$ and $N_{INC2}$ voters unaffected.

On balance, the overall effect of the split of the Janata Party and the subsequent re-entry of its fragments was a net gain of votes by the Congress and an inefficient division in the formerly united Janata vote. Thus, the Rikerian Congress-dominant multiparty system was restored in 1980.

A good illustration of this is provided by the constituencies of Agra and Bombay North. In the 1977 election in Agra the united Janata candidate, contesting on the symbol of the BLD, inflicted a devastating defeat on the Congress candidate by reducing the latter’s vote share by 32.6% compared with the previous election. However, three years later, in 1980, when the Janata party was no longer together and both its successor fragments, the Janata Party and the Janata Party (Secular) ran candidates in the district on their own the Congress(I) candidate triumphed by increasing his share of the vote by 8.4% while the combined vote share of the two Janata candidates fell by 10.6%.

**TABLE 3.5:**
**AGRA CONSTITUENCY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
<td>34.90%</td>
<td>33.90%</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLD</td>
<td>70.30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party (Secular)</td>
<td>29.60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.70%</td>
<td>30.60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46.20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
<td>11.40%</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, in the 1980 election in Bombay North constituency, of the two Janata fragments only the Janata Party ran a candidate against the Congress(I). As expected, the absence of a Janata party (Secular) candidate did not allow the Congress (I) to take advantage of the split that the Janata Party had suffered. Although the Congress(I) candidate made some gains in terms of votes and the Janata Party candidate lost compared to the BLD candidate’s vote in 1977 the Janata candidate still prevailed.
TABLE 3.6: BOMBAY NORTH CONSTITUENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1977</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLD</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td>11.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Congress Party has failed to repeat its comeback ever since its debacle in the 1989 general election, even though the ends-against-the center coalition that had defeated it broke up in 1990. According to the theoretical model, just as the party’s recovery in 1980 was inherent in the manner in which it had been defeated in 1977, so has the party’s post-1989 decline been inherent in the manner in which it was defeated in the 1989 election, i.e. by an opposition coalition that was not only effective in terms of defeating the dominant party but also propelled its members to national system-wide prominence and viability.

In terms of the abstract convention, the distribution of electoral preferences following the break-up of the 1989 coalition and the subsequent re-entry of the race by its members separately can be described as below\textsuperscript{276}:

\[ N_{JD(BJP)} \rightarrow JD(BJP) > INC \]

\[ \rightarrow N_{JD1(BJP1)} : JD(BJP) > BJP(JD) > INC \]

\[ \rightarrow N_{JD2(BJP2)} : JD(BJP) > INC > BJP(JD) \]

\[ N_{INC} : INC > JD(BJP) \]

\[ \rightarrow N_{INC1} : INC > JD > BJP \]

\[ \rightarrow N_{INC2} : INC > BJP > JD \]

\textsuperscript{276}For the sake of simplicity, only the coalition formed by the Janata Dal and the BJP is described here. Although this is somewhat of a simplification of the complex reality of an Indian election, it does convey the main point. In addition, the coalition of these two parties did provide the backbone of the broader anti-Congress alliance in 1989.

\textsuperscript{277}Depending on whether the Janata Dal or the BJP ran the coalition candidate in the district in 1989 \( N_{JD} \) or \( N_{BJP} \) is the applicable voter to consider.
The break-up of the 1989 coalition had two important impacts on the dynamics of voting. First, once the coalition had broken up and its ex-members entered the electoral fray on their own in 1991, $N_{JD1(BJP)}$ voters, for whom supporting the coalition candidate in 1989 was already costly in ideological terms, had an incentive to vote sincerely for the candidate fielded by the party of their first choice. These were the voters whose first choice party had to abstain from running a candidate in the particular district according to the coalition agreement and whose least preferred alternative was the Congress Party and its candidate.

Second, however, this re-balancing of electoral support among the non-Congress parties and candidates was also accompanied by the retention of the support of $N_{JD2(BJP2)}$ voters by the Janata Dal and the BJP respectively. Because the dissolution of the coalition did not entail a change in the identity of these parties voters had very clear information about their relative standing and position in the party system after the election. The drastically improved overall national standing of the ex-coalition partners individually provided an incentive for those voters who would have voted for them sincerely but had voted instead for Congress for strategic reasons earlier to reconsider their behavior and vote sincerely for their first choice. In sum, since $N_{JD2(BJP2)}$ voters no longer perceived their sincere vote wasted they had an incentive to support the candidate of their first choice.

On balance, the distribution of electoral support among the three sets of parties in the average district was the following under the altered incentives:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{INC}: N_{INC1} & \text{JD}: N_{JD1} & \text{BJP}: N_{BJP} \\
N_{INC2} & N_{JD2} & N_{BJP2} \\
\end{array}
\]

This scheme clearly shows that the distribution of voters among the three parties' candidates in the districts has become much more balanced than before and that the
Congress no longer enjoys a structural advantage over the others. With this sort of distribution of electoral support short-term fluctuations and swings may be especially potent determinants of election outcomes.

Good illustrations of the dynamics described above are provided by the electoral results in the districts of Agra, Rajapur and Begusarai respectively. In 1989 in Agra, as shown in Table 3.5, the Janata Dal ran the coalition candidate in the district. The Dal candidate was successful while the Congress(I) candidate lost 9.2% of his share of the vote compared with the last election held in 1984. Two years later, however, in 1991, when both the Janata Dal and the BJP entered the race in the district the Congress(I) was unable to recover its loss and slid further down in terms of the share of the popular vote it received.

In Rajapur constituency, in 1989, the anti-Congress(I) electoral coalition also brought about the victory of a Janata Dal candidate. However, two years later, unlike in Agra, it was not the BJP but its small, nationally hardly viable, ally the Shiv Sena that ran a candidate against both the Janata Dal and the Congress(I). As expected, the Congress(I) did rather well and won the competition because it was not squeezed between the candidates of nationally viable parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>32.10%</td>
<td>27.60%</td>
<td>43.60%</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLD</td>
<td>67.90%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52.90%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiv Sena</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the electoral results in Begusarai constituency of Bihar state illustrate the impact of the split in the Janata Dal. In 1989 the Dal fielded the victorious coalition candidate against the Congress(I). Two years later, however, there were three separate
anti-Congress(I) competitors entering the race: the Janata Dal, the BJP, and the Samajwadi Janata Party candidates. As expected, this resulted in the victory of the Congress(I) candidate: had the Janata Dal’s share of the electorate not been split between the Dal and the Janata Party in 1991, the Congress(I) could have been squeezed between the BJP and Dal. However, the split in the Dal and the subsequent participation of both of its fragments in the electoral race resulted not only in an inefficient division of the Dal’s 1989 voter base but also in the movement of some voters, who had supported the Dal in 1989 and whose least preferred candidate was the BJP, to the Congress(I). Again, because of the split, Dal voters could not be sure whether either of the Dal fragments would be in a strong enough position to defeat the BJP. Therefore, those of them whose second choice was the Congress(I) candidate had a strong incentive to cast a strategic vote for him/her.

TABLE 3.8: BEGUSARAI CONSTITUENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>60.10%</td>
<td>42.90%</td>
<td>51.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLD</td>
<td>44.50%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td></td>
<td>55.30%</td>
<td>41.10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janata Party (S)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same dynamics can be further confirmed by looking at the aggregate data in Table 3.9 which clearly reveals that the gains that the Congress(I) made in 1980 in terms of its vote share were concentrated in those districts of the country where both the Janata Party and the Janata Party (Secular) ran candidates. Curiously, the Party even lost votes in those districts where either just one or neither of the Janata fragments nominated a candidate. The 1991 and 1996 figures also confirm the explanation offered above. The Congress(I)’s decline in term of its votes share was much more pronounced in those
districts in both of these elections where both the Janata Dal and the BJP ran candidates.

TABLE 3.9: THE RECOVERY AND DECLINE OF THE CONGRESS(I) PARTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Congress vote change</th>
<th>Congress vote change in post-coalition districts</th>
<th>Congress vote change in the rest of the districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977-1980</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
<td>-0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1991</td>
<td>-3.00%</td>
<td>-2.00%</td>
<td>-1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1996</td>
<td>-7.70%</td>
<td>-7.10%</td>
<td>-0.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Post-coalition districts in row 1977-80 are those constituencies where both the Janata party and the Janata Party (Secular) ran candidates in 1980. In 1991 and 1996 post-coalition districts are those where both the Janata Dal and the BJP ran candidates.

The last piece of the puzzle that needs to be accounted for is why the off-center parties have no longer found it in their interest to aggregate and form a majority alternative to the Congress(I) Party at the national level. The survey of the theoretical literature earlier on suggested that the degree to which parties aggregate in a party system is determined by the institutional incentives that either encourage or discourage them to do so. According to Cox, for parties to aggregate they have to be motivated either to capture a strong executive office, or to capture control over government policy, or to benefit from the economies of scale in upper tier seats allocations, or perhaps to benefit from campaign finance regulations. While there is no evidence suggesting that any of these potential sources of party aggregation may have changed, the insertion of the Tenth Schedule in the Constitution in 1985 has clearly raised the costs of party aggregation, especially so for off-center parties.

As described, the Tenth Schedule makes party aggregation difficult by imposing heavy penalties on splits. Unless one third of a party’s legislative contingent agrees to a split, representatives seeking to change their party affiliations have to stand for re-election in their constituencies. Knowing this, political parties have an incentive to merge only if they have a reasonable expectation that their unity in the legislature would last, however, the maintenance of such unity is especially difficult when political groups of diverging ideologies are attempting to merge.
To put it simply, the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution acts as a deterrent against party aggregation, especially against the aggregation of the off-center parties, making it more rational for parties to maintain their separate identities and engage in coalition bargaining in the legislature with one another. Furthermore, it has also been shown, that failure to coordinate across the districts has actually helped the non-Congress(I) parties to force the Congress(I) in a perpetual non-dominant status since 1989.

Thus, the emergence of hung parliaments and an even multiparty system in India can be accounted for in terms of the rational choices that the off-center parties have made. In particular, there have been two choices involved. First, the off-center parties have learned that forming a single party may give them only a one-time legislative majority, provided they hit the right degree of coordination at the district level, whereas they can deprive the center party of its electoral dominance on a more permanent basis if they maintain their own separate identities. Second, the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution also provided an institutional disincentive against the merger of parties with different ideological predispositions.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to explain the transformation of the predominant party system in India from a comparative perspective. In so doing it has shown that neither the mainstream Indologist nor the mainstream comparative explanations of party system change can offer an adequate and consistent account for the dependent variable. However, this does not have to lead to resorting to an explanation based on spatial and temporal idiosyncrasies, as it has been the case in much of the literature on Indian elections and party system. The chapter has demonstrated that William Riker’s model of rational voting can be extended by findings of the more recent rational choice theoretical literature to provide a solid account for the decline of the Indian National Congress (I) Party and the subsequent transformation of the party system of India.
CHAPTER FOUR: GOVERNMENT FORMATION

This chapter will seek to provide a consistent account for government formation in India by evaluating the predictions and hypotheses offered in the comparative literature. First, it will be shown that coalition theories predicting the formation of minimum winning coalition governments are entirely inapplicable to the Indian cases. Second, the chapter will show that none of the models seeking to specify the conditions under which cabinets of various types are most likely to form can explain the formation of the Indian cabinets consistently either. Finally, the chapter will demonstrate that by incorporating constraints, both exogenous and endogenous, in the analysis most of the discrepancies between theoretical predictions and the actual empirical observations will disappear. The final part of the chapter will accordingly explain government formation in India as a series of rational choices made by individual political actors under macro- and microscopic constraints.

4.1 MINIMUM WINNING COALITION THEORIES

The classic theories of political coalitions put forth by Gamson\(^{278}\) and Riker\(^{279}\) predict the formation of coalitions of a minimum winning size. These theories are developed in the context of the theory of simple games which is explained in some detail in Appendix 2. Both Gamson and Riker assume that political actors are office-seeking, that they have perfect information about one another, that the coalition formation game is played by \(n\) persons, and that it is zero-sum with no side-payments allowed. In such games Riker predicts that participants will create coalitions just as large as they believe


will ensure winning and no larger. This has become called the minimum winning coalition theory. The reason why rational office-seeking actors would not want to accommodate superfluous members in the coalition, i.e. members without whose inclusion the coalition would still be winning the game, lies in the assumption that the game is zero-sum. Because the spoils of office, or the prize of the game, is fixed, the more coalition members there are the smaller the share of the prize that each member gets allotted. Thus, political actors will not want to share the prize with more actors than what is barely necessary for the coalition to win the game.

In any coalitional situation, i.e. in games without a single winner, there may be multiple minimum winning coalition combinations of actors. For example, in a game of four actors A, B, C and D with weights \{3,3,2,2\} and a decision-making rule of majority, which means that the threshold of winning is 6, there are three minimum winning coalitions: AB, ACD, and BCD. The first coalition has a total weight of 6, the second and the third have a weight of 7 each. No member can be removed from any of the three coalitions without depriving the coalition of its winning status. According to both Gamson and Riker, in such situations it will always be the coalition with the smallest weight that will be formed, in this case AB.

The minimum winning theory of coalitions was developed further by Leiserson, Axelrod and De Swaan who incorporated the idea of policy-seeking into the set of assumptions. The most influential of these has been Axelrod’s thesis which posited that cooperative behavior is the function of the conflict of interest among actors. The less conflict of interest there is, the more likely is cooperative behavior. With specific reference to political coalitions, Axelrod predicted that the less conflict of interest there would be in a coalition the more likely that it was going to be formed.

For Axelrod, conflict of interest in political coalitions is measured by the degree

\(^{280}\text{Riker, } Theory of Political Coalitions, p. 32.\)

\(^{281}\text{Robert Axelrod, } Conflict of Interest (Chicago: Markham, 1970), p. 167.\)
of dispersion of members of the coalition in a uni-dimensional ordinal policy-space. Since the smallest dispersion will be found in coalitions formed by actors that are connected along the dimension, Axelrod further predicts that coalitions whose members are connected along the single dimension will be formed. Finally, because members of such coalitions are also office-seekers and they want to control the branches of government they would want to form a winning combination. In sum, Axelrod proposed that office- and policy-seeking rational political actors will seek to build minimum connected winning coalitions.

TABLE 4.1:
CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN GOVERNMENTS, 1952-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lok Sabha</th>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
<th>Prime Minister's party</th>
<th>Number of parties in government</th>
<th>Seat % of all parties in government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952-1957</td>
<td>J. Nehru</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-62</td>
<td>J. Nehru</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-1967</td>
<td>J. Nehru (until 1964) L.B. Shastri (until 1966) I. Gandhi</td>
<td>All Congress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-71</td>
<td>I. Gandhi</td>
<td>Congress, after 1969 Congress (R)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54.4%, after 1969 42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1977</td>
<td>I. Gandhi</td>
<td>Congress (R)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1979</td>
<td>M. Desai</td>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Singh</td>
<td>Janata Party (Secular)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>I. Gandhi</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1989</td>
<td>R. Gandhi</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1991</td>
<td>V.P. Singh</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Shekhar</td>
<td>Samajwadi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Janata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1996</td>
<td>N. Rao</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1998</td>
<td>A.B. Vajpayee</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.D.D. Gowda</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I.K. Gujral</td>
<td>Janata Dal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Axelrod, Conflict of Interest, p. 170.
Since both these theories predict the formation of coalitions of a minimum winning size they are inconsistent with the Indian cases. Of the sixteen government that were formed in India between 1952 and 1997, six were multiparty coalition governments, however, none of these were of a minimum winning size, as Table 4.1 indicates. Technically speaking, the only minimum size winning coalitions were the ones formed by the Congress and the Congress(I) whenever the party won a majority of the seats in the Lok Sabha. All other governments were either undersized minority governments, coalition or single-party, or an oversized coalition as in the case of the coalition of the Janata Party and the Akali Dal in 1977. Had the Akali Dal chosen not to participate in the coalition the Janata Party would still have been a winner.

4.2 PARTY SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS AND GOVERNMENT TYPES

The single most comprehensive theory that seeks to account for the type of cabinet formed on the basis of various characteristics of the party system is offered by Dodd. Dodd argues that the type of government that is formed is a function of the degree of information certainty that parties can obtain about each other and their willingness to bargain with one another. Dodd claims that these two variables are determined by three characteristics of the legislative party system: its fragmentation, its polarization and its stability. As Figure 4.1 shows, Dodd theorizes that undersized, read minority, governments are expected to form in legislatures that are polarized, fragmented and unstable because in such assemblies parties will find it difficult to obtain reliable information about one another’s preferences and strategic, which in turn reduces their willingness to bargain with each other.

With regard to polarization, it is important to note that conventional wisdom about Indian political parties has it that parties are not ideologically disciplined and

---

therefore explanations of party behavior based on policy-seeking and ideological motivation are irrelevant in the Indian context.\textsuperscript{284} The unfortunate consequence of this conventionally accepted thesis has been the absence of research about the ideological location of political parties in India. As scholars have failed to find evidence that parties professing a leftist or rightist ideological predisposition would either consistently coordinate their strategies with parties of a similar ideological outlook or pursue ideologically based policies once in office, the consensus that ideology is absent in Indian party politics has become unquestionably accepted.

### FIGURE 4.1:
**DODD’S HYPOTHESES ABOUT CABINET FORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party system traits</th>
<th>Information certainty</th>
<th>Willingness to bargain</th>
<th>Cabinet to be formed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fragmented</td>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>undersized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmented</td>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>almost minimum winning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defragmented</td>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>almost minimum winning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defragmented</td>
<td>certainty</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>minimum winning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depolarized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmented</td>
<td>uncertainty</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>oversized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depolarized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Huber and Inglehart have recently found that Indian parties do care about ideology and they can be located on a left-right spectrum in a meaningful way. As Table 4.2 shows, using Huber and Inglehart’s data allows for a fairly sophisticated calculation of the extent of party system polarization. However, since the data about the main parties ideological location are only

available for the 1990s they cannot be used to calculate changes in the degree of party system polarization over time. In any case, the Table does show that ideological polarization in the post-1989 legislatures has been rather moderate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ELECTORAL POLARIZATION</th>
<th>LEGISLATIVE POLARIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: To calculate the polarization scores, the following formula was used: \( \sum f_i (x-X)^2 \), where \( f_i \) is the vote/seat share of the \( i \)-th party, expressed in decimals, at point \( t \) in time; \( x \) is the left-right score of the \( i \)-th party; \( X \) is the mean left-right score of the party system. For comparison of these scores with Western European data, see Lane and Ersson (1994:185).

As for the entire five-decade history of the party system, including the pre-1989 legislatures, polarization scores can be obtained by re-operationalizing the variable. According to this alternative operationalization, polarization can be defined as the difference between the legislative weight of the center party or parties and the combined total weight of the parties of the left and the right, counting only those parties that control at least 3% of the legislative seats, as per Ware's rule-of-thumb.\(^{285}\) The greater the positive difference the less polarized the party system because of the strength of the center. However, the smaller and more negative the difference, the more polarized and centrifugal the party system due to the strength of the extreme parties. This way of operationalizing the variable is better suited for the Indian context because while no longitudinal data are available that would allow for the definition of the exact ideological location of parties in integral terms, impressionistic evidence does make it relatively easy to identify if there is a center party and which parties are to its left and right respectively.

In formulaic terms, polarization is defined as

\[ \text{Polarization} = \sum f_i (x-X)^2 \]

---

POL: \( pC(p>3\%) - [pL(p>3\%) + pR(p>3\%)] \)

where \( p \) is the percentage of the seats held by a party; \( C \) is any party classified as being in the center; \( L \) is a party classified as being on the left; and \( R \) is a party classified as being on the right.

Table 4.2 does suggest an overall positive relationship between polarization and the formation of minority governments in the Lok Sabha. As the bolded entries show, minority governments were formed when the polarization scores were at their lowest values. The sole outlier in this regard is the Janata party government formed in 1977. As the Table suggests, the Lok Sabha was the most polarized between 1977 and 1979, yet the Janata Party formed an oversized majority coalition with the Akali Dal.\(^{286}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weight of the center</th>
<th>Weight of the Left</th>
<th>Weight of the Right</th>
<th>Polarization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952-1957</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-1962</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-1967</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-1969</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-1971</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1977</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1979</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>-33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1980</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1989</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-1990</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1996</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1998</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>-28.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though there appears to be a positive association between the extent of polarization and the formation of minority governments in the Lok Sabha, it should be noted that the Janata Party thus formed an oversized coalition as opposed to a single-party majority government is often ignored in most analyses of Indian political history.\(^{286}\)
emphasized that so far polarization has been used in a relative sense. Thus, to say that the
Lok Sabha was the most polarized in 1977 is not the same as to say that it was highly
polarized at the time. Since the value of the polarization index ranges from +100 to -100,
one can speak of high and low levels of polarization when the value of the index is near
the two extremes. Whereas the first Lok Sabha was indeed very close to the depolarized
end of the spectrum, with a score of +71, there was no Lok Sabha anywhere near lower
end of the range indicating high polarization. This interpretation of the finding confirms
that since high polarization has not been a characteristic feature of the Lok Sabha, it
cannot be the explanation for minority government formation as Dodd suggests.

Figure 4.2 evaluates Dodd' hypothesis by considering the two variables of
fragmentation and polarization together.

FIGURE 4.2:
FRAGMENTATION AND POLARIZATION IN THE LOK SABHA
Note: ENPP stands for the effective number of parliamentary parties.

Once again, it is clear that at no point in time was the Lok Sabha highly fragmented and polarized, as the virtually empty lower right hand corner in the Figure shows. Curiously, at the time of the formation of the Congress(I) minority government in 1991, the Lok Sabha was less polarized than at the time of the formation of the majority coalition by the Janata Party and the Akali Dal in 1977. The formation of this latter government provides a further rebuttal of Dodd’s theory. According to him, oversized governments should form in depolarized, fragmented and unstable legislatures. However, the Sixth Lok Sabha in which this oversized majority coalition was formed was not highly fragmented at all.

With regards to party system stability, Figure 4.3 shows that overall a high degree of volatility has characterized the Indian parliamentary party system.

FIGURE 4.3:
SEAT VOLATILITY IN INDIA, 1952-96

![Graph showing seat volatility in India, 1952-96](image)


However, it is interesting that the volatility rate was rather small until 1969, when the

first minority government was formed, and has become very small again, after two decades of high levels and wide fluctuations, by the 1990s, a period in which only minority governments have been formed. This casts further doubt on the applicability of Dodd's model to the Indian cases.

4.3 MACRO-POLITICAL REGIME CHARACTERISTICS

The theory of government types proposed by Luebbert offers a typological-rational approach to understanding government formation. Luebbert argues that

[a] typological approach would be one that distinguishes types of political systems, the features of which, in conjunction with a given constellation of parties and preferences, will lead to certain types of outcomes. The key to such an approach is to find the chain of causality that runs from the distinctive features of the political system type to the relative importance party leaders assign to their conflicting goals and from this system-prioritized set of goals to a certain evaluation of the prevailing set of policy preferences and then, in consequence, the government formation outcome.

In pointing out the need for a comparative historical understanding of the choices that individual political actors make Luebbert is not calling for descriptive ad hoc studies. Quite the contrary, he wants the political system types and their characteristics to be specified prior to the analysis which should be “conducted within the context of a deductive, rational choice model, that will enhance the theory”.

In his typological model, Luebbert distinguishes political systems depending on (a) the degree of their legitimacy, and (b) the participation of opposition parties in consensus building, see Figure 4.4. A political system is considered to lack legitimacy, according to Luebbert, when there is an anti-democratic party in its party system of such

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289 Ibid., p. 246.

290 Ibid., p. 247.
magnitude that its presence induces centrifugal competition. As for the opposition, it may either cooperate with the government, and then be a consensus builder, or may not cooperate, in which case there will be no consensus. The four system types that this typology yields are indicated in the Figure 4.4.

FIGURE 4.4: LUEBBERT'S TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High regime legitimacy</th>
<th>Opposition is consensus builder</th>
<th>Opposition is not consensus builder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consensual party system</td>
<td>competitive party system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low regime legitimacy</td>
<td>unconsolidated party system</td>
<td>conflictual party system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second element of Luebbert’s model is the specification of the relationships that may exist between the most important party of the cabinet formation process, called the formateur’s party, and the other parties. These relationships can be of three kinds: the parties’ policy preferences may either be tangential, convergent and divergent. Tangential preferences mean that parties emphasize different issues that are not related to one another and therefore party leaders do not consider them incompatible. When parties emphasize the same issues such that their principles tend towards each others’ then their preferences are convergent. Finally, when parties’ preferences are mutually exclusive, their preferences and relationship are divergent, according to Luebbert.

The third element of Luebbert’s theory is the specification of the formateur’s party’s limit of tolerance in each political regime type in terms of these preference relations. In consensual democracies, the formateur will include those parties in the cabinet whose preferences are tangential to or convergent with his. In conflictual democracies, the limit of tolerance is set by divergent preferences which means that all but the anti-systemic anti-democratic parties can participate in the formateur’s cabinet. Finally, competitive democracies are divided into two subtypes: dominated and

undominated. In dominated competitive democracies party leaders work on the assumption that a particular party cannot be left out of the cabinet. Obviously, the limit of tolerance in dominated competitive systems will be lower than in undominated competitive ones.

The actual hypotheses concerning the formation of governments of different types are the following:

- Oversized governments will be formed in dominated competitive systems
- Minimal winning coalitions, i.e. coalitions without superfluous members, will be formed in undominated competitive democracies
- Minority governments will be formed in both consensual and conflictual democracies. In conflictual regimes minority governments are formed because parties are unable to cooperate to form majority coalition. In contrast, in consensual regimes there is no need for parties build a majority coalition.

Luebbert’s theory is not supported by the Indian cases. According to Luebbert, minority governments should be virtually absent in competitive regimes. However, a brief look at the nature of the Indian political regime will convincingly show that India belongs to exactly this regime type.

That the legitimacy of the regime has been high is indicated both by the historically high levels of voter turnout in elections, see Figure 4.5, and the absence of threat that the extreme parties would have posed to the political regime. The fact that both the extreme Right, the BJS later renamed to be the BJP, and the extreme Left, the CPI(M), have participated in every national election since Independence and respected the outcomes thereof further attests to the legitimacy that the regime enjoys. While the BJS and the BJP never opposed democracy, and as such cannot be considered anti-system parties even though they have been located on the far right of the ideological spectrum, the Communist parties have displayed rigid dogmatic adherence to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, including their rejection of democracy, until recently. However, even
the CPI(M), the more radical of the two Communist parties, has recently revised its position when its government in West Bengal adopted an industrial policy that acknowledged the primacy of the private sector in promoting economic growth, welcomed foreign investment and called on workers to consider the effect that protecting their rights may have on productivity and growth.\textsuperscript{292}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{voter_turnout.png}
\caption{Voter Turnout in National Elections, 1952-1996}
\end{figure}

Source: Butler et al., \textit{India Decides} ..., p. 9; and Election Commission of India, GE96-LS19.

Although the legitimacy of the political system is high in India, the opposition’s participation in consensus building has been virtually non-existent. The domination of the national political system for much of the country’s post-Independence history by the Congress Party has prevented the opposition from being effectively and meaningfully involved in building a national consensus. As Rajni Kothari succinctly pointed out,

\begin{quote}
The role of the dominant party has been to evolve a consensus on both normative and procedural matters as well as major policy issues. In such a system, the dominant party becomes a norm setter for all other parties and the model set by
\end{quote}

the Congress had in fact been spreading both in terms of policies and programs. In this system it is the dominant party that acts as an aggregation by developing into a comprehensive, representative mechanism, it represents all shades of opinion, all major interest groups in the society and indeed all other parties as well. In other words, the dominant party system simply did not leave space for the opposition to engage in consensus building, as it was singularly carried out by the dominant party itself.

It is further worth mentioning that the relationship between the government and the opposition in India has also been characterized by mutual mistrust and disdain. Successive Congress governments all betrayed an intolerant and impatient attitude towards the opposition often charging opposition parties with being anti-nationalist and anti-democratic parties that can only criticize and seek to embarrass the government as they are unable to form an alternative to it. Although Narasimha Rao’s minority government made efforts towards building a consultative framework in order to develop a consensus with the contribution of the opposition parties, these efforts quickly broke down.

In sum, since India’s political regime belongs to the competitive type, it should not have experienced the formation of minority governments according to the predictions of Luebbert’s model. Thus, this theory also fails to account for the dependent variable. Furthermore, the historical domination of India’s political and party systems by the Congress Party allows the country to be classified as a dominated competitive regime. Luebbert’s theory predicts that in such regimes parties will often form oversized cabinets because there is a dominant actor that cannot be left out of government. However, of all the coalition cabinets there was only one that was oversized, namely the Janata Party-Akali Dal coalition, and even that did not include the dominant party.

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4.4 OPPOSITION INFLUENCE AND ELECTORAL DECISIVENESS

An influential theory of government formation is offered by Strom. His theory emphasizes the importance of incentives that make political parties either to abstain from or to enter government office. Strom distinguishes political systems and the types of government they tend to see being formed on the basis of two such structural variables: the potential influence of the parliamentary opposition, and the decisiveness of elections for coalitional bargaining power.

FIGURE 4.6: STROM'S TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High opposition influence</th>
<th>High electoral decisiveness</th>
<th>Low electoral decisiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Inclusionary (e.g. Norway)</td>
<td>Captive government (e.g. Italy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Adversarial (e.g. Britain)</td>
<td>Captive opposition (e.g. Netherlands)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the first type of system, which Strom calls inclusionary, elections are competitive and decisive and the opposition is highly influential. In such countries, for example those of Scandinavia, minority governments are expected to thrive. This is so because the greater the potential influence of the opposition over government policy the smaller the relative benefits that a policy-seeking party can gain from entering office; at the same time since elections are decisive for coalitional bargaining power, potential governmental parties may decide to abstain from office because “government incumbency tends to result in subsequent electoral losses, and coalition governments lose more than others.”

The second type of system is called adversarial, exemplified by the United Kingdom. In such systems, elections are just as decisive as they are in inclusionary

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296 Ibid., p. 70 and 90.
297 Ibid., p. 69.
systems, however, the potential influence of the opposition on government policy is much weaker. The frequency of hung parliaments in such systems is rather rare and, therefore, minority governments rarely occur. However, when there are hung parliaments, the frequency of minority governments will outnumber the frequency of majority coalitions.

The third type of system is called the captive government system; an example is Italy, in which minority governments will often form although not as frequently as they would in inclusionary systems. Low electoral decisiveness implies that although the government may suffer electorally it does not do so to the benefit of the opposition. In other words, the votes that the incumbent loses as a result of the incumbent disadvantage factor, will not be translated into seat gains by the opposition. “Contrary to the two previous types, undersized cabinets in captive government systems are not associated with alternation in office. rather, this cabinet solution represents a breathing spell for marginal government parties, which for electoral or other reasons prefer not to shoulder the burden of incumbency. 298

The fourth type of system, the captive opposition system, provides the least incentives for the formation of minority governments. The opposition has both bleak electoral prospects and negligible influence over government policy. Thus, political parties in such systems do have an incentive to enter office. Not surprisingly, Strom has found that such systems have a lot of oversized coalitions.

The two variables are also operationalized by Strom. He measures opposition influence by gauging the power of parliamentary committees. The stronger and more decentralized the parliamentary committee structure, the greater the potential influence of the opposition. The strength of the parliamentary committee structure is measured by a number of factors, including

- the number of standing committees; Strom claims that there have to be at least 10

298 Strom, Minority Government, p. 91.
standing committees for the opposition to have high influence over policy;

- a fixed area of specialization for each committee;
- the correspondence of committee jurisdictions to ministerial departments;
- the number of committee assignments per legislator;
- proportional distribution of committee chairs among the parliamentary parties.  

The decisiveness of elections is measured by

- the identifiability of viable government alternatives;
- electoral volatility, measured by the fluctuation in the distribution of seats among different parties from one election to the next;
- electoral responsiveness of government formation, i.e. parties that have gained rather than those that have lost seats should be in the government;
- proximity, i.e. government formation should take place in close proximity to the election for the election to be decisive.

As Strom notes, political parties respond to electoral decisiveness through a learning process. This means that it is not the decisiveness of the previous election but rather some historical level thereof that is likely to inform the choices that parties make when forming governments.

With regard to the Indian context, the first point to note is that until March 31, 1993 the committee structure of the Indian parliament had been extremely weak, similar to that of the British Parliament. Although Article 105 of the Constitution provides for parliamentary committees, these have been only consultative ones, with no independent staff, no fixed membership, and no direct correspondence to ministerial departments. The three most important such committees, Estimates, Public Accounts, and Public

Strom, Minority Government, pp. 70-1.

As Strom notes, if a party loses seats but still wins an absolute majority of the seats then it is considered a gainer. See, Ibid., p. 73-4. note 12.

The information about the present committee system in Indian Parliament was obtained from Arthur Rubinoff, “India’s New Subject-Based Parliamentary Committees”, Asian Survey 36 (1996) 723-738.
Undertakings were in charge of monitoring government spending broadly conceived. However, they were not designed to monitor the day-to-day activities of specific departments per se. Most of the other consultative committees dealt with House rules and matters. Besides these consultative committees, there have also been a number of ad hoc committees convened at the discretion of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, because the legislative process in India makes the committee stage voluntary committees have not established a strong presence and authority.

Since 1989, however, the successive Prime Ministers of the minority governments, in particular V. P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar and Narasimha Rao took measures to create a stronger committee system in Parliament. As a result, in March 1993, 17 department-related standing committees were created. According to Rubinoff, minority governments were especially keen on strengthening the committee structure because they needed to involve the opposition in governance in order to get the legislative support required to continue in office.\(^\text{302}\)

The 17 standing committees oversee 42 government departments, each committee being responsible for overseeing four to six ministries. Each MP has to serve on at least one committee for no more than two years. Although there is no limit to the number of committees an individual MP can sit on, no committee can have more than 45 members. The membership of the committees comprises legislators both from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the upper house, in a 2-1 ratio reflecting the relative sizes of the two chambers. Following earlier practice, committee chairs are distributed among the political parties in proportion to their strength in the Lok Sabha. Thus, in 1993 the Congress Party chaired 10 committees while the remaining 7 were chaired by opposition leaders. The introduction of standing committees did not do away with consultative committees of which there are more than 30 functioning besides an additional 18 standing House

\(^{302}\text{Rubinoff, “India’s New Subject-Based Parliamentary Committees”, p. 728.}\)
### TABLE 4.4:
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEES IN INDIA, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Agriculture, Water Resources, Food Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>Commerce, Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Information and Broadcasting, Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Coal, Non-conventional Energy-Sources, Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Affairs</td>
<td>External Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Finance, Planning and Program Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, Civil Supplies, and Public Distribution</td>
<td>Food, Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Affairs</td>
<td>Home Affairs, Law, Justice and Company Affairs, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Industry, Steel, Mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor and Welfare</td>
<td>Labor, Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum and Chemicals</td>
<td>Petroleum and Natural Gas, Chemicals and Petro-chemicals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and Technology, Environment and Forests</td>
<td>Science and Technology, Electronics, Space and Ocean Development, Biotechnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Tourism</td>
<td>Civil Aviation, Surface Transport, Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and Rural Development</td>
<td>Urban Development, Rural Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rubinoff, “India’s New Subject-Based Parliamentary Committees,” p. 729.
committees not related to any specific government department.

The second variable in Strom's model is electoral decisiveness. Elections in India are highly decisive when measured by each of the four variables suggested by Strom. First, governing alternatives have always been clearly identified in the general elections, although until 1977 this was limited to the Congress Party. It was only in 1977 that the opposition parties managed to come together and present before the electorate a united alternative program to that of the Congress. In the post-1989 context, as described before, there have been three main alternatives competing against one another.

Second, as Figure 4.3 showed, elections have been highly volatile in terms of the swings they produced in the distribution of seats between parties. The average volatility for the entire 1952-96 period is 21.7%. The Figure also shows that volatility has been particularly high in the 1971-89 period.

Third, government formation in India has been highly responsive to electoral outcomes. Table 4.5 illustrates that with the exception of the last government, that formed by the United Front, cabinets have been predominantly formed by electoral gainers.

Lastly, the decisiveness of Indian elections scores high on the fourth measure of proximity as well. Of the sixteen governments formed in the 1952-96 period, only 4 were not formed immediately after the election. These were the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition in 1979, the Samajwadi Janata party government in 1990, and the two United Front coalitions led by Gowda and Gujral respectively.

In sum, since legislative committees have been historically weak and because elections have been highly decisive, India belongs to the adversarial political system type. In such systems Strom predicts that coalitions will very rarely form if the election produces a hung parliament and even more rarely if there is a clear majority winner. However, as described in Chapter Two, each minority government in India was a coalition with the exception of the 1969 Congress(Ruling) and the 1991 Congress(I) cabinets. Furthermore, even though the 1977 election produced a clear majority winner in
the Janata Party, a coalition government was still formed between the Janata Party and the Akali Dal.

TABLE 4.5:
THE ELECTORAL RESPONSIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION IN INDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year government formed</th>
<th>Parties in government</th>
<th>Seat gain/loss in % since previous election</th>
<th>Gainers' share of seats held by government parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>+0.7% (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>-2.0% (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>-18.6 (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Congress(R)</td>
<td>+13.5% (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Janata</td>
<td>+45.5% (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Janata Party (S)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>+36.7% (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>+11.4% (AM)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Janata Dal Telugu Desam Congress-S</td>
<td>+26.2% -5.2% -7.4%</td>
<td>97.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>SJP</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>BJP-Shiv Sena</td>
<td>+7.6% +2.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Janata Dal CPI Telugu Desam AGP TMC DMK MPVC KCP INC(T) SP MGP FBL RSP</td>
<td>-2.4% -3.7% +5.5% +0.7% +3.7% +3.1% +0.2% +0.2% +2.0% +0.2% 0 0 0</td>
<td>39.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AM stands for absolute majority, NA means not applicable because the party was not in existence at the time of the previous election.
4.5 THE CORE

The theory originally formulated by De Swaan and more recently corroborated and by Schofield (1993, 1996) focuses on the dimensionality of the policy space as well as the positions and weights of political parties therein. The theory stipulates that in a multidimensional policy space there is a Pareto set of party policy points for every possible minimum winning coalition, called the compromise set. The theory predicts that if there is a party whose policy point lies at the intersection of the compromise set of every minimum winning coalition, then this party forms a structurally stable core and will form a minority government, or at least that this party will be included in any government to be formed. If, however, there is no such party and the core of the voting game is empty, a single-party minority government is impossible to form. Theoretical research has shown that under majority voting rule a core will always exist in a unidimensional space at the position of the party that controls the median, only rarely so in a two-dimensional context, and virtually never in a space defined by more than two dimensions.303

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to be certain about the ideological and spatial structure of the Indian party system. This in turn makes the identification of the existence of a core also difficult because in the absence of information about the spatial location of parties it is impossible to estimate the number of dimensions in the system. However, thanks to a theorem offered by Schofield and his collaborators one can come close to finding out if there was a core in the respective parliamentary games. The theorem is as follows:

THEOREM: If the cardinality of the smallest set of winning coalitions with an empty intersection, i.e. the Nakamura number, is equal to or greater than the number of issue dimensions plus 2, then the core will be nonempty. Formally,

\[ N \geq W + 2 \]

where \( W \) is the number of issue dimensions, and \( N \) is the Nakamura number.

COROLLARY: If the voting game is collegial, i.e. if it has a veto player, then \( N \) is by convention infinity. Thus, as per the THEOREM above such games will always have a core regardless of the number of dimensions.

The implications and the working of the THEOREM is illustrated in a couple of hypothetical examples in Appendix 3.

The THEOREM is very useful in determining if it has in fact been the party in the Shepsle (1996) have constructed a model of coalition formation that focuses on the allocation of key portfolios rather than synchronization and reconciliation of overall party policy positions. See, Michael Laver and Kenneth A. Shepsle, Making and Breaking Governments: Cabinets and Legislatures in Parliamentary Democracies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). They note that if there is a very strong party, “a party with an ideal point such that there is no alternative government preferred by a majority to one that gives the very strong party all portfolios” (263), then this party will form a minority government. They note that their very strong party and Schofield’s core party are very similar although not entirely the same.


core that has formed coalition governments in India. The design of this inquiry is simple. First, the Nakamura number will be established for each of the parliamentary games. Then, substituting the value for N into the equation specified by the THEOREM will yield the number of dimensions in which the core will be non-empty, in other words the number of dimensions in which one can be certain that a party occupies the core. The party that is in the core is the one that lies on the intersection of each and every median line. Finally, if there is such a party present and if indeed has formed a minority government then the theory works.

In the majority Lok Sabhas, i.e. those in which a single party controlled a majority of the seats, the core is always occupied by the largest party in the legislature. Not surprisingly, whenever there is such a party, it has indeed formed a government, however, this theory does not shed light on why the Janata Party formed an oversized coalition government with the Akali Dal in 1977.

In hung parliaments, the picture has been a little more complicated. For example, in the Fourth Lok Sabha, following the split of the Congress Party, there were 518 seats which means that q=260. In this game N=3 because, for example, the three minimum winning coalitions by the Congress(Ruling) and the Congress(Opposition); the Congress(Ruling), the United Independent Group, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, and the Jan Sangh; and the Congress(Opposition), the Swatantra, the Jan Sangh, the DMK, the United Independent Group, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Praja Socialist Party, and the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, did not intersect. In other words, there was no party in this game that would have had to be included in each of these minimum winning coalitions. N cannot be 2 because so long as the game is proper\textsuperscript{307} every paired minimum winning coalition would have to have at least one member in common.

\textsuperscript{307}For a more detailed discussion of the concept of a proper game, see Appendix 2.
Substituting $N=3$ into the equation yields $W=1$. Thus, the core can be non-empty in this game only if the space is unidimensional. Since the theory predicts that the government is formed by the party in the core, and because in a unidimensional game the core party is the one in the center, the center party, in this case the Congress (Ruling) can form a minority government. Indeed, this is exactly what took place.

Similarly, in each of the other Lok Sabhas in which coalitions were formed, with the exception of the Sixth in which the Janata and the Akali Dal formed a government, $N=3$. (One can play with the various combinations by using the numbers given in the various tables showing the composition of the Lok Sabhas.) Thus, in each Lok Sabha, $W=1$ implying that the Congress Party has been in the core and as such should have formed minority governments. However, this has only been the case, besides 1969, in 1991. In every other instance a party or a coalition thereof, other than the Congress, and therefore other than the core, has formed minority governments. Thus, the theory does not consistently explain the formation of minority governments in India.

Finally, in the Sixth Lok Sabha, the Janata Party was a veto player by virtue of being a majority party which made the game collegial. Therefore, regardless of the number of issue dimensions the Janata Party was in the core as it was the veto player of the game. According to the prediction of the theory, the Janata indeed formed the government, however the theory says nothing about why it may have done so in coalition with the Akali Dal.

4.6 DOMINANT AND CENTRAL PLAYERS

There are two theories of government formation that posit the characteristics of key players in the cabinet formation game as the independent variable. The first one is offered by Van Roozendaal and it stresses the importance of so-called dominant and
central parties in the cabinet formation game.\textsuperscript{308} The definitions of dominant and central parties are developed within the framework of simple game theory which is summarized in Appendix 2.

Van Roozendaal's definition of a dominant player builds on the earlier works by Peleg\textsuperscript{309} and Einy.\textsuperscript{310} Peleg has argued that a winning coalition $S$ is dominated by player $i$ if the latter can form another winning coalition outside $S$ but $S\setminus\{i\}$ cannot do the same. A player $i$ can be the dominant player in a proper weighted game if there exists at least one winning coalition in the game that is dominated by this player. If there is such a player present then the game, according to Peleg, is called a dominated simple game.

Van Roozendaal identifies three necessary conditions for the presence of a dominant player in a weighted game. First, the dominant player is always the largest player, i.e. the one with the largest weight. (Note, however, that not all of the largest players may be dominant!) Second, the weight of the dominant player must be at least equal to half of the quota.\textsuperscript{311} Third, if $A$ stands for the coalition of players with the smallest total weight which the largest player can form a winning coalition with, then there must be at least one coalition of players outside $A$ that can form a winning coalition with the largest player but not with $A$.\textsuperscript{312}

For example, consider a game with four players A, B, C, and D with the following quota and weights: $[6; 4,3,2,1]$. In this game A is a dominant player as it meets each of the three aforementioned necessary conditions. First, A is clearly the largest player. Second, $w_A > 1/2q$ since $w_A = 4$ and $1/2q = 3$. Third, the coalition having the smallest weight

\textsuperscript{308}Peter Van Roozendaal, “The Effect of Dominant and Central Parties on Cabinet Composition and Durability”, Legislative Studies Quarterly, 17 (1992), pp. 5-35.  
\textsuperscript{311}For a definition of the quota and other game theoretic terms mentioned in the text see Appendix.  
\textsuperscript{312}Van Roozendaal, ‘The Effect of Dominant and Central Parties ...’, p.8.
with which A can form a winning coalition is the one-player coalition consisting of C. While player B can form a winning coalition with the largest player A it cannot do so with C.

The definition of a central player brings the players’ policy positions into the framework. Each player in the game has a position on a policy order R which is reflexive, complete and transitive. Van Roozendaal defines player i to be the central player of a proper simple game when the absolute value of the difference between the total weights of all players located to the left and to the right of i on R is less than the weight of i itself. Formally, player i is a central player if

$$|w(R_+(i)) - w(R_-(i))| < w_i. \tag{2}$$

where

$$R_+(i) = \{j \in N \mid j \neq i \text{ and } jRi\}$$

$$R_-(i) = \{j \in N \mid j \neq i \text{ and } iRj\}.$$

It follows from the above definition that any coalition that is connected along R must include the central player. Van Demeen has proved both that in simple games that are both proper and strong there can only be one central player as well as that there can be no more than one central player with respect to a specific policy order R.\[^{313}\]

On the basis of the presence and absence of dominant and central players in a legislative voting game Van Roozendaal offers a five-fold typology of parliaments, as shown in Figure 4.7.

The first type of parliament, DCP, is characterized by the presence of a player that is both dominant and central. In the second type, DP-CP, the dominant and central


players are not one and the same, however, it is important that both are present. In the third type of parliament, DP, there is a dominant player, however, a central player is absent. The fourth type of parliament, CP, is characterized by the absence of a dominant and the presence of a central player. Finally, there are parliaments, "-", in which neither a dominant nor a central player are present.

Based on the assumptions that parties are unitary players; that there is a dominant ideological dimension R; that all parties have perfect information about which player is dominant and which is central; and that all parties value being included in cabinets more than not being included, Van Roozendaal offers the following predictions and hypotheses about cabinet formation:

- In DCP parliaments, any cabinet, whether majority or minority, will include the dominant central party. The higher the relative parliamentary weight of the dominant central party, measured by its share of parliamentary seats, the more inclined it will be to form a minority cabinet.

The logic behind this is straightforward. A dominant party is the most powerful player in the game. Since it is motivated by office-seeking, this party will always attempt to form a cabinet in which it enjoys the greatest possible power excess.\(^{315}\) The difference between the parliamentary weights of the dominant party and the other parties, i.e. the power excess of the dominant party, is maximal in a minimum size winning coalition.

Therefore, its dominant status gives the dominant central party an incentive to build such a coalition. However, the party is also a policy-seeker. Its central status means that the other parties cannot form a legislative majority coalition on any issue related to R of which the party is not a participant. In other words,

\(^{315}\)A player \(i\) has positive power excess in a coalition \(S\) when its weight is greater than the combined total weight of all other players also constituting \(S\). Formally, \(i\) has positive power excess when \(w_i > w(S)-w_i\). Peter Van Roozendaal, *Cabinets in Multi-Party Democracies: The Effect of Dominant and Central Parties on Cabinet Composition and Durability* (Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1992), p. 18.
it is highly unlikely that parties to its left and right on R that occasionally form ad hoc coalitions on certain issues will be interested in forming or able to form a unified opposition against the central party. The connected coalition of all parties to the left of the dominant central party is closer to the policy position of the dominant central party than it is to any coalition of parties located to the right of the dominant central party.  

FIGURE 4.7:  
VAN ROOZENDAAL’S TYPOLOGY OF DOMINATED AND CENTRALIZED PARLIAMENTARY GAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant player</th>
<th>Central player</th>
<th>Parliamentary game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>DP=CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>DP≠CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>&quot;-&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The dominant central party can increase its positive power excess beyond what it is in the most optimal minimum size winning coalition if it formed a minority cabinet. Thus, the greater the party’s weight the more likely that it will form such a cabinet.

- In DP-CP parliaments, minority cabinets will include either the dominant or the central party but not both. The greater the relative parliamentary weight of the dominant party the more inclined it will be to form a minority cabinet.

In DP-CP legislatures, the dominant party can form a minority cabinet that would yield it the greatest power excess, however it can be defeated by a hostile legislative majority on any issue related to R. The central player would always be a member of such a hostile coalition. The two parties may resolve to form a coalition together, however, in the absence of such an agreement a minority cabinet will be formed by one or the other. Van Roozendaal suggests that the dominant party may receive the initial mandate to form a cabinet as per normal parliamentary procedure in many countries.

- In CP parliaments, any cabinet, whether majority or minority, will include the central

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In CP legislatures, there is no dominant party. In its absence, the central party becomes the most powerful player dictating the cabinet formation game. However, because the central party is interested only in policy and not the pursuit of a maximal positive power excess, Van Roozendaal acknowledges that it is impossible to predict whether a majority or a minority cabinet will be formed by this party.

Similar predictions are offered by the theory proposed by Crombez. He argues that the type of government that is formed in a hung parliament is the function of the largest party’s size as well as its ideological location. Crombez postulates that the larger and more centrist the plurality party the greater the likelihood that it will form a minority government. Furthermore, the model posits that the smaller and farther off the center the plurality party is the greater the likelihood of its forming a minimum winning coalition and then a surplus majority. The logic behind the model’s prediction of the formation of a minority governments is that a strong center party can both keep control of the portfolio allocation process, i.e. it can maximize its own office benefits, and it can maximize its policy benefits, i.e. steering government policy towards its own preferred position, by exploiting the ideological and policy divisions within the opposition.

The first problem with the applicability of both models to the Indian cases is that they exclusively speak to multi-party contexts in hung parliaments, i.e. parliaments in which there is no majority winner. As such they cannot account for the formation of the Janata Party-Akali Dal coalition government which included the Janata Party that could have formed a single-party majority government on its own.

Second, the two theories also fail to be consistent with the formation of the eight minority governments. According to Crombez’s prediction the plurality party will form a

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minority government the larger and the closer to the center of the ideological spectrum it is located. Of the eight cases of minority governments only on three occasions did the plurality party actually form the cabinet: the Congress (Ruling) in 1969, the Congress(I) in 1991, and the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1996. As discussed earlier, while the Congress has also been the centrist party, the BJP has not. Furthermore, Crombez's theory is also falsified by the remaining five minority cabinets that were formed by parties other than the one with the largest number of seats in the legislature.

Van Roozendaal's theory does not fare much better either. Appendix 4 provides the detailed calculation to ascertain the presence of key players in the various multi-party, read hung, Lok Sabhas. On the basis of the calculations, the hung parliaments of India can be classified as shown in Figure 4.8.

FIGURE 4.8:
THE CLASSIFICATION OF INDIAN HUNG PARLIAMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lok Sabha</th>
<th>Dominant Party</th>
<th>Central party</th>
<th>Parliament type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Lok Sabha</td>
<td>Congress (Ruling)</td>
<td>Congress (Ruling)</td>
<td>DCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(post-1969)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Lok Sabha</td>
<td>Janata Party</td>
<td>Congress (I)</td>
<td>DP-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(post-1979)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth Lok Sabha</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>DCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Lok Sabha</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>DCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh Lok Sabha</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Congress(I)</td>
<td>DP-CP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Van Roozendaal's predictions are consistent only with the cabinets that were formed in the Fourth and the Tenth Lok Sabhas. In these DCP parliaments it was indeed the dominant central party, the Congress (Ruling) and the Congress(I) respectively, that formed minority governments. However, in neither the Sixth, nor the Ninth nor the Eleventh Lok Sabhas were the cabinets formed by parties that Van Roozendaal would have predicted. Although in the Eleventh Lok Sabha the dominant party, BJP, did form a short-lived minority government, the other two coalitions that were formed in that
legislature by the United Front included neither the dominant nor the central parties. Similarly, the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition formed in the Sixth Lok Sabha after the Janata Party had split did not include either the dominant party, the Janata, or the central one, the Congress(I). In the Ninth Lok Sabha the Congress(I) was a dominant central party, similarly to the Congress (Ruling) in the Fourth Lok Sabha and the Congress(I) in the Tenth. However, unlike in these latter two cases, the dominant central party was excluded from government in that parliament.

4.7 CONSTRAINTS AND CABINET FORMATION

A body of literature has been recently developed by authors focusing on constraints as the independent variables explaining government formation. Constraints in this literature are defined as "any restriction on the set of feasible cabinet coalitions that is beyond the short-term control of the players." Such constraints can be of two kinds: hard and soft. Whereas hard constraints effectively rule out specific coalitions to be formed by particular parties, soft constraints make the formation of one coalition or another more or less likely. In other words, hard constraints are both specific, as they pertain to particular coalition combinations, and enforceable, meaning that they are "backed up by credible enforcement mechanisms," while soft constraints may be such to a much lesser extent.

In the real political world, constraints on the coalition bargaining process are exerted by exogeneously defined institutions, such as cabinet formation and operation rules, legislative decision-making rules, external veto players as well as specific commitments and rules that parties, the actors in the bargaining process, impose on

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319 Ibid., p. 308.
320 Ibid., p. 308.
themselves.\textsuperscript{321} Thus, constraints can be both exogeneously defined but they may also be endogenously imposed by the actors themselves. For example, a particular party may make a specific electoral pledge not to enter into coalition with a particular other party. This promise to the electorate raises the party’s audience costs because breaking it would lead to the party’s loss of credibility in the eyes of its voters which may well lead to electoral losses in the future.\textsuperscript{322} This example also suggests that even a specific electoral promise of this kind may become a hard constraint on the coalition bargaining process: the expected punishment of the electorate may very well act as a credible mechanism to enforce the hard constraint of the electoral mandate.

Constraint theory was developed largely as a result of the frustration caused by the failure of game theoretic models stressing the size and ideological-policy preferences of political parties as independent variables to explain the formation of minority governments. Budge and Laver have claimed that the reason why game theoretic models may fail to predict the formation of minority governments is the assumption that they make about the cabinet formation game being constant-sum. This implies that there have to be an absolute winner and a loser in the game. However, quite often, as the Indian cases have shown, it will be parties other than those that are best positioned to win the game that end up forming the government. Budge and Laver suggest, therefore, to change both the assumption and the terminology: they offer to replace winning with viability, and the assumption of constant-sum with that of variable-sum. According to them, “[a] protocoalition V will form a viable government if there is no alternative coalition A which is supported by parties controlling more legislative votes than those supporting V, and which all parties supporting A prefer to form rather than V”.\textsuperscript{323} Also, they suggest

\textsuperscript{321}For a list of different types of constraints and examples from countries, as suggested by Strom, Budge and Laver is shown in Appendix 5.


that there are no absolute winners or losers in the game, and therefore, the game is not necessarily over once the government has been formed. Who gets to form the government is not necessarily the same as winning the game in an absolute sense. Rather it is better seen as the viable, as opposed to the winning, outcome under the existing constraints structuring the context of bargaining.

For an illustrative example, consider that there are four political parties in a legislature of 100 seats with the distribution of seats as shown in Figure 4.9. Theoretically, 15 possible alternative governments may be formed in this parliament ranging from the single party minority governments that could be formed by each party to the grand coalition of all four parties.

**FIGURE 4.9: CABINET VIABILITY IN A FOUR-PARTY SYSTEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coalitions

| 1 | X |
| 2 | X |
| 3 | X |
| 4 | X |
| 5 | X | X |
| 6 | X | X |
| 7 | X | X |
| 8 | X | X |
| 9 | X | X |
| 10 | X | X |
| 11 | X | X |
| 12 | X | X |
| 13 | X | X |
| 14 | X | X |
| 15 | X | X |

Source: Budge and Laver "Coalition Theory, Government Policy …", p. 7

However, there are constraints that may prevent a priori the formation of some of these coalitions. Let us impose four such hypothetical constraints. The first may be that
A, B, and D ran an election campaign, each on its own, in which they committed themselves to keeping C out of office. If, after the election, any of these parties formed a coalition government with C it would face high credibility costs in the next election.

Second, let us assume that these parties are interested in office and will therefore want to form minimal winning coalitions. The only minimal winning coalition that excludes C is the one to be formed by all three parties together. Third, let us constrain parties further by supposing that A and D are prevented from sharing power together because of an intense dispute between the upper echelons of their leaderships. This will rule out the possibility of the three-party coalition. Finally, let us suppose that according to convention or clearly specified constitutional rules the party that can make the first attempt at forming the government is the one with the most seats. If this attempt fails then the next largest party may experiment with cabinet formation and so on until a party eventually emerges with a viable combination. Although in this example C is the largest party it would be likely to refrain from proceeding to form a cabinet because none of the other three parties would be willing to either share power with it or support it from the outside.

Under these four constraints, the most likely government to form will be a coalition minority cabinet by A and B supported from the outside by D. Since A is the next largest party after C, it will have the second chance to form a cabinet after C has declined to do so. Since A and D cannot govern together, and A controls the cabinet formation process, D will be excluded from office. Although A could choose not to invite B to share office with it, this would alienate B which is interested in entering office due to the assumption of office-seeking motivation. Thus, A and B will form the cabinet together. A is expected to invite B as opposed to D into the coalition because this would increase A’s positive power excess which, as an office-seeker itself, A is interested in maximizing. That D is likely to support the coalition from the outside, at least for the time being, is because of its commitment to the voters to keep C away from office. D’s failure to support the coalition may destabilize the government causing its collapse and
possibly the dissolution of the house and a call for new elections, which is something that no office-seeking party wants.

The incorporation of constraints in explaining government formation poses a methodological dilemma that needs to be addressed at this point. As suggested earlier, constraints can be of many different kinds many of them pertaining to particular political systems or even to particular contexts or moments in time. Therefore, when all other theoretical predictions fail, as they do in the present case of seeking an explanation for minority governments in India, it is tempting to resort to an idiosyncratic country- or context-specific constraint as the explanation in a post hoc manner. In order to avoid this, Budge and Laver propose that constraints be specified prior to the assessment of specific cases of cabinet and coalition formations. Accordingly, the relevant constraints that may potentially impact on the government formation process in India need to be laid out prior to the analytical assessment of the particular cases.

4.8 CONSTRAINTS ON COALITION BARGAINING IN INDIA

4.8.1 CABINET FORMATION RULES: INVESTITURE

Generally speaking, an investiture requirement, i.e. a requirement whereby the incoming government’s assumption of office is contingent on its gaining the approval of the legislature, encourages the formation of majority coalitions since the coalition partners cannot enter office unless they control the legislature and pass the investiture vote. Such majority coalitions, however, do not need to be formal. Parties aspiring to form the government need to form a majority legislative coalition but not necessarily a majority executive coalition in order to survive the investiture vote. Thus, minority executive coalitions may well form in a system with investiture requirements so long as they are supported by a majority legislative coalition.

Parliamentary systems following the Westminster tradition, such as India, normally do not have an investiture requirement. By convention, the government of the
day remains in office as long as it is either not defeated by the opposition on a vote of no-confidence or it loses a vote of confidence that is submitted itself. Technically, this has been the case in India. Every government considered in this chapter was sworn in office by the President without having to pass a prior investiture vote. However, also in each and every instance the President would stipulate that the new Prime Minister must prove his government’s majority on the floor of the house within a specified short frame of time following the swearing in of the new cabinet. (Normally in about a few weeks.) In short, although a formal investiture vote was not a de jure prerequisite for any incoming government to take office the President’s call for an immediate confidence vote served as a de facto investiture requirement.

4.8.2 CABINET FORMATION RULES: RECOGNITION

Recognition rules are an important part of the government making process as they define the order and sequence in which parties will be asked to form a government. In some countries there are elaborate rules governing the cabinet formation process. In other countries, like India, there are well established conventions that regulate the process and inform the actors involved. Generally, the more discretion the rules and conventions afford the head of state in inviting particular actors to form a government, the greater the bargaining power of the party that the head of state clearly prefers.

India follows the Westminster tradition in the process of government formation. After each election the party with the largest number of seats is asked to form a government. If the post-election government collapses and the Prime Minister does not advise the President to order fresh elections then the President invites the Leader of the Opposition, defined as the leader of the largest party formally outside the initial governing coalition, to make an attempt at government formation. Should the Leader of the Opposition decline to do so the President must in turn approach the next largest party in the opposition and so on until one actor accepts the invitation. If the President cannot
find any such actor then he/she must dissolve the legislature, the lower house, and order fresh elections.

Upon accepting the President's invitation to form a government the leader of the particular party in question has to submit a tentative list of individual legislators whose legislative support he/she believes the new government can count on. The President can refuse to swear-in the proposed cabinet if this list of supporters fails to convince him/her that the new government would command a majority in the lower house.

In sum, the recognition rules, or rather conventions, that are in effect in India are fairly well established and provide the President with little discretionary authority.

4.8.3. LEGISLATIVE RULES: DECISION RULES

In some parliamentary systems, certain pieces of legislation are subject to supra-majoritarian decision rules in the legislature. In other cases, there may be different kinds of restrictive rules structuring legislative procedure. The different decision-making rules are important because they provide incentives for the formation of majority or minority coalitions in the legislature. In India, parliamentary decision-making is based on simple majority which provides an incentive for the formation of majority winning legislative coalitions.

4.8.4 LEGISLATIVE RULES: ELECTORAL FORMULA

Electoral formulae may have an impact on coalition bargaining by moving it to the pre-election period. In particular, the less proportional the conversion of votes to seats afforded by the electoral formula, the greater the incentive that parties have to form electoral alliances and take advantage of "electoral economies of scale". Such formulae are single-member-simple-plurality (used in Britain and India among others), the double

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324 Strom, Budge and Laver, “Constraints on Cabinet Formation,” p. 316
ballot majority run-off (used in France) and the single transferable vote (used in Ireland). Quite often, electoral alliances also involve commitment to post-election cooperation in the legislature. As such, coalition bargaining takes place before the election is held. Of course, depending on the actual outcome of the polls the bargaining may have to continue once the election is over.

4.8.5 PARTY RULES AS CONSTRAINTS

Parties themselves may also impose constraints on coalition bargaining by distancing themselves from entering into coalition with a particular party or set of parties. In India, two such particular constraints need to be mentioned.

First, the long history of one party dominance nurtured a history of hostility between the Congress and the main national opposition parties. Although these opposition parties were ideologically often divided, their office-seeking motivation made them share in common an antagonism against the dominant party that had consistently excluded them from office. This anti-Congress sentiment amongst the Indian national opposition has been so strong that it has in effect constituted a separate dimension, beside the ideological one, structuring the party system.

The second party-imposed constraint worth mentioning is the antagonism between the Left parties and the BJP, and its predecessor the BJS, the origin of which dates back to pre-Independence times. As described in Chapter Two, the Left and the BJP-led Right have consistently pursued a policy of no cooperation with one another over time.

4.8.6 FEDERALISM

Although Strom, Budge and Laver do not mention macro-political structures as possible constraints on coalition bargaining, the importance of the federal structure of the Indian polity must be recognized in this regard. In particular, the impact of federalism has
been important because it has forced parties to form alliances and coalitions in two different party systems, the national and the subnational.

Just as disproportional electoral formulae may move coalition bargaining to the pre-election period, so the non-concurrence of national and subnational electoral cycles may move the national coalition bargaining process to a different, subnational, level of inter-party competition. In other words, inter-party relations in the coalition bargaining process at the national level are significantly influenced by the inter-party relations at the subnational level. Often, parties would test their cooperation at the subnational level before they would commit to cooperating in the national parliament. If such cooperation does produce the intended results either in the sense of good electoral performance or good governance or both then parties will have an incentive to work together at the national level as well. Conversely, however, parties that are fierce opponents in the subnational party system will find it costly to cooperate with one another in the national party system.

4.9 GOVERNMENT FORMATION IN INDIA

This section will analyze the formation of national governments in India by positing the above outlined constraints as the central variables affecting the calculation of political actors involved in the process.

4.9.1 SINGLE PARTY MAJORITY GOVERNMENTS, 1952-67

The formation of single majority governments in the first four Lok Sabhas as well as in the fifth (1971-1977), seventh (1980-84) and eighth (1984-89) hardly needs much elaboration. According to the rules of the government formation process, the President of the Republic invited the leader of the largest party, which invariably was the Congress in this time period, to form a government. Although the Congress formed local electoral alliances with minor parties, it was not necessary to reward these parties with cabinet
portfolios because the Congress itself had a safe majority in the Lok Sabha on its own. As long as the party remained united in the legislature and the government’s majority remained secure, the government formation process was a one-shot game in the respective legislatures. However, in 1969 the governing Congress Party split, reducing the government’s margin to a minority.

4.9.2 THE CONGRESS (RULING) GOVERNMENT, 1969

Following the split in the Congress Parliamentary Party, the governing faction, the Congress (Ruling) still remained the largest party in the Lok Sabha, however, its size was reduced to 46 seats short of a majority. For the opposition to form a majority coalition against the Congress (Ruling) it would have had to include every single party, not counting the Independents, but one of the tiny parties with just one representative in the Lok Sabha. However, no such majority coalition was possible to form because the Congress (Ruling) found sufficient support among the left parties.

As discussed, the parties of the ideological right showed far more unity in their attitude towards the new Congress (Ruling) government than the parties of the left did. While the right openly suggested the idea of replacing the standing government with a new coalition, there were no such suggestions coming forth from the ranks of the left. In addition, while each of the three main right parties, the BJS, the Swatantra and the Congress (O) agreed in their opposition to the Congress (Ruling), there was more division within the left caused by the ambivalent position taken by the Samyukta Socialist Party. Nevertheless, since the other three left parties, namely the two Communist Parties and the Praja Socialist Party, with a combined total of 55 seats, expressed their support of the government, the Congress (Ruling) had sufficient support to continue in office.

The support that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) extended to the Congress (Ruling) government was somewhat surprising given the fact that the Congress,
under Indira Gandhi’s leadership, had supported the CPI against the CPI(M) after the two parties had split in 1964. Most notably, Congressmen loyal to Indira Gandhi assisted the CPI in replacing the CPI(M)-led coalition government in the state of Kerala in November 1969. While this move bought the CPI’s support for the Congress (Ruling) in national politics, it also made the CPI(M)’s support less reliable no matter how ideologically supportive the CPI(M) might otherwise have been of the Congress (Ruling) government.

In spite of the less reliable support of the CPI(M), the Congress (Ruling) had a further reason to expect that it could remain in office as a minority government. Specifically, it expected that eventually it would be able to win over the support of the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, a regional ally of the Swatantra Party, that formed the state government of Tamil Nadu at the time. This expectation, which had been realized by the second no confidence vote that the government faced in July 1970, was based on the fact that following the Congress split it was the Organization Congress that came to prevail in the party’s Tamil Nadu unit. Thus, it made sense for the DMK to form an alliance with the Congress (Ruling) at the national level so as to play the two Congresses against one another thereby weakening the one that was stronger at the subnational level, namely the Congress (O). Since the DMK had 25 seats in the Lok Sabha, it provided the Congress (Ruling) with a reliable pool of support to draw on in case of the CPI(M)’s desertion, which had taken place by the second no confidence motion.

In sum, the constraints that ideology as well as the logic of the interplay between national and subnational party politics imposed on political parties made the Congress (Ruling) minority government viable after the split in the Congress Party.

4.9.3 THE JANATA PARTY-AKALI DAL COALITION, 1977

The process leading to the formation of the Janata-Akali Dal coalition started with the official formation of the Janata Party itself on the eve of the 1977 election. As described, the four opposition parties that had been contemplating the merger failed to
reach an agreement until the new elections were called for 1977. With new elections in sight, it was no longer a mere dialogue with the governing Congress Party that motivated the efforts of the opposition parties to forge a united alternative. The announcement of the elections opened up the avenue to power for the opposition parties. Should they be successful at the polls and win government office they could recalibrate much of the pre-Emergency legal framework on their own without having to negotiate with the Congress Party. To this end, their electoral cooperation had to be such that it would maximize the likelihood of entering office.

The key to such cooperation was to ensure that the anti-Congress vote was not going to be split among multiple non-Congress candidates in the electoral districts. Because India employed the single-member simple plurality electoral formula, the office-seeking non-Congress parties had an incentive to concentrate their votes into one candidate in each district. Past elections had seen the Congress Party win only manufactured majorities, so fielding united candidates against the Congress Party in a majority of the districts increased the likelihood of defeating the Congress.

However, electoral coordination among the opposition parties was not sufficient in itself to enhance the likelihood of the formation of a non-Congress government after the election. According to parliamentary convention, the President of the Republic has to invite first the leader of the largest single party in the lower house of parliament to form a government. Thus, if the opposition parties wanted to ensure that they would be the one first invited by the President to form a government, they had to compete as one party.

Even if it had won a majority in the lower house the opposition would still have had to negotiate with the Congress Party regarding the reamendment of the Constitution that had been amended during the Emergency because of the latter’s overwhelming majority in the upper house at the time. The two houses of the Indian Parliament have equal powers when voting on a constitutional amendment bill. Whereas a veto of an ordinary piece of legislation by the upper house may be overridden by a simple majority in a joint session of both houses, changing the constitution requires a majority of the total membership and two-thirds of those present in both houses separately.
Had the five parties merely formed an electoral alliance while retaining their separate identities the likelihood of their being in a position to be the first invitee would have been small. Past electoral trends had suggested that the Congress Party would be able to win more seats than any other opposition party alone. While an effective electoral coordination against the Congress would have deprived that party of its majority it would probably not have deprived it of a plurality. Again, if the Congress emerged as the plurality party it would still be given the first chance to form a government.

The opposition parties wanted to avoid that scenario because they knew that if forming a minority government the Congress would be able to trigger an exodus of opposition legislators to cross the floor. The Congress For Democracy as well as the dissident Congressmen who joined the Janata Party were particularly vulnerable to this since they were ideologically connected with the Congress. Since there was no penalty for changing party affiliation in the legislature, office-seeking opposition legislators in parties that were ideologically connected with the governing one had an incentive to cross the floor to join the minority governing party. By so doing such legislators can extract benefits in reciprocation of their support. At the same time, since the party they exit from is connected with the party they enter such legislators would face low costs in terms of changing policy preferences.

However, this incentive for merger which the call for new elections provided was quickly countered by the disincentive provided by the ruling of the Election Commission which turned down the parties' application for a common party symbol. In the light of this ruling, the merger would have been irrational. Without recognition, the party's winning candidates would have been classified as Independents. As such, even if the merged party won a majority, its legislative status would be no more than that of a collection of Independent candidates. In that case, again, the single largest recognized party would be the Congress and as such would be given the first chance by the President to form a government.
Therefore, in order to maximize the likelihood of having the first attempt at forming a government, the four parties had to field their jointly sponsored candidates on a single electoral symbol. It was important that the parties receive a new symbol from the Electoral Commission in order to reduce the confusion in their voter’s minds. Since the three older parties, the Congress (Organization), the BJS, and the Socialists had contested elections before and had run candidates against one another, their symbols were well entrenched in their voters’ minds.

The reason why it was the BLD’s as opposed to any of the other three parties’ symbols that was chosen to be the common one had to do with minimizing the audience costs faced by the Congress (Organization), the BJS and the Socialist Party. Since these parties had competed against one another in previous elections it would have been costly for them to tell their voters that this time they should cast their ballot for former opponents. The BLD, however, had never participated in a national election before and its symbol was hitherto unknown to the voter. The cost of instructing their electorates to cast their ballot for a new symbol was lower than instructing them to do so for a symbol designating a previous opponent. In other words, the expected audience cost involved in instructing the electorate to vote for the BLD symbol was no greater than if the parties had won their own distinct symbol from the Commission.

After its formation the CFD arrived at an agreement on electoral coordination with the four-party alliance which allowed it to run its candidates under the BLD symbol. However, the CFD remained non-committal regarding the merger after the election. By so doing the CFD sought to carve out a strategic niche for itself in the post-election

326 Although the parties had formed a Grand Alliance in the 1971 election, they did so by reducing the number of districts in which their candidates would be competing against one another. While doing so, however, the three parties retained their own symbols. The voter did not have to be asked to vote for a former opponent. However, in 1977, for the mentioned reasons, this strategy could not work as the candidates had to run on a common symbol. This potentially increased the audience costs faced by the parties vis-à-vis their voters.
legislature. By deserting the Congress Party and coordinating its candidate nomination with the four-party Janata alliance the CFD sought to contribute to the defeat or at least the electoral weakening of the Congress Party. The CFD calculated that if the election resulted in a close tie-up between the Congress and the Janata alliance it could end up being the kingmaker. Since it would not be bound by an electoral commitment to merging with the parties of the Janata alliance it would retain a degree of flexibility in bargaining for benefits with both sides.

An interesting puzzle is provided by the eventual decision of the CFD to overcome its initial reservations and merge with the Janata Party. In the immediate aftermath of the election, the CFD leadership calculated that instead of committing itself to merging with the Janata Party right after the election it should wait and negotiate for more favorable terms later. The CFD expected to increase its bargaining leverage vis-à-vis the Janata by increasing its numerical strength in the legislature. This the CFD expected to do by appealing to Congress legislators to cross the floor. For Congress legislators, crossing over to the CFD was an excellent trade-off. In terms of spatial location, the CFD was connected with the Congress, after all it had recently seceded from that party. Thus, legislators changing their affiliations would not have to subscribe to radically different policy preferences. Moreover, while belonging to the Congress would only have provided Congress legislators with seats on the opposition benches, belonging to the CFD would bring them within the orbit of government office.

The CFD’s strategy was further aided by the Janata’s lack of a sufficient number of seats in both houses of parliament to secure a safe passage of the constitutional amendments it had fought the elections on. Since the Congress Party had an overwhelming majority in the upper house it could obstruct any constitutional amendment the Janata would try to push through. If successful in attracting a sufficient

327 According to the Indian constitution, the veto by the upper house of an ordinary piece of legislation can be overridden by a majority of a joint sitting of both houses. However,
number of Congressmen, the CFD could have delivered the numbers the Janata needed for safe passage of its constitutional amendment bills in the upper house as well and by so doing it could have improved its bargaining position vis-à-vis the rest of the Janata.

However, the CFD’s strategy was countered by the adamant refusal of the four-party alliance to admit Congressmen who had not joined the alliance before the election. By so doing the Janata partners managed to contain the growth of the CFD that could no longer project itself as the bridge to power for office-seeking Congress legislators. Unable to improve its bargaining position the CFD, itself a group of office-seeking politicians, had to accept whatever terms it could get from the Janata. This is why ultimately the CFD had to content itself with losing the Prime Ministerial berth to the Congress (Organization) and resolved to merge with the rest of the Janata Party at the founding convention on May 1, 1977.

The inclusion of the tiny Akali Dal in the coalition made perfect sense in the light of the recalcitrant attitude of the Congress for Democracy. Since the commitment of the latter to the coalition was not firm by any means, the original four partners needed an additional partner on whose support they could rely in order to counterbalance the blackmail potential of the Congress For Democracy as well as the 6 dissident Congressmen that also belonged to the Janata. The total number of seats that the Congress For Democracy and the dissident Congressmen held was 34, enough to deprive the Janata of its majority should they decide to exit and re-establish their relationship with the Congress. However, by including the 9-member Akali Dal, the Janata was no longer blackmailable by these forces since even if they departed the coalition would have a majority of the seats in the Lok Sabha.

The reason why it was the Akali Dal that was included in the coalition as opposed to some other minor party is perfectly in line with the rationality of office-seeking. After for constitutional amendment bills the support of a majority of the membership and two-thirds of those present is necessary in both houses separately.
the election there were only two parties in the Lok Sabha large enough to provide the
original four Janata constituents with a majority even without the Congress for
Democracy and the dissident Congressmen: these were the Anna Dravida Munnetra
Kazagham with 18 seats and the Akali Dal with 9. The Janata would have fallen below
majority by 7 seats in case the ex-Congressites left it. Thus, the Akali Dal's support was
sufficient to provide the necessary counterbalance whereas the Anna Dravida Munnetra
Kazagham would have been unnecessarily large. Also, although the Janata could have
invited a set of one or two-member parties to join the coalition instead of the Akali Dal, it
would have been more difficult and costlier to coordinate among the wishes of a larger
number of parties. Since the Akali Dal was just the right size it made perfect sense to
invite this party. The fact that the Akali Dal contested the parliamentary election in
alliance with the Janata in Punjab also favored their continued partnership in the
legislature should the need arise.

In summary, this analysis has shown that both the merger of the five parties as
well as the formation of an oversized coalition government were the outcome of a series
of rational decisions and choices made by individual political actors operating under
various constraints. In particular, it is worth reiterating that had the conventional
procedure of government formation not been biased in favor of the numerically largest
party the five parties would probably not have merged before the election.

4.9.4 THE JANATA PARTY (SECULAR)-CONGRESS GOVERNMENT, 1979

The Janata Party could have formed a winning coalition with any of the main
parties in the Sixth Lok Sabha following the resignation of its cabinet. The theoretically
possible combinations of Janata and Janata Party (Secular), Janata and Congress, and
Janata and Congress(I) would all have provided the Janata Party with positive power
excess and would have made the coalitions winning as well. Of course, the Janata Party
could have formed a winning coalition with a host of small parties as well, so long as
their total number would add up to 64 which is how many seats the Janata needed to have a majority. However, the fewer parties there are in a coalition the smaller the transaction and bargaining costs will be to maintain the coalition.

In any event, the Janata Party was unable to proceed with exploring the possibility of forming any of these coalitions because President Reddy invited Y. B. Chavan, Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, as the official Leader of the Opposition to do so according to the conventional norms of parliamentary procedure. The importance of this recognition rule is also highlighted by the Janata Party’s contesting it. As mentioned, Morarji Desai argued to Reddy that his party was not the same as the Janata that had formed the cabinet after the election because that had included legislators who now belonged to the Janata Party (Secular). The President was not convinced by this argument and stuck by convention in inviting the Opposition Leader to form the government. However, after Chavan had informed him that his party would be able to form a coalition government with the Janata Party (Secular) under Charan Singh’s leadership, Reddy did instruct both Singh and Desai to show how many supporters they had in the house.

The requirement that the President imposed on both party leaders to submit to him a list of supporters created an enhanced incentive for them to work towards the formation of majority coalitions. Since neither side wanted to be outdone by the other, each had to go to any extent to get as many names on their lists as possible. This, of course, gave great leverage to those parties for whose support the contest between the Janata and the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress combine was fought since they could demand portfolios and policies in exchange for lending their support to either side. This explains why the eventual coalition that was formed by the Janata Party (Secular) and the Congress included the tiny Congress For Democracy-S and the Socialists although their contribution to the coalition’s total weight was negligible.

The cooperation between the Janata Party (Secular) and the Congress was the result of the choices that the respective party leaders had to make under the constraint of
two self-imposed party rules: neither party wanted to share power either with the Janata or with the Congress(I). The Janata Party (Secular) had recently deserted the Janata Party and government and therefore no reunion between the two was possible in the fresh aftermath of the conflict. The Congress could also ill afford to share power with the Janata given that the two were running very specific election campaigns against one another. It was the audience cost of the two parties vis-à-vis their voters that kept the Congress and the Janata apart from one another. As for the Congress(I), the exact reverse was the case. It was the Congress that had recently broken ranks with the Congress(I) and as such no reunion between the two was feasible. The Janata Party (Secular) could not afford sharing office with the Congress(I) because of the audience costs that it had incurred in the election in which, as part of the Janata Party, it had pledged to the voters that it would work towards removing the Indira-led Congress from office. Since both the Janata Party (Secular) and the Congress were new formations, they could both claim that they did not fight each other in the last election. That they were both born out of a split made it convenient for both of them to reorient their respective electoral pledges against the other faction of their erstwhile united parties.

That at the end of it all it was the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition forming the government, with its smaller partners, as opposed to the Janata Party shows the important role that the otherwise ceremonial head of state can play in the cabinet formation game. As mentioned, both lists submitted to the President contained the same number of names, many of them showing up on both. That after “closer inspection” the President extended the invitation to Charan Singh, although neither his nor Desai’s roster had a majority after the examination, was entirely his personal decision. He argued that he had done so because Singh’s list included more names than Desai’s and therefore should be given priority.

However, since both lists were obviously fraudulent he could have chosen to require the compilation of another list or make the appointment of the new Prime
Minister contingent on a vote of confidence. In the meanwhile, Desai’s Janata government could have continued as a caretaker cabinet. Although President Reddy did require that the new cabinet pass a vote of confidence it did not need to take place until after the cabinet had been sworn in. The reason why Reddy decided against allowing the Janata Party to remain in office for even a day longer than absolutely necessary lay in his hostility against Jagjivan Ram, a contender for the Janata Party’s leadership. As mentioned, there was considerable pressure building up within the Janata to replace Desai with Ram who would have been able to attract more support from other parties and give the Janata a new majority. Since it was likely that sooner or later Ram would take over the leadership of the party, Reddy was set to give whatever privilege he could to the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress combine. In sum, because the President can play an active role in the government formation process, the party or coalition of parties that he prefers may be at an advantage in the game.

4.9.5 THE NATIONAL FRONT GOVERNMENT

There were three mathematically possible minimum winning coalitions in the post-election Lok Sabha in 1989: the Congress(I) could form an minimum winning coalition with either the National Front or the BJP, while the latter two blocs of parties could form a minimum winning coalition together with the Left Front. However, under the constraints that structured the coalition bargaining process none of these possible minimum winning coalitions was politically feasible.

First, because of their historical antagonism against it, neither the BJP nor the members of the National Front could conceivably afford to form either an executive or a legislative coalition with the Congress(I). The same constraint of historical hostility also prevented the BJP and the Left from coming together in an executive coalition, however both sets of parties were open to the idea of supporting a non-Congress(I) government in office, provided of course that this government did not include either of them.
Furthermore, since the National Front did have an electoral alliance with both the BJP and the Left Front respectively, the formation of a coalition that included either of these two pairs of blocs, i.e. the National Front and the BJP on the one hand and the National Front and the Left Front on the other, was both feasible and credible. However, as mentioned before, due to the constraint that the hostility between the Left and the BJP imposed on the bargaining process these two pairs of party-blocs could not form a coalition together.

The first impact of these constraints was the effective elimination of the Congress(I) from the government formation process. Although the Congress(I) was the largest party in the Lok Sabha following the election, it did have to turn down the President’s invitation to form a government because neither of the non-Congress(I) parties or blocs that the Congress(I) could theoretically have formed a minimum winning coalition with, namely the BJP and the National Front, would enter into such a coalition while there was a credible alternative coalition proposed by the National Front supported by both the BJP and the Left respectively. Again, it was the pre-electoral alliance that the National Front had forged with these other parties that lent credibility to their proposed further cooperation in the legislature. It is important to note that in the absence of such a pre-electoral alliance the proposed cooperation among the three seats of non-Congress(I) parties would hardly have been credible. In that case, the Congress(I) would most likely have proceeded with forming a government on its own hoping to exploit the differences among its opponents.

Following the Congress(I)’s decision not to form a government, V. P. Singh, the leader of the Janata Dal, the second largest party in the Lok Sabha, received the invitation of the President to do so. Although the antagonism between the Left and the BJP imposed a constraint on the National Front preventing it from forming an executive minimum winning coalition with them it did not prevent it from forming a minority government on its own. Since neither the Left nor the BJP would have found it feasible to form a hostile
coalition against the National Front by aligning with the Congress(I), and because both
the Left and the BJP had already had a pre-electoral alliance with the National Front, the
Janata Dal was in a very strong position to form a government on its own which it
ultimately did.

Since the Janata Dal had contested the election on a common manifesto with its
tiny allies in the National Front it had an a priori commitment to bringing them into the
coalition regardless of their size. More importantly, the Dal was interested in retaining
the support of these parties in future electoral alliances because they did have strong
territorially concentrated electoral bases in their respective regions of influence. In
particular, the TDP commanded strong electoral following in the state of Andhra Pradesh,
the DMK in the state of Tamil Nadu, and the AGP in the state of Assam.

In sum, the formation of a minority government by the National Front supported
from the outside by the BJP and the Left respectively was the outcome of rational choices
and decisions made by the individual actors under the constraints that influenced the
coalition bargaining process in the Ninth Lok Sabha. To illustrate the viability of the
National Front minority government it is worth summarizing the preference relations of
the respective alliance in the light of their electoral commitments and ideological
predisposition.

NF: NF>LF>BJP>INC
LF: LF>NF>BJP=INC
INC: INC>NF=BJP=LF
BJP: BJP>NF>LF=INC

Clearly, the National Front was the only viable option under the constraints of these
preferences. Whereas it was the second choice of both the Left and the BJP, a
combination that provided the National Front with a comfortable legislative majority, the
Congress(I) was the least preferred option by both the Left and the BJP, although the latter two regarded each other as unacceptable governing options just as well. In short, there was no coalition of parties that was preferred to the minority National Front coalition by more legislative votes, therefore, it was a viable choice that the National Front form a minority government.

4.9.6 THE SAMAJWADI JANATA PARTY GOVERNMENT, 1990

The legislative context became slightly more complex after the Janata Dal had split and a new actor, the SJP, appeared on the scene. In particular, the formation of the SJP increased the number of theoretically possible minimum winning coalitions in the legislature to four. Besides the mathematically possible minimum winning coalitions by the Congress(I) and BJP, and the Congress(I) and the National Front, two other combinations emerged as mathematically possible minimum winning coalitions: a coalition of the Congress(I) and the SJP on the one hand, and a coalition of the National Front, the BJP, the Left and the SJP on the other. However, once again, none of these minimum winning coalitions was politically feasible.

First, the minimum winning coalitions by Congress(I)-BJP and by the Congress(I)-National Front respectively were ruled out for reasons of structural animosity mentioned above. The formation of a minimum winning coalition by the Congress(I) and the SJP was also unlikely because the SJP had contested the election as part of the Janata Dal-led National Front, that had run a specific campaign committing the bloc to removing the Congress(I) from office, and as such would have incurred high audience costs by sharing power with the Congress(I). Lastly, in the light of its recent collapse, the reconstitution of a National Front-Left Front-SJP-BJP arrangement was also unlikely.

What decided in favor of the SJP’s forming a minority government was that in contrast to the Congress(I), the National Front, the Left and the BJP all preferred the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the calling of early elections. This placed the SJP in a
strategically strong position because without its consent neither the Congress(I) nor the anti-Congress(I) parties, the National Front, the BJP and the Left could command a majority and thereby to ensure either the continuation of the legislature or the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. The SJP exploited its strategic position and formed a minority government which was the rational thing to do for an office-seeking party.

4.9.7 THE CONGRESS(I) GOVERNMENT, 1991

The formation of the single-party minority government by the Congress(I) Party in 1991 was a straightforward matter. Being the largest party in the legislature the Congress(I) received the first invitation from the President to form a government. The party was now in a much stronger position because it gained significantly compared to the number of seats it had won in the previous election. In addition, unlike in 1989, the National Front, the BJP and the Left were neither strong enough to form a blocking minimum winning coalition to prevent the Congress(I) from entering office in the Tenth Lok Sabha. Finally, it was of particular importance that in the 1991 election only the National and the Left Fronts coordinated their candidate nomination strategies while the BJP did not resume its electoral alliance with the National Front. As Table 3.2 shows this resulted in a drop in the overall degree of electoral coordination against the Congress(I).

In contrast with the previous Lok Sabha, the Congress(I) was now included in each of three possible minimum winning coalitions that could be formed in the legislature. These three mathematically possible minimum winning coalitions were a coalition of the Congress(I) and the BJP, the Congress(I) and the National Front, and the Congress(I) and the Left Front. As core theory would predict it, since the Congress(I) was a member of every possible minimum winning coalition it could proceed to form a government on its own, which is exactly what the Congress(I) did.

It is important to note that although the National Front, the Left Front and the BJP were not numerically large enough to form a possible minimum winning coalition, they
were certainly strong enough to be able to do so if they had succeeded in obtaining the support of Others and Independents. Thus, if these three sets of parties had maintained their cooperation and had continued with the electoral alliance they would probably have been in a stronger position to attract the support of these fringe actors. Even so, however, because of the constraint that the recognition rule imposed on the coalition bargaining process, the Congress(I) would still have been able to make the first attempt at cabinet formation by the virtue of being the single largest party in the new Lok Sabha. As such the Congress(I) would have had, and in fact did have, an advantage to court these parties' support first and form a government on its own.

In sum, the constraints exerted by electoral alliances, or rather the suspension thereof, and the recognition rule certainly played an important role in structuring the process of cabinet formation in the Tenth Lok Sabha. Since the non-Congress(I) parties no longer shared a commitment to removing the Congress(I) from office, as they had in the 1989 election, their ideological and policy differences came to structure their relationship. As such, the National and Left Fronts clearly preferred the Congress(I) to the BJP while the BJP clearly preferred the Congress(I) to the other two as the respective parties' ideological location suggests. These preference relations can be summarized as below:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NF/LF:} & \quad \text{NF/LF} > \text{INC} > \text{BJP} \\
\text{INC:} & \quad \text{INC} > \text{NF/LF} = \text{BJP} \\
\text{BJP:} & \quad \text{BJP} > \text{INC} > \text{NF/LF}
\end{align*}
\]

Since the Congress(I) was its own first preference and was also the second preference of the other two major formations, and because it was also the largest party and as such was in a position to lead the government formation process, it could form a viable minority government.
4.9.8 THE BJP-SHIV SENA, AND THE TWO UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENTS, 1996

After the 1996 election there were three theoretically possible minimum winning coalitions in the Lok Sabha. These were the coalitions to be formed by the Congress(I) and the BJP, the Congress(I) and the UF, and the BJP and the UF respectively. However, due to the constraint of anti-Congressism, meaning the major non-Congress(I) parties’ commitment to not sharing power with the former dominant party, the formation of both the Congress(I)-BJP and the Congress(I)-UF minimum winning coalitions were ruled out. At the same time, since the Left formally joined the United Front and it had also formed a pre-electoral alliance with the National Front, the formation of a UF-BJP coalition was also impossible. Once again, this was so because the Left and the BJP would under no circumstances share power or assist one another in office.

Honoring parliamentary convention the President invited Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the leader of the largest party in the house, the BJP, to make an attempt at government formation. Although it was clear from the above mentioned constraints that the BJP would be unable to obtain the support of either the Congress(I) or the United Front en bloc, and as such would not be able to prove its majority on the floor of the house, the BJP did accept the President’s invitation.

The reason for the BJP’s trying to form a government against all apparent odds of succeeding lay in a shrewd calculation to break up the UF. First of all, if the BJP’s attempt would fail the next party in line that the President would have to invite to form a government would be the Congress(I). For the Congress(I) to form a government, however, was impossible. Apart from the BJP, the only other combination of parties that could have given the Congress(I) a majority was the UF. However, as mentioned earlier, such an arrangement would have been very costly for both sides because of the antagonism between the Congress(I) and the senior members of the UF, namely the Janata Dal and the Left parties. In addition, the significant presence of regional parties
further strengthened the anti-Congress(I) character of the UF. Unlike in the 1989 and 1991 elections, regional parties that belonged to the UF, or the National Front beforehand, had acquired a sizable presence in the Lok Sabha as a result of the 1996 elections. These parties, particularly the TDP, the DMK, the AGP, and the National Conference all competed against the Congress(I) in the subnational party systems of their respective home states. If the leadership of these parties decided to lend support to the Congress(I), the very party they had been fighting at the subnational level, they would risk losing their credibility in the eyes of their voters. Moreover, supporting the Congress(I) might well trigger intra-party rifts because of the difficulties involved in reconciling conflicting strategies vis-à-vis the Congress(I) at the two levels.

Thus, the BJP could reasonably calculate that the Congress(I) did not have a chance to form a government. If indeed, the Congress(I) refrained from doing so, the next party in line to make an attempt would be the Janata Dal. Although the Janata Dal would be able to count on the support of its partners in the United Front, for the same reasons outlined above it would find it costly to win the support of the Congress(I). In sum, the BJP sought to exploit the high costs of cooperation between the Congress(I) and the United Front that were imposed by the constraints of historical anti-Congressism on the one hand, and asymmetrical inter-party relations across the national and the subnational levels of party competition on the other.

The BJP’s hope of forming a government rested on its expectation that it could sway the support of the regional UF parties over to its side. Besides the aforementioned constraints, the fact that the BJP did not compete with any of these parties in their subnational party systems provided an added incentive and credibility to this strategy. At the subnational level the BJP was in competition only with the Congress(I) and the Janata Dal in some states but nowhere did it constitute a competitive pole against a regional party. Thus, the BJP’s proposal to the regional parties to help it form a government did not seem to carry the same high costs as a cooperation between the UF and the
Nevertheless, there was one very strong reason why the regional parties would want to, and why they eventually did, stay with the Janata Dal and the UF. This reason was that the regional parties could carry a lot greater weight in a UF government than as members of a BJP-led coalition. Since the Janata Dal, the largest party in the UF, was not nearly as strong as the BJP, the regional parties could exert a significantly greater degree of control over the decision making process of a cabinet led by the Janata Dal than a cabinet led by the BJP. In addition, by staying together the members of the UF could expect to form a viable government by playing the Congress(I) and the BJP against each other from issue to issue.

Indeed, the UF did withstand the pressure of the BJP and stayed together thereby sealing the fate of the attempted BJP cabinet. Following Vajpayee’s resignation the President invited the Congress(I) to form a government. However, as expected according to the constraints discussed above, the party declined the invitation. The next party in line to be invited was the Janata Dal which did accept the invitation and in cooperation with its electoral allies and those that joined it in the UF formed a minority coalition government after it had secured the initial support of the Congress(I).

The Congress(I)’s decision to support the United Front government was by no means a smooth affair. Just as constituents of the United Front would have found it costly to support their subnational opponent, the Congress(I), in office at the national level, similarly, the subnational units of the Congress(I) also opposed extending support to these regional parties which they had been competing against in the respective state party systems. In other words, extending support to the United Front government did impose significant costs on the Congress(I) in terms of intra-party unity.

However, the Congress(I) being a centralized nation-wide party could better afford incurring such costs than the regional parties confined to pockets of influence within single states. For the regional parties, party politics in the national parliament is an
extension of party politics at the subnational level. Because it is in the latter that these
parties have been more influential and powerful historically, it is understandable that
their subnational interests enjoy priority and indeed motivate the kinds of alliances and
strategies they pursue at the national level. In contrast, for the Congress(I) subnational
politics has more often served the interest of the party leadership at the national level.
Making opportunistic alliances at the subnational level have paid off in the past for the
Congress in terms of securing the support of particular regional parties, for example the
DMK after the Congress split in 1969. Thus, after the 1996 election, because it served the
Congress(I)’s national interests to support the United Front against the BJP, it proceeded
to do so. In contrast, the United Front would not have supported the Congress(I) in office
at the national level because it would have compromised the subnational interests of its
constituents.

In sum, the formation of the United Front government in the Eleventh Lok Sabha
was possible because under the prevailing constraints of inter-party preference relations
this was the only viable coalition that could be formed. To summarize the foregoing
paragraphs, the preference relations of the three blocs of parties were the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{INC: } & \text{INC>UF>BJP} \\
\text{UF: } & \text{UF>BJP>INC} \\
\text{BJP: } & \text{BJP>UF>INC}
\end{align*}
\]

Clearly, the Congress(I)-led bloc was the least viable option as both the United Front and
the BJP wanted to see this government in office the least. The United Front, however,
while obviously its own first choice, was more preferred by both the Congress(I) and the
BJP than either of the two by both these parties. These relations also suggest that the BJP
government could only have been a viable option if the Congress(I) had preferred it to the
United Front. However, because the Janata Dal, the leading party of the Front, was
ideologically closer to the Congress(I), because the BJP was the single most significant
rival of the Congress(I) in the national party system, and because the Front was a more fragmented and less cohesive entity than the BJP allowing the Congress(I) to exert greater influence on its policies and decision-making, the Congress(I) preferred the Front to the BJP. These relationships also explain why the United Front re-formed a minority government with the support of the Congress(I) after the fall of the Gowda ministry.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that although mainstream comparative theories fail to provide a consistent explanation for government formation in India, a microanalytical account emphasizing the rational calculations made by individual political actors under both exogenously and endogenously imposed constraints can yield such an account. What makes this explanation theoretically coherent is the consistent retention of the assumption that political actors are rational agents seeking to maximize their utilities. Furthermore, the chapter has also shown that the neo-institutionalist critique of coalition theories is very useful in accounting for discrepancies between theoretical predictions and the actual empirical outcomes. Once constraints have been incorporated in the analysis, as neo-institutionalist critics would have it, none of the governments formed in India appear to be an anomaly. This analysis suggests that further research is needed to establish models of government formation that explicitly incorporate constraints, and their various combinations, in the predictive framework.
CHAPTER FIVE: GOVERNMENT STABILITY

This chapter will seek to provide a consistent explanation for the differential durability of the various Indian coalition governments. It will argue that of the existing comparative theories of government stability the one developed by Van Roozendaal provides a consistent account for the Indian cases. According to his theory, the durability of a cabinet depends on whether the central party, as per Van Roozendaal’s terminology, is included in the cabinet or not. If it is, then the cabinet will be durable. However, if such a party exists but it is not included in the governing coalition then it will have the incentive and the capability to de-stabilize the standing government. Furthermore, it will also be shown that if the central party is not included in the cabinet but supports it from the outside then the cabinet will last longer than if the central party did not support it at all.

The explanations that the comparative literature has offered to account for government stability can be divided into two major families depending on the type of the independent variable that they posit. The first family has offered time-dependent and the other has put forth time-independent variables to explain cabinet durability. The following overview will assess the applicability of the various explanations offered by each family.\textsuperscript{328}

5.1 TIME-DEPENDENT EXPLANATIONS

Time-dependent explanations of cabinet stability have been of two kinds. The first has related cabinet termination to critical events taking place outside the legislature that may trigger a cabinet crisis by changing the preferences that actors have and the incentives that they face. Such events can be both political or economic, such as riots, rising levels of inflation, unemployment etc. The problem with this kind of explanation is that it cannot predict in advance what particular kind of event would prove to be eventually de-stabilizing and therefore it cannot predict whether a particular government would be potentially more or less unstable. As such this explanation can only provide a post-hoc account for the dependent variable.

Another problem with this explanation is that the same type of event may de-stabilize one government but not another. Laver and Schofield have noted that although events are important in affecting the durability of cabinets their effect is mediated through structures which make a particular cabinet potentially more or less resistant to a shock or crisis.

A more recent stream of literature explaining cabinet durability in terms of time-dependent variables has emphasized "the centrality of the calculations made by rational actors in considering what the alternatives are to the continuation of the status quo and

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who has an incentive to prefer which of those alternatives.” Much of this literature is empirical and as yet it has not offered readily testable propositions linking such calculations with cabinet durability. The only exception to this is the model proposed by Lupia and Strom. This model is built on three assumptions and three conditions. The assumptions are that parties care about controlling seats in the legislature; that parties value power within the governing coalition; and that parties can value some coalition partners more than others. The three conditions they identify are:

A: There is a majority that prefers an election to leaving the governing coalition exactly as it was.
B: All offering parties prefer an election to the best acceptable offer they make.
C: No offering party prefers the best acceptable offer it can make to leaving the governing coalition exactly as it was.

From these assumptions and conditions, Lupia and Strom construct the following predictions each presented as a theorem.

THEOREM 1: “A critical event will lead to dissolution if and only if A and B are true.”

COROLLARY: “When it affects whether or not dissolution occurs, an increase in any party’s expected postelection utility... or negotiation costs... OR a decrease in any party’s election costs..., subjective value of seat control..., or subjective value of coalition membership... leads to dissolution. In addition, such changes never prevent dissolution.

332Lupia and Strom, “Coalition Termination...”, pp. 652.
333Ibid., pp. 655.
334Ibid., p. 655.
where it otherwise would have occurred.”

THEOREM 2: “The status quo is maintained if and only if A is false and C is true.”

THEOREM 3: “The event leads to a nonelectoral redistribution of power if and only if either (1) A is true and B is false or (2) A and C are false.”

Although this model constitutes a milestone in the evolution of microanalytical models of cabinet stability, there are two factors that prevent its from being directly applicable to the Indian context. First, the model is explicitly developed in a 3-party as opposed to an n-party context. Although the 3-party context “provides the simplest formal framework for examining the bargaining dynamics of coalition government” it also remains extremely detached from reality especially in a context like the various Lok Sabhas considered where the number of parties far exceeded 3. Second, the costs and utilities, mentioned in the COROLLARY remain unspecified, with the result that the model remains vague in its present form. Although theoretically sophisticated, the model does not allow itself to be readily applied to empirical verification and testing.

5.2 TIME-INDEPENDENT EXPLANATIONS

5.2.1 THE BALANCE AMONG PARTIES IN THE LEGISLATURE

The first category among time-independent explanations links government stability to various characteristics of party strength in the legislature and attributes of the cabinet that are related to party balance in the legislature.

5.2.1.1 THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE LEGISLATURE

The first such explanation has posited the fragmentation of the legislature as the independent variable, measured either by the Rae index of fractionalization or the

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336 Ibid., p. 656.
337 Ibid., p. 656.
338 Ibid.
339 See Douglas Rae, The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws (New haven: Yale University Press, 1971). The index calculates fragmentation by deducting the sum of each
Effective Number of Parties.\textsuperscript{340} Taylor and Herman find that fragmentation of the legislature is negatively correlated with the durability of cabinets formed therein.\textsuperscript{341} Similarly, King \textit{et al} have argued that the more fragmented the party system in the legislature the higher the number of possible governing coalitions that can feasibly be formed and thus the greater the likelihood that minor changes in the structure of the bargaining environment could result in the collapse of one and the formation of an alternative coalition.\textsuperscript{342}

In contrast, while also claiming that fragmentation is negatively related to cabinet durability, Grofman has argued that the relationship between party system fragmentation and government stability is indirect.\textsuperscript{343} He claims that more fragmented party systems are likely to produce more fragmented cabinets which face greater transaction costs in maintaining the coalitional agreement which will then in turn lead to government instability. In any event, both kinds of arguments agree that a fragmented party system is associated with unstable governments.

This explanation cannot provide a consistent explanation for the differential durability of the various cabinets in India. Although, as Table 5.1 shows, the cabinets that were formed in the most fragmented legislatures turned out to be the least durable overall, there are two outlier cases that this explanation cannot account for.
TABLE 5.1:
PARTY SYSTEM AND CABINET CHARACTERISTICS IN INDIA,
1952-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prime Minister (party)</th>
<th>Cabinet duration (days)</th>
<th>ENPP</th>
<th>Winning status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>J. Nehru (Congress)</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>J. Nehru (Congress)</td>
<td>1707</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>J. Nehru (Congress)</td>
<td>1709</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>I. Gandhi (Congress)</td>
<td>1486</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>I. Gandhi (Congress-R)</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>I. Gandhi (Congress)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>M. Desai (Janata)</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>C. Singh (JP-S)</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.4 MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>I. Gandhi (Congress-I)</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>R. Gandhi (Congress-I)</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>MW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>V.P. Singh (JD)</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.1 MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Shekhar (SJP)</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>N. Rao (Congress-I)</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>A.B. Vajpayee (BJP)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.1 MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.D. Dewe Gowda (JD)</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. K. Gujral (JD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MINORITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, the Congress(I) Party formed a minority government in the tenth Lok Sabha in 1991. On the basis of the earlier patterns, this cabinet should not have lasted for long because the effective number of parties in the Tenth Lok Sabha was exactly twice as high as the average effective number of parties in those preceding legislatures in which the cabinets that had been formed immediately after the election lasted for full terms. These legislatures were the ones elected in 1952, 1957, 1962, 1971, 1980 and 1984. The average fragmentation of these assemblies, measured by the effective number of parties was 1.9 in contrast with the 3.8 in the Tenth Lok Sabha! However, contrary to the expectation that this explanation leads to, the Congress(I) government formed after the 1991 election lasted for a full five year term in office.

The second outlier is the Janata-Akali Dal coalition of 1977. Although the Sixth Lok Sabha in which this government was formed was only slightly more fragmented than
earlier Lok Sabhas in which cabinets lasted for full terms, 2.6 against 1.9, this degree of fragmentation was significantly smaller than that of the Tenth Lok Sabha in which the Congress(I) had managed to form a stable cabinet. Yet, the Janata cabinet was short-lived lasting for just over a year in office. Furthermore, it is also interesting to note that in both the Fifth and the Seventh Lok Sabhas, elected in 1971 and 1980 respectively, the effective numbers of parties were very close to that in the Sixth. However, in both of those legislatures the cabinets that the Congress Party formed were stable, lasting full terms in office.

Having said this, however, Table 5.1 does confirm that at very high degrees of fragmentation in the parliamentary party system very unstable cabinets are formed and that at very low levels of fragmentation cabinets will be very durable. According to the data, in every legislature in which the effective number of parties did not exceed 2 the cabinets that were formed lasted a full term in power. However, in every legislature with an effective number of parties higher than 4, cabinets tended to be invariably unstable each being terminated before their term in office would have expired.

5.2.1.2 CABINET CHARACTERISTICS

The second kind of explanation in the party-balance category has posited characteristics of the actual government formed as independent variables. First, Taylor and Herman, and Sanders and Herman have found that the fragmentation of a cabinet itself is negatively related with cabinet durability. Second, the size and the winning status of a cabinet has also been found to explain cabinet stability. In his classic inductive account of cabinet stability in Europe, Lowell has laid down the foundations of the myth of multi-partism by claiming that only single-party majority governments can remain

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stable while both coalition and minority governments are doomed to instability. This myth rests on the premises that "(1) Governments in multi-party systems must be minority cabinets, coalitions cabinets or both; (2) by their very nature, minority cabinets and coalition cabinets are quite transient; (3) multi-party systems are consequently undesirable since they produce transient governments."

While Lowell has merely stated his claims as axioms supported by evidence from his descriptive accounts of actual cabinets in Continental Europe, Blondel, while agreeing with Lowell's thesis, attempts to offer a more systematic and sophisticated explanation for it. According to him,

Two factors thus appear to contribute to the relative duration of governments in parliamentary systems: the fact that the system is a straight clash between two parties and the fact that one party government prevails. The two factors are quite clearly connected: one-party governments are not possible without at least one large party, except on a temporary basis. But, as we noted, the ideology of one-party government is accepted in some countries, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, while the notion of coalition can prevail even where it is not strictly necessary ... On balance, ... it does seem that one-party government, rather than the two-party system, is a factor contributing most decisively to the stability of government. ...

The duration of governments can therefore be said to be essentially dependent on the presence in power of a "team," and almost certainly, on the presence of a team leader who does not merely arbitrate, or spend much time in arbitrating, divergences between coalition partners. The existence of a two-party system ... does apparently help in that a two-party system increases the probability that the ideology of one-party government will prevail in the political culture. It also constitutes a sufficient though not a necessary condition for the presence of a large party which can take alone -- or at least is in a position to claim that it can take alone -- all the posts in the government. But where (and when) the two-and-a-half-party system, or even the multiparty system with a dominant party, is so configured to allow one party to take power alone at least fairly frequently, governmental stability is -- or may be -- equally

assured. Coalition, whether small or large, appears directly antagonistic to stable government.\textsuperscript{348}

In a similar vein, Dodd distinguishes among three types of cabinets: minimal winning ones, oversized and undersized cabinets.\textsuperscript{349} Minimal winning cabinets contain only as many parties as necessary in order to ensure the government a parliamentary majority, whereas oversized cabinets are larger and undersized cabinets are smaller than minimum winning ones. Dodd has argued and found evidence from a number of countries that cabinet durability is the function of the cabinets' deviation from minimal winning status. Thus, minimal winning cabinets are argued to be more stable than either over- or under-sized ones.

Dodd's thesis on cabinet durability is an integral part of his theory of cabinet formation. As discussed in Chapter 3, Dodd has sought to explain cabinet formation by two variables, political parties' willingness to bargain with one another and the degree of information certainty they face, both of which are determined by the characteristics of the party system. It is exactly the same two variables that Dodd argued to determine cabinet stability as well. Thus, according to his theory, minimum winning coalitions are inherently stable because such cabinets are formed under conditions of strong willingness to bargain by political parties and the availability of certain and reliable information about. Similarly, oversized cabinets are unstable because their formation reflects a party system in which parties' willingness to bargain is coupled with low information certainty. Meanwhile, undersized cabinets are unstable because the party system in which they are formed is characterized by low information certainty and low willingness to bargain.

This thesis has been challenged by Grofman, who has argued that within-country effects determine whether minimal winning cabinets will in fact be more or less stable.

than over-or undersized ones. He has claimed that the relationship between minimal winning status and cabinet durability is the "artifact of the high average duration of cabinets in countries where there are only two or three significant political parties (where minimal winning coalitions are the norm) and the low average duration of cabinets in countries with a very large number of parties (where minimal winning coalitions are rare)." Budge and Keman have confirmed Grofman's argument by finding that in some countries minority governments outlive minimal winning cabinets while in other countries oversized coalitions tend to be longer-lived than minimal winning ones.

Furthermore, Grofman has proposed that it is not the type of cabinet that determines cabinet durability but characteristics of the party system, namely, its fragmentation and polarization, that determine both. The causal relationship between cabinet type and cabinet durability, according to Grofman, is at best spurious. The difference between the two approaches is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

**FIGURE 5.1:**
**DODD’S AND GROFMAN’S THEORIES ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CABINET TYPE AND CABINET DURABILITY**

**DODD’S MODEL**

Party system type

\[\text{fragmentation, polarization, stability}\]

\[\text{Cabinet type} \rightarrow \text{Cabinet durability}\]

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350 Grofman, ‘The Comparative Analysis ...’
351 Grofman and Van Roozendaal, ‘Review Article...’, p.431.
GROFMAN'S MODEL:

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Party system type

Cabinet type  Cabinet durability
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The data in Table 5.1 do not confirm the predictions that these theories offer. As for cabinet fragmentation, per Taylor and Herman and Sanders and Herman, the prematurely terminated Congress (Ruling) government of 1969, the Janata Party government of 1977, the National Front government of 1989, the Samajwadi Janata Party government of 1990 and the BJP government of 1996 were hardly any more fragmented than cabinets that lasted for full terms. Whereas the Congress (Ruling) and the Samajwadi Janata parties formed single party governments, which made the effective number of parties in these cabinets equal to 1, the Janata, the National Front and the BJP cabinets included one party so overwhelmingly larger than the other member(s) of the coalitions that the effective number of cabinet parties was slightly greater than 1. However, none of these four cabinets proved to be durable.

The data in Table 5.1 also suggest no clear relationship between the size and durability of Indian cabinets. Although the minority governments formed by the Congress (Ruling) in 1969, the National Front in 1989, the Samajwadi Janata Party in 1990, the BJP in 1996 and the United Front in 1996 were shorter lived than the winning cabinets formed earlier, the Congress(I) government of 1991 was also an undersized cabinet yet it
served a full term in office. Furthermore, although the cabinet formed by the Janata Party and the Akali Dal was a winning combination, it failed to last.

Blondel’s prediction comes very close to providing a consistent account for the cases. While it is true that none of the coalition cabinets in India was durable, it is not true that all single-party governments have been stable, as illustrated by the premature termination of the single-party governments of the Congress (Ruling) in 1971 and of the Samajwadi Janata Party in 1991. As for coalition cabinets, none of the National Front, BJP-Shiv Sena, and United Front combinations managed to last for long in office.

The thesis offered by Grofman is limited in its applicability to this investigation because it is concerned with comparing the pattern of cabinet stability across countries, as opposed to intertemporal changes in the degree of cabinet stability within a particular country or countries.

5.2.2. INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The second category of time-independent explanations links government stability with “institutional features of the political process.” The kinds of institutional features that have been argued to affect government stability are the discretionary power of the party in power to call an early election; the rules that govern the cabinet formation process; and whether the actual cabinet is a post-election or a second or later (or caretaker) cabinet.

Institutional explanations have limited utility in explaining intertemporal changes in the longevity of Indian cabinets because the institutions of the political process, particularly the ones pertaining to cabinets, their formation and dissolution, have not

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changed in the time frame examined. First, with regard to the discretionary power of the party in government, since every head of government in India has had this power an explanation based on this institutional feature cannot account for the variation in government stability. Second, the rules and conventions of the cabinet formation process have also remained the same throughout the period. Therefore, these rules cannot provide a consistent explanation for changes in the dependent variable. Third, the record of post-election and later cabinets in terms of their durability in India is rather mixed. Although the Congress (Ruling), the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition, the Samajwadi Janata Party, and the United Front all formed non-post-election cabinets, i.e. these cabinets were formed after the collapse of the one that was formed in the immediate aftermath of an election, and indeed they were rather short-lived, so were the National Front, the Janata Party-Akali Dal and the BJP-Shiv Sena coalitions that were formed in the immediate aftermath of the elections, i.e. they were post-election cabinets.

5.2.3. IDEOLOGY

5.2.3.1.IDEOLOGICAL CONNECTEDNESS OF CABINET MEMBERS

The first kind of ideological explanation of cabinet stability argues that ideologically connected winning coalitions would be more durable than cabinets that are ideologically more diverse. If this were true, then all single-party governments, which by definition are the ideologically most connected ones, must last longer than any coalition cabinet. This, however, clearly was not the case as the examples of the premature termination of the Congress (Ruling) and the that of the Samajwadi Janata Party governments showed in 1971 and 1991 respectively. Furthermore, the ideological connectedness explanation cannot explain why the BJP-Shiv Sena government, consisting of the two most prominent right of center parties, or the United Front,

This thesis was first put forth by Axelrod in Robert Axelrod, Conflict of Interest (Chicago: Markham, 1970).
comprising the most prominent left of center parties were as short lived as they were.

5.2.3.2. PARTY SYSTEM POLARIZATION

The second ideological argument, supported by King et al.\textsuperscript{357} and Warwick\textsuperscript{358}, relates the degree of polarization in the parliamentary party system to government stability. They argue that the more polarized the party system the shorter the duration of the cabinet.

While it is true that those cabinets that proved to be short-lived were indeed those that had been formed in the most polarized legislatures\textsuperscript{359} and that none of the durable cabinets were formed in a parliamentary party system with a polarization value higher than the least polarized party system in which a short-lived cabinet was formed, there are some significant inconsistencies in the relationship. For instance, the Samawjadi cabinet should have lasted longer than either of the two United Front coalitions because the former was formed in a less polarized party system than either of the two latter ones. However, this clearly was not the case. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the BJP-Shiv Sena coalition, that was formed in the same parliamentary party system as the two United Front cabinets was indeed shorter in its duration than the Samajwadi Janata government. Similarly, while the Janata Party-Akali Dal coalition was formed in the most polarized of all parliamentary party systems in India, it was far from being the most unstable government.

In sum, the thesis that cabinet longevity is the function of the degree of polarization in the parliamentary party system is only partially confirmed: it is true that highly polarized party systems are associated with unstable cabinets and that de-polarized party systems are associated with stable cabinets. However, as for the actual differential

\textsuperscript{357}King et al., 'A Unified Model...';
\textsuperscript{359}For the polarization measures of the various Lok Sabhas, see Table 3 in Chapter 3.
degrees of stability within the unstable group, variation in the degree of party system polarization has appeared to be a poor predictor.

5.2.4. KEY PLAYERS

Van Roozendaal has proposed a number of hypotheses linking key players, the dominant and the central party, with cabinet stability. (For a detailed discussion of his theory, see chapter 3 and Appendix 2). Specifically, he expects that:

Hypothesis 1: In DCP parliaments, cabinets including the dominant central party will be more durable than cabinets that exclude them.

Hypothesis 2: In DP-CP parliaments, majority cabinets that include central parties, with or without dominant parties, will be more durable than cabinets that exclude central parties.

Hypothesis 3: In DP-CP parliaments, minority cabinets that include dominant parties and exclude central parties will be less durable than minority cabinets that include central parties and exclude dominant parties.

Hypothesis 4: In CP parliaments, cabinets that include central parties will be more durable than cabinets that exclude central parties.

Hypothesis 5: Mean cabinet durability will be the highest in DCP parliaments, lower in CP parliaments, and lowest in DP-CP parliaments.\(^{360}\)

These hypotheses suggest that the central player is a more powerful actor than the dominant player. In each of the three parliamentary types that Van Roozendaal examines only those cabinets will be durable, hypothetically, that include the central party. Of course, in DC Pparliaments the two players are the same and therefore there is no conflict between the two. However, as the hypotheses suggest, when the dominant and central players are not one and the same the central player proves to have a stronger bargaining

\(^{360}\)Van Roozendaal limits himself to offering hypotheses regarding only three of the five possible parliamentary types.
position and will be able to sustain a more stable cabinet than the dominant, or to that
effect any other, party without the participation of the central player. 361

Van Roozendaal’s hypotheses are consistently confirmed by the Indian data.
First, as predicted, in each of the three DCP parliaments, i.e. the Fourth Lok Sabha after
1969, the Ninth and Tenth Lok Sabhas, cabinets that included the dominant central party
were more stable than those that did not. As discussed in the previous chapter, while in
the Fourth Lok Sabha, the Congress (Ruling) was the dominant central party, in the other
two legislatures this role was played by the Congress (I). In 1969 and in 1991 it was these
dominant central parties that formed cabinets as opposed to the other two cases in which
the dominant central party was excluded from the cabinet. Indeed, as Table 5.1 shows,
the two cabinets formed in 1969 and 1991 respectively were longer lasting than either of
the other two. Thus, Van Roozendaal’s hypothesis is confirmed.

The Fourth Lok Sabha started as a parliament in which a single party having a
majority of the seats formed a government, i.e. it was not a multi-party parliament in
which the coalition game would take place. The party forming the government, the
undivided Congress, was a dictator. 362 However, the context of the game changed as a
result of the split in the party. As discussed in Chapter 3, the parliament that this split
resulted in was that of the DCP type in which the Congress (Ruling) was both the
dominant and the central party at the same time. Through its dominance and centrality the
Congress (Ruling) could afford the luxury of not having to rely on the support of a
specific set of parties but could change the composition of its legislative coalition at its
will. The importance of the party’s central status is highlighted by the fact that its

^controversial constitutional amendment bill seeking to de-recognize the princely rulers of

361 As Van Roozendaal himself acknowledges, this theory is closely related to the core-
party theory of cabinet stability proposed by Schofield, Grofman and Feld, see chapter 3.
The essential prediction of core theory for cabinet stability is that a government will be
stable only if it includes a party that is located in the structurally stable core of the voting
game.

362 For the definition of the term, see Appendix 3.
India was supported both by parties to its left and elements of those that were to its right. The case in point is the support that the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham and even some members of the right-wing Swatantra Party provided to the cabinet on that crucial vote.

In the Ninth Lok Sabha, the National Front cabinet excluded the dominant central party, the Congress(I), which predetermined the cabinet's inherent instability. Although the combined support of the BJP and the Left Front was sufficient to maintain the National Front in office, the arrangement could only continue so long as the issues pertaining to the underlying ideological dimension structuring the party system do not become important. The very formation of the National Front cabinet with the support of the BJP and Left Front had nothing to do with ideology: the three sets of parties shared a commitment and an electoral mandate to remove and keep the Congress(I) Party from office. In order to do so they had to cooperate because the distribution of seats in the Lok Sabha did not provide either one of them with a majority on their own.

However, since parties promise policies to their voters they cannot ignore their real positions on the ideological dimension for long. Should a party do so, its voters will be disappointed and new parties may enter the system to compete for the support of these voters. Thus, sooner or later the policy differences among the partners that had supported the National Front in office were bound to come out in the open.

The National Front cabinet fell because of the disagreement between the Janata Dal and the BJP on the temple construction issue which related directly to the parties' ideological position. The BJP was a party of the right advocating, among others, the cause of Hindu nationalism. In contrast, the Janata Dal was a center-left party with a marked secular ideology. Secularism and religious nationalism are inherently irreconcilable because the former tolerates religious pluralism whereas the latter does not. Thus, whereas it was imperative for the BJP that the temple would be constructed at the cost of an already standing mosque, for the Janata Dal this was unacceptable. Although there had been disagreements between the Janata Dal and the BJP before, for example the
BJP did not agree with the way the reservation issue had been handled by Prime Minister V. P. Singh, the temple issue was something that the two sides could not possibly compromise on.

The implementation of the Mandal report inflicted strategic damage on the BJP’s agenda aiming to homogenize Hinduism, however reservation was not an issue about which the parties had substantive disagreement. In principle, the BJP never opposed reservation, nor did any of the major parties. In other words, reservation was not an issue relating to the underlying ideological dimension along which parties were located. In contrast, the issue of the construction of the temple at Ayodhya related to the essence of the kind of political regime the two parties propagated: secular versus religious-national. Since the two parties were not connected on the ideological dimension each had more in common with the central party, the Congress(I), which, curiously, they both had cooperated against recently.

Because the Congress(I) was a dominant central party it had a very strong bargaining position in this legislative context. Following the withdrawal of the BJP’s support from the National Front’s supporting coalition, the Congress(I) could have stepped in and saved the government. After all, the Janata Dal, the Front’s seniormost member, and the Congress(I) did share ideological proximity and affinity with one another. However, for strategic considerations it was in the Congress(I)’s best interest not to do so. By making it clear that it would vote against the government on the confidence motion together with the BJP, the Congress(I) contributed to the split in the Dal resulting in the formation of the Samajwadi Janata Party. As mentioned the Samajwadi was formed by Janata Dal legislators who were interested in accepting the Congress(I)’s assistance in forming a cabinet of their own.

Why was it in the interest of the Congress(I) to let the Janata Dal government fall? The answer has to do with the Congress(I)’s own motivation to enter office at the earliest convenient moment. By indicating that it would vote against the cabinet the
Congress(I) appealed to the power-seeking motivation of some members of the Janata Dal who did not want to fall with the government. By thus encouraging the break-up of the Janata Dal, the Congress(I) was effectively dividing its opponents and paving the way for the formation of a cabinet on its own. With the disintegration of the Janata Dal and the National Front, the chances that the anti-Congress(I) coalition including the BJP could be re-formed were eliminated allowing the Congress(I) to exploit its position as the central party and form a minority government on its own.

In sum, the episode of the National Front cabinet clearly showed both the inherent instability of a cabinet that excluded the central party and the strong bargaining position that such a party may have.

The instability of the Samajwadi Janata Party cabinet also attested to the Congress(I) Party's bargaining strength and its ability to destabilize a cabinet of which it was not a part. From the very moment of the formation of this cabinet it was clear that the Congress(I) intended the Samajwadi Janata Party to implement the policies that it dictated. While initially the governing party had no choice but go along with this arrangement it refused to do so after a while as the benefits that it could derive from being in office declined with every passing day. However, once the Samajwadi Janata Party stopped acting in accordance with the Congress(I)'s dictates the costs of extending external support to the government that the Congress(I) faced started rising. Because the Congress(I) knew that there were no other parties in the legislature that would either have been able, numerically, or willing to support the Samajwadi Janata Party in office it rationally thought that it could afford to suspend its support and force the government back on a course in line with the Congress(I)'s policy perspectives. That Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar decided to dissolve the legislature was an unintended consequence of the Congress(I)'s action. Nevertheless, the point about the inherent instability of the arrangement and the bargaining strength of the dominant central party remains well illustrated by this case.
The arrangement whereby the dominant central party would support another party’s minority cabinet from the outside was unstable because of the conflicting incentives and motivations that the supporter and the supported had. This arrangement increased the costs of remaining in the opposition for the Congress(I) over time while it also reduced the benefits that the Samajwadi Janata Party derived from remaining in office. This conflict culminated in their clash over the surveillance issue which caused the Congress(I) withdrawal of support and the eventual dissolution of the Lok Sabha.

In stark contrast to both cabinets formed in the Ninth Lok Sabha stands the minority government that the Congress(I) Party formed in 1991. As predicted by Hypothesis 1, in a DCP legislature, which is what the Tenth Lok Sabha was, only a cabinet including the dominant central party, in this case the Congress(I) can be a stable one. On issues relating to the ideological dimension, such as the passage of the budget or, as mentioned earlier, questions about secularism and communalism, and generally speaking most issues of governance, the Congress(I) could seek the support of parties located either to its left or to its right or both.

Furthermore, the fact that the Congress(I) survived even the censure motion that both the Left and the Right submitted against it showed that dominance may be just as important in stabilizing a government as centrality. The lining up of both the Left and the Right against the central party on the censure motion indicated that the Congress(I) would be unable to save its government on ideological grounds. However, because of its numerical prowess as a dominant party it was in a position to muster the support of small parties that allowed it to survive the motion.

In sum, the contrast between the relative stability of the Congress (Ruling) and the Congress(I) governments on the one hand, and the instability of the National Front and Samajwadi Janata cabinet on the other justifies Hypothesis 1. Since both the Ninth and the Tenth Lok Sabhas were dominated and centralized parliamentary games with the Congress(I) being the dominant central party in both, only the cabinet that this party
formed remained stable.

According to van Roozendaal's third hypothesis, minority cabinets in DP-CP parliaments will be less stable if they do not include the central party than if they do. The Janata Party-Akali Dal coalition, following the split in the Janata Party, the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition in the Sixth Lok Sabha, the BJP-Shiv Sena and the two United front cabinets in the Eleventh Lok Sabha were all such minority governments in DP-CP legislatures. As implied by the hypothesis, none of these were stable cabinets, however, due to the absence of a minority government that would have included a central party in a DP-CP parliament, the actual comparison suggested by the hypothesis cannot be tested.

Although the central party was not included in any of these cabinets, the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition and the two United Front cabinets were all supported from the outside by the central party, the Congress(I). Perhaps not surprisingly, each of these three cabinets were longer lasting than the Janata-Akali Dal or the BJP-Shiv Sena coalitions, neither of which was supported by the central party at all. Thus, with some modification the hypothesis can be confirmed. The revised hypothesis would predict that “In DP-CP parliaments, minority cabinets that either include central parties or enjoy their negotiated support without formally including them and that exclude dominant parties will be more durable than cabinets that include dominant parties and exclude central parties both from their executive and legislative coalitions.”

Similarly to the Fourth, the Six Lok Sabha also started out as a majority parliament in which the Janata Party was the dictator. However, as a result of the split in the Janata Party the structure of the parliament changed and it became of the DP-CP type with the Congress(I) being the central and the Janata the dominant party. In this new parliament, the incumbent did not last because it neither included nor was it supported by the central party: the Janata Party remained in office after the split and the formation of the Janata Party (Secular) for only 5 days.
Why was it in the interest of the central party, the Congress(I), to support the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition as opposed to the dominant Janata Party? The main reason for this was the Congress(I)'s interest in having the Lok Sabha dissolved and new elections ordered. Since both Janata fragments had campaigned in the previous election on a specific anti-Congress plank, particularly aimed against Indira Gandhi who was the leader of the Congress(I), the electoral commitment that the Janata had made to keeping the Congress away from power as well as remedying the laws that had been installed by the Congress government during the Emergency increased the audience cost of the party vis-à-vis its voters. If either Janata fragment had now turned around and shared power with the Indira Gandhi-led Congress(I) they would risk perilous electoral consequences by losing credibility in the eyes of their voters. Similarly, the Congress that had expelled the Indira faction could not afford to share power with that party albeit for different reasons. Since the Congress and the Congress(I) were one and the same party during the 1977 election there was no audience costs preventing the two from cooperating and forming a coalition in the DP-CP legislature that the Janata split had created. The cost of such renewed cooperation between the two Congresses lay in internal party cohesion. Had the Congress offered to share power with the Congress(I), for every Congress(I) minister included in such a cabinet there would have been one Congress MP feeling disgruntled that his/her loyalty to remain with the anti-Indira group at the time of the split was betrayed. Thus, the benefits that the Congress(I) could derive from the continuation of the Lok Sabha were highly limited.

At the same time, by pursuing a strategy to keep the Janata fragments divided the Congress(I) sought to ensure that in the next election it would no longer face a united opponent in most districts. Indeed, chapter Three showed how well this strategy worked: the candidates of the two Janata fragments took votes from one another in 1980 which allowed the Congress(I) candidates to regain its dominance in the Seventh Lok Sabha.

The same dynamics were at work in the de-stabilization of the BJP-Shiv Sena
coalition. Although the BJP was the dominant party in the Eleventh Lok Sabha it could not form a stable government that did not include or at least enjoy the support of the central party, the Congress(I). Since the Congress(I) clearly preferred the formation of a United Front cabinet, the BJP could not remain in office.

The cases of the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress coalition and the two United Front cabinets are particularly intriguing for Van Roozendaal’s theory. In each of his hypotheses Van Roozendaal would expect that either the dominant or the central party would form cabinets in DP-CP parliaments. In the case of these governments, however, both the dominant and the central party remained outside the formal executive coalition. What is interesting is that each of these cabinets lasted longer than the cabinets that included the dominant but not the central party, i.e. all of these three cabinets lasted longer than either the Janata Party-Akali Dal or the BJP-Shiv Sena coalitions.363

How is it possible that in a DP-CP parliament a cabinet including neither the dominant nor the central party can last longer than a cabinet that includes the dominant but not the central party? The brief answer to this question is that the former kind of cabinet is more preferable for the central player than the latter one. Either form of cabinet would require the cooperation and support of the central player, otherwise it will fall on any issue relating to the underlying ideological dimension. The central player will find it more beneficial to support a cabinet formed by a non-dominant party because it can exert more influence over it than it can over the dominant player. Since a non-dominant party is numerically weaker than a dominant party it requires the cooperation of the central party to a much larger extent. This in turn gives a lot greater leverage to the central player over government policy which reduces the costs of its formal opposition status. In contrast, the dominant party is numerically very strong which would make it less subservient to the demands of a central player.

363 Again, only that period of the Janata Party-Akali Dal cabinet is meant here that the coalition partners spent in office when the legislature was of the DP-CP type.
This is exactly the reason why the Janata Party (Secular) and the United Front governments lasted so much longer than either the Janata Party-Akali Dal, after the Janata split, or the BJP-Shiv Sena coalition did. In all three cases the central party, the Congress(I) supported the weaker non-central player rather than the stronger dominant one. In the former case it was the Congress (Reddy), in the latter it was the Janata Dal, and its allies in the United Front. Since in none of these three cases could any party form a stable cabinet without securing the support of the Congress(I), it was the Congress(I) Party’s incentive to support the cabinet over which it would have more leverage that determined why the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress United Front cabinet was more durable than the BJP government.

However, establishing that the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress and the two United Front cabinets were inherently more stable than either the Janata Party-Akali Dal or the BJP-Shiv Sena combinations is not the same as to argue that these cabinets were inherently stable. As Hypothesis 3 suggests, a stable cabinet could be expected to form in a DP-CP legislature only if the central party is included in it. Clearly, none of these cabinets included the central party of the game, the Congress(I) but relied on its external assistance instead.

As mentioned before, the arrangement whereby the central party lends external support to a cabinet that formally excludes it is unstable because the central party’s cost of remaining in opposition will increase over time while the governing party’s benefits accruing from being in power will decline. This is so because exploiting its strong bargaining position in the game the central party will demand that the government pursue policies in line with its own preferences. Otherwise, it could coordinate with the rest of the opposition and bring the government down on major issues of governance that pertain to the ideological dimension.

As the description of the tenures of the Janata Party (Secular)-Congress (Reddy) and the two United Front coalition cabinets showed this was exactly what took place.
After a while the governing coalition was unwilling to make further compromises with the central party, which, however, increased the costs of the Congress(I)'s continued extension of support to the government. This conflict of incentives eventually led to the Congress(I)'s withdrawal of support to each of these governments, resulting in their collapse.

5.2.5. KEY PLAYERS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PARLIAMENTS

As discussed above, the undivided Congress Party and the Janata Party had formed majority cabinets in 1967 and 1977 respectively. Technically, these cabinets collapsed when the incumbent parties lost their parliamentary majorities as a result of the split in their ranks. This loss of their majorities resulted in the transformation of the respective parliaments into a multi-party one, more specifically a DCP in the former and a DP-CP in the latter cases. Since Van Roozendaal's model is explicitly designed to explain the comparative durability of cabinets in multi-party parliaments the utility of his model to account for the differential durability of these two governments is not readily apparent. However, the explanation of why the Congress government of 1967 was more durable than the Janata-led coalition cabinet of 1977 can be made perfectly consistent with Van Roozendaal's model.

In order to apply Van Roozendaal' model to these two cases, the assumption that parties are unitary actors needs to be relaxed. Instead of treating these two cabinets as single party majorities they may be considered to be coalition majorities by assuming that both the Congress and the Janata was a coalition of various intra-party factions. Although the data are much clearer about the factional composition of the Janata Party the Congress may likewise be assumed to have contained intra-party subgroups. Let us examine the two coalitions more closely.

Since the undivided Congress had been the party of the center, its internal factions by definition had to be located to the left- and/or to the right-of the center of the ideological dimension, called R in the model. The story of the party's split clearly
demonstrated that the conflict between the Indira Gandhi-led group, that became the Congress (Ruling), and the Morarji Desai-led faction, which became the Congress (Opposition), was largely ideological. The former faction positioned itself left of the center as shown by its concern with social justice and an interventionist economic policy whereas the latter was clearly leaning towards the right as confirmed by its preference of free market economics. Although there is no information available to determine the size of each of these groups prior to the split it is plausible to assume that most Congress MPs had already belonged to one or the other faction before the split would take place. If so, then it is plausible to consider the Congress government as a coalition majority cabinet containing both the dominant and the central party, which of course, would be the Indira Gandhi-led faction.

Thus, the undivided Congress government can be conceived to have been a coalition cabinet in a DCP parliament including the dominant central party, i.e. the Indira Gandhi faction of the party. According to Van Roozendaal's first hypothesis, this cabinet should be durable or at least more so than a cabinet that would exclude the dominant central party. Indeed, although it did not last for a full five year term, the undivided Congress cabinet was more durable than those cabinets that were formed in DCP parliaments and excluded the dominant central party, i.e. the National Front cabinet of 1989 and the Samajwadi Janata cabinet of 1990.

In contrast to the undivided Congress, the Janata Party did not include the central party/faction. By treating the individual factions of the Janata Party separately, it can be calculated that the Congress was both the dominant and the central party. The Congress met all three conditions of dominance. First, if considering the factions of the Janata as separate players, then the Congress was indeed the largest party in the Lok Sabha. Second, its weight in terms of seats was greater than one-half of the quota. The quota in the 540-member House was 271, one-half of which is 135.5. The Congress had 154 seats. Third, the Congress could form non-intersecting winning coalitions with, say, the 41 MPs
belonging to Other parties, the Communist Party of India, the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham, the Congress For Democracy, and 7 Independents on the one hand, and with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the Socialist on the other hand. However, these hypothetical coalition partners could not have formed a winning coalition together because their total weight only amounted to 258 seats, 13 seats below the quota.

With regard to centrality, the calculation shown in Table 2 of Appendix 4 is not affected at all if the Janata segments were treated separately. Thus, in sum, the Congress could be conceived to have been the dominant central party in the Sixth Lok Sabha when the Janata Party was formed. If so, then, as predicted by Van Roozendaal’s first hypothesis, the cabinet formed by the Janata factions was inherently unstable because it excluded this party although it was present in the legislature. The bitter disputes between the Janata segments certainly suggest that the coalition was de-stabilized by the absence of a center party therein.

The instability of the Janata cabinet can also be explained by treating not only the Janata but also the Congress as a coalition of individual players. After all, the Congress did split in 1978 between those loyal to and those against Indira Gandhi. Considering the Congress this way shows that there was no dominant party in the legislature since the number of seats held by the largest party, which in this case would be the 90-member Jana Sangh faction of the Janata, was less than one-half of the quota. However, the Congress(I) would remain the central party. As per van Roozendaal’s fourth hypothesis, in a CP parliament, a cabinet excluding the central party is not expected to last. Indeed, the Janata cabinet did not.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In sum, Van Roozendaal’s model may be extended to account for the stability/instability of cabinets in majority parliaments as well, so long as there is plausible information about parties’ factional composition. In closing it is also worth
mentioning that the durability of the single-party majority governments formed by the Congress in the first four, the seventh and the eighth Lok Sabhas is also perfectly in line with Van Roozendaal’s general game theoretical framework as outlined in Appendix Two. Since all these cabinets were formed by dictators, i.e. players that constituted a winning “coalition” on their own, they all managed to last much longer than cabinets in the other parliaments because they did not need to engage in coordination with any other player. The comparative analysis of the Congress and the Janata Party-Akali Dal governments of 1967 and 1977 respectively also shown that a centrist dictator, the Congress, is better equipped to form a stable government than a non-centrist dictator, the Janata party,
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: THE NESTED GAMES OF PARTY POLITICS IN INDIA

The foregoing chapters have treated the politics of party system change, coalition formation and maintenance as three distinct analytical problems independent of one another. While this approach has allowed a systematic testing of alternative hypotheses and theories, its limitation is that real political life does not consist of watertight compartments. This final and concluding chapter will make an attempt at suggesting a possible way of unifying the three themes. Since the earlier chapters have already established rational choice as the common analytical framework in which the party politics of India can be most fruitfully analyzed, the unified model set out in this chapter will likewise be informed by the assumptions of rational choice.

In a nutshell, the unified model has the following outline. The three themes are essentially about inter-party games in two arenas: the electoral and the legislative. Parties’ goals, their payoffs, and the entire nature of the game is different in these two arenas. Whereas party politics in the electoral arena is about winning office, party politics in the legislative arena, which includes both government formation and maintenance, is about producing policies that will benefit those in power, and their supporters, in the next electoral round. The two arenas, however, are nested rather than independent of one another. The commitments that parties make in the electoral arena influence their interactions in the legislative one. This influence of the electoral on the legislative game is a negative function of the time elapsed since the conclusion of the elections.

Before any further elaboration, the findings of the previous chapters will be summarized. This will be followed by providing an overview of the theory of nested games and its application to party politics in India.

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A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

This study started out by setting the task of answering three questions about party politics in India through the testing of predictions and accounts coming from competing theoretical paradigms. In summary, it is worth looking back at the three questions and pulling together the answers that have been discovered in Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

The first question centered around the transition from the predominant to an even multiparty system as of the general election of 1989. The inquiry was developed in the context of a comparison between two moments in India’s electoral history: the first provided by the 1977 and 1980 elections marked by the first electoral defeat but quick re-gaining of strength by the predominant Congress Party, and the second by the post-1989 period in which neither the former predominant party nor any other party have been capable of winning a legislative majority. The task was to find an explanation that would consistently account for both the ability of the opposition parties to form an electoral coalition capable of winning a legislative majority in 1977 but not since 1989 and the ability of the predominant party to recover its strength in 1980 and its failure to do so in the post-1989 period.

Chapter Three showed that while none of the dominant comparative or Indologist theories of party system change can consistently explain these phenomena, the theory of voting and party system fragmentation under the single member simple plurality electoral formula offered by Riker could be extended to provide such an account. In brief, the answer to the question was that

(a) the former centrist predominant party has failed to re-gain its electoral strength in the post-1989 period because the form of cooperation the opposition parties chose to pursue against it, due to the institutional disincentive created by the tenth Schedule of the Constitution, resulted in increasing the viability of parties both to its left as well as to its right, which resulted in the desertion of the center party by those voters who had only supported it in the past out of strategic considerations;

(b) the non-Congress parties have failed to provide a majority alternative to the Congress
in the post-1989 period, unlike in 1977, because they have chosen to limit their electoral cooperation only to the formation of electoral alliances which resulted in the effective division rather than the unification of the opposition's electorate.

The second question that the dissertation has addressed pertains to the formation of different types of governments in India. In looking for the answer to this question, Chapter Four has shown that most comparative theories of government formation fail to account for the formation of the various types of governments consistently. It was particularly surprising that while one would have expected parties in a Westminster democracy not to be inclined towards sharing power and forming coalition governments, of the sixteen governments examined, six were actually formed by coalitions of parties. Furthermore, none of these coalitions satisfied Riker's famous minimum size dictum: five of them were coalition minority governments while one of them was an oversized coalition cabinet.

The answer to the question was found in the application of a relatively recent body of theoretical literature, known as the 'constraint' literature. Constraint theory conceives of the government formation process as a variable-sum rather than a constant-sum game and focuses the analysis on what is viable and feasible rather than what the winning combination is and how it should therefore emerge. Recognizing that political actors operate under the influence of a myriad of constraints, institutional as well as political, constraints theory can account for the formation of cabinets that most other theories would discard as exceptional deviations from the general pattern.

However, it must be emphasized that constraint theory is a theory anchored in the rational choice school of thought: actors act under the incentives provided to them by the framework of constraints to advance their gains and minimize their losses. In addition, constraint theory does not challenge the assumptions that political actors are policy- and power-seeking, it only challenges the assumption that the game is constant-sum. From this it proceeds to acknowledge that under certain constraints policy- and power-seeking behavior may yield outcomes that might appear suboptimal when conceiving the game as constant-
Chapter Four identified six particular constraints that structure the cabinet formation process in India. These are:

- the President’s power to impose an investiture requirement on the newly formed cabinet;
- the convention that the largest party after the election will make the first attempt at forming a government, and, in case that government collapses, parties will be invited by the President to form a government according to the descending order of their numerical presence in the legislature;
- the majority decision-making rule in the lower house of Parliament, which forces parties to constantly search for allies whose support would give them the majority the government needs;
- the single-member simple plurality electoral system which shifts the coalition formation process to the electoral phase by forcing parties to form strategic alliances in the electoral arena;
- specific rules imposed on parties by themselves with regard to cooperation or non-cooperation with particular other parties;
- and federalism which complicates inter-party relations at the national level by the often contradictory incentives originating from their relationships at the subnational level.

The third question pertains to the stability of the governments examined: What accounts for the early collapse of half of the governments examined? Once again, Chapter Five has found that most conventional theories of government stability fail to yield a consistent and satisfactory answer to the question. The answer to the question, however, was provided by the ‘key actors’ theory of cabinet durability offered by Van Roozendaal. As noted, the theory stipulates that the durability of the cabinet formed depends on whether there are dominant and central players present in the legislature and whether they are included in the cabinet or not. A careful examination of the theory also revealed that if there is a central party in the legislature then a stable cabinet must include this party otherwise it is doomed to
premature termination.

The answers to the three questions have one important factor in common: each of them is anchored in the positive or rational choice, tradition of political science. They all share the assumption that on the basis of his/her preferences, and the incentives and constraints that structure the situation in which he/she is embedded, the individual political actor makes a rational decision when presented with choices. This leads to the overall conclusion that theories grounded in microanalytical models of individual choice are the best equipped to provide a comparative explanation for the three political phenomena in India.

This conclusion has significant implications for the future of theories of comparative democratic party politics. Until now most such theories have been developed and tested in the context of the industrialized democracies of Western Europe simply because there were very few empirical cases of democratic party systems elsewhere. However, in the current age democracy is being embraced by an ever increasing number of countries worldwide. As the number of democratic party systems increases outside the socio-cultural setting of the industrialized West care must be taken to review existing theories of party politics in order to ensure that they are adequate to explain, and above all, predict party political processes and developments in non-Western democracies as well.

Macro-social and -institutional theories of party competition are likely to yield frustrating results in this respect. As for the former, the sociological make-up of Western democracies cannot be replicated in the non-West. Since Western and non-Western democracies would be very different on a host of socioeconomic variables, focusing on sociological variables as the potential explanation for the dynamics of party politics would incur the Lijphartian problem of too many variables for the cases observed.

Macro-institutional theories are also likely to yield disappointing results. As the case of India has illustrated, the macro-regime characteristics of Westminster-style democracy that India adopted cannot account for either party system fragmentation, or the formation and stability of the various governments examined. Curiously, as mentioned, India was actually
becoming similar in terms of its party political developments to Western Europe where Westminster-style democracy is a rarity.

Furthermore, as Chapter Four showed, there may be a plethora of institutional and non-institutional political constraints at levels of analysis below that of the political regime that may alter the impact of regime-level attributes on political outcomes. For example, the party system of Westminster-style democracy in a unitary country, for example Britain, may be much less fragmented than in a federal country, for example, India or Canada. However, the absence in Canada of a predominant party of the kind that the Congress Party was in India may partially account for the reason why electoral alliances and coalition politics have not become characteristic features of Canadian party politics. In contrast, the decades-long dominance of the Congress Party in India has both fostered a cooperative spirit among the main opposition parties, manifested in their formation of strategic electoral alliances, and has also led them to self-impose the constraint of non-cooperation with the Congress. In sum, the impact of macro-regime variables on the dynamics of party politics in a country may be significantly influenced by a host of other microscopic constraints that political parties operate under. These observations suggest that theories of democratic party politics must be microanalytical.

With respect to the critique of rational choice advanced by Green and Shapiro, this study has demonstrated that rational choice models and theories may very well provide a more consistent and thus a more powerful explanation for real world political phenomena than explanations conceived in other theoretical paradigms. In other words, Green and Shapiro's claim that rational choice theory suffers from empirical poverty has been clearly proven wrong.
UNIFYING THE THEMES: THE NESTED GAMES APPROACH

The term *nested games* was coined by George Tsebelis in an attempt to account for apparently suboptimal outcomes in political games. According to Tsebelis, such outcomes are accounted for by changes in the actors' payoffs which themselves are the result of interactions either among the same actors or between some set of them and others in a different arena in which the principal one is nested. In other words, interactions among political actors produce externalities that may alter the payoffs of actors in a different arena of interaction.

Political parties are engaged in inter-party interactions in two arenas: the electoral and the legislative, or parliamentary.\(^{365}\) Whereas the three analytical chapters of this dissertation have treated inter-party relations in each of these arenas as separate games, it is plausible to hypothesize here that the two games are nested in one another. If so, then, the dynamics of the game in one arena may very well have an impact on the dynamics and the outcome of the game in the other arena such that it leads actors to making choices that add up to a suboptimal outcome, i.e. an outcome to which there is an alternative that would make some actors better-off without making any other actor worse-off, in the other arena.

Political parties engaged in the nested games of electoral and parliamentary politics receive pay-offs from each game. The primary pay-off that parties receive in the electoral game is, by assumption, political office; after all, elections are about filling positions of political authority. In contrast, the principal pay-off that political parties seek in the parliamentary game is policy. More precisely, in the parliamentary arena political parties seek legislation that is preferred by their ideal voters so that they could win their support in the next election.

Although the games of electoral and parliamentary party politics are nested in each

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\(^{365}\) The terms legislative and parliamentary arenas will be used here interchangeably.
other they do not take place simultaneously. The game starts in the electoral arena and moves to the parliamentary one after the election is concluded. However, the choices that parties make in playing the electoral game will have an influence on the choices they can or cannot make in the parliamentary arena. This idea was already captured in Chapter Four under the notion of constraints. For instance, when political parties make a clear statement to the voters during the campaign about which parties they will not cooperate with under any conditions, they create an endogenous constraint by imposing high audience costs on themselves. Once the election is over, the choices they make in the legislature about which parties to cooperate with and which ones to stay away from will be constrained by these costs.

The influence of the dynamics of the electoral game on the dynamics of the legislative game, however, is not constant but declines with time. As time moves on in the legislative game and parties get ready for the next electoral round they will be less constrained by the choices they made in the previous election. The simple reason is that they are looking forward to preparing the legislative platform on the basis of which they would appeal to their voters for support in the next election. In other words, there is a point in time somewhere during the term of the legislature until which parties can be considered backward-looking and after which they become more forward-looking. Backward-looking parties are more constrained by the choices they had made in the electoral game than forward-looking parties which prepare themselves for the next election.

Thus, the total pay-offs that parties receive in both games can be summarized as follows:

\[
PO_i = tPO_{ei} + (1-t)PO_{li}
\]

where \( PO_i \) stands for the pay-off of party \( i \), \( PO_{ei} \) for the pay-off of party \( i \) in the electoral game, \( PO_{li} \) for the pay-off of party \( i \) in the legislative game, and \( t \), which is in the \([0,1]\) interval indicates the time that has elapsed since the inception of the term of the current
legislature as the fraction of its normal duration. (Thus, immediately after the election \( t \) is very close to 1 and it gets closer to 0 as the term of the legislature draws closer to its expected end.) The equation shows that the total pay-offs that parties receive in the two nested games are more heavily determined by their pay-offs in the electoral game in the early post-election phase of the newly elected legislature. However, as time moves on the importance of these electoral pay-offs decline and so does the influence of the electoral game on the calculations that parties make in the parliamentary round.

In any game, some player has to make the first move. This initial step is very important because every other move by all the other players in the game will be made in relation to this move. The player that makes this first move must know both his/her own as well as the opponents’ pay-offs, and must assume that the other players are also rational, in other words, that they will react to the first move in a way that would maximize their own pay-offs. Thus, whichever player makes the first move will have to make it in such a way that it should lead to the maximization of his/her pay-offs as long as the opponents pursue equilibrium strategies.

Each player has two basic strategies available regarding his/her interaction with another player during the game: either to cooperate with him/her or not. The combination of strategies chosen and pursued by the players may yield four possible pay-offs to the players: the temptation pay-off, which is what a non-cooperating player receives as long as the other player cooperates; the sucker’s pay-off, which is what the cooperating player receives as long as the other player does not cooperate; the reward pay-off, which is what both players receive if they both cooperate; and the penalty pay-off, which is what both players receive if neither cooperates. What determines a player’s choice of strategy depends on the utility the player expects to derive from pursuing the given strategy. According to the assumption of utility

\[\text{Instead of } t, \text{ Tsebelis uses the notation } k \text{ to refer to the general influence of the electoral on the legislative arena. See, Tsebelis, } Nested \text{ Games}, \text{ p. 166.}\]

\[\text{Tsebelis, } Nested \text{ Games}, \text{ p. 55.}\]
maximization, the greater the expected pay-off from pursuing a certain course of action, the
greater the likelihood that it will be chosen by the player involved.

The expected utility of cooperation (C) and non-cooperation (NC) for a player i is
given below:

\[ EU(C)_i = R_p i + S(1-p)i \]
\[ EU(NC)_i = T_q i + P(1-q)i \]

where EU is expected utility, C stands for cooperation, NC for non-cooperation, p is the
probability that the other player will cooperate when player i chooses the cooperating
strategy, q is the probability that the other player will choose the non-cooperating strategy
when player i chooses not to cooperate, T is the temptation pay-off, R is reward, P is penalty,
and S is the sucker's pay-off. A rational player i chooses the strategy that will increase
his/her expected utility. Thus, if

\[ EU(C)_i - EU(NC)_i > 0 \]
then player i will cooperate, however, if

\[ EU(C)_i - EU(NC)_i < 0 \]
then player i will not cooperate. By substituting and rearranging the terms the following
formulae of cooperation

\[ (R-S)p_i + (T-P)q_i > (T-S)i \]
obtains. According to this formula, a player i will choose a cooperative strategy vis-à-vis a
given opponent either when R and S, the pay-offs from cooperation, increase or when T and
P, the pay-offs from non-cooperation, decrease. Similarly, player i will choose a non-
cooperative strategy when either R and S decrease or T and P increase. In other words, an
increase in the pay-offs from either strategy will make that strategy a more attractive
alternative.

It is important to point out that these assertions hold only in cooperative games (see

\[^{380}\]Tsebelis calls p the probability of instruction and q the probability of retaliation. See,
Tsebelis, Nested Games, pp. 68-70.
Appendix Two) in which players can communicate with each other and develop correlated strategies, i.e. strategies that depend on those adopted by the opponent. In non-cooperative games the players cannot communicate with one another and therefore they pursue the strategy that promises to yield the largest pay-off without regard to what the other player does. This strategy is called the dominant or equilibrium strategy. The problem is, however, that by pursuing their dominant strategies the players may actually end up arriving at an outcome that is collectively suboptimal, i.e. there are alternative outcomes that would make some, or all, players better-off without making any one worse-off. Communication and correlated strategies allow players to avoid or at least reduce the likelihood of suboptimal outcomes.

For example, consider the classic example of the Prisoners' Dilemma. Briefly, the Prisoners' Dilemma is a single-shot two-person non-cooperative game in which each player faces the following pay-off structure: T>R>P>S. Since it is a non-cooperative game, each player's equilibrium strategy is non-cooperation because it yields the largest pay-off no matter what strategy the opponent chooses. Suppose that one player cooperated while the other one chose to defect. In this case, the cooperating player would receive the sucker's pay-off, which is the worst possible outcome for him/her. Therefore, it is in the player's interest to choose non-cooperation regardless of the strategy pursued by the other so as to avoid the sucker's pay-off. However, if both players think this way, then the equilibrium outcome of the game will be suboptimal because both players would in fact prefer reward to penalty, that is the pay-off from mutual cooperation to the pay-off from mutual non-cooperation. If the two players were allowed to communicate and develop correlated strategies then they would be able to make a binding contract to agree to cooperate so that they would both enjoy the reward pay-off which is larger than penalty.

Electoral and parliamentary politics are cooperative games in which the players, the

30Tsebelis, Nested Games, p. 62.
parties, can communicate and enter into side agreements. Because the two games are nested, the players have to calculate the expected utility of cooperation and hostility in both arenas before deciding which strategy to choose. In other words, the total pay-off that parties expect to receive by pursuing a certain strategy in the game is the sum of the expected utilities that the given strategy is going to yield in both arenas. In terms of the above notations, the total pay-off from cooperation is

$$EU(C)_i = t[Rp_i + S(1-p)i_e] + (1-t)[Rp_i + S(1-p)i_l]$$

and the total pay-off from non-cooperation is

$$EU(NC)_i = t[Tq_i + P(1-q)i_e] + (1-t)[Tq_i + P(1-q)i_l].$$

As before, if

$$EU(C)_i - EU(NC)_i > 0$$

then player i will cooperate, however, if

$$EU(C)_i - EU(NC)_i < 0$$

then player i will not cooperate with its opponent.

These formulae reveal two very important points. First, the same strategy pursued by player i vis-à-vis the same opponent may provide player i with very different pay-offs in the electoral and the parliamentary arenas. For example, it is possible that a party finds that mutual cooperation with another party in the election provides both of them with an outcome that they both prefer to any other alternative outcome. In this case, the magnitude of $R_i$, the pay-off resulting from mutual electoral cooperation, increases and cooperation will be the likely strategy adopted. However, it is also possible that the same two parties find mutual cooperation in the legislative arena suboptimal, that is the magnitude of $R_l$, the pay-off resulting from mutual legislative cooperation, is not high enough for the two parties to prefer it to an alternative outcome. Since parties are rational actors, they pursue the strategy that will maximize their utilities. These utilities, however, may very well be different in the two arenas. Therefore, parties have an incentive to develop consistent strategies vis-à-vis one another in the electoral and the legislative arenas only if the expected utility of this strategy is
consistently high enough in both arenas. Otherwise, the greater the difference between the expected utility that a given strategy yields in the two arenas the smaller the incentive for the same player to adopt the same strategy consistently therein.

Second, the formula also highlights that the evaluation of the expected utilities is time-dependent. This means that the closer \( t \) is to 1, the more heavily the calculation of the pay-offs from the electoral strategy weigh in parties' calculation of their total pay-off, and the less important the expected difference, if any, between the size of the pay-offs resulting from pursuing the same strategy in the two arenas will be. Conversely, as time moves on and \( t \) declines, parties' calculation of their total pay-offs will be more heavily determined by the pay-offs that the different legislative strategies can provide. In addition, the more mature the legislature becomes and the smaller the influence of the electoral on the legislative arena, the more important the difference, if any, between the pay-off that the same strategy yields in the electoral and the parliamentary arenas respectively.

The notion that the expected utility of both cooperation and hostility is time-dependent suggests that players constantly have to be engaged in recalculating and reassessing their total pay-off because there may very well be a point in time at which a change in strategy is required in order to maximize the player's total pay-off in the game. The actual value of \( t \) at which such a change in strategy is necessary is specific to each game because it depends on the magnitudes of the variables involved. In general, however, the value of \( t \) at which the player \( i \) becomes indifferent between the two strategies can be obtained by substituting and solving the following equation for \( t \):

\[
EU(C)_i - EU(\text{NC})_i = 0
\]

which is

\[
t = \frac{Tqil + P(1-q)il - Rpil + S(1-p)il + Rpie + S(1-p)ie - Tqie - P(1-q)ie}{Tqil + P(1-q)il - Rpil + S(1-p)il}
\]

When this holds, the player \( i \) is indifferent between cooperation and non-cooperation because both strategies will yield the same expected utility, or pay-off. Of course, for given values of the variables involved it is possible that the \( t \) which will satisfy the above
equation falls outside the [0,1] interval. In that case, player i will have no incentive to change strategy because it will not be able to increase its pay-off by doing so within the ramifications of the current game.

For a hypothetical example, suppose that an imaginary political party A has to choose between adopting either a cooperative or a hostile position vis-à-vis political B during the election. For the sake of simplicity, suppose that A knew for certain that B would reciprocate whatever strategy it chose, i.e. p=1 and q=0. In other words, there are only two possible outcomes: mutual cooperation or mutual hostility. Let us say that A's expected utility from mutual electoral cooperation is 0.35, whereas its expected utility from mutual electoral hostility is 0.1. In addition, further suppose that A’s expected utility from mutual legislative cooperation with B is 0.2 whereas the utility it expects to get from mutual hostility in the legislature in 0.4. Each of these expected utilities is on the [0,1] interval. According to the foregoing formulae, at t=1, EU(C)a=0.35>EU(NC)a=0.1. Therefore, A will choose to cooperate with B. This cooperation will last until a value of t is reached which makes party A equally well-off by pursuing either the cooperative or the non-cooperative strategy. The value of t at which EU(C)a=EU(NC)a is t=0.444. In other words, about half-way through the term of the legislature, player A becomes indifferent between cooperation and non-cooperation with player B. For values of t<0.444, in other words, as the legislature matures and time gets closer and closer to the next election, EU(NC)a>EU(C)a and player A will switch strategies by deserting its former electoral ally.

It has been stated that the expected utility of cooperation increases with any expected increase in R and S, while the expected utility of non-cooperation increases with any

Hypothetically, it can be assumed that the expected utility of either electoral strategy is measured in terms of the percentage change in the share of legislative seats that the pursuit of the given strategy allows the party to win, while the expected utility of either strategy in the legislature is measured in terms of the percentage of policies the party promised to its voters to implement while in office. Of course, one could imagine different ways of operationalizing the variables.
expected increase in T and P. The expected utility of cooperation, in either the electoral or the legislative arenas, depends on the probability of the success of the cooperative venture, pv, and on player i’s utility of the alliance’s performance. Empirically, this performance in the electoral arena can be thought of as the number of seats won, while in the legislative arena the number of cabinet portfolios received by the allies.

Thus,

$$R_{ie} = pv_{ie}V_{ie}$$

and

$$R_{il} = pv_{il}V_{il}$$

The value of Vi may be either negative or positive, while pv and pvl is on the [0,1] interval.\(^{37}\) It is important to note that Vi is always positive for every seat or portfolio to be won by player i itself. Therefore, the critical value that can make a difference in Ri is the value that i attaches to its partner’s winning seats and portfolios. When Vie and Vi l are positive then both the value of each seat won and the value of each portfolio received by i’s partner are positive. However, when Vie or Vil are negative then it must be the result of player i not wanting its partner to win an additional seat or win an additional portfolio.

Of course, the weight of Vil is moderated by the factor (1-t), and therefore the value of Ril will have a significant impact on the calculation of the overall utilities only after t has reached the level at which the impact of the calculation of electoral utilities is sufficiently small.

According to these relationships, mutual cooperation between players is more likely to occur in either arena as the probability of the success of their alliance increase, unless Vie or Vil are negative. Finally, as the expected utility of mutual cooperation increases so does Si because the fear of being the sucker decreases.

The expected utility of non-cooperation in either arena depends on player i’s utility of its own performance vis-à-vis its ally regardless of the outcome of the election, Uie or Uil,

\(^{37}\)Tsebelis, *Nested Games*, pp. 197-200.
and on the probability that player i can dominate the alliance, pd. Thus,

\[ T_{ie} = pdU_{ie} \] and
\[ T_{il} = pdU_{il}. \]

If \( U_i \) in a given arena is positive, then the incentive for player i not to cooperate increases as the probability that player i will be the dominant partner in the alliance increases, either because of the expectation to win more seats in the electoral arena or to win more portfolios in the legislative arena. However, if \( U_i \) is negative then the temptation pay-off decreases as the probability of i dominating the alliance increases. It is important to mention that when the alliance is expected to be victorious vis-à-vis the third party opponent, \( U_i \) is always large and positive. The reason is quite simple: office and policy-seeking players are by definition interested in leading a winning coalition. Therefore, the critical value that determines whether \( U_i \) is negative or positive in either arena of the game is the utility of leading an alliance that is expected to lose the election.

In sum, the likelihood of non-cooperation in either arena increases as the probability that player i can dominate the alliance increases, unless the respective values \( U_{ie} \) or \( U_{il} \) are negative. Once again, the weight of \( T_{il} \) in the calculation of the player's overall utilities becomes significant only after t has reached a low enough level to remove the influence of the calculation of electoral utilities on the calculation of legislative utilities.

The likelihood of cooperation between players in either arena can be illustrated in the following simplex. The simplex is an equilateral triangle the tips of which indicate the maximum share of the pay-off that each of the three players can win, i.e. 100%. In the electoral game the pay-off can be thought of as seats, whereas in the legislative game they can be thought of as portfolios. R stands for the stylized Right, L for the left and C for the center player. The midpoints of each side is represented by \( L' \), \( R' \) and \( C' \) respectively. Thus, \( RL' = L'C = CR' = R'L = LC' = C'R = RL' \). The small case symbols c, r and l indicate the points at

\[ Tsebelis, Nested Games, pp. 191-4. \]
which a given player receives exactly 1/2 of the total pay-off. At any point above these respective points, the player can dominate the game on its own.

**FIGURE 6.1: A TWO-DIMENSIONAL SIMPLEX OF COOPERATION AMONG THREE PLAYERS**

First, assume that $V_i$ is positive and $U_i$ is negative. Since $V_i$ is positive, player $i$ cares only about the potential success of the alliance vis-a-vis the third party opponent, and the likelihood of cooperation increases as the probability of such success increases. In addition, since $U_i$ is negative, $T_i$ decreases as $p_d$ increases. Thus, cooperation will be regarded by player $i$ as an increasingly more attractive strategy as the likelihood that it can dominate the alliance increases. The zone of cooperation is provided by the intersection of the two probabilities, which in this case is provided by the points that are both close to the boundary $L'R'C'$ but are farther away from the segments $cC'$, $rR'$, and $lL'$.

The picture changes considerably when both $V_i$ and $U_i$ are positive. In such cases, the zone of cooperation becomes more restricted because a positive $U_i$ increases the temptation of player $i$ not to cooperate as the likelihood that it can dominate the alliance increases.
other words, cooperation between any two players is more likely to occur as pv increases but pd decreases. In the simplex, such situations can be represented by around the points c, l and r. At these points the allies can tie with the common opponent while their respective strengths vis-à-vis one another are in balance so that no one can dominate the other.

When both Vi and Ui are negative, the likelihood of cooperation increases as pv decreases but as pd increases. In the simplex, these outcomes are represented by points that are both farther below the segments L'R', R'C' and C'L and farther away from the segments cC', rR', IL'. Finally, when Vi is negative and Ui is positive, the likelihood of cooperation increases as both pv and pd decrease resulting in higher Ri but lower Ti. In the simplex, this is represented by points both farther below L'R', R'C', C'L', and closer to segments cC', rR' and IL'.

THE NESTED GAMES OF PARTY POLITICS IN INDIA

Chapter Three has shown that the Indian National Congress party managed to remain both the dominant and the central player of the Indian party system for decades. The party regularly used to capture just under 1/2 of the popular vote with the remainder being split between parties to its left and those to its right. This Rikerian structure consistently allowed the Congress to maintain a strategic advantage in the game and, in game theoretic terms, make the first move. Since both the Left and the Right would have preferred working together with the center rather than with each other, as Riker's argument showed, they had to wait until the center decided which side, if either, it would cooperate with. In game theoretic terms, the Left and the Right had to wait for the initial move to be made by the center in order to see what subgame will be played thereafter. At the same time, in making its first move the center had to anticipate the response of the other players involved and make it such that it would maximize its own utilities.

In the Rikerian system, the center had no incentive to cooperate with either side
simply because it knew that it could win the election and form the government on its own.\footnote{For the detailed argument, see Chapter Three.}

In other words, the center's expected utility of cooperation with either side in the Rikerian party system was zero, which meant that no change in \( t \) could make cooperation a more attractive strategy to the center. Rikerian outcomes are represented by the area \( L'CR' \) in the simplex.

A change in the center's strategy could only be the result of some exogenous shock such as the one that resulted in the Congress Party's split in 1969. That split suddenly made cooperation with one of the sides, the Left, in the legislature more attractive to the center, however, it is also important to note that \( t \) had already dropped by then sufficiently so that this change in strategy was possible. Had the Congress split occurred sooner after the 1967 election, the center's conflictual electoral position vis-à-vis both ends would have made such a change from hostility to cooperation with the Left impossible because the players' relationship in the electoral arena would have influenced their relationship in the legislative arena too strongly.

The non-cooperative position taken by the center trapped both the Left and the Right in a dilemma. Whereas they both knew that by mutual cooperation they could be better-off at least in the electoral round of the game, i.e. they would stand a better chance to win office, they had compelling ideological reasons preventing them from engaging in cooperation with one another. This ideological and policy incompatibility diminished the expected utility of their parliamentary cooperation to zero since given their ideological positions, each side clearly would have preferred governing with the center than with one another. In other words, mutual cooperation might have benefited the Left and the Right at best in the electoral, however, not at all in the parliamentary round of the game. The problem was, however, that since the portion of the total pay-off that the players derived from the electoral round would be diminishing with time, any gains that the ends could make in the electoral round by
mutual cooperation would also vanish sooner or later once the value of \( t \) dropped sufficiently.

The common interest of both the Left and the Right in defeating the Congress meant that they both had positive values of \( V^{ie} \), while their ideological and policy differences resulted in positive \( U^{ie} \) for both players. Thus, whereas they both wanted to have the Congress removed from office, they both felt strongly about leading the cooperative venture since in the light of their ideological incompatibilities neither side could afford to be dominated by the other. Accordingly, for positive \( V^{ie} \) and \( U^{ie} \), cooperation was likely to occur as \( PV \) increased but \( PD \) decreased. In other words, the Left and the Right had an incentive to cooperate only when they could be absolutely sure that the pay-off from mutual cooperation in the electoral round was the largest possible, i.e. if they could be certain to win the election by cooperating, and when they could estimate that their respective positions vis-à-vis one another would be balanced.

As for the legislative round, both players had negative \( V^{i} \) and positive \( U^{i} \). Since party politics in the legislature is about producing policies, each side was potentially more interested in cooperating with the centrist Congress than with one another, hence the negative \( V^{i} \). For the same reason, each player had an incentive to dominate the other resulting in positive \( U^{i} \). For this combination of utilities, cooperation is likely to occur as the probability of the chances that the allies may win the game, \( PVL \), decreases but the probability that either side may dominate the other, \( PDL \), decreases. In any case, the weight of these expected utilities deriving from the appropriate legislative strategies was negligible in the players’ calculation of their total pay-offs during the electoral round because of the factor \((1-t)\).

Once again, note that as long as the center was strong enough to be able to win the election and form a government alone, the ends had no incentive to cooperate at all because of the very small value of \( PVE \). What was required for an ends-against-the-center cooperation to take place in the electoral arena was a weakening in the ability of the center to win. Whereas its weakening still would not provide an incentive for the center to cooperate with either of the sides, as it knew that even if losing the election it would be in a pivotal position
in the parliamentary arena by virtue of being the central player, it would increase the expected utility of mutual cooperation for the Left and the Right and thus provide an incentive for them to cooperate.

In sum, in the Rikerian party system structure, the center had an incentive to make a hostile first move against both ends in both the electoral and the parliamentary arenas. Similarly, the ends also had an incentive not to engage in cooperation with each other unless they could be certain that they would be able to win the election such that neither side would dominate the other.

A brief look at the performance of the center in the by-elections reveals that the left and the right must indeed have faced an increase in the expected utility of mutual cooperation just before the 1977 and the 1989 elections. Figure 6.2 shows that in contrast with all other national polls, the center approached these elections facing an increasingly hostile electorate: the swing in the Congress Party’s share of the vote shows a steady decline for four years in the by-elections that had been held prior to these national polls. By the time of the actual elections, the swing of the Congress vote was very large and negative: -18.3% by 1977 and -28.6% by 1989. By the eve of every other general election the Congress had experienced a positive swing in the by-elections. This evidence clearly shows an increasing pve towards the 1977 and 1989 polls meaning that the Left and the Right could anticipate to be able to defeat a weakened center by mutual cooperation in these elections, which is exactly what happened.
With regards to the probability of dominance within the Left-Right coalition, both in 1977 and 1989, the players made definitive efforts to reduce the likelihood of either side emerging dominant over the other. As mentioned, this was essential since cooperation was unlikely to emerge when players have positive $U_e$ unless $p-de$ decreases. Prior to the 1977 polls, the major parties of the Left and the Right merged into one party, the Janata. The merger can very well be seen as the creation of an institutional mechanism whereby each side gave up its autonomy and thus also its ability to dominate the other regardless of the electoral outcome. The actual distribution of seats among the original constituents of the Janata, as reported in Chapter Two, also reflected that the Left and the Right were quite balanced. Whereas the BLD and the Socialists, the major player of the Left in the Janata, ended up with 40.3% of the Janata's total seats, the Jana Sangh and the Congress(O) won

The mean number of by-elections per year in the 1952-91 period has been 7.1
49%, with the rest going to the centrist CFD. Similarly, prior to the 1989 election the Left and the Right engaged in a nation-wide web of seat adjustments in order to balance one another's powers. In particular, there were two aspects of this balancing that clearly decreased pdl between the Left and the Right in the 1989 election. First, neither side ran candidates in a majority of the districts, and, second, the Janata Dal and the BJP, the major players of the Left and the Right respectively, ran almost exactly the same number of candidates. Whereas the latter ensured that neither side would be dominant in the electoral game, the latter ensured that the two sides would have to rely on one another in the legislature since a successful Left-Right cooperation, that is the defeat of the Congress(I), would automatically produce a hung parliament.

Once the center was defeated, in 1977 and 1989, the ends had an incentive to continue with their cooperative strategy as long as sufficient time did not elapse that made non-cooperation a more attractive strategy. As mentioned, on policy grounds, each side would have preferred working together with the center to cooperating with each other in the legislature resulting in negative VI and positive Ul. With these values, the same probabilities that made electoral cooperation possible, i.e. high pve and low pde, now made legislative cooperation highly unlikely. As explained earlier, for negative VI and positive Ul, cooperation between players can emerge as both pvl and pdl decrease.

Switching to hostility, however, was possible only once t declined to such an extent that the players no longer found it in their interest to follow the promises and alliances they made in the electoral arena. In other words, since the electoral portion of their total pay-off diminished with time, and since the parliamentary portion of their total pay-off increased with time, the ends sooner or later switched to a strategy of hostility in the legislature. Thus, the nested games approach can consistently explain why the Left and Right found it in their interest to cooperate in the elections of 1977 and 1989 and also why they switched to non-cooperation soon after the election resulting in cabinet instability.

As discussed in Chapter Three, an ends-against-the-center cooperation could take
alternative forms. In 1977, the left and right opted for merger whereas in 1989 these players chose to cooperate against the center by forming an electoral alliance. As explained, these choices were greatly influenced by the positive and negative incentives that the institutional regulations about party mergers and splits provided the players with. It was also discussed how future electoral games were influenced by the actual mode of cooperation that the Left and the Right pursued. Whereas the merger strategy led to the reequilibration of a Rikerian party system in 1980 wherein the center regained its dominant position, the alliance strategy facilitated the emergence of a balanced multipolar party system in the 1990s.

It is important to reiterate that both party systems have had one very important feature in common: the central status of the Congress Party. In other words, even though the party system has changed from one in which the center was clearly dominant to one in which it is just one of the competing poles each having a reasonable chance to capture power, the ideological location and size of the center still make it the central player.

In the new post-1989 party system, each of the three competing poles has had approximately the same electoral strength. While none of them can win a majority on its own, each has roughly the same chance of becoming the largest player after an election and lead the game in the legislative round. This structure presents the players with conflicting incentives with the result that they pursue inconsistent strategies in the two arenas. On the one hand, none of them has an incentive to cooperate with any other in the electoral arena because each expects to be able to win the election, that is to emerge as the largest player, on its own. In other words, each player has a negative Ve and a positive Ue. Accordingly, since electoral cooperation between any two players is guaranteed to result in victory, given that each player controls about 1/3 of the total vote, pve would be high, which, however, decreases Re making cooperation unlikely.

On the other hand, however, each player also knows that any such victory would be limited because no player can win an absolute majority on its own, i.e. the expected outcome of the election in this party system structure is a hung legislature. Thus, whereas for each
player the expectation to be able to win the electoral round reduces the expected utility of electoral cooperation with any other player, the expectation of having to form a coalition of some sort in the legislature increases the expected utility of legislative cooperation. In other words, in the legislative arena each of the three players is likely to have both a positive $V_I$ and a positive $U_I$. Accordingly, cooperation will be likely to emerge between the two players that can win, for which $p_{VI}$ is high, and that are relatively balanced, for which $p_{DL}$ is small.

Furthermore, since in each player's calculation of pay-offs the weight of the expected utility of the electoral strategy exceeds the utility of the legislative strategy in the early part of the game, i.e. in the electoral round, the players will start out being hostile against one another in the electoral round which will continue, because of $t$, for some time in the legislature as well. This is exactly what accounts for the instability of governing coalitions and the turbulence of parliamentary politics in India in the post-1989 party system.

It is worth mentioning that the central player still enjoys a strategic advantage over the other two players in this new party system since it is not as constrained in its choice of partners in the legislature. Because of their ideological positions, the Left and the Right are better-off cooperating with the center than cooperating with each other. In terms of ideology, however, the central player is indifferent between the two potential partners which provides it with greater freedom to experiment with alternative cooperative experiments. This is exactly the reason why the Congress was able to provide a stable government after the 1991 election. By skillfully switching partners as the moment required it the Congress managed to survive not only the critical time when $t$ was still large and the opposition had an incentive to be hostile against it but also the entire term of the legislature, as Chapter Five has shown.

In closing, this final chapter has demonstrated, similarly to the previous ones, that political parties in India interact with one another in both the electoral and the legislative arenas in a rational utility-maximizing manner. The theory of nested games has allowed studying inter-party interaction in two distinct arenas, the electoral and the parliamentary, in one common theoretical framework. The application of this theory has shown that the
strategies parties adopt in both arenas are determined by the utilities they expect them to yield. In the electoral arena, parties want to win office while in the legislative arena they seek to implement policies grounded in their ideological positions. In both arenas, they adopt the strategy that allows them to get the most of these pay-offs with the only restriction being that their choice of strategy in the legislature is constrained by the time that has elapsed since election.
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Publications.
APPENDIX 1:
FULL NAMES, ABBREVIATIONS AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIAN
POLITICAL PARTIES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIADMK</td>
<td>All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham. A regional party in the state of Tamil Nadu born as a result of faction dispute in the DMK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGP</td>
<td>Asom Gona Parishad. A regional party in the state of Assam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party. The major Hindu nationalist party born as a result of the BJS' exit from the Janata Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>Bahujan Samaj Party. A regional party concentrated in Uttar Pradesh representing the interests of the lowest castes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-S</td>
<td>Congress-S. A dissident faction of Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>Communist Party of India. The more pragmatic branch of the once united Communist Party of India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI(M)</td>
<td>Communist Party of India (Marxist). The more ideological offshoot of the once united Communist party of India. The party has governed the state of West Bengal without interruption for over 20 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMK</td>
<td>Dravida Munnetra Kazagham. A regional party in the state of Tamil Nadu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBL</td>
<td>Forward Bloc. A small leftist party, member of the Left Front.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVP</td>
<td>Haryana Vikas Party. A regional party in the state of Haryana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC(I)</td>
<td>Indian National Congress(I) Party. The party was created by followers of Indira Gandhi who had been expelled from the Congress in 1978.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC(I)(T)</td>
<td>Indian National Congress(I) (Tiwari) Party. A ex-Congress(I) dissident party led by Tiwari and Arjun Singh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUML</td>
<td>Indian Union Muslim League. The most important Muslim party in India, has been a steady ally of the Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>Janata Dal. The party was formed under the leadership of ex-Congress(I) Finance and Defense Minister V. P. Singh. The party first came to office as part of the National Front government in 1989.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD(G)</td>
<td>Janata Dal (Gujarat). A regional faction of the Janata Dal in the state of Gujarat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCP</td>
<td>Karnataka Congress(I) Party. A regional dissident group of the Congress(I) led by Bangarappa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KC(M)</td>
<td>Kerala Congress (Mani). A faction of the Kerala Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGP</td>
<td>Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party. A regional party in the state of Goa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPVC</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress(I). A small ex-Congress(I) dissident party led by Madhav Rao Scindia, the prince of Gwalior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSP</td>
<td>Revolutionary Socialist Party. A small leftist political party,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Samata Party. A regional party concentrated in the Northern states of India.

Shiromani Akali Dal. A regional party in the state of Punjab representing the interests of the Sikh population.

Shiv Sena. A regional Hindu nationalist party in the state of Maharashtra.

Samajwadi Janata Party. A party formed by Janata Dal dissident in 1990 under the leadership of Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar.

Samajwadi Party. A party formed by the Samajwadi Janata party dissidents led by Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Sikkim Sangram Parishad. A regional party in the tiny Northeastern state of Sikkim.


Tamil Maanila Congress(I). A party formed by Congress(I) dissidents in the state of Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Moopanar.

United Democratic Front. The Congress(I)-led alliance of parties in the state of Kerala.

United Front. The alliance of the National and Left Front parties plus some minor dissident and regional parties that formed a government in 1996.
APPENDIX 2:
SIMPLE GAME THEORY

The game theoretic literature has distinguished three game models:

- two-person versus n-person game
- cooperative versus non-cooperative games
- constant-sum versus variable-, or non-constant-, sum games.

The difference between two-person and n-person games consists of the difference in the number of players involved. In the former there are only two players whereas in the latter there are more than two.

Non-cooperative games are those in which players are not allowed to have any discussion or make binding commitments with regards to the outcome of the game is allowed. If the outcome that players are pursuing is fixed and constant then the game is called a constant-sum game.

The simple game is a kind of n-person cooperative constant-sum game. In a simple game with a set of N players, the set of all possible coalitions can be divided into two subsets: winning (W) and losing (L) coalitions. A simple game can therefore be formalized as G=(N, W). Winning coalitions must satisfy the condition of monotonicity, i.e. every coalition containing a winning subcoalition must also be a winning coalition itself. Formally, if coalition S∈W and T⊇S, then T∈W.

When the complement of any winning coalition is a losing coalition then the game is called proper. In formal terms, G=(N, W) is a proper game if when S∈W then N-S∈L. A losing coalition whose complement is also a losing rather than a winning coalition is called a blocking coalition. Simple games wherein no blocking coalition can occur are called strong simple games. Thus, G=(N, W) is a strong simple game if when S∈L then N-S∈W.

Based on van Roozendaal, *Cabinets in Multi-Party Democracies...*, pp. 5-15.
An important kind of winning coalition is the minimal winning coalition. A minimal winning coalition is defined as a winning coalition every subcoalition of which is a losing coalition. Formally, \( S \) is a minimal winning coalition if, when \( T \subset S \), then \( T \in L \). \( W^{\text{min}} \) denotes the subset of all minimal winning coalitions (henceforth abbreviated as minimum winning coalition).

If there is a player in the simple game that participates in every winning coalition then this player is called a veto player. If the set of veto players, \( V \), is nonempty, that is \( V \neq \emptyset \), then the simple game is called weak. If a player \( \{ i \} \) forms the only minimum winning coalition in the game on its own then it is called the dictator. Formally, if \( \{ (i) \} = W^{\text{min}} \) then \( \{ i \} \) is a dictator.

Finally, if every player in the game has a weight, \( w_i \), representing its voting power then the simple game is called a weighted one. In weighted games a coalition is winning if the sum of its members' weights is at least equal to the quota, or the decision-making point, of the game, \( q \). If \( q \) is a simple majority then a coalition will be winning if the sum of its members' weights will be at least \( 50\% + 1 \) of the total weights of all players in the game. A weighted simple game can be described as \( G = [q; w_1, w_2, w_3, \ldots, w_n] \). In a weighted simple game a coalition \( S \) is winning, i.e. \( S \in W \), if

\[
\sum_{i \in S} w_i \geq q
\]

To illustrate some of these concepts, consider first a game with 6 players A, B, C, D, E and F with the following quota and weights \([6; 3,2,2,1,1,1]\). In this game \( W^{\text{min}} \) consists of ABC, ABD, ABE, ABF, ACD, ACE, ACF, BCDE, and BCDF. The game is proper but it is not strong because any of AB, AC, ADE, ADF, AEF, BCD, BCE, and BCF is a blocking coalition, that is their complement will also be a losing coalition. In contrast, a game with players A, B, C and D such that \([6; 4,2,2,2]\) will be both proper and strong. As in the previous example the game is proper because the complement of every winning coalition is a losing one. However, this game is also strong because no blocking
coalition can occur therein: the losing coalitions A, BC, BD, and CD all have a winning complement.
APPENDIX 3: 
THE СHOFIELD ET AL.. THEOREM

First, suppose that there were four parties in a hypothetical legislature A, B, C and D with the following distribution of weights, i.e. share of legislative seats:

- A: 40%
- B: 30%
- C: 20%
- D: 10%

If the decision-making rule, $q$, in this legislature were 2/3, that is the winning coalition must possess at least 66.7% of the seats, then A would have veto power. Because A has veto, the only minimum winning coalitions to form are AB and ACD, the Nakamura number in this legislature is infinity and the core would lie with A no matter what the dimensionality of the space is. Figures A3.1 and A3.2 below illustrate that player A would be in the core both if $W=1$ and if $W=2$ given the above distribution of weights.

FIGURE A3.1: THE CORE AT A WHEN W=1 AND q=2/3

A: 40%  B: 30%  C: 20%  D: 10%
In Figure A3.2 the existence and the location of the core can be detected by looking at the intersection of the median lines. A median line is a line connecting two players such that both the players on and to either side of the line comprise winning coalitions. In Figure A3.2, there are only two such lines. Parties on and to either side of the line connecting A and B comprise winning coalitions (AB with 70% on the one hand and ACD with 70% on the other) and so do parties on and to either side of the line connecting A and C (AC with 60%, ACB with 90% and ACD with 70%). The two lines intersect at A and therefore the voting game has a core at A.

Now suppose that the same four parties with the same weights existed in a legislature where the decision-making rule were simple-majority. In this legislature, there would be three possible minimum winning coalitions:

- AB 70%
- AC 60%
- BCD 70%

---

The Nakamura number is 3 since while every pair of these three minimum winning coalitions does have at least one member in common, the three taken together do not. Thus, the smallest set of winning coalitions with an empty intersection is 3. According to the THEOREM, if $N=3$ then the core can only be guaranteed in one dimension. As Figure A3.3 shows, if these parties existed in a undimensional space then party B would be in the core. However, if $W=2$ as in Figure A3.4 then the median lines do not intersect. Therefore, the core cannot be guaranteed, i.e. it is empty, and any coalition formed in that space would be unstable. In other words, if $N=3$ and $W=2$ then there will always exist a majority coalition in the legislature that would benefit from bringing the government down.

FIGURE A3.3: THE CORE AT B WHEN $W=1$ AND $q=1/2$

![Diagram](image1)

A: 40%  B: 30%  C: 20%  D: 10%

FIGURE A3.4: EMPTY CORE WHEN $W=2$ AND $q=1/2$

![Diagram](image2)

B: 30%

D: 10%

A: 40%

C: 20%
In the game illustrated in Figure A3.4 parties A and B have an incentive to change their location. If A moved so as to be colinear with B and C then all median lines would pass through it. Similarly, if B moved to be colinear with A and D then there would be no median line in the game that would not pass through it. In other words, both A and B could become core parties. However, such cores would still be structurally unstable because if due to some shock these parties would have to change their location again the lines A-D and A-B respectively would still remain median lines.37

APPENDIX 4:
CLASSIFYING THE LOK SABHAS ACCORDING TO VAN ROOZENDAAL’S MODEL

Following the split of the Congress Party in 1969 the Congress(Ruling) remained the largest party in the Lok Sabha with 221 seats. The quota in the House at the time was 260, so the weight of the Congress(Ruling) was clearly greater than one half of the quota. The third condition of dominance was also met by the Congress(Ruling). In order to form a winning coalition the party had to secure the support of any party, or coalition thereof with 39 MPs. For example, the Congress(Ruling) could have formed such a coalition with the Swatantra Party and any 3 of the Independent members. However, the second largest party, the Congress(Opposition) with which the Congress(Ruling) could have formed a winning coalition as well, was not large enough to be able to do the same. A coalition of the Congress(Opposition), the Swatantra and the 3 Independents would only have provided 103 seats for the coalition, a number far below the quota.

In order to establish if there was a central party present, the main parties need to be ordered along the ideological dimension. The two Communist parties were clearly on the left with the more radical Communist Party of India (Marxist) occupying the extreme position. To the right of the Communist Party of India were the two Socialist Parties. That the Samyukta Socialists have traditionally been more prepared to enter into dialogue with the right parties in order to form an anti-Congress coalition suggests that this party placed less emphasis on programmatic purity than the Praja Socialists. Of the two Congress parties, the Congress(Ruling) was clearly closer to the left of the center than the Congress(Opposition). The right parties consisted of the Jan Sangh, the Swatantra and the DMK, with the latter being located at the far right as suggested by the party’s vehement stand in favor of Tamil sovereignty.

Table A4.1 clearly demonstrates that the Congress(Ruling) was the only party that

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378 Again, only parties with at least 3% of the seats are considered.
met the condition of centrality in the Fourth Lok Sabha. Thus, since the Congress (Ruling) was therefore both a dominant and a central party, the legislature was of a DCP type in which, Van Roozendaal predicts the formation of a government by or including the dominant central party. Indeed, the minority government that continued in office was the one provided by the Congress (Ruling).

TABLE A4.1: CENTRALITY IN THE FOURTH LOK SABHA, 1969

| Party                  | w  | wR+(i) | wR-(i) | |w(R+(i)) - w(R-(i))|
|------------------------|----|--------|--------|-----------------------|
| Congress (Ruling)      | 221| 76     | 158    | 82                    |
| Congress (Opposition)  | 64 | 297    | 94     | 203                   |
| Swatantra              | 36 | 394    | 25     | 369                   |
| Jan Sangh              | 33 | 361    | 61     | 300                   |
| DMK                    | 25 | 430    | 0      | 430                   |
| SSP                    | 17 | 59     | 379    | 320                   |
| PSP                    | 16 | 43     | 396    | 353                   |
| CPI                    | 24 | 19     | 412    | 393                   |
| CPI(M)                 | 19 | 0      | 436    | 436                   |

Following the split in the ranks of the Janata Party in 1979, the larger faction that retained the party's name, remained the largest party in the Lok Sabha with 206 seats. As the Janata Party was the largest in the House it met the first condition of dominance. The second condition is that its weight has to be greater than one half of the quota. With a total size of 538 seats in the Lok Sabha, the quota was 270, one half of which is 135.5. Clearly, the Janata Party met the second condition of dominance as well. As for the third condition, it is easy to see that the smallest combination of parties that would have given the Janata a majority, any coalition of small parties comprising 64 MPs, would not have give the second largest party, the Janata Party (Secular) a majority. Since the Janata Party (Secular) had 76 seats, it needed 194 MPs to have a majority base in the Lok Sabha. However a coalition of the Janata Party and the Janata party (Secular) would have been a majority combination. Thus, the Janata Party met the third condition of dominance as
well. It is interesting to note that the Janata Party would have remained a dominant party even if the Congress had not split between the Indira-loyalists and those who opposed the Emergency. A united Congress with 154 seats in the Lok Sabha would have needed 116 MPs in order to have a majority, a far cry from the 64 that the Janata needed.

To identify if there was a central party in the Sixth Lok Sabha after the Janata split one needs to locate the main parties on an ideological scale. As discussed before, impressionistic evidence suggests that in this parliament both Congress factions were in the center, with the more authoritarian-leaning Congress(I) closer to the right-of-center and the Congress closer to the left-of-center, the Janata Party was located to the right of the Congress, and the Janata Party (Secular), including many ex-Socialists, was positioned to the left of the Congress alongside with the two Communist parties which were further to the Left of the Janata Party (Secular). The calculation of the difference between the weight of each of these parties on the one hand, and the absolute value of the difference between the weights of the parties to their left and to their right on the other shows that the Congress(I) was a central party in the legislature.

**TABLE A4.2: CENTRALITY IN THE SIXTH LOK SABHA, 1979-80**

| Party          | Weight |  w(R+(i)) |  w(R-(i)) | \(|w(R+(i)) - w(R-(i))|\) |
|----------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Janata Party   | 206    | 251       | 19        | 232             |
| Janata Party (S) | 76    | 29        | 352       | 321             |
| Congress(I)    | 71     | 180       | 206       | 24              |
| Congress       | 75     | 105       | 277       | 170             |
| ADMK           | 19     | 450       | 0         | 450             |
| CPI(M)         | 22     | 0         | 435       | 435             |

Thus, the Sixth Lok Sabha can be described as a DP-CP parliament following the split of the Janata Party. According to Van Roozendaal, in this legislature either a majority coalition of the dominant and central parties, the Janata and the Congress(I), or a
minority cabinet by either the dominant, Janata, or by the central party, the Congress(I), should have been formed. However, the actual cabinet was formed by neither.

In the 1989 election only 529 of the 543 Lok Sabha seats were filled because no election was held in the Northeastern state of Assam that has 14 seats. The largest party after the election was the Congress(I) with 197 seats. The quota of this parliamentary game, i.e. the majority point was 265 seats. The Congress(I) Party’s share of the seats was greater than 133, which is one-half of the quota, thus the Congress(I) met the first two necessary conditions of dominance.

As for the third condition, the Congress(I) could have formed a winning coalition with the CPI(M), CPI, AIADMK, SAD, RSP and IUML that would have given it a bare majority of exactly 265. The total weight of this subcoalition would be 68 which is the exact number that the Congress(I) would have needed in order to meet the quota. The second largest party, the Janata Dal, had only 142 seats. The same subcoalition of the CPI(M), CPI, AIADMK, SAD, RSP and IUML would not have enabled the Janata Dal to form a winning coalition since 142+68=210 which is well below the quota. However, the Janata Dal could have formed a winning coalition with the largest party, the Congress(I), since their combined strength would have been 142+197=339 which is well above the quota of 265. In sum, the Congress(I) met all three conditions of dominance and was a dominant party in the Ninth Lok Sabha.

In order to identify the central party in this, and the other two post-1989 legislatures, Huber and Inglehart’s data on the location of parties will be used as the basis. Table A4.3 shows the calculation which yields that the Congress(I) was the central party in the legislature.380

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380 The split of the Janata Dal did not affect either the dominance or the centrality of the Congress(I) Party.
TABLE A4.3: CENTRALITY IN THE NINTH LOK SABHA, 1989-91

| Party/bloc  | Weight | \( w(R+(i)) \) | \( w(R-(i)) \) | \( |w(R+(i)) - w(R-(i))| \) |
|-------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Congress(I) | 197    | 187             | 86              | 101                        |
| Janata Dal  | 142    | 45              | 283             | 238                        |
| BJP         | 86     | 384             | 0               | 384                        |
| CPI(M)      | 33     | 0               | 437             | 437                        |

In sum, the Ninth Lok Sabha was a DCP parliament because the same party, the Congress(I) was both the dominant and the central player. According to van Roozendaal's prediction, the cabinet to be formed in this legislature should have included the Congress(I). However, as it was shown, neither of the two cabinets that were formed in this legislature did so.

In 1991, there were no elections held in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (6 seats) and elections were postponed in the state of Punjab (13 seats). The following figures include the results of the Punjab election that was held eight months after polls were over in the rest of the country. The Tenth Lok Sabha had only 537 seats which yields a quota of 269. The largest party after this election was once again the Congress(I) with 244 seats, well over 135 which is 1/2 of the quota.

In order to form a winning coalition the Congress(I) needed the support of a coalition of parties with a total weight of at least 25 seats. One possible coalition that would have provided the Congress(I) with exactly that many seats was a coalition consisting of the CPI and the AIADMK. The second largest party, however, the BJP, had only 120 seats and therefore it could not have formed a winning coalition with the same two parties. The total weight of a BJP-CPI-AIADMK coalition would have only been 145, well below the quota. At the same time, however, the BJP could have formed a winning coalition with the Congress(I). Thus, the Congress(I) met the third condition of dominance in the Tenth Lok Sabha as well.
The calculation of centrality is shown in Table A4.4. It clearly shows that the Congress(I) was the only party whose parliamentary weight was greater than the difference between the weight of parties to its left and those to its right. Thus, the tenth Lok Sabha was a DCP parliament, just like the Ninth was. As such, it should see the formation of a government by or including the dominant central party, i.e. the Congress(I). As predicted by Van Roozendaal’s theory, indeed the Congress(I) formed a single-party minority cabinet in 1991.

| Party     | Weight | $w(R+(i))$ | $w(R-(i))$ | $|wR+(i)| - |wR-(i)|$ |
|-----------|--------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Congress(I)| 232    | 106        | 120        | 14             |
| Janata Dal| 59     | 47         | 352        | 305            |
| BJP       | 120    | 338        | 0          | 338            |
| CPI(M)    | 35     | 0          | 423        | 423            |

In 1996 each of the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha were filled. Therefore, the quota of the parliamentary game increased to 272. The largest party in this legislature was the BJP with 161 seats which was greater than 1/2 of the quota, 136. For the BJP to be a dominant party it had to be strong enough to be able to form a winning coalition with a set of parties such that no other party or coalition thereof, that could form a winning coalition with the BJP would be able to do so with that set of parties. In order to meet the quota and form a winning coalition the BJP needed the support of a set of parties with at least 111 seats. A possible coalition of parties with exactly this many seats could have consisted of the JD, CPI(M), TMC, CPI and, let us say, the SDF. This same coalition of parties, however would not have allowed the Congress(I), the second largest party with 140 seats, to form a winning coalition, since their total weight of 251 seats would have been below the quota. At the same time, of course, the Congress(I) could have formed a winning coalition with the BJP! In sum, the BJP met all three conditions of dominance.
and was a dominant party of the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

Table A4.5 below shows that once again, the Congress(I) Party was a central party in the Eleventh Lok Sabha as well. Therefore, this parliament was a DP-CP legislature. According to Van Roozendaal's theory either the Congress(I), the central party, and the BJP, the dominant party, should have formed a majority coalition; or either the Congress(I) or the BJP should have formed their own minority governments. While this prediction does account fully for the formation of the BJP-led minority government, it cannot explain the formation of the United Front coalition government following its collapse. Furthermore, Van Roozendaal's theory does not offer anything that would help to understand why the BJP formed a coalition government with the Shiv Sena. Although the inclusion of the Sena brought the BJP cabinet slightly closer to winning status it also reduced the party's positive power excess. Because the Sena was so small and the BJP was so far from the majority threshold, it is not clear that this trade-off was worth the making.

**TABLE A4.5: CENTRALITY IN THE ELEVENTH LOK SABHA, 1996-97**

| Party   | Weight | \( w(R+(i)) \) | \( w(R-(i)) \) | \( |w(R+(i)) - w(R-(i))| \) |
|---------|--------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Congress(I) | 140    | 91             | 161            | 70                      |
| Janata Dal    | 47     | 44             | 301            | 257                     |
| BJP             | 161    | 231            | 0              | 231                     |
| CPI(M)         | 32     | 0              | 234            | 234                     |
## APPENDIX 5:
CONCEPTUAL AND THEIR IMPACTS ON COALITIONAL BARGAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constraint</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mandatory minimum government size</td>
<td>Precludes minority governments</td>
<td>Constructive vote of confidence in Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory cabinet composition</td>
<td>Specific parties gain bargaining power</td>
<td>Combination of ethnic parties in Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investiture vote</td>
<td>Favours majority coalitions</td>
<td>Israel, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specified coalition forms</td>
<td>Status quo coalition gains bargaining power</td>
<td>Ireland, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of state plays an active role</td>
<td>Head’s of state favourite party gains bargaining power</td>
<td>Italy, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective cabinet responsibility</td>
<td>Favours policy-connected coalitions</td>
<td>Britain, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet authority delegated to individual ministers or committees</td>
<td>Disfavours parties with strong policy preferences</td>
<td>Italy, Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supramajoritarian decision rules</td>
<td>Favours parties capable of forming blocking coalitions</td>
<td>Constitutional amendment rules in Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictive legislative rules</td>
<td>Favours minority coalitions</td>
<td>Package vote in Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to call elections</td>
<td>Favours policy-connected coalitions</td>
<td>Ireland, Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMP, STV, double ballot electoral systems</td>
<td>Favours pre-electoral alliances</td>
<td>Britain, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain party excluded from office</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-electoral coalitions</td>
<td>Favours allied party blocs</td>
<td>Norway, Germany</td>
</tr>
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<td>Foreign governments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic pressure groups</td>
<td>Favours acceptable parties</td>
<td>Trade union ban on Fascists’ participation in government in Italy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Strom, Budge and Laver, "Constraints on Cabinet Formation...", pp. 320-1.