

Regionalism, Party Building, and Rule of Law:
Explaining the Strength of Regional Political Parties in India

Adam W. Ziegfeld
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the
American Political Science Association
Chicago, IL
1 September 2007

Draft:
Please do not cite without the author's permission
Comments welcome.

In April and May of 2004, nearly 390 million Indians went to the polls in India's 14th general election. Of these 390 million, roughly 175 million, or 45% of the electorate, cast their votes for regional parties or independent candidates. National parties together garnered just over half of all votes. Though the 2004 election marks a low point in the fortunes of national political parties in India, national parties have historically been weak in India, particularly when compared to other countries with similarly lengthy histories of democracy (See Table 1 in the Appendix for a cross-sectional comparison of national and regional parties across the world's federations). Why are regional parties generally stronger in India than in most of its fellow democracies? More generally, why do regional parties take root and flourish in some societies but not others? Though few countries have regional parties as numerous or as successful as India's, many are home to persistent, successful regional parties, and their party systems contrast markedly with many other countries in which regional parties remain entirely on the fringe of politics.

This paper identifies the conditions under which regional parties emerge in democracies where rule of law is weak. In doing so, it makes two central claims. The first is that the strength of rule of law determines how voters formulate their voting decision and how politicians solicit support from the electorate. As a result, voting and elections in weak rule of law societies are fundamentally different from their counter-parts in countries with strong rule of law. I contend, therefore, that we cannot even begin to understand why regional parties emerge unless we understand how rule of law influences the party-building process.

However, once we understand how voters vote and how politicians behave under weak rule of law, then the conditions under which regional parties emerge can be identified. Herein lies the paper's second claim: given a background condition of weak rule of law, regional parties emerge when: 1) politically salient individual-level characteristics (such as ethnicity) are highly concentrated within a polity and 2) multi-party coalitions frequently form the government.

The paper proceeds in the following way. Section 1 discusses the significance of the research question. Section 2 provides relevant definitions and situates India's experience with regional parties in comparative context. Section 3 discusses the relevant literature on regional parties, thereby setting a backdrop for the argument presented here. Section 4 discusses the relevance of the rule of law: why rule of law has such a consequential effect on voting and elections and why regional parties emerge under different conditions depending on the strength of rule of law. Section 5 explains in greater detail the determinants of regional party strength.

Section 1: Significance

What is the significance of understanding why some parties are national and other are not and why some countries are home to larger number of regional parties than others? First, there is reason to believe that regional parties may affect policy outcomes. Regional parties that adopt an autonomist agenda often behave as one-issue parties. They become ideal coalition partners for larger multi-issue parties precisely because they are willing to support larger parties on a variety of issues in return for concessions on their single issue of interest (Heller 2002). Additionally, regional parties are freer to adopt radical positions on issues on which regional interests diverge. For example, two of India's southern states, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, have long disputed how the two will share water from the Kaveri River that runs through both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. While the national parties in both states—BJP and Congress—have typically taken moderate stances on the issue, suggesting that an impartial national-level arbiter resolve the dispute, regional parties in these states—the JD(S)¹ in Karnataka and ADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu—have typically taken much more divisive stands that are unacceptable to politicians

¹ See Appendix II for the expansion of acronyms for Indian political parties.

in the other state. In adopting more extreme positions, the regional parties have used this issue as a rallying point, while the national parties have largely sought to downplay the dispute.

Second, widespread support for regional parties poses major questions about how to interpret elections. As citizens, we tend to view elections as an opportunity to weigh in on the performance of incumbent governments, interpreting elections as either approval or rejection of the party (or parties) in power and a mandate either for continuity or change. Interpreting elections in this way is possible in many instances because the overwhelming majority of voters are casting their votes over roughly similar options. But, what do election outcomes mean when voters cast their votes over altogether different options? Given different party systems in different states, a party can potentially face both victories over and defeats at the hands of a variety of different opponents. When different election dynamics prevail across different states, how does one begin to think about a “national” verdict?

Third, and finally, a great deal of political science research links regional parties to secession and regional nationalism (see, for example, Brancati 2006). As a consequence, regional parties are often viewed with great suspicion as harbingers of ethnic conflict and evidence of failed nation-building projects. Though my analysis will question whether these conclusions are necessarily correct, these suspicions provide another important reason for studying the emergence of regional parties.

Section 2: Definitions and context

I define a national political party as a political party capable of achieving at least some minimal level of support across the majority of a country. By contrast, a regional political party is a political party unable (or unwilling) to win some minimal level of support across most parts of a country. As I define it, a regional party need not be limited to a single region, nor does it need to espouse a platform in any way related to regional demands. The distinction I draw between national and regional parties rests purely on where a party wins its votes: National parties’ win their votes from across the country (though not necessarily in equal proportion everywhere), whereas regional parties win their votes from specific parts of a country.

To operationalize my definition, I calculate a Herfindahl index measuring the concentration (or fragmentation) of a party’s vote share across a country’s regions. Since regions within the same country often vary in population size, I normalize the populations of the regions so that the lowest possible score on the Herfindahl index (a score of 0) indicates that a party wins its votes *in equal proportion from each region* based on the region’s population. Without normalizing the population, a score of 0 would indicate that a party had won *an equal number of votes from each region* even if the regions themselves are of wildly different sizes. Having calculated each party’s Herfindahl index, I then normalize each party’s score so that it ranges between 0 and 1. Without normalizing the score, it is difficult to do cross-country comparisons because the minimum value of the Herfindahl index varies depending, in this case, on the number of regions. (See Appendix III for a detailed discussion of how I construct this measure).

I classify a party with a Herfindahl index of 0.18 or higher as a regional party and a party with a score of less than 0.10 as a national party. A semi-national (or semi-regional) party is a party with a score of between 0.10 and 0.18. Thresholds of 0.10 and 0.18 may seem to be arbitrary cut-offs, and, to some extent, like any thresholds of this kind, they are. I select these cut-offs because they are used by the U.S. Department of Justice in order to assess levels of firm concentration in the market-place. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, an industry with a Herfindahl index of less than 0.10 is considered unconcentrated, an index of between 0.10 and 0.18 moderately concentrated, and index of greater than 0.18 highly concentrated. The Department of Justice uses this index in order to uncover industry monopolists. Though I am considering the world of party politics, my use of the index is quite similar. My interest is uncovering when a party’s vote is highly fragmented across states, just like an industry

whose market share is fragmented across different firms, or when a region (or handful of regions) has a monopoly over a party's votes, like when a monopolist firm dominates an industry. These cut-offs for determining national, regional, and semi-national parties maps quite well onto conventional wisdom about what constitute national and regional parties in the Indian case (see Table 2 in Appendix I). The semi-national category accurately captures ambiguous cases in India in which parties are somewhat short of being truly national but somewhat more broadly-based than a typically regional party.

To calculate the strength of national parties in a particular country, I sum the vote shares of all parties classified as national. In Table 1 in Appendix I, I present the vote shares won by national parties across the world's federations. This table shows that when viewed in comparative context, India's national parties are quite weak. (Appendix IV discusses in greater detail the countries and data sources included in Table 1). Even holding federalism constant (though levels of decentralization vary tremendously across these federations), India is among the countries with the weakest national political parties and the strongest regional parties. The only countries with substantially weaker national parties are those countries like St. Kitts and Nevis, Belgium, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which have, at various times, faced the serious possibility of bifurcation and in which there exist two completely discrete party systems. Though Table 2 shows that 2004 marks a nadir for national (and semi-national parties) in India, vote shares for national parties in India have always been fairly low, while vote shares for regional parties and independent candidates have always been rather high.

Section 3: Relevant literature

The body of research that places regional political parties at the center of its analysis is large and varied. The precise questions that this literature asks also vary. Most commonly, research on regional parties asks: why do regional parties emerge (Brancati forthcoming, de Winter and Türsan 1998, de Winter et al. 2006, Keating 1998, Levi and Hechter 1985, Meadwell 1991). Alternatively, some cast the problem in terms of the dominance of national parties and the nationalization of politics at the expense of regional parties (Caramani 2004, Chhibber and Kollman 2004) or seek to explain the emergence of secessionist (Brancati 2006, Sorens 2005) or autonomy demands (Fearon and van Houten 2002, van Houten 2000) for which regional parties are the principal vehicles. The parties that are the focus of this literature are variously termed regional, regionalist, ethno-regional, autonomist, and secessionist.

Differences aside, several key themes and similarities run throughout this literature. First is the empirical reference point: a specific set of parties predominantly in Western Europe. Though some authors look outside of Western Europe (Brancati 2006, Brancati forthcoming, Chhibber and Kollman 2004), this research is, by and large, grounded in the experiences of a handful of parties, primarily in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Belgium. Scant attention has been paid to Latin America, Africa, and Asia, even though a country like Argentina is also home to a large number of regional political parties. Second, most authors conflate regional parties with either secessionism or autonomy, some explicitly and others implicitly. Those who do so explicitly identify "autonomist" parties or autonomy demands as their dependent variables. Others do so implicitly by focusing on a part of the world where the correlation between regional parties and demands for either autonomy or secession is extremely high. Regardless of the explicitness or implicitness of the link, demands for autonomy, secession, or decentralization are typically prominent in explanations of regional party success. (The work of Caramani and Chhibber and Kollman, which focus less on regional parties are more on the emergence of national parties are exceptions). Third, the literature is overwhelmingly voter-centered in its explanation of regional parties. Regional parties (or the demands associated with them) either emerge out of the territorial cleavages or government institutions that mould voter preferences in a particular way, leading them to prefer regional parties to national parties.

As is already evident, this paper takes a developing world country, India, as its empirical reference point. Furthermore, my definition of regional parties relies only on the concentration of votes and sets aside issues of demands for autonomy and secession. Finally, as will become clear later in the paper, my explanation for the emergence of regional parties in weak rule of law democracies is strong politician-centered. This is consistent with Mainwaring's (1999) observation that in many "third wave" democracies², party systems are often determined in large part from above by elite manipulation.

Section 4: Rule of law

This section of the paper explains why and how rule of law influences party-building and voter-politician linkages. It shows how the rule of law is crucial for understanding how voters formulate their vote choice and how politicians solicit votes from the electorate. The importance of this section lies in detailing the context in which parties operate under weak rule of law. Only once these background conditions have been established can the specific conditions under which regional parties emerge be identified.

This section proceeds as follows. I begin by discussing the meaning of rule of law. I then show how the strength of rule of law influences both how voters formulate their voting decisions and how politicians behave. Finally, I link political behavior—on the part of both politician and voter—under strong and weak rule of law to two very distinct party-building processes that lead to very different sets of conditions conducive to the emergence of regional political parties. In Sections 2 and 3, I discuss the conditions that give rise to regional parties in weak rule of law democracies.

Section 4.1: Defining rule of law

Rule of law is the state's universal and routinized application and enforcement of the law.³ Under conditions of strong rule of law, the state uniformly applies the law (whatever its content) to all citizens. Citizens expect that, as a rule, laws cannot be evaded, circumvented, or selectively applied. When rule of law is weak, the writ of the law is conditional. All laws are breakable, but not every individual can break any law at any moment. Circumstance determines who can evade which laws when. Those in power, usually bureaucrats or politicians, can flout the law or apply it selectively, and those favored by or with influence over power-holders enjoy similar freedom from the rigid enforcement of laws. Those without privileged access are subject to the law or its perversions by those who do have privileged access. Citizens do not, therefore, expect that the state will unconditionally or uniformly implement laws; they expect instead that laws will be followed some of the time, though not all of the time.

In societies with no rule of law, the state does not apply or enforce the law. Virtually anyone can break any law with impunity. Conditions of absent rule of law occur most frequently in failed states, when the state is virtually non-existent. Lacking the capacity to enforce even basic order, failed states are unlikely to conduct democratic elections. Because this study is concerned with party systems in democratic countries, I focus my attention here on the distinction between weak rule of law and strong rule of law.

An alternative way to conceive of rule of law is to focus on the practical conditions that typically lead to strong rule of law. I identify four crucial elements of rule of law, without which rule of law is

² India is exception in that it is a poor, post-colonial democracy that is not actually a "third wave" democracy. However, in terms of the structural conditions of politics, it has a great deal in common with other "third wave" democracies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

³ Must cite/discuss Hayek on rule of law.

weak. All four of these conditions in some way increase the likelihood that laws on the books become reality on the ground.

1) Performance accountability for bureaucrats. The state cannot apply its laws or implement its programs and schemes if bureaucrats are not held accountable for their performance. Accountability may come from within the bureaucracy or from without. Within the bureaucracy, bureaucrats may be subject to monitoring and review, the results of which decide their pay and career advancement. Alternatively, more informal channels may be used to hold bureaucrats accountable. Various elements within society may engage in some form of collective action in order to monitor bureaucratic behavior. Absent accountability among state employees, policy implementation suffers from bureaucratic inertia; policy remains completely or only partially implemented for want of bureaucratic will and initiative. If bureaucrats are not punished for non-performance, then the bureaucracy is unlikely to satisfactorily implement the tasks delegated to it.

2) Unwillingness of bureaucrats to accept bribes. When bureaucrats cannot be bribed as a matter of course, then the likelihood that the laws will be intentionally circumvented or unevenly applied will diminish. However, when bureaucrats are widely susceptible to bribery, then they can easily be persuaded to contravene the law. They can also extort bribes by refuse to apply or follow the law unless bribed.

3) Insulation of the bureaucratic hiring, firing, promotion, and transfer from politics. While bureaucrats' refusal to take bribes diminishes the opportunities for the average citizen to interfere with the routine enforcement of the law, the insulation of bureaucratic hiring, firing, promotion, and transfer from political interference reduces the likelihood that bureaucrats will fail to implement the law at the behest of politicians. When politicians can influence a bureaucrat's career trajectory, then politicians can potentially interfere with proper implementation of the law. The temptation for politicians is particularly great since they may often wish to abuse the resources of the state in order to enhance their chances of reelection.

4) An efficient and speedy justice system. An efficient judicial system can deter illegality by posing a credible threat of punishment. When the justice system is inefficient—for example, in terms of gathering evidence or of prosecuting criminals—or exceedingly slow, the threat of punishment constitutes a less effective deterrent. Individuals contemplating breaking the law—whether committing a violent crime, breaking a contract, seizing land, or bribing a bureaucrat—will discount the threat of punishment when faced with an inefficient and slow justice system. They may regard the likelihood of being found guilty to be low or they may discount the possibility of a punishment that they may not face until years, sometimes decades, after their crime. Furthermore, when the justice system is inefficient and slow, victims of crime may not turn to the police or the courts for recourse. Instead, they may turn to extra-legal forms of justice in order to see the guilty punished.

These four conditions that sustain the rule of law illustrate the cumulative nature of rule of law as an aggregate set of conditions that together result in the state's universal and routinized application and enforcement of the law.

Finally, before turning to the implications of rule of law in the electoral context, it is important to distinguish the weak rule of law from several common pathologies that can easily be confused for weak rule of law: pork barrel politics, patronage, and clientelism. I define these terms as follows: "Pork" or pork barrel politics is the discretionary allocation of non-individualized state resources (i.e., club or public goods). Patronage is the discretionary and individualized allocation of state resources to political supporters. Clientelism is the individualized allocation of state resources, through illegal means, to induce political support, usually through bribe or threat to withhold state resources. Although all of these concepts refer to discretionary action on the part of politicians and bureaucrats, they cannot be neatly equated with weak rule of law.

First, pork barrel politics does not presuppose weak rule of law. Though discretionary, pork-barrel politics is fully legal—an explicitly and intentionally discretionary part of the governing process. Taken to an extreme—leaving large portions of a country’s budget for pork—pork-barrel politics may violate normative expectations about how a government should rationally provide public goods and may advantage incumbent candidates in their re-election bids. However, pork per se does not require weak rule of law since it constitutes legal discretion that is part of the governing process.

Second, like pork, some forms of patronage are also compatible with strong rule of law, as in countries like Japan, Austria, and Belgium, where political parties routinely divvy up political resources—mainly jobs—and allocate them to their supporters. In many societies such discretionary allocation is entirely legal. Even in India, where rule of law is weak, guidelines for hiring primary school teachers and police constables are often vague, and the number of applicants fulfilling the minimum requirements far surpasses the number of available posts.⁴ As a result, filling positions with political supporters (or on the basis of any other criterion) is not necessarily a violation of the law, particularly when political influence does not later determine promotion, firing, or transfer.⁵ Of course, patronage may also include allocation of state resources through improper means (such as awarding access to state institutions like hospitals or universities to those who do not fully qualify), but since patronage-based systems can exist under strong rule law, patronage cannot simply be seen as a manifestation of weak rule of law in a political context.

Third, unlike pork and patronage, clientelism as I define it fully requires weak rule of law, since pervasive illegality—bribes, abuse of state resources—sustains clientelistic behavior. But, clientelism (and illicit forms of patronage) should not be confused for weak rule of law, but viewed rather as a manifestation of it. For rule of law is far broader concept that comprehends the entire range of a state’s activity, calling into question the presumption that the state will fulfill any of its intended functions: enforcing property rights and contracts between citizens, punishing criminals, implementing social welfare schemes, or regulating commerce and industry. Clientelism refers to one of many potential mechanisms through which the law fails to be universally applied or enforced: through political manipulation, usually for political gain. But, the state can fail to implement its own policies as a result of other factors, such as bureaucratic inertia and sloth (i.e., bureaucracies whose inefficiency prevents the universal implementation of laws) or bureaucratic greed (i.e., bureaucrats who demand bribes for their services) that have nothing to do with politics. Thus, while clientelism (and sometimes) patronage are closely linked to rule of law, they cannot be thought of as synonymous; rather, clientelism is one of the practices made possible by weak rule of law (though of as the four conditions outlined above) that results in the failure of state policy implementation.

Section 4.2: Politicians, voters, and the rule of law

The difference between politics under strong and weak rule of law hinges on the voter’s expectation that the state will (or will not) implement public policy in a fair and uniform manner. Under strong rule of law, the voter believes that the state will, in fact, implement its laws; under weak rule of

⁴ This example is taken from Chandra (2004), who elaborates on this in greater detail.

⁵ Earlier, I referred to the politicization of bureaucratic hiring, firing, promotion, and transfer as one of the conditions associated with weak rule of law. As a partial exception to this, politicized hiring may do relatively little to undermine strong rule of law when it is *not* accompanied by political influence over later stages of a bureaucrat’s career. This appears to be the case in countries like Austria and Belgium, where party membership is an important criterion in hiring decisions, but where bureaucrats do not later seem to face undue pressure from political quarters. Perhaps one explanation for this is that individual politicians do not actually intervene in the hiring process at all; instead, the bureaucracy itself considers partisan affiliation as a way to maintain inter-party political harmony.

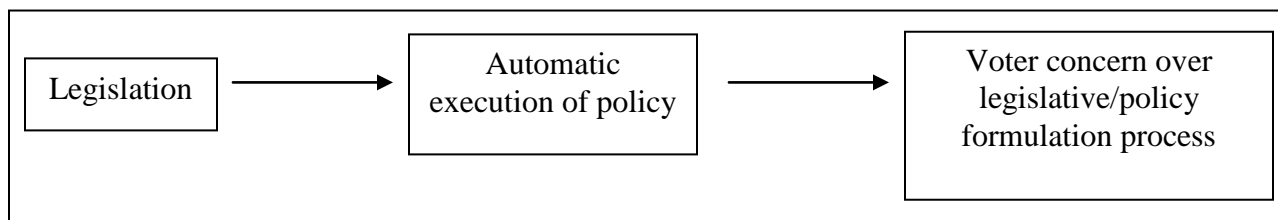
law he⁶ does not. This distinction leads to far-reaching consequences in terms of both voter and politician behavior, determining how voters formulate their voting decision and how politicians solicit votes.

Because most political science research on voter behavior and party formation implicitly assumes a strong rule of law framework in which voters expect states to adequately implement their own policies, I begin by describing the party-building process and politician-voter linkages common under strong rule of law. I then move on to show how shifting from strong to weak rule of law alters the party building process and the links between politicians and voters. I begin by discussing what voters care about and then move on to how politicians solicit votes. Finally, given what voters care about and how politicians appeal to voters, I discuss what parties mean and how they are built.

Section 4.2.1: Politics under strong rule of law

Under strong rule of law, voters expect that when the government adopts, discards, or alters a policy, these policy changes produce direct effects on the voter. Policy changes result in increased or decreased taxes, provision or retrenchment of social welfare benefits, license for or prohibition of certain behaviors, etc. Voters in strong rule of law settings rightly believe that the law becomes reality through the policy implementation process: the execution of law follows automatically from its legislation. With no reason to doubt the efficacy or integrity of the policy implementation process, voters naturally focus their attention on policy formulation. Through voting and other types of political activism, they attempt to influence policy formulation, since they fully expect that changes to public policy will result in changes in how the state actually governs (see Figure 1 below)

Figure 1.



I call voters under strong rule of law “policy voters” because their primary concern is influencing the policy formulation process. Whether they care more about changing policy in order to bring about a direct benefit to themselves or in order to further their vision of what constitutes an ideal society does not matter. Either way, the voter cares most about how he can influence the content of the law.

To that end, the policy voter casts his ballot for a party or candidate (depending on the electoral system) who will influence policy in the way that he prefers, whether to shift policy in one direction or another or to maintain the status quo. For simplicity, I will refer only to political systems in which voters cast their votes for individual candidates who may be affiliated with political parties or who may be contesting as independents. In practice, this means that the systems to which I am referring could either be a single member plurality system (SMP) or an open list proportional representation (PR) system in which voters vote directly for candidates that appear on party lists.

As the voter considers which candidate will influence policy in a manner most consistent with the voter’s wishes, the voter must bear in mind two things:

- 1) the candidate’s stated policy preferences and

⁶ Throughout, whenever I refer in the abstract to a “candidate,” I use the female pronoun, and whenever I refer in the abstract to a “voter,” I use the male pronoun.

2) the candidate's ability to translate her preferences into actual policy.

Above all, voters compare their own policy preferences against those of the candidate politicians. All else equal, the politician whose policy preferences most closely match the voter's will be the voter's preferred candidate. At times the twin concerns for policy-position and candidate efficacy reinforce one another, leading a voter to an unequivocal choice for the candidate he believes to be most congruent in terms of policy and most effective in turning her policy proposals into law. At other times, these concerns may point in different directions forcing a voter to choose between candidates on the one hand whose policy preferences they prefer more but who are less well-positioned to turn these preferences into policy and candidates on the other hand who espouse less attractive policy positions but who are better situated to translate their preferences into policy.

When evaluating a candidate's policy preferences, a voter may take into consideration a number of pieces of information in addition to the candidate's explicitly stated stands on political issues. Among them are the candidate's party affiliation, her ideological predilections, and her perceived wisdom, expertise, and experience in policy-making. All of this information supplements what the voter already knows about how the candidate has promised to influence policy and further assists him in formulating expectations about how the candidate will behave in the policy formulation process. Party affiliation can inform a voter about a candidate's like behavior on issues that the candidate does not herself mention but on which the party has taken a position. The candidate's ideological predilections can tell a voter about the candidate's political values: is she a socialist, a free-market liberal, or a religious conservative? (Party identification is also useful for understanding a politician's ideology and political values). This information is useful in the event that new issues arise after the election on which the candidate did not earlier to a stand.⁷ Similarly, voters may care about how wise, expert, or experienced a politician is in policy-making as reassurance that the candidate will make the "right" policy decision about new or previously unimportant issues or in the event that unexpected events alter the public's previous understandings of various issues.

In considering the politician's ability to actually influence policy in a manner consistent with her beliefs, voters will focus most of their attention on the candidate's party affiliation and on her own skills as a legislator. In most legislatures where at least a modicum of party discipline prevails, voters' best guesses about the candidate's ability to translate preferences into policy comes from knowledge about the party to which she belongs. Does she belong to a large party likely to head the next government, a small party likely to join a coalition government, or a small party with virtually no chance of joining the government? If a candidate is a member of a party that will likely form the government and if the candidate shares many of her policy preferences with her fellow partisans, then the voter has strong reason to believe that the candidate will be able to effectively legislate in accord with her preferences. Additionally, voters may consider the politician's individual skills a legislator. In some legislatures, seniority provides a legislator with greater leverage in policy-making, or some politicians may be known as especially keen deal-makers with the ability to realize their preference in legislation.

Moving beyond the politician as legislator, voters may also care about the politician as ombudsman. In cases in which automatic implementation of policy falters, politicians are often called upon as a local ombudsman to solve the problems that arise out of the occasional errors made by even the most efficient of bureaucracies. As a result, voters may consider whatever qualities in a politician that may indicate how effective and how energetic an ombudsman she will be once elected. However, there is reason to believe that the relative importance of the politician as ombudsmen is likely to low under strong

⁷ A good example of the emergence of unforeseen issues was the increased salience of issues like foreign policy, counter-terrorism, civil liberties, and executive power following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Though these issues eventually became very salient issues, they were, for the most part, absent from the discourse surrounding the 2000 election.

rule of law. First, policy implementation under strong rule of law typically proceeds smoothly and efficiently, creating a comparatively infrequent need for the politician's ombudsman services and leaving voters to place increased weight on their evaluations of the politician as policy-maker. Second, since under strong rule of law the politician and her associates have little opportunity to use their political weight to intervene in policy implementation, the range of instances in which the politician can assist a voter is not terribly big. As indicated by the examples cited in Mayhew, many of the ways in which politicians assist their voters are comparatively minor, with little impact on a voter's overall material well-being or life chances.

Given the voter's concern with a politicians' stated policy preference and efficacy, what do politicians do in order to attract support of voters? Generally speaking, the politician attracts voters primarily through her activities as a policy-maker and how she projects herself as a policy-maker. Politicians invest substantial amounts of their time and resources on policy-making—attending hearings and legislative sessions, meeting with lobbyists, and learning about relevant policy issues. They do so with the belief that the policies that the legislature passes will directly impact voters and that engaging in “good” policy-making is an effective way for the politician to do good for the public and win its political support. Of course, by taking a stand on a particular issue, politicians knowing alienate a portion of the electorate, but they do so in the hopes of both winning the support of ideologically-similar voters and of convincing uncommitted or weakly opposed voters of the wisdom of their position.

In a world of strong rule of law in which voters care foremost about policy and politicians respond by focusing on their role of policy-makers, the role of political parties is crucial. As already discussed, political parties are important cues for voters, telling them about a politician's policy preferences and about the politician's likelihood of being part of an effective policy-making team in the legislature. More importantly, from the perspective of politicians—who found, join, and run political parties—parties are important for two main reasons. First, politicians signal their ideological position and ideological credentials to ideologically-motivated voters through their party membership.

Second, policy-making often takes place through the medium of political parties. Aldrich (1995) argues that political parties in the United States emerged endogenously from the legislature as a way for a large number of individuals to coordinate on policy-making on a variety of different issues. Indeed, in many democracies parties are responsible for setting the legislative agenda, drafting policy, and seeing it passed in the legislature. As a result, when major policies are passed, politicians can highlight these achievements to the voter, touting their own contributions to the process, whether drafting policy, pushing it through the legislature, or simply casting a vote in favor of it. Even in the case of failed attempts at policy change, politicians can tout their attempt to change policy as a way of advertising their policy positions (if not their efficacy). Without the coordination that takes place within parties, any individual legislator would be hard-pressed to achieve much in terms of policy change. If unable to concretely affect policy formulation, then the politician is unlikely to attract the voters' support as she will be unable to convince voters of her efficacy and perhaps even of her commitment to her own stated policy positions. Parties are therefore useful to the politician as an informational signal to voters and as a way of achieving policy goals that they can use to attract future support.

As a result, political parties under strong of rule tend to be ideologically coherent teams of like-minded politicians.⁸ Ideologically eclectic parties face problems similar to those in pre-party legislatures in which a large number of people have a hard time solving coordination problems and avoiding preference cycling. Ideologically incoherent parties also send a very weak signal to the electorate since

⁸ Politicians need not always be like-minded, but they should at least be willing to consistently masquerade as believing in a particular ideology or set of political values. Politicians may, in fact, sometimes choose their party bases on the characteristics of the constituency they wish to represent rather than their own beliefs.

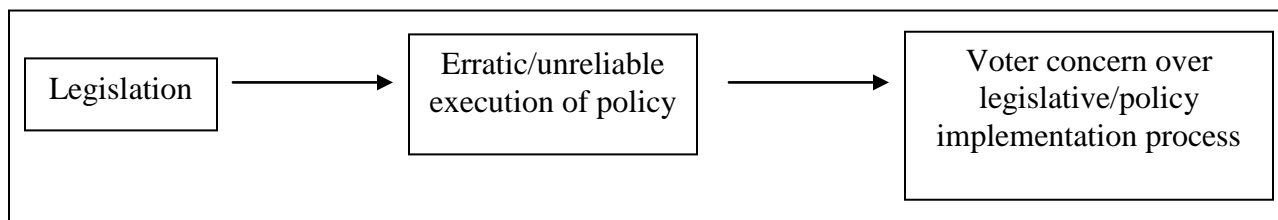
voters know that a politician's party membership may not be a very good indicator of her actual preferences. In order to send a strong informational signal and to maximize the ease with which policy is made (and by extension with which politicians can bring back policies to show to the voters), politicians have an incentive to join a party that provides a good ideological fit and to support the party in its policy-making efforts.

Section 4.2.2: Politics under weak rule of law

Under weak rule of law, the voter-politician linkage and the nature of political parties differ substantially. Under weak rule of law, voters seek to influence policy implementation, and politicians appeal to voters by promising to use their discretion in the implementation of the law to the voters' benefit. Instead of politician as policy-maker, she is the politician as "fixer." The essence of weak rule of law is that the letter of the law is not, in fact, practiced; policy on the books is not implemented on the ground. The public realm is not ruled by the law, but by something else entirely—usually individual discretion by the powerful. From the perspective of voting and party-building, the most crucial feature of weak rule of law is the overriding importance of a politician's discretionary power in the implementation of public policy over the actual formulation and passage of public policy in a legislative body (or by executive order).

While under strong rule of law, the complexion of politics follows directly from the assumption that a society's laws are implemented, politics under weak rule of law hinges equally on the widespread belief that laws will not necessarily be implemented.

Figure 2.



If laws may or may not be implemented, then voters respond to erratic or unreliable execution of public policy by shifting their concern from policy formulation to policy implementation. Under strong rule of law, laws and public policies both liberate and constrain. Strong rule of law liberates voters from the pervasive uncertainty surrounding policy implementation and from the need to ensure that what should be happening, according to the law, will actually happen (such as the delivery of basic state services). It also constrains voters by limiting their behavior to that which is proscribed by the law and imposing harsh punishments as deterrents. Under weak rule of law the obverse is true: voters are often saddled with uncertainty about the implementation of public policy and must often assume the burden of ensuring that should be happening is actually happening; but at the same time, they are liberated from the law's harsh and binding constraints on their behavior.

Since there is no guarantee that the policy-making process will have its intended effects, voters seek influence over policy implementation rather than policy formulation. Voters alternatively want either to ensure proper implementation of state policy (when existing policies will benefit them) or to exploit the weak rule of law to circumvent regulations (when existing policies hurt them). As a result, they place virtually no importance on the content of the law—in other words, on public policy. This seemingly extreme claim—particularly from the point of view of the West's established democracies—rests on the idea that assurances about how power-holders will implement policy precede concerns about the content of policy. Presumably, both voters and politicians care more about policy outcomes than about the

specific way in which outcomes are achieved.⁹ Few people will be satisfied with the mere presence of a law if they know that it is neither implemented nor enforced. If a voter cares about securing a particular outcome (most commonly as it relates to how the state does or does not impinge on himself and his life), his first concern is ensuring (im)proper policy implementation.¹⁰ Once the voter is secure in the knowledge that policy will be implemented as he wishes, then he can worry about the actual content of the law in order to increase the likelihood he will routinely benefit from his preferred policy outcome. As a result, voters subordinate their policy preferences to their preferences over

To underline this point about the irrelevance of the law,¹¹ consider a hypothetical scenario involving land-ceiling legislation. Large landlords will virtually always prefer the absence of ceiling on land-holdings, since they prefer to keep all of their land rather than forfeit land in excess of a land ceiling. Meanwhile, landless laborers and tenants will virtually always favor land-ceiling legislation, because it invites the possibility of land reform and re-distribution. However, when rule of law is weak, for both the landlord and the laborer, the more important considerations are: 1) who is the local political authority?, and 2) on whose behalf is she likely to act? A landlord-friendly politician can ensure that land ceiling legislation does not actually result in the confiscation of land,¹² while a tenant- or laborer-friendly politician can potentially employ extra-legal means and pressures to appropriate land from the land-lord to give to the landless.¹³

Table 1

Politician type	Land-ceiling legislation	Outcome	Landlord Preference	Tenant Preference
Pro-landlord	No	No land redistribution	1 st	4 th
Pro-landlord	Yes	Circumvention of land ceiling	2 nd	3 rd
Pro-tenant	No	Extra-legal appropriation of land	3 rd	2 nd
Pro-tenant	Yes	Formal land redistribution	4 th	1 st

⁹ For example, most people probably care more about achieving an outcome such as low inflation than they do about the policy instruments that achieve low inflation. Or, citizens care more about incarcerating criminals than about having tough sentencing laws on the books. The laws *per se* are not important to most people; the laws are appreciated only when implemented.

¹⁰ In cases where the citizen disagrees with the law, his interest is not in ensuring proper policy implementation but in ensuring that policy will *not* be implemented.

¹¹ To give an anecdotal and personal example of this, a recent conversation underlined the irrelevance of the law in a weak rule of law society like India. Over dinner, a friend from Mumbai recounted a story about how his friend had unintentionally collided into another car while driving. At the next stoplight, the owner of the car into which he had collided got out of his car, brandishing a hand gun, and threatened the driver. After recounting the incident, a second friend—a Canadian—asked whether India had laws against handguns. No one knew the answer, and a third friend, another Mumbai native, concluded: “It doesn’t matter. Even if there were laws against them [hand guns], no one would follow them. Who is going to enforce them?” Ultimately, the road-side encounter was resolved peacefully when the man with the gun—a well known film actor—found out that he was actually threatening the son of a government minister.

¹² One such tactic in India is what is called *benami* land or land registered under false names. Sometimes, land is registered in the name of various individuals in the same family in order to ensure that no single individual’s holdings exceed the land ceiling.

¹³ For example, in Brazil, the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) [Landless Workers’ Movement] aims to appropriate unused land from landlords for use by the landless. At one point in time, the movement was closely associated with the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), the party of current president Lula da Silva. Prior to Lula’s election in 2002, many land-owners feared that a PT administration would turn a blind-eye to (what it believe to be illegal) land occupations. Even before Lula’s election, a great deal of land had been *de facto* appropriated by the landless through occupations of unused land. For evidence see the Kanchan Chandra’s Constructivist Dataset on Ethnicity Identity’s on the Brazilian election of 2002, coded by the author.

Table 1 shows why preferences over policy implementation trump preferences over policy formulation. All else equal, both landlords and tenants will prefer certain types of laws. But, often all else is not equal. Assuming that a local politician wields substantial power in implementing land-ceiling laws, then given the chance to choose either the type of local politician (landlord-friendly or tenant-friendly) or the content of the law (land-ceiling laws or not), both landlord and tenant will opt to choose the type of politician. Greater assurances come at the policy implementation stage than at the policy formulation stage. No matter the policy regime, the landlord is always better off with a pro-landlord politician in office, while the tenant is always better off with a pro-tenant politician in office. Indeed, both would prefer a friendly politician in office and legislation they oppose to their preferred legislation with an unfriendly politician overseeing policy implementation.

Only once the landlord and tenant are assured of their preferred type of policy implementation will their policy preferences come into play. Though secure in the knowledge that he will receive assistance from a politician in circumventing land-ceiling laws, the landlord would nevertheless prefer not to have to bother with circumventing the law. They prefer that tenants have one less weapon with which to attack the landlord's privilege. Similarly, the tenant—even when enjoying the support of a friendly politician—would prefer to receive land through legal channels than through illicit ones and to have the law, as well as a power-holder, as his disposal.

If under strong rule of law, preferences over policy formulation motivate vote choice, as a consequence of which voters focus their attention on a politician's own policy preferences, then under weak rule of law, preferences over policy implementation then motivate vote choice. Typically, policies are implemented (or not) by powerful individuals with discretion over how to use their power—whether to threaten overly zealous bureaucrats for applying the law or underperforming bureaucrats for failing to enforce or implement it. Implementation decisions therefore fall to the discretion of power-holders, usually politicians. Because individuals will often wield their discretionary power differently, voters have a tremendous stake in who precisely is in power. And since a great deal of public policy implementation takes place at the local level,¹⁴ voters are particularly interested in their own representatives, whether they be representatives to local, state, or national legislative bodies. The voter bases his vote choice on how he expects the politician to use her discretionary power over policy implementation.

I term voters under weak rule of law “attribute voters” because they focus principally on a politician's individual attributes, both acquired and inherited, in order to formulate their voting decision. Using information about the identities and characteristics of the candidates, voters formulate expectations about which types of voters are most likely to benefit from a politician's discretion. The more the voter believes the politician will favor him, the more likely he is to vote for her. Rather than aligning his policy preferences with the candidates' preferences in order to decide how to vote, as is the case in societies with strong rule of law, the voter in a weak rule of law society appraises the likelihood that a candidate will use her discretionary power to the voter's benefit.

The following analogy illustrates the relationship between the voter and the politician and motivates how the voter decides for whom he wishes to vote. Imagine every voter in a constituency lining up outside the door of a politician, each with a favor to ask, some policy to implement or some law to bend. The voters know that the politician will begin granting favors in the morning and stop some time in the evening. Those at the front of the line are more likely to have their favors heard and, hopefully, granted. Voters therefore care about are: 1) where they stand in line relative to other constituents and 2)

¹⁴ Aside from policies formulated and fully under the charge of local government, many national policies are also implemented either through local government or through local offices. For example, education, law and order, social welfare, and economic regulation are often implemented or enforced at the local level, even if many of the policies themselves are formulated at higher levels of government.

how long the politician will continue to hear favors. But, voters do not line up randomly. The politician gives some voters priority and moves them to the front of the line. The likelihood that the politician helps a particular voter is therefore a function of 1) to whom the politician gives priority in line, and 2) how many of the voters the politician will meet. For the voter wishing to have his favor heard and granted, the voter wants to maximize the likelihood that the politician in office will 1) move him to the front of the line, and 2) hear a large number of petitions. The latter concern is particularly relevant for voters who do not expect that any of the candidate politicians will home him to the front of the line.

If the policy voter formulates his voting decision by considering the politician's policy positions and his evaluation of her efficacy in policy-making, then what does the attribute voter consider? They begin by assuming that the politician will privilege certain classes of voters.¹⁵ Naturally, voters personally known to a candidate are highly likely to benefit from her favor granting capacities once she is in office. But granting favors is a valuable resource for winning votes, and a politician is unlikely to restrict the use of her discretion to only those whom she already knows. In any constituency large enough that a candidate's friends and family do not constitute a substantial portion of the electorate, politicians will extend their favor-granting to those whom they do not know.¹⁶ Under weak rule of law, where the demands on a politician are likely to outstrip her capacity to not only disburse tangible benefits but also to intercede on behalf of constituents in a variety of ways, candidates must decide on whose behalf to expend energy and resources. Voters, in turn, when deciding whom to vote for, must guess about what types of voters the politician will favor, and, by extension, the likelihood that the voter himself will benefit from the candidate's intervention.

In some cases, candidates and parties openly say which voters they will favor. Overtly ethnic parties and parties with strong ties to particular trade unions are but two examples of parties that candidly identify their intended beneficiaries.¹⁷ This simplifies the voter's decision by eliminating much of the uncertainty and guess-work surrounding his calculations weighing the potential costs and benefits of voting for each candidate. But many—probably most—parties are not so explicit in identifying a target audience for fear of alienating potential voters. For this reason, parties may be intentionally ambiguous.¹⁸ This leaves the voter to extrapolate whom the candidate is likely to favor.

The voter does so by focusing on a candidate's individual attributes for clues about whom the candidate will favor in order to arrive at an estimate about the likelihood that they will benefit from the politician's intercession. The same mechanism does not need to link a candidate's attribute with the voter's understanding of what this attribute tells him about his likelihood of winning the politician's favor. A variety of mechanisms may be at work. I identify three in particular: altruism, community, and *noblesse oblige*.

¹⁵ Naturally, a personal relationship with the At the local level, election constituencies may be small enough that

¹⁶ According to the 2001 census there are 1,027,015,247 people in India. With a lower house of 543 members, there is one member of Parliament (MP) for every 1,891,372 people. In the states of Rajasthan (25 MPs), Tamil Nadu (39 MPs), and West Bengal (42 MPs), where I did fieldwork, the number is, in some cases, even higher: 1 MP for approximately 2,258,925 people in Rajasthan; 1,592,586 people in West Bengal; 1,910,028 in West Bengal. The state legislatures in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal have 200, 234, and 294 seats, respectively, meaning approximately 282,366 people per member of the legislative assembly (MLA) in Rajasthan; 265,431 for every MLA in Tamil Nadu; and 272,861 in West Bengal. Only at the lowest levels of local government in rural India (the *gram panchayat* or village council) are constituencies small enough that candidates are likely to personally know a large portion of the voters in their constituency.

¹⁷ The class of beneficiary voters may be identified, but most parties typically do not couch the appeal in terms of their willingness to circumvent the law on behalf of some voters or their intention to enforce the law more rigorously for some voters and not for others.

¹⁸ See Chandra 2004, in which she discusses how parties can use ideology and issues as a "cover" in order to retain strategic flexibility to adapt strategies over time and to local conditions.

When a candidate is thought to be honest, hard working, fair, or generous, then the mechanism linking the candidate characteristic to the candidate's anticipated behavior is altruism. The voter believes that a politician will help a needy constituent because she is genuinely motivated to help those in dire straits. Particularly energetic and hard working candidates may be expected to help a larger number of constituents, while especially fair politicians may help those in the greatest need. These "moral" characteristics are not necessarily easily observed; they often require cultivation through activity in the community and rest on reputation. Candidates may also come to be associated with these characteristics through their association with a high-profile or charismatic leader thought to embody these positive traits.

The second mechanism is community: individuals—including the politician—feel a sense of solidarity or obligation to individuals who belong to the same community, however community is defined.¹⁹ Essentially, a politician will help voters "like her" (i.e., members of her community) before she helps those who unlike her (i.e., those from other communities). Voters therefore consider the array of attributes associated with a candidate's identity: ethnicity,²⁰ place of residence, gender, class, or membership in a particular organization (especially a political party). Voters match their attributes to those of the candidate, assuming that the more attributes they share, the more they constitute a fellow community member. And as a fellow community member, they are more likely to benefit from the candidate's intervention.²¹

Finally, noblesse oblige links the politician to the voter through ties of dependency; the politician assists a voter because he is dependent on her, whether because she is his boss, his landlord, a traditional community elder, or a member of a family known as local patrons.

When formulating an expectation about which types of voters will benefit from a candidate's election, the voters may also consider the candidate's party affiliation, supplementing their knowledge about the characteristics of the candidate with information about characteristics of other politicians in the party. This knowledge may corroborate, contradict, or expand the voter's estimate of which type of favor the politician will favor. When a candidate and her fellow party-members share characteristics, the candidate's party affiliation corroborates the voter's initial conclusions. When she does not share characteristics with her fellow party members, then the voter must either reconcile contradictory

¹⁹ Community can be defined in terms of political sub-cultures. In a number of societies strong bonds of community have formed around political membership or political characteristics. Bloody conflicts erupted between Liberals and Conservatives in Colombia and between Republicans and Nationalists in Spain. Mixing religion and politics, for many years Dutch society was characterized by segmented and vertically integrated *zuilen* (pillars) dividing Catholics, Protestants, Socialists, and Liberals, while Belgians were divided, somewhat more loosely, in to Catholics, Socialists, and Liberals. In these cases, identification with these political currents typically entailed far more than simple ideological sympathy. Whole social networks, indeed communities, emerged out of these identifications. In this way, community construed in these political terms differs quite substantially from the way in which policy voters match policy preferences in order arrive at a voting decision.

²⁰ By ethnicity I refer to any of the following characteristics: language, nationality, race, region/place of origin, caste, tribe, and clan.

²¹ Some recent suggesting otherwise has recently emerged. Stokes (2005) finds that in Argentina, the Partido Justicialista (the Peronist party) tends not to try to buy the votes of die-hard supporters but of those who are weak supporters or weakly opposed to the party. However, she does not explicitly treat this mechanism of community as it applies to membership in an organization (in this case the Partido Justicialista). Kasara (2007) also shows that in Africa presidents tend to over-tax co-ethnics because they can better monitor and select the intermediaries responsible for delivering votes. However, Kasara's study matches ethnic groups to the national executive; constituent-representative linkages may differ, perhaps involving greater ties of community. Her empirical evidence looks only at taxation. It is possible that politicians tend to dole out material benefits (sops, tax breaks, jobs) to key marginal voters while distributing less tangible benefits (favors and bureaucratic interventions) to co-ethnics.

information or broaden his expectation of whom the politician will help. For example, a voter seeing a Muslim candidate from the BJP may discount the candidate's religious identity because of the BJP's history of anti-Muslim rhetoric, concluding that Muslims are not, in fact, likely to benefit from the candidate's election. However, a voter seeing a backward caste candidate from the traditionally upper-caste dominated BJP might not discount the caste identity of the candidate; rather, she might simply conclude that upper castes as well as members of the candidate's caste are likely to find favor with the politician.

Just as a policy voter is concerned with both the politician's policy positions and efficacy as a policy-maker, a politician's efficacy (in this case, her ability to circumvent or selectively implement the law) is also a potential concern, though a somewhat less pressing concern. Party may be important, but it is less likely to influence the calculations of attribute voters for two important reasons. First, whereas the policy voter seeks policy goods that require politicians to coordinate on policy proposals and on legislative voting, what the attribute voter seeks can often be accomplished by the politician on her own. Often, elected politicians retain substantial influence, even when the party is out of power. Politicians may remain influential, even when in opposition, because they retain a variety of prerogatives such as the budgets for local development that all Indian state and national legislators are given. Alternatively, in settings in which multiple layers (national, state, local), it may be infrequent that any party is completely "out of power" at all levels, thereby retaining ties to politicians who—at some level—have access to state power. Or, where party alternation is high, bureaucrats might be wary of disregarding the requests of a politician for fear of retribution once she eventually comes to power. Finally, politicians and their parties more generally may remain influential in a more informal sense, though cover ties to the underworld, big business, etc. So long as politicians are not entirely stripped of their influence over policy implementation, voters will not place much weight on the expect performance of the politician's party.

Second, strategic concerns may be muted in the voting decision because of a voter's inability to cast a "strategic vote." The logic of strategic voting rests on the assumption that voter preferences can be arrayed on a single dimension. If a voter does not think that his preferred candidate will win, he shifts his support to the closest viable candidate. But, what happens when there is no dimension at all? For example, suppose three candidates are contesting a race, and all are thought to be hard-working and efficient. The voter, a land-owner from the Rajput caste believes that candidate A, also a Rajput land-owner from the same locality, will certainly act on the voters behalf if elected. The other two candidates belong to different castes—one is a Mali and the other a Dhakad; they are engaged in urban occupations—one a doctor and the other a trader; and they reside in a different part of the constituency. If the voter believes that his preferred Rajput land-owner candidate has a slim chance of winning, how does he cast a strategic vote? The characteristics that the voter is considering do lend themselves to dimensionality. A Rajput is no closer to a Mali than to a Dhakad, a land-owner no closer to a lawyer than to a trader.²² In this circumstance, a voter may entirely abandon his strategic concerns, cast his vote sincerely, and simply hope for the best.

As a result, though strategic concerns about party performance may influence a voter's vote decision, he is much more likely to focus his attention on the 1) the candidate's attributes and what they can tell him about the class of voters who will benefit from her election, and 2) information about the party that will substantiate, discredit, or in some way modify his beliefs based on the candidate's attributes alone.

²² One could argue that this situation is analogous to one in which a voter's ideal point is equidistant from that of the two viable candidates. But whereas in a policy space exact equidistance from two candidates should be relatively rare, "equidistance" from candidates in terms of individual attributes should be common. A female voter will often face a choice between two male candidates; a voter from one ethnicity facing a choice between candidates from two different ethnicities, neither of which can be construed as "closer."

Under weak rule of law, the politician does not appeal to voters primarily as a deliverer of policy goods; rather, she appeals to them as a “fixer”—someone who can get things done on their behalf. In many discussions of patronage, scholars refer to vote-buying as the distribution of material goods in advance of elections (see, for example, Stokes 2005). And certainly, in a country like India, this type of pre-election distribution of money, alcohol, and food frequently occurs (Wilkinson 2007). But the politician’s role as fixer extends far beyond the election campaign into the day-to-day routine of life in ways that are not necessarily always linked explicitly to the exchange of votes for services.

As already indicated, politicians may differ in the extent to which they openly identify particular classes of voters whom they will privilege when in office. Some may explicitly target some groups, or may do so covertly. Others may attempt to be as ambiguous as possible, instead cultivating a reputation not as the benefactor of a particular set of voters but rather as an usually hard-working or energetic representative. Regardless, the essence of their appeal lies in what they can claim to do on behalf of the voters, not in terms of policy outcomes but in terms of individualized favors, services, and goods.²³

Finally, just as the way in which voters formulate their voting decision and politicians solicit votes differs from strong to weak rule of law, so too does the nature of parties. Parties under strong rule of law serve both voter and politician. Parties provide informational shortcuts to voters about the candidates’ policy preferences and about whom to punish for policy outcomes of which they do not approve. They also facilitate policy-making by easing coordination problems that would otherwise be faced in the legislature. The resulting policies benefit both the policy-seeking voter as well as the politician wishing to appeal to such voters. For politicians, often membership in a party is virtually the only way to assure voters of one’s efficacy. As an independent candidate, the likelihood of pivotality and being able to influence policy is slight. In this way, the politician *needs* the party, without which she is hard pressed to win support from prospective voters.

Under weak rule of law, the utility of the party to both voter and politician is lower. Voters may care little about a politician’s party so long as he believes the politician is likely to grant him favors if elected. For the politician, the party is often useful, but not necessary. Being in government is desirable because of the added power and opportunities for patronage, but the politician does not need the party in order to secure election. She can win on her own, by committing herself to help some large (but perhaps neglected) portion of the constituency population or through a personal following acquired thanks to her reputation as a hard-working and fair representative.²⁴ As a rule, therefore, party membership is more a function of desire and ambition than it is of necessity.

This is not to say that politicians random choose which parties to join. They are, no doubt, as professional politicians more likely to be interested in public policy than the average voter and choose their party based on its ideological leanings. But the sheer frequency of defections and party-switching that takes place in India and in other developing democracies suggests that ideology is far from a binding

²³ In interviews with politicians in India, self-promotion typically took the form of lauding their own “social work” or philanthropy or in noting their rapport with community and approachability. They did not, by contrast, emphasize policy knowledge, seniority (which would indicate influence in the legislature), or ideological credentials.

²⁴ In India, it is very common for incumbent candidates to run as independents or on minor party labels if they are denied their party’s tickets. Frequently, they win. Systematic data are not available on this subject, but the Rajasthan legislative assembly is a good example. In 2003, 24 legislators of 200 legislators were elected on tickets other than those of the two main parties (INC, BJP), 13 as independents and 11 on the labels of parties with marginal influence in the state as a whole. Of these 24, at least 14 were rebel candidates who had either fallen out with their parties or been denied tickets, yet contested again in their home constituencies. (All but two independents, the lone legislators from the Rajasthan Nyaya Samajik Manch and Lok Jan Shakti and at least one—probably more—of the Indian National Lok Dal’s four legislators were either Congress- or BJP-rebels).

constraint on politicians. Politicians are likely to select parties in which they believe themselves likely to “get ahead.” They may believe themselves more likely to “get ahead” in a party dominated by fellow politicians who share many of the same characteristics (such as ethnicity, class, organizational membership, or proximity to a well-known leader). Thus, while under strong rule of law, parties are typically comprised of politicians with similar policy preferences who are strongly bound to the party as their life-line for winning elections, under weak rule of law parties are very different. They are comprised typically of politicians with similar characteristics who are much more loosely tied to the party.

Section 4.3: Rule of law and a party’s geographic scope

Having discussed in great detail the implications of the strength of rule of law on politics, what are the consequences of rule of law for a party’s geographic scope—whether national or regional? Rule of law is crucially important because it determines how to problematize the question of regional parties. When rule of law is strong, then regional parties are a question of extreme inter-regional variation in policy preferences.²⁵ If voters are policy-seeking and politicians provide policy in order to win elections, then parties—assuming that they aggregate like-minded politicians—should perform well, wherever there are voters who hold policy preferences espoused by the party.²⁶ Regional parties should, therefore, only emerge when there are very extreme inter-regional policy preferences, where voters in different regions have wildly different policy preferences over the same national issues or where different issues are salient in different regions. In practice, the former should be relatively rare.

Policy preferences on a variety of issues often correlate highly with voter attributes such as class, income, and religious observance. Though we see the preponderance of certain classes, income groups, and levels of religious observance in some parts of a country, stark geographic segregation of these groups is extraordinarily rare.²⁷ Cities are often more left-leaning than rural areas in terms of positions on the left-right dimension, and rural areas tend to be more religiously observant and socially conservative than urban areas, but urban-rural differences are differences of degree rather than kind. Urban and rural areas are not home to a range of mutually exclusive preferences that consequently produce entirely different party systems. Rather, both urban and rural areas represent the same range of policy positions with somewhat different distributions of preferences along the same dimensions. In other words, left-leaning, socially progressive parties are comparatively weak in the country-sides of many European countries, but they are not *absent* from these places. So too with right-leaning, social conservative parties in Europe’s urban centers. The parties’ legislative presences outside of their strongholds may be minor because of the electoral system’s translation of votes into seats, but they nevertheless remain competitive parties with significant appeal among large sections of the electorate.²⁸

Particularly for policies related to the left-right dimension, it is not surprising that preferences are usually distributed fairly evenly across a polity, rather than being highly concentrated. Most complex societies rest on a division of labor, as a result of which all but the smallest communities require a distribution of individuals of varying incomes, classes, and levels of education in order to function. When income, class, and education are highly correlated with a voter’s left-right ideological placement, the

²⁵ It is important to emphasize that differences in regional preferences must be extreme. Some variation almost always occur; but this is not sufficient for a party to be national. Variation must be so extreme that preferences that are commonly held in one or a handful of regions are held by almost no one in the other regions.

²⁶ Of course, party strategy, candidate quality, and valence issues influence a party’s performance, but looking at the political scene in very broad terms, there should be a strong correlation between the presence of voter’s with particular policy preferences and the electoral performance of parties that advocate these policies.

²⁷ One major exception to this is occupational sector, especially with respect to agricultural crops.

²⁸ Cite data and examples from countries like France (which has a big urban-rural divide) and Italy (which had strong ideological strongholds).

societal division of labor fosters a diversity of ideological positions within virtually every community. When left-leaning, centrist, and right-leaning voters are all distributed across a country—even if not perfectly evenly—it becomes very unlikely for a party making ideological appeals to find itself confined to one or a handful of regions. Moreover, since parties tend to adopt bundles of policy over a wide variety of issues, even on issues where salience or policy preferences are widely divergent across regions, the party as a whole may still be able to acquire a national following through its appeals on issues that are widely salient, on which preferences tend not to vary across the country, or both.

If regional parties are viewed as the outgrowths of extreme regional variation in preferences, then understanding the conditions that give rise to regional parties requires understanding when preferences vary. Most commonly, researchers focus on regional grievances, typically economic or ethno-cultural grievance—as the source of extreme inter-regional variation in preferences. These grievances lead at some portion of the regional electorate to favor secession, autonomy (either as a general policy or for a specific region), or cultural policies that affect only a geographically concentrated ethnic group.

These demands—whether economic or ethno-cultural in their motivation—typically fall on deaf ears in the rest of the country. Alternatively, in more extreme cases, perceptions of grievance prompt some parties to pursue explicitly exclusivist agendas. In these cases, the party openly champions the interests of one region, to the exclusion of others, rather than advocating ostensibly general policies that happen only to be popular in a particular region. Thus, where we see regional parties in democracies with strong rule of law, they tend to be regionalist parties in which the party's stated ideology—and the basis on which it wins votes—revolves around the grievances or policy preferences of a particular region. Though scholars disagree about the relative importance of various economic and ethno-cultural factors in determining a region's propensity to give rise to region-specific preferences (that, in turn, sustain regional parties), there appears to be widespread agreement that this type of approach explains cross-national variation in the strength of regional parties.²⁹

Under weak rule of law, regional parties are problematized very differently. Since voters are not voting on the basis of their policy preferences, then certainly the emergence of regional parties does not like in preference variation. Since politicians in weak rule of law democracies are, to a large extent, much freer agents than politicians under strong rule of law, the geographic scope of a party is a question of politicians' motivations: When do politicians from across the country join into national political parties and when can parties only secure the allegiance of politicians from a particular part of the country.

The approaches to the study of weak and strong rule of law are, therefore vastly different. Under strong rule of law, the approach is voter-centered; under weak rule of law it is politician centered. The assumption under strong rule of law is that voters have strong preferences over the types of political parties to which candidates belong. Parties form, therefore, largely in response to voter's preferences and desires. By contrast, under weak rule of law, voters are largely indifferent to the types of parties to which candidates belong. The onus of party-building therefore falls to the politicians.

Section 5: Regional parties under weak rule of law

²⁹ In addition, there are important arguments about the formal political institutions that tend to give rise to regional parties, most notably Chhibber and Kollman 1999, 2004 and Brancati 2006, forthcoming. This literature addresses the problem from a slightly different angle, arguing that certain institutions permit the expression of regional or local sentiment to a greater degree than do other institutions. In other words, these institutions enable the expression certain preferences but do not necessarily explain the origin of the institutions themselves. A fuller account of regional parties in strong rule of law democracies would therefore incorporate both types of arguments.

Two conditions determine the extent to which regional parties emerge in a weak rule of law democracy: 1) the degree of concentration of politically-salient individual attributes and 2) the frequency of coalition government. Dispersed attributes more naturally lend themselves to national parties because they allow a party to mobilize around a single strategy (typically an attribute) across the country. Concentrated attributes require that a party knits together multiple strategies across various regions. The degree of concentration of politically-salient attributes therefore speaks to the ease and success with which national parties can form. Meanwhile, the frequency of coalition government addresses the incentives for politicians to knowingly join small political parties (as most regional parties are). When coalition governments are frequent, there is no strong disincentive to joining a small political party, because small parties are frequently pivotal and join the government. However, when coalition governments are infrequent and single party governments typically rule, then there are strong disincentives to joining a small party for it typically precludes members from enjoying the full perks of power.

Therefore, when politically-salient individual attributes are highly concentrated and when coalition rule is frequent, regional parties are likely to emerge with great strength. By contrast, when politically-salient individual attributes are not highly concentrated—when they are instead dispersed—and when single-party government, rather than coalition governments, are the rule, then national parties will dominate, and regional parties will be weak.

Where one of these conditions obtains in the absence of the other, then the outcome is somewhat indeterminate. When attributes are dispersed under single party government, then unstable national parties are likely to be the results—parties that unstably aggregate multiple regional factions. Meanwhile, when attributes are dispersed but coalition governments dominate, then there is likely to be a mix of regional and national parties since parties *can* easily form national parties, but there is no strong disincentive to being a small party. As a result, other factors will determine whether parties will unite politicians with identical attributes into one national party or multiple regional parties. These could include mechanisms for leadership succession and factional conflict resolution or the strength of the party organization. Table 2, below, summarizes the argument about how the concentration of attributes and coalition government influence the strength of regional parties and includes examples from India of parties that fall into each of the four categories.

Table 2

	<i>Single-party government</i>	<i>Coalition government</i>
<i>Concentrated attributes</i>	Unstable national parties	Stable regional parties
<i>Dispersed attributes</i>	Stable national parties	Either national or regional parties

Section 5.1: Concentrated attributes

Regional political parties are more likely to emerge in settings in which politically salient individual attributes are concentrated rather than dispersed across the polity. Where the attributes on the basis of which individuals form their expectations about whom politicians will favor are highly concentrated in a small geographical area, then successful party-building is often circumscribed by the limits of diversity. Parties face difficulty in expanding outside of the geographic frontiers beyond which certain attributes are not found. Parties that attract voters with a particular attribute cannot attract voters outside of the region where this type of voter is dominant. The result is regional parties.

However, where politically salient attributes on the basis of which voters formulate their vote choice are dispersed across the width and breadth of the polity, then politicians can knit together a national party based on the common attributes of politicians found across the country. The result is much the same as in strong rule of law democracies: national political parties. The crucial difference is that

national parties under strong rule of law are built through appeals to public policy and promises to change the content of the law, whereas under weak rule of law, national parties are aggregations of politicians with similar characteristics who are believed to influence policy implementation in similar ways.

This logic rests on the assumption that it is much easier for parties to mobilize voters on the basis of a single strategy rather than on multiple strategies tailored for each region. If there were no drawbacks to simultaneously using different mobilizing tactics in different places, then there would be no reason for the concentration or dispersion of attributes to matter. Parties could simply form through the random aggregation of politicians, each using a different method of mobilize voters in each constituency. Pursuing multiple mobilizational strategies is far from impossible, but I argue here is that it is significantly easier, and therefore preferable, to pursue one strategy alone. I identify two reasons why this is the case.

First, party reputations cross constituency boundaries. As discussed earlier, though individuals will tend to focus on the characteristics of their own legislators, information about other party leaders can be used to confirm, discredit, or sometimes alter their expectations about which types of voters will benefit from a particular politician's electoral victory. Because of this, there are potentially negative reputational effects that can result from an extremely heterogeneous mobilizational strategy, particularly when parties attempt to mobilize on the basis of different attributes of the same type, such as two different ethnic groups or two rival leaders. Doing so potentially discredits or dilutes the party's appeals. Again, this is not to say that multiple claims *necessarily* diminish the strength of a party's appeal, in many cases it is a distinct possibility.

Second, diverse methods of mobilization can lead to divisiveness within the party, particularly among the leadership. Suppose a party is comprised mainly of three regional units, each mobilizing voters in a different way. In one region, the party wins votes because its politicians are landlords who attract the voters of traditional dependents. In the second region, the party's politicians belong to a single ethnic group and win the voters of co-ethnics. Finally, in the third region, the party's leadership is comprised almost entirely of farmers who elicit support from fellow farmers. In this case, where different types of leaders each winning votes for different reasons, who should lead the party? Should it be the landlord leader, the ethnic leader, or the farmer leader? Increasing the number of strategies used to mobilize voters should increase the likelihood of leadership conflict. Moreover, regional leaders can, if disgruntled by the party's leadership success, mobilize voters on terms entirely different from the rest of the party, are well-positioned to strike out on their own and form a new party.

By contrast, if a party employs a single strategy across the country, the party may more easily avoid divisive leadership contests. For example, suppose instead of three mobilizing strategies for three regions, the party has one strategy across all three, projecting it as a farmer-friendly party everywhere. Though the potential divisive leadership conflicts exists everywhere, there are no longer ready-made fault lines. If the party is dominated everywhere by farmers, then no matter who becomes the leader, she will still be a farmer leader. She is more likely to be broadly acceptable to other farmers and will carry much the same appeal to voters as any of the other contenders for the leadership (also farmers). Moreover, disgruntled leaders have fewer options outside the party. As farmer leaders, they are rivals for the same constituents in the same places, but presumably found themselves insufficiently popular among this clientele to win the leadership contest in the first place. This stands in contrast to the case in which the farmer wins the leadership contest over the ethnic leader and the landlord. The farmer may be largely unacceptable to the non-farmers. Moreover, the landlord and the ethnic leader have the options of forming their own party in their own region without any competition from the farmer leader.

Although there are reasons to believe that because single mobilization strategies are preferable to multiple strategies, the concentration of attributes does not necessarily guarantee the emergence of

regional parties. Nor does the mere presence of dispersed attributes guarantee the emergence of national parties. An important factor when considering the likely outcome of different distributions of individual attributes is the salience of various attributes.

In trying to determine, *ex ante*, whether a country's distribution of attributes is likely to lead to regional or national parties, the entire universe of attributes found in a population must be distinguished from those attributes that are politically salient and therefore cheaply mobilized. When politically salient attributes are highly concentrated, then we can say, *ex ante*, that regional parties are more likely to emerge.

There is a broad range of candidate attributes that may matter to voters when they formulate their voting decision. But, in any setting, only some of a candidate's myriad characteristics are going to be relevant. A great deal of research has gone into explaining why some types of social cleavages (membership in which is determined by possession of a particular attribute) are more salient than others, and a variety of answers have emerged. Research suggests visible attributes (Chandra 2004) and institutionally-privileged attributes should be most important. Institutional arguments vary. Lieberman (2003) focuses on how constitutions create "national political communities" that structure what is salient. Similarly, Chandra (2005) looks at state institutions that encourage political action based on some cleavages but not others. Posner (2006) argues that institutions that determine the size of minimum winning coalitions matter, while Laitin (1986) looks at those institutions imposed by colonialism that produce a hegemonic common sense.

It is outside the scope of this project to theorize in depth about what creates salience, but it is nevertheless worth noting that not *all* instances of dispersed attributes can sustain a national party nor are all instances of concentrated attributes likely to produce regional parties. Moreover, since much of the existing research shows that salience rarely inheres in particular types of individual characteristics but is socially constructed out of contingent decisions. Salience can therefore be altered, though often with great difficulty.

Just as salience can be altered, so too can concentration or dispersion. The level of concentration or dispersion of a population is often subject to manipulation, though the ease of that manipulation may vary greatly. Previously distinct and geographically concentrated attributes can be combined to be thought of as a single dispersed attribute. The most obvious examples of the construction of concentration or dispersion are ethnic groups. In India, for example, the category of Scheduled Caste—which is dispersed across most of the country—is comprised of separate geographically concentrated castes. From these multiple concentrated attributes, a single dispersed attribute can be created. But the construction of concentration and dispersion is not limited to ethnicity alone. The same could be applied to class. Industrial workers in one region, agricultural laborers in a second region, and low-level workers in the service section in a third region could all be thought of as a geographically-dispersed "working class" instead of distinct classes.

Section 5.2: Coalition government

Coalition is important because it removes a strong disincentive for politicians to join small parties that are themselves unlikely to form the government on their own. Though voters themselves are relatively unconcerned with whether their preferred politician belongs to a regional or national political party, politicians—whether motivated by power, perks, policy, or material benefits—have a strong preference for being in government over being in opposition. This preference for being in government can have a strong impact on politicians' decisions about which party to join. In particular, when single-party government is the norm, politicians are likely to avoid joining small parties. However, when coalition governments are common, politicians are not similarly constrained; politicians may join small as well as

large political parties and still realistically hope to gain access to the government. A politician's concern for party size inevitably influences membership in regional parties, since regional parties are, almost by definition, small parties.

One of the important conditions that underlies the growth of regional parties is the strategic environment in which politicians operate—specifically, whether the strategic environment punishes or rewards membership in a small party. In this section, I argue that when coalition government is frequent, regional parties are more likely to emerge because politicians see little disincentive to being part of a regional party. By contrast, when single-party government is the norm, there are strong disincentives to being a member of a regional party.

When governments are habitually formed by single party majorities, small parties have little expectation of being able to enter government. Suppose, for example, that at a country's independence a single party comes to dominate the first handful of elections, as is common in many recently de-colonized societies. A single party capable of winning power on its own can only be dislodged by a party of roughly equal size or by a coalition of small parties.

When there are two large parties that are each large enough to potentially win majorities on their own, then small parties will often believe themselves unlikely ever to enter government. Politicians, especially those who are primarily office-seeking, are likely to place greater weight on historical precedent than on future possibility. In other words, they have a far greater expectation that what has happened in the past is far more likely to happen again than that some outcome that has rarely, if ever, happened in the past will happen in the future. Thus, if there is a history of single-party majority governments, politicians will expect single-party majority governments in the future, even if there is ample possibility for a hung parliament. Politicians, in turn, condition their behavior on these expectations. They see strong disincentive to joining a small party because of the slim likelihood that they will ever be part of a government party.

A coalition of small parties can also challenge an incumbent party with a majority. The ideal coalition consists of parties with clearly demarcated arenas of support (i.e., regional parties). When the parties' support bases do not overlap, then each party contests in its area of strength without infringing on any of the other parties' territory or dividing the opposition vote. In this situation, parties can form either post- or pre-election alliances. Either way the same election outcome will obtain.

In the absence of such clearly defined support bases, small parties must coordinate in some way in order to dislodge a large incumbent party. They can do so either through seat adjustments or through party mergers. Seat adjustments are agreements among parties to limit the number of seats that each individual party contests in order to avoid splitting the opposition vote. In each seat, one party contests on behalf of all of the party's in the alliance. Alternatively, parties can merge in order to combine their strength into a single party. When faced with a strong single party rival capable of potentially winning majorities on its own, there are several reasons why a group of small parties would prefer to merge into a single party.

First, it reduces exit options for alliance parties after the allocation of tickets. When separate parties ally, parties can easily leave the alliance in the event of disputes over seat sharing or may engage in a small number of "friendly fights," in which multiple parties from the same alliance contest a seat, without necessarily withdrawing from the overall alliance.³⁰ But, when parties merge, it is more difficult

³⁰ The term "friendly fight" is used in India to describe instances in which alliance partners contest against one another. In the past, friendly fights have taken place when one of the parties is dissatisfied with the number of seats that it received in the agreement. It contests a small number of additional seats in which alliance members are also

to defect. Rebel candidates must either contest as independents or on the old party labels. Last minute defections may be met with considerable bureaucratic hurdles that may prevent dissident politicians from contesting on their old party label or even on a new party label. There is also an added degree of uncertainty, since it may be unclear how the electorate will react to the new or re-founded party.

Second, and perhaps most importantly, a party merger obscures the allocation of seats to the various factions. With seat sharing agreements between parties, the number of seats allocated to each party is typically quite clear, leading to the possibility of dissatisfaction with the candidate selection. However, when parties are merged, the boundaries between the factions (formerly the parties) are blurred. It is more difficult to see who are “winners” or “losers” in ticket allocation.

Third, the perception among voters may be that a single larger party is a more credible alternative to a coalition of small parties. I have earlier argued that voters care little about whether they are voting for a candidate whose party will enter government or about the policies that a party will pursue when in government. That said, to the extent that some voters do care about these things, they may look more kindly upon a single large party rather than on a coalition of small parties as an alternative to a large incumbent party. The large party may simply seem a more “natural” alternative than a coalition of small parties, none of which comes close to equaling the size of the incumbent. Additionally, a coalition may be associated with a high degree of uncertainty. Voters may wonder which party’s leader will occupy the highest post in government or whether the coalition partners can successfully and stably run a government when the exit costs are low. Thus, in a context of habitual single-party majorities, politicians are likely to favor large (therefore usually national) parties because a single large party offers the best option for entering government for all those politicians outside the incumbent party.

Once it is clear that *no* party can form a single-party majority, there is no major disincentive for politicians to join small parties. If both of the country’s leading parties require coalition partners in order to govern, then small parties no longer face the same imperative to merge in order to combat a single party capable of winning on its own. Though the benefits of merger remain (high exit costs, lower likelihood of the alliance splitting, perceptions of being a more viable alternative), they are often overwhelmed by the strategic advantages of being a potential king-maker.

In coalition governments, small parties exercise a great deal of bargaining power. As possible king-makers, they are potentially in a position to extract more than their fair share of resources in return for giving an alliance enough votes to claim a legislative majority. Threats of withdrawal are most credibly made when the costs to exiting the coalition are low. The cost to exit is much lower for an intact party with its own party label, organization, and seats that it can claim as its own in the legislature. The costs are much higher (as discussed above regarding party mergers) if those threatening to topple the coalition are part of an amorphous faction within the party. Parties, rather than factions, can therefore exercise greater leverage as king-makers. In coalition politics, small parties also have a strategic dexterity in being able to move from one alliance partner to the other, such that the shrewdest political parties can remain almost perpetually in power, even as the head of the coalition changes.

Of course, coalition politics or its absence does not lead ineluctably to regional parties or national parties. If a party is well-entrenched, well-organized, and capable of winning power at the state-level, it may continue as a regional party even in a context in which only single-party governments are formed at the national level. The point is simply that coalition politics significantly lowers the disincentive for forming a regional party by allowing small parties a chance to gain access to the government.

contesting. However, the contest is intended to be “friendly.” In other words, in the campaigning, the erstwhile allies are expected to train their eyes not on each other but on the rival party or alliance. Prominent examples of friendly fights can be found in recent elections in the state of Bihar.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the possible endogeneity associated with an argument positing a causal relationship between coalition politics and the growth of regional parties. In fact, it may be that the growth of regional parties causes coalition politics, rather than the other way around. The emergence of a large number of small parties could well erode the national parties' vote bank and preclude them from being able to form a government. In many cases, this may be the true. However, I argue that there can be—and often is—a direct causal relationship between the advent of coalition politics and the growth of regional parties. Events in India in the 1990s bear this out.

In 1989, the Indian National Congress lost its legislative majority to the BJP and the newly-formed Janata Dal, two national parties that had arranged a partial seat-sharing agreement in 1989. From the 1984 election to the 1989 election, Congress' vote share declined by approximately 9% points. But during both the elections the vote share for regional parties hovered at around 30% of the vote. Rather than losing votes to regional parties, the Congress lost most of its votes to the BJP and JD.³¹ Moreover, the BJP and JD made better use of their votes through informal seat sharing agreements in some states, thereby translating votes into seats more efficiently. After the 1989 election the JD formed the government, though it was plagued by instability during its short tenure.

In the 1991 election, Congress again registered a decline in its vote share, though there was no notable growth in regional parties. It nevertheless emerged out of the 1991 election as the largest party, forming a minority government. The 1991 election (India's tenth) produced the country's second consecutive minority government after 37 years of single-party majority government (1952-1989). Beginning the early 90s, after the 1991 election and accelerating as the decade progressed, the Janata Dal began to disintegrate into various regional parties, and splinters from the Congress also began to break away into regional formations. But, it was only after the first series of hung verdicts that the growth of regional parties began in earnest. Admittedly, once these parties began to grow, it further diminished the likelihood that any party would ever again be able to win a single-party majority. But the sequence of events shows that the minority governments and the need for informal coalitions (that is, minority governments relying on the outside support of other parties to keep the governing party in power) predated substantial increases in support for regional parties.

³¹ For example, in the state of Rajasthan, many interview respondents described the JD's support as coming in large part from the Jat community and also from Muslims. Traditionally, both the Jats and the Muslims have leaned strongly in favor of Congress.

Appendix I: Tables

Table 1. National and semi-national party strength across world federations

Country	Election Year	Number of federal units	National party vote share	National and semi-national party vote share
Brazil	2006	27	95.99%	100.00%
Mexico	2006	32	99.68%	99.68%
Malaysia	2004	16	97.90%	97.90%
Austria	2006	9	95.57%	95.79%
Italy	2006	20	92.51%	92.69%
Switzerland	2003	26	91.41%	92.68%
Germany	2005	16	91.40%	91.80%
Australia	2004	8	88.90%	90.10%
Canada	2006	13	88.21%	88.50%
Colombia	2006	33	83.60%	86.84%
South Africa	2004	9	86.18%	86.18%
Spain	2004	19	85.00%	85.00%
Pakistan	2002	6*	26.21%	75.67%
India	2004	35	54.04%	55.78%
Belgium	2007	3	0.13%	0.13%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2006	2	0.10%	0.10%
St. Kitts and Nevis	2004	2	0.00%	0.00%

*Pakistan has 6 federal units; however in one of them, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), partisan candidates cannot contest elections; only independents may contest. I therefore exclude the FATA from the analysis of Pakistan. In 2002, voters from FATA accounted for only 1.07% of the electorate.

Table 2. India's national and semi-national parties (1951-2004)

Year	National parties	National vote	Semi-national parties	Semi-national vote	National + semi-national vote
1952	INC, SOC, KMPP, BJS, SCF	66.81%	RRP	1.97%	68.79%
1957	INC, PSP, CPI	68.07%	BJS, SCF	7.66%	75.73%
1962	INC, PSP, SWA, CPI	69.37%	RPI, BJS	9.27%	78.64%
1967	INC, BJS, SWA, SSP, CPI	68.62%	PSP, RPI, CPI(M)	9.81%	78.43%
1971	INC, CPI, NCO, BJS, SSP	68.61%	PSP, SWA	4.11%	72.72%
1977	INC, JNP, CPI	78.66%		0.00%	78.66%
1980	INC, JNP, INC(U), CPI, JNP(S)	78.83%		0.05%	78.88%
1984	INC, BJP, CPI, JNP	64.88%	LKD	5.64%	70.53%
1989	INC, JD, CPI, BJP	71.26%	BSP, CPI(M)	9.10%	80.36%
1991	INC, BJP, JD, CPI	70.91%	SJP	3.36%	74.27%
1996	INC, BJP, AIIC(T), CPI	52.71%	JD, BSP	12.10%	64.81%
1998	INC, BJP	51.41%	BSP	4.71%	56.12%
1999	INC, BJP	53.53%		0.00%	53.53%
2004	INC, BJP	54.04%	BSP, CPI	1.74%	55.78%

Appendix II: Party abbreviations

ADMK	All India 'Anna' Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
AIIC(T)	All India Indira Congress (Tiwari)
AITC	All India Trinamool Congress
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
INC	Indian National Congress
INC(U)	Indian National Congress (U)
JD	Janata Dal
JD(S)	Janata Dal (Secular)
JNP	Janata Party
JNP(S)	Janata Party (S)
KMPP	Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party
LKD	Lok Dal
NCO	Indian National Congress (Organisation)
NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
PSP	Praja Socialist Party
RPI	Republican Party of India
RRP	Ram Rajya Parishad
SCF	Scheduled Caste Federation
SHS	Shiv Sena
SJP	Samajwadi Janata Party
SOC	Socialist Party
SSP	Samyukta Socialist Party
SWA	Swatantra Party

Appendix III: Herfindahl index of regional vote fragmentation

In studies of party systems, political scientists measure the effective number of parties as the reciprocal of a Herfindahl index. They calculate a Herfindahl index by squaring each party's percentage of the vote and then summing those squared voted shares. For the effective number of parties measure, the Herfindahl score is for a party system, and the components that comprise the index are party vote shares. For my purposes, the Herfindahl index is calculated for each *party*, and the components of the index are the percentage of a party's total vote share that it wins from each region.

By normalizing the regions' populations, I want to ensure that a perfectly national party is one that draws votes from each region in perfect proportion to the regions' populations. This means that if a country has two regions, one with 1000 voters and one with 200 voters, then a perfectly national party is one that wins 100 votes in the first region and 20 votes in the second region (or 200 votes in the first region and 40 in the second, and so on). A party winning an equal number of votes in each region, say 100 in each, would be "less national" because it draws an equal share of its total votes from the much smaller region. Its voters are therefore disproportionately concentrated in the smaller region. Normalizing the regions' populations in effect treats each region as equally important, regardless of size, and awards higher scores to any party that is comparatively poorly represented in any region (no matter its size).

Once the Herfindahl index has been calculated, I then normalize that score since the minimum value of the Herfindahl index will be $1/N$, where N is the number of units that comprise the index (in my case regions). In order to facilitate cross-national comparisons, I want to ensure that the score for any country can obtain any value between 0 and 1. I therefore use the standard normalization formula for a Herfindahl index that makes the minimum possible value a 0 and the maximum possible value a 1. The standard formula for normalizing a Herfindahl index is: $(H - (1/N)) / (1 - (1/N))$, where H is the raw Herfindahl score and N is the number of regions.

The table below provides a sample calculation. In the first step, I calculate the proportion of a country's total votes that come from each region (column 3). I then divide the total number of votes a party wins in each region (column 4) by the percentage of the total votes that come from each region (column 3) to arrive at the number of "normalized" votes that a party wins in each region (column 6). (Column 5 simply shows the % of a party's total votes that comes from each region. The difference between this column and column 7 is striking). Next, I calculate the % of a party's normalized votes won in each region (column 7). The percentages in column 7 are used to calculate the raw Herfindahl score in which each percentage is squared and the values then summed. Finally, the raw score is normalized.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Region	Total votes cast in region	% of total votes that come from each region	Total votes won by Party X in each region	% of Party X's total votes won from each region	# of normalized votes won in each region	% of Party X's total votes won from each region, with the region populations normalized
1	100	10%	50	16.67%	500	26.67%
2	100	10%	100	33.33%	1000	53.33%
3	400	40%	50	16.67%	125	6.57%
4	400	40%	100	33.33%	250	13.33%
Raw Herfindahl score		0.3738				
Normalized Herfindahl score		0.1704				

Appendix IV: Data on cross-national elections (Table 1)

Table 1 compares the strength of national, quasi-national, and regional parties across federations world-wide. According to Griffiths (2005), the world's federations are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Comoros, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa, Spain, St. Kitts & Nevis, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, and Venezuela. To this, I also add Iraq, bringing the total to 26 federations. Watts' (1999) list of federations is identical except that it includes Yugoslavia and does not include Bosnia and Herzegovina, differences which I attribute to the date of publication.

I add quasi-federations to this list of federations. To determine the set of quasi-federations, I take Watts' list of 21 "decentralized unions with federal elements" and include those decentralized unions that, according to Keefer's "Database on Political Institutions 2004," have locally elected state/provincial governments and have sub-national governments with extensive taxing, spending, or regulatory authority. The only countries that qualify are Colombia and Italy.

I therefore arrived at a list of 28 federations and quasi-federations for which I sought election data. For each country, I looked for election results from the country's most recent lower house legislative elections. Specifically I needed either constituency or state/province-level data for each party. I currently have this data for 17 countries (see table of included countries) and am in the process of collecting it for three more countries (Ethiopia, United States, Venezuela). Data are potentially available for an additional four countries (Comoros, Iraq, Nigeria, and Russia). Full election data are further available for Argentina, but I am not aware of any way of calculating my index using Argentine election data since there is no obvious way to attribute a vote share (even a vote share of 0) to each party in each province. Finally, three countries are excluded because of lack of party-based elections (Micronesia, Serbia and Montenegro, and United Arab Emirates). For countries included in the Table 3, the table below ("Included countries") provides the source of the data used. For federations and quasi-federations excluded from Table 3 ("Excluded countries"), the reason for the exclusion is given as is the possibility of future inclusion.

Included countries

Country	Source	Website
Australia	Australian Electoral Commission	http://www.aec.gov.au
Austria	Bundesministerium für Inneres, Wahlen und Volksbegehren	http://www.bmi.gv.at/wahlen
Belgium	Belgium Federal Portal, Federal Elections 2007	http://polling2007.belgium.be/en
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Centralna Izborna Komisija Bosne i Hercegovine	http://www.izbori.ba
Brazil	Website of Professor Jairo Nicolau	http://jaironicolau.iuperj.br
Canada	Elections Canada	http://www.elections.ca
Colombia	Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, Organización Electoral	http://www.registraduria.gov.co/reselec2006/0312/index.htm
Germany	Der Bundeswahlleiter	http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de
India	Election Commission of India	http://www.eci.gov.in
Italy	Ministerio dell'Interno, Dipartimento per gli Affari Interni e Territoriali	http://elezioni.interno.it
Malaysia	Election Commission of Malaysia	http://www.spr.gov.my
Mexico	Instituto Federal Electoral	http://www.ife.org.mx
Pakistan	Election Commission of Pakistan	http://www.ecp.gov.pk
South Africa	Independent Electoral Commission	http://www.elections.org.za
Spain	Ministerio del Interior, Dirección General de	http://www.mir.es/DGPI

	Política Interior	
St. Kitts & Nevis	Psephos—Adam Carr’s Election Archive	http://psephos.adam-carr.net
Switzerland	Chancellerie fédérale, Thèmes, Droits politiques	http://www.bk.admin.ch/themen/pore/index.html?lang=fr

Excluded Countries

Country	Future inclusion	Reason for exclusion
Argentina	Possibly	Election data are available from Ministerio del Interior, Dirección Nacional Electoral (http://www.mininterior.gov.ar/elecciones/); however, comparable province-level vote shares for each party are not available for each party.*
Comoros	Possibly	Electoral results for subnational units are currently unavailable.
Ethiopia	Yes	Data are currently being collected from the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (http://www.electionsethiopia.org).
Iraq	Possibly	Electoral results for subnational units are not presently available.
Micronesia	No	There are no political parties.
Nigeria	Possibly	Electoral results for subnational units are not presently available.
Russia	Possibly	I am currently trying to locate comprehensive vote share data in English for Russia’s subnational units.
Serbia and Montenegro	No	The country no longer exists; moreover, prior to its dissolution, the country never held direct national elections.
United Arab Emirates	No	Elections are not held.
United States of America	Yes	Data are currently being collected
Venezuela	Yes	Data are currently being collected from Consejo Nacional Electoral (http://www.cne.gov.ve/)

Works Cited

- Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?: The Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Brancati, Dawn. Forthcoming. The Origins of Regional Parties. *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Brancati, Dawn. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism." *International Organization* (July): 651-685.
- Caramani, Daniele. 2004. *The Nationalization of Politics: The Formation of National Electorates and Party Systems in Western Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Chandra, Kanchan. 2004. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Chhibber, Pradeep K. and Ken Kollman. 2004. *The Formation of National Party Systems*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- De Winter, Lieven and Huri Türsan, eds. 1998. *Regionalist parties in Western Europe*. London: Routledge.
- De Winter, Lieven, Margarita Gómez-Reino, and Peter Lynch, eds. 2006. *Autonomist Parties in Europe: Identity Politics and the Revival of the Territorial Cleavage*. Barcelona: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials.
- Fearon, James and Pieter van Houten. 2002. The Politicization of Cultural and Economic Difference: A Return to Theory of Regional Autonomy Movements. Paper presented at the Laboratory in Comparative Ethnic Processes (LiCEP), Stanford, CA, 10-11 May.
- Griffiths, Ann L., ed. 2005. *Handbook of Federal Countries, 2005*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Heller, William B. 2002. Regional Parties and National Politics in Europa: Spain's *estado de las autonomías*, 1993 to 2000. *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (6): 657-685.
- Kasara, Kimuli. 2007. Tax Me If You Can: Ethnic Geography, Democracy, and the Taxation of Agriculture in Africa. *American Political Science Review* 101 (1): 159-172.
- Keating, Michael. 1998. *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Kedar, Orit. 1995. When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections. *American Political Science Review* 99 (2): 185-199.
- Laitin, David D. 1986. *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Change among the Yoruba*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Levi, Margaret and Michael Hechter. 1985. A Rational Choice Approach to the Rise and Decline of Ethnoregional Political Parties. In *New Nationalisms of the Developed West: Toward Explanation*, eds. Edward A. Tiryakian and Ronald Rogowski. Boston: Allen and Unwin.

- Lieberman, Evan S. 2003. *Race and Regionalism in the Politics of Taxation in Brazil and South Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mainwaring, Scott P. 1999. *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Meadwell, Hudson. 1991. A Rational Choice Approach to Political Regionalism. *Comparative Politics* 23 (4): 401-21.
- Posner, Daniel N. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sorens, Jason. 2005. The Cross-Sectional Determinants of Secessionism in Advanced Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies* 38 (3): 304-326.
- Stokes, Susan. 2005. Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina. *American Political Science Review* 99 (3): 315-325.
- Van Houten, Pieter. 2000. Regional Assertiveness in Western Europe: Political Constraints and the Role of Party Competition. Dissertation. University of Chicago.
- Watts, Ronald L. 1999. *Comparing Federal Systems*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Wilkinson, Steven I. 2007. Explaining changing patterns of party-voter linkages in India. In *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Accountability and Political Competition*, eds. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson, 110-140. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press