social justice through inclusion

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ELECTORAL QUOTAS IN INDIA

Francesca R. Jensenius

Social Justice through Inclusion

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FRANCESCA R. JENSENIUS

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Abbreviations

AC	State Assembly Constituency
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
DC	District Commissioner
ECI	Election Commission of India
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HP	Himachal Pradesh
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
INC	Indian National Congress or the Congress Party
JD	Janata Dal
JNP	Janata Party
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MoV	Margin of Victory
MP	Member of Parliament
NES	National Election Studies
NSS	National Sample Survey
OBC	Other Backward Classes
PC	Parliamentary Constituency
PCA	Primary Census Abstract
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SP	Samajwadi Party
STs	Scheduled Tribes
TD	Town Directory
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VD	Village Directory

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A Note on Terminology

THIS BOOK IS about the electoral quotas for India's "Scheduled Castes" (SCs). This collection of caste groups—united by the social stigma of being considered ritually impure or "untouchable"—has been referred to by various names, so a note on terminology is in order.

In the British censuses of the late nineteenth century, various subcastes were categorized into caste groupings. Since the untouchables were not included in any of the main categories, they were included in categories such as "Outcastes or Not Recognising Caste" and "Semi-Hinduised Aborigines."[1] Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar—the prominent SC leader who lobbied for SC quotas during the first half of the twentieth century—referred to them as the "depressed classes," whereas Mahatma Gandhi referred to them as "Harijans" (children of God).

The term "Scheduled Castes" was used in the Government of India Act of 1935,[2] referring to the fact that the Act included a "Schedule" (or list) of those castes who qualified for quota positions and other government benefits. The term was defined as "such castes, races or tribes or parts of groups within castes, races or tribes, which appear to His Majesty in Council to correspond to the classes of persons formerly known as the 'Depressed Classes,' as His Majesty in Council may prefer."[3]

---

1. Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998, 28).

2. The term was first proposed by the provincial government of Bengal to the Indian Franchise Committee (Thorat 2009, 1).

3. GoI (1942). Categorizing castes according to these vague criteria was not easy. The Simon Commission, which sought to draw up these lists in the 1920s, noted that the distinction between untouchables and other backward classes was not always obvious (cited in Galanter 1984, 125).

This terminology was retained in the Indian Constitution and is still the official term used by the Indian government. A subcaste qualifies for inclusion in the Scheduled Caste list if it can demonstrate "extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the traditional practice of untouchability."[4] According to Chapter 341 of the Indian Constitution,[5] "the President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be."[6]

In recent years, it has been common to refer to the community as "Dalits." Originally a name used by Jyotirao Phule in the nineteenth century, it was used infrequently until the 1970s, when it became the term used by the *Dalit Panthers* and other activists.

I have opted to use the term "SCs" in referring to the group, because this book is about the quotas for the group that the government has defined as Scheduled Castes, "SCs." This is also the governmental category used in the Indian censuses and surveys that I draw on. I employ other names for the group only when citing or discussing statements where other terms are used.

In order to describe SCs it is often relevant to compare them to the rest of the population, which I have chosen to refer to as "non-SCs." That is not an official category, nor one frequently employed in India. When using it, I have generally taken data for the entire population and then subtracted SCs from the figures.

---

4. See FAQ at http://socialjustice.nic.in. A full list of the castes categorized as SC is provided in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. Available online at http://socialjustice.nic.in/scorder1950.php.

5. GoI (2001b).

6. Excellent discussions of who are categorized as SCs, on how caste groups and individuals have changed their caste status, and on the changing nature of caste-based discrimination, can be found in Galanter (1984) and Rudolph (1984).

1

The Effects of Political Inclusion

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people […] and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.[1]

No proof has been given by the hon. Minister or anybody else to show that this reservation has in practice led to concrete advances and benefits for this class.[2]

GOVERNMENTS OFTEN DESIGN institutions and policies with the explicit goal of promoting social justice. From implementing antidiscrimination laws to reserving seats for women and indigenous groups in parliaments, they make efforts to improve intergroup relations and alter power asymmetries. Such efforts are usually supported with arguments about a range of assumed positive long-term consequences, but studying these potential consequences is difficult: To what extent can institutions alter entrenched social norms? How long does it take for such change to take place? And what effects should we expect from differently designed policies?

When India became independent from British rule in 1947, some of the most controversial political debates were about which rights and safeguards to grant minority groups. One of the thorniest issues was what to do with the group at the bottom of the Hindu caste hierarchy, the Scheduled Castes (SCs or Dalits)—formerly known as the "untouchables" because their mere touch was considered polluting. SCs had traditionally been subjected to extreme socioeconomic exploitation and social exclusion. How could they

1. Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution, Article 46.

2. Statement by a Member of Parliament (MP) during the parliamentary session discussing the extension of electoral quotas in India in 1969 (*Lok Sabha Debates*, December 8, 1969, 299–300).

be integrated into mainstream society? The official response to this challenge was a bundle of efforts aimed at combating untouchability with institutional change: the new Constitution abolished untouchability, prohibited forced labor, reserved positions for SCs in politics, and empowered the Indian states to enact policies that would improve the socioeconomic standing of SCs.[3]

This book is an empirical study of the long-term consequences of one of these policies: the reserved seats for SCs in India's state assemblies. This wide-ranging quota system (or *reservations*,[4] as they are usually referred to in India) has been in place since the first post-independence elections in 1951, making it one of the most extensive and longest-lasting quota systems in the world. What have been the consequences of more than 65 years of electoral quotas for SCs?

What I will show in this book is that the quotas for SCs have played an important role in improving social justice for SCs in some ways, primarily by weakening the status hierarchy associated with the caste system. Examining three dimensions of social justice—redistribution, political participation, and recognition[5]—at the levels of the political elites and the general population, I find that the electoral quotas for SCs have opened the political arena to many who would otherwise have been excluded, have allowed them to gain experience and confidence, and seem to have contributed to making it less socially acceptable to discriminate against SCs in public. The extent and nature of the gains in social justice have not, however, been what all advocates of these quotas had expected or hoped for. The quotas have had no detectable constituency-level effect on overall development or redistribution to SCs, the electoral turnout is lower in SC-reserved constituencies than elsewhere, and critics of the system hold that it has brought the "wrong" SC politicians to power.

---

3. These provisions were used to, among other things, reserve positions for SCs in public jobs and educational institutions.

4. The term "reservations" is applied to electoral quotas in the national parliament, the state assemblies, and village-level politics, as well as reserved positions in educational institutions and public jobs. In the national parliament and in the state assemblies there are quotas for SCs, and also for tribal groups (Scheduled Tribes or STs). In educational institutions and public jobs there are also quotas for the "Other Backward Classes" (OBCs). In village-level politics there are quotas for all these groups, and also for women. In this book the focus is on the quotas for SCs in politics, and only those in the state assemblies, although I sometimes refer to the other types of reservations for comparison.

5. Here I follow Fraser's (2007) understanding of social justice as *parity in participation in social life*, and her focus on three hurdles to overcoming injustice.

These findings, I argue, are to a large extent a result of how the quota policy was designed: SC politicians are elected in single-member constituencies (electoral districts) by voters from all caste groups. This institutional design incentivizes the mainstream *political parties* to recruit and support SC politicians, in order to increase their numbers in the legislative assemblies. Because SCs are a minority of the voters in reserved constituencies, *SC politicians* have to cater to voters across caste lines in order to win elections. This also means that *voters* from all caste groups have to interact with SC politicians, and treat them well, if they want a share of the government resources controlled by those politicians.

In several ways, this quota policy has therefore had a moderating, or *centripetal*, effect—creating incentives for the gradual *integration* of SC politicians into the mainstream political elite.[6] The result is that the quotas have brought to power SC politicians who look and behave similarly to other politicians—not SC politicians who focus on working for the interests of the SC community. In other words, the political inclusion of SCs through the quota system has resulted in *group integration*, but not *group representation*.[7]

In discussions of quota policies, in India and elsewhere, there seems to be a normative bias toward wanting to see group inclusion leading to group representation. However, as is demonstrated in this book, a system that encourages group integration instead of group representation may have important long-term effects. Over time, as SC politicians have gained experience and confidence, they have become better at mobilizing voters, have acquired more positions of power, have faced less discrimination, and have altered stereotypes about who can and cannot be a political leader. The importance of these quotas therefore lies not in their bringing material benefits to SCs, or in making SCs feel that they are much better represented politically—but rather in their capacity to make a dent in one of the world's most rigid status hierarchies.

This study focuses on India, and on one out of several types of quotas in India, but the findings and discussions have broader implications. Reserved seats and other policies of group inclusion have become increasingly common

6. Centripetal systems are those that create incentives for moderates to compromise on conflicting group claims, to form interethnic coalitions, and to establish a regime of interethnic majority rule (see Horowitz 2000, 2014).

7. I follow Pitkin (1972, 209–10) in using the term representation to mean "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them." This is often referred to as "substantive" representation.

across the world, but little is known about their long-term consequences, and arguments are often muddled by normative desires as to the effects we would *like* them to have. Experiences from India—in many ways an extreme case—can help to inform discussion about what to expect from differently designed quotas in other contexts as well.

The empowerment of SC politicians that I describe in this book has been slow and partial, and stands as a sobering reminder of how long it can take for social norms to change. That being said, the findings should be interpreted in the context of the enormity of the challenge of the caste system, and the practice of untouchability in particular. India's official attempt to fight social injustice by means of institutional tools was unprecedented in its scope and scale, and can best be compared to other large-scale efforts to overcome legacies of discrimination, exploitation, and injustice—such as the institutional reforms in the United States aiming to counter the legacy of slavery and segregation and the efforts of South Africans to combat the effects of decades of apartheid. Status hierarchies of this scale do not disappear overnight, and single policies alone cannot be expected to upend them. Neither do efforts to combat social injustice result in only one type of change. To make sense of how institutions can shape society we need to disaggregate the various consequences that different policies may have, and examine their multiple and potentially contradictory effects.

1.1 Disaggregating the effects of quotas

India's caste system may be the world's largest and most oppressive social order. At the bottom of that status hierarchy are the SCs: a large collection of subcastes currently consisting of about 16 percent of the population of India—or more than 200 million people. SCs were traditionally associated with ritually impure work, such as maintaining cremation grounds and cleaning toilets, and were, therefore, considered "untouchable."[8] The result was that they used to be subjected to extreme social exclusion and socioeconomic exploitation. The intensity and type of discrimination that they faced varied from place to place, but included denial of access to wells, schools, roads, courts, temples, shops, and other public places. SCs who deliberately or accidentally broke unwritten caste rules could be subjected to violent and cruel punishments. The police

8. See, e.g., Gupta (1991), Thorat (2009), and Jodhka (2015).

would often turn a blind eye to such atrocities, in some cases even taking part in them.[9]

The situation for SCs has gradually improved over time, as will be discussed in chapter 8. Even today, there are examples of heinous behavior toward SCs. In January 2016, an SC PhD student made the headlines when he killed himself because of harassment by higher-caste fellow students. "My birth is my fatal accident," he wrote in his suicide letter.[10] In March the same year, another SC student was murdered for marrying an upper-caste Hindu girl.[11] However, newspaper headlines focusing on such incidents obscure the long-term trend: things have become much better than they used to be. Today, SCs are *for the most part* exposed to forms of discrimination that are less extreme—such as not being served tea in non-SC households—and the socioeconomic gap between SCs and others is steadily shrinking.[12]

We see massive changes for SCs in politics as well. In 1917 Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the most important SC leader during the first half of the twentieth century, was asked to represent the SC community in a British committee. This was not because of any form of election, but because he happened to be the *only* SC in the Bombay presidency with a graduate degree.[13] Today there are thousands of SC politicians, some in important positions of high visibility. For instance, during the period I conducted fieldwork for this book (2009–2011), Mayawati[14] was the chief minister in India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh (UP), and Meira Kumar was the Speaker of Lok Sabha (the lower house of the federal parliament).

As these examples indicate, and as will be discussed further in other parts of this book, there have been changes in the socioeconomic standing of SCs, the intensity and type of discrimination that they face, and their presence in politics. But can these changes be said to be the *result* of the quota system? And which outcomes should we examine?

9. See Elayaperumal (1969) and Mane (1974).

10. Cited in *New York Times* editorial, January 27, 2016 (NYT 2016).

11. Reported in *The Hindu*, March 14, 2016 (Kumar and Kumar 2016).

12. See Thorat (2009), Shah (2006) and Macwan et al. (2010) for details about common untouchability practices in recent times. I discuss this in chapters 2 and 8.

13. Jaffrelot (2005, 53).

14. Mayawati's full name is Mayawati Prabhu Das, but she usually goes by the first name only.

Redistribution, participation, and recognition

Quotas and other *policies of group inclusion*—such as minority-majority districting, lowered electoral thresholds, or special legislative bodies—have increasingly become tools used to alter the composition of elected political assemblies.[15] Such policies are often justified with reference to a broad range of assumed positive long-term outcomes. They are expected to do more than just alter the composition of legislative assemblies: shift the policy agenda, alter the nature of political deliberation, improve political participation, and reduce discrimination and intergroup conflict.[16]

Empirical studies from across the world have found that including excluded groups in political decision making has affected the political participation or aspirations of those communities,[17] changed the perceptions of the members of the group,[18] and altered intergroup relations.[19] Many studies have also looked for evidence of better "substantive representation" for excluded groups resulting from policies of group inclusion—what I refer to as *group representation*.[20] Several studies of women and minorities in politics have concluded that they tend to represent a different set of interests than other politicians.[21]

---

15. By "policies of group inclusion" I refer to all types of constitutional provisions, legal provisions, and other regulations or practices that are intended to encourage, increase, or guarantee the *political presence* (following Phillips 1995) or *descriptive representation* (following Pitkin 1972) of a specific group. Following Young (2000, 89), I understand "social groups" not as collectives of individuals with specific attributes, but rather as collectives formed by the shared actions and interactions of members with each other and those outside or on the margins of the group. SCs are a group in this sense. Nonetheless, they should not be understood as a unitary category. As with any marginalized group, there are intersectional power dynamics within the group itself (see Crenshaw 1989, Young 1997, McCall 2005, Hancock 2007).

16. See, for example, Phillips (1995, 62), Young (2000, 144), Kymlicka (1995, chap. 7), Lijphart (1984, 22–23), and others.

17. See, for example, Tate (2001), Gay (2001, 2002), Pantoja and Segura (2003), Lawless (2004), Banducci et al. (2004), Griffin and Keane (2006), Dolan (2006), Wolbrecht and Campbell (2007), Zetterberg (2009), Schwindt-Bayer (2010), Butler and Broockman (2011), Fox and Lawless (2013).

18. Recent examples include Hopkins (2009) and Chauchard (2014).

19. See Lijphart (1984), Horowitz (1993, 2000), Fraenkel (2001), Reynolds and Horowitz (2002), Wilson (2002), Iyer et al. (2012), Bhalotra et al. (2014).

20. I use "group representation" exclusively to refer to the efforts of politicians to substantively work for the interest of their group, and talk of "redistribution" when discussing actual socioeconomic changes in society that may result from these actions.

21. This is a sizable literature; examples include Lovenduski (1986), Skjeie (1991), Lovenduski and Norris (1993), Dahlerup (2006), Krook (2006), Welch and Foster (1987), Miller (1989),

But other empirical work has shown that they often do not act in the interest of their group, and definitely not in the interest of *all* the members of that group.[22]

To systematize the multitude of outcomes that could be examined, I turn to Fraser's[23] notion of three dimensions of social justice—*redistribution*, *political participation*, and *recognition*. She defines justice as parity in participation in social life, and achieving this entails overcoming three types of hurdles or obstacles that prevent people from participating in social life on an equal footing. As an explicit goal of the Indian state is to protect weaker sections of society from "social injustice and all forms of exploitation,"[24] evaluating the effects of their policies on different aspects of social injustice seems fitting.

The first hurdle to social justice is distributive injustice: being prevented from participating in social life because of a lack of socioeconomic resources. SCs have traditionally been heavily disadvantaged along this dimension, being generally poorer than other social groups, less educated, and systematically forced into low-status occupations. The class disadvantages separating SCs and others have become weaker over time—but have the electoral quotas contributed to this change? And if so, was this because SC politicians were better at representing SCs—or for some other reason?

The second dimension is political participation:[25] being included in the community that makes political decisions, and having the opportunity to voice concerns to those with political power. SCs have been guaranteed a proportional presence in India's legislative assemblies, and thereby parity in terms of numerical inclusion—but have the politicians who have been elected through the quota system been able to contribute on the same footing as other politicians? And has the inclusion of SCs in political positions made SCs in the voting public feel more represented or promoted their political participation?

Bratton and Haynie (1999), Canon (1999), Preuhs (2006), Grose (2005), Minta (2009), Grose (2011), Broockman (2013).

22. Interesting examples include Diamond (1977), Alionescu (2004), Skard (2012), Celis and Childs (2014), Htun (2016).

23. Fraser (2007, 277).

24. Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution, Article 46.

25. In Fraser's work this is the third dimension, which she added only in her later writings. I have chosen to place it as the second dimension here, because that is the order in which I present the findings in this book.

The final dimension concerns recognition. This is a cultural dimension, focused on inequality in social status. Through several publications, Fraser has argued that too much emphasis has been placed on redistributional justice: people can also be prevented from participating in social life on equal terms by institutionalized status hierarchies. This is particularly relevant for the SCs of India, as it was primarily humiliation and stigmatization, rather than economic deprivation or a shared cultural identity, that has set them apart from others.[26] Have the quotas affected the social status of SCs?

These three hurdles to social justice structure the empirical inquiry in this book. I will show how the SC quota system—a quota policy that incentivizes group integration but not group representation—has had important consequences for political participation and recognition, but no detectable effect on redistribution.

Elite-level effects and broader social change

The disaggregation of outcomes according to three aspects of social justice—redistribution, political participation, and recognition—covers several types of important outcomes. This disaggregation is similar to that used by other authors wanting to examine a broad array of outcomes of policies of group inclusion.[27] However, there is another important distinction to make: between elite-level effects and broader social change.

In November 2010 I was traveling with an SC politician—a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)—in India's largest state, UP. He was campaigning for the upcoming election, traveling from village to village, hearing people's complaints and needs, and trying to convince them that he would be able to help if they voted for him. In each village, we were offered tea and snacks, and the villagers crowded around him to tell about the needs of the village and ask for favors. Later I asked him whether people from higher-caste groups ever treated him badly or refused to share food and drink with him. His answer was similar to responses I got from several SC politicians across India:

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26. See Kohli (1990), Weiner (2001), Stuligross and Varshney (2002), Varshney (2014).

27. See, for instance, Franceschet et al. (2012), who divide the outcomes they look at into substantive, descriptive, and symbolic. I follow Pitkin (1972) in using those terms to describe the representational role of politicians, while I use the language of *redistribution*, *political participation*, and *recognition* for describing the effects of that representstion.

"Personally I never experience any discrimination, people would not dare, but if I come with Dalit [SC] friends they will often not be offered tea."[28]

His statement is revealing. A first interesting thing to note is that he claimed never to experience any discrimination himself. He could travel around to different villages, entering the homes of voters from different caste groups and sharing tea and snacks with them. This shows that the common boundaries of untouchability did not apply to him. He was influential, a politician, and the villagers we encountered treated him with respect. Given the continuing prevalence of practices of untouchability across India, this is in itself quite remarkable, and could be evidence of a change: he, an SC, was recognized as being a person of importance and worthy of respect.

A second striking aspect of this story is the fact that this SC politician explained that people would "not dare" to discriminate against him. That choice of words indicates that he was conscious of continued caste bias. He was implying that the same voters might have treated him differently had he not held a position of power—that there could be a difference in how they would treat him in and out of office. Work by Chauchard[29] on quotas for SCs in village-level politics in Rajasthan shows that villagers who had been exposed to SC politicians were more likely to say they would accept tea from an SC and less likely to issue verbal threats against SCs who did not adhere to social norms. Importantly, the changes in behavior seemed driven by changes in what was perceived as socially correct, and not by actual changes in attitudes toward SCs. This may also hold true for behavior toward higher-level politicians, like the MLA I was traveling with.

Finally, the statement made by this MLA also pointed toward a clear difference in behavior toward him and his SC friends. It is possible for the same villagers to alter their behavior toward a powerful politician, refraining from caste discrimination in his case, while at the same time discriminating against SC friends accompanying him. The quota system and the gradual integration of SCs into mainstream politics may have brought changes in behavior toward this new political elite, but not toward SCs in general.

What this discussion shows is that there is an important theoretical distinction to be drawn between changes achieved at the elite level, among

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28. MLA interviewed in Lucknow, November 21, 2010. See section 1.3 for information about the interviews.

29. Chauchard (2014, 2016).

those few people who have come to power through the quota system, and broader social change in the general population. The quota system has made it possible for some members of previously excluded groups to get elected into politics. That in itself has some direct effects: it alters the social status of the elite as a whole. But it invariably also affects the dynamics within the political elite and how the voting public perceives the elite.

The elite-level consequences are interesting in their own right. That an SC politician can interact with his voters without experiencing discrimination should be considered a major social change, given the severity of the stigma attached to being an SC. But, as the anecdote about this SC politician indicates, that change may not necessarily be reflected in behavior toward other SCs.

What then is the relationship between the consequences at the elite level and the broader societal effects? Voters cannot be expected to respond positively to a new elite that remains marginalized and ignored. The extent to which SC politicians are taken seriously by other politicians and wield political power is therefore likely to affect the extent to which they serve as meaningful role models or help to alter stereotypes about SCs. Nor is it reasonable to expect quotas to lead to redistributional changes in society, if the new politicians do not bring changes in the political debate or policy choices. To understand policy changes, or the lack thereof, of the quotas, we therefore need to look at what the SC politicians do while they are in power. There may be various reasons for changes in society, but elite-level political change is certainly one of them. That is why, throughout the empirical chapters in this book, I operate with the distinction between elite-level effects and social change, as well as indicating possible interactions between them.

Disaggregating the effects of the quotas in this way—into three dimensions of social justice, studied at the levels of the political elites and the general population—allows me to show that the SC quotas have had a range of effects (some perhaps more normatively desirable than others), that the effects have been greatest at the elite level, and that these elite-level changes have *conditioned* or shaped the broader effects on society. Separating out the different consequences in this way therefore enables me to shed light on some of the trade-offs inherent in choices about how to design policies intended to promote group inclusion.

1.2 The importance of institutions

A sizable literature in political science has discussed what combinations of electoral rules are most likely to have beneficial societal effects, like lowering intergroup tensions.[30] By contrast, work on policies of group inclusion has to a large extent focused on why they are important and has examined the effects of quotas within single cases. Less attention has been given to the fact that differently designed versions of such policies may result in widely different outcomes.[31] As there is considerable variation in how such policies are designed,[32] it is important to shift the discussion from arguing that they *should* be implemented to examining how choices about *how* they are designed and implemented will shape their consequences. What should we expect from differently designed policies?

The importance of the design of the SC quotas in shaping the actions of political parties, politicians, and voters was evident during my fieldwork. Surprisingly often, my interview respondents referred back to how institutional factors and electoral concerns constrained their actions. This was particularly common in the interviews with SC politicians who had come to power because of the quota system.

In India, electoral quotas are granted as reserved seats in the legislative assemblies. Constituencies reserved for SCs are single-member electoral districts where voters from all caste groups may vote (joint electorates).[33] Efforts have been made to place the quotas in areas with high concentrations of SCs (see section 1.3), but since SCs are spread out across the country, they still tend to form a minority in any given electorate. This design choice was based on a compromise between the SC leader Dr. Ambedkar, who wanted

30. See Lijphart (1994), Bunce (1999), Horowitz (2000), Diamond and Plattner (2006), Norris (2008), Reynolds (2011), Lublin (2014), and others.

31. Some important exceptions to this generalization includes work by Bird (2014), Zuber (2015), Kroeber (2016), and Kroeber and Thürk (2016). There is also considerable work on how differently designed policies have had different impacts on the numerical presence of the group which the policy was meant to benefit (e.g., Matland 2006, Dahlerup 2006, Krook and O'Brien 2010, Hughes 2011, Lublin and Wright 2013).

32. See Htun (2004), Franceschet et al. (2012), Bird (2014).

33. From 1951 till 1961, the reservation system was organized differently: all constituencies had one general (nonreserved) seat, and in addition some had an extra seat reserved for an SC or ST politician. This created confusion and dissatisfaction, and the practice was ended with the Two-Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act in 1961, stipulating that India was to have only single-member constituencies.

SC politicians to be elected solely by SC voters, and Mahatma Gandhi, who was opposed to quotas in any form, a topic we return to in chapter 2.

What Dr. Ambedkar was concerned about, and the argument commonly heard in India, is that this design of the quota system prevents group representation for SCs because of the incentives it creates for politicians: SC politicians need to cater to non-SC voters to be able to get elected. That argument makes a lot of sense. To get elected in an SC constituency, it is rarely sufficient to get only the SC votes: the candidates must attract other members of the voting public as well. Running a campaign overtly directed toward SCs, or giving preferential treatment to SCs between elections, would make it hard to get elected. As a result, it is in the interest of SC politicians not to seem too focused on the interests of their group. Since there is a strong assumption of group-linked loyalties in India, several SC politicians I interviewed for this project said they made deliberate efforts to be seen as representing *not* the SC community, but rather their political party (see chapter 3). Even if not all politicians respond to the incentives of the quota system, repeated elections serve the evolutionary function of selecting those who do. Politicians who do not seem to be working for the benefit of the majority of the voters tend to fare poorly in the next elections.

Up to this point, this argument about institutional incentives for politicians aligns well with what I perceive as conventional wisdom about the SC quotas.[34] But this is only a part of the story. To understand more about the effects that the quotas for SCs have had, we also need to consider how their design shapes the behavior of political parties and voters.

Political parties serve an important role in Indian elections. There are many parties on the ballot in every election, but within each state there will usually be only a few serious contenders.[35] A party label carries local networks and name recognition, and although politicians may shift party allegiance from election to election,[36] most successful candidates run under a party label.

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34. It is also consistent with the comparative studies of the effects of differently designed policies of group inclusion on the "substantive representation" of the groups. See Kroeber (2016) and Kroeber and Thürk (2016) on how minority politicians elected from majority-minority districts are more likely to act as group representatives.

35. Chhibber et al. (2014) show that at the state level the effective number of parties was around four (when computed by votes) and around three (in terms of seats) between 1967 and 2000.

36. Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2017) show that in India many incumbent politicians and candidates run for election under different party labels from one election to the next.

For political parties, it is important to capture as many electoral seats as possible, in order to dominate the legislative assembly and form the state government. That makes them keen to win in the SC-reserved constituencies. And, since the electorate in those constituencies is a mixture of SC and non-SC voters, there is no reason why mainstream political parties should not be able to do that. All political parties therefore have a vested interest in recruiting, training, and empowering SC politicians to make them as competitive as possible.

Additionally, since SCs are not concentrated in SC-reserved areas, political parties have an incentive to vie for the SC vote across all constituencies, undermining the creation of SC parties. Some policies of group inclusion create electoral districts with a majority of minority voters—thereby limiting the importance of the group as a voting bloc. In the context of majority-minority districting in the United States, it has been argued that the election of one black Democrat probably has come at the cost of electing two white Democrats who might have been quite good at representing black interests.[37] Similarly, in New Zealand, the communal electorates for the Māori population have been found to have produced a trade-off between the election of Māori politicians and the party preferred by most Māori voters.[38] This is not the case for SCs in India, as they are a large voting bloc across both reserved and nonreserved constituencies.

Across India it is therefore in the interest of all parties to try to address (or co-opt) the main rallying points of SCs and important SC leaders, to win SC-reserved constituencies, to gain the support of SC voters across all constituencies, and to prevent the competition that could arise from group-oriented party formation.[39]

As a result, the design of the quota system for SCs serves to incentivize mainstream parties to cater to the interests of SC voters *and* to recruit and support SC politicians, nudging them into positions of power. And as the new SC elite gains political know-how and experience, the stereotypes and practices associated with traditional social hierarchies are likely to start

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37. Lublin (1999).

38. Lublin (2014, 143).

39. As argued by Chandra (2004), the SC party Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) was successful in some parts of India because mainstream parties failed to give SC leaders enough power within their party organizations to prevent group-oriented party formation.

breaking down at the elite level—which in turn *may* affect group relations in society in general.

In addition to affecting the population through signals of change at the elite level, the quota system also has a direct impact on the lives of people living in reserved constituencies. Constituency service is a central task of elected politicians in India (see chapter 3), and voters need to interact with politicians to benefit from these services. As most SC politicians are probably unlikely to make much effort to help voters who treat them with disdain, non-SC voters in reserved constituencies have to treat SC politicians with a certain amount of respect if they wish to benefit from their constituency services. Non-SC voters may not change their personal attitudes toward SCs, but they have good reasons for showing respect in their interactions with the SC politician in power in their area. And so, clear changes in the behavior of voters toward SC elites are to be expected.

From this discussion, it should be evident that the design of the quotas for SCs has impeded group representation—by making SC politicians accountable to a mostly non-SC electorate and by undermining the formation of ethnic parties. This implies that we should not expect them to bring to power SC politicians who actively work for the interests of SCs; and, consequently, we should not expect their inclusion to lead to major policy changes or to much redistribution to this group in society.

However, from an institutional perspective, we *should* expect these quotas to result in the creation and gradual empowerment of an SC elite within mainstream political parties that is treated quite well by both other elites and voters. This should greatly improve the political participation of this new SC elite, especially since it is integrated into mainstream parties that control the policy agenda.[40] The greater visibility of SCs in important positions of power may also embolden other SCs to make their political opinions heard. And finally, the inclusion of SCs into mainstream parties should break down caste boundaries between SCs and others in the elite, as well as between SC politicians and their voters, and these changes at the elite level *may* also affect intergroup relations in the rest of society.

Seen together, the expectation from this institutional argument is that the quotas for SCs should have a moderating, or *centripetal*, effect, by

40. See Allen (2016) for an interesting discussion of how even where there are quotas that incentivize group representation, they are unlikely to lead to much policy change, since minority-group politicians are isolated in small ethnic parties that have little ability to affect policies.

incentivizing the integration of some SCs into the mainstream political elite.[41] From the implementation of these quotas we should expect to see limited effects on redistribution, but considerable effects on political participation and recognition (particularly at the elite level). In other words, these quotas should result in positive outcomes that are *unrelated* to group representation and redistribution.

How the argument can be generalized

The preceding discussion concerned an institutional argument for what to expect from the SC quotas and why, indicating that they will incentivize group integration but not group representation. To what extent can the patterns found for India be generalized to other contexts as well?

Policies of group inclusion are becoming increasingly common. While electoral quotas were quite uncommon before the 1980s, by 2016, 77 countries around the globe had either legislative candidate quotas or reserved seats for women in the lower house of the legislative assembly.[42] There are also many types of policies of group inclusion for minority groups. Examining 80 democracies that were rated "free" by Freedom House from 1990 through 2011, Lublin and Wright[43] found seven countries with reserved seats for minority groups, six with reduced electoral thresholds, and one (Mauritius) with a best-loser system guaranteeing the inclusion of minorities. Bird[44] reported that at least 28 countries had quotas for ethnic groups in the lower house of the legislative assembly, but also noted that many countries had other types of provisions for ethnic minorities, such as quotas for elections to the upper house, provisions for overrepresentation of areas with a concentration of certain ethnic groups, or separate parliamentary chambers or consultative bodies designated for ethnic groups.[45]

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41. See Horowitz (2000, 2014).

42. Another 54 countries had voluntary party quotas. The website http://www.quotaproject.org/ continuously updates the overview of countries that employ quotas for women.

43. Lublin and Wright (2013).

44. Bird (2014).

45. As noted by Htun (2004) and Bjarnegård and Zetterberg (2014), reserved seats are more common for minorities, and aspirant or candidate quotas are more common for women. This is because quotas for women are intended to integrate them, whereas quotas for minorities are often designed to allow them to retain their uniqueness.

These different policies are usually categorized by similarities in design.[46] However, for studying their effects, it makes better sense to organize them by the types of incentives they create for politicians, political parties, and voters. Kymlicka has suggested that policies can be distinguished by whether they manipulate the identity of candidates or the electorate.[47] Similarly, based on my findings from India, I propose roughly dividing the many types of policies of group inclusion found around the world into two types: those that make elected politicians accountable and answerable to a specific group (e.g., separate electoral lists for minorities)—we can call them *policies of group representation*—and those that simply mandate the inclusion, or presence, of politicians with certain characteristics (e.g., party quotas for women). However, whereas others have emphasized how these latter policies *fail to provide* group representation, I will argue, from the experiences of India, that these policies can have important effects on group integration—and will therefore refer to them as *policies of group integration*.

Majority-minority districting is an example of a policy of group representation. This policy alters the relative proportion of groups in electoral districts, thereby making any politician elected in the majority-minority districts answerable to an electorate consisting of a majority of people belonging to the minority group. This creates an incentive for politicians (and parties) elected in those constituencies to work for the interests of that group. Minority candidates may be perceived as better group representatives, but Swain[48] found that in the case of majority-minority districts in the United States, both white and black politicians do a good job of representing black interests when given the electoral incentives to do so in majority-minority districts. Reserved seats with separate electorates is another example of a policy of group representation—as in New Zealand until 1993, where only persons of Māori descent could vote for the Māori politicians elected from reserved Māori seats. Māori politicians therefore needed only to cater to a Māori electorate to win elections.[49] The quotas for tribal groups, or STs, in India are also closer to

46. See, for example, Htun (2004), Bird (2014), Dahlerup (2006), and Matland (2006). Krook (2014) has summarized different ways of subdividing and conceptualizing quotas and called for a pragmatic approach to using whatever subdivision is practical for the analysis at hand.

47. Kymlicka (1995, 147–48). A similar distinction is made by Kroeber (2017), also showing how different incentives shape the actions of politicians.

48. Swain (1993).

49. Lublin (2014, 143).

this type of policy, since STs usually form a majority of the electorate in areas reserved for STs.

On the other hand, the most common policies of group inclusion do not incentivize group representation: they manipulate the characteristics of politicians, but not the electorate to which the politicians are answerable. Aspirant quotas, candidate quotas, and reserved seats with joint electorates (including the quotas for SCs discussed in this book) all make politicians answerable to a similar group of voters as other politicians. It follows that their electoral incentives will be the same as those of other politicians. If politicians are responsive to electoral incentives—as is assumed in most traditional political economy models[50]—we should expect them to act similarly to other politicians. Even if some politicians are driven more by group interests than by electoral incentives, the power of political parties in selecting candidates, and the choices made by voters in elections, will gradually result in the selection of politicians who work for the interests of their parties and the majority of the voters. This is what I will show has happened for SCs in India, and this has also been found to be the case in other systems where minority politicians are elected by mostly majority-group voters, as in Romania.[51]

Table 1.1 provides examples of common policies of group inclusion and whether they make politicians accountable to their own group—*policies of group representation*—or to a similar electorate as other politicians—*policies of group integration.* The examples listed on top (in black) are policies that deterministically include politicians from some specific group, while the ones below (in gray) do so only probabilistically. I subdivide the examples in this way because the first question usually asked about policies of group inclusion is whether they actually increase the numerical presence of the group—and the answer will depend on whether the policy is deterministic or probabilistic.[52]

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50. See Downs (1957), Arrow (1963), Mayhew (1974), Fenno (1978), Kingdon (1989), Cox and McCubbins (2005).

51. Kroeber and Thürk (2016).

52. Reserved seats and nominations are examples of policies that guarantee the inclusion of politicians with certain characteristics. By contrast, aspirant quotas and candidate quotas without placement mandates are examples of policies that encourage the inclusion of groups without guaranteeing this: they ensure the members of a group the opportunity to run for election, but that does not necessarily result in their getting elected. See Matland (2006), Dahlerup (2006), Krook and O'Brien (2010), and others.

Table 1.1 Policies of group integration and policies of group representation

Similar electorate as other politicians: "Policies of group integration"	Different electorate than other politicians: "Policies of group representation"
→ Reserved seats with joint electorates	→ Reserved seats with separate electorates
→ Candidate quotas with placement mandates	→ Special legislative bodies
	→ Nomination
→ Candidate quotas without placement mandates	→ Majority-minority districting
	→ Lowered thresholds
→ Aspirant quotas	→ Self-identification to constituency

Note: Examples in black deterministically include groups, while those in gray probabilistically include them.

Drawing a distinction between policies of group integration and policies of group representation is useful because it makes it clearer what types of effects can be expected from differently designed policies. With policies of group integration we should expect to see improved political participation at the elite level and better intergroup relations (as will be shown in this book), but not group-specific political mobilization (e.g., through the formation of ethnic parties) or more group-specific targeting in spending.

Policies of group representation, on the other hand, may result in the mobilization around ethnic parties and clearer efforts to represent group interests, but perhaps less political influence for the included politicians and worse intergroup relations. As I return to discuss in the conclusion, several studies of policies of group representation have found that they may not actually result in policy changes that benefit the group. This is because in many cases minority politicians are pitted against each other, minority interests are fragmented, and the minority agenda is set apart from the arena of mainstream political competition.[53]

If policies of group inclusion can primarily incentivize *either* group representation *or* group integration, not both at the same time, then how to design a policy in a given cultural and institutional context becomes an

53. For example, see the detailed discussions of quotas for ethnic minorities in Croatia (Allen 2016) and in Colombia (Htun 2016).

important political choice. Intuitively, it may seem that the ideal effect of including formerly excluded groups is to improve their representation. But whereas group inclusion without group representation in some contexts has been talked of as having little value, being merely symbolic, or an act of tokenism, this book aims to bring more nuance to this debate by demonstrating some of the benefits of a system that incentivizes group integration instead.

The categorization provided in Table 1.1 provides a rough overview of what we may expect from differently designed policies, but it should be seen as a starting point for further study rather than as a clear set of predictions. The generalization here is based on experiences from India: the effects of other policies in other contexts are likely to depend on institutional incentives, but they will also be affected by a broad range of other factors—including the overall electoral system, the salience of group identities and cleavages, individual convictions of politicians, and much more.

There is, for example, ample evidence of how *some* women have entered politics through mainstream parties and done important work that was in the interest of many women.[54] Similarly, interviews with minority politicians reveal that some of them feel a responsibility to voice what they perceive as the interests of their group, whereas others want to distance themselves from their group identity and be free to fight for the political issues closest to their hearts.

My point is simply that if politicians who have gotten to power with the help of a policy of group integration work for group interests, they do so *despite* the incentives that they face, and not because of them. And, as I show in this book, there may be clear long-term benefits from policies that incentivize group integration rather than group representation.

1.3 Empirical approach

There has been no lack of opinions and controversies about the effects of the electoral quotas for SCs—the interview material presented in this book offers examples—but the subject has received little academic attention.[55] In

54. This literature is further discussed in chapter 4.

55. The reservations in education and jobs, however, have been debated heavily in recent years, and much has been written about them. See, for example, Wadhwa (1975), Galanter (1984), Dhavan (2008), and Bagde et al. (2016).

one of the few empirical studies of the effects of the electoral quotas for SCs, Galanter[56] wrote that they have been a "partial and costly success." More than 30 years later, McMillan used survey data to conclude that "[t]he clearest direct effect of electoral reservation is to provide a guaranteed minimum number of legislators from the Scheduled Castes."[57] Both authors note the need for more detailed studies with better data. But recent efforts to examine the effects of these quotas have been hindered by data scarcity, and have also encountered a problem common when trying to draw causal conclusions from observational data: differences observed in places with and without quotas may simply be the result of differences that existed even before the quotas came into effect.

As discussed in the preceding sections, there are many choices to be made as to which outcomes to examine and how to theorize about those outcomes. The next step is to think about how to go about measuring those outcomes, collecting the necessary data, and finding a good identification strategy. I have opted for a multimethod approach, combining a variety of qualitative and quantitative data. The result is a book that is data-oriented, each chapter drawing on a different set of empirical sources.

Second, I approach some of the methodological challenges related to studying noncomparable units by employing a matching design. Exploiting particularities in how a new delimitation of electoral boundaries and quota locations was implemented in 1974, and using pre-delimitation data from 1971, I identify pairs of SC-reserved constituencies and very similar non-reserved constituencies, and then trace developments there over time. This allows me to draw fairly strong conclusions about constituency-level effects of the quota system, and represents a major step forward in identifying the effects of the quotas. However, this empirical approach does not allow conclusions about possible diffuse effects of the quotas—broader societal changes that affect reserved and nonreserved areas to the same extent. Neither does it shed light on what *would have happened* had there been no quotas for SCs at all, or if the quota system had been designed differently. Empirically studying such counterfactual or hypothetical scenarios is very difficult, but I discuss this in the concluding chapter.

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56. Galanter (1979, 450).

57. McMillan (2005, 320).

Data

Collecting, collating, cleaning, and merging large-scale data from across India formed a major part of the work that went into this book. I chose to focus on India's 15 largest states, which covered most of the territory of the country and included approximately 91.2 percent of the population according to the 1971 census.[58] The main reason for this choice was that my identification strategy required constituencies that remained unchanged throughout the period 1974–2007. This was the case for the 15 states under study, whereas several other states changed their boundaries during this period.[59]

Data were collected from various sources. A major effort went into the creation of constituency-level estimates of development indicators from the Indian Censuses of 1971 and 2001. Census data in India are collected for administrative units—but these differ from electoral constituencies, making it hard to look for associations between political changes and development outcomes.[60] Creating estimates of development indicators was therefore an important part of this project (see appendix A.3). These estimates were used to trace development patterns over time and also as baseline data for the matching analyses employed throughout this book.

Further, I assembled a complete dataset of candidates, electoral returns, and rerunning patterns for all of India's state assemblies from the late 1960s until

58. The states included are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. In 2000 three new states (Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand) were carved out of these existing states. In Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand the political boundaries were retained, whereas in Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand) a new delimitation was conducted. Since I trace the same constituencies over time between 1974 and 2007 I could not include Uttarakhand in the dataset (so only the parts of Uttar Pradesh that remained in the state after the year 2000 are included in the data). After 2000, my datasets thus cover 17 states.

59. Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Goa became states in 1987; Delhi got a legislative assembly in 1991 (delimited in 1992); Jammu and Kashmir was delimited in 1995; and Uttarakhand in 2001. I also ended up excluding the remaining states of Northeast India, partly because of problems in accessing data from that region, partly because their constituencies are smaller than in most of the rest of the country, making them less readily comparable, and also because the high number of ST-reserved seats in that region meant that large parts of these states would be excluded from the analysis in any case. Some individual constituencies also changed their reservation status in 1977, following the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act of 1976. I exclude these constituencies from the dataset. See appendix A.2 for further details.

60. Bhavnani and Jensenius (2015).

2013.[61] Like many other data sources in India, these data are publicly available, but not in formats amenable to statistical analysis. The data had to be scraped from the PDFs that are publicly available from the Election Commission of India (ECI) and cleaned of errors. The election data were then used for manually tracing the rerunning patterns of candidates (see appendix A.2).

To probe for voter-level attitudes, I collated evidence from existing voter surveys, and conducted an original survey in UP in January 2013. This book also includes little-explored data on candidate characteristics and state-level cabinet membership from the early 1970s until 2007. Further information about each of these data sources is given in the chapters where the data are used and in appendix A.

Material from interviews constitutes a key part of the evidence presented in this book. Between August 2010 and April 2011, I conducted over one hundred interviews with cabinet ministers, MLAs, *pradhans* (elected village chiefs), Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, activists, and members of the voting public. In selecting respondents, I sought to include a range of political opinions, experiences, caste groups, and age groups in order to get various perspectives. Most of the interviews were conducted in Delhi, and in the states of Himachal Pradesh (Shimla and Solan), UP (Lucknow, Meerut, and Varanasi), and Karnataka (Bangalore). The interviews were not recorded, so quotes from interviews provided throughout this book are approximate, and are usually my own translation from Hindi to English. In a few instances, the original Hindi term is provided in italics. See appendix A.9 for an overview of locations and types of respondents.

Identification strategy

A major challenge in studying the effects of SC quotas in India, as with many other observational studies, is that the locations of the quotas were assigned systematically, not randomly. That means that differences observable between them today may be the result of original differences, and not effects of the quota policy. To reduce this selection problem, I exploit features in the institutional design of the quotas to identify nonreserved (general or open)

61. This includes data on the last election before the 1974 delimitation and the first election after the 2008 delimitation for the states in the sample.

constituencies that can serve as plausible counterfactuals to SC-reserved constituencies.[62]

The electoral constituencies in the 15 states studied here remained unchanged between 1974 and 2007. The original plan had been to rotate the locations of reserved seats with every ten-year census. The quotas for SCs in state assemblies came into effect with the first national and state elections held in India in 1951, and were rotated in the mid-1950s, early 1960s, late 1960s, and then again in the early 1970s.[63] But then it was decided to freeze the boundaries of all parliamentary and state assembly constituencies, and thereby also their reservation status.[64] As a result, the borders of most of India's constituencies stayed exactly the same for more than 30 years—the period in focus in this book. That has made it possible to compare constituencies that elected SC politicians for more than 30 years, with constituencies that rarely elected SC politicians during the same period. Figure 1.1 shows the location of constituencies reserved for SCs during this period.[65]

The borders of the more than four thousand state assembly constituencies from which Indian MLAs were elected between 1974 and 2007 were drawn up by the Delimitation Commission of India following the release of the 1971 Census of India. Once all the constituency boundaries had been drawn, the next step was to select seats to be reserved for SCs and STs. States, and then administrative districts, were assigned a number of reserved seats proportional to the percentage of SCs and STs in their population. If an administrative district was eligible for an SC-reserved seat, the constituency with the highest percentage of SCs within the district was generally assigned to be reserved for SCs.[66]

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62. This empirical approach follows the intuition of the potential outcomes framework, or the Neyman-Rubin framework, as set out by Splawa-Neyman (1923), Rubin (1974, 2006), and Holland (1986).

63. The Delimitation Orders for each of these changes can be found at http //eci.nic.in/eci_main1/delimitation_pub_rpt.aspx.

64. Differential birth rates across India led to an increase in the political representation of areas with high rates. This was seen as a perverse incentive for the family planning programs, a focal area for the Indian government in the 1970s. The 42nd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, adopted in 1976, froze all political boundaries until after the 2001 census.

65. GIS shapefiles were retrieved from the ECI, and corrected by Sandip Sukhtankar, Manasa Patnam, and the author. The reservation status is based on the 1976 Delimitation report, as described in the appendix.

66. See Jensenius (2013) for a discussion of some exceptions.

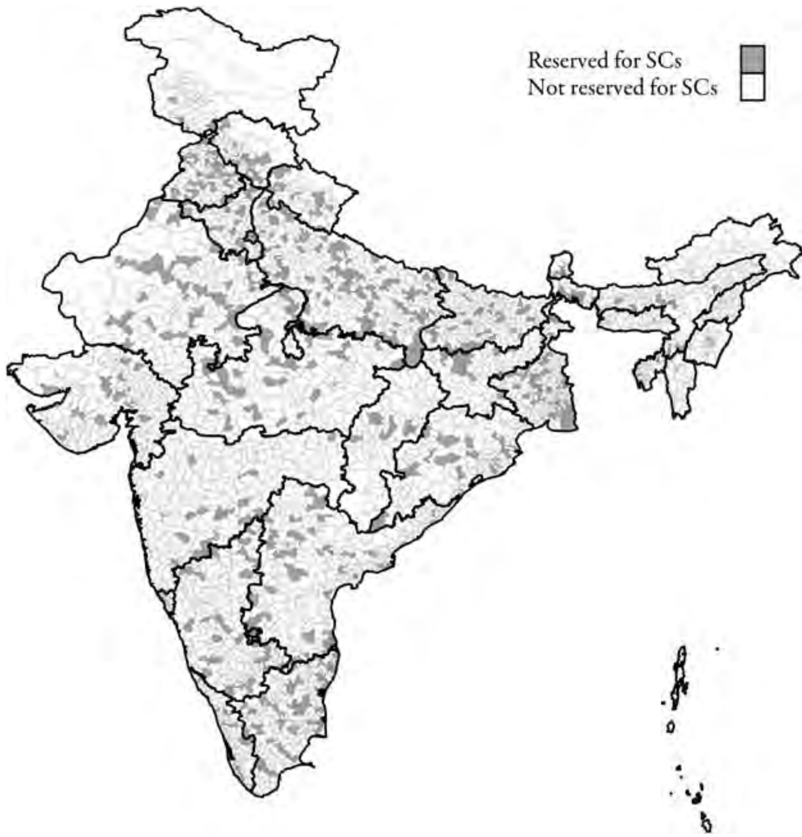

FIGURE 1.1 Indian state assembly constituencies reserved for SCs, 1974–2007

STs (tribal groups) were also assigned reserved seats in a similar way, but since the quotas for SCs and STs have different intellectual histories, requiring a different methodological approach and different data, they are not discussed in this book. I consistently compare SC-reserved constituencies to nonreserved constituencies; ST-reserved constituencies are excluded from all analyses.

The result of the step-wise selection of SC-reserved constituencies was great variation in the percentage of SCs in SC-reserved constituencies, and several instances of constituencies with high proportions of SCs that were not chosen to be reserved. The average share of SCs living in constituencies chosen to be reserved for SCs in the 1970s was 24.7 percent, ranging from a mere

4 percent to 66.5 percent,[67] but there were also nonreserved constituencies where SCs constituted up to about half the population.

The constituencies that became reserved for SCs in the 1970s were generally selected because they had the highest percentage of SCs among the constituencies within that administrative district. This means that an SC-reserved constituency differed systematically from the average nonreserved constituencies within its districts, but it may not have been so different from the constituency with the *second-highest* percentage of SCs. Often there was only a small difference in the percentage of SCs in the constituency that was selected to be reserved for SCs and the one with the second-highest percentage (which remained "general" or nonreserved), so the selection across these pairs could be said to be *as if random*. Matching every SC-reserved constituency to the nonreserved constituency within the same administrative district with the second-highest percentage of SCs (as of 1971) therefore creates pairs of constituencies that were very similar in the early 1970s.

This is the identification strategy used in most of the chapters in this book. Before matching, the comparison was between 2,558 nonreserved constituencies and 505 SC-reserved constituencies.[68] After matching, the comparison is between 470 SC-reserved constituencies and 470 comparable nonreserved constituencies (see Figure 1.2). The matched pairs of constituencies are a reduced sample where the nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies began by looking very similar in the 1970s, so the average differences that emerged between them over time can arguably be interpreted as causal effects of the quota policy. In some chapters I also present evidence from alternative matching specifications for robustness. A further description of the matching models used and balance statistics for the matches can be found in appendix B.

The analyses in most chapters employ a combination of descriptive statistics, matching estimates, and statistical modeling. However, the survey referred to in chapters 7 and 8 used a different empirical approach. That survey was conducted in 2013. Here too, I sought to identify the causal effects of the quota policy by eliminating as many confounding variables as possible

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67. These constituencies were located in Bihar and in West Bengal, respectively. The population figures were calculated by the Delimitation Commission on the basis of the 1971 census data, and were retrieved from their records.

68. This is all the 3,323 constituencies in the 15 states included in the datasets for which census data from 1971 was available, with the exception of the few that changed their reservation status in 1977 and those reserved for STs. See appendix A.1 for further details.

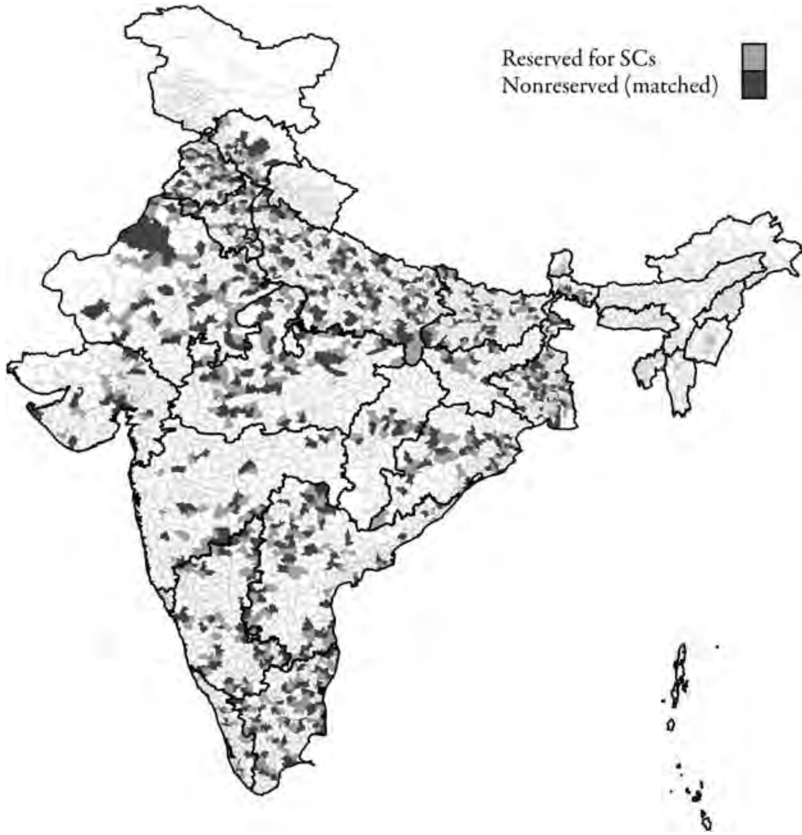

FIGURE 1.2 Matched pairs of SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies

by design rather than by using statistical models. The design of that survey is described in appendix A.8.

1.4 Overview

The book is organized around three dimensions of social justice: redistribution, political participation, and recognition. These topics are taken up in two separate chapters each, one focusing on elite-level effects and one discussing changes in the general population. Efforts are also made to point out how the elite-level patterns condition, or shape, the broader societal effects.

Before these empirical chapters, chapter 2 provides an introduction to the group of SCs and a historical overview of how quotas became a policy tool for addressing social injustice in India. The chapter investigates primary

sources on the initial debates about the design of electoral institutions in the early twentieth century. Tracing the debate on electoral quotas between 1905 and 1950, I show the gradual rhetorical shift from quotas being about group representation to how they become about group integration. A key moment in these debates was the intense struggle between two giants—Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar—who disagreed on how to combat the hierarchies of the caste system. Gandhi wanted to break social boundaries by having joint electorates that would incentivize the integration of SCs into the mainstream political process, whereas Dr. Ambedkar wanted SC politicians to be elected by, and be answerable to, a separate SC electorate. The Gandhian view prevailed. Instead of a quota system of SC politicians answerable to SCs, the quotas were designed to integrate SC politicians into mainstream politics by making it necessary for them to appeal to voters from all caste groups.

A recurrent issue in the study of quotas is whether they result in better representation of the interests of the group in question, and consequently in more redistribution to the group. This is often studied by examining broad societal development outcomes (as done in chapter 4). But we cannot make sense of the presence or absence of such patterns without looking into how the politicians themselves perceive their own political role and what they actually do while in office. In chapter 3 I focus on the representational role of MLAs in India to better understand whether the quotas have resulted in policy changes that could lead to more redistribution to SCs. I start with an account of the daily life of Indian MLAs—based on the literature and on evidence from my fieldwork and interviews—including examples of how SC politicians differ in their political work compared to other politicians. I then discuss how SC politicians themselves describe their representational role. It is clear that they respond to the incentives of the electoral system and the pressures from their political parties, and that many of them perceive it as their role to act as representatives of their parties and not as agents of their group. I conclude the chapter by showing the distribution of which parties have won in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies over time, demonstrating that SC politicians have been elected for a similar set of parties as other politicians, and that parties running specifically on an SC platform have not done particularly well in SC-reserved constituencies.

In chapter 4 I ask whether the quotas for SCs have resulted in more redistribution to the SC community in general. Whereas the expectation in Indian politics is often that groups will receive socioeconomic benefits when they have one of "their own" in power, we should not expect such changes given

the findings in chapter 3. However, several upper-caste respondents claimed that there has been *less* overall development in SC constituencies because SCs are less able to attract resources and influence the bureaucracy—which would indicate that the quotas have been harmful to development in reserved areas. Using census data merged to the state assembly constituency level, I examine changes in the overall level of development, and the distribution of resources between SCs and others in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies during the period 1971–2001. Comparing matched pairs of constituencies, I find that the quotas had no detectable constituency-level effect on development patterns. These findings are robust across multiple model specifications, and across constituencies and villages with varying proportions of SCs.

Chapter 5 inquires into the effects of the quotas for SCs on the political participation of SCs at the elite level, by looking at the gradual integration of SCs into mainstream politics. I examine differences between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in the number of candidates who have run for election, the competitiveness of elections, and the rerunning patterns of candidates. Although reserved constituencies in India used to be somewhat less politically competitive than other constituencies, these differences evened out over time. However, there are differences in the rerunning patterns of SC politicians and others, suggesting that SC politicians may still be somewhat less politically competitive than general-category candidates. In the last section I turn to an indirect but important measure of whether SC politicians have truly achieved parity in political influence and decision making: cabinet membership. I show that SCs have gradually become included in cabinets across India in larger numbers, although they are still less likely than other politicians to be given such responsibilities, and especially so when it comes to the highest-ranked positions.

Chapter 6 examines changes in political participation among voters. The focus is on one of the key indicators in the study of democracies: electoral turnout. Data on state election outcomes between 1974 and 2007 show that turnout plummeted in the first election after constituencies became reserved in the 1970s. Over time, this gap between the turnout in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies narrowed, but after more than 30 years there was still a difference in turnout of several percentage points. Evidence from the Indian National Election Studies (NES) from 1971 and 2004 indicates that it was not mainly caste bias, or a feeling of being disempowered, but rather the weaker networks and mobilizational capacity of SC politicians that explains most of this variation in political participation. As the political experience

and mobilizational capacity of politicians has increased, so has voter turnout. These findings point to how the extent to which the new elite is integrated into political networks shapes how voters respond to them.

Chapter 7 is about status and recognition for the new SC elites. I first examine the socioeconomic profile of SC politicians compared to other politicians and then look at how they are perceived and treated by their colleagues and voters. Drawing on data from UP, I show that whereas SC politicians had significantly less formal education than other politicians a few decades ago, that is no longer the case. However, SCs tend to be less wealthy than other politicians, are less likely to have a criminal record, and seem to be perceived as less "glamorous." Further, interview evidence concerning the relationship between SC politicians and other elites indicates that while SC politicians still face some discrimination, factors like power, education, and money seem to reduce this caste bias. And finally, using data from an original survey in UP, I show that voters for the most part are as positive to SC politicians as to other politicians, and that those who had lived in a reserved constituency for a long time were somewhat more likely to evaluate SC politicians positively.

The final empirical chapter is about recognition for SCs in society more generally. Here I consider how quotas have affected caste-based discrimination. After summarizing key findings in the literature on intragroup and intergroup relations, and the ritual practices of SCs in India today, I present evidence from two surveys that provide some evidence that there has been a reduction in caste-based discrimination in SC-reserved areas. The patterns are weak and the surveys do not have samples that are representative of large areas, so the findings should be treated as tentative. Nonetheless, in both cases the evidence points toward potentially wide-ranging social changes resulting from implementation of the quota system. The patterns are also corroborated by findings from studies of village-level quotas for SCs.

In the concluding chapter, I summarize the empirical findings and argue that quotas for SCs have played an important role in breaking down the social barriers associated with the caste system. This success is only partial, as SC politicians are still perceived as weaker than other politicians, and they still experience subtle forms of discrimination. However, some important achievements have been made: this large community that otherwise probably would have been excluded from politics have had the opportunity to gain political experience and know-how, and it now seems to be seen as socially unacceptable to treat SC elites disrespectfully in public.

I conclude by discussing how these findings speak to other cases. In particular, the findings from India demonstrate the importance of institutional design in shaping the behavior of political parties, politicians, and voters, but also that a policy which incentivizes integration rather than group representation may have important effects. These findings also indicate that understanding the effects of policies of group inclusion at the elite level is vital for understanding social change. While including marginalized groups in the political elite may have some broad societal effects, we should not expect a quota policy to eradicate existing social hierarchies. A quota policy should be recognized for what it is: one of many tools that can be used to promote social justice.

2

From Representation to Integration[1]

The result is that the legislator of the minority elected to the reserved seat instead of being a champion of the minority is really a slave of the majority.[2]

TRADITIONALLY, THE SCS of India were marginalized, uneducated, and poor. They are still recognized as one of India's most vulnerable communities; but, contrary to what one might think, they are not excluded from political power. The system of electoral quotas (reservations) guarantees them a proportional presence in the federal parliament and the state assemblies. This quota system ensures group inclusion, but not group representation—understood as SC politicians acting in the interests of the SC community. In fact, because of the way the quotas are designed, they do not serve to incentivize group representation: SC politicians are elected in reserved constituencies where SCs usually constitute a minority of the electorate, and are therefore answerable to a majority of non-SC voters.

Quotas and other policies of group inclusion can be designed in many ways, and the final form they take is usually the result of a combination of historical legacies and political struggles.[3] The particular design of the Indian quota system—reserved territorial constituencies with joint electorates—was the result of several decades of political negotiations. In this chapter I trace these discussions through four critical junctures.

The process tracing reveals that the drafters of the Indian Constitution were keenly aware that differing designs of the quota system would create differing incentives for the politicians elected from reserved seats. They

1. A previous version of this chapter was published in *Journal of Asian Studies* (Jensenius 2015b).

2. Statement by Dr. Ambedkar (quoted in Samujh 2005, 59).

3. Htun (2004, 439).

recognized that the strong bias against the SC community, as well as their socioeconomic deprivation, would make it difficult for SC candidates to be politically competitive in open elections. But they were also worried about exacerbating existing social cleavages. Rather than creating a quota system of SC politicians representing SC interests, they sought to integrate SC politicians into mainstream politics by making them appeal to voters from various caste groups.

Whereas the intentions of the drafters of the Indian Constitution were quite clear—to integrate SC politicians into mainstream politics—the process tracing also reveals a confusion in what outcomes to expect from the quotas. Debates vacillated between arguments about how quotas were implemented to help SCs get elected in a plurality voting system and assertions that they will result in development ("upliftment") of the SC community in general. This disjuncture between design and expectations—which is symptomatic of many discussions of quotas around the world—is probably one of the main reasons why the quotas for SCs are sometimes denounced as a failure, although they have in fact been very successful at creating and empowering a new SC elite.

2.1 *Who are the Scheduled Castes?*

India's caste system can be understood as a tradition, an ancient system that divides society into endogamous groups, but also as a status-based system that orders those groups in a strict social hierarchy and thereby institutionalizes humiliation of low-status groups.[4] Centered around ideas of ritual purity and pollution, the system legitimizes social and cultural practices associated with displaying power and superiority toward those lower down in the hierarchy. It also institutionalizes a system of social segregation that is determined at birth. Historically, the subcaste a person was born into affected everything from educational and professional choices to eating habits and possible marriage partners.

The group at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, the SCs, do not have a common cultural identity: the term refers to a collection of subcastes with the shared social stigma of being associated with ritually impure work and therefore considered "untouchable." Members of these subcastes, currently about 16 percent of the population of India (some 200 million people), have been subjected to extreme forms of social exclusion, socioeconomic exploitation,

4. See Jodhka (2015, 5–21) for a discussion of different ways of understanding the caste system.

and discrimination. As noted in chapter 1, practices of discrimination have varied from place to place, and have included denial of access to wells, schools, roads, courts of law, temples, shops and cafes, and other public places. SCs have also been prevented from owning land and getting an education, placing them at the bottom of the class hierarchy.[5]

The origins of the practice of untouchability are unknown, but many date the ideas about ritual purity and pollution back to *Manusmriti* and other Vedic writings, produced between 600 BC and 200 AD.[6] One of the earliest detailed accounts of the caste system and the practice of untouchability during British colonial rule is provided in the book *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*:[7]

> Throughout the whole of India the Pariahs [untouchables] are looked upon as slaves by other castes, and are treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere are they allowed to cultivate the soil for their own benefit, but are obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes, who in return for a minimum wage exact the hardest tasks from them. Furthermore, their masters may beat them at pleasure; the poor wretches having no right either to complain or to obtain redress for that or any other ill-treatment their masters may impose on them.

The British rulers in India had a policy of nonintervention in the caste system, but their presence still changed its nature. British attempts to understand and describe the caste system streamlined and solidified a complex and fairly fluid social tradition.[8] The British also brought new opportunities for the untouchable community: they introduced a unitary legal system, which (in theory) gave the lower castes the privilege of equality before the law. Schools founded by reformers, missionaries, and the government provided

5. See, e.g., Gupta (1991), Thorat (2009), and Jodhka (2015). It should be noted that untouchability is practiced within the SC community as well, with higher-ranking SCs discriminating against lower-ranking SCs (see, e.g., Macwan et al. 2010).

6. Michael (1999).

7. This classic work by Dubois (1807, 49) has been found to be based on a a manuscript from the 1760s by the French Jesuit Missionary Gaston-Laurent Coeurdoux (Dirks 2001, 21).

8. See Dirks (2001) for a fascinating account of these changes.

access to education for a few untouchable children.[9] Colonial rule also meant new occupational opportunities. Because they were willing to do ritually polluting works—such as polishing leather shoes and preparing beef—some untouchables were hired as servants for the British.[10] They were also allowed to take government jobs and to enlist in the army, and this made it easier for their children to get schooling. A few, talented untouchables managed to rise up to higher social positions in this way. The most famous example of this is the SC leader Dr. Ambedkar, who was the son of a soldier in the Indian army.[11]

The untouchable community gradually started to mobilize politically. During the 1890s and early 1900s, interest organizations for untouchables—or the *depressed classes*, as they were often termed at the time—were formed in several parts of India.[12] Untouchability also became politicized for a different reason. By the turn of the twentieth century, discussions were ongoing about getting a few elected Indian representatives into the legislative councils across the country. This representation was envisioned to be group-wise, and the counting of groups in the decennial censuses amplified the focus on strength in numbers in politics. Although the Government of India refrained from any official classification of the depressed classes until 1936 (with the release of the Government of India Act, 1935), estimates abounded.[13] Leaders from the Muslim community were worried about Hindus outnumbering them, and therefore argued that the untouchables (who numbered about 50 million, or about one-sixth of the total population in India) should be considered a separate group and not Hindus.[14] The British census officers noted a shift in the attitudes toward SCs among upper-caste Hindus as well. The same community that had opposed

9. Galanter (1984, 21–22). Already in 1854, the British Education Commissioner in India had laid down the principle that all children should have equal access to education. The right to equal treatment for all groups was reaffirmed in a declaration issued by Queen Victoria on April 21, 1856: "none be in any way favoured, none molested by reason of their faith, and that all alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law" (cited in Joshi 1986, 21–22). In practice, however, very few Indians from any caste group had access to school at that point.

10. Dubois (1807, 52).

11. See Jaffrelot (2005).

12. McMillan (2005, 66, endnote 13).

13. See discussions by McMillan (2005, 66–67, endnote 15) and Galanter (1984, 122–23).

14. Saint Nihal Singh in *Indian Review*, cited in Galanter (1984, 26).

SCs being counted as Hindus in the censuses of the late nineteenth century was adamant about counting them as Hindus in the census of 1911.[15] This was the context in which the discussion of political safeguards for this group first came about.

2.2 *The history of electoral quotas in India*

The idea of reserving positions for different groups crept in during the nineteenth century. Concerns had been raised about upper castes being overrepresented in government jobs, and reservations for backward classes in the civil services were initiated in the princely state of Mysore as early as 1874.[16] At this time, whether to reserve political positions was not a relevant debate, since there was virtually no representation of any Indians in the political institutions of the country.

The inclusion of Indians in the political institutions of British India was slow and gradual. In 1853, a few Indians were for the first time included as nonofficial members of the Governor-General's Council with the explicit intention that they would help to strengthen British control over India by contributing their "local knowledge."[17] The Indian Mutiny, or the first Indian war of independence, in 1857 led to several changes to British rule in India, and after the Crown officially took control over India in 1858 further efforts were made to include Indians in the political establishment in order to "provide safety valves for the expression of public opinion which had been so badly misjudged before the rebellion."[18] As one of the British members of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Henry Bartle, wrote in a memorandum in 1860: "The addition of the native element has, I think, become necessary owing to our diminished opportunities of learning through indirect channels what the natives think of our measures, and how the native community will be affected by them."[19] This initial inclusion of Indians in political decision-making bodies was ensured by the Indian Councils Acts of 1861 and 1892, but

15. Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998, 27–28).

16. Bayly (1990, 195).

17. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 37).

18. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 2).

19. Quoted in Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 38).

the number of representatives was small and they were appointed, not elected.[20]

It was with the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 that Indians were for the first time elected to legislative councils in India, albeit with a restricted franchise. With this inclusion of a representative element in the political system came discussions on who was to represent whom. The major decisions related to reservations were taken at the time of the drafting of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms), the Government of India Act of 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms), the Communal Award and the Poona Pact in 1932, and the drafting of the Indian Constitution.[21] In the following sections I focus on these four critical junctures in this negotiation process, which together shaped the electoral quota system for SCs in India:

The Morley-Minto Reforms: Quotas with separate electorates for Muslims were enacted by the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909.

Dr. Ambedkar and the depressed classes: In the electoral reforms following the Government of India Act of 1919, the depressed classes were recognized as a separate community that needed group representation.

The Poona Pact: The Poona Pact of 1932 formalized an agreement between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar, where SCs were guaranteed reserved seats under the condition that they gave up the claim for separate electorates.

Drafting the Constitution: The violence at the time of partition turned the Constituent Assembly against quotas for Muslims and other religious minorities. Quotas for SCs were retained, but were justified as a way of "helping" them rather than bringing to power politicians that would "represent" them.

The Morley-Minto Reforms

At the turn of the twentieth century, Indian nationalists, represented mainly by the Congress Party, were advocating greater political influence. After Lord Minto arrived in India as Viceroy in 1905, he started corresponding with

20. Although in the Indian Councils Acts of 1892 various interest groups were given the right to nominate these representatives (Leith 1893).

21. The focus here is on the political discussions in British India. There were also separate discussions about reservations for religious and caste minorities in several of the larger princely states, such as in Travancore, Cochin, and Mysore (Wilkinson 2004, 105).

the liberal Secretary of State, Lord Morley, about the possibility of enacting reforms to increase the representation of Indians in the political system.[22] The discussion concerned increasing the number of Indian representatives in various legislative councils, and including Indian members in the Council of the Secretary of State in London and in the Viceroy's Council in India. Already in 1905, Minto appointed a committee to consider increasing local representation in India's legislative councils.[23]

This was a time when religious minorities, the Muslims in particular, were anxious to ensure political safeguards because they were "apprehensive of cultural homogenization."[24] According to Galanter, British rule made Muslims feel that they were falling behind Hindus, as it "shattered the earlier patterns of dominance and accommodation, permitting, if not fostering, open rivalry" between Hindus and Muslims.[25]

The Muslim League was formed as a political alternative to the Congress Party in 1906. In October 1906, while the Morley-Minto reform documents were being drafted, a delegation of Muslims visited the Viceroy at his summer residence in Shimla to demand political safeguards. In an address delivered by Sir Aga Khan III, they argued that Muslims would remain a minority in a plurality voting system, and that Muslims must be ensured a political presence. In his response, Minto declared, "the Mahommedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded by any administrative re-organization with which I am concerned."[26]

Minto kept his promise. In the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (the Morley-Minto Reforms), several communities, including Muslims, landholders, and various commercial interests, were ensured the right to elect group representatives to the Legislative Councils in British India.[27]

The choice of granting political safeguards to Muslims was based on the belief in group-wise representation in India, as Minto explained in a letter to Secretary of State Morley: "The only representation for which India is

22. Minto (1934).

23. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 47).

24. Mahajan (1998, 120).

25. Galanter (1984, 25).

26. Quoted in Minto (1934, 47).

27. Ilbert (1910, 432–35).

at present fitted is a representation of Communities."[28] Minto expressed the same opinion in his opening address to the new Imperial Council after the implementation of the reforms in January 1910:[29]

> We have distinctly maintained that Representative Government, in its Western sense, is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire and would be uncongenial to the traditions of Eastern populations; that Indian conditions do not admit of popular representation. [...] But we have been deeply impressed by the changing political conditions alluded to in my note, and we have endeavored to meet them by broadening the representation authorized by the Council Act of 1893, by expanding its rules of procedure and facilitating opportunities for debate, by inviting the leaders of Indian public opinion to become fellow-workers, with us in the British administration, and by securing the representation of those important interests and communities which go to form the real strength of India, whilst at the same time recognizing the claims of educational advance.

From looking at the personal correspondence between Morley and Minto, there can be little doubt that in granting separate electorates to Muslims and other communities, these politicians were primarily concerned with securing British interests in India. In a letter dated May 28, 1906, Minto wrote to Morley: "I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes."[30] On November 23 the same year, Morley wrote to Minto: "I incline to think that the admission of a Native, whether to your Council or to mine, or to both, would be the cheapest concession we could make."[31]

Thus, it was the need for local information, and the pressure to make concessions to a growing local elite, combined with distrust of popular representation, that led to the introduction of group representatives in political institutions in India. Guarantees of political inclusion were granted

28. Quoted in Minto (1934, 102).

29. Quoted in Minto (1934, 372).

30. Quoted in Minto (1934, 29).

31. Quoted in Minto (1934, 101).

to influential groups, with no intention of moving the system in the direction of a Western-style parliamentary democracy.

The introduction of group-wise reservations in the Morley-Minto Reforms was an important historical juncture for India, as it planted the idea of communal and not territorial representation. Following the lead of British India, several princely states also started introducing similar political safeguards for religious and caste groups.[32] Also Gandhi clearly expressed how important he considered this juncture, when he met Lady Minto in London many years later: "'Do you remember my name?' I [Lady Minto] asked. 'Remember your name!' Exclaimed Mr. Gandhi. 'The Minto-Morley Reforms have been our undoing. Had it not been for the Separate Electorates then established, we should have settled our differences by now.' "[33]

Dr. Ambedkar and the depressed classes

Ten years after the discussions of Morley and Minto, the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (named after Secretary of State Montagu and Viceroy Chelmsford) expressed their dissatisfaction with the choice their predecessors had made in granting separate electorates to Muslims: "It is probable that the far-reaching consequences of this decision [to grant separate electorates] and the difficulties which it would create at a later stage were not fully foreseen."[34] The Montagu-Chelmsford Report rejected communal electorates in principle:[35]

> A minority which is given special representation owing to its weak and backward state, is positively encouraged to settle down into a feeling of satisfied security; it is under no inducement to educate and qualify itself to make good the ground it has lost compared with the stronger majority. On the other hand, the latter will be tempted to feel that they have done all they need do for their weaker fellow countrymen and that they are free to use their power for their own purposes. The give-and-take which is the essence of political life is lacking. There is

32. See Kooiman (1995) and Wilkinson (2004).

33. Quoted in Minto (1934, 21).

34. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 49).

35. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 149).

> no inducement to the one side to forbear, or to the other to exert itself. The communal system stereotypes existing relations.

Despite speaking against communal electorates, the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report recommended that the policy be continued, on the grounds that it was politically unfeasible to revoke a right that had already been granted:[36]

> The Muhammedans regard these as settled facts, and any attempt to go back on them will rouse a storm of bitter protest and put a severe strain on the loyalty of a community which has behaved with conspicuous loyalty during a period of very great difficulty. [. . .] How can we say to them that we regard the decision of 1909 as mistaken, that its retention is incompatible with progress towards responsible government, that its reversal will eventually be to their benefit; and that for these reasons we have decided to go back on it?

Thus, although opposed in principle to continuing the system of group-wise representation, the report ended up recommending political safeguards to several groups:[37]

> We have been pressed to extend the concession to other communities. Some have based their claim on their backward, others on their advanced, condition. [. . .] Now our decision to maintain separate electorates for Muhammadans makes it difficult for us to resist these other claims. [. . .] Any general extension of the communal system, however, would only encourage still further demands, and would in our deliberate opinion be fatal to that development of representation upon the national basis on which alone a system of responsible government can possibly be rooted.

In the discussions that led up to the Morley-Minto Reforms, the depressed classes had not been considered for political safeguards, since they were not an organized or influential community at that time. But the deliberations surrounding the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms provided "an additional

36. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 149).

37. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 150).

stimulus" to the development of organizations speaking on their behalf.[38] The demand for political safeguards—primarily electoral quotas—for the depressed classes came in 1917 from a conference led by Namdeo Bagade, and again in 1918 from a Bombay conference led by S. G. G. Rokde.[39] At the same time, others petitioned for removal of all disadvantages imposed on the depressed classes by religion and custom.[40] The response from the British was to include one or two individuals from the depressed classes in their legislative councils, and the Congress Party issued statements about the need for social reform.[41]

At this time, Dr. Ambedkar emerged as an important spokesperson for the depressed classes.[42] He was first asked to mobilize these classes on behalf of the Congress Party in 1917, but soon broke with the party line and—as other SC leaders of the time—started to demand political safeguards for the depressed classes. In January 1919 Dr. Ambedkar made a representation to the Southborough Franchise Committee, demanding some form of guarantee for the political inclusion of the depressed classes. This was a committee appointed on the basis of the recommendations of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, broadly mandated to examine issues related to representation and elections. The committee considered various types of electoral systems (constituency size and voting methods) and recommended "the most simple method of election" (plurality voting in single-member districts). The reason given was that electors were "inexperienced in the exercise of the vote."[43]

In his representation to the Southborough Committee, Dr. Ambedkar argued that whereas minorities such as Muslims and Christians were "like-minded" (homogenous), Hindus were clearly divided into the "touchables" and the "untouchables." Untouchables, he argued, had been treated like slaves for so long that they knew nothing else, and "as can be easily seen

38. McMillan (2005, 29).

39. McMillan (2005, 29).

40. Sisson (1988, 183).

41. Sisson (1988, 184).

42. Dr. Ambedkar grew up in Maharashtra. After completing his schooling in India, he received scholarships to study at Columbia University in New York and the London School of Economics, where he took a degree in law and a PhD in political science. His first systematic critique of the caste system came in a paper he presented at an anthropology seminar as a graduate student at Columbia in May 1916 (see Ambedkar 1916, Jaffrelot 2005).

43. GoI (1928a, 8).

they can be represented by the untouchables alone. They are distinctively their own interests and none else can truly voice them."[44] He also argued that the untouchables would never be elected to hold offices since they were a minority and were seen as inferior: "[T]erritorial constituencies fail to create popular Government because they fail to secure personal representation to members of minor groups."[45]

From his speech, it is clear that Dr. Ambedkar envisioned the inclusion of SC politicians who would voice the concerns of the SC community, which he considered distinct from the interests of other Hindus. He also thought they would help to prevent the systematic exclusion of SCs from politics. Further, he argued that group representation would reduce caste-based social boundaries by bringing together groups in the legislative assemblies that usually did not interact: "So long as each caste or a group remains isolated its attitude remains fossilized. But the moment the several castes and groups begin to have contact and co-operation with one another the resocialization of the fossilized attitude is bound to be the result."[46] In other words, he was concerned with all three dimensions of social justice discussed in chapter 1: redistribution, political participation, and recognition.

The Franchise Committee was convinced that the SC community needed political safeguards. On the basis of the recommendations of the Committee's report, the Government of India Act of 1919 continued the separate electorates for religious groups and established a system of nomination of a few representatives from the depressed classes. The depressed classes were thereby recognized as a distinct community, alongside religious communities, landholders and other interest groups.

At this time, Indian politicians did not limit themselves to discussing quotas as the only form of political safeguard for communities. In 1916, the Congress Party and the Muslim League had agreed on a scheme of suggestions for a constitutional framework for India. This "Lucknow Pact" stated that all "important minorities" should have reserved seats. It was also suggested that the members of a community represented in the Imperial and Provincial Councils should have the power to veto bills or resolutions that went against

44. Ambedkar (1919, point 22).

45. Ambedkar (1919, point 10).

46. Ambedkar (1919, point 40).

their interests.[47] The Montagu-Chelmsford Report rejected the idea of a veto for minorities as "unworkable," and argued that the general protection of religious interests was ensured by the clause that the Governor-General must sanction all laws affecting communities.[48] The idea of veto powers was taken off the agenda by the British rulers, and group-wise representation of minority groups remained the main type of political safeguard under discussion.

In 1927 the Simon Commission was appointed by the British government to make recommendations for further constitutional reforms. The Simon Report recommended continuing the policy of reserving seats for religious minorities and the depressed classes, although such group-wise representation was described as an "undoubted obstacle in the way of the growth of a sense of common citizenship."[49] The innovation was that instead of proposing separate electorates the commission suggested reserved seats in joint constituencies, but with primaries where only minority voters would be allowed to select the minority candidates.[50]

Since all the members of the Simon Commission were British, their report was boycotted by the Congress Party—although not by the various minority organizations in the country—and India's political parties were consequently requested to make their own suggestions for the drafting of the new constitution. The All Parties Conference met in Delhi in January 1928. At the third meeting of the Conference, a smaller committee was appointed—headed by Motilal Nehru—and mandated to make recommendations for a constitutional framework. The authors of the ensuing Nehru Report were opposed to quotas in any form, and proposed various other ways of safeguarding the interests of minorities, such as guaranteeing language rights and introducing a proportional representation (PR) system of voting:[51]

> We feel strongly attracted to this method [a PR electoral system] and are of opinion that it offers the only rational and just way of meeting the fears and claims of various communities. There is a place in it for every minority and an automatic adjustment takes place of rival interests.

47. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 105).

48. Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, 105–106).

49. Brock and Simon (1930, 96).

50. McMillan (2005, 39).

51. GoI (1928b, 36).

> We have no doubt that proportional representation will in future be the solution of our problems.

However, the Committee had not consulted the organizations of the depressed classes, and Dr. Ambedkar rejected the suggestions in the report, insisting that the depressed classes needed either reserved seats or separate electorates to prevent their being excluded from politics.[52] The ideas presented in the Nehru Report also met strong opposition from the British, who felt that a PR system would be too complicated for the Indian voter.[53]

In this way, the choice of selecting group-wise representatives made in the beginning of the twentieth century was brought into the first drafts of the Indian Constitution due to feelings of obligation to uphold old promises, and fears of rebellion. With the continuation and expansion of the policy of group-based representation, the depressed classes were recognized as a community in need of separate political representation.

The Poona Pact

When the Simon Commission Report was rejected by all the major contenders in India, the British government called a round-table conference in London to negotiate political solutions. Three such conferences were held in London to negotiate the future of India.

The first conference met from November 1930 to January 1931. The Congress Party refused to participate, as many of its leaders were jailed because of involvement in the ongoing Civil Disobedience Movement. Dr. Ambedkar and Bahadur R. Srinivasan were present as representatives of the depressed classes. During the conference they submitted a memorandum to the Minorities Committee, stating the terms under which the depressed classes would consent to placing themselves under majority rule in a self-governed India. While the depressed classes had not been a strong political force until then, their case was probably strengthened by the fact that the Congress Party

52. Jaffrelot (2005, 56).

53. During the Constituent Assembly Debates, the idea of using a PR system of voting was suggested by several members as a plausible alternative to reservations, but was rejected on the grounds that it would be too complicated for the uneducated populace, would create too much fractionalization in the legislatures, and would be too hard to implement in a country as large as India. See the discussion following Mr. Lari's proposal of PR on Wednesday, May 25, 1949, in CAD (1999, vol. 8).

was not represented at the conference. In addition to equal rights and a seat in the cabinet, Dr. Ambedkar demanded "adequate representation" for the depressed classes in the legislatures of India. More specifically, he called for adult suffrage, for separate electorates for the depressed classes for the first ten years after independence, and thereafter for reserved seats with joint electorates.[54]

At the second round-table conference, September to December 1931, Gandhi was present as the sole representative of the Congress Party. Promoting a united India, he was strongly opposed to separate electorates for any group, but "he grudgingly conceded them to Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Anglo-Indians."[55] He made it clear, however, that he was not prepared to give political recognition to any other community, and he threatened a fast unto death if the depressed classes were given separate electorates.[56] As an alternative, Gandhi presented to the Minorities Committee a memorandum with a proposal for a Communal Settlement.[57] This called for the constitutional protection of culture and language, as well as free religious practice for all minorities. It proposed adult franchise and joint electorates, but with constituencies that would enable all communities to secure a proportional share of legislative seats. Hindus and Muslims would also be guaranteed reserved seats where they were less than 25 percent of the population.[58]

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54. Ambedkar and Srinivasan (1931, condition no. 4).

55. Galanter (1984, 31).

56. Gandhis's political positions can be argued to be conservative, and some who offered these arguments seemed to have been reluctant to make serious concessions to SCs and other minorities. For Gandhi, however, fighting untouchability was a major concern in his political work. In the early 1920s Gandhi wrote a series of chapters on the topic of untouchability and supported campaigns to allow untouchables to enter temples. In a Congress Party meeting in 1920, he pushed through a motion condemning the "sin of untouchability," and in 1922 the Congress Party called on its activists to "help the untouchables" (Jaffrelot 2005, 60–61). Gandhi himself went further in his fight for the rights of untouchables: when traveling, he would often stay in the quarters of the *bhangis*, the caste group traditionally seen as the lowest of the untouchables; he called himself a *bhangi*, and expressed a desire to be reborn as a *bhangi* in order to share their suffering (Galanter 1984, 35). Over time he also started encouraging interdining and intermarriage between castes, in an attempt to eradicate the caste system (Galanter 1984, 37). See Jaffrelot (2005) for a further discussion of why Gandhi chose the drastic step of going on hunger strike against separate electorates.

57. Sheth and Mahajan (1999, 114).

58. A similar provision was made for Hindus in Sind, Muslims in Assam, and Sikhs in Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) (Chanchreek et al. 1991, 176).

Dr. Ambedkar was also present at the second round-table conference. He again demanded quotas for the depressed classes in the legislatures, in the executive, and in public services, and held that there should be "certain limitations" in order to "prevent the majorities from abusing their legislative power in such a manner as to enact laws which would create discrimination between one citizen and another."[59] He focused on a package of safeguards, rather than solely electoral quotas, recognizing that with a small number of reserved seats "there is always the danger of the interests of the depressed classes being neglected altogether."[60]

British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald responded to the demands of the round-table conferences by presenting the Communal Award of 1932, granting to the depressed classes separate electorates for 20 years in 78 areas where they were concentrated, and also the right to vote in the remaining unreserved areas.[61] He also conceded to many of the demands from other minorities, such as granting Muslims in Punjab and Bengal separate electorates and more seats than other communities in the provincial assemblies.[62]

Following the announcement of the 1932 Communal Award, Gandhi, who had been arrested in January 1932 and placed in Yerwada prison in Pune, went on a hunger strike against the granting of separate electorates for the depressed classes. The British refused to change the Award without the consent of Dr. Ambedkar. Meetings were then called between Dr. Ambedkar and Congress Party leaders, and Dr. Ambedkar was subjected to strong pressure to give up the demand for separate electorates.

On September 24, 1932, the Poona Pact was signed. In the pact, Dr. Ambedkar relinquished the demand for the 78 separate electorates in the Award, in return for 148 reserved seats in provincial assemblies elected with joint electorates—but on the condition that all members of the depressed classes registered in the general electoral roll in reserved constituencies would be able to select four SC candidates in primary elections. The agreement set out in the Poona Pact was for 18 percent of the seats in the Central Legislature allotted to the general electorate for British India to be reserved for the depressed classes. The Pact also had a clause about appointment to the

59. Quoted in Chanchreek et al. (1991, 95).

60. Quoted in Chanchreek et al. (1991, 98). See McMillan (2005, chapter 1) for a further discussion of these negotiations.

61. GoI (1932a).

62. Jalal (1994, 12–13).

public services and a clause that an "adequate sum" of every province budget should be earmarked for educational facilities to members of the depressed classes.[63]

Many saw the Poona Pact as a victory for Dr. Ambedkar since he gained a significant increase in the number of reserved seats for his community. After the final meeting about the Poona Pact, Dr. Ambedkar is quoted as saying: "I am very grateful to the Mahatma. [. . .] I must confess that I was immensely surprised when I met him that there was so much in common between him and me."[64] But later he spoke of Gandhi's hunger strike as a "foul and filthy act" and expressed his disappointment about the agreement.[65] He had wanted separate electorates, or at least to reduce the number of candidates selected in the primaries to two—since this would mean that only aspirant candidates that had the support of a large share of SC voters would end up standing for election. He had also wanted a higher number of reserved seats—proportional to their share of the population. And he had to concede to the reserved seats being guaranteed only for ten years, compared to twenty in the Communal Award.[66]

Soon after the Poona Pact had been made, Dr. Ambedkar started negotiating with Gandhi about an alternative system where candidates in reserved seats would have to get at least 25 percent of the votes from the depressed classes, in order to increase their control over candidate selection, but to no avail.[67] It was an arrangement similar to the one set out in the Poona Pact that was implemented as part of the Government of India Act of 1935.[68]

The system with primary elections of SC candidates proved to be an ineffective way of making SC politicians accountable to an SC electorate. There were rarely enough eligible candidates for electoral contests to be real ones, and SC leaders felt that the Congress Party was subverting the intentions of the Poona Pact by nominating aspirant candidates who did

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63. GoI (1932b).

64. Quoted in Omvedt (1994, 175).

65. Ambedkar (1946).

66. McMillan (2005, 60).

67. McMillan (2005, 61). This would effectively reduce the number of "primary" candidates from four to three.

68. The number of reserved seats in provincial assemblies specified in the Government of India Act of 1935 was 151 (GoI 1942).

not represent the interests of the SC community.[69] In *Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables*,[70] Dr. Ambedkar argued that, by insisting on joint electorates, the Congress Party was seeking to control the politicians elected from reserved seats:

> [S]eparate electorate does not permit the Hindus to capture the seats reserved for the Untouchables. On the other hand the joint electorate does. [. . . If] there is a joint electorate in these constituencies the representative of the Untouchables would be only a nominal representative and not a real representative, for no Untouchable who did not agree to be a nominee of the Hindus and a tool in their hands could be elected in a joint electorate in which the Untouchable voter was out numbered in ratio of 1 to 24 or in some cases 1 to 49.

Dr. Ambedkar also tried to lobby the British for change. In 1942 he presented the Viceroy with a memorandum calling for separate electorates in politics—in addition to guaranteed positions in government jobs and the educational system—but these demands were ignored.[71] In 1946 Dr. Ambedkar made another attempt to change the agreement in the Poona Pact, but the British did not want to go against Gandhi.[72]

In a way, India's reservation system can be seen as the direct product of the compromise between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar in the Poona Pact. Through that Pact and the promise of reserved seats, political mobilization around an SC identity became institutionalized, obstructing that very unity that Gandhi was fighting for. At the same time, because of joint electorates, SCs were unable to elect their "own" leaders as Dr. Ambedkar had fought for—although they did have the opportunity to select the candidates. Disappointed with the settlement, Dr. Ambedkar was convinced that the joint electorates would make SC politicians tools in the hands of the upper castes, rather than leading to the betterment of the SC community.

Nonetheless, the role of the British in shaping this outcome should not be underestimated. At the time of the Poona Pact, negotiations were about

69. McMillan (2005, 62).

70. Ambedkar (1943, 24–25).

71. Jaffrelot (2005, 97).

72. McMillan (2005, 63).

having no reservations versus reserved seats with separate electorates for the depressed classes, and the compromise became reserved seats with joint electorates. But these negotiations were a response to the Communal Award handed down by the British. And, as in previous years, the British were not neutral arbitrators: they were playing their own political game in order to stay in power. We have already seen how Minto tried to find ways of counterpoising the Congress Party, and there were similar examples later as well. For example, in August 1942, as the Quit India Movement was gaining strength, the British Secretary of State for India, Leopold Amery, asked the then Viceroy Linlithgow whether leaders like Dr. Ambedkar could be included in the Executive Council so that they could deliver "stirring speeches on war efforts" and "deflect lime-light" from Congress Party spokesmen.[73]

Another point to note about the discussions surrounding the Poona Pact was that the focus of the debate shifted from being about preventing the systematic exclusion of SCs to how to "uplift" them. Dr. Ambedkar argued that the best thing for SCs would be to get *group representation*, whereas Gandhi argued for *group integration*.

Crafting the Constitution

In 1946, a Constituent Assembly was elected to draft the Indian Constitution, with Dr. Ambedkar as Chair of the Drafting Committee. The Sub-committee on Minorities, established by the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights and Minorities (Advisory Committee), was tasked with making recommendations about representational guarantees for minorities.[74]

Once again, Dr. Ambedkar fought for separate electorates. When that proved futile, he tried to get provisions for having a minimum of 35 percent of SCs in reserved constituencies, so that at least a large portion of the electorate should be SC. Both the Advisory Committee and the Constituent Assembly consisted of a majority of Congress Party supporters, and almost half of the members of the assembly were Brahmins.[75] It is therefore perhaps not surprising that Dr. Ambedkar's demands found little support.

73. Quoted in Singh (2004, 293).

74. Sheth and Mahajan (1999, 116).

75. Austin (1999, appendix III).

The Advisory Committee recommended reserved seats for SCs and various minority groups,[76] but rejected demands for separate electorates, primaries, a minimum percentage of the minority group in the constituencies that were chosen to be reserved, reservations in cabinets, requirements for a minimum percent of votes from the minority community, and giving different weights to voters from different communities. In addition to the reserved seats in politics, the Committee also recommended a "due share" of the jobs in the Indian bureaucratic services, the appointment of an officer to report to the legislatures on the "working of the safeguards," and the establishment of a "Statutory Commission for backward classes."[77]

The report of the Advisory Committee was presented to the Constituent Assembly on August 27, 1947 by the chairman of the Committee, Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel. In a passionate speech, he argued that communal representation was a "poison which has entered into the body politic of our country,"[78] but went on to say that the Committee still supported reserved seats in joint electorates for SCs and religious minorities as a compromise solution to make these groups feel comfortable with the new electoral system. The report itself stated that the system of separate electorates has "sharpened communal differences to a dangerous extent and has proved one of the main stumbling blocks to the development of a healthy national life."[79]

The debate following the presentation of the report concerned whether to have reserved seats at all, and whether there should be separate or joint electorates. Many in the assembly were strongly opposed to any form of group-wise reservations. Although he had just presented a report recommending reserved seats for SCs, Sardar Patel soon made a fiery speech against the same reservation system:[80]

> I do not understand how Mr. Khandekar [an SC member who had just spoken] is a Scheduled Caste man. If he and I were to go outside India, nobody will find out whether he is a Scheduled Caste man or

76. Anglo-Indians, Parsees, Plains tribesmen in Assam, Christians, Sikhs, and Muslims.

77. Recommendations reprinted as an appendix in the Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD 1999, vol. 5, 243).

78. CAD (1999, vol. 5, August 27, 1947, 225).

79. Reprinted as an appendix in the Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD 1999, vol. 5, 243).

80. CAD (1999, vol. 5, August 28, 1947, 272).

> I am a Scheduled Caste man. There is no Scheduled Caste between us. So those representatives of the Scheduled Caste must know that the Scheduled Caste has to be effaced altogether from our society, and if it is to be effaced, those who have ceased to be untouchables and sit amongst us have to forget that they are untouchables or else if they carry this inferiority complex, they will not be able to serve their community. They will only be able to serve their community by feeling now that they are with us.

In defense of having reserved seats, the Christian representative Jerome D'Souza reminded the assembly that "for years together the Congress party has been associated with the demand that there shall be joint electorates with reservation. At this stage to give up reservation as some of my friends wish to do would be in contradiction to the promises held out."[81] In this way, discussions of the previous decades were used as a way to legitimize reserved seats. Similarly, an SC representative from Madras, Muniswami Pillai, invoked the memory of the Poona Pact in a speech supporting the introduction of reserved seats with joint electorates:[82]

> It was that Poona Pact to which you yourself have been a signatory along with me and Dr. Ambedkar, that produced a great awakening in this country. Then, Sir, one question was in the mind of everybody, whether the Poona Pact will show signs of a change of heart by caste Hindus in this country. Today I may assure you, Sir, that that change has come, though not full 100 per cent, at least more than 50 per cent. I may give you instances here. The very inclusion of Dr. Ambedkar in the present Dominion Cabinet is a change of heart of the Caste Hindus that the Harijans [SCs] are not any more to be neglected.

The SC representative and Dr. Ambedkar supporter S. Nagappa raised several issues that the Advisory Committee had already discussed and rejected.[83] He first demanded reservations in the cabinets, and he then moved an amendment whereby candidates would have to poll at least 35 percent of the votes of

81. CAD (1999, vol. 5, August 27, 1947, 231).

82. CAD (1999, vol. 5, August 27, 1947, 202).

83. Jaffrelot (2005, 103).

the SC community in order to win elections in reserved constituencies.[84] His arguments for such a provision reflected Dr. Ambedkar's argument about the need for SC politicians to be answerable to an SC electorate:[85]

> [T]oday if we are elected to reserved seats, when there is agrarian trouble, when the Harijans [SCs] and the agriculturists are at loggerheads and when we go and appeal to these people these Harijans they say "Get out man, you are the henchmen and show-boys of the caste Hindus. You have sold our community and you have come here on their behalf in order to cut our throats. We don't accept you as our representative." Sir, in order to avoid that what I suggested is that a certain percentage of the Harijans must elect the candidate so that he may be able to tell them that he has the backing of some Harijans and he will have the prestige and voice as their representative.

It is clear from Nagappa's statement that he thought being a member of the SC community was not enough to be perceived as a representative of SCs. To be a legitimate representative of SCs he held that one would also need to be elected by SCs and therefore answerable to an SC electorate. However, he moved this amendment mainly as a matter of principle, and withdrew it again before it was voted upon. This amendment was therefore not further debated in the assembly.

One amendment that was debated and passed, however, involved changing the wording about SCs from being a "minority" to being a marginalized "section" of the Hindu community. The Minorities Committee had originally referred to SCs as a minority group, but several members objected to this. This change was an important part of the discussion, because it strengthened the argument that the purpose of these quotas was to have an integrative effect rather than to create group representation. In the words of K. M. Munshi who moved this amendment:[86]

> The Harijans, generally known as Scheduled Castes, are neither a racial minority nor a linguistic minority, not certainly a religious minority.

84. One Muslim representative, K. T. M. Ahmed Ibrahim Sahib Bahadur, moved a similar amendment requiring a minimum of 30 percent support from the community. This was rejected by the assembly.

85. CAD (1999, vol. 5, August 28, 1947, 259).

86. CAD (1999, August 27, 1947).

> [...] The Harijans are part and parcel of the Hindu community, and the safeguards are given to them to protect their rights only till they are completely absorbed in the Hindu Community.

On August 28, 1947, the report of the Advisory Committee was adopted with only minor changes, including reserved seats for religious minorities.[87] Later, however, after the horrors of the partition between India and Pakistan, attitudes of members of the Constituent Assembly toward concessions to minorities changed. In May 1949, the Advisory Committee passed a resolution to abolish reservations for religious minorities, while keeping them for another ten years for SCs. In a letter of May 11, 1949 to the president of the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel explained the motivation for their change in opinion:[88]

> Some members of the committee felt that, conditions having vastly changed since the Advisory Committee made their recommendations in 1947, it was no longer appropriate in the context of free India and of present conditions that there should be reservation of seats for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs or any other religious minority. Although the abolition of separate electorates had removed much of the poison from the body politic, the reservation of seats for religious communities, it was felt, still lead to a certain degree of separatism and was to that extent contrary to the conception of a secular democratic state.

When the Constituent Assembly discussed the resolution, it was clear that the Muslim members of the assembly were divided in their opinions about reserved seats, while most others supported the removal of reservations for religious minorities. The Muslim member Begam Aizaz Rasul, one of the strongest supporters of removing reservations, stated: "reservation is a self-destructive weapon which separates the minorities from the majority

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87. Sheth and Mahajan (1999, 117). The reserved seats were for Muslims and Christians. Anglo-Indians were to be nominated by the Governor-General of the state, Parsees relinquished the right to any form of safeguard, and the question of Sikhs was deferred till later.

88. Printed as an appendix in the Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD 1999, vol. 8, 311).

for all time."[89] Similarly, in a passionate speech against reservations, Tajamul Husein proclaimed that "the term 'minority' is a British creation. The British created minorities. The British have gone and minorities have gone with them."[90] Yet another argued that this was a measure the British had implemented to "play their own game," and that now that the British were gone "there would be no cause for safeguard of anybody's rights."[91]

How to explain this shift in opinion? According to one representative, the decision to keep reservations in 1947 had been based solely on the fact that groups were accustomed to separate electorates, and that the leap to no group-wise representation at all seemed too drastic. After a few years of getting used to not having separate electorates, however, it was time to "proceed towards a compact nation."[92] According to another, the Assembly had, in 1947, feared seeming too harsh on minorities. He argued that the change in sentiments came from the fact that "[c]ommunal incidents have played havoc in this country."[93]

Thus, reserved seats for religious minorities were removed. One representative suggested reopening discussions about the electoral system—probably hoping for a proportional form of electoral system more conducive to electing minority representatives—but this was once again defeated by the argument that a PR system was too complicated for India. The debate was put to an end by Sardar Patel thundering that this was an attempt at sneaking reservations in "the back door."[94]

While the quotas for religious groups were removed, the provisions for SCs would continue. This decision was not uncontested. Mahavir Tyagi argued that the category "SCs" was a British artifact, and proposed class-based rather than caste-based political safeguards:[95]

> I want to emphasise [...] [that] originally when the Scheduled Castes were given separate representation, Mahatma Gandhi had started his

89. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 25, 1949, 300).

90. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 26, 1949, 333).

91. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 26, 1949, 317).

92. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 26, 1949, 321).

93. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 26, 1949, 317).

94. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 26, 1949, 353).

95. CAD (1999, vol. 3, May 26, 1949, 344).

> fast in protest. Now we have, it seems, accepted the idea; but when it was first introduced, everybody was shocked. [...] The term "Scheduled Castes" is a fiction. Factually there is no such thing as "Scheduled Castes." There are some castes who are depressed, some castes who are poor, some who are untouchables, some who are down-trodden. All their names were collected from the various provinces and put into one category "Scheduled Castes." In spite of the category being a fiction it has been there for so many years. [...] Sir. How is Dr. Ambedkar a member of the Scheduled Castes? Is he illiterate? Is he ill-educated? Is he an untouchable? Is he lacking in anything? He is the finest of the fine intellectuals in India and still he is in the list of Scheduled Castes. [...] By allowing caste representations, let us not re-inject the poisonous virus which the Britisher has introduced into our body politic. I would suggest Sir, that instead of the so called Scheduled Caste, minorities be protected, if you like, on class basis.

Also several other members of the Constituent Assembly were opposed to granting quotas to SCs, but the majority still grudgingly supported it. As one member argued:[96]

> I have no hesitation in saying that if we had removed even this provision [reservations for SCs] from the Constitution, it would have been for the better. But because the Scheduled Castes are poor, uneducated and suffer because of their status in society and because of the prevailing social customs, it would have been unjust not to provide for them some special facility in the Constitution.

Similarly, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, stated:[97]

> Frankly I would like this proposal to go further and put an end to such reservations as there still remain. But again, speaking frankly, I realise that in the present state of affairs in India that would not be a desirable thing to do [...] in regard to the Scheduled Castes. I try to look upon the problem not in the sense of religious minority, but rather in the sense of helping backward groups in the country.

96. CAD (1999, vol. 3, May 26, 1949, 339).

97. CAD (1999, vol. 8, May 26, 1949, 331).

Thus, while the introduction of reservations for SCs originally had been justified as a way of guaranteeing the political inclusion of a minority group, SCs were now defined as a marginalized section of the Hindu community. Further, it was made clear that reservations were given to SCs not on grounds of a group identity, but "apparently and clearly on grounds of their economic, social and educational backwardness."[98]

On May 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly voted in favor of the new recommendations of the Advisory Committee, granting SCs reserved seats with joint electorates. As is clear from the debates, many were opposed to this measure, but saw it as a way of helping members of a deprived community become electorally competitive.

The reservation system was originally to apply for only ten years, in order for SC candidates to become sufficiently integrated into the political system to be able to contest elections on an equal footing with other candidates. But every ten years since then, as the arrangement was about to expire, it has been extended. And, in the debates about extending the quotas there seems to have been considerable confusion about what to expect from them.

In 1959, the Minister of Home Affairs, G. B. Pant, moved to extend the reservations for the first time: "The reasons which weighted with, and influenced, the Constituent Assembly in making provisions for these reservations have not ceased to exist."[99] The minister seems to have assumed that the end-goal of political reservations was group representation to the benefit of the SC population: "I know that if they [reservations] go on working, they [SCs] will perhaps attain further progress in educational, administrative and other fields [...] we have to remember that if they [SCs] had made progress in those directions, that progress too is, to a large extent, due to their representation in the legislatures."[100]

Similarly, in 1969, the Minister of Law and Social Welfare, Mr. Govinda Menon, moved for yet another extension of the quota system:[101]

> Our attempts to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, our attempts to bring them up to a level which

98. CAD (1999, vol. 3, May 25, 1949, 308).

99. Lok Sabha Debates, November 30, 1959, 2443.

100. Lok Sabha Debates, November 30, 1959, 2443.

101. Lok Sabha Debates, December 8, 1969, 282.

> is equal to the rest of the population of the country have not fully succeeded. So far as I am concerned, I do not believe that the depression which was effected by the Hindu society on the Scheduled Castes could be rectified in two or three decades.

In 1980, 1989, 1999, and 2009, the same arguments were repeated and the policy was extended. The wording was similar every time. In 2009, the Minister of Law and Justice, Mr. M. Veerappa Moily, introduced the bill to amend the Constitution in the following way: "the reasons which weighed the Constituent Assembly in making the provisions with regard to the aforesaid reservation of seats [. . .] have not ceased to exist."[102]

In every debate there were a few voices speaking up against the extension. During the debate in 1959, the independent MP B. C. Kamble raised the very valid point that it was absurd to grant quotas on the basis of untouchability when untouchability had been abolished by the Indian Constitution.[103]

In 1969, M. R. Masani of the Swatantra Party summarized many of the arguments against reservations in one speech:[104]

> It seems to me that one of the bad things that this reservation has done is to put the conscience of the upper class and the upper castes to sleep. Having given a few seats to the Harijans [SCs] and the Adivasis [STs], those who are better-placed think they have done their duty by them and now they can fend for themselves. [...] [The result is the] coming into existence by reservations of an upper crust of Harijans [SCs] and others who have become a vested interest in our political life and who, though they have done very well for themselves, are not the best champions for fighting the cause of the Harijans and backwards classes. [. . .] No proof has been given by the hon. Minister or anybody else to show that this reservation has in practice led to concrete advance and benefits for this class.

The main criticism here is that SC and ST politicians do not champion the interests of—or represent—their groups, and that the quotas have not "benefited" these communities.

102. Lok Sabha Debates, August 4, 2009, 299-300.

103. Lok Sabha Debates, November 30, 1959, 2450.

104. Lok Sabha Debates, December 8, 1969, 299-300.

Repeatedly, ministers and MPs reiterating the history of the Poona Pact, Dr. Ambedkar's hard work, and Gandhi's involvement in trying to uplift deprived groups such as the SCs. In this way, the arguments of the past—now focused on group representation and development rather than group integration—were handed down from one parliament to the next.

It may seem curious that the reservation policy has not encountered more resistance. However, as noted by McMillan,[105] there are at least two clear strategic reasons why all the main parties should continue to lend support to the policy: The reserved seats are seen as a benefit for the SC and ST communities, and any party that opposed them would risk alienating those large voting groups. Further, the system of reserved seats allows parties to pit minority candidates against each other, thereby undermining the potential for group-specific political mobilization. This also explains why parties mobilizing around SC and ST identities tend to be opposed to the reservations, as they lose their competitive advantage when forced to compete against other SC/ST candidates. These arguments align with my own main claim in this book: that institutional incentives and electoral concerns drive and shape much of the behavior that we observe.

2.3 *Conclusions*

In this chapter I have traced the history of how the electoral quotas for SCs in India took shape through a negotiation process that lasted from the early twentieth century until the signing of the Indian Constitution in 1950.

Group-wise political inclusion arose from the British attempt to strengthen their own control of India by appeasing religious minorities. The Government of India Act of 1919 and the Communal Award of 1932 then institutionalized quotas for many groups, including the depressed classes (or SCs). The main spokesperson of the SCs, Dr. Ambedkar, argued that SCs had been so marginalized that they needed to be represented by someone from their own community. He was open to many forms of safeguards, but had a preference for a system that would make SC politicians elected by and accountable to an SC electorate. The Poona Pact between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar entrenched the promise of quotas for SCs, but also made Dr. Ambedkar give up the demand for separate electorates. The agreement from the Poona Pact was brought into the Indian Constitution

105. McMillan (2005, 324).

(minus the agreement about having primary elections), with arguments about how reserved seats with joint electorates would serve to integrate SCs into mainstream politics. Over time, the quota policy thereby changed from one intended to incentivize group representation to one that sought to guarantee political presence and incentivize group integration.

The drafters of the Indian Constitution were aware of the tradeoffs in the design of the quota system. They were strongly opposed to a system that would bring to power politicians who worked solely for the interests of their own groups. For the majority of the political elite at the time, any kind of group-wise representation was seen as destructive, because it was thought to reinforce existing social cleavages. Nonetheless, in subsequent debates there still seems to have been certain expectations that SC politicians would act as group representatives—and so we see a disjuncture between the incentives created by the design of the quota system, and the expectations that came to surround it.

3

Whose Representative?

I have to work for all, for the majority of the voters—how could I win the election otherwise?[1]

THE ELECTORAL QUOTAS for SCs have been in place since the 1950s, and they have been enforced effectively: in the approximately 16 percent of India's single-member territorial constituencies that have been reserved for SCs, only SCs have been able to run for election. The most immediate effect of these quotas is that they have ensured the numerical presence of SCs in the legislative assemblies. But once elected, what do these politicians do? And whose interests do they work to represent?

A recurrent question in discussions of policies of group inclusion is whether they bring to power politicians who really *represent*—or act in the interest of—their group, and consequently, whether they result in policy change or a redistribution of resources. This is often studied by examining societal development patterns (see chapter 4), but we cannot make sense of the presence or absence of such patterns without examining what politicians actually do while in office and how they perceive their own political role. This chapter explores the representational role of SC politicians compared to others, both *how* they act as representatives and *whom* they try to represent.

In the previous chapter I discussed the historical controversy over how the quotas for SCs were to be designed. Should SC politicians be elected only by SCs or by voters from all caste-groups? In the end it was decided that they should be elected by voters from all groups, although the reserved seats were to be placed in areas with a high concentration of SCs. But as SCs are spread out geographically across India, they are almost always a minority of the voters in SC-reserved constituencies (see section 1.3). During the debates about the

1. SC politician interviewed in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

quota policy, the SC leader Dr. Ambedkar expressed concern that this design of the quota system would result in the election of SC politicians who do not really represent the SC community. This is a criticism that has been repeated over the years: In the 1980s, Kanshi Ram, an important SC leader, famously wrote that SC politicians elected through the quotas are *chamchas* (sycophants or stooges) who merely follow the orders of party leaders.[2]

I begin this chapter with a brief discussion of the expectation that group inclusion will result in group representation, followed by a description of the daily life of Indian Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs). Based on examples from interviews I show how politicians divide their time between legislative work and constituency service, and that although SC politicians in general seem to conduct their political work in much the same ways as other politicians, their work also appears to differ in subtle aspects.

The third section focuses on how SC politicians talk about their representational role. I discuss how most of those I interviewed emphasized that their responsibility is to represent all the voters in their constituencies and that they see themselves as agents of their parties rather than of the SC group. But, while Dr. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram had interpreted this in a negative light, the politicians themselves explained it in more positive terms. Several held that the quotas system has put SC rights on the agendas of all the main parties and that it is the task of the parties—not of individual SC politicians—to represent the interests of the SC community.

A recurrent theme in my interviews with politicians was the important role of political parties. To understand whether the quota system affects political representation in reserved areas, we therefore need to see which parties have been elected there. From an institutionalist perspective the expectations are clear: since all parties can run for election in reserved areas and the demographic make-up of the population is similar to other places, we should expect the same parties to run for (and win) elections.[3] This is also the pattern that emerges. In the final section of this chapter I present data from across India between 1974–2007: we see that the same parties have come to power in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, and that parties running on

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2. See Ram (1982). Kanshi Ram was a leading SC politician in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. He founded the SC party BSP, which has been powerful in UP for the past 20 years.

3. See, for instance, the cross-national study by Lublin and Wright (2013), which shows that reduced thresholds (a policy of group representation) tend to increase the share of votes and seats won by ethnoregional parties, whereas reserved seats do not.

a distinctly SC platform have not done any better than others in SC-reserved areas.[4]

The findings in this chapter indicate that, although quotas have increased the numerical presence of SCs in politics, they have only to a limited extent changed how reserved areas are represented politically. The same parties have been elected, legislative work follows party line, and constituency service is conducted in much the same way as in other constituencies—the inclusion of SCs in legislative assemblies has not resulted in greater group representation for SCs.

3.1 Group representation

In her seminal work about political representation, Pitkin concluded that representation is really about "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them."[5] This notion of *acting for*, often referred to as *substantive representation*, is about both an intention and an ability to act in favor of some community. In the context of policies of group inclusion I refer to this as *group representation*.

A key question in the study of policies of group inclusion is whether the mere presence (*descriptive representation*) of previously marginalized groups will improve their group representation. In much of the theoretical discussion about the inclusion of female politicians, women are seen as better equipped to represent women.[6] Few would argue that *all* women are better representatives of women's interests, but female politicians are thought *on average* or *probably* to be better than men at defending the interests of women. This point of view is supported by findings from across the world, showing that women tend to have different political preferences than men.[7] Similarly for minorities, it is often argued that minority politicians tend to be better at representing group interests because of a shared culture or experience of marginalization.[8]

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4. By "comparable" I refer to the fact that I use matched pairs of constituencies for the analysis, as described in section 1.3.

5. Pitkin (1972, 209–10).

6. See, e.g., Phillips (1995), Mansbridge (1999, 2003).

7. See Campbell et al. (2010), Svaleryd (2009), Edlund and Pande (2002), Duflo and Topalova (2004), Besley et al. (2005), Ban and Rao (2008).

8. Mansbridge (1999), Canon (1999), Minta (2009).

The expectation that women and minorities who enter politics will act in the interests of their group stands in stark contrast to traditional political economy models that assume politicians to be rational individuals motivated by career incentives and reelection for themselves or their parties.[9] According to this more incentive-based view of politicians, the identity of who is elected should not affect policy outcomes, since all politicians would respond similarly to the incentives they face. In this view, then, differences in behavior are to be understood as the result of context and incentives, not of individual characteristics or ideology.

There is considerable empirical evidence that politicians are incentive-driven. Work on minority-majority districting in the United States has shown that both white and black politicians do a good job of representing black interests when they have the electoral incentives to do so.[10] In fact, it has been argued that the election of one black Democrat probably reduces the the substantive representation of black interests, because it happens at the cost of the election of two white Democrats.[11] In the literature about female politicians, there is ample evidence to show that not all women work for "women's interests." A study of women at the top level in politics across the world has shown how several of the most prominent female politicians have explicitly tried to avoid being seen as representatives of women.[12] Work on women legislators in the United States has shown that female legislators usually do not see themselves as acting for women.[13] Similarly, work on Latin America has shown that quotas for women have generally resulted in group inclusion—but not in group representation.[14]

However, as noted in the introduction of this book, these findings are not necessarily contradictory if we consider the different incentive frameworks that politicians find themselves in. Politicians may feel solidarity with groups they belong to and at the same time respond to the institutional incentives they are faced with. In this chapter we will see that several SC politicians

9. See Downs (1957), Arrow (1963), Mayhew (1974), Fenno (1978), Kingdon (1989), Cox and McCubbins (2005).

10. Swain (1993).

11. Lublin (1999).

12. Skard (2012).

13. Diamond (1977).

14. Htun (2016).

expressed an interest in working for SCs—they thought SCs had a shared grievance of being poor, excluded, and disrespected. At the same time, however, they explained that they would not be nominated as candidates nor get elected if they tried to advocate SC rights in particular. Both the nomination process and elections serve as evolutionary filters that select those who act the most like other politicians. The way the quotas for SCs are designed they therefore have a moderating effect, bringing to power SC politicians who act as representatives of mainstream parties.

3.2 *The daily life of Indian MLAs*

Officially, the main task of Indian MLAs is to represent their constituents in the state assembly. Each of the Indian states has a state assembly, based in the capital of that state.[15] New assemblies are elected approximately every five years, and members are supposed to meet at intervals of no more than six months between the end of one session and the beginning of the next one. When the assemblies meet, the MLAs take part in drafting and passing bills, raise questions to the state government, and voice opinions during debates.

The time spent in the legislative assembly is, however, only a small part of the work of an MLA. In a study of MLAs in the early 1990s, Chopra found that only 3 percent of those interviewed said they devoted most of their time to assembly work.[16] MLAs surveyed by Bussell in Bihar, Jharkhand, and UP reported that about 21 percent of their time was spent on "Policy/Office Work."[17] This is largely because state assemblies in India only meet for a short period every year. Data on the legislative activity of 15 state assemblies across India during the period 1967–2007 show that assemblies met on average for about 40 days a year, that the average number of meeting days has been steadily declining, and that some states (among them, Haryana) consistently had as few as 10 sittings a year.[18] In fact, according to the MLAs interviewed by Chopra, the assembly in Haryana convened only to fulfill the

15. Two of India's Union Territories, Delhi and Pudducherry (formerly known as Pondicherry), also have legislative assemblies.

16. This was a study of 207 MLAs across five Indian states (Chopra 1996, 151).

17. Bussell (2015).

18. Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2015).

constitutional requirements, and political decisions were generally taken by the state government.[19]

Most of the time of MLAs is spent on various types of constituency service, which includes delivering "pork," attending weddings and funerals, negotiating to solve individual problems, and dealing with requests for help in contacting various state officials. Constituency service has not been studied in much detail in India, but, according to Bussell, it can be argued that this is a major area of political representation, an additional realm in which citizens' voices and needs can find expression through the actions of their representatives.[20] Understanding more of this work was an important aspect of my interviews with politicians, civil servants, elites, activists, and voters in 2010 and 2011. What, then, did MLAs have to say about their legislative responsibilities and constituency service?

Legislative work

Discussions of political representation are often focused on the legislative work of politicians, and several of the MLAs I interviewed spoke passionately about the importance of their legislative role. For example, a senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) politician in India's largest state, UP, emphasized that when he was in opposition, he saw it as his responsibility to raise many questions and oppose the sitting regime in order to help improve political deliberations.[21] A senior SC MLA insisted that he would have liked to spend more time on legislative matters, but that he was working so hard on providing constituency services that he had to neglect his duties in the assembly.[22]

As already mentioned, MLAs do not spend much of their time on legislative work. Further, even when present at assembly meetings they seem to play a minor role in the drafting of bills and have little space for opposing bills proposed by the state government. When they attend meetings in the state assemblies they are expected to speak as instructed by their party leaders and vote according to what the party has decided.[23] Since most votes in assemblies

19. Chopra (1996, 12).

20. Bussell (2015).

21. Interview in Lucknow, November 24, 2010.

22. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

23. Chopra (1996, 12).

are taken by voice vote (*avaaz*, saying "aye" or "nay"), it is easy for the parties to observe, and control, how their MLAs vote. Parties generally also have one MLA assigned as the "party whip" in charge of making sure their MLAs toe the party line.

When I asked my non-SC respondents about their perceptions of SC politicians, I was told that SC politicians tend to be more passive in legislative debates and more dependent on their parties than other politicians. An upper-caste politician in UP explained to me that SC politicians are passive and quiet because they still have an inferiority complex (*heen bhavana*), but added that those SCs who manage to overcome this inferiority complex face few limitations on becoming powerful.[24]

This perception was also reflected in conversations I had with SC MLAs. None of those interviewed seemed to think that the presence of SCs in the state assemblies significantly changed the policy debate or the policies that were adopted. Some explained that it may look as if SCs propose more policies for the poor because parties ask their SC politicians to introduce such policies, but these policies really originate from the parties and not individual SC MLAs.

Perceptions of SC politicians seem to have changed over time. Using detailed data on the Third Lok Sabha (in power in India 1962–1967), Galanter wrote that in the 1960s, SC politicians were seen as being less articulate, less assertive, and less independent than other politicians: they participated less in debates, were less in touch with ministers, were less likely to hold party office, less likely to serve on committees, less likely to hold ministerships—and the majority of SC politicians reported that they felt only "partially effective" at representing their own views (whereas the majority of politicians in nonreserved constituencies felt "effective").[25] However, Galanter reported a much improved situation by the late 1970s, with SCs having become more experienced and more assertive.

My interviews also seem to reflect this gradual change. While some respondents spoke of SC politicians as "weak" and "ineffective," several said that SC politicians *used to be* "useless" (*nalayak*), but that now that they were more educated and had gained political experience they were similar to other politicians (we will see in chapters 5 and 7 how differences in education and experience have indeed evened out over time). A young SC MLA in

24. Interview in Lucknow, November 20, 2010.

25. Galanter (1979, 443–447).

the northern state of Himachal Pradesh (HP) told me that SC politicians often speak up in state assembly meetings, and that although they may be less eloquent than others at first, they learn quickly and improve.[26] Along the same lines, a senior SC politician from UP said he used to have little confidence about speaking in public when he first entered politics, but that he had gradually grown more comfortable and no longer worried about addressing crowds.[27]

Constituency work

Of the MLAs interviewed by Chopra in Haryana in the early 1990s,[28] 74 percent said that the role they mainly performed was to attend to the needs of constituents or to create development in the constituency. This involves maintaining contact with politicians, the bureaucracy, and regular voters.

MLAs are in touch with politicians at all levels: with ministers, other MPs and MLAs, other party members, and activists and officeholders in village-level politics. Several local-level politicians (*pradhans*, heads of village councils) whom I interviewed explained that the MLA in their constituency was the most important contact person in their job, and that being in the same party as the MLA, or otherwise having good connections to the MLA, was essential for getting work done in their villages. The *pradhans* described how they would approach the MLA about projects that had not been implemented, asking him or her to speak with the administrative official in charge of implementing the project or with a higher political authority.

The regular contact between MLAs and the bureaucracy was confirmed in several of my meetings with civil servants. For example, one senior IAS officer (high-level civil servant) in HP said that he was contacted daily by MLAs seeking to help a constituent to get a favorable job transfer.[29] A community development officer, on the other hand, claimed to not be much in touch with politicians—but during the interview he received phone calls from two MLAs and two *pradhans*.[30] A District Commissioner (DC) in HP told me

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26. Interview in Shimla, October 12, 2010.

27. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

28. Chopra (1996, 151).

29. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

30. Interview in Meerut, February 4, 2011.

that MLAs sometimes try to help their constituents by sending letters with people who come to see him, or by contacting him directly; if something really mattered to them they might even threaten to see to it that the bureaucrat got an unfavorable transfer, or that someone in their family would get hurt (although he said that this was much more common in UP than in HP).[31]

Even more time-consuming than the contacts with politicians and civil servants are the MLAs' frequent interactions with members of the voting public. In a survey of politicians, civil servants, and members of the public, Bussell found that when people need to access some public service, they will often use an alternative route to the "official" one, and a large number of respondents said they had approached a politician directly at some point.[32] The politicians that were surveyed reported that they had hundreds or thousands of daily visitors—mostly individual constituents—and that they spent between 24 and 31 percent of their time dealing with requests for favors or help of some kind.[33] In Chopra's sample, 19 percent of the MLAs reported that they met with fewer than 19 people every day, 31 percent said 20–49 people, 10 percent said 50–99 people, 21 percent said 100–150 people, while 13 percent claimed that they met with more than 150 people every day.[34]

In the sample of MLAs I interviewed, the figures given were similarly high. Several politicians told me that they would have more than 100 visitors every day. One MLA explained that the pressure to meet with individual constituents had increased after MLAs had gained power over discretionary constituency development funds (MLACDS).[35] Before the implementation of the MLACDS, he said, the main constituency service of MLAs had been to resolve local conflicts and attend marriages and funerals; now they constantly had to travel to villages and meet with constituents to ensure that these funds were put to the best possible use.[36]

31. Interview in HP, October 13, 2010.

32. Bussell (2015).

33. Bussell (2015, 21–22).

34. Chopra (1996, 102).

35. Since 1993, Indian MLAs have had access to discretionary development funds which they can distribute in their constituencies. As of 2012 the MLA had the power to distribute 20 million Indian rupees per year (see http://tnrd.gov.in/schemes/st_mlacds.html). See Keefer and Khemani (2009) for a discussion of the politicization of the distribution of MP-LADS, the equivalent funds available to MPs.

36. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

Because so much time is spent interacting with constituents, MLAs usually set aside a meeting room in their home for receiving visitors. When interviewing MLAs, I often first met them in these meeting rooms, where supporters were gathered to talk and people came and went with requests of different kinds.

Respondents said that people came with all sorts of requests: this could involve help in obtaining a caste certificate or card confirming that an individual was below the poverty line (such documentation is needed to be eligible for certain government benefits), a complaint that development work had not been implemented, asking to be recommended for a job or a job transfer, getting help in a land conflict, or extending an invitation to some event. Many also came to present gifts, or express gratitude for work that had been done previously, in order to maintain good relations for the future. One MLA explained that he always asked people about when they had last come to see him, in order to check whether they were really his supporters, and that he was more willing to help out if they seemed to be loyal supporters who had come to see him before.[37] For the most part, however, politicians seemed to receive people fairly indiscriminately, without asking them about where they were from or whom they had voted for: in many cases there were simply too many people coming and going to keep track.

During such meetings with constituents, it was common for MLAs to have a group of young party workers on hand to help people fill in governmental forms, write letters, make phone calls, or get sent off to solve problems. These "assistants" are often aspiring leaders who are powerful in some local area because of their close relationship to the MLA; they also empower the MLAs by being their eyes and ears in different parts of the constituency.[38]

Working efficiently, being well-connected, and getting things done in interactions with the public (or at least maintaining an image of this) is essential for the popularity of MLAs. Several MLAs emphasized that very hard work went into maintaining their networks and their support. One of the most exhausting days during my fieldwork was a day spent traveling with an SC politician in UP. We left his office at 7 am and did not get back until 10 pm. During this time we visited five or six villages, where he addressed several caste groups in each one. We had not eaten anything except the biscuits and

37. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

38. See Price and Ruud (2009) for fascinating accounts of the importance of these relationships.

nuts offered with the tea in each village, and we had not taken any breaks. From what I gathered, this was a typical day in the life of this politician.

A non-SC MLA told me that he got up at 5 o'clock every day, met with constituents in his home between 7 am and 10 am, and then traveled around in his constituency for talks with people or meetings. He said that he kept records of all those who approached him, and that every day he spoke with between 50 and 300 constituents who came to him about ration cards, job transfers, or problems with the police. He claimed to be able to help out in about half the cases. To sort out a problem, he would first make phone calls, but then if nothing happened he would send one of his party workers, and as a last resort he would go to the government office or police station himself to deal with a situation.[39]

Another senior non-SC politician in UP, who had been a minister several times, lives in the state capital and travels to his constituency only about once a week. When he visits the constituency, between 200 and 2,000 people come to his car or home with requests. He said he always takes along an assistant to help register complaints and that he also gets help from local supporters to record all the requests. He estimated that about half of the requests concerned some development project, like the need for a school or a road, while the other half concerned individual issues. In his experience, most things could be solved by making a phone call, and he rarely had to follow up further to get them done. This seemed to be because he often phoned directly to the relevant minister in question, even when he was part of the opposition. He explained that ministers usually listened to him because he had established good relations with them when he was in power.[40]

The politicians I interviewed all seemed to have slightly different strategies for getting things done. The best-connected ones clearly only needed to phone a minister or a high-ranking civil servant to be able to get a file moving or to speed up a project. Politicians would often make a bit of a show out of dealing with a request in this way, for example by immediately phoning up some contact and ordering that something be done at once. In other cases they might help the person by drafting a letter to the right authority, or by promising to talk with someone later on.

Politicians with few contacts appeared to have fewer people coming to them for help. Their main way of getting work done seemed to be to write

39. Interview in Lucknow, November 20, 2010.

40. Interview in Lucknow, November 23, 2010.

letters, stage protests, or send party workers to surround (*gherao*) the relevant government office.

Here there seemed to be a difference between SC and non-SC politicians. Among the non-SC politicians, some were grassroots activists who worked hard to maintain their networks and reputations, while others had a more royal demeanor and stressed their good connections. Some SC politicians I encountered were clearly accomplished and experienced, but they did not seem to have (or show off) the ability to call up any minister to get something done. One ST politician expressed this difference by saying that, while some politicians have many contacts they can draw on, SC and ST politicians are not as well connected and have to "scream and shout" to get things done.[41]

3.3 *Agents of their parties*

One thing I asked all interview respondents was whether they thought the SC quotas had resulted in better representation of the interests of SCs in reserved constituencies. The answers were surprisingly consistent: I was repeatedly told that SC politicians follow the party line and focus on the interests of those who support the party.

In HP I spoke with an SC activist from a political constituency that had been reserved since 1977. When asked about reservations he answered: "It makes no difference. The representatives follow the party line and are only concerned about themselves and their families."[42] Similarly, several civil servants claimed that there was no systematic difference in the work of SC MLAs and other MLAs. One told me that he thought SC politicians try to work for everyone in their constituencies in order to gain support from as many voters as possible.[43]

The fact that SC politicians work similarly to other politicians was explained to me in two ways, that arguably are two sides of the same coin. Some argued that it is not the *mandate* of SC politicians to work particularly for SCs, because their allegiance is to their parties and their voters. Others expressed a desire to focus more on SC rights than they did, but said that party control and electoral incentives *prevented* them from doing so.

41. Interview in Shimla, October 12, 2010.

42. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

43. Interview in Solan, October 15, 2011.

The institutional design of the quota system plays a key role in both of these explanations. The first perspective—that it is not their mandate—speaks directly to the fact that most of the voters in SC-reserved constituencies are non-SC. One politician in Karnataka explained that if he worked more for SCs it would be unfair to the non-SC voters. He said he saw it as his responsibility to work for all marginalized people in his constituency, but also to speak up for the rights of all SCs in the state in the legislative assembly. When asked whether he thought that speaking out for the SC community would have an impact on policy, he answered that he did not think so, because policies are generally determined by the party in power, but that he still saw it as an important democratic principle to voice what he perceived to be the interests of the SC community.[44]

Several politicians noted the role of their parties in working for SCs—they held that representing the interests of the SC community was not their responsibility as individuals, but rather the job of their parties. BJP politicians spoke of the great work the BJP was doing for the poor; BSP politicians praised the work of the BSP; Congress politicians talked of the proud tradition of their party in fighting for SCs and the poor. In other words, they all emphasized the representational responsibility of their political parties rather than their responsibility as individuals. And they saw themselves as contributing to the work of the party, rather than having an individual responsibility to represent SCs.

A similar perspective was expressed by Meira Kumar, the Speaker of Lok Sabha during the period 2009–2014, talking about the legacy of her late father, Jagjivan Ram. He was an important SC politician in the Congress Party, but has not been portrayed as a representative of SCs in particular. She explained that in choosing to work in "national politics" her father had worked for all downtrodden and marginalized people in the country, not only SCs. As such, he had done a lot for SCs but had retained a national perspective.[45]

Meira Kumar has also followed a similar political strategy herself. For example, Chandra reported from a Congress Party rally in 1997 where Kumar clearly was present to signal that the Congress Party took SCs seriously, but she never articulated this commitment in words nor expressed a particular sense of belonging to the SC community. Rather, she raised grievances associated with SCs as a national leader concerned with SCs as one of several

44. Interview in Bangalore, February 23, 2011.

45. Seetha (2009).

marginalized groups and applauded the efforts of the party to bring SCs into mainstream politics.[46] This was one of the issues the BSP politician (and later leader), Mayawati, has used against Kumar: "I have not forgotten my Dalit and oppressed brothers the way the others, who live as slaves in Brahminical parties, have forgotten them."[47]

This idea that parties restrict SC politicians was also brought up in some of my interviews. For example, a local-level SC politician in UP asserted that he would really like to work for the SC community, but that he realized that the higher up in the political system he climbed, the more would he have to follow the party line.[48]

India's political parties are often referred to as weak or disorganized, but it is the party leadership that usually decide who gets to run for office under the party label.[49] Parties are generally controlled by non-SC leaders, and SC politicians may never be given the opportunity to run for election if they are not palatable to the party leadership. An SC activist in HP explained that SC politicians are picked by political parties because they are loyal to the party, and that once they get to power they forget about caste loyalties and work according to the party line.[50] One SC politician in UP went even further: "All the parties choose very weak SC politicians, if the politician gets too vocal they will kick that person out." Similarly, an SC politician in HP told me that he had wanted to focus his campaign on working for SC interests, but that his party had refused to let him run until he changed the campaign platform to follow the party line.

Electoral incentives were also cited to explain why SC politicians do not work for SC interests. I was repeatedly told that an SC who ran on an SC profile would not win an election—the quote in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter is a typical example. An SC politician in UP argued that the goal of reservations was to increase the representation of SC interests in the country as a whole, but that to get elected he needed to work for all the voters in his constituency. While praising reservations for having brought him, the

46. Chandra (2004, 151–155).

47. Cited in Chandra (2004, 155).

48. Interview in Meerut, February 5, 2011.

49. See Farooqui and Sridharan (2014) for an excellent review of the candidate nomination process in India.

50. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

son of a poor laborer, into a position of power, he seemed sad at not being able to do more for the SC community, as only a few of his voters were SCs.[51]

Most SC politicians I interviewed did not claim to have made a major difference for SCs in their constituency—except for those who had held cabinet positions. An SC MLA from Karnataka said that his proudest achievement was that as a minister he had been able to fight for the land rights of SCs and to reduce the backlog of hiring for public jobs reserved for SCs.[52] With more and more SCs entering cabinets (see chapter 5), SCs have probably come to exert greater influence on political decision-making over time.

That SC politicians work for all voters and not specifically for SCs is not problematic in itself. A main argument against electoral quotas, in India and elsewhere (particularly with separate electorates), is that they may aggravate social cleavages by sharpening the focus on group differences.[53] That minority politicians are able to enter mainstream politics and work for whatever they themselves consider particularly important could be interpreted as evidence of their finding a place in politics without creating such societal divisions.

However, things become problematic when politicians feel they must downplay or reject their own group identities in order to be taken seriously, as when female politicians make efforts to be "one of the boys" so as to fit in, or minority politicians avoid promoting their group even when they would have liked to do so.[54] One senior SC politician in HP told me that SC politicians tend to do *less* for SCs than other politicians because they are afraid of being branded as "too SC."[55] Such comments indicate that there is still some way to go before SCs can compete in politics on an equal footing with other groups.

From my interviews it seemed clear that the institutional design of the quota system has affected the representational role of SC politicians. Some felt that it was not their mandate to work specifically for SCs, since the majority of their voters were non-SCs; other felt restricted from doing so by their political party and by the wish to be reelected. The politicians who come to power in reserved seats are the ones who are willing to enter into this political reality. They might be more concerned about the SC community

51. Interview in Meerut, February 5, 2001.

52. Interview in Bangalore, February 23, 2011.

53. See Galanter (1984, 81–82).

54. E.g., Kanter (1977).

55. Interview in Shimla, October 10, 2010.

than other politicians, but those I interviewed generally seemed to see it as their main responsibility to work for their party and their voters, not for the SC community.

3.4 *Reservations and political parties*

If SC politicians act as agents of their parties, then we must ask which parties they represent. Political parties play an important role in Indian elections. Successful candidates generally run under some party label, and the party leadership act as gatekeepers as to who gets to run for election.[56] In the first decades after independence, the Congress Party dominated the political landscape,[57] but its hegemonic position gradually weakened. By the 1990s, India had a full-fledged fragmented party system with a multitude of parties competing for seats.

Which parties have come to power in SC-reserved constituencies? Figure 3.1 shows a breakdown of the political parties of the MLAs who got to power in nonreserved (GEN) and SC-reserved (SC) constituencies across India between 1974 and 2007. This includes data from the 15 largest states, comprising approximately 91.2 percent of the Indian population according to the 1971 Census of India—these are the states in focus in this book.[58] There were slightly over 4,100 assembly constituencies across all of India during this period, but focusing on these 15 states and excluding constituencies reserved for STs yields a sample of 2,558 nonreserved constituencies and 505 constituencies reserved for SCs. Throughout the book I alternate between presenting data for this full set of constituencies and showing a reduced sample of 470 matched pairs of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies that are far more comparable as to demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (as described in section 1.3).

Figure 3.1 presents data for state assembly elections over time, with elections ordered into periods of 4–5 years that roughly correspond to the election

56. See Chhibber et al. (2014) for a discussion of the variation in the organizational capacity of parties in India, and Jensenius (2016) on how this affects nomination patterns for SCs and women.

57. See Kothari (1964).

58. As mentioned in section 1.3, I focus on these states because their political boundaries did not change during the period 1974–2007, allowing me to trace constituency-level patterns over time. After 2000 the data cover 17 states, as the two states Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand were carved out of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, respectively.

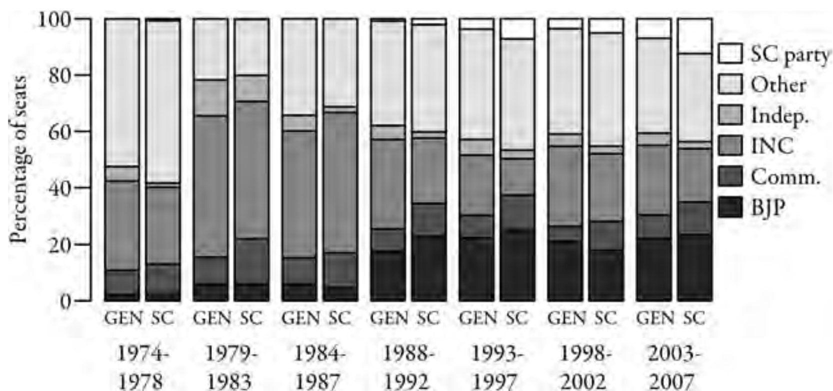

FIGURE 3.1 Party affiliation of MLAs in nonreserved and in SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (full sample)

Note: The figure shows the political parties that won elections in 2,558 nonreserved (GEN) constituencies and 505 SC-reserved (SC) constituencies across India's 15 largest states, as reported by the ECI (see appendix A for further information). "SC party" includes the Republican Party of India (RPI) as well as all its factions that won elections (RPI(A), RPI(K) and BBM), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP); "Indep." stands for independent candidates; "INC" includes the Congress Party and its factional groups INC(I) and INC(U); "Comm." includes the communist parties CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML)(L), and CPM(K); "BJP" includes BJS prior to 1980; and "Other" includes all remaining parties.

cycles of the states.[59] The overall pattern is that the Hindu nationalist party BJP has gained strength over time, whereas the Congress Party has lost ground. We see little difference in the patterns in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in any election period: SC-reserved constituencies have not had a dramatically different party profile from that of nonreserved constituencies.

However, we may note a few minor differences. For instance, the share of independent MLAs has been somewhat lower and the share of BJP MLAs has been slightly higher in SC-reserved constituencies (I will return to this point below). Perhaps more interestingly, the proportion of MLAs from

59. Most states held seven elections between 1974 and 2007, while UP had ten elections. This means that some of the time-periods contain two elections for the same state. I have chosen this approach because the presentation by year captures state-wise variation and therefore does not give a good representation of the pattern in India as a whole. Similarly, the presentation by election number leads to a comparison of state-wise elections that are far apart in time, and therefore also fails to represent country-wide trends.

an "SC party" has been slightly higher in SC-reserved than in nonreserved constituencies from the 1990s and onward.

What is meant by an "SC party"? In line with Chandra's understanding of an *ethnic party* as a party that overtly represents itself as a champion of the interests of one particular ethnic group, an SC party can be seen as one that openly represents itself as a party for SCs.[60] There have been several strong social movements fighting for the rights of SCs in India, and some of these have given rise to such political parties. Most notable are the RPI that emerged from the work of Dr. Ambedkar and his movement in the western state of Maharashtra in 1957, the BSP founded by Kanshi Ram in UP in 1984, and VCK formed in 1988 by the Dalit Panthers in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

As shown in Figure 3.1, SC parties won few seats in state assembly elections prior to the 1990s. When they did win, it was in somewhat larger numbers in SC-reserved constituencies. However, that should not be interpreted as a *result* of the quota system. Rather, it is because SCs have voted for SC parties in higher numbers, and reserved constituencies have a higher share of SC voters. Figure 3.2 provides an overview of the parties of elected MLAs in the matched sample of 470 pairs of SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies. Whereas the full sample of nonreserved constituencies on average had a smaller share of SCs among the voters, these matched pairs of 470 SC-reserved and 470 nonreserved constituencies had a more similar share of SCs in the 1970s. In these matched pairs of constituencies with a similar share of SC voters, we find no systematic difference in the success of SC parties. Across India, SC parties have done equally well in nonreserved constituencies with a high share of SC voters as in SC-reserved constituencies.

In the sample of matched constituencies, we can also note slightly fewer independent MLAs in the SC-reserved constituencies, but the difference is not as pronounced as in the full sample. The main clear difference across the groups of constituencies in the latest period is that there were more BJP MLAs and fewer Congress Party MLAs in SC-reserved constituencies than in comparable nonreserved constituencies.

The patterns shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 may seem strange to those familiar with Indian politics: the Congress Party, with its famed SC leaders Jagjivan Ram and B. P. Maurya, was known to control much of the SC vote

60. Chandra (2004, 3).

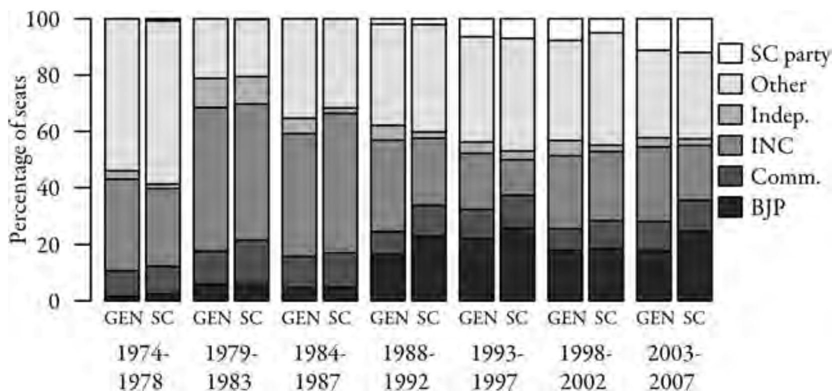

FIGURE 3.2 Party affiliation of MLAs in nonreserved and in SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (matched sample)

Note: The figure shows the political parties that won elections in 470 nonreserved (GEN) constituencies and 470 SC-reserved (SC) constituencies across India's 15 largest states, as reported by the ECI (see appendix A for further information). "SC party" includes the Republican Party of India (RPI) as well as all its factions that won elections (RPI(A), RPI(K) and BBM), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP); "Indep." stands for independent candidates; "INC" includes the Congress Party and its factional groups INC(I) and INC(U); "Comm." includes the communist parties CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML)(L), and CPM(K); "BJP" includes BJS prior to 1980; and "Other" includes all remaining parties.

before the 1990s, and the SC party BSP has been famous for its mobilization of SC voters in recent years.

These trends are confirmed if we look only at the parties elected in India's largest state UP, but it also shows that UP has been a clear outlier in voting patterns compared to the rest of the country. Figure 3.3 presents the share of political parties in UP's state assembly elections 1974–2007. The Congress Party won an impressive share of both nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in 1980 and in 1985, and then completely lost power to BJP and the rising lower-caste party SP in the 1990s. It is also here that the 1990s saw the rise of the SC-dominated party BSP, which managed to win a large majority of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in 2007.

For the purpose of this study—which examines what has happened in reserved constituencies across India over time—it is important to note that the rise of the BSP has occurred mainly in UP, and only since the 1990s. The BSP had a marginal presence before the 1993 elections in UP, but grew rapidly after that. But even with impressive victories in UP, BSP won only about 3.4 percent of the nonreserved seats across India in the period 1999–2002, and

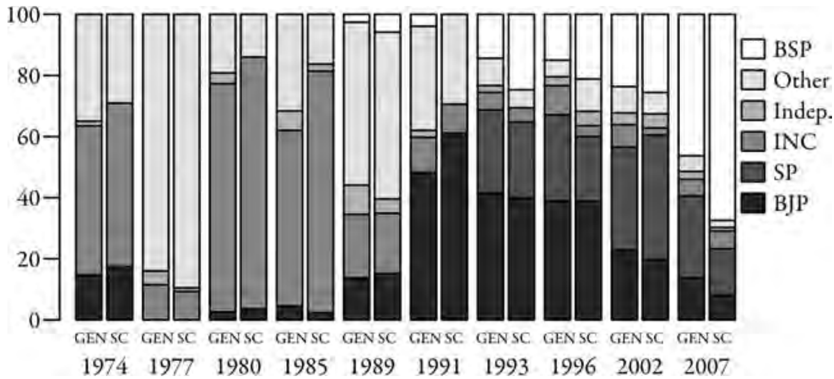

FIGURE 3.3 The party affiliation of MLAs in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in UP, 1974–2007 (full sample in UP)

Note: The figure shows the political parties that won elections in the 316 nonreserved (GEN) constituencies and 86 SC-reserved (SC) constituencies in UP (the part that became Uttaranchal is not included), as reported by the ECI (see appendix A for more information about the data). "BSP" stands for Bahujan Samaj Party; "Indep." stands for independent candidates; "Congress" includes the Congress Party and its factional groups INC(I) and INC(U); "SP" is the Samajwadi Party; "BJP" includes BJS prior to 1980; and "Other" includes all remaining parties.

only about 5 percent of the SC-reserved seats. In the last period examined for the whole country (2003–2007), the BSP held 5.7 percent of the full sample of nonreserved seats and 10.7 percent of the SC-reserved seats. Although it has played a crucial role in the discussions about SCs in India, we should bear in mind that the vast majority of SCs elected to India's state assemblies have come from other parties than the BSP.

3.5 *Conclusions*

It may be tempting to assume that group inclusion in politics will result in group representation. But, as discussed in this chapter, that is often not the case. Several SC politicians I interviewed said that they felt a strong shared sense of marginalization with other SCs, but that as politicians they saw it as their main responsibility to (or they felt forced to) represent their parties and voters rather than their group. As such, this would seem to confirm the criticism that SC politicians in India do not actively represent SCs—but not all of them saw this as a negative thing: several argued that their responsibility lay in representing their parties, and that their parties did a good job representing the interests of SCs.

It is less clear whether SC politicians are more or less effective in their representational work than other politicians. As shown in this chapter, work in the state assemblies is only a small part of the job for India's MLAs. Most of their time is spent meeting with constituents and trying to help out with their various requests. In that way, MLAs serve as the link between the Indian public and the state.

The SC politicians I interviewed seemed somewhat less connected than non-SC politicians, and seemed to use different methods when helping people. Rather than picking up the phone to call a minister, they might tackle a problem by helping someone write a letter to the relevant authority or by organizing a demonstration (also the method favored by several of the non-SC politicians who had not served in cabinets). These methods may be "less efficient" at getting a job done—but they may be better when it comes to empowering members of the public. Politicians using these "less efficient" techniques may also be less prone to enter the gray-zone of corruption. As one SC politician put it: without connections it could be hard to get someone in the civil service to help with something unfair, but most civil servants will respond to a fair request, regardless of who presents it.

4

Quotas and Development[1]

I know that if they [SC quotas] go on working, they [SCs] will perhaps attain further progress in educational, administrative and other fields [. . .] we have to remember that if they had made progress in those directions, that progress too is, to a large extent, due to their representation in the legislatures.[2]

DO POLICIES OF group inclusion result in resources being distributed more fairly? And if so, under what circumstances? These are major issues in the debate worldwide. As discussed in chapter 3, SC politicians in general do *not* act as representatives of their group. Thus, we should not expect to find that SCs benefit materially from living in an SC-reserved constituency. However, it is an open empirical question whether there has been less *overall* development in SC-reserved constituencies. A common stereotype of SC politicians is that they are "weaker" and "less efficient" than other politicians, and that there is less overall development in SC-reserved constituencies.

In this chapter I explore the impact of SC reservations on development patterns at the state assembly constituency level—whether they have resulted in a redistribution of resources. Using constituency-level estimates of census data from 1971 and 2001, I examine both changes in overall levels of development, and the development gap between SCs and non-SCs. However, as we will see, comparison of matched pairs of SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies reveals that 30 years of quotas have had no detectable constituency-level effect on development patterns. These findings do not rule out the possibility that the presence of SCs in positions of power has had an overall impact on the

1. An earlier version of this chapter was published in *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* (Jensenius 2015a).

2. Lok Sabha Debates, November 30, 1959, 2447.

development for SCs in India. However, it is hard to confirm or reject the existence of such an overall effect on empirical grounds.

It may be tempting to conclude that the no-development effect of SC quotas at the constituency level represents a failure of the quota system—that was certainly how some of my interview respondents saw it. However, this should rather be interpreted as a logical consequence of the institutional design of the quota system: SC politicians face similar incentives and constraints as other politicians and consequently act in much the same way as other politicians when they hold office.

Perhaps the most important finding here is that there has not been *less* overall development in SC-reserved constituencies. The SC quotas do not seem to have hindered the socioeconomic development of SCs or others. As a widespread argument against quotas, in India and elsewhere, is that they negatively affect the efficacy of the political system, the findings in this chapter indicate that such fears may be exaggerated.

4.1 SCs and development

India's SC communities have traditionally suffered from socioeconomic exploitation and deprivation. Despite the many policies that have been implemented to combat untouchability, they have remained vulnerable. Large numbers of SCs used to serve as bonded labor—under slave-like conditions—on farms and in various industries. This practice was made illegal in 1976, but has still not been eradicated.[3] SCs have a lower rate of land ownership, experience higher unemployment rates, and hold fewer influential positions in private- as well as public-sector jobs.[4] The annual reports of the SC Commission provide evidence of continued caste-related violence and discrimination across the country.[5]

The successive five-year plans of the Indian governments bear witness to a continued concern about the socioeconomic deprivation of SCs. Money has been set aside for a range of programs aimed at improving their conditions, including scholarships for SC children, training programs for freed bonded labor, and income-generating development schemes. These programs have

3. See Upadhyaya (2008).

4. Thorat (2009).

5. Reports available online at http://ncsc.nic.in/.

not always been effective, and not all funds have reached the intended beneficiaries.[6] Yet, despite all the corruption and inefficiency, it should not be forgotten that massive development has indeed taken place in India and that the glaring socioeconomic gap between SCs and others has narrowed.

The change is visible in poverty statistics: In the Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted in 2011/2012, 29 percent of SCs were estimated to be living below the national poverty line, as compared to 22 percent of the full population. This is a difference, but a smaller one than what was previously the case: Using data from the 1993/1994 NSS, the numbers were 61 for SCs and 46 for the whole population. This means that the poverty gap between SCs and others has narrowed considerably from the 1990s and onward.[7]

This can be observed in educational levels as well—one of the few development indicators for which we have fairly reliable group-wise data over time. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of literacy rates among SCs and non-SCs across India in 1931, 1971, 2001, and 2011. The figures are calculated on the basis of district-level data from the Census of India for each of these years. The plot shows the difference between SC individuals and non-SC individuals across the country, independent of the reservation status of the constituencies of residence.

We see that in 1931 the average district-level literacy rate among SCs was 1.9 percent, compared to 8.0 percent for non-SCs. The x-axis in this first plot runs only from 0 to 25, as few districts had a literacy rate higher than that. The numbers are small, but not surprising: As discussed by Suryanarayan,[8] members of the upper castes used their predominance in the British bureaucracy and in the British provincial councils to restrict access to public schooling among lower-caste groups.

By 1971, a major change was evident. There was a large difference between SCs, with an average district-wise literacy rate of 16.0 percent, and non-SCs, with an average literacy rate of 29.5 percent. By 2001, literacy rates had increased across the whole country, while the gap between SCs and non-SCs had narrowed to about 9 percentage points. By 2011, the average literacy rate

6. India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi famously said that only 17 percent of development money reached the common man. Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, later said he had data indicating that the actual figure was closer to 16 percent (TNN 2009).

7. These are estimates of the population living below the Tendulkar poverty line, as calculated by Panagariya and More (2014, 205).

8. Suryanarayan (2016).

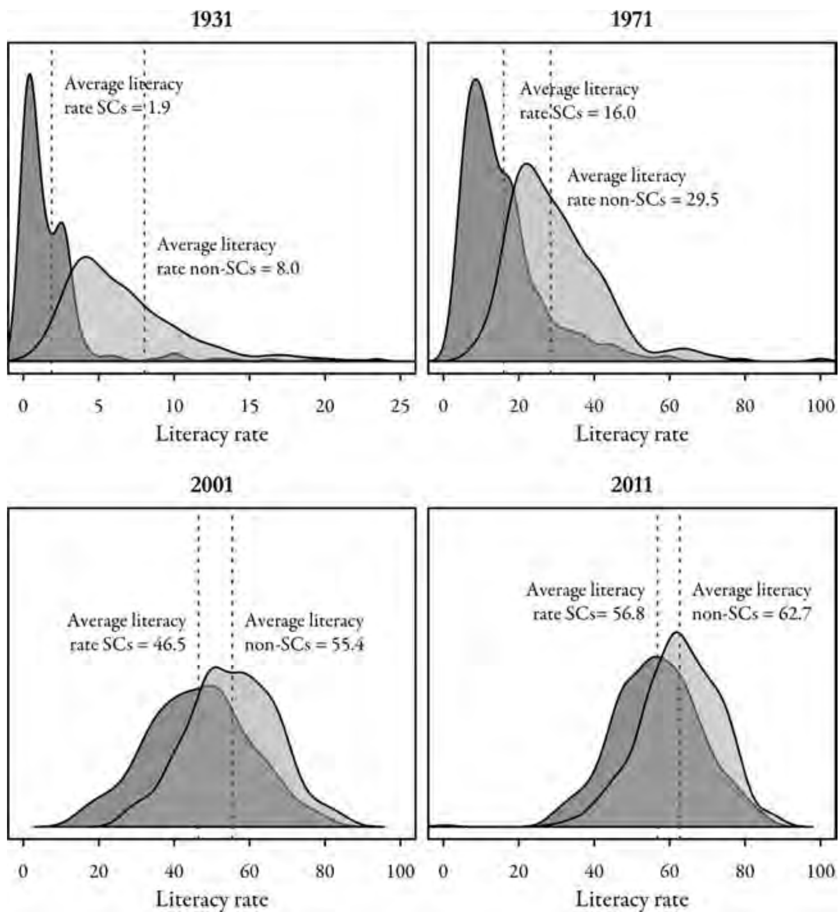

FIGURE 4.1 Changing literacy rates of SCs and non-SCs

Note: Plots for 1931 are based on district-level data for Bihar, Central Provinces and Berar, Hyderabad, Punjab, Rajputana, Travancore, Madras Presidency, Bombay Presidency, and the United Provinces from the 1931 Census of India, digitized and developed by Suryanarayan (2016). The 1971 and 2001 data are aggregated from the census data used in the rest of this book (see appendix A). Plots for 2011 are based on district-level data from the 2011 Census of India, for the same 17 states that are included in the datasets in the rest of the book. For consistency across years, all literacy rates have been calculated as the literate population divided by the whole population.

among SCs was about 57 percent, as compared to 63 percent for the rest of the population—the gap had further narrowed to about 6 percentage points.

This shows that there still is a correlation between caste and socioeconomic characteristics in India, but that the gap has narrowed. SCs have made considerable progress, but can this to some extent be said to be a *result*

of the electoral quotas? Has the rate of change been faster in SC-reserved constituencies?

Literature on development and quotas

Recent years have seen considerable academic interest in exploring the socioeconomic effects of electoral quotas in India. Most of this literature has focused on quotas for women in village-level politics, because these quotas were implemented randomly, making them well-suited for empirical study.[9] Work on West Bengal and Rajasthan has shown that female politicians tend to focus more on issues in which women in particular express an interest.[10] A study of more than 35,000 respondents across 24 states shows that villages with female political leaders tend to have better drinking-water supplies.[11] Female leaders in West Bengal have also been found to improve the targeting of subsidized loans to disadvantaged groups, but to worsen the targeting of employment grants.[12]

As to quotas for SCs and STs at the village level, survey evidence from West Bengal shows that places where the position of *pradhan* (village president) was reserved for SCs saw an increase in benefits to the village as a whole, as well as an increase in the measures targeted at female-headed households and to the group of the *pradhan*.[13] Some work also finds that more public goods have been provided to SC-dominated parts of the villages reserved for SCs.[14] However, a study using a regression discontinuity design finds no evidence that SC politicians channel development funds to their own group when they are in power.[15]

Quotas at the state and national levels for SCs and STs have received less academic (and public) attention. These quotas warrant study in the context of socioeconomic effects, as they have been in place for a longer time and give

9. Since 1993 one-third of the seats in village councils have been reserved for women. The locations of these seats have been rotated at the time of each election.

10. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004b,a).

11. Beaman et al. (2010).

12. Bardhan et al. (2010).

13. Bardhan et al. (2010).

14. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004a).

15. Dunning and Nilekani (2013).

access to considerable resources. We also cannot assume that the same patterns will emerge from the state-level and village-level quotas, as politicians at different levels face different incentive structures—for example, higher-level politicians are unlikely to have the same personal relationships with their constituents as politicians in villages.

As discussed in chapter 1, one problem in studying these higher-level quotas is that they were not randomly assigned. In a study of the effects of state-level quotas on public spending, Pande[16] circumvented this selection bias by exploiting the time-lag between the change in the population share of SCs and STs and the change in number of seats reserved for them. She reported strong effects of ST representation on overall spending, educational spending, and ST welfare spending, but weaker patterns for SC politicians. Having more SCs in positions of power was not associated with changes in total spending, nor with spending on education, land reform, or welfare spending for SCs or STs. However, it was associated with a higher proportion of government jobs being reserved for SCs and STs.

Using the same identification strategy as Pande, Chin and Prakash have examined the effects of state-level reservations on poverty, measured as the proportion of people living below the poverty line in each state according to the National Sample Surveys conducted between 1960 and 2000.[17] They found strong evidence of reduced poverty when more ST politicians were in power, but reported no significant effect of SC reservations on poverty. They argued that this no-impact finding is consistent with Pande's findings, as reserved jobs are likely to benefit the better-off segments of the SC community, with little effect on poverty.

In chapter 3, I discussed how the evidence from my interviews with Indian elites indicates that, even though some SC politicians may wish to work for the interests of the SC community, they also wish to be reelected, and must appeal to non-SC voters in order to be renominated by their parties and win votes. Moreover, several of the SC politicians I interviewed said representing the interests of SCs was the responsibility of their parties and not themselves personally. From this evidence, we should therefore not expect to find greater development among SCs in SC-reserved constituencies than among SCs in comparable nonreserved constituencies.

16. Pande (2003).

17. Chin and Prakash (2011).

Further, noting some differences in how SC MLAs and other MLAs work when in power, I argued that individual SC MLAs to a limited extent seem to affect the policy debate and legislative choices that are made. But MLAs are thought to matter in their constituencies: if SC politicians are indeed less effective in attracting resources to their constituencies or in influencing the bureaucracy than other politicians, then we should expect to see a lower rate of overall development in SC-reserved constituencies over time. In the remainder of this chapter, I use census data to demonstrate that this does not seem to have happened. We find no observable differences in the development patterns in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies between 1971 and 2001.

4.2 *Redistributional effects of quotas*

The outcome variables used here come from the 2001 Census of India. There are several advantages in using these data when examining development outcomes. The census is the only data source in India that contains development indicators at the village and block levels for the entire country.[18] This makes it possible to create estimates of variables at the state assembly constituency level, a more disaggregate level than what has been used in earlier analyses. In addition, the baseline data used in creating the matched pairs employed throughout this book came from the 1971 Census of India.[19] Returning to the same data 30 years later allows us to draw causal conclusions about differences between SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies, since we know that the patterns are not biased by different starting points.

Constituency-level estimates of the 2001 census data were created by overlaying block-level Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps with GIS maps of state assembly constituencies, and merging variables from the block-level census data to the constituency level by area-weighting.[20] The resultant dataset has constituency-level estimates of development indicators

18. Large-scale surveys conducted in India, such as the National Sample Survey, do not include indicators for political constituencies and do not release the indicators for geographic location below the district.

19. See appendix A.3 for a further description of the 1971 data, section 1.3 for a discussion of the intuition of the matching models, and appendix B for balance statistics for the matches.

20. See appendix A.3 for details on how the 2001 census dataset was created.

for 2,558 nonreserved constituencies and 505 SC-reserved constituencies for 15 states (17 after 2000).

In addition to data from the Primary Census Abstract, I use the 2001 Village Directory (VD), which contains information on village-level amenities for all the villages in India. In most of the analyses in this chapter these data are aggregated to the constituency level; in the final section, I use the data at the village level, to search for intraconstituency patterns.[21]

Operationalizing development

From the variables available in these datasets I chose to focus on seven development indicators. The first is the constituency-level *literacy rate*.[22] This is an important variable considering the low literacy rates among the Indian population, and how much voters care about education, seeing it as the key to social mobility. Politicians have the power to affect literacy rates in their constituencies by getting funds allocated to specific schooling projects, or following up on whether the bureaucracy is doing their job of getting schools built, whether teachers show up for work, whether SC children get access to the classroom, and using their discretionary MLA funds for books, uniforms, or scholarships. The official literacy figures for India for 2001 were calculated as the literate out of those aged seven years and older. For 1971, they were calculated as the literate out of those aged five years and older. For consistency, the literacy rates have been calculated as the literate population divided by the whole population. That means that the literacy rates provided here are lower than official figures.

My second outcome variable is the *employment rate* in a constituency. This variable captures all people in the population engaged in full-time or part-time work.[23] Unemployment is high in India, and having a stable income is crucial to the socioeconomic standing of the family. As noted, much of the contact between politicians and their constituents relates to help in getting a job or getting transferred to another position, which are matters that politicians are thought to be able to influence.

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21. See appendix A.3 for detail on how the data were aggregated.

22. According to the Census of India: "A person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language has been taken as literate" (GoI 2001a).

23. According to the Census of India: "Work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit" (GoI 2001a).

My third development indicator is the percentage of *agricultural laborers* in a constituency. These are usually landless laborers who work for wages on someone else's farm.[24] Achieving ownership of land has been a major issue for SC activists, since land is vital to both social respect and social mobility. As there are far more agricultural laborers among SCs than among non-SCs, it is relevant to ask whether reservations have had an effect on the percentage of SCs and non-SCs working as agricultural laborers. Also, as Pande[25] found an association between more SCs in power and more job quotas for minorities at the state level, we may expect to see this reflected at the constituency level as well—with more SCs within SC-reserved constituencies taking up desk-jobs rather than working as agricultural laborers.

In addition to these variables based on individual-level data, I examined four village-level characteristics. For the main analysis these variables were aggregated to the constituency level: I calculated the percentage of the rural population in a constituency who lived with some form of *electricity in the village*, with some type of *school in the village*, with some form of *medical facility in the village*, and some type of *communications channel in the village* (post, telegraph, or telephone). As of 2001, the spread of mobile phones and the Internet in rural India was still limited, so having access to one of these types of communication channels was an important indicator of development. Since most villages have both SC and non-SC populations, these measures cannot be neatly divided by caste group. However, the VD specifies the SC population in each village, so I could calculate the proportion of the rural SC population within a constituency who lived in a village with access to each of these four types of amenities. As the SC community is generally poorer than the rest of the population, it would seem likely to be in the interest of the SC community to see more overall development along the lines of those four amenities.

To distinguish the overall development effects from the potential redistribution to SCs in SC-reserved constituencies, I examine both the differences across SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies on the overall level of all these outcome variables, and the gap between SCs and non-SCs.

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24. According to the Census of India: "A person who works on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share is regarded as an agricultural labourer" (GoI 2001a).

25. Pande (2003).

Development differences in the full sample

Examination of the outcome variables from the 2001 Census of India on the full sample of constituencies, as shown in Table 4.1, reveals some clear differences between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies. Not surprisingly, the most notable difference is the much higher *percentage of SCs*

Table 4.1 Differences in development indicators for nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 2001

Overall patterns (percentages)	Mean non-reserved	Mean SC-reserved	Diff. in means	P-value
Percentage of SCs	16.4	24.3	7.8	<0.01
Literacy rate	56.2	53.4	−2.8	0.01
Employment Rate	40.1	40.3	0.2	0.76
Agricultural laborers	15.4	14.9	−0.5	0.50
Electricity in village	90.0	86.9	−3.1	0.03
School in village	95.6	94.6	−1.1	0.03
Medical facility in village	62.4	59.6	−2.8	0.09
Comm. channel in village	73.8	70.4	−3.4	0.02
Gap between SCs and non-SCs	**Mean diff.**	**Mean diff.**	**Diff. in diff.**	**P-value**
Literacy gap	−9.8	−11.6	−1.8	<0.01
Employment gap	2.1	2.6	0.5	0.10
Agricultural laborers gap	13.3	13.7	0.4	0.50
Electricity in village gap	0.2	−0.1	−0.3	0.10
School in village gap	0.1	0.1	−0.1	0.48
Medical facility in village gap	−0.4	−0.9	−0.5	0.06
Comm. channel in village gap	0.0	−0.9	−0.8	< 0.01

Note: Data based on the 2001 Census of India. Reported p-values are from bivariate OLS regression models estimated separately for each outcome variable, with standard errors clustered at the state level.

in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones. Otherwise, in nonreserved constituencies the average literacy rate was 56.2 percent, as against 53.4 percent in SC-reserved constituencies. This difference of 2.8 percentage points is highly statistically significant. No major differences emerged regarding the employment rate or the percentage of agricultural laborers.

As to differences in the village-level variables, we again see that the SC-reserved constituencies fare worse: whereas 90 percent of the rural population in nonreserved constituencies lived in electrified villages, the figure was 86.9 percent for those in SC-reserved constituencies. Similarly, percentages in reserved constituencies were slightly lower as regards living in a village that had some type of school in the village, some form of medical facility in the village, and some form of communications channel in the village. All these overall differences are statistically significant at conventional levels.

The lower part of Table 4.1 shows the differences between SCs and non-SCs for the same variables. Here, the mean difference of −9.8 percentage points in nonreserved constituencies is the average difference between the literacy rate among SCs (47.5) and non-SCs (57.3) living in nonreserved constituencies. This literacy gap is even greater in SC-reserved constituencies—a difference of −1.8 percentage points, which is highly statistically significant.

Negative values indicate the SCs had a lower rate than others. Thus, the positive values for employment rate and agricultural laborers indicate that there were more employed SCs and more SC agricultural laborers in both types of constituencies, and these gaps were larger in reserved constituencies.

These descriptive patterns indicate that the overall level of development was higher in nonreserved constituencies than in SC-reserved ones in 2001. Further, on many important variables there was a larger gap between SCs and non-SCs in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones. This may explain why people often say that there has been less development in reserved constituencies.

However, these patterns should not be interpreted as causal. As discussed in the introduction, constituencies that were selected to be reserved for SCs in the 1970s were chosen because they had a high percentage of SCs. At that time, literacy rates and other development indicators were not only much lower across the board, but also much lower in the constituencies that became reserved than in nonreserved constituencies. Figure 4.2 shows the change in literacy rate for non-SCs and SCs between 1971 and 2001. In 1971 the literacy rate among non-SCs in nonreserved and in SC-reserved constituencies averaged 33.3 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively. In both types of constituencies there was a massive increase in the literacy rate over

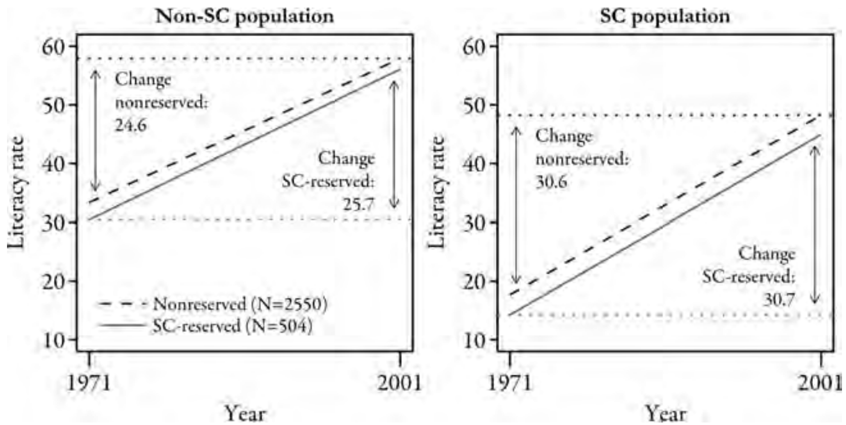

FIGURE 4.2 Changes in literacy rates in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1971–2001

Note: Data based on the 1971 and 2001 Census of India. Literacy figures are calculated as the number of literate persons divided by the entire population. These figures therefore differ slightly from official figures, which were calculated as percentages of the population aged 5 or older in 1971 and of the population aged 7 or older in 2001.

the years. As can be seen from Figure 4.2, this increase was very similar in SC-reserved and in nonreserved constituencies with a slightly faster growth for the literacy rate of non-SCs in SC-reserved constituencies.

A similar pattern holds for the SC population. Here the literacy rate in 1971 was 17.6 percent and 14.2 percent in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, respectively. Between 1971 and 2001, in both types of constituencies, SCs showed a dramatic and similar growth in literacy, but the growth was neither faster nor slower in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones.

However, these descriptive patterns might be biased by the fact that SC-reserved constituencies differed systematically from nonreserved ones, and could thus have different time trends. In the next section I present evidence from the reduced, matched sample of constituencies, which were more similar in the 1970s.

Development differences in the matched sample

The main purpose of matching up similar constituencies was to eliminate as much as possible the selection bias in the nonrandom assignment of reserved constituencies in the 1970s. Each of the SC-reserved constituencies in the sample was matched to a nonreserved constituency within the same district and parliamentary constituency that had the closest percentage of

SCs according to 1971 census data. This model has the advantage of being simple and transparent, but some matched pairs may differ considerably as to the percentage of SCs. I therefore also present results from an alternative matching model where the matched pairs were dropped if they differed by more than 0.5 standard deviations on the percentage of SCs (matching with a caliper). This resulted in pairs of constituencies that were even more similar in 1971 (see appendix B.1 for balance statistics).

Table 4.2 reports both these sets of matching estimates: The differences between the 470 matched pairs of SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies (all matches), and the difference between the 336 pairs that

Table 4.2 Matching estimates of differences in socioeconomic development in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 2001

Overall patterns	All matches		Matches w/caliper	
	Diff.	P-value	Diff.	P-value
Literacy rate	−0.41	0.25	−0.03	0.91
Employment rate	−0.08	0.72	−0.28	0.22
Agricultural laborers	−0.28	0.80	−0.16	0.86
Electricity in village	−0.63	0.47	−0.39	0.64
School in village	−0.36	0.18	−0.33	0.27
Medical facility in village	−0.20	0.72	−1.17	0.11
Comm. channel in village	0.24	0.68	0.89	0.29
Gap between SCs and non-SCs	**Diff. in diff**	**P-value**	**Diff. in diff**	**P-value**
Literacy gap	0.00	0.98	0.07	0.72
Employment gap	−0.02	0.84	−0.09	0.49
Agricultural laborers gap	−0.30	0.77	−0.10	0.89
Electricity in village gap	−0.02	0.84	0.18	0.44
School in village gap	−0.03	0.75	−0.04	0.75
Medical facility in village gap	0.00	0.99	0.38	0.39
Comm. channel in village gap	−0.45	0.12	−0.32	0.34

Note: Data from the 2001 Census of India. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each outcome variable, with standard errors clustered at the state level. Conclusions are robust to using naïve standard errors from the OLS models, and standard errors from permutation tests.

were matched with a caliper—a maximum distance of 0.5 standard deviations on the percentage of SCs.[26]

The differences reported are the same as in Table 4.1, but the differences are now much smaller, and none are statistically significant.[27] The first row shows the difference in the overall literacy rate in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies. In the full sample there was a difference of 2.8 percentage points, whereas in this reduced sample of constituencies that began as similar in the 1970s, the difference is down to 0.41 percentage points. Not only is this statistically insignificant, it is also a very minor difference in real-life terms. The other differences are similarly small and insignificant.

If there had been an overall pattern of SC politicians being less able to bring development to their constituencies, we should have seen negative and significant figures for literacy, employment, and village amenities, and positive and significant differences in the percentage of agricultural laborers, in the top part of the table. However, across all the variables, the differences are small and insignificant.

The lower part of the table shows the differences across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in the intraconstituency gap between SCs and non-SCs. Had SCs benefited from living in reserved constituencies, there should have been positive and significant values for literacy, employment, and village amenities and negative values for agricultural laborers. The fact that we see only small differences that are far from statistically significant indicates that SC representation has had no discernible impact on the intra constituency distribution between SCs and non-SCs.

Figure 4.3 shows the matching estimates reported in Table 4.2. The black dots indicate the normal matching estimates and the light gray dots represent the estimates from the matching models with a caliper of 0.5. The black horizontal lines show the 95 percent confidence intervals for each of these point estimates.

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26. In an earlier version of this chapter I also reported a bias-adjusted estimate of the differences between these 336 pairs (Jensenius 2015a).

27. Patterns in the table include first-order differences in the top panel, and second-order differences in the bottom panel. The patterns are robust to including the third difference of examining changes over time (1971–2001) for the PCA variables. I chose not to report these third-order differences, as data from 1971 were not available for the VD data. In Table 4.3, some of the models include the 1971 values as a control variable.

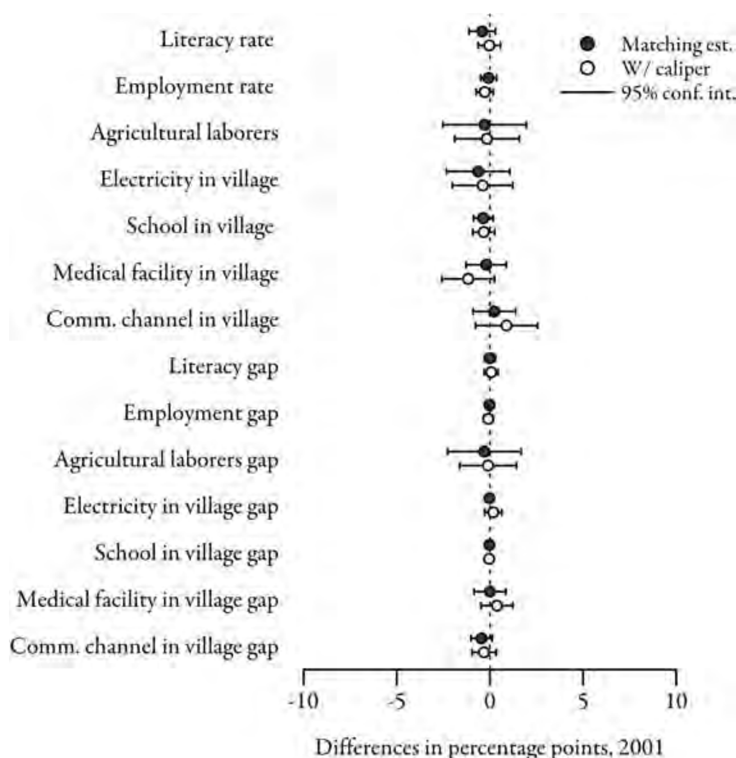

FIGURE 4.3 Matching estimates of differences in socioeconomic development in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1971–2001

Note: Matching estimates are illustrations of the normal matches and the matches with a caliper from Table 4.2. Reported confidence intervals are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each outcome variable, with standard errors clustered at the state level.

Heterogeneity in the findings?

There are various ways of probing these findings further in order to check for robustness and for heterogeneous effects. Here I discuss two such robustness checks.

First, it is relevant to see whether the level of development is correlated with the percentage of SCs in the constituency, and whether there is an interaction effect between the reservation status of a constituency and the percentage of SCs. If politicians were differently affected by electoral incentives—for example, if they preferred to work for their group when they had the chance to put together a winning coalition to do so—we might expect a heterogeneous treatment effect: That SC politicians work more for SCs when there are

enough SCs in the population to create political coalitions with many SCs, while non-SC politicians would still not work more for SCs. On the other hand, if politicians respond similarly to electoral incentives, we should expect to find no difference between SC politicians and other politicians, given the same incentive structures. Similarly, the arguments presented earlier about the important role of political parties in nominating candidates and controlling politicians should also act to prevent such differential behavior among politicians.

Table 4.3 reports output from OLS regression models exploring these potential heterogeneities in the matching estimates. The outcome variables are the SC literacy rate, SC employment rate, and percentage of agricultural

Table 4.3 Interaction between percentage of SCs in a constituency and socioeconomic development outcomes for the SC community

	SC lit. rate 2001		SC emp. rate 2001		SC agr. 2001	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	50.94***	41.29***	44.84***	26.08***	22.76***	−3.53†
	(6.69)	(2.87)	(2.55)	(2.44)	(4.53)	(1.92)
SC reserved AC	0.50	0.36	0.26	−0.59	0.82	−0.63
	(0.98)	(0.96)	(0.67)	(0.54)	(1.14)	(0.81)
Percentage of SCs	−0.36	0.01	−0.14	0.07	−0.12	0.08
	(0.25)	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.16)	(0.08)
SC reserved * % SCs	0.01	−0.02	−0.02	0.01	−0.04	0.02
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)
SC literacy rate (1971)		0.99***				
		(0.11)				
SC employment (1971)				0.53***		
				(0.07)		
SC agr. laborer (1971)						0.33***
						(0.02)
State fixed effects		Yes		Yes		Yes
N	672	672	672	672	672	672
R^2	0.03	0.84	0.02	0.62	0.01	0.77
adj. R^2	0.03	0.84	0.01	0.61	0.00	0.76
Resid. sd	13.13	5.40	7.42	4.69	11.04	5.43

Note: Data from the 1971 and 2001 Census of India. Standard errors clustered by state in parentheses, †significant at $p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

laborers among SCs in 2001. The sample is the 336 pairs of constituencies that were matched with a caliper of 0.5. For each outcome variable, Model 1 includes the reservation status of constituencies (ACs), the percentage of SCs in the constituencies, and their interaction. Model 2 also includes the baseline value for the outcome variable in 1971 and state fixed effects. For all three cases, the explanatory power of the reservation status and the percentage of SCs is minimal (R^2 of less than 0.04), while the inclusion of the lagged outcome variable and the state fixed effects greatly increase the explanatory power of the models. All standard errors are clustered by state.

As with the output from the matching models, the coefficients for reservation status are low across the models. The coefficients for the percentage of SCs and the interaction terms are also insignificant. In other words, we find no evidence of a heterogeneous treatment effect based on the percentage of SCs in constituencies.

Finally, another possibility consistent with the no-impact findings is that SC politicians have given priority to redistributing resources to the few areas within their constituency with a large SC population, at the expense of SC minorities across the rest of their constituency. Such behavior would be shown by a higher rate of development in villages with a high proportion of SCs.

To probe for such a pattern, the full sample of villages in the VD dataset (N=430,219) was reduced to the villages that fell within the 672 (336 pairs) SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies that were matched with a caliper. The village-level data include only villages that were found to overlap with an AC according to two different sets of GIS maps, which means that not all ACs were included in the data. This leaves us with a sample of 85,340 villages across 630 ACs (and sometimes a bit less when there are missing values for specific variables). Table 4.4 reports output from logistic regression models probing for heterogeneity by proportion of SCs in each village. The analysis is at the village level, and the outcome variables are binary indicators for whether a village was electrified, had a primary school, had a medical facility, and/or had some form of communications channel, as explained above.

Across the models, the coefficients are substantively small. With standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency, none of the explanatory variables are significant at conventional levels.[28]

28. With naïve standard errors, some of the coefficients are significant, but not in the expected direction: villages with a high proportion of SCs emerge as the least likely to be electrified in constituencies reserved for SCs, and villages with a low proportion of SCs are more likely to

Table 4.4 Logistic regression models of propensity for villages to have various village amenities, 2001

	Electricity	Primary school	Medical inst.	Comm. channel
Intercept	18.56***	2.50***	−0.00	1.52***
	(0.17)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.23)
SC-reserved AC	0.01	−0.00	−0.03	0.09
	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Proportion of SCs	0.01	0.28	−0.22†	−0.04
	(0.29)	(0.22)	(0.12)	(0.12)
SC-reserved AC *	−0.03	−0.08	0.10	−0.01
prop. SCs	(0.37)	(0.28)	(0.16)	(0.15)
State fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N villages	85340	85418	85418	85418
AIC	67428.27	81113.84	95679.32	103584.63
BIC	68139.20	81824.84	96390.33	104295.63
log L	−33638.13	−40480.92	−47763.66	−51716.31

Note: Data from the 2001 Census of India. Standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency in parentheses, †significant at $p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

Again, the patterns reported do not provide any evidence that SC politicians bring less development to their constituencies, nor that they have distributed more resources to SCs while in power.

4.3 Conclusions

This chapter has examined constituency-level development effects of the quotas for SCs over a 30-year period. There are several reasons why we might expect to find development effects of the quotas for SCs. On the one hand, SC politicians might have wanted to channel resources to the SC population because of their shared experience of stigmatization and discrimination. On the other hand, development effects could also accrue from changes in attitudes toward SCs among other politicians, civil servants working harder to implement policies for SCs in reserved areas, or SCs working harder to climb

have a communications channel in reserved constituencies. However, given the clustered nature of the village data these standard errors are probably too small.

the social ladder because they are inspired by being politically represented by a fellow SC. There could also have been less overall development in SC-reserved constituencies if SC politicians had been less able to bring resources to their areas.

In this chapter I have shown that no such differential growth seems to have taken place. We find no evidence of any difference in the overall change in development or the redistribution to SCs in SC-reserved constituencies.

The fact that SCs have not benefited materially from living in SC-reserved constituencies does not mean that no development at all has taken place for the SC community. There has been massive overall development in India since independence, and the development gap between SCs and the rest of the population has narrowed substantially. This may be the result of all the main parties in India having SC development on their agendas. And, as SCs form a large part of the electorate across India, it is in the interest of all parties to vie for SC votes.

The narrowing gap between SCs and others *may* also partly be a result of the SC quotas, albeit one that is hard to identify: the zero-findings at the constituency level do not preclude diffuse effects of the SC quotas, resulting, for instance, from non-SC politicians or civil servants coming to view SCs more positively, or from SC politicians shifting *overall* development patterns (as with SC politicians who hold cabinet positions, as discussed in chapter 3). What I show in this chapter is simply that there has not been greater redistribution to SCs living in SC-reserved constituencies than to SCs elsewhere, nor less overall development in SC-reserved constituencies than elsewhere.

5

A New Political Elite

The first time I was asked to speak on stage I did not manage to say more than "Jai Bhim" because I had no confidence to speak in public. After that, Kanshi Ram made me speak in all the public meetings I attended until I felt comfortable doing it.[1]

FOR POLITICAL PARTIES, the incentives of the quota system for SCs have been quite clear: If they wanted a higher number of seats in the legislative assemblies, they would have to field SC candidates and help them win elections. Thus, it has been in the interest of all political parties to seek out qualified SC candidates and promote their political careers. This should mean that SC politicians gradually should get empowered and become active participants in the political elite. But to what extent has this actually happened? Have the quotas for SCs really created parity in political participation at the elite level?

Stereotypes about SC politicians are many. During my interviews with politicians, civil servants, and activists across India in 2010 and 2011, I was told that SC politicians are "weak," "useless" (*nalayak*), "inexperienced," "ineffective," and that they are never entrusted with important positions of power. I was also told that SC politicians could afford to work less than others, because elections in reserved constituencies are less competitive. But not all my respondents expressed such negative views. One SC politician I interviewed in Karnataka even said that he thought the exclusion of SCs from positions of power has been greatly exaggerated. He held that those SC politicians who do a good job in office are taken seriously and are selected for important posts.[2]

1. SC politician interviewed in Lucknow, November 21, 2010. "Jai Bhim" translates as "Victory to Bhim," i.e., to Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar.

2. Interview in Bangalore, February 23, 2011.

This chapter is about the gradual empowerment of a new political elite among SCs. Looking at the competitiveness of constituencies and the rerunning patterns of politicians, we can note several differences in the political profiles of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies. Faced with the incentives of the quota system, all the main parties have fielded SC candidates. These candidates have fought in competitive elections, and over time many of them have been reelected and gained political experience. However, SC-reserved constituencies do seem to be somewhat less competitive than nonreserved ones, and they also have more female candidates.

Finally, I turn to a more direct measure of whether politicians are truly integrated into the top echelons of their parties: cabinet membership. I show how more and more SCs have gradually achieved cabinet posts across India, although they are still less likely than other politicians to get the highest-ranking positions. The findings in this chapter thus show how the quotas have resulted in the gradual, albeit still incomplete, integration of SC politicians into the political elite.

5.1 Reservations and competitiveness

Elections in India are highly competitive, and there are always many candidates running for election. One commonly held belief about SC-reserved constituencies is that they are less competitive than other constituencies, and this is sometimes used as an argument against SC politicians. For example, one non-SC politician I interviewed in India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh (UP), explained that SC MLAs are not as hard-working as others because their constituencies are less competitive and SC politicians can therefore take their votes for granted.[3]

Since the quota system severely truncates the pool of potential candidates, we should expect to see fewer candidates standing for election in SC-reserved constituencies, and, as a result, slightly less fierce electoral competition in SC-reserved constituencies. However, as more and more SC politicians gain experience and the main political parties make efforts to get their candidates elected, we should expect to see the electoral patterns in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies gradually becoming more similar. In the following section I examine three aspects of competitiveness—competition for candidate nominations, the number of candidates standing for election, and the margin of victory in elections—to show that SC-reserved constituencies *once*

3. SP politician interviewed in Lucknow, November 24, 2010.

were somewhat less competitive than nonreserved constituencies, but that these differences have generally evened out over time.

The fight for "getting a ticket"

Most politicians—both SCs and non-SCs—have climbed a long political ladder before becoming an MLA candidate.

In Meerut, in the western part of UP, I met a young SC politician who was trying to climb his way up to become an MLA candidate. He told me that he, for the past ten years, had been trying to build a political reputation and support group, by starting up an NGO to assist poor families in his area. His organization supported the schooling of talented SC children, collected and distributed used clothing, and also helped illiterate and poor voters in his area in their interactions with the state.[4] When I met him, he had just been elected to a position in the district-level council (*zilla panchayat*), and was talking about trying to "get a ticket" from one of the main parties to run for election in the next state assembly election.

To "get a ticket" means to be allowed to run for election for a specific political party. In some parties, working one's way up through the party hierarchy is the only way of getting a ticket, while other parties have made ticket distribution a family endeavor or a money machine. A survey of MLAs across India in the early 1990s found that 49 percent of those sampled had held positions in their party before running as an MLA, 35 percent reported having been active in student politics, and 41 percent reported having held positions in the village council or being involved in peasant activities. Only 8 percent said that they had run for election with no previous political background.[5]

It is probable that those who had run for election with no previous political experience managed to win because they were family members of other politicians, famous actors or actresses, otherwise well known in their constituency, or had paid large sums of money for the candidature.[6]

It is hard to come by accurate information on how common it is to pay for a candidature in Indian elections. According to an article in *India Today*,

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4. Interview in Meerut, February 5, 2011.

5. Chopra (1996, 92).

6. India has a strong tradition of dynastic politics and of screen celebrities entering politics. See Chhibber (2013) and Chandra (2016) for discussions of political dynasties in India and Dickey (1993) for a fascinating account of actors-turned-politicians.

the Congress Party formally started charging Rs. 5,000 for applying to be a Congress candidate in the 2002 state elections in UP, but many ticket-seekers in addition had paid between Rs. 25,000 and 75,000 for an audition with members of the selection committee, to strengthen their candidacy. It is allegedly also common for potential candidates to bid for a candidacy by making a large donation to the party. For example, prior to the 2002 state elections in UP, BSP changed candidates in some constituencies half-a-dozen times: party insiders said this was because of someone else upping the bid of the existing candidate.[7]

The practice of paying for a candidature was mentioned during my interviews in Delhi, UP, and Karnataka, but not in the northern state of Himachal Pradesh (HP). One MLA interviewed in UP claimed that many candidates in UP bought their party tickets for Rs. 2–3 million, although he added that those with very strong political track-records or local support groups might not have to pay.[8] The practice seems less common in SC-reserved constituencies: some respondents in UP and in Karnataka explained that the cost of a ticket generally is much lower in reserved constituencies than in nonreserved constituencies, because potential candidates tend to be poorer and there are fewer competing for the candidatures.

It is the case that SC politicians tend to be poorer than other politicians (see chapter 7), and it is also true that the pool of potential candidates in reserved constituencies is smaller by construction. In my sample of constituencies that became reserved for SCs in the 1970s and that remained reserved until a new delimitation was implemented in 2008, SCs constituted 24.7 percent of the population on average, and SCs formed the majority in few constituencies.[9] Since only SCs may run for elections in SC-reserved constituencies, this means that the pool of potential candidates in these constituencies has on average been about one-fourth of that in nonreserved constituencies. In the most extreme cases, only a small portion of the electorate has been eligible to run for election. The pool of potential candidates is therefore severely restricted.

Interestingly, the smaller pool of potential candidates in SC-reserved constituencies may have reduced the pressure on ticket-seekers to pay their

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7. Iyer and Mishra (2002).

8. Interview in Lucknow, November 20, 2010.

9. These figures are based on data from the 1971 Census of India for the 505 SC-reserved constituencies from the 15 largest states (see appendix A).

way into politics—a trend that arguably is one of the major reasons for the criminalization of Indian politics in recent years.[10] Less competition may in this sense be seen as a good thing.

Number of candidates

A more systematic way of investigating competitiveness is to examine the *number of candidates* in a constituency, assuming that more candidates is an indicator of a seat being more competitive. Given the smaller pool of potential candidates in SC-reserved constituencies, we should expect to find a somewhat lower number of candidates running for election in these constituencies—there should be fewer disgruntled individuals who, having been denied a ticket from the main parties, choose to run under the banner of some small party or as independent candidates.

Examination of data over time confirms that there have been slightly fewer candidates in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones. Across the 2,558 nonreserved state assembly constituencies in the 15 states studied here, there were on average about 10.1 candidates (median of 8) in each constituency between 1974 and 2007, while in the 505 SC-reserved constituencies the average was 7.9 (with a median of 7).[11] In Bihar and UP, there was on average about 14 candidates in each constituency, whereas in West Bengal and HP—where a few parties dominate the elections—the average number was about 5.5. But as the difference in means and medians reveals, averages were driven by some extreme cases of a few constituencies with a very large number of candidates. In the 1996 state assembly elections, one constituency in Tamil Nadu had 1,033 candidates contesting a single seat.[12]

10. See Vaishnav (2017).

11. See appendix A.2 for a description of these data.

12. According to an interview with Mr. Mehendiratta, legal advisor to the Election Commission of India (ECI), on February 17, 2011, the high number of candidates was a protest action by voters unhappy about developments in the constituency. The protesters thought that elections would have to be canceled if they could field enough candidates to confound the system. However, the ECI took up the challenge and produced a 70-page ballot booklet with the names of all the candidates. Symbols were assigned to each candidate by choosing random items in the market and creating symbols with one, two, or three such items. Boxes for woolen blankets were made into ballot boxes—and the elections took place.

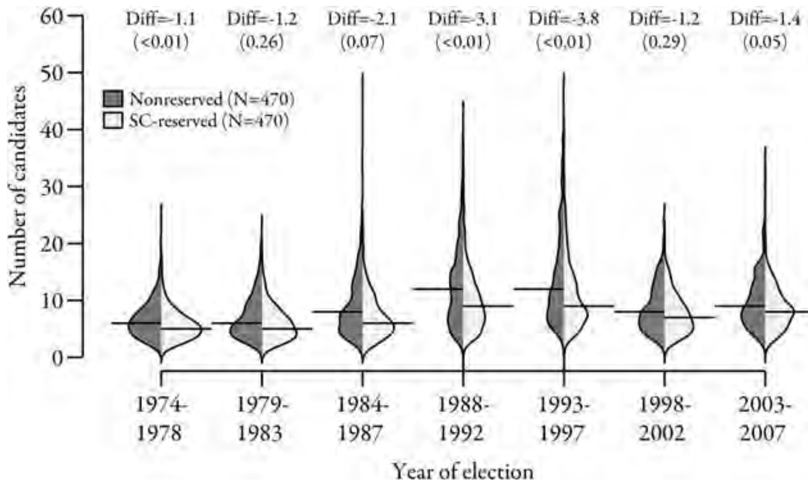

FIGURE 5.1 Number of candidates in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (matched sample)

Note: The numbers of candidates are from the election data reported by the Election Commission of India (see appendix A.2). The difference in means reported above each bean is calculated by subtracting the mean of the nonreserved constituencies from the mean of the SC-reserved constituencies. The reported p-values are from bivariate regression analyses with the standard errors clustered at the state level.

Figure 5.1 shows the number of candidates in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies between 1974 and 2007 for the 470 pairs of matched constituencies across India's 15 largest states. These matched pairs of constituencies started out with a very similar demographic and socioeconomic profile in the 1970s. Concerning the number of candidates across these similar pairs of constituencies, the major difference is therefore that in the nonreserved constituencies both SCs and non-SCs could run for election, whereas in SC-reserved constituencies only SCs could run for election.

The plots presented are bean plots; and for each period, the left side of the bean illustrates the distribution of the number of candidates across the matched nonreserved constituencies, while the right side of the bean shows the distribution of the number of candidates running in constituencies reserved for SCs.[13] The horizontal lines cutting through each of the distributions indicate the median values for the group of constituencies. Above each pair of distributions I provide the numeric difference in the average number of

13. The density shape used is a polygon given by a normal density trace. This is created by the function beanplot() in R as described in Kampstra (2008).

candidates as well as the p-value for this difference, calculated with standard errors clustered at the state level.

For example, for the last set of elections after the delimitation—held between 2003 and 2007—the average number of candidates in each nonreserved constituency was about 9.9 (median 9) and the average number of candidates in the SC-reserved constituencies was 8.5 (median 8). The difference in means of 1.4 candidates is written above the bean for those years.

As could be expected, the average number of candidates has consistently been somewhat lower in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones. In the 1990s the differences were considerable, with each nonreserved constituency on average having over three more candidates than each SC constituency. This was because of the tendency for some constituencies to have many unviable candidates running for election. For the sake of comparison it is therefore important to focus not only on the mean value but also on the median values and the shape of the distributions for each group of constituencies. Then we see that, across both types of reservation status, there were a great many candidates. In the last two periods studied (from 1998), the differences across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies are quite small, but a slight difference remains.

Margin of victory

Another important measure of the competitiveness of a constituency is the margin of victory (MoV)—the difference in the share of the votes cast for the winning candidate and the runner-up in each constituency. Despite the high number of candidates, during the period 1974–2007, the average Indian MLA won by a margin of about 14 percentage points, meaning a comfortable win. About half of the MLAs won by a margin of more than 11 percentage points, and only about 25 percent by a margin of less than 5 percentage points. This indicates that elections in only about one-fourth of the constituencies were truly competitive.

Figure 5.2 shows the distribution of the MoV across the matched pairs of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies over time. The left part of each bean shows the distribution of nonreserved constituencies and the right side shows the values for SC-reserved constituencies. Lines in the beans show the median values, and the difference in means is provided above each bean.

We see that, in the 1970s, SC MLAs tended to win by a somewhat larger MoV than other MLAs—indicating that the reserved constituencies were slightly less competitive. In the 1980s, these differences grew larger, and the

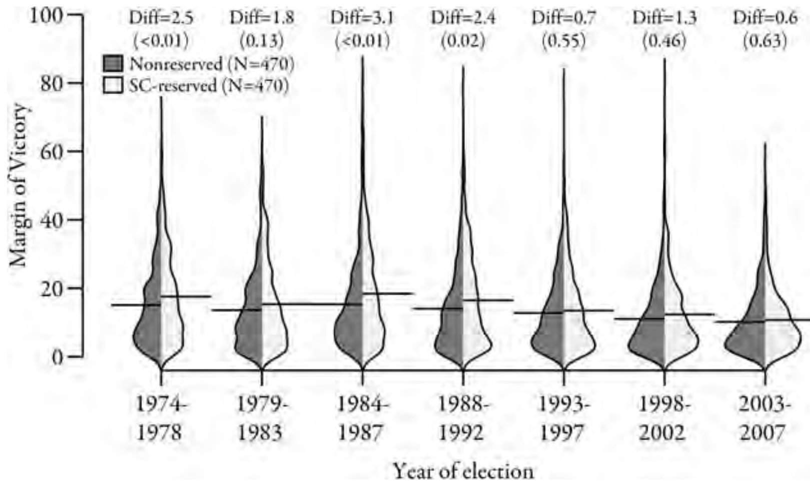

FIGURE 5.2 Margin of victory in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (matched sample)

Note: The Margin of Victory is calculated as the vote share of the winner minus the vote share of the runner-up in each of the constituencies included in my matched sample, as reported by the Election Commission of India (see appendix A.2). The difference in means reported above each bean is calculated by subtracting the mean of the nonreserved constituencies from the mean of the SC-reserved constituencies. The reported p-value is from bivariate regression analyses with the standard errors clustered at the state level.

differences between the average MoVs during this period are statistically significant. From the distributions shown in the plots, however, we also see that there is still considerable overlap between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, meaning that there were highly competitive and less competitive elections across both types of constituencies.

Also here, the differences gradually evened out, and by the 1990s and 2000s the competition between the top two candidates was almost as sharp in SC-reserved constituencies as in nonreserved ones. In the last period, the difference in average MoV in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies was about 0.6 percentage points in the matched sample. That is far from being statistically significant, and it is also a very small difference in real-life terms.

Overall, the findings reported here show that there is some truth to the stereotype that SC constituencies have been less competitive than nonreserved constituencies. Some of this difference is to be expected, as the number of persons eligible to run for election in SC constituencies is much lower. Indeed, in view of how low this figure is, it is actually surprising that we do not see more of a difference.

More importantly, however, keep in mind that a small difference in average values does not mean that *all* SC-reserved constituencies are less competitive than *all* nonreserved constituencies. From the distributions of values in the figures presented in this section, it is evident that there are more competitive and less competitive constituencies across both types of constituencies.

5.2 Reservations and political experience

How experienced are SC politicians, compared to other politicians? This is a crucial point, as it is practical experience in politics that allows politicians from a marginalized community to gain political savvy, the confidence to speak out and act independently, and the opportunity to be accorded important positions by their parties.

Experience can mean many things. This chapter started out with a quote from an SC politician telling how he gradually gained confidence to speak in public. Here I will measure experience by examining the rerunning rates for incumbent politicians across constituencies. This measure captures whether politicians who come to power have already had one term in office to learn from, indicating that they may have gained considerable knowledge of the political game. As the reelection rates for SC and non-SC politicians *conditional upon rerunning* are not systematically different, it is really the rerunning rate that determines who gets back into office. By focusing on the rerunning patterns of incumbents only, this measure underestimates other types of experience politicians may have—experience from another level of government, another area, the party organization, student politics, and so on. However, this is still an effective way of comparing politicians in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, as it is a measure that is fairly straightforward to code and compare across all of India.

The data presented in this section draw on the electoral dataset covering the 15 largest Indian states used previously in this chapter. For each constituency, an incumbent was coded as rerunning if he or she could be identified among the top five candidates in the same constituency in the next election.[14]

The dataset covers information about the rerunning patterns of about 25,000 incumbents across the more than 3,000 constituencies included in

14. See appendix A.2 for more details about these data.

the full data between 1974 and 2007, of which 3,830 incumbents were from SC-reserved constituencies. Among these incumbents, 64 percent of those in SC-reserved constituencies ran for reelection, as did about 67 percent of those in nonreserved constituencies.

Figure 5.3 shows the differences in rerunning patterns across our 470 matched pairs of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies over time. The percentage of incumbents who reran at all—whether for the same party or another one—is indicated inside each bar. Here it is important to remember that running for reelection is not altogether an individual choice. As discussed above, all major political parties in India closely control who are nominated as candidates (those who "get a ticket"), and it is difficult to run without the support of a major party. Most of the top contenders in Indian elections therefore run under a party label, although it is possible to stand for election as an independent. Many candidates reran under a different party label—whether because they chose to change parties, or their original party refused to renominate them, or the original party split or merged with another party.[15]

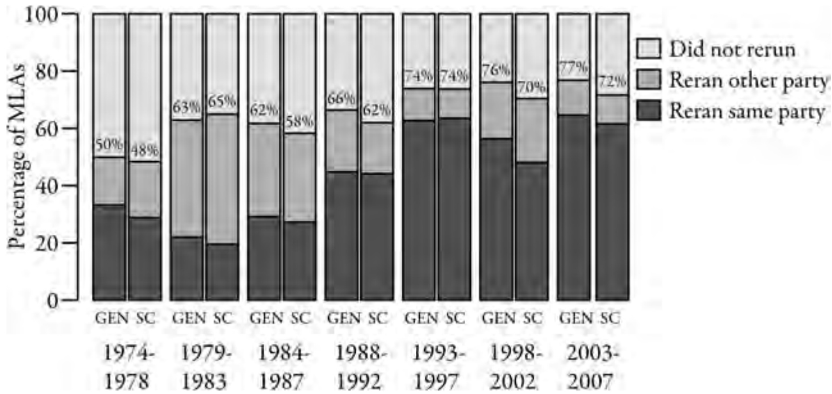

FIGURE 5.3 Percentage of incumbents who ran for reelection in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (matched sample)

Note: Each pair of columns shows 470 matched pairs of nonreserved (GEN) and SC-reserved (SC) constituencies from India's 15 largest states. Incumbents were coded as rerunning if they appeared among the top five candidates in the same constituency in the next election (see appendix A.2 for more information about these data).

15. The large percentages of incumbents running under a new party label in the late 1970s and 1980s is due mainly to the turbulent period following Indira Gandhi's Emergency Rule, which led several parties to split, merge, or change their names. See Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2017) for a further discussion of this type of electoral switching.

Interestingly, Figure 5.3 shows that the percentage of rerunning incumbent candidates has remained quite similar across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies over time, with percentages sometimes slightly higher and sometimes slightly lower. There is no overall strong pattern of SC incumbents being much more or less likely to run for reelection, which would indicate that SC politicians have had the opportunity to gain political experience and know-how in much the same way as other politicians. However, two patterns evident in Figure 5.3 deserve further attention: the lower overall rerunning rate immediately after the delimitation; and that the greatest differences between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies are seen in the last few elections, with somewhat fewer SC incumbents rerunning for the same party.

The first point concerns rerunning patterns at the time of the delimitation. Figure 5.3 shows that somewhat fewer incumbents in nonreserved, and even fewer in SC-reserved constituencies, ran for reelection in the first election after the 1970s delimitation. That is hardly surprising. After all, the political boundaries changed, the reservation status changed in many constituencies, and many politicians faced new constituents. Actually, it might seem surprising that the proportion of rerunning incumbents was as high as 43 percent in SC-reserved constituencies, considering that none of the non-SC candidates were allowed to run for election in newly reserved areas. However, if we break up the numbers by type of constituency before and after the delimitation, we find that constituencies that changed reservation status had very few rerunning incumbents.

For a closer look at what happened to incumbents at the time of the new delimitations, I created a more detailed dataset for the rerunning patterns around the time of the 1974 and 2008 delimitations. Since politicians at precisely these times were more likely to have run for election from another area than before, I checked for them among all the candidates in the same state in the next election. I also coded whether they ran from the "same" constituency as before the delimitation, by identifying the most overlapping constituency. The correspondence between constituencies before and after delimitation is not perfect, but does allow for an approximation of how many politicians ran for reelection when the reservation status of their constituencies changed.[16]

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16. See appendix A.2 for a further description of these data.

Figure 5.4 shows the rerunning patterns for incumbents in the first elections after the delimitation of the 1970s. Here we can note a major difference between incumbents in areas that generally kept the same reservation status, and those in areas that changed reservation status. I say *area* instead of constituency in this case, since the new constituencies corresponded only roughly to the old ones. As shown in Figure 5.4, about 54 percent of the incumbents in nonreserved constituencies (Nonr. AC) that overlapped geographically with a new nonreserved constituency ran for reelection, and most of them in the same area. This share was even higher (almost 63 percent) among SC incumbents whose constituency generally remained reserved for SCs (SC AC).

The picture is very different for incumbents in areas that changed reservation status. Here almost no incumbents from the previously nonreserved constituencies were eligible to run for reelection. Some ran for election in other areas, but almost 89 percent of them did not run for reelection as an MLA in the first election after the delimitation. Most SC incumbents were eligible to stand for reelection, as anyone may run in nonreserved constituencies (not in ST-reserved ones), but only a few of them did so.

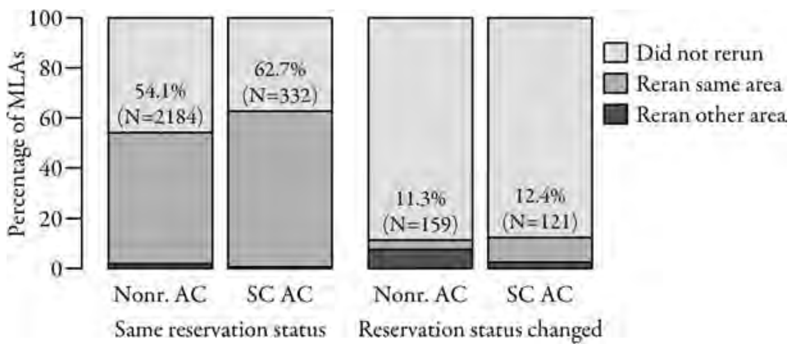

FIGURE 5.4 Percentage of incumbents who ran for reelection in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies after the delimitation in the 1970s (full sample)

Note: The data include all incumbents in power immediately prior to the delimitation in India's 14 largest states. Himachal Pradesh was excluded from the normal sample of 15 because it had a separate delimitation between 1967 and 1974 that I do not have information about. Each incumbent was identified as running or not in the next state assembly election held after the delimitation. They were also coded as running for the same area or not, by coding which new constituency the old constituency overlapped the most with. See appendix A.2 for more information about the data.

That SC incumbents do not run for reelection when their area becomes nonreserved is sometimes mentioned as a sign of the weakness of SC politicians. And so it may well be. However, in conversations with party workers in HP and UP, I sometimes heard people talk of nonreserved constituencies as if they were reserved for general-category candidates. SCs are guaranteed a proportional share of the seats through the reservation policy, but they also win some of the nonreserved seats. The result is that SCs have a higher political presence than other groups in India. From the perspective of the political parties, it may therefore seem logical not to field SCs in nonreserved constituencies.

However, some SC incumbents did run for reelection in their newly de-reserved constituencies. They had been in power there already and were probably fairly well known. Of the twelve SC incumbents in my sample who ran for reelection in a constituency that had become nonreserved, five ran again as independents (meaning that their party probably did not support them in rerunning) and did poorly. Those who reran for the same party, on the other hand, did quite well, ending up among the top candidates.

We see a similar pattern after the 2008 delimitation, as shown in Figure 5.5. Here too, the main difference is between incumbents who were in constituencies that changed reservation status and those in constituencies that retained

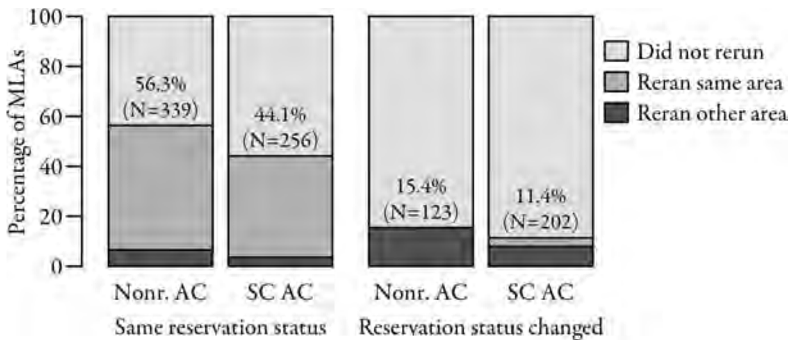

FIGURE 5.5 Percentage of incumbents who ran for reelection in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies after the 2008 delimitation (matched sample)

Note: The data include the incumbents in power in our 470 pairs of matched constituencies immediately prior to the 2008 delimitation. Each incumbent was identified as running or not in the next state assembly election held after the delimitation. They were also coded as running for the same area or not, by coding which new constituency the old constituency overlapped the most with. See appendix A.2 for more information about the data.

their reservation status. All the incumbents in constituencies that changed status were clearly disadvantaged, and few ran for reelection. Across the country I found eight incumbent SCs who had rerun when their constituency became nonreserved. And indeed, those five candidates who were renominated by their party did well in the election (one won and four became the runners-up), and one that ran for another party also emerged as the runner-up, whereas the two who ran as independents fared poorly in the election. This again indicates that the backing of a political party plays a crucial role for winning elections in India.

However, whereas in the 1970s the share of rerunning SC incumbents in areas that stayed reserved was higher than the share of rerunning incumbents in nonreserved constituencies, the pattern had reversed by the turn of the century: SC incumbents were somewhat less likely than other incumbents to rerun, even when the reservation status of their constituency remained the same. This finding is similar to the second pattern mentioned above—fewer SC incumbents being renominated in the 2000s—and therefore leads into discussion of this second pattern.

From the number of candidates and the MoV, the differences between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies seem to have been evening out. However, in the late 1990s and after the turn of the twenty-first century we find SC incumbents being renominated by their parties at a lower rate than their colleagues in nonreserved constituencies. There may be various reasons for this, including chance, but there is one notable change that has occurred in the nomination practices of parties that may explain some of this difference: parties have started to nominate more women in SC-reserved constituencies.

Historically, women have been massively underrepresented in Indian politics. But in the 1990s, the pressure to include more women started to increase, and many of the major parties began making more and less formal commitments to field more female candidates. This coincided with the debates about reserving positions in the parliament and state assemblies for women, that is, the "women's bill."

India's main political parties are still far from fulfilling their promises of including at least one-third women among their candidates, but gradually—as pressures to include more women have increased—all the main parties have started to field more women in reserved constituencies. Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of female candidates fielded in nonreserved (GEN) and SC-reserved (SC) constituencies over time. The Congress Party began

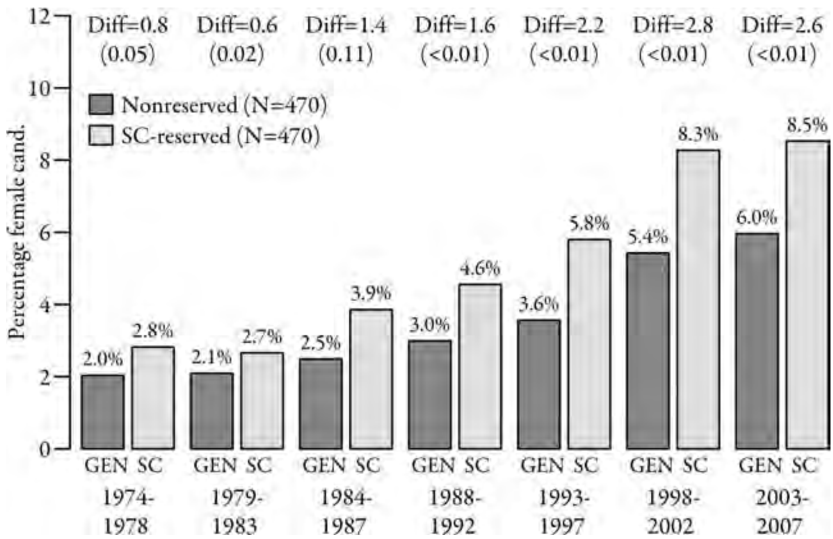

FIGURE 5.6 Percentage of female candidates fielded in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (matched sample)

Note: The percentages of women are calculated for the 470 matched pairs of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies from India's 15 largest states. The percentage of female candidates was based on Male/Female categorization provided by the Election Commission of India (see appendix A for more information about the data).

fielding more women in reserved constituencies in the late 1980s, whereas other parties started in the late 1990s.[17]

Once again, the incentive structure created by the quota system may explain much of this pattern: It is the quotas that make parties field SC politicians. Faced with a new political and social pressure to field more women, the parties are able to fulfill two requirements at the same time by fielding SC women in SC-reserved constituencies. This may have been a deliberate strategy, but may also be the result of male SC incumbents being less able than their colleagues in nonreserved constituencies to defend their territory and gain renomination. This pattern seems to indicate that male SC politicians still have a weaker position within their parties than other male politicians.

17. See Jensenius (2016) for a further discussion of these patterns, where it is also shown that this trend has continued into more recent elections.

5.3 *Cabinet membership*

Writing about SC politicians in the 1970s, Galanter pointed out that reservations may not have had a major impact on political discussions in the assemblies, but that they have created a pool of SC MLAs with enough experience to achieve cabinet positions.[18]

Holding a position in a state cabinet is associated with high status and access to considerable resources. It is common to hear that politicians use their time as cabinet ministers to enrich themselves, their families, and their closest supporters.[19] Some of the benefits of holding office are also thought to end up with the co-ethnics of the politician. For example, a senior bureaucrat in Himachal Pradesh told me that a recent minister of education had only appointed school principals from his own caste group while he was in office.[20]

After every election in India there are serious negotiations about appointments to cabinet positions, and newspapers talk of these negotiations as if they were a matter of handing out a clientelistic good to party loyalists. With coalition governments becoming more common, the size of state cabinets in India has grown dramatically, as all the parties in the coalitions want to have several cabinet positions. Being given a cabinet position is therefore an important indicator of a politician's power and the closest we have to a statistical measure of how powerful SCs are within parties, given the absence of data on who hold important party positions across India.

When the reservation system for SCs was debated in the 1940s, discussions were also ongoing about reserving seats in cabinets. The Advisory Committee on Minorities was responsible for recommending policies regarding minority safeguards to the Constituent Assembly. When the report of the Committee was presented to the Constituent Assembly on August 27, 1947, it was made clear that some committee members had proposed that minorities should have reserved seats in cabinets in proportion to their population, but that the committee had concluded that a constitutional provision of this character would give rise to "serious difficulties," and that the main criterion should be to select politicians able to command the confidence of the legislatures.[21]

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18. Galanter (1979, 444).

19. See, e.g., the discussions in Bhavnani (2012) and Fisman et al. (2014) of how politicians, particularly those in cabinet positions, have a suspicious increase in their assets during their time in office.

20. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

21. Report reprinted in appendix in CAD (1999, vol. 5, 243).

Instead, the report recommended that the Constitution should "draw the attention of the President of the Union and the Governors of Provinces to the desirability of including members of important minority communities in Cabinets as far as practicable."[22] Despite some opposition, the Assembly supported the report, and no groups were guaranteed positions in cabinets in India.

Looking at the practices of including SCs in cabinets in the years after independence, Galanter wrote that it "early became convention to have at least one Scheduled Caste cabinet minister at the Centre and in each of the states."[23] Table 5.1 shows the number of SCs in state cabinets across India 1953–1965. From the column showing the total number of SCs who were ministers, deputy ministers, or parliamentary secretaries, we can deduce that each state had between one and two SCs in important positions, but that SCs had less than a proportional share of cabinet positions.

Table 5.1 Number of SCs who held cabinet positions in state cabinets across India, 1953–1965

	Ministers	Deputy Ministers	Parliamentary Secretaries	Total
1953	14	4	4	22
1954	13	7	4	24
1955	15	7	4	26
1956–1957				
1957–1958	14	7	4	25
1958–1959	14	10	2	26
1959–1960	14	8	2	24
1960–1961				26
1961–1962				28
1962–1963				30
1963–1964	18	7	0	25
1964–1965				24

Note: Table adapted from Galanter (1979, 442).

22. Ibid.

23. Galanter (1979, 440).

Tracing cabinet positions (and cabinet portfolios) in UP, Punjab, and Karnataka 1951–1992, Chandra similarly found that SCs held few positions compared to their share in the state assemblies in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.[24] This weak presence in positions of power continued through the 1980s in UP and Punjab, whereas in Karnataka SCs were included in state cabinets in increasing numbers.[25]

Cabinet membership for SCs 1977–2007

Data on cabinet membership for SCs are not systematically recorded across India, but can be estimated by examining all the members in state cabinets and determining whether they were elected from SC-reserved constituencies. This yields a conservative estimate of SCs in cabinets, as there may be some SCs elected in nonreserved constituencies who have also held cabinet positions.

The dataset with cabinet information that is used here includes information about the *first* cabinet formed after each state election in India 1977–2007. The data include information about the type of position held by each of the MLAs in the cabinet (Chief Minister, Cabinet Minister, Minister of State with an Independent Charge, or Minister of State), but not their portfolios. Each cabinet member can then be identified as running from a nonreserved or an SC-reserved constituency.[26]

Table 5.2 shows the states included in the dataset, the number of seats in each assembly (according to the 1976 Delimitation Report), the average size of the cabinets recorded in the data, and the number of cabinets included in the dataset between 1977 and 2007. It also shows the percentage of SC seats in each of the state assemblies and the percentage of SCs included in the cabinets in each state. Overall, the share of SCs in cabinets is slightly lower than their share of the assemblies—SCs held 16.6 percent of the seats in the assemblies

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24. Chandra (2004, 178–184).

25. This weak presence in cabinets also seemed to be symptomatic of a weak presence in the party organizations, and this exclusion from political power has been argued to be the main reason for the emergence and success of the BSP in UP and Punjab. See Chandra (2004, chapter 8).

26. In Indian state cabinets most members are elected in the general state elections, but some are members of the legislative councils (upper houses) of states or are elected through by-elections. Only politicians elected in the general election to the lower houses are included in this dataset. Most of the data were collected by Bhavnani (2015), but were expanded to include missing state-years. See appendix A.4 for more information about the data.

Table 5.2 Cabinets 1977–2007 included in the analysis

	Size of assembly	% SCs in assembly	% SCs in cabinets	Mean size of cabinets	Cabinets in data
Andhra Pradesh	294	14.0	13.3	25	7
Bihar	324	15.8	15.3	33	8
Gujarat	178	7.7	7.6	21	7
Haryana	90	18.6	15.0	17	7
Himachal Pradesh	68	24.5	21.3	12	8
Karnataka	224	14.6	17.1	24	7
Kerala	140	8.5	5.0	17	8
Madhya Pradesh	320	17.6	13.3	22	6
Maharashtra	288	6.8	6.0	24	7
Orissa	147	19.6	14.1	19	7
Punjab	117	24.1	17.6	22	7
Rajasthan	200	18.1	15.8	22	7
Tamil Nadu	234	18.1	10.1	20	8
Uttar Pradesh	419	21.5	13.7	32	9
West Bengal	294	21.3	9.9	39	7
Total	3,337	16.6	12.8	23	110

Note: In 2000, Bihar was split into Bihar and Jharkandh; Madhya Pradesh was split into Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh; and Uttar Pradesh was split into Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal: for these states the size of the assemblies was therefore greater prior to 2000 than afterward. The table reports the size of the assemblies prior to 2000.

included in the data, and about 12.8 percent of cabinet positions—less than a proportional share of these posts.

Some interesting cross-state variation are apparent in Table 5.2. As is evident from comparing the percentage of SCs in the assemblies in each state and their share of cabinet positions, SCs have had a nearly proportional presence in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, but a weak presence in Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

In Karnataka, SCs have held a higher proportion of cabinet positions than their share in the assembly. This trend started in the 1970s, and continued with a very high number of SCs in the cabinet formed by the Janata Dal government that came to power in 1994 and the Congress Party government that came to power in 1999: each included seven SC MLAs in their cabinets, according to this dataset. From Karnataka cabinet portfolios, Chandra also

found that SCs held many of the most prestigious posts in the Congress Party government that came to power in 1989 and the Janata Dal government in 1994.[27]

Also of interest are the patterns of cabinet positions over time. Figure 5.7 shows the percentage of MLAs elected in nonreserved (GEN) and SC-reserved (SC) constituencies that held cabinet positions between 1977 and 2007. The percentages for each group are written above each bar. The percentage-point differences in cabinet positions held by MLAs from nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies are written above each pair of bars, with associated p-values reported in parentheses.

In the states that held elections in 1977–1978, only 2.6 percent of MLAs from SC-reserved constituencies held cabinet positions, compared to 6.8 percent of MLAs in nonreserved constituencies. Gradually, the size of cabinets increased, and with it the percentage of MLAs from nonreserved

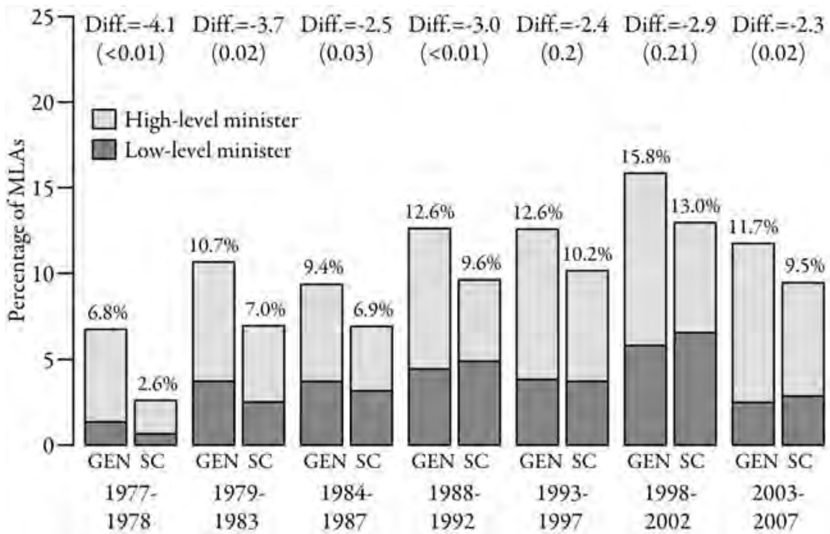

FIGURE 5.7 Percentage of cabinet positions held by MLAs elected from nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1977–2007 (full sample)

Note: The data shows the percentage of MLAs elected in nonreserved (GEN) and SC-reserved (SC) constituencies that held a low-level cabinet position (Minister of State with an Independent Charge or Minister of State) and high-level cabinet position (Chief Minister or Cabinet Minister) in India's 15 largest states 1977–2007. Reported p-values are from bivariate regression analyses with standard errors clustered at the state level.

27. Chandra (2004, 182).

and SC-reserved constituencies that held positions. However, the percentage of SCs holding cabinet positions has not increased as rapidly as that of non-SC politicians. Throughout the period SCs have held a somewhat smaller share of cabinet positions than MLAs elected in very similar nonreserved constituencies.[28]

In work on women's entry into politics it is often argued that the higher up one goes in the power hierarchy, the lower the presence of women.[29] This may apply to SCs as well. Figure 5.7 shows that SCs have held an almost proportional share of low-level cabinet positions (Minister of State with an Independent Charge or Minister of State), but that they have had a lower presence in the higher-level positions (Chief Minister or Cabinet Minister).[30]

This analysis shows that SC politicians indeed have been somewhat less likely to hold cabinet positions than their non-SC colleagues. Nonetheless, many SCs have held cabinet positions, and their numbers have been increasing. It is inaccurate to say that SCs have been given very few cabinet positions.

Experience and cabinet membership

Some of my interview respondents mentioned that *experienced* SC politicians do get important positions. That makes it interesting to see whether the measures of competitiveness and experience examined previously in this chapter make a difference as regards being selected for a cabinet position. Are fewer SCs chosen simply because they are less experienced, or come from less competitive constituencies?

Table 5.3 presents the results from logistic regression models of the propensity of an MLA to become a member of cabinet. The data are divided into two groups—before and after 1993—to capture some of the change that occurs over time. The main explanatory variables of interest in the models are whether MLAs are elected from a constituency (AC) reserved for SCs,

28. As cabinet members are elected from a small number of constituencies and the inclusion of one MLA in the cabinet may directly affect the likelihood that MLAs in neighboring constituencies will be included, I present data from the full sample of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies rather than the matched sample. In the matched sample the differences between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies are somewhat stronger.

29. See, e.g., Bashevkin (1993).

30. In this dataset only one SC ever became Chief Minister: Mayawati in UP. During this period Sushilkumar Shinde was also Chief Minister of Maharashtra for two years, but since he came to power in the middle of a legislative term, his cabinet is not included in the dataset.

whether they are experienced (reelected within the same constituency), and the interaction between these two terms.

The first model shows patterns for the period 1977–1992. Here we can note the strong negative correlation between being from a SC-reserved AC and becoming a member of cabinet, and the strong positive correlation between being experienced and becoming a member of cabinet. We also see that the interaction term between these two variables is negative and significant, indicating that the difference in the propensity to become a minister between SCs and non-SCs is greater among experienced politicians than among inexperienced ones (hardly surprising: inexperienced politicians are unlikely to become ministers, regardless of whether they are SC or non-SC). The model includes state-election fixed effects and standard errors are clustered by constituency, to account for correlations between observations of the same constituency over time.

The second model in table 5.3 includes several control variables to check the robustness of these patterns. First, there is a dummy variable for whether the MLA was a member of one of the political parties in the ruling coalition.[31] Not surprisingly, MLAs who are not members of one of the ruling parties are unlikely to be asked to join the cabinet. I then include a dummy variable for being a male politician. The coefficient on this variable is negative and significant, as the percentage of women in cabinets used to be higher than their share in the legislatures (albeit a small presence at both levels). I include the number of candidates who ran for election in the constituency of the MLA, the turnout, and the MoV, which serve as indicators of the competitiveness of the constituency. I also include a variable for the proportion of SCs in the constituency, to account for differences in SCs across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in the full sample of constituencies.

Despite the inclusion of more control variables, the coefficients for both SC-reserved AC and being an experienced politician remain significant. The magnitude of the interaction term is reduced, indicating that the controls account for some of the disadvantage of experienced SC politicians, but this term remains significant.

The third and fourth columns in Table 5.3 run the same models on data from the period 1993–2007. Here, the negative coefficient for being

31. The ruling coalition was coded as consisting of the parties that had at least one member in the cabinet.

Table 5.3 Logistic regression models of MLAs becoming cabinet members, 1977–2007 (full sample)

	1977–1992		1993–2007	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	-1.75^{***}	-19.64^{***}	-1.72^{***}	-20.38^{***}
	(0.30)	(0.15)	(0.34)	(0.10)
SC-reserved AC	-0.38^{***}	-0.35^{***}	-0.18^{***}	-0.26^{***}
	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Experienced	0.94^{***}	1.10^{***}	0.75^{***}	1.02^{***}
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
SC*Experienced	-0.24^{*}	-0.14^{*}	$-0.18^{\dagger}$	-0.17^{**}
	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.06)
In ruling coalition		18.04^{***}		18.41^{***}
		(0.06)		(0.02)
Male		-0.32^{***}		-0.03
		(0.05)		(0.04)
Number of cand.		0.01^{***}		0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)
Turnout		0.01^{***}		0.01^{***}
		(0.00)		(0.00)
Margin of victory		0.02^{***}		0.02^{***}
		(0.00)		(0.00)
Proportion SCs		-0.01^{***}		-0.01^{***}
		(0.00)		(0.00)
State-election FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N observations	13,416	13,409	10,033	10,029
AIC	7,692.44	6,480.90	7,430.74	6,031.78
BIC	9,703.57	8,671.97	8,931.17	7,705.25
$\log L$	−3,578.22	−2,948.45	−3,507.37	−2,783.89

Standard errors clustered by constituency in brackets.
†significant at $p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

elected from an SC-reserved constituency is smaller than in the earlier period, suggesting that SC politicians are somewhat less at a disadvantage. But the size of the coefficient grows larger when controls are included. This means that neither lack of experience nor coming from a more competitive constituency can account for the disadvantage associated with being elected from an SC-reserved constituency.

Figure 5.8 illustrates the predicted probabilities for an MLA becoming a member of cabinet, based on Model 2 from before and after 1993 from Table 5.3. In the top panel we see the patterns for the period 1977–1992. The average predicted probability of an inexperienced SC politician who is a member of a party in the ruling coalition being appointed to a cabinet post is 0.08, whereas the probability for an inexperienced non-SC politician is 0.12. Both probabilities are low, but SCs are clearly less favored. Experienced SCs have a slightly higher probability of 0.15. This indicates that experience can partly counter the caste disadvantage, but those clearly most likely to become members of the cabinet were experienced non-SCs. The negative interaction between being an SC politician and having experience is reflected in finding that non-SC politicians had more of an advantage from being experienced than did SC politicians.

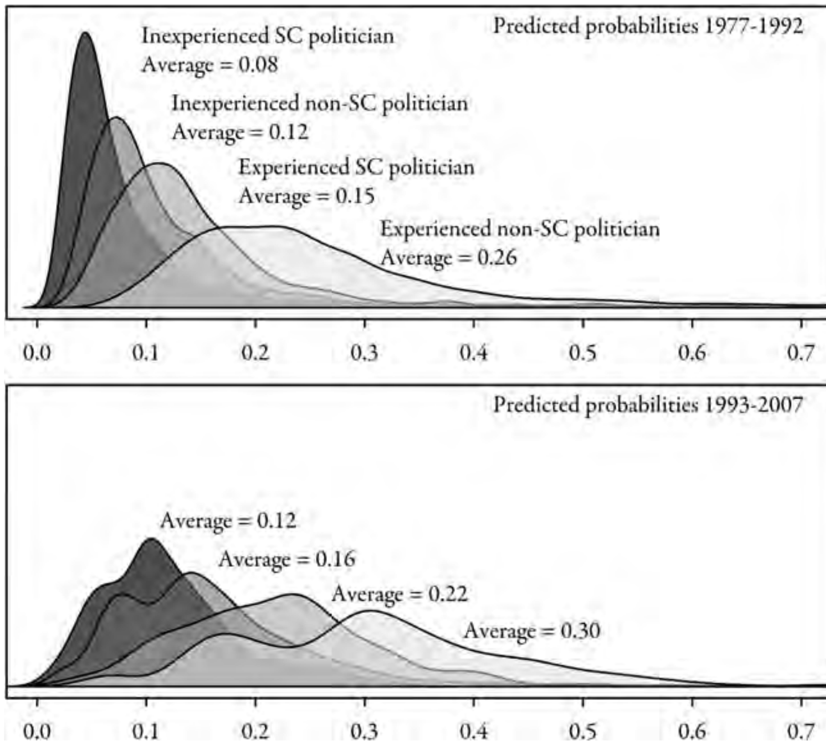

FIGURE 5.8 Predicted probabilities for MLAs in the ruling coalition becoming cabinet members, before and after 1993

Note: The data illustrate the densities of the fitted values from Model 2 and Model 4 in Table 5.3 for all the MLAs who were in the ruling coalition, subdivided by reservation status and experience. The variation is driven by the other characteristics of the MLAs/constituencies included in the models.

The bottom plot shows the period 1993–2007. The first clear pattern in this plot is that *all* were more likely to become cabinet members—because of the growing size of cabinets over time. But we also see that experienced non-SCs no longer had such a strong advantage: also experienced SCs achieved cabinet positions in higher numbers. There was still a gap, but it had lessened.

Running the models presented in Table 5.3 separately for each state reveals major state-wise differences. Figure 5.9 shows these state-wise differences for the period 1993–2007. For each state I provide the average fitted value for all the MLAs in the ruling coalition in the state, divided by the reservation status of their constituency and their experience.

We see that in Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh experienced SC politicians were as likely to get cabinet posts as were experienced non-SC politicians during this period. In Maharashtra there

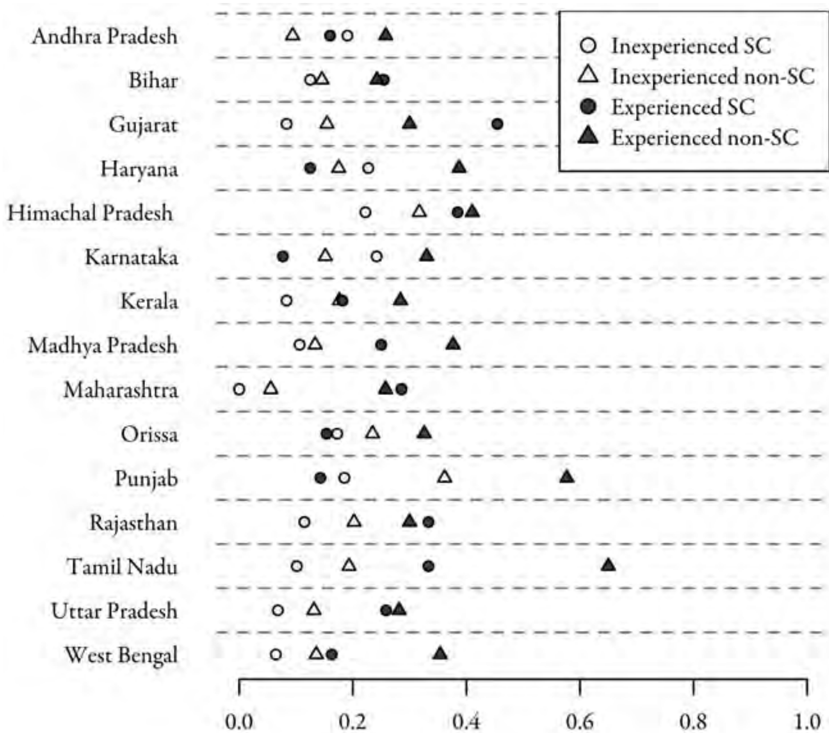

FIGURE 5.9 Predicted probabilities for MLAs of the ruling coalition becoming cabinet members by state, 1993–2007

Note: The data illustrate the average fitted values from Model 2 in Table 5.3 run separately for each state in the sample. The fitted values are based on the MLAs who were in the ruling coalition in each state, subdivided by reservation status and experience.

was a sizable gap between inexperienced and experienced politicians (the former being far more likely to get a cabinet position), but no difference between experienced SCs and non-SCs. This is interesting, since the state of Maharashtra was the center of Dr. Ambedkar's activism. And, as Ahuja argues, the presence of a strong SC social movement in Maharashtra has made political parties there internalize many of the claims of the movement, thereby undermining the potential for SC parties to mobilize voters around an SC identity.[32]

In some states—Haryana, Karnataka, Orissa, and Punjab—reelected SCs have been the least likely to be given cabinet positions of all MLAs in the ruling coalition. In the remaining states, the pattern resembles the national average presented in Figure 5.8.

The general pattern that emerges is that SC politicians have been less likely than non-SCs to hold cabinet positions, even when we control for factors like belonging to a party in the ruling coalition, being experienced, and having won from an electorally competitive AC. This pattern is even stronger as regards positions at the highest level. All in all, this analysis yields the same conclusion as above: SCs are clearly at a disadvantage in the allocation of cabinet posts, but it is an exaggeration to say that SCs never get any positions of power. Moreover, over the years they do seem to have achieved more such positions.

Types of portfolios

In addition to noting the numerical presence of SCs in cabinets across India, it is important to see which portfolios they have been given. Not all cabinet positions come with the same budget, and some are considerably more prestigious than others. Chandra's study of cabinet positions in Karnataka, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh, for instance, finds that until the early 1970s SCs were given only "relatively unimportant posts" such as *Labour*, *Stationery*, and *Animal Husbandry*.[33] It was only after 1972 that in Karnataka SCs began to be accorded "key portfolios in the state, which carried with them both prestige and patronage," such as *Revenue*, *Education*, *Finance*, and *Home*.[34]

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32. Ahuja (2017). The potential for SCs coordinating has also been undermined by the factionalism among SC leaders themselves. See, e.g., the discussion in McMillan (2005, 260) or newspaper reports about this, such as Rao (2014).

33. Chandra (2000, 854).

34. Ibid.

Here I examine a detailed cabinet dataset that includes all the cabinets formed in UP between 1974 and 2007, and all the members of these cabinets—members of the upper and lower houses elected through general elections and by-elections—and their portfolios.[35]

There were 10 elections in UP during the period 1974–2007, but 21 cabinets. This more detailed dataset therefore includes information about more than twice as many cabinets as the one used in the previous section.

Table 5.4 shows the percentage of cabinet positions held by SCs in these cabinets; with the name of the Chief Minister, the abbreviated name of the largest party (sometimes the only one) in the cabinet, and the size of the cabinets. The trend for cabinets to grow larger over time is clear. Table 5.4 also shows the number of MLAs from SC-reserved constituencies, and what percentage of the seats they held. Since 27 percent of the MLAs in UP are elected from SC-reserved constituencies, a proportional inclusion of SC politicians would be 27 percent. Only two of the cabinets achieved this—both under the leadership of the SC politician Maywati.

Let us begin with an early example, the INC government ruling UP from 1974 to 1976 led by Chief Minister Hemwati Anadan Bahuguna. The cabinet had 21 members, two of whom were elected from reserved constituencies. The two SCs in the cabinet were Baldev Singh Arya from Uttarkashi constituency, and Ramji Lal Shayak from Siwalkhas constituency. These constituencies were newly reserved areas, but both politicians had been elected as MLAs for INC in other constituencies in the 1950s and 1960s. They were therefore not political newcomers. Baldev Singh Arya was made cabinet minister with the portfolios Collective Development, Panchayati Ray (local government), and Provincial Guard; Ramji Lal Shayak was made responsible for Technical Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education.

In 1980, another INC cabinet was formed by V. P. Singh. Here the cabinet had 54 members (48 were MLAs), of whom 10 were SCs. This presence of 18.5 percent was the highest inclusion of SCs in a UP cabinet so far, and was the first in a series of INC governments that accorded SCs a fairly high share of the cabinet positions. Although the percentage of SCs was still lower than

35. These data were collected by Gilles Verniers and this author from the Uttar Pradesh *Vidhan Sabha* (assembly) Archives in 2010; ministers were coded as SC or non-SC based on the publications *Who's Who* published by the assembly. The data now form part of a database with profiles of MLAs maintained by Kumar, Jaffrelot, and Verniers (2016)—which is an expanded version of the dataset used in Jaffrelot and Kumar (2009).

Table 5.4 Cabinet sizes and percentage of SCs in cabinets in UP, 1974–2007

Year	Chief Minister	Largest party	Size of cabinet	SCs in cabinet	Percent SCs
1974	Hemwati Anadan Bahuguna	INC	21	2	9.5
1976	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	31	3	9.7
1977	Ramnaresh Yadav	JNP	52	5	9.6
1979	Banarsi Das	JNP	46	6	13.0
1980	V. P. Singh	INC	54	10	18.5
1982	Shripati Mishra	INC	45	11	24.4
1984	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	49	8	16.3
1985	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	36	9	25.0
1986	Veer Bahadur Singh	INC	36	8	22.2
1988	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	48	9	18.8
1989	Mulayam Singh Yadav	JD	61	10	16.4
1991	Kalyan Singh	BJP	56	5	8.9
1993	Mulayam Singh Yadav	SP	28	6	21.4
1995	Mayawati	BSP	33	11	33.3
1996	Mayawati	BSP	46	10	21.7
1997	Kalyan Singh	BJP	119	16	13.5
1999	Ram Prakash Gupta	BJP	91	13	14.3
2000	Rajnath Singh	BJP	86	13	15.1
2002	Mayawati	BSP	90	10	11.1
2003	Mulayam Singh Yadav	SP	103	18	17.5
2007	Mayawati	BSP	56	15	26.8

the percentage of SCs among the INC politicians in the assembly, some of these SC ministers held important portfolios, including Justice, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs, Revenue, Home Guard, and Civil Defense. One SC cabinet minister held the portfolios of SC Welfare, Social Welfare, Police Welfare, and Youth Welfare. These do not have large budgets and may be seen as portfolios to be given to a less influential politician.

The BJP in UP has a less impressive track-record of allocating important cabinet posts to SC politicians. In the BJP government of Kalyan Singh, which came to power in 1991, there were 61 members (46 MLAs) and only 6 SC members. In addition to the low share of SCs being included (11 percent), those who were included seem to have been given portfolios associated with little power. Among the SC members only one was a cabinet minister, and

he was given responsibility for Adult Education, Technical Education, and Science and Technology. The other SCs were Ministers of State (deputy ministers) for Civil Supplies, Public Works, Power and *Panchayati Raj* (local government).

On the other hand, both SP and BSP have included a large number of SCs in their cabinets, with important positions. In Mulayam Singh Yadav's 1993 government, which was a coalition between SP and BSP, 21 percent of the cabinet members were SCs, and they held portfolios for matters like prisons, the home guard, civil defense, rural/urban/regional development, welfare, and medical education.

The strongest presence of SC MLAs in UP cabinets was, not surprisingly, in the BSP governments formed by Mayawati, first in 1995 and then in 2007. The presence of SCs was actually not very great in the 2002 BSP government (when the BSP was in coalition with BJP), but when the BSP came to power alone in 2007, 27 percent of the cabinet positions went to SC MLAs: a proportional presence compared to the assembly and the population. The Chief Minister, Mayawati, kept many of the most important portfolios for herself. In addition to being Chief Minister, she also had responsibility for portfolios like general administration, secretariat administration, intelligence, appointments, justice, economics and statistics, state revenues, and defense. However, other SCs in her government also had important portfolios, among them finance, rural development, and elections.

5.4 Conclusions

This chapter has followed the gradual integration of SC politicians into the political elite. In some ways SC-reserved constituencies do not look much different from other constituencies: elections have been competitive, and many of the same SC politicians have been renominated from one election to the next. Over time this has enabled SC politicians to gain experience and acquire political know-how.

However, some data presented in this chapter do indicate that SC politicians have remained less powerful than other politicians. When facing general-category competitors, SC politicians have not been particularly successful. This indicates that, although SC politicians have made great strides in being integrated into mainstream parties, they would probably have been unlikely to win many positions without the quotas. It also seems parties have started fielding more women in reserved constituencies (whether

deliberately or not). Female candidates have thereby entered politics at the expense of SC males rather than non-SC males, and it is SC women—not non-SC women—whose presence in Indian politics has increased the most in recent years.

The findings about the presence of SCs in cabinets across India are also telling: In lower-level positions, such as Minister of State, SCs hold an almost proportional share of the posts. However, they have held less than a proportional share when it comes to higher-level positions. Experience as such is evidently not enough to make SC politicians as likely to get cabinet positions as other MLAs. That being said, the fairly large and increasing presence of SCs in cabinet positions suggests that SC politicians are active participants in the political elite, and are on the way to achieving parity in political participation.

6

Quotas and Political Participation

As soon as you reserve a constituency for Scheduled Castes, 80 per cent of the population of that constituency will feel frustrated because their sons cannot offer themselves as candidates from their home constituency.[1]

IN INDIA IT is frequently said that "Indians do not cast their vote, they vote their caste."[2] Caste is thought to be a major driver of both vote choice and the extent to which voters feel represented. The fear expressed by MP Mahavir Tyagi (cited in the epigraph) during the debate on abolishing the Two-member Abolition Bill in 1961[3] was that, if single-member constituencies were reserved for SCs, the non-SC voters in the reserved constituencies would lose interest in politics and simply stop voting.

This chapter examines how quotas for SCs have affected the political participation of SCs and non-SCs—with a focus on voter turnout. Several studies have shown that electoral turnout has been lower in SC-reserved constituencies, and my analysis of election data from 1974 to 2007 confirms this pattern. The gap has narrowed over time, but even at the end of the period studied there remains a significant difference in turnout.

It may be tempting to conclude that the lower turnout in SC-reserved constituencies is the result of fewer upper-caste voters casting their ballots because of caste bias—but that does not seem to be the case. Data from the

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1. Statement by MP Mahavir Tyagi during the Lok Sabha debate about the 1961 Two-member Abolition Bill (Lok Sabha Debates, February 16, 1961, 359).

2. See, e.g., Yadav (2009).

3. Between 1951 and 1961, nonreserved constituencies were single-member districts, while reserved constituencies were larger two-member districts that elected both a general-category and a reserved-category candidate. These two-member districts were seen as large and unwieldy, and many felt that SCs became tag-ons to the more influential general-category candidates (see in particular the speech by A. K. Sen, Minister of Law, GoI, February 18, 1961).

National Election Study (NES) conducted in 1971 show lower turnout in SC-reserved constituencies among both non-SC and SC voters, and indicate that the weaker networks and mobilizational capacity of SC politicians can explain much of the difference in turnout. As SC politicians have become more experienced and more integrated into political parties, they have gradually become better at getting out the vote. However, even when this is taken into account, there is still an unexplained gap in turnout, and at the end of the chapter I draw on interviews to shed light on this.

6.1 Inclusion and electoral turnout

Political participation has been a major topic in discussions of group inclusion across the world. In 1991, a Royal Commission on electoral reform in Canada stated that when a community of interest is split across geographic constituencies it reduces voters' ability to promote their collective interests, thereby reducing their "incentives to participate [...] because the outcome has a lesser relevance to their community." This, the commission concluded, acts to undermine the entire electoral system.[4]

Several studies have found that the presence of minority politicians makes minority voters feel more politically empowered, increasing the likelihood of their participating in politics.[5] The flipside of this coin is that majority-group voters might feel less represented, less interested in politics, and less inclined to go to the polls in areas with a minority representative.[6] Studies from the United States have found that the election of minority-group politicians depresses the electoral turnout of majority-group voters.[7]

To what extent has electoral turnout in India been affected by the SC quotas? There is no clear model of turnout in India, but one of the strongest predictors is reservation status: turnout is always lower in reserved constituencies.[8] McMillan used survey data from 1971 and from the 1990s to explore self-reported turnout, and found that it has been somewhat lower

4. Quoted in Kymlicka (1995, 136).

5. See, e.g., Bobo and Gilliam Jr. (1990) and Banducci et al. (2004).

6. E.g., Bositis (1999).

7. See Gay (2001) and Barreto et al. (2004).

8. See, e.g., Mori and Kurosaki (2011).

in SC-reserved constituencies than in other constituencies.[9] He noted that turnout in nonreserved and in SC-reserved constituencies seems to have converged over time.

To explore this pattern of convergence, I examined turnout in the full sample of nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies across India's 15 largest states during the period 1974–2007, as shown in Figure 6.1. Each bean plot shows the distribution of turnout in nonreserved constituencies on the left and in SC-reserved constituencies on the right. The lines going through each plot show the median value, while the difference in means is written above each bean. Similarly to what has been reported in other studies, there is a large and significant difference in electoral turnout in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies: For the first elections after the 1974 delimitation, the average difference in turnout was 9 percentage points, and a turnout gap continues across the entire period under study.

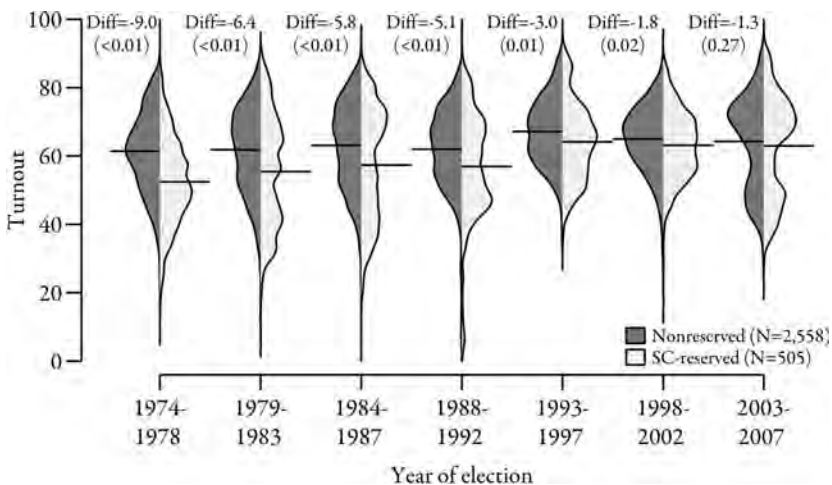

FIGURE 6.1 Electoral turnout, nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (full sample)

Note: Turnout figures are based on the electorates and voters for each constituency in the sample, as reported by the Election Commission of India (see appendix A.2 for more information about the data). The difference in means reported above each bean is calculated by subtracting the mean of the nonreserved constituencies from the mean of the reserved constituencies. The reported p-values are from bivariate regression analyses with the standard errors clustered at the state level.

9. McMillan (2005).

Averages do not tell the whole story. Figure 6.1 shows the considerable variation in the turnout patterns across nonreserved as well as SC-reserved constituencies, with great overlap in their distributions. There are constituencies with very low and very high turnouts in both groups. But there is also clearly a difference across the groups.

Perhaps the most striking pattern here is the major change that has occurred over time: the gap in turnout has definitely been shrinking. By the last round of elections the difference was only 1.3 percentage points on average. So we must ask: how much of this convergence has to do with the reservation policy, and how much is due to the general trend in turnout patterns in the country?

After India became independent in 1947, the political arena was dominated by the urban elite, and voter turnout was the highest among elites. Gradually, more and more members of the lower classes began voting; they also started to occupy more political seats.[10] Unlike the situation in many other countries, turnout in India in the 1990s was highest among the rural poor. However, that has not been the case since then. Kumar[11] showed that, in the 2004 and 2009 general elections, turnout was almost the same among the upper, middle, and lower classes, but was slightly higher among older people and SCs.

SC-reserved constituencies have a higher proportion of SC voters than other constituencies, and these traditionally marginalized groups are exactly those who increasingly started going to the polls. As McMillan pointed out, the patterns he observed "may be more a reflection of the type of constituency which is selected as a reserved constituency than any influence of reservation itself."[12] We know that the poor started turning out in higher numbers during this period, that there are more SCs in SC-reserved constituencies, and that SCs tend to be poorer: the gradual reduction in the turnout gap could therefore be a product of this trend. This is the type of selection bias I have sought to reduce by looking at matched pairs of constituencies in this book.

Figure 6.2 shows the distribution of turnout in the matched pairs of constituencies introduced in chapter 1 and used in previous chapters (see section 1.3). This is a smaller sample of constituencies, but they were more comparable in the 1970s, with a similar proportion of SCs, as well as of poor and illiterate voters. Differences in turnout between these matched pairs are therefore less likely to be biased by overall trends in turnout.

10. See Jaffrelot and Kumar (2009) and Yadav (2000).

11. Kumar (2009, 50).

12. McMillan (2005, 239)

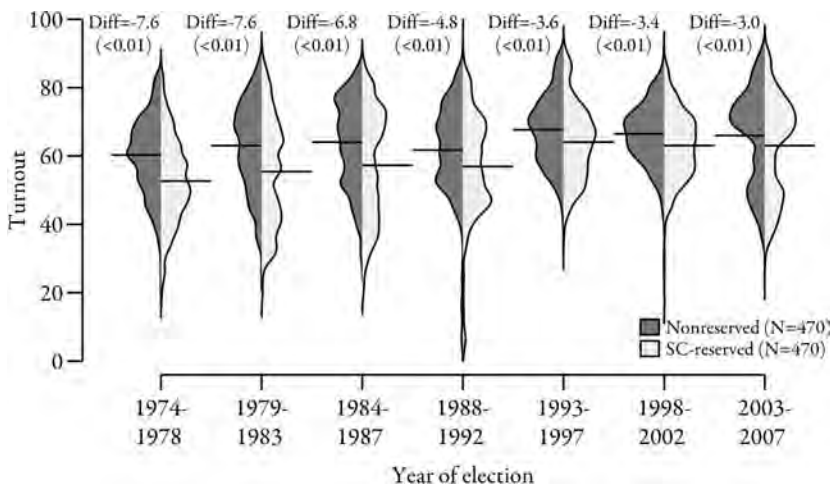

FIGURE 6.2 Electoral turnout, nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1974–2007 (matched sample)

Note: Turnout figures are based on the electorates and voters for each constituency in the sample, as reported by the Election Commission of India (see appendix A for more information about the data). The difference in means reported above each bean is calculated by subtracting the mean of the nonreserved constituencies from the mean of the SC-reserved constituencies. The reported p-values are from bivariate regression analyses with the standard errors clustered at the state level.

In this reduced sample we can also note large and statistically significant differences in turnout across SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies. In the first elections after the delimitation, turnout was on average 7.6 percentage points lower in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones. In this sample we also see a gradual convergence in turnout, with the gap between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies narrowing over time.

However, in this matched sample there was a larger difference in turnout—about 3 percentage points—in the last round of elections before 2008. The gap is even larger if we further control for constituency-level differences—if we examine the reduced set of matches with a caliper (as in chapter 4) or run regression models controlling for the percentage of SCs in the constituency. This pattern is also robust to running models that control for various characteristics of constituencies and MLAs: number of candidates, size of the electorate, average wealth of candidates, and so forth.

There are several possible reasons for the gap and then convergence in turnout. One is caste bias, another could be feelings of disempowerment among voters, and a third relates to the capabilities and characteristics of candidates and MLAs. In the following I examine each of these possible explanations in turn.

6.2 Who stopped voting?

The logical first question to ask concerning the observed turnout patterns is *which voters* started turning out in lower numbers when constituencies became reserved in the 1970s.

In the early 1970s when the Delimitation Commission was working on redrawing India's electoral boundaries, they received many letters requesting that the location of reserved seats be moved—expressing concerns that reserving seats would affect electoral turnout. One Member of Parliament in UP wanted a reserved seat to be moved out of Unnao district. She argued that in that district "four assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha Constituency have become reserved for Scheduled Castes and there is already a General feeling amongst the general population with the result that General voters will be less enthusiastic at the time of casting their vote in the election."[13] MLA M. S. Maravi pleaded for another reserved seat to be moved: "As this constituency has been a reserved constituency since 1957, there is a great resentment among the voters of majority communities of this area; and that is why the percentage of the polling of this constituency always remains lowest in the whole district. Besides, this percentage is decreasing in every general election."

Since SCs are almost always a minority in constituencies, we cannot see from constituency-level data whether more SCs, or fewer members of other groups, turned out to vote when constituencies became reserved. Survey data can help here. In this section I use the Indian National Election Studies from 1971 and 2004 to examine turnout patterns and other responses that can indicate some explanations for the differences in turnout in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies.[14]

The 1971 survey is from before the 1970s delimitation came into effect, and thus shows turnout patterns in the constituencies that were reserved at that time.[15] The survey drew on a sample of about 5,000 people across 19 Indian states, including about 4,000 respondents living in nonreserved state assembly constituencies and 513 in SC-reserved constituencies.

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13. Letter by Smt Ganga Dai to T. Swaminathan, dated August 16, 1973. Available in the files of the Delimitation Commission, file number 282/UP/73 vol I.

14. See appendix A.6 for more information about these surveys.

15. The constituencies that were reserved in 1971 had become reserved in the 1967 delimitation, and were thus also newly reserved seats. I have chosen to use this survey because it is the only Indian election survey from the 1970s and 1980s that includes the indicators needed to separate the sample into SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies.

Table 6.1 Self-reported turnout, nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 1971 general elections, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	80.6 (3,416)	72.0 (410)	−8.7	0.09
SC respondents	80.2 (592)	73.8 (103)	−6.5	0.28
All respondents	80.6 (4,008)	72.3 (513)	−8.3	0.07

Note: Data is from the NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

Table 6.1 shows the difference in self-reported turnout among SCs and non-SCs across these constituencies (ACs). As with the aggregate data, we see a clear difference across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies: 80.6 percent of respondents living in nonreserved constituencies claimed to have voted in the elections, as against 72.3 percent of respondents in constituencies reserved for SCs. This difference of 8.3 percentage points is statistically significant (standard errors clustered by AC) and is consistent with the actual observed difference in turnout reported in Figure 6.1.

Examining the self-reported turnout figures among SCs and non-SCs in SC-reserved constituencies separately, we find that both groups voted in much lower numbers than their peers in nonreserved constituencies, and that the difference among non-SCs was only somewhat larger than among SCs. This indicates that the drop in turnout was not mainly the result of fewer non-SCs going to the polls because of caste bias. In the next few sections I offer some answers to other questions in the survey, to further explore the low turnout in SC-reserved constituencies.[16]

For more recent survey data, I examine turnout patterns in the NES 2004, which had a sample of more than 27,000 respondents across 31 states, including more than 19,000 respondents in nonreserved state assembly

16. One reason for the lower turnout among SCs as well as non-SCs in reserved constituencies could be socioeconomic differences between the constituencies. In order to control for socioeconomic differences in the survey data, I would have liked to examine a reduced sample where the proportions of SCs and the socioeconomic patterns in the reserved and nonreserved constituencies were more similar. Unfortunately, the survey does not include the actual constituency numbers that would allow me to do that.

constituencies and some 3,700 respondents in constituencies reserved for SCs.[17] In the full data, turnout was slightly higher in SC-reserved (86.4 percent) than in nonreserved constituencies (84.6 percent), for SC and non-SC respondents alike. This resonates well with what has been found in other studies: voter turnout was somewhat higher among SCs than among non-SCs during this period.

In the case of the survey data from 2004, the sample size is large enough to make it feasible to reduce the sample and focus on respondents from comparable constituencies. The data also include constituency identifiers, making it possible to identify the matched pairs of constituencies that I use throughout this book. Of the 470 matched constituencies, 214 were present in the survey sample. As constituencies were randomly sampled within states for this survey, these constituencies should offer a fair representation of all the matched pairs.[18] Also, since individuals were randomly sampled within constituencies, this should yield a representative sample of people from those constituencies. The reduced sample of the survey has 5,614 people from 214 constituencies across the 17 states in my sample.

When the sample of the NES 2004 is reduced to these matched pairs of constituencies (as shown in Table 6.2), we find little difference in turnout in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies. Here too, SCs turned out in

Table 6.2 Self-reported turnout, nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 2004 general elections, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	87.2 (2,259)	87.0 (2,111)	−0.2	0.89
SC respondents	89.7 (611)	89.6 (633)	−0.1	0.96
All respondents	87.7 (2,870)	87.6 (2,744)	−0.2	0.92

Note: Data from a reduced (matched) sample of the NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

17. Here, as elsewhere in the book, I exclude respondents from state assembly constituencies reserved for STs.

18. In the reduced sample, the average share of SCs is 22 percent in the SC-reserved assembly constituencies and 21 percent in the nonreserved assembly constituencies, indicating that these groups of constituencies are comparable.

higher numbers than non-SCs, but not more in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones.

The survey data indicate that both SCs and non-SCs had low turnout in SC-reserved constituencies in 1971, whereas turnout levels were quite similar in 2004. The figures from the 1971 survey correspond well with the actual turnout gap, while in reality the average turnout in SC-reserved constituencies was about 3 percentage points lower than in comparable nonreserved constituencies at the time of the 2004 survey. This indicates a problem with the aggregate election data, in how representative the survey sample is, or with the accuracy of the responses in the survey, possibly due to social desirability bias.

6.3 Feeling represented

The survey evidence presented in the previous section indicates that caste bias against SCs among upper-caste voters was not the main reason for the lower turnout in SC-reserved constituencies in the 1970s, as turnout was lower among both SCs and non-SCs in SC-reserved constituencies. Another possible explanation is that voters in these constituencies felt less represented—perhaps because they thought that SC politicians had less political influence or cared less about them.

Two questions in the 1971 NES questionnaire allow exploration of this: one question about whether people felt their vote had an effect, and one about whether respondents believed that politicians cared about what people like them thought.

Table 6.3 shows responses to the question about whether people felt their vote had an effect, where they could answer *Yes*, *No*, *Maybe*, or *Don't know*.

Table 6.3 Respondents, NES 1971, who thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	52.7 (3,407)	46.1 (410)	−6.6	0.28
SC respondents	42.3 (591)	42.7 (103)	0.4	0.96
All respondents	51.2 (3,998)	45.4 (513)	−5.7	0.30

Note: Data from the NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

Figures in Table 6.3 are the percentages of the respondents who answered *Yes*. The clearest pattern in these responses, is that more non-SC voters in nonreserved constituencies seemed to think their vote had an effect. The difference of 6.6 percentage points across constituencies is quite large—suggesting that non-SCs in SC-reserved constituencies felt less represented—but is not statistically significant at conventional levels. However, the difference does go in the direction to be expected from anecdotal evidence about non-SCs feeling alienated when an SC politician is in power in their constituency. There is little difference in the responses of SCs across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies.

We see a similar pattern in answers to the question about whether respondents believed that politicians cared about what they thought, where the respondents could answer *Yes*, *No*, or *Don't know*. As shown in Table 6.4, SC individuals were slightly less likely overall to answer that they believed politicians cared about what they thought (as opposed to *No* and *Don't know*). Here too there were small differences between SCs in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies, and small differences between non-SCs and SCs in SC-reserved constituencies, non-SCs living in nonreserved constituencies seemed somewhat more likely to say they believed that politicians cared about what they thought. Here too, the difference of 4.2 percentage points provides some support for the anecdotal evidence that non-SCs in SC-reserved constituencies feel less represented, but this is also statistically insignificant.

The responses to these questions in 1971 therefore provide no support for the assumption that SCs felt better represented in reserved constituencies, but there are some indications that non-SCs felt less represented in reserved constituencies in 1971.

Table 6.4 Respondents, NES 1971, who believed politicians cared about what they thought, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	27.5 (3,400)	23.3 (407)	−4.2	0.29
SC respondents	24.4 (590)	24.5 (102)	0.1	0.99
All respondents	27.1 (3,990)	23.6 (509)	−3.5	0.39

Note: Data from the NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

Table 6.5 Respondents, NES 2004, who thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	70.4 (2,259)	68.7 (2,111)	−1.7	0.56
SC respondents	64.5 (611)	67.6 (633)	3.1	0.44
All respondents	69.1 (2,870)	68.4 (2,744)	−0.7	0.8

Note: Data from a reduced (matched) sample of the NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

The 2004 survey did not ask whether respondents thought politicians cared about what they thought, but it did include a question about whether respondents thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country. Table 6.5 shows the proportion of those in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies who responded affirmatively to the question (as opposed to *No* and *Don't know*) and the sample size for each group.

Nearly 69 percent of the respondents said they felt that their vote had an effect, but the percentage of SC individuals who thought so was slightly lower than the overall percentage of non-SCs who did. There are some minor differences in the affirmative response rates of persons living in reserved and nonreserved constituencies, however—with SCs in SC-reserved constituencies being slightly more likely to respond that their vote had an effect, and non-SCs somewhat more likely to think so if they lived in nonreserved constituencies. Importantly, responses from non-SCs and SCs were more similar in SC-reserved constituencies, indicating that voters from all groups had a similar view of SC politicians. The patterns are neither strong nor statistically significant, but they do provide some weak evidence for how differences in feelings of being represented across constituencies could explain the difference in turnout seen in the aggregate data.

6.4 Capacity to mobilize voters

If lower turnout were simply a matter of bias against SCs, we should expect to find more of a drop among non-SC voters and less of a drop—or perhaps even an increase—in turnout among SC voters. However, this does not seem to be the pattern in the data. Neither are there large differences in how people

feel about their vote. What, then, about differences in how politicians in these areas conduct their campaigns?

Both the NES 1971 and NES 2004 asked whether a candidate, party worker, or canvasser had come to the respondent's home prior to the election to canvas votes. The ability of candidates to reach voters can be seen as an indicator of how extensive their networks are and to what extent they manage to reach out and communicate with voters.

As we can see in Table 6.6, in the 1971 survey about 44 percent of respondents living in nonreserved constituencies answered that they had been contacted prior to the elections, whereas less than one-third of those living in SC-reserved constituencies said that they had been contacted. There is also a considerable difference between how many SCs and non-SCs reported having been contacted, with only 22.3 percent of SCs in SC-reserved constituencies having been contacted, as against 32.9 percent for non-SCs.

Importantly, there is a strong association between being contacted and actually going to the polls: Among those who said they had been contacted, 88 percent said they had voted, as against 74 percent among those who said they had not been contacted. This difference of 14 percentage points in self-reported turnout is highly statistically significant.

The observed pattern here fits very well with the turnout patterns, indicating that the capacity of politicians to mobilize voters may be an important determinant of turnout. Whereas most of the literature on turnout in India has focused on voter characteristics, like educational level, and caste group, it would appear that the networks and campaign efforts of politicians are important determinants as well.

Table 6.7 shows 2004 survey data on being contacted prior to the elections. Again, we see little difference in the responses of voters in nonreserved and

Table 6.6 Respondents, NES 1971, who were contacted by a candidate, party worker, or canvasser prior to the 1971 elections, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	43.9 (3,411)	32.9 (410)	−11.0	0.04
SC respondents	40.9 (591)	22.3 (103)	−18.6	<0.01
All respondents	43.5 (4,002)	30.8 (513)	−12.7	0.01

Note: Data from the NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

Table 6.7 Respondents, NES 2004, who said they were contacted by a candidate, party worker, or canvasser prior to the 2004 elections, in % and (N)

	Nonreserved AC	SC-reserved AC	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	55.5 (2,259)	56.7 (2,111)	1.2	0.76
SC respondents	55.8 (611)	58.1 (633)	2.3	0.64
All respondents	55.6 (2,870)	57.0 (2,744)	1.5	0.69

Note: Data from a reduced (matched) sample of the NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses. P-values are based on standard errors clustered by state assembly constituency.

in SC-reserved ACs. Whereas 55.6 percent of voters in nonreserved assembly constituencies said they had been contacted by a party worker or politician prior to the elections, about 57 percent of voters in SC-reserved constituencies reported being contacted. The affirmative response rate is also similar among SCs and non-SCs.

In this survey too there is a strong correlation between being contacted and actually voting. Self-reported turnout was 84 percent among those who said they had not been contacted, but 90 percent among those who said they had been contacted: this difference of 6 percentage points is highly statistically significant.

The differences in responses in the NES 1971 and NES 2004 are instructive. In the 1970s, politicians in SC-reserved constituencies seem to have been far less able to mobilize voters than were politicians in nonreserved constituencies. That is hardly surprising, considering that SC politicians used to be less educated, less wealthy (see chapter 7), and less experienced, and also used to hold fewer cabinet positions (see chapter 5). The result seems to have been that both SCs and non-SCs turned out to vote in lower numbers in SC-reserved constituencies. Over time, as SC politicians gained political experience, and became more adept at mobilizing voters, the gap in turnout grew smaller.

In 2004, slightly more respondents reported that they had been contacted in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved constituencies, so this cannot explain the remaining turnout gap. In the next section I draw on my interviews for suggestive evidence of alternative explanations.

6.5 A lack of "glamour"

That reservations have resulted in less interest in politics and less turnout was mentioned by several of my interview respondents. Three types of explanations were given for how voters in India have responded to electoral quotas. According to a high-ranking civil servant in HP, non-SCs living in SC-reserved constituencies are displeased that no one from their group may run for election.[19] Similarly, a prominent SC activist in UP told me that, in his experience, non-SCs living in SC-reserved constituencies are not interested in voting in elections because nobody from their own caste is running for election.[20] In the surveys I found no evidence of such caste bias—but, with political participation being a sensitive issue, this could be due to a social desirability bias.

A non-SC politician in UP offered another explanation of why non-SCs in reserved constituencies might be less interested in politics. We were sitting in the meeting room in his home. On his desk there was a huge pile of thick envelopes. He pointed to the pile and explained that they were wedding invitations. According to him, constituents care deeply about politicians taking part in their everyday happiness and sorrow (*sukh aur dukh*), and that he would be able to win an election simply by attending funerals and weddings. SC politicians, he argued, might not be invited to (or attend) as many family events as non-SC politicians, because people might be uncomfortable having them eat with their other guests. In this way SC politicians lose the goodwill that he himself, as an upper-caste politician, can enjoy. He held that this lack of good-will would make voters less interested in participating in political events and less interested in voting on election day.[21]

Third, according to several respondents, people turn out to vote in elections because of bribes, gifts, and coercion. Turnout might be lower in reserved constituencies, they argued, because SC politicians are less able to use such methods. For example, a former *pradhan* (head of village council) in HP stated that turnout is driven largely by handouts of money, and that turnout is likely to be lower in SC-reserved constituencies since SCs generally have less

19. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

20. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

21. Interview in Lucknow, November 24, 2010.

money to give away than other politicians.[22] The same point was stated more pessimistically by a non-SC opposition politician in UP: "People vote on the basis of the food and alcohol distributed during elections, therefore people with money control the vote."[23]

Wealth and gifts concern not only handouts but also the reputation of politicians: SC politicians were often spoken of as being less impressive or glamorous than other politicians: a high-ranking civil servant in HP referred to SCs as less "impressive" than other MLAs,[24] and an SC MLA said that he could see that he and the other SC MLAs lacked the "glamour" that other politicians have.[25] Or, in the words of another SC politician in UP: "Turnout is lower in reserved constituencies because SC politicians have less money to throw around so the elections are less glamorous. People vote for glamour."[26]

All of this points to possible explanations for the turnout gap, although more systematic study is needed here. Nonetheless, as this chapter has shown, the difference in turnout in reserved and nonreserved constituencies is no longer great, and seems to be shrinking.

6.6 Conclusions

I started this chapter with a quote expressing a strong stereotype about the effects of the electoral quotas for SCs on political participation: that non-SC voters are frustrated at living in SC-reserved constituencies.

Voter turnout data over time have shown generally lower turnout levels in SC-reserved constituencies. The turnout gap was large and highly statistically significant in the first few elections after new constituencies became reserved in the 1970s, but then it gradually lessened. While it is tempting to jump to the conclusion that this is evidence of non-SCs feeling less represented and abandoning the electoral system, the findings reported in this chapter indicate that the drop in turnout occurred among both SC and non-SC voters, and can, at least in part, be explained by SC politicians being less adept

22. Interview in Shimla, October 13, 2010. SC politicians are generally much less wealthy than other politicians, as shown in chapter 7.

23. Interview in Lucknow, November 25, 2010.

24. Interview in Shimla, October 13, 2010.

25. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

26. Interview in Lucknow, November 19, 2010.

at mobilizing voters than non-SC politicians. As SC politicians gradually established stronger mobilizational networks, it seems most voters—both SCs and non-SCs—started to turn out in higher numbers.

The findings in this chapter also indicate how the integration of SC politicians at the elite level may have a direct impact on effects at the voter level. When quotas brought to power politicians who were less experienced, less well-connected, and also perhaps less glamorous and wealthy than other politicians, this affected voter responses. And then, as SC politicians became better integrated into their political parties, voters began to respond to them as they did to non-SC politicians.

7

Status and Recognition

What I want is power—political power for my people—for if we have power we have social status.[1]

THE SOCIOECONOMIC GAP between SCs and others has been steadily shrinking. However, discrimination of SCs has never been based solely on their low socioeconomic status. Rather, it has involved SCs being stigmatized as ritually impure and perceived as inferior. For this reason, it is the politics of dignity (self-respect) and recognition (respect by others) that has been the primary rallying point for SCs in the twentieth century.[2]

In previous chapters I have shown how SC politicians have gradually become integrated into the mainstream political elite. They have run for office for the same parties as other politicians, have won in competitive elections, have worked for their parties in the legislatures and in their constituencies, and have gained political experience and important positions of power. But to what extent are these gains reflected in how SC politicians are perceived and treated?

In this chapter I explore the status and recognition of SC politicians. I begin by examining some "objective" measures of the socioeconomic standing of SC politicians compared to others. Indeed, SC politicians used to have less formal education than non-SCs on average, but that gap has closed over time. Further, SC politicians tend to be considerably less wealthy than other politicians and also less likely to be involved in criminality. What this shows is the existence of some systematic differences in who gets elected to nonreserved and SC-reserved seats.

1. Statement by Dr. Ambedkar during the United Provinces Scheduled Castes' Federation, 1948. Quoted in Jaffrelot (2005, 91).

2. See Kohli (1990), Weiner (2001), Pai (2002), Stuligross and Varshney (2002), Gorringe (2005), and Varshney (2014).

I then draw on interviews and survey data to examine how SC politicians relate to their colleagues and voters. We will see that the higher socioeconomic status and political power of SC politicians to a large extent outweigh caste in their relationships with others, and that holding public offices gradually has made them more confident. It seems to be perceived as politically incorrect to treat SC politicians badly in public, but they still experience micro-aggressions and some SCs even self-impose social exclusion to avoid upsetting others. However, they seem to face little overt discrimination—and, importantly, the situation today appears to have improved, as other elites and voters have grown accustomed to SCs holding positions of power.

7.1 The socioeconomic profile of MLAs

Caste and class are distinct status hierarchies, but they are also related. SCs used to be poorer and have far less formal education than upper-caste groups—but, as discussed in chapters 1 and 4, the correlation between caste and class has gradually weakened. Some even go as far as to say that caste discrimination today is driven largely by socioeconomic differences, and that when you control for factors like income, occupation, and education, caste no longer matters much in determining life chances.[3] Examining the socioeconomic gap between SC politicians and other politicians is therefore an important first step in understanding the perceived social status of SC politicians.

Education

In my interviews with elites in India in 2010 and 2011, the fact that SCs were, or used to be, less educated than other politicians was frequently mentioned to explain why they were perceived as less politically powerful than other politicians. To what extent does this stereotype hold true?

Unfortunately, there is not much detailed historical information about the socioeconomic profiles of SC politicians. In one of the few empirical studies of the new elite who have come to power through the reservation system, Galanter provided the following account of SC MPs:[4]

> They are younger and more rural in residence than their fellow legislators; fewer have professions (other than landholding) and they

3. See Shukla et al. (2010).

4. Galanter (1979, 442).

> have less formal education. The median age of reserved seat MPs is in the early forties; that of their fellows in general seats is in the early fifties. The disparity in age has remained constant over successive Lok Sabhas, but the gap in educational attainments has narrowed appreciably. In the Third Lok Sabha [1962–1967], for example, roughly 60 per cent of occupants of general seats held bachelor's or higher degrees, compared to 30 per cent of Scheduled Caste MPs and 35 per cent of Scheduled Tribe MPs. In the Fifth Lok Sabha [1971–1977], 53 per cent of Scheduled Caste and 37 per cent of Scheduled Tribe MPs were degree holders, while the general seat MPs remained at about 60 per cent.

This indicates a gradually narrowing gap in the educational attainment of SC politicians and others.[5] A dataset covering MLAs in India's largest state UP[6] allows us to examine this in greater detail. The dataset includes information about the MLAs who held office in UP between 1974 and 2007, altogether some 4,206 individuals. The educational information is available for 2687 (64 percent) of these MLAs. Figure 7.1 compares the educational attainment of politicians in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, for all the politicians for which this information is available—broken into the four broad educational categories: less than high school, high school, BA/diploma, and MA/PhD.

In the first few assemblies there was a clear difference between MLAs in nonreserved (GEN) and SC-reserved (SC) constituencies. In 1974, 31 percent of the MLAs in nonreserved constituencies reported holding MAs or PhDs, while the figure was only 16 percent for SC MLAs. This educational level may seem low, but should be read in the context of a state (UP) where, according to the 1971 census, 55 percent of the population were illiterate (63 percent of SCs).

5. Galanter also mentioned age. The affidavits data for 2003–2007 that I use later in this section show almost no differences in the average ages of candidates in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies: 44 in nonreserved ACs and 43 in SC-reserved ACs. Elected politicians (MLAs) are slightly older on average: 50 in nonreserved ACs and 48 in SC-reserved ACs, but this difference is reduced to one year when we compare the matched pairs of more similar constituencies.

6. The data form part of a database about MLAs maintained by Kumar, Jaffrelot, and Verniers (2016). See appendix A.5 for details.

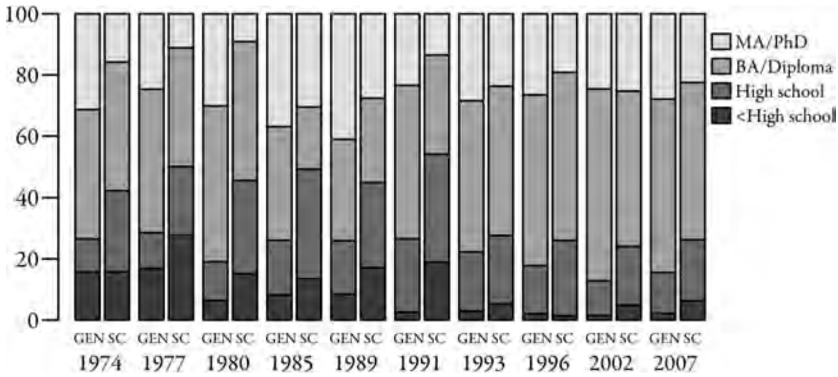

FIGURE 7.1 Educational profile of MLAs, Uttar Pradesh, 1974–2007

Note: The data are from the publication *Who's Who?* and are part of the database maintained by Kumar, Jaffrelot, and Verniers (2016).

The differences in educational levels for MLAs in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies are statistically significant for the first six elections ($p < 0.05$ in chi-square tests). However, consistent with Galanter's observation from the 1970s, the gap between SCs and others decreased over time. For the last four elections (since 1993), the differences have been small and no longer statistically significant.[7]

This pattern is not unique to UP. Another data source allows us to examine the educational attainment of politicians across states in more recent years. Since 2003, all political candidates have had to submit a sworn judicial affidavit to the Election Commission when they present their nomination papers. These written statements include information on educational background, as well as assets and liabilities, and also any criminal records of each candidate.[8] The dataset I report from here includes information on candidates and winners in the elections held between 2003 and 2007, in altogether 3,125 constituencies across 16 Indian states.[9]

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7. I do not present matched data for education since the sample size is already small because of missing values, and using matches only from UP makes the sample even smaller. The pattern does, however, look similar in the matched data.

8. These data are available online at http://www.myneta.info/, but the version I use here was collated and cleaned by Milan Vaishnav (see Vaishnav 2017, 313–317).

9. These are the same states as in the rest of the book except for Rajasthan, which is missing in this dataset for the years 2003 to 2007.

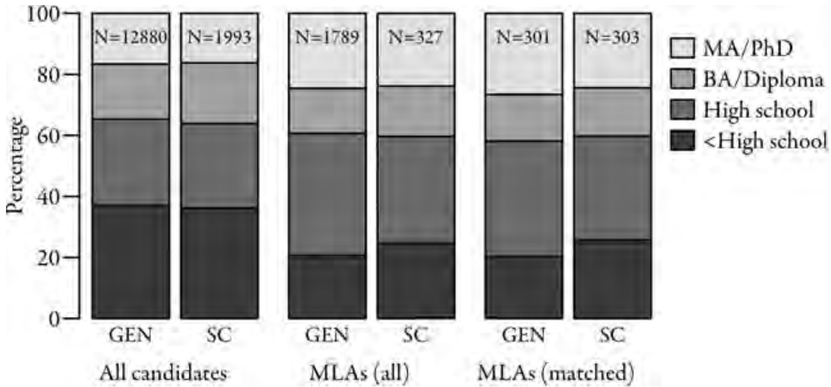

FIGURE 7.2 Educational levels of politicians in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, 2003–2007

Note: Affidavit data from MLAs elected between 2003 and 2007, based on data used in Vaishnav (2017).

Figure 7.2 compares the educational profile of politicians in nonreserved constituencies and SC-reserved constituencies across these 16 states. The educational variable was recoded into the same four categories as above. Figure 7.2 includes three sets of comparisons. First, I show the educational profile of all the candidates across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies who reported on their educational level. Here, educational information was available for 14,873 (5 percent) of all the candidates in the dataset. I then show the educational level of election winners only (information available for 2,116, or 73 percent, of the MLAs). And finally I reduce the sample to the matched pairs of more comparable nonreserved and SC-constituencies used throughout this book, and compare the winners in just those constituencies (information available for 604, or 69 percent, of the MLAs). The sample size for each group is indicated at the top of each bar.

We see that there are many political candidates across both nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies who had less than a high-school education. Another large share of the politicians reported that they had completed high school, and some held university degrees.[10] Educational levels were somewhat

10. Overall, the educational levels reported in these data seem lower than those from the UP dataset. This could be because publications on politicians from UP tend not to include educational information about those with less formal schooling. This is a problem for the reliability of the data on the whole, but if this underreporting is similar across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies, comparisons between the two types of constituencies should still be valid.

higher among winning candidates (the MLAs) than the average among all candidates. Across all three comparisons, however, we find little difference in the educational profile of politicians in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies—for this period, at least, SC politicians did not have less formal education than other politicians.[11]

This shrinking gap in the educational levels of SC politicians and other politicians is symptomatic of the shrinking educational gaps between SCs and non-SCs across India (see chapter 4). This is probably to a large extent a product of the reserved seats for SCs in educational institutions across the country, which have allowed many SCs to access a higher education.[12] From SC student activists in UP, I heard stories of how some SC students had to fight for their right to enter university through the educational reservations, but also that many SCs access higher education without any issues at all, and that the upcoming generation of SCs are getting closer and closer to being equally educated and qualified as other caste groups.[13]

SC politicians getting more educated over time may also be connected to the fact that SCs have been actively recruited into politics precisely because of their educational attainment. Three of the SC politicians I interviewed explained how they had no intention of entering politics initially, but they were recruited in the 1980s—one by Rajiv Gandhi and two by Kanshi Ram—because of their high educational qualifications. One of them went on to say that Kanshi Ram had told him it was time to "pay back" to the state the privilege he had received by getting access to a university degree through the educational reservation system.[14]

Despite the occasional perceptions of SC politicians as uneducated, these data show that, whereas there used to be an education gap between SC politicians and others, this gap has narrowed: by the late 1990s there were hardly any differences remaining.

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11. Chi-square tests revealed statistically insignificant differences across nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies for all three comparisons.

12. See a discussions of this in Chandra (2004, 173–174).

13. Interviews in Meerut, February 4 and 5, 2011.

14. Interview in Lucknow, November 24, 2010.

Money and muscle

Money and muscle are key in Indian politics, and seem to have become increasingly important.[15] Politicians allegedly use money to buy candidatures, pay for election campaigns, and distribute resources (in cash or in kind) to voters. Money and muscle power also affect how politicians are perceived—making it important to see how SC politicians differ from others on these characteristics.

In chapter 5 I described how some political parties make candidates pay for the right to run for election under their banner. Another major cost related to becoming an MLA is paying for the election campaign. Officially, India since independence has had restrictions on how much can be spent on election campaigns (specified in the Representation of the People Act [RPA] of 1951). In reality, circumvention has proven easy, as there were no restrictions on support from political parties or independent supporters. The expenditure ceiling has gradually been increased, but has always remained well below actual expenditure levels.[16]

Campaign funding often comes from out of the candidates' pockets. Writing of the early 1990s, Chopra reported that 69 percent of the MLAs he surveyed in UP said they had used personal funds in their campaigns in addition to collecting funds from the public, businesses, and their political parties.[17] And the figure seems to be increasing: in a survey of MLAs conducted during the period 2012–2014, 88 percent of those interviewed reported that they had spent personal resources on their campaign.[18]

The high, and rising, cost of getting a ticket and running for election makes personal wealth essential to electoral victory. Indeed, India's politicians do tend to be much wealthier than the average Indian. From the self-declared asset reports for candidates running for state elections in 28 states between 2003 and 2009, Vaishnav[19] found that the median net worth of an MLA

15. See Vaishnav (2017).

16. A National Election Audit conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in 24 sample parliamentary constituencies in 1999 estimated that the average winner spent Rs. 8.3 mill. for campaigning and the average runner-up spent Rs. 6.8 mill., whereas the official limit at the time was Rs. 1.5 mill. (Gowda and Sridharan 2012, 234).

17. Chopra (1996, 177).

18. This was a survey of MLAs in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh (Bussell 2016).

19. Vaishnav (2017).

for that period was about 3.2 million (mill.) Indian rupees (Rs.), and that the *average* net worth of MLAs was Rs. 19.9 mill.—so some MLAs must be exorbitantly rich. In comparison, the median net worth of the self-declared assets of MLAs in seats reserved for SCs was about Rs. 1.5 mill., and the average was Rs. 4.1 mill., so SC MLAs are generally much less wealthy than other MLAs.[20]

Table 7.1 shows the average wealth of MLAs in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies (ACs) for the years 2003 to 2007 for the matched sample of constituencies used throughout this book.[21] The average self-reported wealth of MLAs in SC-reserved constituencies was about Rs. 3.1 mill., as against more than Rs. 14 mill. for MLAs in highly comparable nonreserved constituencies—showing a clear wealth gap between SC politicians and other politicians, even when controlling for constituency-level differences.

Among politicians, the tendency to be well-off is strongly associated with being involved in crime. Indeed, the ever-increasing cost of running for election is arguably an important reason behind the criminalization of Indian politics.[22] A large share of Indian politicians have criminal records. Among MPs elected in 2014, 34 percent reported pending criminal cases when they handed in their nomination, and 22 percent had serious criminal cases.[23] And

Table 7.1 Assets and criminal records of MLAs (matched sample)

	Nonreserved ACs (N=440)	SC-reserved ACs (N=440)	Diff.	P-value
Average wealth (million INR)	14.1	3.1	−11.1	<0.01
% MLAs with a criminal record	22.7	13.2	−9.5	<0.01

Note: Affidavit data from MLAs elected between 2003 and 2007, based on data used in Vaishnav (2017).

20. The median and mean worth of SC MLAs in nonreserved constituencies is slightly lower than that of SCs in reserved seats, indicating that the few SCs who win in nonreserved seats are not competitive because of being particularly wealthy.

21. With the matched pairs from Rajasthan missing, since there is no data for Rajasthan for these years.

22. See Vaishnav (2017).

23. See http://www.myneta.info.

the wealthier the politicians, the more likely they are to have criminal cases pending.[24]

This tendency is reflected at the state assembly level as well. Data from across India during the period 2003–2009 show that 35 percent of non-reserved constituencies had at least one candidate facing serious criminal charges.[25] However, this differed by reservation status, with 40 percent of the nonreserved constituencies but only 27 percent of the SC-reserved constituencies having at least one criminal politician.[26]

A similar pattern emerges when we examine only the elected MLAs and only the matched sample of comparable nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies. As shown in Table 7.1, about 13 percent of MLAs elected to SC-reserved constituencies had at least one criminal charge, compared to some 23 percent of the MLAs in highly comparable nonreserved constituencies. SC politicians are much less likely to have criminal records.

7.2 Relations with other elites

Holding political office in India is associated with considerable prestige. A survey of Indian MLAs conducted in the early 1990s found that 76 percent of the respondents felt that their status had improved after getting elected, and 69 percent said they thought this trend would continue in the future.[27]

The evidence in the previous section indicated an important characteristic of SC MLAs: they are less associated with money and muscle power than other politicians. This shows a difference in their socioeconomic profile, but it also says something about their social status. The importance of money and muscle in Indian politics is not only about being able to pour money into a campaign, but also about the status and respect that comes with doing so. As discussed in chapter 6, several of my interview respondents pointed this

24. Vaishnav (2017, 153).

25. Vaishnav (2017, 219).

26. The figure was even lower (18 percent) in constituencies reserved for STs.

27. Chopra (1996, 164–165).

out: that SC MLAs seemed less "impressive" than other MLAs,[28] and that SC politicians lacked the "glamour" of other politicians.[29]

The difference in socioeconomic profile was evident among the SC and non-SC politicians that I interacted with during my fieldwork, as regards how they spoke, dressed, and behaved. For example, typical powerful non-SC politicians would wear a *kurta* (Indian long shirt) and would often speak to their followers in very simple Hindi, as if speaking to children. By contrast, some of the SC politicians seemed keen to make an impression by speaking formal, highly sanscritized (*shudh*) Hindi or wearing a full Western-style suit despite the heat. Somehow, the first approach gave an impression of superiority, while the latter did not. Interestingly, the most experienced SC politicians seemed far more relaxed in behavior and dress, often wearing rumpled shirts. They did not, however, have the same air of royalty as some of the senior non-SC politicians.

When I asked SC politicians whether they had faced overt caste-based discrimination, most of them said they had experienced it when they were younger, but not after they got into office. An SC MLA from UP recalled being asked to sit separately in school as a child, but said that he no longer faced discrimination after he got an education. He claimed that SCs who become wealthy or powerful no longer experience caste-based discrimination.[30]

These stories were corroborated by responses by several upper-caste respondents. A senior upper-caste IAS officer in HP said that in his constituency, which was a reserved one, his upper-caste friends might complain to each other about their MLA, but that they would never speak about it to SCs or treat a politician badly, because they still wanted to be able to approach that person for favors.[31] What this example suggests is that their respectful treatment of the SC MLA was instrumental behavior, aimed at getting help from the politician, rather than a sign of actual respect. This is in line with studies of the effects of SC quotas at the village level, which find changes in behavior toward SCs and attitudes about what is socially

28. Interview in Shimla, October 13, 2010.

29. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

30. Interview in Meerut, February 5, 2011.

31. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

acceptable behavior toward SCs, but not changes in underlying attitudes.[32] The same may be the case for MLAs.

None of the SC politicians I interviewed gave examples of any overt form of discrimination by other elites. However, some of them told of more subtle forms of discrimination—micro-aggressions. Take, for instance, the following quote by Meira Kumar, the Speaker of the House 2009–2014 and a member of India's social and political elite, who said in an interview that she felt SC elites still face caste prejudice. "People do discriminate. They won't call you to their homes. They will serve you in different vessels. This happened even in some very well-off homes."[33]

Similar stories came from some of my SC respondents as well. I was particularly struck by a young BJP politician from HP. When I first interviewed him and was asking him specific questions about his work, he answered clearly, proudly, and with many references to how great BJP was for SCs. Later that day, we were sitting around talking more loosely and an SC civil servant joined us. Then other stories began to emerge, of how they still felt belittled and excluded by upper-caste colleagues. "We try so hard to do good work," said the civil servant sadly, "but no matter what we do, they do not really respect us." The SC politician nodded quietly: "That is why the reservations are still so important," he added, "because otherwise none of us would have been where we are now."[34]

An SC MLA in Karnataka said that he did not experience any direct discrimination, but that he felt his party did not project him and other SC politicians as serious leaders. In his view, his experience and support-base made him an obvious candidate for a top position in the party, but he was not promoted because of his caste.[35] Whether this was a legitimate complaint is hard to evaluate, but it exemplifies the feeling of not being taken seriously.

The senior upper-caste IAS officer who had told me that his upper-caste friends would speak about SC politicians behind their backs also pointed to another startling fact: that some SC politicians self-impose some of the practices of untouchability in order to retain the goodwill of upper-caste voters. He gave the example of an SC MLA he had invited home for dinner,

32. See Chauchard (2014, 2016).

33. Interview with *The Telegraph* (Seetha 2009).

34. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

35. Interview in Bangalore, February 23, 2011.

who had chosen to eat outside and not enter the house. He also claimed to have seen SC MLAs choosing to take their shoes off in places where that was expected of low-status groups, even though nobody had told them to do so.[36]

In chapter 3 I described how some SC politicians said they had gradually gained the confidence to speak up in legislative debates and be assertive in their political work. There seem to have been changes over time in the case of interelite relationships as well. A BJP politician in UP told me that SCs used to be treated badly, but that nowadays they are given respect by everyone.[37] A senior civil servant in UP emphasized that he had seen a major change in how SCs were treated as more and more SCs had come to power in UP. He thought it made an enormous difference to intergroup relations that upper-caste civil servants were working under SC ministers.[38] As more SCs come to hold cabinet positions and other political positions of high visibility, we should therefore expect to see further improvements in intergroup relations.

7.3 Relations with voters

A key finding in studies of village-level quotas for women in India is that first-time female leaders tend to be evaluated more negatively than male leaders, even if they actually perform better in office, but that this bias against women is reduced over time.[39]

In chapter 1 I discussed what became the clearest example of the relationship between SC politicians and voters observed during my fieldwork: traveling with an SC MLA, I noted how he was welcomed into the homes of voters from all caste groups. He was offered tea and snacks, and he spoke with people from all groups. In his own words, people would not "dare" to discriminate against him, and if people were restrictive about interacting with him in ways they hid this well.[40] This echoed what I heard from other SC politicians. An SC MLA in HP told me that he observed a lot of

36. Interview in Shimla, October 11, 2010.

37. Interview in Lucknow, November 20, 2010.

38. Interview in Lucknow, November 18, 2010. At that time the female SC politician Mayawati was in power in UP and there were an unusually high number of SC ministers (see chapter 5).

39. See Beaman et al. (2009), Duflo and Topalova (2004).

40. Interview in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

discrimination against SCs in villages, but that people were generally very respectful to him.[41]

An important point that came up in several interviews was the perception that there had been a change in the social norms related to discriminating against SCs, at least against powerful ones. The SC politician I traveled with said that voters would not dare to discriminate against him, indicating that they feared some form of sanction if they did. A village-level SC politician interviewed in HP put it in very explicit terms: she told me that nobody would discriminate against her when there were others present, because it has become socially unacceptable to discriminate against SCs.[42] These anecdotes point to an important shift in social norms (though not necessarily attitudes) that has resulted in changing intergroup behavior.

A story related by a senior SC politician in Karnataka illustrates this nicely. He said that he still sees indirect forms of discrimination even against very powerful SCs, but that people make efforts to hide it. Recently, he said, he had gone to a village and wanted to see the temple. The priest came out to greet him, presumably in order to prevent him from going inside the temple, without being openly impolite—after all, this was a senior politician. Realizing what the priest was trying to do, the politician repeated that he wanted to see the temple and went in anyway. Nobody prevented him from doing so, but he said he could tell that people were uncomfortable. Afterward he heard that there had been a fight in the village about the issue of his entering the temple.[43]

How SC politicians are perceived

When asked about their relations with voters, SC politicians frequently said that they have experienced better treatment as they climbed the socioeconomic and political ladder. However, they suggested that the change has concerned people's actions, not necessarily their attitudes. Has the quota system in state assemblies also had measurable effects on voter attitudes toward SC politicians? Such outcomes are difficult to measure, but here I will

41. Interview in Shimla, October 12, 2010.

42. Interview in Shimla, October 13, 2010.

43. Interview in Bangalore, February 23, 2011.

report from a voter survey conducted in UP in early 2013 in order to try to identify such effects.[44]

The survey was aimed at studying perceptions of caste bias, quotas, and SC politicians, in particular comparing the perceptions of voters who had lived in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies for a long time. Constituency boundaries in UP remained unchanged between 1974 and 2007, and the first post-delimitation state election was held in 2012. Within constituencies that became reserved for SCs in 2008, some voters therefore voted for an SC MLA for the first time in 2012, whereas others had already lived in a reserved constituency since at least 1974. Comparing voters in villages that were only a few kilometers apart, and very similar except that some were newly reserved and others had been reserved ever since the 1970s, allows us to look for long-term constituency-level changes in attitudes toward SC politicians.

The survey was conducted in 10 villages in Auraiya district and 10 villages in Kanpur Dehat district in UP. Villages were selected because they were currently in an SC-reserved constituency, but *used to be* close to the border of a nonreserved and SC-reserved constituency.[45] These villages were then matched on 1971 characteristics to make them as comparable as possible, and the most similar five pairs of villages on each side of the old border were selected for inclusion in the sample. These villages were therefore similar in all respects except their reservation status 1974–2012. From each of the resultant 20 villages, 100 respondents were drawn, of which 67 percent (1,349 individuals) were interviewed.[46]

Of the respondents, 40 percent were SC, about 60 percent were male, and average age was close to 40. There was considerable spread in educational levels, with about 28 percent of SCs and 21 percent of non-SCs self-reporting as illiterate. Almost everyone in the sample self-reported as being small-scale farmers, agricultural laborers, or housewives. There was also little mobility in this sample: some 69 percent of the respondents said they had always lived in the same village, and another 23 percent said that they had been living in the village for ten years or more.

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44. The survey was prepared in collaboration with Dr. Anil K. Verma at the Christ Church College in Kanpur and implemented by his survey team in January 2013. See appendix A.8 for further information.

45. Villages were selected if they lay within 5 km of the old constituency border and had populations of more than 400 people.

46. See appendix A.8 for further details.

In the first part of the survey, respondents were asked about whether they voted in the last election, what type of politician they had wanted to win, and then some questions about SCs and about SC reservations. Responses about electoral turnout were typical of Indian election surveys, with about 85 percent of those surveyed claiming to have voted. Also typically, most respondents stated that politicians should work for everyone, but, given choices such as honesty and efficiency, the sample was split on what they thought were the most important attributes for politicians. On these generic questions there were small differences between respondents living in the newly reserved constituencies and in the constituencies that had been reserved for a long time.

Respondents were asked to compare SC politicians to non-SC politicians on a range of topics—did they feel that SC politicians do better, the same, or worse than other politicians on various issues?[47] Figure 7.3 shows the answers to six of these questions. In each plot, the first two bars show the answers among non-SCs in newly reserved villages and villages that had been reserved since 1974, whereas the second two bars compare SC respondents from villages with different reservation statuses. The p-values reported above the bars are from chi-square tests comparing the responses within each pair of bars.

Two clear patterns emerge from Figure 7.3. The first is that whereas respondents in the elite interviews sometimes claimed that SCs were "weak," "useless," or "inefficient," this does not seem to be the view held by the voters. Most respondents seemed to believe that SC politicians were equally capable as non-SC politicians. Not surprisingly, SC voters were more positive to SC politicians than were non-SC voters, but not dramatically so. SC voters were more likely than non-SCs to respond that SC politicians are more hardworking, more effective, more honest, and care more about the poor. However, there were also many non-SCs who saw SC politicians as performing better than non-SC politicians, particularly as to whether they were hardworking and cared about discrimination against SCs. On the other hand, there were also many SCs who responded that non-SCs did a better job—or as good a job—as SC politicians.

47. Caste bias is a very sensitive issue, and possible social desirability bias should be kept in mind when interpreting these results.

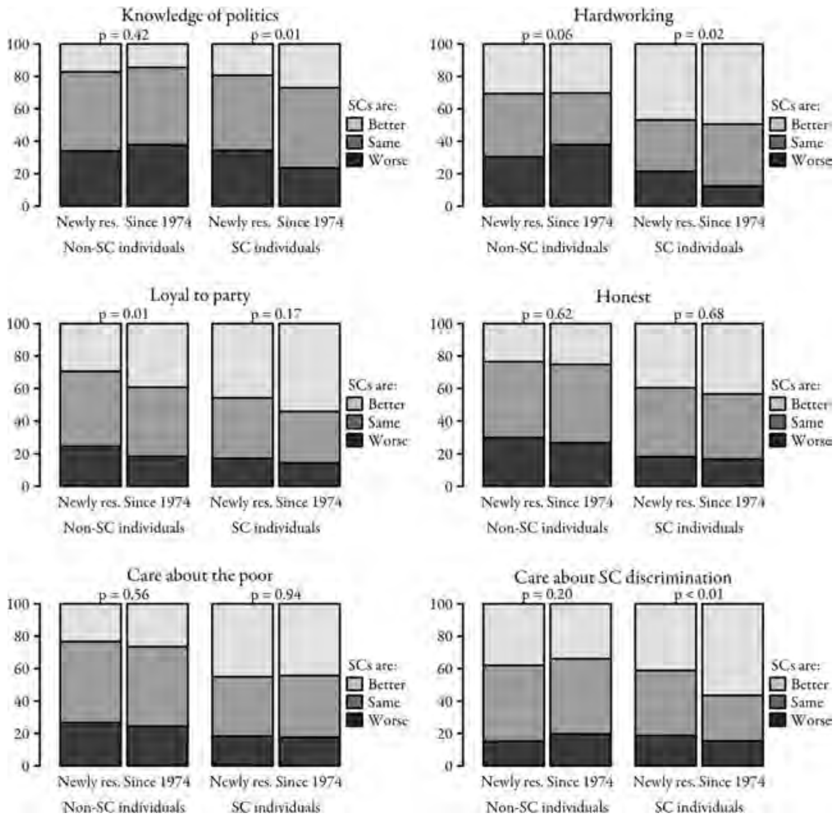

FIGURE 7.3 Perceptions of SC politicians among voters in newly reserved villages compared to villages that had been reserved for a long time

Note: Data from survey of voters in UP, 2013 (see appendix A.8). The reported p-values are from chi-square tests.

The second pattern concerns the slight differences in the responses of those who had lived in a reserved constituency for a long time compared to those whose constituency had recently become reserved.

The most notable difference is that SCs who had lived in an SC-reserved constituency for a long time seemed slightly more positive to SC politicians: SCs who had lived in a constituency that had been nonreserved until the previous year responded similarly to non-SCs to questions about politicians' knowledge of politics and how much SC politicians cared about SC discrimination. On the other hand, SCs who had lived in a reserved constituency for a long time were more likely to say that SC politicians were more knowledgable about politics, more hardworking, and cared more about SC discrimination than non-SC politicians. Both non-SCs and SCs who had lived in a reserved

constituency for a long time were more likely to report that SC politicians are loyal to their party, are honest, and care about the poor.

Having lived in a reserved constituency for a long time seems to have given voters a somewhat more favorable impression of SC politicians. These patterns provide persuasive evidence that not all non-SC voters are negative to SC politicians, and that many voters are at least as happy with SC politicians as with other politicians. The findings also point to a possible positive effect of reservations on the perception of SC politicians, but these patterns should be treated as suggestive, as they are quite weak and based on samples from only two areas. A larger study will be needed to enable stronger conclusions to be drawn about this.

7.4 Conclusions

This chapter has examined the socioeconomic profile of the new SC elite and how SC politicians are perceived by other elites and by voters. The findings indicate that although SC politicians still experience micro-aggressions, they are spared overt discrimination, and attitudes and treatment toward them seems to have improved over time.

MLAs are not average Indians: they tend to be wealthy, educated, and well-connected. When individuals from a traditionally low-status background are brought into public office, the linkage between the general public and the state inevitably changes. The extent to which the new elite behave like the old one will have important implications for how people view the state and whether they change their views of the low-status community. A humble SC politician may make people less uncomfortable about approaching the state with concerns, without necessarily altering their view of SCs in general. A wealthy, highly educated, and well-connected SC politician may alienate members of the public from the state, but may also impress them and thereby reduce the bias against the SC population by breaking down stereotypes about SCs—or at least changing the stereotypes of what is seen as socially acceptable behavior toward SCs.

The quotas for SCs in India's state assemblies seem to have had such effects at the elite level. Whether they have also resulted in changes in behavior toward all SCs is the focus of the next chapter.

8

Chipping Away at the Caste Hierarchy

So long as each caste or group remains isolated its attitude remains fossilized. But the moment the several castes and groups begin to have contact and co-operation with one another the resocialization of the fossilized attitude is bound to be the result.[1]

A KEY FEATURE of the quotas for SCs in India's state assemblies is that they have increased and changed social interactions between SCs and other groups. Across the world, studies have shown that regular interactions with out-groups can help people overcome psychological barriers against that group.[2] One expectation of the quota system for SCs was precisely that it would result in improved intergroup relations, as reflected in the statement by Ambedkar cited above.

The inclusion of SCs into politics may not have greatly changed how SC interests are articulated and represented, but it has led to the gradual empowerment of a new SC elite. Some SCs have achieved powerful positions, providing role models for SCs; and large numbers of elites and voters from all groups have been made to interact with SC politicians—possibly helping to reduce negative stereotypes.

In the previous chapter we saw that there was little difference in how voters perceive SC politicians and other politicians and that SC politicians are usually treated with respect. But have the quotas resulted in more recognition for SCs in general? In this chapter I show how the status hierarchy separating

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1. Part of Ambedkar's presention to the Southborough Committee in January 27, 1919 (Ambedkar 1919, point 40).

2. See, for example, Emerson et al. (2002), Pettigrew and Tropp (2008), Green and Wong (2008), Paluck and Green (2009), Finseraas et al. (2016).

SCs from others has weakened, and provide some evidence that the electoral quotas for SCs have contributed to this change.

8.1 A changing caste system

The Indian Constitution of 1950 abolished the practice of untouchability, and—although it is still far from eradicated—there have been massive changes in the ritual practices, attitudes, and relations between SCs and others. A survey of 565 villages across 11 Indian states concluded that, although some forms of untouchability were still practiced in about 80 percent of the villages studied, the more extreme and blatant forms of untouchability are becoming less common.[3]

Several of those I interviewed in India in 2010 and 2011, both SCs and non-SCs, said they felt there had been great improvements in how SCs have been treated, particularly in urban areas. In my conversations with students in Delhi, Lucknow, Meerut, and Varanasi, several pointed out that there may still be discrimination against SCs in rural areas, but that they see little overt discrimination in cities. And even in the countryside, things seemed to be changing: Villagers from rural areas in both HP and UP told me that there used to be more discrimination, but that the situation was much better now.

A 2008 survey from UP provides compelling evidence of the changes.[4] The survey was administered to more than 19,000 SC households living in two administrative blocks in UP, one in the west of the state (the wealthier part of UP) and one in the east. Respondents were asked about various social practices at the time of the survey, as well as about what they remembered of the same practices in 1990. Findings from this survey point to massive changes in interactions between SCs and others. Open-ended questions about these changes even elicited responses such as "the world has been turned upside down" and that then and now was like "night and day."[5]

The first set of questions in the survey concerned social changes, personal grooming practices in particular. As social inferiors, SCs have traditionally encountered different expectations as to appearance and eating habits than others, and changes could be interpreted as a sign of increased self-respect and upward social mobility. The reported changes are striking: whereas about 93

3. Shah (2006).

4. See Kapur et al. (2010).

5. Kapur et al. (2010, 41).

percent of the sample in eastern UP and 97 percent in western UP reported that they did not use toothpaste, shampoo, or bottled hair oil in 1990, by 2008 these figures had shrunk to 11.4 percent and 15.6 percent, respectively.[6]

The survey also found wide-reaching changes in eating habits, with SCs moving away from lower-status foods, such as sugar-cane juice and *roti chatni*, to rice, vegetables, and spices, and also to offering higher-status foods to visiting relatives and guests at weddings.[7] These findings indicate that SCs have stopped complying with the behavior expected of social inferiors.

Results from the survey also point to major changes in intergroup interactions. For example, by 2008 SCs were rarely seated separately at weddings, more non-SCs reportedly accepted snacks and drinks that were offered in SC households, and non-SC midwives were far more likely to attend births of SC babies.

And finally, the survey reported on greater flexibility in the job market, with SCs taking up jobs not traditionally associated with a lower status.[8] All of these findings speak of extensive gains in self-respect as well as less severe social control and more respect from others.

While the caste system used to be perceived as fairly rigid, the 2008 survey is part of a growing literature on how intercaste relations in India are changing. Even marriage practices—sometimes seen as a defining feature of the caste system[9]—seem to be changing.

Intercaste marriage in India is still uncommon, particularly in rural areas.[10] But this seems to be changing. In a field experiment in the online arranged-marriage market, Ahuja and Ostermann[11] found that almost 71 percent of SC women and 54 percent of upper-caste women responded positively to profiles of men from other caste categories. In particular, poorer upper-caste women responded positively to potential marriage partners with an attractive socioeconomic profile, even when they belonged to another caste category. Similarly, the wealthiest SC women responded the most positively to profiles of men from other caste categories, indicating that they may view

6. Kapur et al. (2010, 43).

7. Kapur et al. (2010, 44–45).

8. Kapur et al. (2010, 46–47).

9. See Dumont (1980).

10. Macwan et al. (2010) found that intercaste marriage was prohibited in 98 percent of the 1,589 villages they surveyed in Gujarat.

11. Ahuja and Ostermann (2016).

their socioeconomic status as an asset that outweighs a caste disadvantage. Ahuja and Ostermann held that even though people may end up marrying within their caste group—as shown in other studies of the Indian marriage market[12]—these findings indicate that people are becoming more open to the possibility of marrying outside their caste.

8.2 SC quotas and changes in intergroup relations

Studying the effects of quotas on intergroup relations in the general population is difficult: dignity, respect, stereotypes, and intergroup relations are all hard to measure. Well-designed survey questions would make it possible to approximate these outcomes, but large-scale Indian surveys do not include such questions. The few surveys that do include relevant questions—such as the Indian Human Development Survey—do not release geographical indicators below the district level. This makes it impossible to know whether respondents lived in nonreserved or in SC-reserved constituencies— essential for studying the effects of SC quotas at the state assembly level.[13]

In the following, I attempt to identify effects of SC quotas at the state assembly level on discrimination against SCs, drawing on data from two surveys: a large-scale survey of practices of untouchability from Gujarat and my own voter survey from western UP. Both include village indicators—making it possible to know whether respondents lived in a nonreserved or an SC-reserved constituency, and to look for differences in responses across these two types of constituencies.

Untouchability practices in Gujarat

There is little available data about the prevalence and variation in practices associated with untouchability. A survey of 1,589 villages in Gujarat, specifically designed to capture various aspects of untouchability, can provide unique insights.[14]

12. For example Banerjee et al. (2009).

13. On the other hand, the effects of village-level quotas have been studied, as discussed in section 8.3.

14. The survey was conducted between 2005 and 2008 and is described in Macwan et al. (2010). I am very grateful for having been given access to a village-level version of the dataset—a dataset that includes indicators that aggregate the answers from the respondents from each village in the survey sample. These data were cleaned and parsed by Trivedi (2017).

For this survey, a team consisting of academics and practitioners consulted a range of sources, including academic literature, religious texts, legal documents, and focus groups, in order to compile an overview of practices that might be associated with untouchability. From this, they created a list of 98 distinct practices, clustered into eight categories: (1) water for drinking, (2) food and beverage, (3) religion, (4) touching, (5) access to public facilities and institutions, (6) caste-based occupations, (7) prohibitions and social sanctions, and (8) private-sector discrimination.[15] This list formed the starting point for a survey instrument asking respondents whether each of these practices did or did not exist within their village or urban homeplace.[16]

The findings in the survey are disconcerting, as some practices of untouchability were reported in almost all the villages that were surveyed. For instance, as previously mentioned, intercaste marriage was prohibited in 98 percent of their surveyed villages.

Figure 8.1 shows which types of discrimination were the most common. Each boxplot gives the distribution of how many of each of the eight clusters of practices were reported within the villages in the sample. For example,

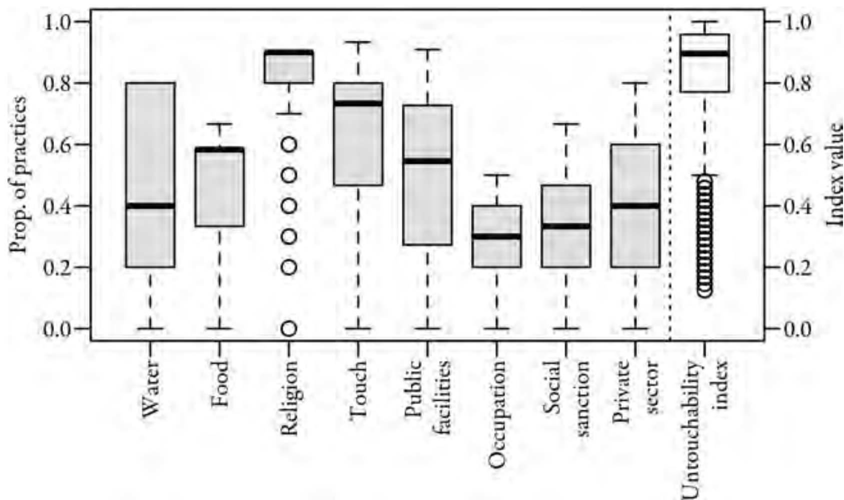

FIGURE 8.1 Prevalence of various types of practices of untouchability in Gujarat *Note*: Data are from a survey conducted in 1,589 villages in Gujarat; see Macwan et al. (2010) for further details.

15. Macwan et al. (2010, 4).

16. For each practice, a distinction was also made between whether the practice was directed toward the SC community from non-SCs (intergroup) or from other SCs (intragroup).

the study had identified five types of discrimination associated with water. In 18 percent of the villages (288), none of these were reported; in 33 percent (520), four of them were reported; but there were no villages where all five were reported. The median value for the villages (indicated with a black line) was that two out of the five practices were reported. Most villages reported discrimination across all eight categories; particularly common were discriminatory practices related to religious activities and touch.

The team created an overall *Vertical Untouchability Index* (practices directed by non-SC to SCs) running from zero to one—the higher the number, the greater the prevalence of untouchability in a village.[17] In Figure 8.1, the boxplot furthest to the right shows the distribution of values for this index across all villages.

But do practices differ between villages that are in an SC-reserved constituency and those in nonreserved constituencies? This survey was concluded in 2008, before the new delimitation came into effect, so villages had had the same reservation status since 1974. To identify the type of constituency for each village, all villages in the sample were first manually linked to villages in the 2001 Indian Census, and then linked to constituencies using GIS maps. This then yielded a sample consisting of 1,279 villages across six SC-reserved and 43 nonreserved constituencies.[18]

The villages included in this survey were not a representative sample of Gujarat. They were selected from villages where one of the implementing partners—Navsarjan Trust—had a presence. Compared to other villages in Gujarat, the villages in the survey had a higher proportion of SCs and were slightly more prosperous.[19] Since the villages were from only some constituencies, it was also inappropriate to use the matched pairs of constituencies used otherwise in this book to look for differences between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies. Instead, I present regression models.

Figure 8.2 shows output from regression models of differences in untouchability practices in nonreserved and in SC-reserved constituencies (ACs). The comparison is between the 1,093 villages within the 43 nonreserved constituencies covered by the survey sample and the 186 villages in the six

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17. They created a *Horizontal Untouchability Index* measuring the same thing for intragroup practices—practices directed by SC to SCs (Macwan et al. 2010, 11–16).

18. Some villages could not be identified in the census, and some were lost because of inaccuracies in the GIS maps. See appendix A.7 for further information.

19. See balance statistics in appendix A.7.

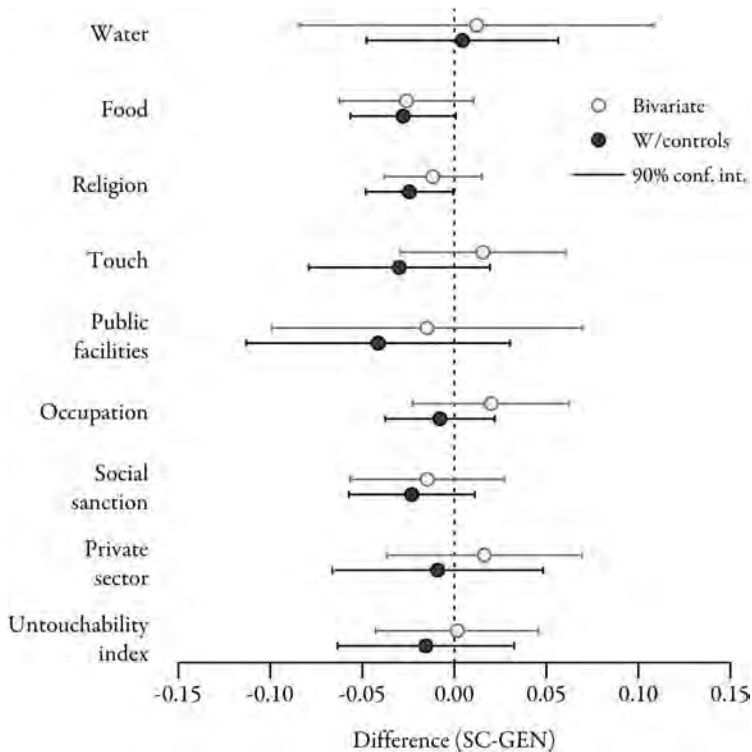

FIGURE 8.2 Difference in untouchability practices in nonreserved and in SC-reserved areas (coefficients from regression models)

Note: Coefficients from OLS regression models with reservation status as the main explanatory variable. The confidence intervals are based on standard errors clustered at the AC level.

SC-reserved constituencies. For each of the eight types of untouchability practices and the vertical untouchability index, I first ran a bivariate model with *SC-reserved AC* as the only explanatory variable—the coefficient on this variable gives the mean difference between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies. The outcome variables were the proportions of how many of each types of practices were reported in a village, as well as the index. In Figure 8.2, each of the light gray circles provides the coefficient of *SC-reserved AC* from these bivariate models, accompanied by a 90 percent confidence interval for this estimate (based on standard errors clustered at the AC level). No clear pattern emerges in these coefficients; some are slightly positive, others are slightly negative, and none are close to being statistically significant.

However, these patterns may be biased by the fact that the villages in the sample are not representative of all villages in Gujarat, nor of their constituencies. Additionally, there is the problem that SC-reserved constituencies differ

systematically from other constituencies since they have a higher population of SCs. To control for some of these differences, I included three types of control variables in the regression models: controls for AC characteristics,[20] village-level characteristics from the 2001 census,[21] and district fixed effects.

The black circles in Figure 8.2 provide the coefficients for *SC-reserved AC* from these regression models with control variables. Here all estimates are negative, except for water discrimination: practices of untouchability are somewhat less common in villages located within SC-reserved constituencies. Most estimates are far from statistically significant (using standard errors clustered at the AC level), but both food and religion are close to being statistically significant at conventional levels (p-values of 0.11 and 0.09, respectively).

These patterns are admittedly neither strong nor very robust. Still, the fact that all coefficients point in the same direction is at least indicative of a pattern: various practices of untouchability seem somewhat less common in villages that have been within SC-reserved constituencies for a long time.

Social desirability bias is a concern here—people in reserved constituencies might be more embarrassed to admit to being the victims (or perpetrators) of caste-based discrimination. The slight difference observed could therefore be the result of a change as to what is perceived as socially acceptable rather than actual changes in social practices. Either way, these patterns indicate that intergroup relations are not worse and perhaps even slightly better in areas that have been reserved for SCs.

Voter survey in Uttar Pradesh

The second source I draw on here is an original survey from UP, described in the previous chapter (see also appendix A.8). The survey was conducted in January 2013—the year after the first post-delimitation election in UP—but respondents were sampled from villages selected from each side of the old constituency borders (and matched on 1971 characteristics). This was done

20. The proportion of SCs in the AC in 1971, the margin of victory for the MLA in the 2007 state assembly election in Gujarat, the turnout in the AC in that same election, and the number of electors registered in that election.

21. The population in the village, the proportion of SCs, the literacy rate, the proportion of the population registered as working, whether there was a medical facility in the village, and whether there was some form of communications channel in the village. I did not include the indicators for electricity and having a school, since all the villages in the survey sample had that.

in order to compare answers from respondents living in villages very similar in all respects, except that half of them had recently become part of a reserved constituency while the other half had been part of a reserved constituency for more than 30 years. A systematic random sample of 2,000 people from these villages was then approached for interviews about perceptions of caste relations, reservations, and SC politicians.

In chapter 7 I presented some of the characteristics of the respondents and showed their responses to questions about SC politicians. Here, the focus is on the caste discrimination experienced by people living in these villages. Respondents were asked two questions about this: whether they thought SCs used to be treated badly in the past because of their caste, and whether they were still treated badly.

As shown in Table 8.1, a full 76.4 percent of respondents in newly reserved constituencies and 71.7 percent of those in old reserved constituencies agreed with the statement that "SCs have been treated badly in the past because of their caste." The difference between SCs in previously nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies was small—almost 80 percent of all SC respondents agreed that SCs had suffered from bad treatment in the past. However, among non-SCs we can see a difference. Some 75.7 percent of non-SCs in newly reserved areas agreed that SCs had been treated badly in the past, whereas only 62.8 percent of the non-SCs living in previously reserved areas thought so.

This difference may be the result of non-SCs feeling that SCs have achieved their share of power and influence because of their experience of living in a reserved area. It could also be that these respondents have seen less bad treatment of SCs than have non-SCs living in neighboring villages that were

Table 8.1 Percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement: "SCs have been treated badly in the past because of their caste"

	Newly reserved	Reserved since 1974	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	75.7 (506)	62.8 (298)	−12.9	0.23
SC respondents	78.1 (192)	79.3 (352)	1.1	0.90
All respondents	76.4 (698)	71.7 (651)	−4.6	0.58

Note: Reported p-values are from bivariate regression analyses with standard errors clustered at the village level.

Table 8.2 Percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement: "SCs *are still* treated badly because of their caste"

	Newly reserved	Reserved since 1974	Diff.	P-value
Non-SC respondents	50.9 (505)	30.9 (298)	−20.0	0.09
SC respondents	68.8 (192)	59.1 (352)	−9.7	0.35
All respondents	55.8 (697)	46.2 (651)	−9.6	0.36

Note: Reported p-values are from bivariate regression analyses with standard errors clustered at the village level.

not reserved. The percentage-point difference in the affirmative response rate for non-SCs across constituencies is large, and statistically significant if using naïve standard errors—but it is not statistically significant at conventional levels using standard errors clustered at the village level.

The difference in responses is even more pronounced when we look at responses to the statement, "SCs are still treated badly because of their caste." As shown in Table 8.2, about 68.8 percent of SCs in newly reserved areas agreed with this statement, while 59.1 percent of the SCs in reserved areas thought so. This difference of 9.7 percentage points is also statistically significant with naïve standard errors, but not when standard errors clustered at the village level are used. The strongest conclusion to be drawn about this pattern is that it offers further suggestive evidence indicating that SCs who had lived in a reserved area for a long time were less likely to experience discrimination.

The difference in the responses among non-SCs is even greater. While about 51 percent of non-SCs living in a newly reserved village opined that SCs were still being treated badly, only about 31 percent of non-SCs who had lived in an SC-reserved constituency for a long time thought so. This difference of 20 percentage points is statistically significant at the 10 percent level, even with standard errors clustered at the village level.

Although this should be interpreted with caution, the differences in responses are quite striking, especially given that the voters surveyed live in villages that are only a few kilometers apart. These differences in means are based on villages across two areas, and can therefore not be said to be representative of all of India, but they too provide some indications that SC reservations have been associated with a reduction in caste-based discrimination—or,

alternatively, a shift in what is seen as socially acceptable behavior. Here too, it seems clear that the quotas have at least not acted to worsen intergroup relations, although further, larger-scale studies of the attitudinal and relational effects of quotas are needed before stronger conclusions can be drawn.

8.3 Exploring mechanisms

The two previous sections provided some quantitative evidence that villages within SC-reserved constituencies have less caste-based discrimination than other villages—that the massive changes for SCs discussed in the beginning of the chapter have taken place somewhat faster in SC-reserved areas than elsewhere. I have also alluded to the increasing and changing contact between SC politicians and others as a mechanism that might spur such change, as indicated by studies of village-level politics.

An ethnographic study of caste relations in a village in western UP conducted in 2010 and 2011 describes some of the changes that resulted when an SC gained power in village-level politics for the first time. This was a village dominated socially and politically by *Gujjars* (a non-SC caste group), but the single largest caste group was *Jatavs* (SCs). In 1990, the Jatavs were successfully mobilized as a community for the first time, and put up their own candidate for village president. This resulted in major changes:

> For the first time in the village's known history, an ex-Untouchable Jatav man had become the head of the Gujjar-dominated village. The world of village politics was forever changed. [. . .] From that point on, a Gujjar needed to visit the house of a Jatav *pradhan* [village president] to get a signature on a bank loan application or see state officials at the panchayat house. For the first time in village history, Gujjars realized that Jatavs were more than just laborers and voters, and that they could no longer be used to carry out the Gujjars' will. The pradhan's office shifted to the Jatav *mohalla* [neighborhood]—a space which used to symbolize untouchability. A space Gujjars had always avoided visiting had turned into a legitimate space of authority.[22]

The study goes on to describe how these political changes also resulted in changes in intergroup relations and in social practices: SCs started celebrating

22. Kumar (2017, 15).

the birthday of Dr. Ambedkar with a procession through the village, and SC bridegrooms started riding to the wedding on horseback—a practice signaling higher status.

Work on the effects of village-level quotas on intergroup relations provides further evidence of the relational changes that came when SC politicians entered politics.[23] Since the 1990s, SCs have had reserved seats at all three levels of local-level politics—village, subdistrict, and district. Similar to the state level, the presidencies of village councils are selected to be reserved on the basis of the percentages of SCs in villages compared to other villages in the same administrative block. The effects of having an SC village president can therefore be identified by comparing villages that became reserved with villages that had a very similar percentage of SCs but remained nonreserved.

Conducting a survey across 32 such village pairs—similar in all respects, except that one became reserved and the other remained nonreserved—Chauchard found that respondents in reserved villages were much less likely to say that they would engage in verbal violence or verbal threats against SCs who chose to sit on chairs in village meetings (instead of sitting on the ground to show their inferior status) or who protested that they could enter a temple. Respondents were also more likely to say they would accept tea from an SC.[24]

However, exploring the mechanisms behind these patterns, it became clear that the changes in intended behavior were not due to a change in the stereotypes that respondents held about SCs. Rather, respondents in reserved villages seemed to see it as more socially acceptable to interact with SCs and were also more likely to fear punishment or reprisals if they treated SCs badly. The conclusion from this study was that just a few years of quotas for SCs at the village level had resulted in major changes in intergroup relations—but that this was due to changed social expectations and not changes in stereotypes or personal beliefs. However, these results were based on only a few years of a quota regime, so it is possible that personal beliefs might also change over time.

In addition to seeing how quotas affect intergroup relations, it is also relevant to explore how they may alter intragroup solidarities among SCs. In the ethnographic study from western UP, Kumar reported that the inclusion of one SC community (*Jatavs*) did not result in more recognition of another

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23. See, e.g., Chauchard (2014, 2016).

24. Chauchard (2014, 2016).

SC community in the village (*Valmikis*); even Jatavs openly discriminated against this lower-ranking SC group. In this village, the entry of one SC community into politics seems to have increased the distance among SCs.[25]

A survey experiment conducted in the South Indian state of Karnataka provides further insights into the intergroup and intragroup effects of quotas for SCs at the village level. Using a similar design as Chauchard, Dunning[26] probed for changes in intragroup dynamics in village councils with and without an SC president. Testing how people responded to politicians from (1) the same subcaste, (2) a different subcaste within the same caste category (e.g., SCs), or (3) a different caste category, he found that respondents in reserved constituencies were more likely to support a politician from their own caste category, and even more so politicians from their own subcaste. These findings indicate that reservations enhance the salience of both subcaste *and* broader caste categories. Focusing on the SC respondents in the sample, Dunning found that SC quotas were associated with a particularly strong increase in sympathy for politicians from another subcaste within the SC category, bringing the evaluation of all SC candidates—whether from the same subcaste or not—up to the same level.

All of these studies conclude that the entry of SCs into politics at the village level has resulted in changes in how SCs are perceived and treated. These findings are also consistent with the survey evidence I have presented in this chapter and with my interview material presented in chapter 7—showing that SC politicians felt it had become less socially acceptable for them to be treated badly in public.

8.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have probed for effects of SC quotas on the recognition of SCs. It seems clear that the caste system in India is changing. India's SCs have still not caught up with the rest of the population in terms of socioeconomic development, and many still experience discrimination, but the situation has improved. SCs have started acting with more dignity; they have changed their personal grooming patterns, their eating habits, and their interactions with others. And others seem to be treating them with more respect—for example,

25. Kumar (2017).

26. Dunning (2010, 38).

by allowing them to sit with other villagers in meetings and at weddings, or being more open to sharing food and drink with them.

Quotas for SCs are among the various factors that may have contributed to this change. In this chapter I have presented suggestive evidence indicating that the state-assembly-level quotas have served to reduce discrimination against SCs. I have also discussed some studies of village-level quotas for SCs that corroborate these patterns.

Taken together, the findings discussed in this chapter provide some evidence that the changes in the recognition of SCs that have taken place at the elite level—the gradual empowerment of a new SC elite—have had broader societal consequences. The surveys mentioned here are not representative of the entire country, and the patterns are not strong, but all the evidence points in the same direction: improved intergroup relations in SC-reserved areas. This can therefore be interpreted as suggestive evidence that quotas for SCs at the level of the state assembly have improved (or at least not worsened) interactions between SCs and others. Still, larger-scale, more representative studies are needed for stronger conclusions to be drawn about the magnitude and exact nature of these effects.

9

Trade-Offs in Institutional Design

I want my due share; though I am innocent, ignorant, dumb, yet I want you to recognize my claim.[1]

INDIAN SOCIETY IS deeply hierarchical. Hierarchies are based on caste, class, skin color, region, gender, sexual orientation, and more. Probably the most extreme type of status inequality in India has been that experienced by the former "untouchable" community, the Scheduled Castes or SCs.

A specific goal of the drafters of the Indian Constitution was to combat the social injustices facing the SC community and other "weaker sections" of society. They tried to achieve this through institutional change, not least by guaranteeing the SCs a proportional presence in India's legislative assemblies. Optimistic about how fast society would change, they originally decided that this policy would remain in place for ten years. Today, 65 years later, the policy is still there. What have been the consequences of India's extensive quota system? Has it really benefited the SC community?

This concluding chapter summarizes the main findings in the book and discusses how the findings presented here can be used to evaluate the quotas for SCs. I then offer the counterfactual case—what if there had been another quota system? In conclusion, I point out some trade-offs inherent in the choice of how to design policies of group inclusion.

9.1 Main findings

India's quota system for SCs is extreme in several ways. It was granted to a group that had suffered extreme social exclusion and socioeconomic

1. Statement by SC representative S. Nagappa during the Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD 1999, vol. 5, August 27, 1947, 207).

exploitation; it is large-scale, bringing thousands of SC politicians to power; and it has been in place for more than 65 years, allowing us to look for even quite slow-moving social change.

The focus in this book has been on three types of outcomes: redistribution, political participation, and recognition, each analyzed at the level of the new political elite and the broader population.

At the societal level, the analysis has shown some evidence of a shrinking gap in the socioeconomic standing of SCs and non-SCs, but no indication that these changes have taken place more rapidly in SC-reserved constituencies than elsewhere (chapter 4). Differences in political participation have also lessened; and SCs and non-SCs have gradually started turning out to vote in similar numbers, although turnout has been somewhat lower in SC-reserved constituencies than in nonreserved ones. Responses to survey questions about how represented the voters *feel* they are, however, are similar across both types of constituencies (chapter 6). And finally, the findings presented in chapter 8 speak of massive changes in the social status of SCs over time, changes that may have occurred at a somewhat higher pace in SC-reserved constituencies.

A negative reading of these patterns would be that the effects of SC quotas in society have been marginal, and that the quota system has served to depress electoral turnout. However, the findings can also be interpreted in a more positive light: in countries around the globe, a common argument against bringing women and minority groups into politics is that this will reduce the efficiency of the state and potentially result in a major social backlash. There is no evidence of either of these things happening in India. True, we find evidence of lower electoral turnout in SC-reserved constituencies. But the differences in turnout evened out as the mobilizational capacity of SC politicians improved. My interview evidence indicated that the small remaining difference in turnout may be a result of voters perceiving SC politicians as less "glamorous" or "impressive," possibly because they are less independently wealthy and less likely to be criminals. If so, is the gap in turnout such a bad thing? Personally, I think that finding so little difference between the development patterns and intergroup interactions in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies indicates a normalization of SCs in positions of power; further, that it is a sign of important social change that the turnout gap has gradually narrowed as SC politicians have become better integrated into politics. However, the findings do indicate that lower political participation might be the price to pay (at least for a while) for integrating new groups into politics.

This book has also examined changes that have occurred at the elite level. I have described how SC politicians speak of and conduct their representational work (chapter 3), shown how they have become more integrated into mainstream political parties and achieved important positions of power (chapter 5), and discussed how they have gone from being clearly less educated and experienced than others to being on a par with other politicians (chapter 7). Indeed, there are some differences between SC politicians and others: SC politicians tend to be less wealthy; they are more likely to be women, are somewhat less likely to be renominated by their parties (particularly if the reservation status of their constituency changes), and are less likely to hold important cabinet positions. Several of the SC politicians I interviewed also spoke of micro-aggressions and feelings of being belittled.

I have introduced these elite-level changes as important for understanding the changes seen at the societal level. For instance, it is unsurprising to find no direct redistributive effect of the quota system when we realize that the system brought to power politicians who have seen themselves as agents of their parties rather than as agents of their group. Nor is it surprising that the turnout gap has narrowed as SC politicians have become more experienced.

But can elite-level changes also be seen as an end in themselves? For the case of SCs, my answer would be "yes." Discrimination against SCs is based on the idea of pollution that is acquired by birth. To break that barrier, even for just a few powerful individuals, means shifting the struggle for status from birth-based ascriptive characteristics to socioeconomic characteristics, thereby making social mobility possible. Many SCs I interviewed seemed to have struggled with a sense of inferiority and insecurity, acquired through repeated subtle (or not so subtle) negative interactions with others—for instance, memories of having been made to sit separately at school because of their caste. Overcoming low self-confidence through regular public speaking and the opportunity to prove oneself as capable become crucial elements in empowering groups that are fighting for more social recognition.

Another major step in itself is that public discrimination of SCs seems to have become less socially acceptable. And achieving positions of power can also be seen as an end in itself, because it helps to break stereotypes about who should be a political leader, thereby opening the political sphere to individuals from all sorts of backgrounds.

The same arguments would hold for other groups that have been perceived as having a lower social status because of some ascriptive trait, such as sex or race. Allowing individuals from groups with a shared sense of marginalization to gain confidence and take on public work can gradually shift the power

dynamics in society. Making public discrimination less socially acceptable can reduce the feelings of inferiority. The psychological effects on the entire population of having a black president, a female minister of finance, or an SC Speaker of the House are also likely to be profound—such diffuse effects cannot easily be identified empirically, but they may have important ramifications for stereotypes and social interactions in the long run.

9.2 An alternative quota system

If we compare SC-reserved constituencies to very similar nonreserved ones, as was done in this book, the SC quotas seem to have done some good—or at least not to have done much harm. The findings suggest that India's SCs have been better off with quotas than without them. However, this does not say what would have happened if there had been a different type of quota system. The main political controversy about quotas for SCs, from the 1920s until today, has concerned precisely this: Would SCs have been better off with SC politicians who more clearly acted as representatives of SCs as a group? This counterfactual scenario cannot be studied empirically, but thinking about it is an important thought experiment.

During the 1930s and 1940s, discussions on how to design the quotas for SCs included several alternatives aimed at incentivizing SC politicians to act as group representatives: separate electorates (only SCs could vote for SC candidates), reserved seats being assigned to areas with a clear SC majority, primaries where only SCs could elect candidates to run for election in reserved areas, or a requirement for a minimum vote share among the SC community in reserved areas.

We cannot know what would have happened had SCs been granted separate electorates, or one of these other versions of the quota system that would give the SC community more electoral control over SC politicians. There might have been greater political mobilization of the SC community around an SC identity, and there would perhaps have been more parties running on an SC platform—but that would also probably have meant a clearer fractionalization of SCs, as all SC politicians would be vying for the same SC voters. In fact, as Vaishnav has argued,[2] the fact that SC politicians run against each other in SC-reserved constituencies in the current system has made elections there less focused on caste and identity.

2. Vaishnav (2017).

Having separate electorates would probably have made elected SC politicians more vocal about the interests of SCs (although what "SC interests" meant would in all likelihood have differed from one political party to another). However, experiences from other parts of the world indicate that this might, in fact, have given SC politicians less overall influence over policy, because they would be less likely to be integrated into mainstream parties: If they had run under the label of SC-specific parties, these parties would probably have found themselves in a minority in the legislatures. This would have meant that SC politicians would have been less likely to be included in ruling coalitions and cabinets and perhaps less integrated into the ruling elite. This is indeed what seems to have happened in countries with separate electorates, as in New Zealand[3] and Croatia.[4]

With separate electorates, SC voters would also have been electorally concentrated, making them an important voting bloc in fewer constituencies, thereby reducing the incentive for mainstream parties and non-SC politicians to be concerned with the community. This is what some have argued has happened in the case of majority-minority districts in the United States.[5]

Thus, for various reasons, SCs might not have benefited any more in distributive terms from a quota system where SC politicians were elected by only SC voters. An alternative quota policy would also probably have resulted in less change in intergroup relations as neither political elites nor voters would have had to relate to SC politicians on a daily basis, as they do under the current system.

The experiences of India's tribal groups, STs, are instructive. STs constitute about 8.6 percent of the total population according to the 2011 Census of India, and, like SCs, have had reserved seats in each state legislature in proportion to their population. But, because they are more geographically concentrated than SCs, STs on average constitute 63 percent of the electorate in ST-reserved constituencies.[6] This means that, on average, a majority of the population can stand for election in these areas, and that ST politicians elected to these constituencies have clearer incentives to cater to ST interests. This is reflected in the empirical findings in studies of the distributive effects

3. Summersby (2009).

4. Allen (2016).

5. Lublin (1999).

6. Figures are from the 2008 Indian Delimitation Report.

of SC and ST quotas: whereas SC quotas have not been found to have much of an effect on policy or development patterns (see chapter 4), the quotas for STs have been found to affect policy choices, in terms of more group-specific targeting and more poverty reduction.[7] However, the overall socioeconomic development for STs has proceeded more slowly than the case of SCs,[8] STs have not held as many visible political positions of power as SCs, and they do not seem better organized politically.[9] Quotas for STs have been closer to a policy of group representation—but has this made them better off on the whole?

9.3 Concluding thoughts

Through the discussions in this book I hope to have provided some nuances to what we should expect from differently designed policies of group inclusion and what we should really want from such policies. Policies create an institutional incentive structure that will affect the actions of politicians, political parties, and voters. How they are designed will therefore shape their outcomes. I have argued that policies of group inclusion broadly can be divided into those that change the electorate in a way that makes politicians more accountable to the group—policies of group representation—and others that simply mandate a change in the characteristics of a politician (being an SC or a woman) without changing the electorate or the institutional incentives faced by these new politicians—policies of group integration.

Policies of group representation and policies of group integration are likely to have different consequences both for the new elites and society at large. Group-specific characteristics will determine which type of policy is more appropriate in any given context. Policies of group representation will create an emphasis on group-specific interests and will bring in politicians who voice group-specific concerns—although, given their minority position they may have limited influence over policy or the political decision-making process. This may be appropriate for groups that have a very clear set of shared interests or a cultural identity they wish to maintain. But setting a group apart in

7. See Pande (2003) and Chin and Prakash (2011).

8. Panagariya and More (2014, 205).

9. See Guha (2007).

this way is unlikely to result in gains in terms of status and recognition, or integration with other groups.

By contrast, policies of group integration may provide subtle shifts to political deliberations and interactions, but are unlikely to alter policy debates very much, as the new elite will have similar political incentives as other politicians and will tend to maintain the political status quo. However, this new elite is likely to obtain considerable political power and may break down social barriers. This is therefore an appropriate policy tool for preventing systematic exclusion based on ascriptive traits and for fighting status-based marginalization. But one should not be surprised or disappointed if politicians brought into power with such a system do not act as group representatives.

What this shows is that a single policy should not be expected to solve all problems for a group, and should also not be used as an excuse for not doing more for marginalized communities. For instance, some might argue that the Indian government has done enough for SCs by granting them reserved seats in politics. But we should not expect redistributive effects from this policy: other policies must be implemented to improve the socioeconomic standing of the group. Neither can we expect the quotas for SCs to eradicate the caste system on its own: efforts over a wide range of forms are needed.[10]

It may be tempting to have high expectations for policies of group inclusion. We want them to empower groups, create distributive benefits, improve group relations, and at the same time not have harmful consequences for other communities. Discussions of electoral system design tend to emphasize the importance of creating systems that integrate and moderate the interests of various groups. In discussions of policies of group inclusion, by contrast, there seems to be a normative wish for them to result in group representation—bringing new voices into politics.

In the case of quotas for SCs in India, there has been a fair amount of focus on the fact that the quotas have *not* created group representation and have *not* resulted in massive changes for all SCs. Some of the SC activists I interviewed even called the quotas for SCs a failure, saying that they had brought the "wrong" SC politicians to power. But overfocusing on what the quotas have not done can obscure what they have managed to do: a minority group consisting of more than 200 million people is no longer excluded from

10. By contrast, the quotas for SCs in public employment and educational institutions have been found to have important redistributive effects.

political life, and the social boundaries that separate caste groups have been weakened.

At the same time as it was discussing quotas for SCs, the Constituent Assembly was considering quotas for women and members of religious minorities. These other groups were not granted quotas, and their political presence has increased at a slow pace.[11] Reserved seats are crude measures that counteract the high threshold for being elected in plurality voting systems. Changing the electoral system might be a more effective way of increasing the diversity among elected representatives, but a serious concern in the Indian context is that this would lead to considerable political fractionalization. Given a plurality electoral system and strong social hierarchies, quotas may be a necessary way to bring marginalized groups to power. The choice in the early 1990s of reserving one-third of all elected positions in local-level politics for women initially met with some resistance, but the conclusions after 20 years are overwhelmingly positive—there are examples of elected female politicians being controlled by male family members, but for the most part women have been found to rise to the task of holding elected office and perform as well as their male colleagues.

Policies of group inclusion are policies of the impatient. They attempt to create a quick fix to a slow-moving problem. The findings presented in this book clearly show the tenacity of social inequalities and hierarchies, and how painfully long it may take for social change to come about. The most evident changes resulting from the SC quotas have taken place at the elite level, and not among the general population; even so, the new SC elite still confronts subtle forms of caste-based discrimination. Even today, it would be hard for SCs to compete in totally open elections.

Do these findings represent a glass that is half full, or half empty? Changes in India have been slow-moving, partial, and perhaps diffuse. But there has been change in the intensity and the type of discrimination faced by SC politicians (and to some extent the general SC population). Nothing as entrenched and historically stubborn as the caste system should be expected to disappear overnight, or even in 65 years. The patterns shown in this book should serve as a reminder that we should not expect quick changes from policy interventions. Further, the quota policy is not, nor should it be expected to be, the only policy working to break down social inequalities. To

11. See a discussion of Muslims in elected office in India in Jensenius (2013) and of women in politics in Jensenius (2016).

achieve social justice—with more equitable redistribution, parity in political participation, and recognition of the equal value of different people—will require efforts on many fronts at the same time. Including people with certain characteristics in the political elite is not enough to change society—but it may be a part of a larger effort toward that end.

APPENDIX A

Data

A.1 The sample

FOR THIS BOOK I have used data from the period 1969–2012 on India's 15 largest states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. This covers data from the period 1974–2007 for the state assembly constituencies (ACs) in these states, the period that India's electoral boundaries were frozen, and also the election years prior to the 1970s delimitation and the first elections after the 2008 delimitation. From 2000 I also include Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, two new states that were carved out of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, respectively. The area that became Uttaranchal after 2000 was not included in the data, since the political boundaries were changed with the creation of a new state, making it hard to trace constituency-level patterns over time. Throughout the book I exclude ACs reserved for STs from the sample, in order to compare SC-reserved ACs to nonreserved ACs. Data files and replication files are available at www.francesca.no.

To compare SC-reserved ACs to nonreserved ACs, it is important to have the correct reservation status of ACs. The election data included an indicator for reservation status, but this was sometimes inconsistent across years when it should have been the same. I therefore went back to the delimitation report of 1976 to check the correct status. However, this was not alway correct either. In 1976, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act made provisions for the readjustment of the allotted seats. The Act entered into force on July 27, 1977; at the end of August that year the census office provided revised population figures for SCs and STs.[1] Based on these revised figures the reservation status of some constituencies was changed. I have not

1. Chopra (1989).

found an authoritative source on which ones changed or when they did so, but have tried to identify the changes, using information from the Election Commission of India (ECI) archives and election reports.[2]

In the datafile called *ACdta* the variable *AC_type* provides the reservation status of ACs as given in the ECI reports, while the variable *AC_type_corr* gives the reservation status I believe the AC had in any given election. The variable *AC_type1976* gives the AC reservation status at the time of the first election after the 1970s delimitation (the reservation status provided in the delimitation report for the states that had elections before the changes in 1977 came into effect and the changed status for the states that had no elections before the change took place). Since my goal was to look at the trajectories of SC-reserved and nonreserved ACs over time, I excluded the ACs that changed reservation status in 1977 and had a post-delimitation election prior to the 1977.

The following is a list of the ACs and Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs) I have coded as changing reservation status after the readjustment:

ACs that changed reservation status before their first election after the 1970s delimitation and are included in my data:

- AC 168 Sirsi in Karnataka changed from GEN to SC
- AC 207 Kallamb in Maharashtra changed from GEN to SC

ACs that changed reservation status before their first election after the 1970s delimitation, but are excluded from my data because they became reserved for STs:

- AC 73 Polavaram in Andhra Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 273 Mulug in Andhra Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 294 Deverkonda in Andhra Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 62 Palghar in Maharashtra changed from GEN to ST
- AC 79 Baglan in Maharashtra changed from GEN to ST
- AC 82 Nandurbar in Maharashtra changed from GEN to ST
- AC 152 Gadchiroli in Maharashtra changed from GEN to ST
- AC 162 Kelapur in Maharashtra changed from GEN to ST

ACs that changed reservation status after their first post-delimitation election and therefore are excluded from my data:

- AC 171 Sultanganj in Bihar changed from GEN to SC
- AC 90 Surajpur in Chhattisgarh changed from GEN to ST

2. For instance, for Madhya Pradesh the 1977 report lists ACs as reserved if they changed to becoming reserved in 1977. However, from the names and rerunning patterns in the 1972, 1977, and 1980 elections, I conclude that the status did not change until the 1980 election.

- AC 94 Pilkha in Chhattisgarh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 95 Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 114 Jarhagaon in Chhattisgarh changed from GEN to SC
- AC 151 Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 50 Gadhada in Gujarat changed from GEN to SC
- AC 163 Songadh in Gujarat changed from GEN to ST
- AC 174 Navsari in Gujarat changed from GEN to ST
- AC 264 Chatra in Jharkhand changed from GEN to SC
- AC 30 Sultan's Battery in Kerala changed from ST to GEN
- AC 43 Thrithala in Kerala changed from GEN to SC
- AC 22 Seondha in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to SC
- AC 84 Anuppur in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 185 Nainpur in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 186 Mandla in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 192 Bargi in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 193 Panagar in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 214 Jamai in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 295 Anjad in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- AC 169 Reodar in Rajasthan changed from GEN to SC
- AC 157 Uppiliapuram in Tamil Nadu changed from GEN to ST
- AC 235 Sadat in Uttar Pradesh changed from GEN to SC
- AC 238 Chandauli in Uttar Pradesh changed from GEN to SC
- AC 280 Sirathu in Uttar Pradesh changed from GEN to SC

PCs that changed reservation status (all are included in the data):

- PC 10 Sidhi in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to ST
- PC 15 Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesh changed from GEN to SC
- PC 14 Sidhi in Maharashtra changed from GEN to ST (before first post-delimitation election)
- PC 1 Mizoram in Mizoram changed from GEN to ST (before first post-delimitation election)

There were 3,323 constituencies in the 15 (17) states included in the datasets used in the book. After excluding the ones that were reserved for STs and the ones that changed their reservation status in 1977 (and had elections before that), I was left with a sample of 2,558 nonreserved constituencies and 505 SC-reserved constituencies. This is the "full sample" that is used throughout the book. The "matched sample" is a reduced sample of more comparable constituencies, as described in appendix B.

A.2 Election data

After every election in India, the Election Commission of India compiles constituency-wise data from the election, and the data are made available online in PDF reports.[3] In order to use the data, however, they must first be transformed into soft copy. For this project, I downloaded each of the PDFs that are available online, and extracted the data content using the function readLines and regular expression functions in the statistical computing environment R.[4] Irregularities in the formatting made it hard to recreate the data perfectly, so such errors were manually corrected with the help of research assistants. There are a few remaining mistakes in the data due to gaps or errors in the original PDF files. Also, the names of constituencies and candidates were often spelled differently in the various reports; I present them as they were listed in the reports.

The result of this work was a constituency-level dataset of political variables for the 306 Indian state elections held between 1961 and 2015.[5] The part of the reports included in this dataset is the "Detailed Results" at the end of each report. This included the name, party, sex, and number of votes for each candidate running for election. It also included information about each constituency, with the size of the electorate and the total number of voters and whether a constituency was reserved for SCs or STs in each election. Where data were missing or were clearly incorrect, changes were made on the basis of the information in the other parts of the reports.

Rerunning data

From the election data I created variables for the rerunning patterns of individual candidates. This work was done in collaboration with Pavithra Suryanarayan. To create the rerunning variables, the top five candidates in each constituency were manually coded as rerunning if they had been among the top five candidates in the same constituency in the previous election as well. We also recorded the positions of the rerunning candidates in the elections and whether they ran again for the same party.

We chose to use the top five candidates since the vast majority of votes across constituencies go to the top five candidates, and manually checking all the candidates would be a massive task. We opted to look for rerunning patterns only within the same constituency because of the difficulty of identifying people by name in other constituencies. There are always many candidates with similar names in a given state,

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3. At eci.nic.in.

4. R Core Team (2013).

5. I scraped the data for elections held in previous years as well, but for those elections the votes for both candidates were pooled in all the two-member constituencies, rendering the data less useful.

and if someone runs in another constituency for another party it is hard to know whether it is the same person. Similarly, it is hard to know whether a candidate is the same as someone with the same name who ran several elections earlier. This measure minimizes erroneous coding of candidates as rerunning when they are in fact not rerunning, but probably underreports how many candidates were in fact running again.

Considerable efforts were made to ensure data reliability. For most states, the work of coding up rerunning patterns was done separately by two different data companies, and the data were compared and corrected until the two versions corresponded. In cases where the coders were in doubt, we went through the coding ourselves—in practice, for ten of the states in the dataset. After that, the most reliable coder was tasked with finishing the rest of the data.

Rerunning at the time of the delimitations

Throughout most of this book the comparison is between nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies that remained unchanged between 1974 and 2007. However, in order to understand the rerunning patterns at the time of each delimitation, I had to get a sense of which old constituencies corresponded to which new ones. Since most political boundaries moved as a result if the delimitations there is no way of perfectly linking up the old and new constituencies, but it is possible to make an approximation.

For the 1976 delimitation, the work was done in collaboration with Rikhil Bhavnani and with the excellent help of several research assistants. Manually comparing the delimitation reports of 1967 and 1976, we were able to create fuzzy links of constituencies: in cases where constituencies remained unchanged, they were coded as a perfect match. In most cases, however, the new constituencies consisted of parts of two or more former constituencies: we then coded the old constituency with the largest overlapping population as a fuzzy match for the new constituency. When it came to the 2008 delimitation, there were geocoded (GIS) maps of both the old and new constituencies and I relied on shapefiles for the assembly constituencies before and after the delimitation. Using the intersect tool in the mapping program *QGIS* I calculated the overlapping area for each pair of constituencies and then selected the two most overlapping constituencies as matches. These are the "same areas" used for examining where incumbents reran in chapter 5.

A.3 Census of India data

Constituency-level estimates of 1971 Census of India data

To create constituency-level estimates of the 1971 Census of India, the Primary Census Abstract (PCA) books with block-level data were scanned and then made electronic by using text recognition (OCR) software. This was done for data from India's 15 largest

states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. This work was done in collaboration with Rikhil Bhavnani. Mistakes in the data were manually cleaned with the help of some 13 research apprentices at the University of California (UC) Berkeley and another 7 research assistants in India. We then manually matched the block-level data to ACs, based on the information given in the 1976 Delimitation Report. The "true" total population and SC population were acquired from the record room of the ECI, allowing us to create constituency-level estimates of the remaining census data based on population weighting. See Bhavnani and Jensenius (2015) for further details.

Constituency-level estimates of 2001 Census of India data

The same procedure of manually matching blocks to constituencies could not be followed for the 2001 Census of India data. The constituencies as such had remained unchanged since 1974, but so many blocks and districts had changed borders and names during this time that it was difficult to identify the blocks listed in the Delimitation Report from 1976 in the census data from 2001. For the 2001 data we there used GIS maps to identify the blocks that fell within each AC, along with area-weights for each block. These weights were calculated as the proportion of the area of the block that fell within a constituency. We used these weights to aggregate all block-level data from the 2001 Census of India to the state assembly constituency level. Since the maps are not always accurate, we ran various quality checks on the data. See Bhavnani and Jensenius (2015) for details.

Aggregation of village-level census data

The Village Directory (VD) of India for 2001 includes village-level information about amenities and facilities like electricity, roads, schools, and hospitals, and their location can be identified with the use of GIS maps. I decided to use a conservative estimate by including only villages in the data that overlapped with an AC in two different sets of GIS maps. The first set of maps were retrieved from the ECI and corrected by Sandip Sukhtankar and Manasa Patnam (see www.dartmouth.edu/~sandip/data.html#maps), and were further adjusted by the author. The other set were AC maps created by the company ML Infomap that were linked to VD data by Asher and Novosad (2017). I am very grateful to them for sharing these link files. The original VD data covered more than 600,000 villages. Including only the ones overlapping with an AC across the two sets of maps yielded 430,219 villages that were linked to ACs across 2,283 nonreserved and 474 SC-reserved constituencies.

The Census of India also includes amenities information about towns in the Town Directory (TD)—a dataset separate from the VD. I chose to use only the VD, and not

the TD, for three reasons. First, while villages are small and fall within one constituency, towns and cities are often large and may span several constituencies. The GIS maps of towns usually code them as a point, thereby assigning the whole town or city to the constituency that overlaps with that point. This can create severely biased estimates at the constituency level. Second, the variables recorded in the VD and TD are not the same, thus making it a nontrivial task to merge the data. Third, all cities are generally listed as having electricity, schools, health centers, and similar amenities that are relevant to studying villages. Adding in the TD data would therefore simply add the 100 percent coverage of these services among the urban population. Using only the VD enabled me to capture the proportion of people within the *rural part* of a constituency that has access to these services; it can be assumed that all of the urban population have access to the same services—at least on paper.

To aggregate the VD information to the constituency level, I aggregated the number of people who lived in a village with access to each amenity. For example, if AC *X* had six villages—five villages with 100 people in each and no primary school, and one village with 500 people and a primary school—the AC-level estimate would be that 50 percent of the population lived in a village with a primary school. The aggregation was done the same way for the SC population and for the non-SC population, in order to capture the gap in the services available to SCs and others within each constituency.

The variables can be interpreted as the share of the rural population in an AC with access to the different services. As not all villages in India were included in these data, the actual figures are unlikely to be good estimates, whereas using proportions should be less problematic. That being said, my findings based on these data are robust to the inclusion of data for all the villages (i.e., trusting one single GIS source).

A.4 Cabinet data

Most of the cross-state cabinet data were collected by Rikhil Bhavnani,[6] but I expanded the dataset by adding missing years and states. Several years of the UP data (which were also used to study portfolios) were collected directly from the Vidhan Sabha Secretariat in Lucknow in 2010 in collaboration with Gilles Verniers. Other gaps were filled by visiting archives in the states in question.

A.5 Education data

Data on the formal educational backgrounds of MLAs in UP were entered based on information in the assembly-wise publications *Who's Who*, which contain personal information about MLAs like educational background and employment history. These

6. For more details about the data, see Bhavnani (2015).

publications were obtained by Gilles Verniers and the author from the UP Vidhan Sabha Archives in 2010. The data were entered manually and now form part of a larger dataset developed and maintained by Kumar et al. (2016), covering various individual characteristics of Indian politicians.

For the 1970s, educational information was available for only about one-fourth of all MLAs. For more recent years, however, information is available on more than 80 percent of the MLAs. For the purpose of the analysis in chapter 7, I recoded information about the educational background of MLAs in UP in the dataset into four categories:

1. Less than 10 years of schooling
2. More than 10 years of schooling, but not a university graduate
3. Graduate (BA or Diploma)
4. Postgraduate (MA or PhD)

A.6 NES survey data from 1971 and 2004

In chapter 6 I use data from the Indian National Election Studies (NES) in India from 1971 and 2004. The first NES were a series of face-to-face surveys of adults in India in the periods immediately following the 1967, 1971, 1979, and 1985 national elections. The 1971 survey data were collected by Samuel Eldersveld of the University of Michigan, Ahmed Bashiruddin of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in New Delhi, and Dwaine Marvick of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and are available at the website of The Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).[7] Unfortunately, constituencies are given different codes in the surveys than those ones used in Election Commission publications, making it difficult to determine which constituencies were reserved. Fortunately, the 1971 survey included indicators for whether constituencies were reserved or not, allowing me to use the 1971 survey for this project. The other surveys lack such indicators and could therefore not be used.

The 1971 survey had several questions about how people voted, their reasons for voting a certain way, and their political opinions. It sampled 4,922 people from 19 states in India; about 15 percent of the sample were self-reported SCs, which is close to the actual national average. However, only about 8 percent of the sample were living in a parliamentary constituency reserved for SCs, and only about 11 percent in a state assembly constituency reserved for SCs. Reserved constituencies are therefore underrepresented in the sample. Excluding those living in a constituency reserved for STs yields a sample of 4,522 people in 19 states.

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7. Eldersveld et al. (2011).

The second survey used is the NES from 2004, that was conducted by the research network Lokniti right after the Indian general elections that year. Some 27,189 respondents from 31 states were asked about their political opinions on a range of topics. Respondents were selected using a multistage stratified random sampling strategy. A set of assembly constituencies was randomly selected from each Indian state (with the probability of selection being weighted by population size). Within each selected constituency, polling stations were then randomly sampled. Finally, individuals were sampled by systematic random sampling from the voters' lists of each selected polling station. More information about the data collection process can be found on the Lokniti website, www.lokniti.org. I was given access to the set of variables used in this book during Lokniti's Summer Workshop on Research Methodology at Shimla in 2009, for which I am very grateful.

The NES 2004 sample includes 15.1 percent SCs (excluding self-reported SCs who were also self-reported Muslims, as Muslims are not officially categorized as SCs). The actual proportion of SCs in the population in 2004 was about 16 percent. The original NES questionnaire used the same constituency codes as the Election Commission of India, but without indicating whether a constituency was reserved or not. Here I merged in information about whether the constituencies were nonreserved or reserved for SCs. The sample is drawn from 421 PCs and 934 ACs, of which 12.4 percent PCs and 13.7 percent ACs were reserved for SCs. As the actual figure was about 15 percent, there is a slight underrepresentation of SC constituencies in the sample. Excluding ST constituencies from the sample reduced the sample size to 22,116 individuals across 380 PCs and 794 ACs in 27 states.

A.7 Gujarat Survey

For the Gujarat analysis in chapter 8 I used a village-level dataset with information about practices of untouchability in 1,589 villages—a dataset based on a survey by Macwan et al. (2010) that was cleaned and parsed by Trivedi (2017). To identify the constituency of a village, all villages in the sample were first manually linked to villages in the 2001 Census of India. In all, 1,508 villages could be identified in the census; 81 did not have a name for the village and subdistrict that matched the census. This work was done in collaboration with Priyamvada Trivedi. Using the 2001 census village identifier, the data were merged into the 2001 village-level census data linked to AC number and type, as described in section A.3. This brought the sample of included villages down to 1279, across 6 SC-reserved and 43 nonreserved constituencies.

Were the villages included in the survey sample representative of Gujarat or of the AC where they were located? Table A.1 compares the 1,279 villages to all the 14,383 villages in Gujarat included in my village-level dataset. We see that the survey villages have a higher proportion of SCs—9 percent on average, compared to 6 percent on average in all villages. Further, the villages in the survey sample have higher literacy

Table A.1 Difference between 1,279 villages included in survey sample and all villages in Gujarat

	Mean, all villages	Mean, survey villages	Difference	P-value
Percentage of SCs	0.06	0.09	0.03	<0.01
Literacy rate	0.48	0.52	0.04	<0.01
Employment rate	0.49	0.48	−0.02	<0.01
Electricity in village	0.99	1.00	0.01	<0.01
School in village	0.97	1.00	0.02	<0.01
Medical facility in village	0.66	0.67	0.01	0.73
Comm. channel in village	0.72	0.88	0.16	<0.01

Note: Comparison of village-level characteristics from the 2001 Census of India for all the 14,383 villages for which I have data in Gujarat, with the 1,279 villages included in the sample of the untouchability survey from Gujarat. P-values are from bivariate regression analyses with the standard errors clustered at the subdistrict level.

Table A.2 Difference between 1,279 villages included in survey sample and other villages within their constituencies

	Mean, all villages	Mean, survey villages	Difference	P-value
Percentage of SCs	0.08	0.09	0.01	<0.01
Literacy rate	0.50	0.52	0.02	0.07
Employment rate	0.49	0.48	−0.01	<0.01
Electricity in village	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.30
School in village	0.99	1.00	0.00	0.22
Medical facility in village	0.60	0.67	0.07	<0.01
Comm. channel in village	0.80	0.88	0.08	<0.01

Note: Comparison of village-level characteristics from the 2001 Census of India for the 3,568 villages in the same ACs as the 1,279 villages included in the sample of the untouchability survey from Gujarat. P-values are from bivariate regression analyses with the standard errors clustered at the subdistrict level.

rates, and more of them have electricity, a school, a medical facility, and some form of communications channel available.

Table A.2 compares the sample to the other villages in the same ACs. Here the dataset was reduced to 3,568 villages that fall within the 49 ACs within which the surveyed villages were located. Here too we see differences, although they are not so pronounced: The villages in the survey have a higher proportion of SCs and also seem to be wealthier.

A.8 Uttar Pradesh Voter Survey

The voter survey used in chapters 7 and 8 was prepared in collaboration with Dr. Anil K. Verma of Christ Church College in Kanpur and implemented by his survey team in January 2013. The intention was to study perceptions of caste bias, quotas, and SC politicians, and in particular to compare the perceptions of voters who had lived in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies for a long time.

The selection of villages for the study was inspired by studies using a geographic discontinuity design to identify causal effects.[8] We know that SC-reserved constituencies were chosen because they had a high percentage of SCs and were therefore systematically different from other areas. However, if we examine villages that used to be in the same constituency but then ended up on different sides of the border when new constituencies were drawn out, it could be argued that these villages were *as if* randomly assigned to be reserved/nonreserved. If indeed it was nearly random which side of the border the villages ended up on, then they were likely to be similar in all respects other than their previous reservation status.

In UP, constituency boundaries remained unchanged between 1974 and 2012. When I wanted to run a survey in 2013, I therefore had the choice between a border design using the new borders used for the first time in 2012—which would capture changes from just having become reserved—or using villages close to the old border, thus comparing neighboring villages that were in the same constituency as of 2012, but had been in different constituencies (of which one was reserved) since at least 1974. There are advantages and disadvantages with both designs. However, because attitudes may take a long time to change, I was more interested in the latter design. As the survey was to be implemented after the 2012 election, and I wanted to ask questions about SC politicians and about being reserved, I chose to identify villages that were in an SC-reserved constituency as of 2012, but that until 2012 had been very close to the border of a nonreserved and an SC-reserved constituency.

I identified two such areas in western UP: border areas according to the old delimitation that had become reserved for SCs in 2012. From these areas I selected all villages within the newly SC-reserved constituency that had populations of more than 400 and that were nearer than 5 kilometers to the old constituency border. This resulted in a sample of 80 villages from Auraiya constituency in Auraiya district and 66 villages from Rasulabad constituency in Kanpur Dehat district.[9]

Normally, studies that use a geographic discontinuity design examine data for the whole region selected. In this case, however, sampling respondents from all of the

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8. See, e.g., Keele et al. (2015).

9. There were also 17 more villages in Auraiya and 7 more villages in Rasulabad that were close to the border, but with populations of less than 400. I chose to exclude those villages because they are unusually small, making it difficult to draw a reasonable sample of respondents without sampling members of the same family.

villages was logistically unpractical. In order to create a more manageable sample of villages while retaining a good balance across the samples, I therefore matched up pairs of villages from each side of the old border in each of the two constituencies. This strategy followed a similar logic as that explained by Keele etÂ al.,[10] who used matching within a small regional area in order to enhance balance on the groups compared.

Villages from each side of the old borders were matched on the basis of population size, size of SC population, and literacy rate in 1971, as well as longitude and latitude (extracted from GIS maps). The matching was done using the GenMatch function and then the Match function in the Matching package in R.[11] Village-level data from 1971 were entered only for the relevant villages that were identified from the maps. Names on the village maps are from 2001, so not all names could be identified in the 1971 data, either because these villages did not exist in 1971 or because the names had been changed. I was able to identify 66 of the 80 villages in Auraiya and 48 of the 66 villages in Rasulabad. The villages were matched without replacement, which means that a village could be used as a match only once. The five pairs of villages with the best balance on the matching variables in each of the two constituencies were selected as the sample. This yielded a sample of 20 villages from two currently SC-reserved constituencies, half of which had been in a SC-reserved constituency since 1974 and half of which had been reserved since 2012.

These villages looked fairly similar in both 1971 and 2001, although there were still slightly more SCs in the villages on the reserved side of the border. Balance statistics for these 20 villages are reported in Table A.3. The first three columns show the minimum, maximum, and mean values for the villages that used to be in a nonreserved constituency; the last three show the same values for the villages that used to be in an SC-reserved constituency. The last column shows the p-value from a difference-in-means permutation test.

Table A.3 Descriptive statistics of matched villages in 1971

	Newly SC-reserved (N=10)			SC-reserved since 1974 (N=10)			
	Min	*Max*	*Mean*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*P − value*
Population size 1971	244	1487	777	265	1639	638	0.23
Percentage of SCs 1971	0	77	33	6	100	38	0.42
Literacy rate 1971	13	42	26	11	46	24	0.98

10. Keele et al. (2015).

11. Sekhon (2011).

Table A.4 Descriptive statistics of matched villages in 2001

	Newly SC-reserved (N=10)			SC-reserved since 1974 (N=10)			
	Min	*Max*	*Mean*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*P − value*
Population size 2001	441	2494	1257	467	2204	1039	0.23
Percentage of SCs 2001	0	99	38	8	100	43	0.58
Literacy rate 2001	44	66	56	31	77	57	0.76

It is also important to consider how these villages changed over time. Given the finding (reported in chapter 4) of similar development in SC-reserved and nonreserved constituencies, there is no reason to believe that these villages have become less similar over time. Table A.4 compares the matched pairs of villages based on variables from 2001 Census of India. As expected, population size has increased in all villages, and there are still on average more people in the villages on the nonreserved side of the border than on the SC-reserved side of the border. There are also still slightly more SCs on the reserved side of the border, whereas the average literacy rates are pretty much the same. None of these differences emerge as statistically significant in a difference-in-means permutation test. These villages are therefore still fairly comparable, except that half of them had non-SC MLAs between 1974 and 2012, and then an SC MLA from 2012 to 2013, whereas the other half had SC MLAs since 1974.

Within each of these 20 villages, 100 respondents were sampled from the voter lists, based on a systematic random sample (systematic in order to avoid choosing members of the same household, as households are listed consecutively in these lists). Respondents were interviewed by teams of two field officers, who traveled to these villages in the course of one week in January 2013. Most of those who could not be interviewed were reported to be absent temporarily (13 percent) or permanently (10 percent). About 2 percent were reported as having died, although they were still on the voter lists. Of the respondents sampled from the newly reserved villages, 70 percent were interviewed; in the villages that had been reserved since 1974, 65 percent were interviewed. Field personnel were instructed not to use replacements, but to return to the house three times. Given that there was no replacement this is a high response rate for this area.

A.9 Interview material

Between September 2010 and April 2011 I conducted more than one hundred interviews with elites and voters. Interviews were semistructured, ranging in length from 15 minutes to three hours each. In some cases I returned to the same respondent several times for

Table A.5 Elite interviews conducted 2010–2011

	Delhi	Himachal Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	Karnataka
Politicians	3	9	20	3
Bureaucrats	7	7	6	2
Activists	5	1	11	
Other elites	8	5	5	3
Total	23	22	42	8

follow-up interviews, and in one case I traveled with a politician who was campaigning in villages. During the first few interviews, I tried to record the conversations, but as that seemed to inhibit the respondents, I soon went over to taking notes during the interviews and then writing up detailed summaries of the conversations later the same day. In Shimla, Solan, Varanasi, and Delhi, I conducted the interviews alone; in the other locations I worked with a collaborator or a research assistant. Most of the interviews in North India were conducted in Hindi; those in South India were conducted in English.

Table A.5 gives the breakdown of the elite interviews by state. “Politicians” include SC and non-SC MLAs (or former MLAs), cabinet ministers, and local-level elected politicians. Slightly less than half of the interviewed politicians were SCs. “Other elites” include academics and influential people who were neither politicians nor bureaucrats. In addition to the elite interviews, I interviewed voters across the states.

APPENDIX B

Matching approach

IN CHAPTER 1 I described how SCs were given electoral quotas in India's state assemblies. All constituencies in India are single-member districts; and in SC-reserved constituencies only SCs can run for election, even if they are a small minority of the population in that constituency. Constituency boundaries, as well as their location, are determined by the Delimitation Commission.

Over four thousand state assembly constituencies from which Indian MLAs were elected between 1974 and 2007 were drawn up by the Delimitation Commission of India following the release of the 1971 Census of India. The process of delimiting constituencies was completed in Delhi by a group of civil servants instructed to ensure geographically contiguous areas with similarly sized electorates.[1]

Once all the constituency boundaries had been drawn, the next step was to select seats to be reserved. The Delimitation Act of 1972 set two selection criteria: that the proportion of SCs should be high in selected constituencies, and that the reserved constituencies should be geographically spread out within the state.[2] In practice this meant that states, and then administrative districts, were assigned a number of reserved seats proportional to the percentage of SCs in their population. If an administrative district was eligible for a reserved seat, the constituency with the highest percentage of SCs within the district was assigned to be reserved. If a district was eligible for more than

1. Information about these selection procedures is based on archival work in the record room of the ECI in February 2011 and an interview with Mr. Mehendiratta, February 17, 2011. He was a junior member involved in the delimitation work in the 1970s; he was also involved in the delimitation work in the 2000s, and was serving as a legal advisor to the ECI at the time of the interview.

2. *Gazette of India*, December 30, 1972.

one seat, the two constituencies with the highest percentages of SCs, not contiguous to each other, were to be reserved.[3]

Since reserved constituencies were selected because they had the *highest percentage of SCs* within their district, we can come close to identifying the causal effects of quotas in India by comparing the SC-reserved constituencies with a nonreserved constituency within the same district that had a similarly high percentage of SCs—that is, the nonreserved constituency with the second-highest percentage of SCs within the district. This was done by matching each of the reserved constituencies in the sample to a nonreserved constituency within the same district and parliamentary constituency with the closest percentage of SCs according to the census data from 1971 (exact match on district and parliamentary constituency and closest neighbor match on percentage of SCs in the constituency). The matching was done without replacement, so a nonreserved constituency could be used as a match only once.

I chose to match on parliamentary constituency in addition to district since parliamentary constituencies also were assigned to be nonreserved or reserved in the early 1970s, and differences in reservation status at the parliamentary constituency level could bias the differences between the matched pairs at the state assembly level. State assembly constituencies are nested within parliamentary constituencies.

In most cases this meant that within a district with a reserved constituency, the constituency with the highest proportion of SCs was matched to the one with the second-highest proportion of SCs. Before matching, the comparison was between 2,558 nonreserved constituencies and 505 SC-reserved constituencies. Some cases were dropped because of the exact matching on district and parliamentary constituency, and a few cases were dropped because of missing data on certain variables. After matching, the comparison was between 470 reserved constituencies and 470 matched nonreserved constituencies. The location of these matched pairs was shown in Figure 1.1.

That matching model has the advantage of being simple and transparent, but it allows for some matched pairs to differ considerably on the percentage of SCs. To check the robustness of the results presented in the book, I also ran the matching model with a caliper of 0.5 on the percentage of SCs. That means that all matches not equal to or within 0.5 standard deviations of percentage of SCs were dropped, reducing the sample to 336 matched pairs. Results using these alternative matched pairs are presented in chapter 4.

I also ran other specifications to check the robustness of results, including: (1) matching on percentage of SCs and several potentially confounding variables within the state instead of within the district: this yielded excellent balance on all variables, including percentage of SCs; (2) matching constituencies on the type of constituency that each constituency had mainly overlapped with before 1974 (when the borders

3. The Delimitation Commission generally followed these instructions very carefully. A few exceptions are noted in Jensenius (2013).

changed), but including both nonreserved and reserved constituencies; (3) limiting the sample to places that mainly overlapped with a previously nonreserved constituency, thereby examining only places that had not been "treated" before; (4) limiting the sample to places that had the same reservation status at the state assembly level and parliamentary level, thereby comparing places that were reserved at both levels to places that were not reserved at any level; and (5) all of these models with a restriction imposed on how far apart the matched pairs can be on the variable percentage of SCs (caliper). The findings presented in this book are robust to all the different specifications and also to running linear models on the matched data, controlling for remaining differences in the percentage of SCs.

B.1 Balance statistics for the matched pairs

Figure B.1 shows density plots of the percentage of SCs according to 1971 data for nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in the sample. The left-hand panel shows the difference in the full sample before matching. Here we note a large difference in the densities for the two groups: the nonreserved constituencies had an average of about 14 percent SCs, as against an average of almost 25 percent SCs for SC-reserved constituencies. After matching constituencies on percentage of SC, the difference was reduced to about 20 percent in nonreserved constituencies and 24 percent in SC-reserved constituencies, as shown in the middle panel in Figure B.1. The right panel shows the balance for the matches with a caliper of 0.5. Here the difference is further reduced, with 20 percent SCs in nonreserved constituencies and 21 percent SCs in the reserved constituencies. It is not surprising that there still is a small difference between the groups—as constituencies were selected to be reserved precisely because they had the highest proportion of SCs within the district—but the matching clearly improved the balance.

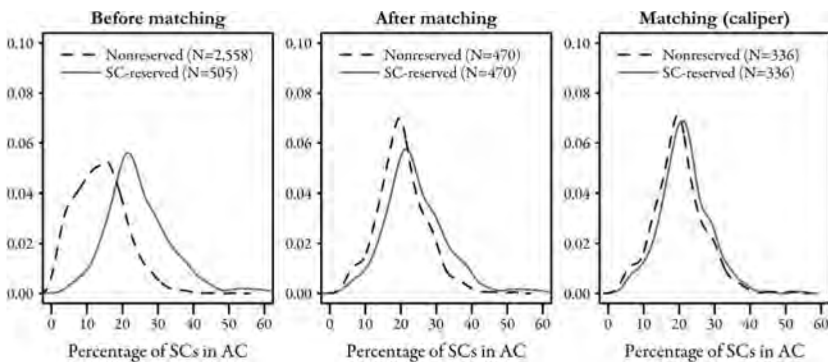

FIGURE B.1 Density plots of percentage of SCs in nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in 1971 (full sample, matched sample, and matched with a caliper)

Table B.1 Balance of matched pairs on pretreatment observables

Covariate	Before matching		After matching		Matching (caliper)	
	t-test *p*-value	KS *p*-value	*t-test* *p*-value	KS *p*-value	*t-test* *p*-value	KS *p*-value
Population size	0.17	0.03	0.10	0.91	0.38	0.91
Percentage of STs	0.42	0.06	0.67	0.95	0.71	0.86
Literacy rate (non-SCs)	0.00	0.00	0.48	0.83	0.64	0.88
Literacy rate (SCs)	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.98	0.53	0.99
Employment (non-SCs)	0.11	0.20	0.23	0.62	0.99	0.76
Employment (SCs)	0.18	0.01	0.92	0.60	0.56	0.98
Agricultural laborers (non-SCs)	0.09	0.04	0.20	0.82	0.56	0.99
Agricultural laborers (SCs)	0.31	0.72	0.97	1.00	0.60	0.98

Note: Balance statistics are based on data from the 1971 Census of India. The reported p-values are from two-sample t-tests before matching, paired t-tests after matching, and KS bootstrapped Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) tests. These are the default test statistics returned from the function MatchBalance in the Matching package developed for R by Sekhon (2011).

More important than balance on percentage of SCs is balance on other potentially confounding variables. The assumption needed to draw causal inferences from the matching estimates is that both observable and unobservable confounders balance out after matching. As the 1971 dataset includes a range of other variables that were not matched on, this assumption can be tested.

Table B.1 shows balance statistics before and after matching on a selection of variables from the 1971 PCA. The table reports p-values from difference in means tests (t-test) and difference in distribution tests (bootstrapped Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test). We see that the nonreserved and SC-reserved constituencies in the full sample were statistically significantly different from each other on several of these preselection variables. After matching, no variables were statistically significantly different from each other—neither in the simple matching model including all matches, nor in the matching model with a caliper. Thus, matching SC-reserved constituencies to nonreserved ones greatly improved the balance on observable variables, and makes it plausible to assume that unobserved confounders also balance out.

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