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Power, Performance and Bias: Evaluating the Electoral Quotas for Scheduled Castes in India

by

Francesca Refsum Jensenius

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Pradeep Chhibber, Chair Jasjeet Sekhon Leonardo Arriola Pranab Bardhan

Spring 2013

Power, Performance and Bias: Evaluating the Electoral Quotas for Scheduled Castes in India

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Abstract

Power, Performance and Bias: Evaluating the Electoral Quotas for Scheduled Castes in India

bv

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Many countries make special institutional arrangements to guarantee the political representation of minorities. This is usually justified as a way of reducing ethnic tensions and improving the quality of democratic representation. In addition, it is often assumed that minority representatives will act in the interest of their group. India has had reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes (SCs, the former 'untouchables') in their state assemblies since independence. Reserved constituencies are single member districts where only SCs can run for election, while the whole population votes for them irrespective of their caste group. In this dissertation I explore the effects of these quotas between 1974 and 2007. I am able to control for the selection bias inherent in quotas being non-randomly assigned in the 1970s by matching more than 3,000 constituencies on pre-treatment variables from 1971. Using unique new data at the constituency-level for 15 Indian states, I show that the quotas have been effective at guaranteeing the political presence of SCs and integrating them into main-stream politics. Contrary to the bias often reported against SC politicians, they are not much different from other politicians: they represent similar parties, have similar rerunning patterns, and hold many cabinet positions. In fact, rather than being spokespersons of the SC community, SC politicians seem to be agents of their parties rather than agents of their group. The presence of SC politicians seems to have had positive effects on caste bias in society at large, though, with voters in reserved areas reporting less caste discrimination than voters in non-reserved areas. Considering how strong the social boundary of untouchability used to be in Indian society, this can be seen as a huge achievement in itself. But the integration of SC politicians, and the fact that they are answerable to mostly non-SC voters, also means that their presence has not done much to improve the substantive representation of SC interests. This can therefore serve as a reminder that there are clear trade-offs in institutional design and that an electoral system might work well to reduce social bias and prevent conflict without improving the substantive representation of minority groups.

To my family

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In democratic countries, where politicians are chosen in free and fair elections, women and minorities often remain politically under-represented. During the last few decades it has become increasingly common to try to counter such under-representation by granting electoral quotas, majority-minority districts, exemptions from electoral thresholds, or veto powers. Today, more than 100 countries have electoral quotas for women and at least 38 countries have electoral quotas for minority groups (Krook and O'Brien, 2010). Quotas are usually justified as a way of reducing ethnic tensions and improving the quality of democratic representation by including more voices in legislative debates. In addition, it is often assumed that minority representatives will act in the interest of their respective groups and thereby improve the substantive representation of the group.

When India became independent from British colonial rule in 1947, the political representation of minorities was a major topic of discussion. The members of the Constituent Assembly wanted the country to be an electoral democracy, but recognized that the strong social divisions in Indian society would result in some groups being permanently excluded from political power. One of the groups that demanded political safeguards was the Scheduled Castes (SCs), a collection of sub-castes that used to be considered "untouchable." The practice of untouchability was outlawed by the Indian constitution, but was still common at the time of independence. Members of the SC community were seen as ritually polluting because they were associated with dirty work, such as maintaining cremation grounds and cleaning toilets, and were, therefore, discriminated against by higher caste groups (Galanter, 1984, p. 15). The intensity and type of discrimination they were subjected to varied from place to place, but included denial of access to wells, schools, roads, courts, temples, shops, and other public places (Elayaperumal, 1969, pp. 15-32). Those SCs who consciously or accidentally broke unwritten caste rules could be subjected to violent and cruel punishments (Elayaperumal, 1969, pp. 92-98). The police would often turn a blind eye to such atrocities, and in some cases even take part in them (Mane, 1974, p. 3).

During the debates about how to design India's electoral system, the members of the Constituent Assembly came to the conclusion that although SCs constituted about 15% of the population, the strong social bias against them would make it hard for them to be

competitive in open elections. As a remedy, SCs were granted electoral quotas (commonly referred to as reservations) in the lower house of parliament and in state legislative assemblies in proportion to their share of the population in each state.¹ This quota system has been praised for empowering members of a marginalized community, but has also been criticized for bringing to power SC politicians who are tools in the hands of the upper castes. This is often attributed to its design: in reserved constituencies (political districts) only SCs can run for election, while the whole electorate votes for these SCs irrespective of their own caste. Since the SC community is spread across India they are usually in minority in the constituencies reserved for them. This means that the SC politicians in most cases are answerable to a majority of non-SC voters, and that political parties only support candidates who are palatable to a non-SC electorate.² During a debate about quotas for SCs in 1969, one Member of Parliament (MP) complained that: "No proof has been given by the hon. Minister or anybody else to show that this reservation has in practice led to concrete advance and benefits for this class" (Lok Sabha Debates, December 8 1969, p. 299-300). No response was given to this comment at the time of that meeting and we still do not know the answer to his question: have quotas benefited SCs?

The electoral quota system for SCs is one of the world's most extensive and long-lasting quota systems, but it has received surprisingly little academic attention. In one of the few empirical evaluations of SC quotas, Galanter (1979, p. 450) wrote that they have been a "partial and costly success." More than 30 years later, McMillan (2005, p. 320) concluded that "[t]he clearest direct effect of electoral reservation is to provide a guaranteed minimum number of legislators from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The justification for this is that it provides an element of representation which would not otherwise exist, and that the representatives will change policy outcomes so as to represent the interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes better." Both authors pointed to the need for further analysis and additional original data.

1.1 Findings in a nutshell

This project attempts to evaluate the effects of the electoral quotas for SCs in India state assemblies. In order to do so, I have developed new constituency-wise data for more than 3,000 state assembly constituencies in India's 15 largest states. The data includes information about electoral outcomes in India from 1969 to 2007 – including rerunning patterns of candidates, which parties they ran for, and voting patterns – and development

¹In India, the term reservations is also used about the reserved positions in government services and educational institutions. This project is exclusively about the political reservation system, and unless otherwise specified, I use reservations to describe the electoral quotas in the national parliament and in state assemblies.

²Quotas were also given to the Scheduled Tribes according to their population in each state (on average 7%). Although often discussed together, quotas for SCs and STs have different intellectual histories, require different methodological approaches and different data. In this dissertation I have therefore chosen to focus exclusively on the issue of electoral quotas for SCs.

indicators from the Census of India from 1971 and 2001 merged to the constituency-level. Using this data, and also other existing data sources, I have looked at the representation of SC politicians across India from the 1970s until today, how voters have reacted to them, and the development of the SC community in reserved constituencies. I also complement the quantitative analysis with evidence from historical sources, as well as with observations from about 11 months of qualitative field work in several Indian states.

Looking at the record of SC politicians in India over time, it is evident that SC quotas have been very effective in bringing SC politicians to power and making them part of mainstream politics. After just one period in power they have a similar educational profile as other politicians, they represent the same parties, have a similar re-election rate, and hold many cabinet positions. In this way, the quotas have truly worked to integrate SC politicians into the political system. Considering how strong the bias against SCs has been historically, the mere presence of SCs in circles of political power can be considered a huge achievement. While poor and uneducated SCs may still experience social discrimination in Indian society, it is clear that power, education and money trump traditional caste boundaries. I also find evidence that there is less caste discrimination in reserved constituencies and that voters in these areas have a more favorable perception of SC politicians.

But my analysis also reveals a bias against SC politicians: electoral turnout drops when areas become reserved, very few SC incumbents run for re-election when their constituency becomes de-reserved, and even fewer get re-elected. Although there seems to have been a gradual reduction in bias against SC leaders over time – the drop in turnout was much higher after the change in reservations in the 1970s than after the change in 2008 – it seems clear that few SCs would have been able to win elections without the help of electoral quotas. In addition, many of my interview respondents stated that SC politicians are 'weak' or 'useless' and it is clear that SCs have been under-represented in the highest positions of power, such as high-level cabinet positions.

Quotas for SCs have also been criticized for bringing the wrong SC leaders to power. Those opposed to the quotas often argue that SC politicians are tools in the hands of political parties and that they have not worked for SC interests. There seems to be truth to these claims. In my analysis of development indicators, I find no systematic evidence of SCs being better (or worse) off when they live in a reserved constituency. SC politicians I talked to also made it clear that they do no actively try to work for SC interests, because the majority of their voters are from other groups and because they follow the policy line of the political parties of which they are members. There are, of course, exceptions to these generalizations. But, on an aggregate level, the quotas for SCs in India do not seem to have had any systematic effect on development for the SC population at large. Rather, SC politicians seem to have been embedded in the political game in much the same way as other politicians, and they seem to see themselves as agents of their parties rather than of their group.

The case of quotas for SCs is a stark example of some of the tradeoffs inherent in institutional design: a policy may be good at integrating a group by ensuring their descriptive representation, without really improving their substantive representation. Looking back

through the history of how the particular design of these quotas came into effect (see Chapter 2), it is clear that the drafters of the Indian constitution were keenly aware that different designs of the quota system would create different incentives for the politicians elected from reserved seats. SCs were granted quotas against the will of many political leaders, on the condition that they were designed to integrate SC politicians, not create champions of SC interests. This was done by making SC candidates appeal to voters from different caste groups. An electoral system of separate electorates for SCs — which was the quota system originally sought by SC leaders in pre-independence India — may have resulted in better substantive representation for SCs, but it was feared that this would be at the cost of aggravating the social cleavage between SCs and other groups.

My findings show that electoral quotas for SCs have increased their descriptive representation and helped reduce caste bias both among the political elite and among voters, but have not necessarily improved the substantive representation of the SC community at large. A question that arises — not only in the case of SCs, but also in the case of women and other minority groups — is whether descriptive representation is valuable in itself if it does not directly improve the substantive representation of the group? I believe there are many examples of this being the case. For SCs, quotas have been one important way of breaking down a strong social barrier. For other minorities, they have been used as a tool to prevent social conflict. For yet others, representation has been important for providing role models and helping to develop an interest in politics. It cannot be ignored that these benefits might come at a high political cost. In some cases, the implementation of quotas and other forms of political safeguards can result in parts of the electorate feeling alienated or unrepresented. It is also a reality that quotas may temporarily bring to power political leaders who are inexperienced or ill-suited for the job. In the case of quotas for SCs in India, SC politicians have gradually gained political experience and the negative reactions against them seem to have subsided over time. Overall, the quotas have been very effective at integrating a previously marginalized group into positions of power and, in doing so, have helped weaken a strong social division. We should not fool ourselves, however, that they have necessarily achieved much more than that.

Before moving on to an overview of the dissertation chapters, the next sections will provide a brief discussion of some of the key terms I use throughout the discussion, and some contextual background information about SCs and the use of quotas in India.

1.2 Quotas and representation

Discussions of political representation usually go back to Heinz Euleu's treatment of Edmund Burke's two types of representatives: 'trustee' and 'delegate'. The delegate is a representative who promises to follow the constituents instructions or expressed desires, while the trustee promises to "further the constituents long-run interests and the interests of the nation as a whole" (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 516). In either case representation is characterized by representatives being "responsible to," "answerable to," "bound," and even

"bound by" their voters (Mansbridge, 2003, p. 516). In a comprehensive study of the concept of representation, Pitkin (1972) explores and discusses several different views, or interpretations, of the word representation that can be found in political philosophy and political science. She distinguishes between four sources of legitimacy for the representative:

Formalistic: a representative is seen as legitimate because he/she has been elected or will have to face re-election.

Descriptive: the legitimacy of a representative rests on having the same characteristics as (or some shared experience with) the represented: female legislators representing women, black legislators representing black constituents, a farmer representing farmers, and so on.

Symbolic: representation by some kind of national symbol or figurehead.

Substantive: that the representative actually *acts* in the interest of the represented.

India is not unique in trying to guarantee the descriptive representation of some groups in their governing institutions. Measures to ensure minority representation have become increasingly common over the last two decades and are often described as a sign of "liberal progressiveness" (Reynolds, 2005). In 1999, the OSCE³ High Commissioner on National Minorities stated in a speech that "states should ensure that opportunities exist for minorities to have an effective voice at the level of the central government, including through special arrangements as necessary" (van der Stoel, 1999). And, in fact, in a UNDP survey of minority representation, 40% of the 91 surveyed countries did have in place some special electoral measure to ensure the representation of minorities (Protsyk, 2010).

In the US, the most well-known method to for increase the representation of underrepresented groups is to change political boundaries in order to create majority-minority electoral districts. Such measures ensure that a minority group has the power to decide who is elected, so long as they vote together. Whether or not this leads to the election of minority representatives, the result is that politicians in these districts have to be responsive to a minority electorate.

A more direct way of ensuring minority representation is to use electoral quotas, since quotas mandate that political representatives belong to a specific group. The number of countries using quotas for women and minorities has been growing rapidly over the last 20 years (Krook and O'Brien, 2010; Franceschet, Krook and Piscopo, 2012). Figure 1.1 shows the countries across the world that use some form of quota as of 2012.

There are several ways of sub-dividing quotas, but one useful way of dividing them is the following (see e.g. Htun, 2004; Dahlerup, 2006; Matland, 2006):

Aspirant quotas: a minimum number of the beneficiary group is required among precandidates within parties. These types of quotas are used, for example, for primaries

 $^{^3}$ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

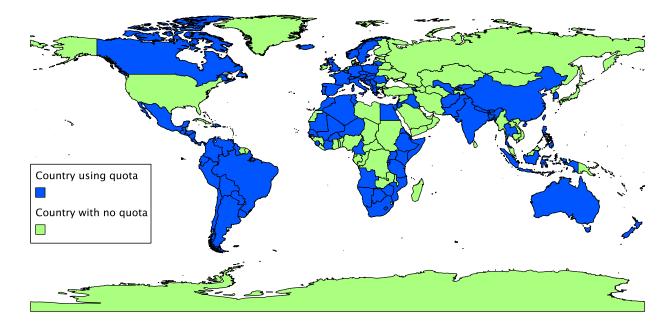


Figure 1.1: Quotas across the world

or candidate short-lists and can be implemented voluntarily by political parties or mandated by Constitutional or electoral laws.

Candidate quotas: a minimum number of the group must be fielded as candidates by the party. These quotas are very commonly used for women's quotas and can also be voluntary or legally mandated.

Reserved seats: a political position can only be held by an individual belonging to the group. This type of quota is the most common for political minorities and is always implemented through Constitutional or electoral laws.

Aspirant quotas and candidate quotas guarantee equality of opportunity, since members of the beneficiary group are considered as political candidates, but they do not guarantee equality of outcomes. Reserved seats, on the other hand, guarantee political positions for a specified number of members from the group. Reserved seats are the opposite of majority-minority districts in that the voting population may consist of any proportion of the minority group, but a minority representative will always be elected.

But there is also another, arguably more important, distinction between all these types of quotas: that quota politicians are elected by, and answerable to, members of their own group or some other group. Who gets to pick minority representatives will have a major impact on who is selected to fill the quota seats and for whom politicians will be incentivized to work once in power. If reserved seats are placed in areas where the beneficiary group is in minority, the minority representative will be given a difficult balancing task of pleasing the majority

group in their constituency at the same time as seeming like a legitimate representative of their own group. This is the type of electoral quotas that have been put in place for SCs in India.

When a group has been socially marginalized or politically under-represented for a long time, getting a descriptive representative into a position of power can have important emotional effects. In a paper evaluating whether descriptive representation is beneficial, Mansbridge (1999, p. 628) concludes with a "contingent yes" because "descriptive representation promotes goods unrelated to substantive representation." Several UN agencies have also been outspoken about the benefits of including minorities in institutions of power:

The parliamentary representation of minorities and indigenous peoples is essential for ensuring these groups effective participation in public affairs. Whether minorities and indigenous peoples are actually present in legislatures, whether their voices are heard, and whether their interests are taken into account are all important indicators of minority/ indigenous participation in decision making on a national level. Such participation has the potential to benefit everyone in a society, it can help to strengthen democracy, greatly improve the quality of political life, facilitate societal integration and prevent conflict (Protsyk, 2010).

In this way, descriptive representation is associated with a number of important societal and political effects, but not necessarily with better substantive representation for a given group. Yet, in discussions about descriptive representation there is often an explicit or implicit assumption that an increase in descriptive representation will necessarily result in better substantive representation for the group in question. For example, although Mansbridge (1999, p. 654) starts her paper by stating that the importance of descriptive representation does not rest on its impact on substantive representation, she then goes on to conclude that "descriptive representation usually furthers the substantive representation of interests by improving the quality of deliberation." This assumption resonates well with theories of politicians as self-motivated actors who join politics in order to do what they deem best for society (Mansbridge, 2003, 2011), and theories of "citizen-candidates" who run for election in order to implement their favorite policy (see Osborne and Slivinski, 1996; Besley and Coate, 1997). These perceptions stand in stark contrast, however, with traditional voting models in which politicians are usually described as sanction-driven, vote-seeking, motivated by re-election, or driven by career incentives (e.g Downs, 1957; Arrow, 1963; Mayhew, 1974). It might often be that representatives do not share the political interests of their group, and even if they do, what happens when politicians do not have the electoral incentives or political clout to fight for their interests?

The main suggested mechanism that links descriptive and substantive representation is that politicians will have a shared experience with individuals in the group they belong to. In her seminal book "The Politics of Presence", Phillips (1995) argues that women are best equipped to represent women, because they have a different set of political preferences than men. The claim that women have different political preferences from men has been supported

by a number of studies (Campbell, Childs and Lovenduski, 2010; Svaleryd, 2009; Edlund and Pande, 2002; Duflo and Topalova, 2004; Besley, Pande and Rao, 2005; Ban and Rao, 2008, e.g.) and the prediction of a link between the presence of women and more policy choices that benefit women has found support in empirical work from different (mainly European) countries (Lovenduski, 1986; Lovenduski and Norris, 1993; Skjeie, 1991; Dahlerup, 2006; Krook, 2006).

In the case of minorities there is a more limited literature. Supporters of minority-majority districting have argued that blacks are better at representing blacks exactly because of a shared experience of the world (Mansbridge, 1999; Canon, 1999; Minta, 2009). There is also evidence, however, that electoral incentives play a key role in determining the quality of the substantive representation of black interests. Swain (1993) argues that, given the electoral incentives to do so, both white and black politicians can do a good job representing black interests. Cameron, Epstein and O'Halloran (1996) find that the substantive representation of blacks in the South of the US is better when black voters are spread out across more districts and, therefore, can influence the policy position of more politicians. Similarly, Lublin (1999) explains how the election of one black democrat probably is at the cost of at least two white democrats, thereby reducing the overall representation of democrats and thereby also the substantive representation of blacks.

One of the main challenges to the empirical studies of the effect of descriptive representation across the world has been that places where minority representatives are in power tend to be different from places where such representatives are not elected. In other words, the studies have faced massive selection problems. One way of getting around these selection problems is to study places with exogenously implemented quotas. In this dissertation I will do exactly that, by telling the story of political representatives of SCs in India and showing how the design of the electoral system has a major impact on the effects of descriptive representation.

1.3 Who are the Scheduled Castes?

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) are the former "untouchables" in India, who constitute 16.2% of the Indian population according to the 2001 census. SCs used to be associated with "unclean" work such as leather work, maintaining cremation grounds, and cleaning toilets and were, therefore, seen as ritually polluting. Members of the group have traditionally been discriminated against by other caste groups.

The origins of the practice of untouchability are unknown, but references to it can be found as far back as in 1020 A.D. when Alberuni wrote about caste groups that were "not reckoned among any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty work, like the cleansing of the villages and other services." (cited in Ghurye, 1961, p. 220). One of the earliest accounts of the caste system and the practice of untouchability during British colonial rule was made by the French missionary Abbé Dubois (1906, p. 49):

Throughout the whole of India the Pariahs [untouchables] are looked upon as slaves by other castes, and are treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere are they allowed to cultivate the solid for their own benefit, but are obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes, who in return for a minimum wage exact the hardest tasks from them.

Furthermore, their masters may beat them at pleasure; the poor wretches having no right either to complain or to obtain redress for that or any other ill-treatment their masters may impose on them."⁴

The British rulers in India had a policy of non-intervention in the caste system, but their presence still changed the nature of it. By introducing a unitary legal system, they (in theory) gave the lower castes the privilege of equality before the law. Schools that were founded by reformers, missionaries and the government were opened to children of untouchables (Galanter, 1984, pp. 21-22).⁵ Colonial rule also brought in new occupational opportunities for the untouchables. Because they were willing to do ritually polluting works, such as polishing leather shoes and preparing beef, untouchables were hired in large numbers as servants for the British (Dubois, 1906, p. 52). They were also allowed to take government jobs and to enlist in the army and this made it easier for their children to get access to schools. As a result, a few, talented untouchables managed to rise up to a higher social position. The most famous example of this is Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, arguably the most important leader and spokesperson of the untouchables, who was the son of an untouchable soldier in the Indian army.

By the end of the 19th century, Hindu associations like the *Arya Samaj* and the *Prarthana Samaj* started concerning themselves with improving the conditions of the untouchables. The first interest organization for the untouchables — The Depressed Classes Mission Society of India — was formed in 1905 (Chopra, 2003). At this time, discussions were ongoing about getting a few elected Indian representatives into the legislative councils across India. This representation was envisioned to be group-wise, and since leaders from the Muslim com-

⁴In addition to criticizing the behavior of upper caste towards the untouchables Dubois also argued that their behavior could be justified: "Pariahs, being thus convinced that they have nothing to lose or gain in public estimation, abandon themselves without chime or restraint to vice of all kinds, and the greatest lawlessness prevails amongst them, for which they do not feel the least shame. One might almost say that, in the matter of vice, they outstrip all others in brutality, as the Brahmins do in malice. Their habits of uncleanliness are disgusting. Their hits, a mass of filth and alive with insects and vermin, are, if possible, even more loathsome than their persons. Their harsh and forbidding features clearly reveal their character, but even there are an insufficient indication of the coarseness of their minds and manners. They are much addicted to drunkenness, a vice peculiarly abhorrent to other Hindus [...] Drunken quarrels are of frequent occurrence amongst them, and their wives are often sufferers, the unhappy creatures being nearly beaten to death, even when in a state of pregnancy" (Dubois, 1906, p. 55).

⁵Already in 1854, the British Education Commissioner in India had laid down the principal that all children should have an equal access to education. The right of equal treatment for all groups was also reaffirmed in a declaration from Queen Victoria on April 21 1856 that "none be in any way favoured, none molested by reason of their faith, and that all alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law" (cited in Joshi, 1986, p. 21-22).

munity were worried about Hindus outnumbering them, they argued that the untouchables (who numbered about 50 million, or about 1/6 of the total population in India) should be considered their own group (Saint Nihal Singh in *Indian Review*, cited by Galanter, 1984, p.26).

From then on, untouchability became a political issue. There were two main viewpoints in the debate about untouchability. Some argued that untouchability was an impurity within Hinduism and that the solution was to rid Hinduism of this imperfection and restore the untouchables to their rightful position within the caste system. This was the line of the Hindu reform movement, the *Arya Samaj*, and later Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress (Congress).⁶ A different political point of view was that of the political leader Jyotirao Phule — and later, Dr Ambedkar — who saw the existence of a caste system itself as the key problem. Dr Ambedkar alternated between advocating for the abolition of the caste system in its entirety and recommending untouchables to convert to other religions in order to get out of the Hindu fold (Galanter, 1984, pp. 28-31).

The case against untouchability gradually grew stronger. In September 1932, a conference of Hindu leaders unanimously adopted a resolution outlawing untouchability. The resolution called for an end to discrimination in the use of public wells, schools and roads, and also advocated for temple entry for untouchables (Dirks, 2001, p. 269). However, it was not until the passing of the Indian Constitution of 1950 that the practice of untouchability was made illegal in India (2001b, Part 3, article 17).

Along with making untouchability illegal, a number of measures were taken to prevent violence against untouchables and to give them opportunities for social mobility. Among the most important measures was an extensive quota system, which I will describe in more detail in the next section. In addition, legislation was passed to prevent discrimination against untouchables. The Untouchability Offenses Act of 1955 (renamed to Protection of Civil Rights Act in 1976) provided for penalties if a person was prevented from entering a place of worship or from taking water from a tank or well. Subsequently, in 1989, the Indian Parliament passed the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in order to prevent violence against untouchables. There are also a number of scholarships and employment generation programs that were initially created to provide opportunities

⁶Fighting untouchability was one of the main concerns of Gandhi in his political work. In the early 1920s Gandhi published a series of articles on the topic of untouchability and supported campaigns for the temple entry of untouchables. In a Congress party meeting in 1920, he pushed through a motion condemning the "sin of untouchability" and in 1922 the Congress party called on their activists to "help the untouchables" (Jaffrelot, 2005, pp. 60-61). Gandhi also went further in his fight for the rights of untouchables: When he travelled he often stayed in the quarters of the *bhangis*, the caste group traditionally seen as the lowest of the untouchables, he called himself a *bhangi*, and expressed a desire to be reborn as a *bhangi* in order to share their suffering (Galanter, 1984, p. 35). Over time he also changed his opinion about the caste system, and started encouraging inter-dining and inter-marriage between castes in an attempt to eradicate the caste system (Galanter, 1984, p. 37)

⁷Ambedkar thought this was too little, too late and actually spoke against Congress' ensuing temple entry campaigns because he thought it undermined the fight against the entire caste system (Ambedkar, 1945).

for untouchables.

Despite these extensive measures to improve the situation for SCs, the SC community remains more vulnerable than the rest of Indian society. In the National Sample Survey for 2004-05, 37% of SCs are reported to live below the poverty line, as compared to 23% among the rest of the population. According to the 2001 Census of India, the average literacy rate among SC was about 46%, as compared to 56% amongst the rest of the population. This is a much smaller difference than at independence, but it is still quite large. SCs also have a lower rate of land ownership, higher unemployment rates, and a lower level of representation in influential positions in both private and public sector jobs (Thorat et al., 2009). The yearly reports by the SC Commission also tell of continued caste related violence and discrimination across India.

The untouchable community has been referred to by several different names. In the British censuses of the 19th century, the different caste groups were categorized as four varnas (main caste groups). Since the untouchables were not part of any of these categories, they were listed as 'outcastes.' In his writings, Dr Ambedkar referred to them as the 'Depressed Classes', while Gandhi referred to them as 'Harijans' [children of God]. In the Indian Government Act of 1935, the first "draft" of the Indian constitution, they were referred to as the 'Scheduled Castes' for the first time, because the Act included a Schedule listing the castes who qualified for quota positions and governmental benefits. 10 This language was also used in the Indian constitution and is still the official term for the group used by the Indian government. A caste group qualifies for inclusion in the Scheduled Caste list if it can demonstrate "extreme social, education and economic backwardness arising out of the traditional practice of untouchability." ¹¹ In more recent years, it has been common to refer to the untouchable community as 'Dalits.' This was originally a name used by Jyotirao Phule in the 19th century, but was used infrequently until the 1970s, when it became the term used by the Dalit Panthers and other activists. For the purpose of this dissertation I will not enter into the discussion about who is categorized as SC, how caste groups and individuals can (and have) changed their caste status, or the changing nature of caste-based discrimination. ¹² Since I specifically study the effects of a governmental policy and therefore relate to the governmentally defined category of SCs, I will treat the categories provided

⁸This number is reported in Chin and Prakash (2011, p. 6).

⁹Reports are available online at http://ncsc.nic.in/

¹⁰Categorizing castes according to these vague criteria is not a trivial task, as was noted by the Simon Commission which first tried to make lists of the untouchables in the 1920s. The distinction between untouchables and other backward classes is not always obvious (cited in Galanter, 1984, p. 125).

¹¹From the frequently asked questions at http://socialjustice.nic.in. A full list of the castes categorized as SC were provided in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 (Available online at http://socialjustice.nic.in/scorder1950.php). According to Article 341 of the Indian Constitution 2001 b, "the President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union territory, as the case may be."

¹²An excellent account of many of these complications can be found in Galanter (1984).

by the government as given and look at the changes in areas that have been categorized as "reserved for SC" or "not reserved for SC."

1.4 Reservations in India

Reservations have been a major political issue in India over the last few decades. If you search for the term reservations online, the search returns pictures of angry demonstrators, self-immolating students and catchy posters railing against reservations. Figure 1.2 shows some examples of these kind of images. But these protests and these articles are not about electoral quotas in parliament and usually not about quotas for SCs; they are mainly about reserved seats in educational institutions for "Other Backward Classes" (OBCs), groups that are also poor, but still higher than SCs in the caste hierarchy.

There are three main types of quotas or 'reservations' in India:

- Reservation of governmental jobs (for SC, STs and OBCs)
- Reservation of seats in educational institutions (for SC, STs and OBCs)
- Reservation of political positions
 - The lower house of Parliament (for SC and STs)
 - State assemblies (for SC and STs)
 - In the three-tier panchayat (village council) system (for SC, STs and women)

Out of these three types of reservations, the first two types have by far received the most attention. It is not surprising that people are more agitated about them, considering that the reserved positions add up to 50% of all governmental jobs and educational spots. In comparison, the reservation of political positions has not been as controversial a topic. But this has not always been the case. The question about giving reserved seats to SCs was an explosive topic during the decades before India became independent, as will be further discussed in Chapter 2. Since independence, there have regularly been voices speaking out against the quota system. During the debate about the Two-Member Abolition Bill in 1961, the SC politician Shri Siva Raj spoke on behalf of the Republican Party: "We feel that this concession [reservations], far from helping to develop the political status of the so-called scheduled castes and tribe, confers an inferior political status on them [...] Maybe those who feel that there ought to be reservation for scheduled castes think that they are kind to the scheduled castes. Personally from our point of view it is a sort of cruel kindness" (Lok Sabha Debates 1961, February 16, p. 372). Similarly, the prominent SC politician Kanshi Ram (1982), has famously argued that SC representatives who win elections in India are chamchas [stooges or sycophants] who do not properly represent SC interests, because they have to cater to the interest of a non-SC majority in order to win elections.

Figure 1.2: Images online related to reservations in India $\,$



In this dissertation I am focusing on the political quotas for SCs in state assemblies. I will be referring to constituencies that are reserved for SCs as *reserved* and constituencies that are not reserved for SCs or any other group as *general* or *non-reserved*.

The electoral quotas for SCs in state assemblies have been in place since the Indian constitution came into effect in 1950. The constituent assembly had granted SCs reserved seats in the national parliament and the state assemblies, in proportion to their population in each state (on average 16%). The exact proportion of reserved seats is proportional to the percent SCs in each state and each district. Table 1.1 shows the number of state assembly seats and SC seats in the 15 largest states in India 1974 to 2007.¹³

Table 1.1: Assembly seats reserved for SCs in 15 Indian state assemblies 1974-2007

State	Assembly	SC	Percentage
	seats	seats	SC seats
Andhra Pradesh	294	39	13.3
Bihar	324	47	14.5
Gujarat	182	13	7.1
Haryana	90	17	18.9
Himachal Pradesh	68	16	23.5
Karnataka	224	33	14.7
Kerala	140	12	8.6
Madhya Pradesh	320	43	13.4
Maharashtra	288	17	5.9
Orissa	147	22	15.0
Punjab	117	29	24.8
Rajasthan	200	32	16.0
Tamil Nadu	234	42	17.9
Uttar Pradesh	425	90	21.2
West Bengal	294	59	20.1

In reserved constituencies only individuals belonging to an SC community can run for election, while the whole electorate votes for them irrespective of their own caste group. Since the SC community is spread across India, they are usually a minority in the constituencies reserved for them. This means that most SC politicians are elected by a majority of non-SC

¹³This distribution of seats was based on the Indian census of 1971. For example, since SCs constituted 5.9% of the population in Maharashtra in the 1971 census, 5.9% of the political seats were reserved for SCs in that state (rounded to the closest whole number). In 2000 three new states were carved out of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. In Uttarakhand there was a new delimitation and the reserved seats were changed, while in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand the reserved seats remained exactly the same as before until the new delimitation came into force in 2008.

voters.¹⁴ Quotas for SCs were originally meant to be in place for 10 years in order to 'help' the SC community get started in the new democratic system. But, at the end of the first 10 years of quotas, SCs still had not achieved the expected socio-economic development and the quotas were extended. The quotas were most recently extended in 2011, again with the justification that SCs had not achieved the desired level of development and would not be able to win elections from general constituencies.

The boundaries of electoral districts in India (referred to as constituencies) are determined by the Delimitation Commission. A new delimitation was meant to be conducted following every decennial census, in order for all constituencies to have the same population size. Consequently, a Delimitation Commission was formed in 1952, 1963 and 1972. However, in the 1970s the Indian parliament decided to 'freeze' all political boundaries until 2001. The result was that the boundaries of all constituencies, and the location of all constituencies reserved for SCs, were based on the 1971 census and remained the same between 1974 and 2007. Figure 1.3 shows the state assembly constituencies that were reserved for SCs in the 15 states under study during the time period 1974-2007.

Because the boundaries were frozen, we have a situation in which SCs, and SCs only, were in power in the same constituencies for more than 30 years, while virtually no SCs were in power in other constituencies. This is the time period I have chosen to focus on in this project.

1.5 Overview of dissertation

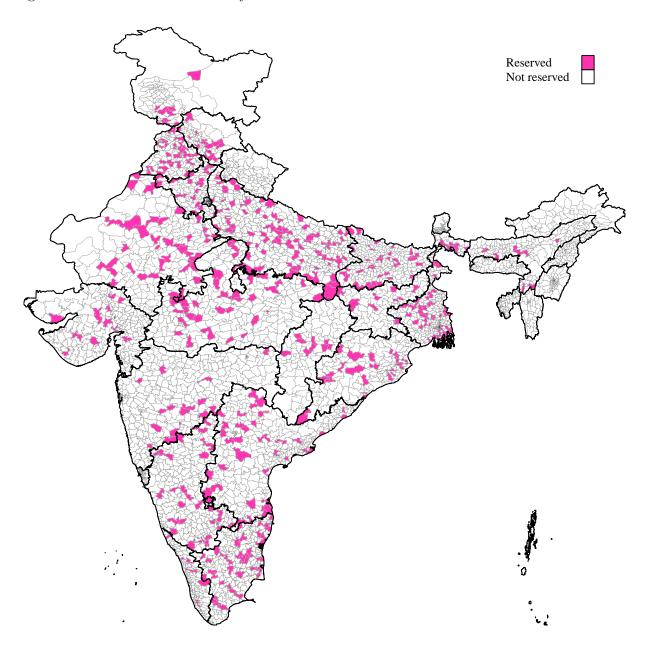
This dissertation has nine chapters. In this first introductory chapter I have described the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the electoral quota system for SCs in India, and some of the main ideas that I will be addressing in the dissertation.

Chapter 2 is about the history of reservations for SCs in India. Tracing the history of these quotas through four critical junctures, I show how British attempts to appease religious minorities in the early 20th century shaped the negotiations about minority safeguards in independent India. SCs were granted quotas against the will of many political leaders, on the condition that they were designed to integrate SC politicians, not create champions of

¹⁴For ten years, from 1951 till 1961, the electoral system had multiple members running for elections in reserved constituencies. All constituencies had one general seat, and in addition some of them had a seat reserved for a SC or ST politician. This created both confusion and dissatisfaction, and the practice was ended with the Two-Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act in 1961, where it was set down that India should have only single-member constituencies. According to the debates, it was felt that it was hard to conduct an election campaign in the multi-member constituencies because they were large and unwieldy, and some felt that SC politicians became tag-on politicians to influential general candidates. Since then the reserved seats have been in single-member constituencies.

¹⁵The decision was implemented in the 42nd Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1976. Since the population size of all political constituencies was supposed to be the same and the birth rates differed dramatically across India, this over time led to an increase in the political representation in areas with high birthrates. This was seen as a perverse incentive to the family planning programs that were one of the primary focus areas for the Indian government in the 1970s.

Figure 1.3: Indian State Assembly Constituencies reserved for SCs 1974-2007



SC interests. Yet, the justification for quotas gradually changed from being about political integration to development for the SC population, resulting in a contraction between the design of the quota system and the expectations of it.

Although quotas for SCs have been in place since 1950, the focus of this study is on the constituencies that were reserved between 1974 and 2007. The two main challenges to an empirical evaluation of these quotas has been data scarcity and the challenge of clearly identifying the effects of the quotas, since they were non-randomly assigned in the 1970s. In order to control for this selection bias, it is necessary to understand exactly how they were selected. This is the topic of Chapter 3, where I go through how the Delimitation Commission of India selected reserved seats in the 1970s and explain how I use matching to identify the effects of reservations. I also describe the process of putting together constituency-level data from 1971, which I use as baseline pre-treatment data. I then go through different ways of matching up constituencies in order to reduce bias and show balance statistics for the matches and robustness checks. The matched pairs identified in this Chapter are used in the analysis in later chapters.

In Chapter 4, I try to give an impression of who Indian Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) are and how their daily lives look. Drawing on my interviews with MLAs and reports from surveys of MLAs, I show that MLAs spend most of their time meeting with their constituents and helping to solve their constituents' various problems, many of which are related to communicating with the state. MLAs tend to be fairly wealthy men with a high level of education. SC MLAs are on average less wealthy than other politicians, but other than that they are similar to their non-SC colleagues in many ways. An interesting fact is that, in recent years, the proportion of female MLAs is also much higher in reserved constituencies. Since many Indian politicians rely on money to get elected and remain influential in their areas, the findings in this chapter do give an impression of SC MLAs as slightly less powerful than other politicians.

The notion of SC MLAs being 'weaker' than other politicians was often repeated to me in my elite interviews. In Chapter 5, I further explore whether SC politicians are less powerful than other politicians. I do so by looking at rerunning rates among MLAs in reserved and general constituencies, as well as the number of cabinet positions held by SC MLAs and other MLAs. I find that, except for in the first election after the new delimitation came into effect, SC MLAs have a similar rerunning rate and re-election rate to other MLAs. This suggests that they are as experienced in politics as their non-SC colleagues. Given a similar level of political experience, we should expect SCs to hold a similar number of cabinet positions. However, looking at data for cabinet positions across states over time we see that SC MLAs are, and have been, systematically, although not dramatically under-represented in cabinet positions.

Having established that SC MLAs represent the same parties, have a similar educational profile, similar level of political experience and are present in state cabinets, I look at the perceptions of SC politicians held by normal voters. The bias against SC politicians was quite strong among non-SC politicians that I talked to and they suggested that non-SC voters felt frustrated living in reserved constituencies. Looking at survey data from the Indian

National Election Studies in 1971 and 2004, however, I do not find much of a difference in the perception of politicians held by voters in reserved and general constituencies. Voters report a similar level of belief in the efficacy of their vote and a similar level of satisfaction with their political leadership. Looking at a survey from western Uttar Pradesh from 2013, however, I find that voters from constituencies that have been reserved since 1974 have a more favorable impression of SC politicians than voters in newly reserved areas. There also seems to be less discrimination against SCs in areas that have been reserved for a long time. Thus, the negative impressions of SC politicians seems to be more of a bias among the elite than among voters, and more generally the findings from the survey in UP suggest that SC quotas have led to a reduction in caste discrimination in reserved areas.

The main effect of quotas in India, as cited in several different papers, has been lower turnout. In Chapter 7, I show the difference in the electoral turnout in reserved and non-reserved constituencies. Looking at my matched sample of constituencies, I find an average drop in turnout of more than 9 percentage points in the first election after constituencies became reserved. This difference grows smaller over time, but turnout is still lower in reserved constituencies after 30 years of reservations. Using both aggregate election data and survey evidence, I show that it was both SCs and non-SCs that turned out in lower numbers in reserved constituencies in the 1970s and that this seems to have been a result of SCs politicians having weaker networks to mobilize voters than other politicians. As the mobilizing capabilities of SC politicians improved over time, SCs seemed to have returned to the polls, while the turnout among non-SCs remained slightly lower than in comparable non-reserved constituencies. The gap in turnout is correlated with self-reported caste bias at the state-level, and with the rate of literacy rate at the constituency-level.

In Chapter 8, I address the question of whether quotas have led to development for the SC community. As was argued in Chapter 2, many people expect these quotas to have direct developmental effects despite the fact that the system was specifically designed to integrate SC politicians rather than make them champions of SC interests. Looking at the matched pairs of constituencies, I find that 30 years of quotas had neither a positive nor a negative effect on development indicators for SCs in reserved constituencies. Drawing on my interviews, I argue that the no-impact findings can be explained by SC politicians becoming embedded in the political system and facing the same electoral incentives as other politicians. This is consistent with the design of the quota system and the expectation of the members of the political elite that were involved in the creation of the quota system in the 1930s and 1940s. The findings give a clear example of why we cannot take it for granted that minority politicians will work actively to benefit their own group once in power. They do not, however, preclude the fact that the presence of SCs in India's legislative assemblies may have substantially benefited the community in an indirect manner by reducing social biases and increasing the concern for marginalized groups in general.

In the concluding chapter, I evaluate the quotas for SCs based on all the findings in the previous chapters. I argue that quotas for SCs have been successful at doing what they were designed to do: to include a marginalized group in the political elite. This success is only partial, in that SC politicians are still perceived as weaker than other politicians and are still

generally not as competitive as other politicians. But, considering the strength of the social boundary of untouchability, their inclusion can still be seen as an achievement. Still, the quota system has not produced the type of SC politicians that many in the SC community would have liked to see. The case of electoral quotas for SCs in India is therefore an excellent reminder of the trade-offs in institutional design and the fact that an electoral system might work to reduce social bias and conflict without improving the substantive representation of minority groups.

Chapter 2

The History of Reservations

2.1 Introduction

Since independence in 1950, India has had electoral quotas for SCs in the national parliament and in state assemblies. This quota system has been praised for bringing members of a deprived community to power, but they have also been criticized for bringing to power SC politicians who are tools in the hands of the upper castes. This is attributed to the design of the quota system: SC politicians are elected in reserved single member constituencies, where SCs for the most part are a minority of the electorate and voters from all caste groups are eligible to vote (joint electorates). This means that the SC politicians in most cases are answerable to a majority of non-SC voters.

This particular design of the Indian quota system — reserved constituencies with joint electorates — was the result of several decades of political struggle. In this chapter I look at the history of this struggle, and argue that the current quota system was shaped by the decisions made at four critical junctures. At each point in time the negotiating partners and their power relations were different, but the agenda was shaped by the choices made in the past. By tracing the process of negotiations over time, I show how a British discussion about granting communal representatives to appease an influential and loyal Muslim community, resulted in the entrenchment of reserved seats for marginalized caste groups in independent India.

The process tracing also reveals that the drafters of the Indian constitution were keenly aware that different designs of the quota system would create different incentives for the politicians elected from reserved seats. They recognized that the strong bias against the SC community, as well as their educational and economic deprivation, would make it hard for SC candidates to be politically competitive in open elections. But rather than create a quota system of SC politicians representing SC interests, they wished to integrate SC candidates into mainstream politics by making them appeal to voters from different caste groups. In other words, the quotas were consciously designed to have an integrative effect and reduce caste barriers, not to create champions of SC interests.

While the intentions of the drafters of the constitutions are quite clear — to help SC politicians get electorally competitive — the debate about quotas for SCs gradually shifted to being about development for the SC community at large. This might be why the quotas for SCs are sometimes denounced as a failure, because they do not seem to have not led to tangible developmental benefits for the SC community, while they have in fact been very successful at guaranteeing the political presence of an otherwise marginalized group.¹

2.2 Four critical junctures

The idea of guaranteed representation for different societal groups goes back to British rule in India. During the 19th century, concern had been raised about upper castes being over-represented in the civil service, and reservations for backward classes in the civil services were initiated in the princely state of Mysore as early as 1874 (Bayly, 1990, p. 195). Whether or not to reserve political positions was not a relevant debate at this time, since there was virtually no representation of Indians in the political institutions of the country.

The inclusion of Indians in political institutions was slow and gradual. In 1853, four Indians were included as non-official members of the Governor-General's Council in order to strengthen British control over India by contributing their "local knowledge" (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 37). After the rule of the British East India Company was transferred to the Crown in 1858, further efforts were made to include Indians in the political establishment in order to "provide safety valves for the expression of public opinion which had been so badly misjudged before the rebellion" (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 2). As one of the British members of the Viceregal Council, Sir Henry Bartle, wrote in a memorandum in 1860: "The addition of the native element has, I think, become necessary owing to our diminished opportunities of learning through indirect channels what the natives think of our measures, and how the native community will be affected by them" (quoted in Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 38). This initial representation of Indians was also ensured by the Indian Council Acts of 1861 and 1892. The number of representatives was small and they were appointed, not elected.

With the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909, Indians were, for the first time, elected to various legislative councils, albeit with a restricted franchise. With this inclusion of a representative element in the political system came the discussions of who was to represent whom. The major decisions related to reservations were taken at the time of the drafting of the Government of India Acts of 1909, 1919, 1935, and the drafting of the Indian Constitution. The British colonial rulers were actively involved in the process, but the implementation of reservations after independence is more than a simple colonial legacy: At each point in history, the actors

¹In this chapter I have tried to rely on primary sources as much as possible. I first used the resources that were online or in the UC Berkeley library, but later I looked for sources in the British library in London and in the National Archives, Nehru Memorial Library, and the Parliamentary Library in New Delhi. I also traveled to the archives of several state assemblies to see what information they kept and collect information about the activities of the assemblies in general, and of the SC politicians in particular.

involved in the decision-making process were different, the incentive structures for the actors changed, and the power of the British slowly dwindled away. Yet, the choices of the past shaped the agendas at every stage. In the following sections I will focus on four critical junctures in the negotiation process, that together shaped the reservation system that India has today.

- Morley-Minto reform: Political quotas for Muslims were enacted by the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909. The motivation was to safeguard the cultural identity of the Muslim community.
- Ambedkar and the depressed classes: In the Council of India Acts of 1919 and the Communal Award of 1932 the 'depressed classes' were guaranteed political representation, since they were argued to be a distinct cultural community.
- The Poona Pact: Gandhi was strongly against reserved seats with separate electorates (only SCs would vote for SCs). The Poona Pact of 1932 formalized an agreement between the Congress party and the representatives of the depressed classes, where Gandhi accepted that SCs would have reserved seats as long as they gave up the claim for separate electorates. He emphasized that reserved seats was a way of 'uplifting' a poor and disadvantaged segment of the Hindu community.
- **Drafting the constitution:** The violence at the time of partition turned the Constituent Assembly against political safeguards for Muslims and other religious minorities. SC were still given quotas because it had been promised in the Poona Pact and because this was no longer seen as a communal claim, but as a way of helping a deprived group.

2.3 Morley-Minto reforms 1909: quotas enter the stage

At the turn of the 20th century, Indian nationalists, mainly represented by Congress, were advocating for more political influence. After Lord Minto arrived in India as Viceroy in 1905, he started corresponding with the liberal Secretary of State, Lord Morley, about the possibility of enacting reforms to increase the representation of Indians in the political system (Minto, 1934). The discussion was about increasing the number of non-official Indian members in various legislative councils, and about including Indian representatives in the Council of the Secretary of State in London as well as the Viceroy's Council in India. In 1905, Minto appointed a committee to consider the increase in the local representation in the Indian legislative councils (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 47).

This was a time when religious minorities, mainly the Muslims, were anxious to ensure political safeguards because they were "apprehensive of cultural homogenization" (Mahajan, 1998, p.120). According to Galanter (1984, p. 25), British rule made Muslims feel that they were falling behind Hindus, as it "shattered the earlier patterns of dominance and

accommodation, permitting, if not fostering, open rivalry" between Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim League was formed as a political alternative to the Congress in 1906.

In October 1906, while the reform documents were being drafted, a delegation of Muslims visited the Viceroy in Shimla to demand political safeguards. In an address to Lord Minto read by Sir Aga Khan III, they argued that the interests of Muslims could be completely ignored in a democratic system with plurality elections, and that Muslims must be ensured communal representation. In his response to the address, Minto declared that "the Mohammedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded by any administrative re-organization with which I am concerned" (quoted in Minto, 1934, p. 47).

Minto kept his promise. In the Indian Council Act of 1909, several communities, including Muslims, landholders, and different commercial interests, were ensured the right to elect representatives from their communities to the Legislative Councils in British India (Indian Council Act of 1909, reprinted as an appendix in the second edition of GOI, 1907, pp. 432-35).

The choice to give political safeguards to Muslims was made on the basis of a belief in community-wise representation in India, as Minto expressed in a letter to Secretary of State Morley: "The only representation for which India is at presently fitted is a representation of Communities" (quoted in Minto, 1934, p. 102). Minto expressed the same opinion in his opening address to the new Legislative Council after the implementation of the reforms in January 1910 (quoted in Minto, 1934, p. 372):

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

Looking at the personal correspondence between Morley and Minto, it seems quite clear that in granting separate electorates to Muslims and other communities, they were primarily concerned with securing British political power in India. In a letter dated May 28 1906, Minto wrote to Morley: "I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes [...]" (quoted in Minto, 1934, p. 29). On November 23 the same year, Morley wrote to Minto that: "I incline to think that the admission of a Native, whether to your Council or to mine, or to both, would be the cheapest concession we could make" (quoted in Minto, 1934, p. 101).

Thus, it was a need for local information, a pressure to make concessions to a growing local elite, and a disbelief in popular representation, that led to the introduction of communal representatives in political institution in India. Representation was granted to influential groups, with no intention of moving the system in the direction of a Western style parliamentary democracy. The importance of this historical juncture was made clear by Gandhi when he met Lady Minto in London many years later: "'Do you remember my name?' I [Lady Minto] asked. 'Remember your name!' Exclaimed Mr. Gandhi. 'The Minto-Morley Reforms have been our undoing. Had it not been for the Separate Electorates then established, we should have settled our differences by now'" (quoted in Minto, 1934, p. 21).

2.4 Dr. Ambedkar and the depressed classes

Ten years after the Morley-Minto reforms, other British administrators regretted the choice that had been made in granting separate electorates to Muslims. Writing about the Morley-Minto reforms, Montagu and Chelmsford (1918, p. 49) state that: "It is probable that the far-reaching consequences of this decision [to grant separate electorates] and the difficulties which it would create at a later stage were not fully foreseen." In the Montagu-Chelmsford report (1918, p. 149) communal electorates were rejected in principle:

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

Despite speaking against communal electorates, the authors of the report recommended the continuation of the policy on the grounds that it was politically unfeasible to revoke a right that had already been granted (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 149):

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

At this time, the Indian nationalists did not limit themselves to discussing quotas as the only form of political safeguard for minority groups. In 1916, Congress and the Muslim League had come together and set forward a scheme of suggestions for a constitutional framework for India. The so-called Lucknow Pact stated that all 'important minorities' should have reserved seats. However, it was also suggested that the members of a community represented in the Imperial and Provincial Councils should have the power to veto Bills or resolutions that went against their interests (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 105). The Montagu-Chelmsford report rejected the idea of a veto for minorities as 'unworkable', and argued that the general protection of religious interests were ensured by the clause that the Governor-General must sanction all laws affecting communities (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, pp. 105-6). Thus, the idea of veto powers was taken off the agenda. However, although they were against the continuation of the system of group-wise representation in principle, in the end the report ended up recommending political safeguards to several groups (Montagu and Chelmsford, 1918, p. 149):

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

The depressed classes had not been considered for political safeguards in the discussions leading up to the Morley-Minto reforms, since they were not an organized or influential community. At this point Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar emerged as a spokesperson for the depressed classes.² He was first asked to mobilize these classes on behalf of Congress in 1917, but soon broke away from the Congress line in demanding separate representatives for the depressed classes. In January 1919 Ambedkar made a representation to the Southborough Franchise Committee, demanding political representation for the depressed classes.³ He argued that while Muslims and Christians were "like-minded", Hindus primarily belonged to a caste and were clearly divided into the 'touchables' and the 'untouchables'. Untouchables,

²Dr Ambedkar grew up in Maharashtra. After completing his schooling in India, he got scholarships to study in the US and England, where he took a degree in law and a PhD in political science. His first systematic critique of the caste system was in a paper he presented at an anthropology seminar as a Graduate student at Columbia university in May 1916 (Ambedkar, 1916). From then on he continued to be a public spokesperson for the rights of the untouchable community.

³The Franchise Committee (1918-1919) was appointed on the basis of recommendations from the Montagu-Chelmsford report. It had been given a broad mandate to look into issues related to representation and elections. The committee considered different types of electoral systems (constituency size and voting methods) and recommended "the most simple method of election" (plurality voting in single-member districts). The reason given was that electors were "inexperienced in the exercise of the vote" (GOI, 1928 a, p. 8).

he argued, had been treated like slaves for so long that they knew nothing else, and "as can be easily seen they can be represented by the untouchables alone. They are distinctively their own interests and none else can truly voice them" (Ambedkar, 1919, point 22). He also argued that the untouchables would never be elected to hold offices since they were in minority and were seen as inferior: "[T]erritorial constituencies fail to create popular Government because they fail to secure personal representation to members of minor groups" (Ambedkar, 1919, point 10). He foresaw two potential remedies for this problem: either to reserve seats in plural constituencies or to grant communal electorates.

Based on the report from the Franchise Committee, the Government of India Act of 1919 continued the separate electorates for religious groups and established a system of nomination of representatives from the depressed classes. The depressed classes were thereby recognized as a separate community, alongside religious communities, landholders and other interest groups.

In 1927 the Simon Commission was appointed by the British government to make recommendations for constitutional reform. The Simon report recommended continuing the policy of guaranteeing political representation for Muslims as well as for the depressed classes, although this was seen as an "undoubted obstacle in the way of the growth of a sense of common citizenship" (Brock and Simon, 1930, p. 96). Since all the members of the Simon Commission were British, it was boycotted by Congress, and the Indian parties were requested to make their own suggestions for the drafting of the new constitution. In response to this request the All Parties Conference met in Delhi in January, 1928. At the third meeting of the Conference, a smaller committee headed by Motilal Nehru was appointed, with the mandate to make recommendations for a constitutional framework. The authors of the Nehru report (1928b, pp. 36-8) were opposed to quotas of any form and suggested a variety of other ways of safeguarding the interests of minorities, such as guaranteeing language rights and introducing a proportional representation (PR) system of voting:

We feel strongly attracted to this method [a PR electoral system] and are of the opinion that it offers the only rational and just way of meeting the fears and claims of various communities. There is a place in it for every minority and an automatic adjustment takes place of rival interests. We have no doubt that proportional representation will in the future be the solution of our problems.

These ideas met strong opposition from the British, who thought a PR system would be too complicated for the Indian voter.⁴

In this way, the choice of selecting communal representatives made in the beginning of the 20th century was brought into the first drafts of the Indian constitution, because of a

⁴During the constituent assembly debates the idea of using a PR system of voting was suggested by several members as a plausible alternative to reservations, but then too was rejected on the basis that it was too complicated for the uneducated population in India and too hard to implement in a country as large as India. E.g. see the discussion following Mr Lari's proposal of PR on Wednesday 25 May 1949 (CAD, 1999, vol. 8).

feeling of obligation to uphold old promises and a fear of rebellion. With the continuation of communal representation, the depressed classes were recognized as a separate community that needed separate political representation.

2.5 The Poona Pact

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

The first round table conference was held in 1930. Congress refused to participate, but Ambedkar was present as a representative of the depressed classes. During the conference, Ambedkar and Bahadur B. Srinivasan submitted a memorandum to the Minorities Committee in which they stated the terms under which the depressed classes would consent to placing themselves under majority rule in a self-governed India. While the depressed classes had not been a strong political force until then, it is likely that their case was strengthened by the fact that their representatives were present in this conference while Congress was not represented. In addition to equal rights and a seat in the cabinet, Ambedkar demanded "adequate representation" for the depressed classes in the Legislatures, with which they meant adult suffrage and separate electorates for the depressed classes for the first ten years after independence and thereafter reserved seats with joint electorates (quoted in Chanchreek, Prasad and Kumar, 1991, p. 139).

At the second round table conference, Gandhi was present as the sole representative of Congress. Promoting a united India, he strongly opposed separate electorates for any group, but "he grudgingly conceded them to Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Anglo-Indians" (Galanter, 1984, p. 31). He made it clear, however, that he was not prepared to give political recognition to any other community and he threatened to fast unto death if the depressed classes were given separate electorates. As an alternative, Gandhi presented before the Minorities Committee a memorandum with a suggestion for a Communal Settlement (Sheth and Mahajan, 1999, p. 114). It called for the constitutional protection of culture and language, as well as free religious practice for all minorities. It proposed adult franchise and joint electorates, but with constituencies that would enable all communities to secure a proportionate share of legislative seats. Hindus and Muslims were also guaranteed reserved seats where they were less than 25 % of the population.⁵

Ambedkar was also present at the second round table conference and again demanded quotas for the depressed classes in the legislatures, the executive, and in the public services, and that there should be "certain limitations" in order to "prevent the majorities from abusing their legislative power in such a manner as to enact laws which would create discrimination between one citizen and another" (quoted in Chanchreek, Prasad and Kumar,

⁵A similar provision was made for Hindus in Sind, Muslims in Assam, and Sikhs in Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)(Chanchreek, Prasad and Kumar, 1991, p. 176)

1991, p. 95). He focused on a package of safeguards, rather than only reservations, because he recognized that with a small number of reserved seats: "there is always the danger of the interests of the depressed classes being neglected altogether" (quoted in Chanchreek, Prasad and Kumar, 1991, p. 98).

The British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald responded to the demands in the round table conferences by presenting the Communal Award of 1932, in which he gave the depressed classes separate electorates in 78 areas where they were concentrated and also the right to vote in the remaining unreserved areas (GOI, 1932a). He also conceded to many of the demands from other minorities, such as granting Muslims in Punjab and Bengal separate electorates and more seats than other communities in the provincial assemblies (Jalal, 1994, pp. 12-13).

Following the announcement of the Communal Award, Gandhi, who was imprisoned in Yeravda prison in Pune at the time, went on hunger strike against the separate electorates for the depressed classes. The British refused to change the Award without the consent of Ambedkar. In order to resolve the situation, meetings were called between Ambedkar and Congress leaders, and Ambedkar was subjected to strong pressure to give up the claim for separate electorates. On September 24 1932, the Poona Pact was signed. In the pact, Ambedkar gave up the claim for the 78 separate electorates in the Award, in return for 151 reserved seats in provincial assemblies elected with joint electorates. The Poona Pact also provided for 18% of the seats in the central legislature to be reserved for the depressed classes (GOI, 1932b). Many considered the Poona Pact a victory for Ambedkar since he gained a significant increase in the number of reserved seats for his community. Ambedkar himself saw it as a failure because the elected individuals from the depressed classes were no longer elected by and answerable to an 'untouchable electorate': "the result is that the legislatures of the minority elected to the reserved seat instead of being a champion of the minority is really a slave of the majority" (quoted in Samujh, 2005, p. 59).

In his book "Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables," Ambedkar (1943, pp. 24-25) went even further, by arguing that Congress' intention with insisting on joint electorates was to control the politicians elected from reserved seats:

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

India's reservation system can be seen as the a product of the compromise between Gandhi and Ambedkar in the Poona Pact. Yet, the role of the British negotiating partners should not be underestimated. At the time of the Poona Pact the negotiation was about having no reservations versus reserved seats with separate electorates for the depressed classes, and

the compromise became reserved seats with joint electorates. But these negotiations were a response to the Communal Award handed down by the British. As was clear in the All Parties Conference in 1916, in the Nehru report of 1928, and in the representations made by Gandhi and Ambedkar in London, the Indian nationalists had been open to other forms of political safeguards for minorities and underrepresented groups. It was the British choice of institutionalizing communal representation, as well as rejecting other types of safeguards as too complicated, that limited the debate to this single type of safeguard.

This round of negotiations also resulted in a disjuncture between the arguments about safeguards and the policies chosen: Gandhi fought for an ideal of unity, where the untouchables were to be uplifted by being integrated in the Hindu fold, while Ambedkar argued that the depressed classes would only develop by electing their own representatives. During this round of negotiations the debate therefore shifted from being about political representation for a group with a separate identity to being about how to best uplift a deprived segment of Hindu society. Through the Poona Pact and the promise of reserved seats, the SC identity was institutionalized, preventing the unity that Gandhi was fighting for. On the other hand, when everyone could vote in reserved constituencies SCs would not be able to vote in their own leaders the way Amvedkar had envisioned. Ambedkar was convinced that this would make SC politicians mere tools in the hands of the upper castes.

Once the agreement had been reached, however, the effect was powerful: Both the British and the members of the Indian Constituent Assembly felt obliged to follow the agreement of reserving seats with joint electorates for the depressed classes.

2.6 Drafting the constitution

The Government of India Act of 1935 was the last pre-independence constitution of India. In 1946, a Constituent Assembly was elected to draft the Indian Constitution with Ambedkar as the Chair of the Drafting Committee. The sub-committee on Minorities, established by the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights and Minorities (Advisory Committee) was given the task of making recommendation about representational guarantees for minorities (Sheth and Mahajan, 1999, p. 116). Ambedkar fought for separate electorates once again, and when that proved futile, he tried to get provisions for having a minimum of 35 % SCs in reserved constituencies in order that at least a large portion of the electorate should be SC. Both the Advisory Committee and the Constituent Assembly consisted of a majority of Congress supporters, and almost half of the members of the assembly were Brahmins (Austin, 1999, Appendix III). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that Ambedkar's demands were rejected. In the end, the Advisory Committee recommended reserved seats for SCs and religious minorities, but rejected demands for separate electorates, primaries, a minimum percent of the minority group in the constituencies that were chosen to be reserved, reservations in cabinets, requirements for a certain percent of votes from the minority community, and different weights given to voters from different communities.

The report from the Advisory Committee was introduced to the Constituent Assembly

on August 27 1947 by the chairman of the Committee, Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel. He argued that communal representation was a "poison which has entered into the body politic of our country" (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 27 1947, p. 225), but that the Committee still supported reserved seats in joint electorates for SCs and religious minorities as a compromise solution to make these groups feel comfortable with the new electoral system. In the report itself it was stated that separate electorates have "sharpened communal differences to a dangerous extent and has proved one of the main stumbling blocks to the development of a healthy national life" (reprinted as an Appendix in CAD, 1999, vol. 5, p. 243).

The debate that followed the introduction of the report was both about whether or not to have reserved seats at all, and about whether there should be separate or joint electorates. Many in the assembly were strongly opposed to any form of group-wise representation. Sardar Patel was the one who had introduced the report recommending reserved seats for SCs, but still made a fiery speech against them (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 28 1947, 272):

I do not understand how Mr. Khandekar [SC representatives who had just spoken] is a Scheduled Caste man. If he and I were to go outside India, nobody will find out whether he is a Scheduled Caste man or I am a Scheduled Caste man. There is no Scheduled Caste between us. So those representatives of the Scheduled Caste must know that the Scheduled Caste has to be effaced altogether from our society, and if it is to be effaced, those who have ceased to be untouchables and sit amongst us have to forget that they are untouchables or else if they carry this inferiority complex, they will not be able to serve their community. They will only be able to serve their community by feeling now that they are with us.

In supporting the reserved seats, several of the members of the assembly invoked the memory of past agreements. Jerome D'Souza reminded the assembly that "for years together the Congress party has been associated with the demand that there shall be joint electorates with reservation. At this stage to give up reservation as some of my friends wish to do would be in contradiction to the promises held out" (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 27 1947, p. 231). In this way, the discussions of the previous decades was used as a way to legitimize reserved seats. Similarly, an SC representative from Madras, Muniswami Pillai, reminded everyone of the agreement in the Poona Pact and the promise of given SCs reserved seats with joint electorates (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 27 1947, p. 202):

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

But not all the representatives in the Assembly agreed to the recommendations given in the report. The SC representative S. Nagappa raised a number of issues that the Committee had already discussed and rejected. He first demanded reservations in the cabinets: "I want my due share; though I am innocent, ignorant dumb, yet I want you to recognize my claim" (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 27 1947, p. 207). He then moved an amendment suggesting that candidates must poll at least 35% of the votes of the SC community in order to win elections in reserved constituencies. His argument for such a provision reflected Ambedkar's argument about the need for SC politicians to be answerable to an SC electorate (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 28 1947, p. 259):

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

It is interesting to note in Nagappa's statement that he argues that being a member of the SC community is not enough to be perceived as a legitimate representative of SCs. Representatives also need to be elected by SCs and be answerable to the SC community. However, his demands found little support in the assembly, and the report from the Advisory Committee was adopted with only minor changes on August 28 1947 (Sheth and Mahajan, 1999, p. 117).

Later, however, after the horrors of the partition between India and Pakistan had sunk in, the attitudes among the members of the Constituent Assembly towards concessions to minorities changed. In May 1949, the Advisory Committee passed a resolution to abolish reservations for religious minorities, while keeping them for another 10 years for SCs. In a letter of May 11 1949 to the President of the Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel explained the motivation for their change in opinion: "Some members of the committee felt that, conditions having vastly changed since the Advisory Committee made their recommendations in 1947, it was no longer appropriate in the context of free India and of present conditions that there should be reservation of seats for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs or any other religious minority. Although the abolition of separate electorates had removed much of the poison

 $^{^6}$ Nagappa moved this amendment mainly as a matter of principle, and withdrew it again before it was voted upon. One of the Muslim representatives, K. T. M. Ahmed Ibrahim Sahib Bahadur, moved a similar amendment of a minimum of 30 % support from the community. This amendment was rejected by the assembly.

⁷At that time Christians and Muslims were also granted reserved seats proportional to their share of the population, and Anglo-Indians were to be nominated by the Governor of Governor General of the state. Parsis gave up the right to any form of safeguard.

from the body politic, the reservation of seats for religious communities, it was felt, still lead to a certain degree of separatism and was to that extent contrary to the conception of a secular democratic state" (printed as an appendix in CAD, 1999, vol. 8, p. 311).

When the Constituent Assembly discussed the resolution, it was clear that the Muslim representatives were divided in their opinions about reserved seats, while most others supported the removal of reservations for religious minorities. The Muslim representative Begam Aizaz Rasul was one of the strongest supporters of removing reservations. She stated that "reservation is a self-destructive weapon which separates the minorities from the majority for all time" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 25 1949, p. 300). Similarly, in a passionate speech against reservations, the Muslim representative Tajamul Husein proclaimed that "the term minority is a British creation. The British created minorities. The British have gone and minorities have gone with them" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 26 1949, p. 333). Yet another argued that this was a measure the British had implemented to "play their own game," and that now that the British were gone "there would be no cause for safeguard of anybodys rights" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 26 1949, p. 317).

So where did this shift in opinion come from? According to one representative, the decision to keep reservations in 1947 was based solely on the fact that groups were used to separate electorates, and that the jump to no reservations seemed too large. After a few years of getting used to not having separate electorates, however, it was time to "proceed towards a compact nation" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 26 1949, p. 321). According to another, the Assembly had, in 1947, been scared of seeming too harsh on minorities. He argued that the change in sentiments came from the fact that "[c]ommunal incidents have played havoc in this country" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 26 1949, p. 317).

In this way reserved seats for religious minorities were removed. One representative suggested reopening the discussion about the electoral system, but this was once again shot down with the argument that a PR-system was too complicated for India. The debate was put to an end by Sardar Patel ferociously claiming that this was an attempt of sneaking reservations in "the back door" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 26 1949, p. 353).

While the quotas for religious groups were removed, it was decided to continue the provisions for SCs. This decision was not uncontested. Mahavir Tyagi argued that the category SCs was a British artifact, and suggested class-based rather than caste-based representational guarantees (CAD, 1999, vol. 3, May 26 1949, p. 344):

I want to emphasise [...] [that] originally when the Scheduled Castes were given separate representation, Mahatma Gandhi had started his fast in protest. Now we have, it seems, accepted the idea; but when it was first introduced, everybody was shocked [...] The term 'Scheduled Castes' is a fiction. Factually there is no such thing as 'Scheduled Castes'. There are some castes who are depressed, some castes who are poor, some who are untouchables, some who are downtrodden. All their names were collected from the various provinces and put into one category 'Scheduled Castes'. In spite of the category being a fiction it has been there for so many years. [...] Sir. How is Dr. Ambedkar a member of the

Scheduled Castes? Is he illiterate? Is he ill-educated? Is he an untouchable? Is he lacking in anything? He is the finest of the fine intellectuals in India and still he is in the list of Scheduled Castes [...] By allowing caste representations, let us not re-inject the poisonous virus which the Britisher has introduced into our body politic. I would suggest Sir, that instead of the so called Scheduled Caste, minorities be protected, if you like, on class basis.

Many other members of the Constituent Assembly were also opposed to granting quotas to SCs, but the majority still grudgingly supported it. One member of the assembly argued: "I have no hesitation in saying that if we had removed even this provision [reservations for SCs from the Constitution, it would have been for the better. But because the Scheduled Castes are poor, uneducated and suffer because of their status in society and because of the prevailing social customs, it would have been unjust not to provide for them some special facility in the Constitution" (CAD, 1999, vol. 3, May 26 1949, p. 339). Similarly, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, stated that "[f]rankly I would like this proposal to go further and put and end to such reservations as there still remain. But again, speaking frankly, I realise that in the present state of affairs in India that would not be a desirable thing to do [...] in regard to the Scheduled Castes. I try to look upon the problem not in the sense of religious minority, but rather in the sense of helping backward groups in the country" (CAD, 1999, vol. 8, May 26 1949, p. 331). Thus, while the introduction of reservations for SCs in the first place had been justified with them having a separate group identity, it was now stated that SCs were given reservations not on grounds of their group identity, but "apparently and clearly on grounds of their economic, social and educational backwardness" (CAD, 1999, vol. 3, May 25 1949, p. 308).

The Constituent Assembly voted in favor of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on May 26th 1949, granting SCs reserved seats with joint electorates. As is clear from the debates, many were opposed to this measure, but saw it as a way of helping members of the SC community become electorally competitive. The reservation system was originally set up to last for only 10 years, in order for SC candidates to become integrated enough in the political system to be able to contest elections on an equal footing with other candidates. But every 10 years since then, as they were about to expire, they have been extended.

In 1959, the Minister of Home Affairs, G.B. Pant, moved to extend the reservations for the first time: "The reasons which weighted with, and influenced, the Constituent Assembly in making provisions for these reservations have not ceased to exist" (Lok Sabha Debates, November 30 1959, p. 2443). It is clear that the minister assumed that political reservations would lead to socio-economic development for SCs: "I know that if they [reservations] go on working, they [SCs] will perhaps attain further progress in educational, administrative and other fields [...] we have to remember that if they [SCs] had made progress in those directions, that progress too is, to a large extent, due to their representation in the legislatures in the legislatures" (Lok Sabha Debates, November 30 1959, p. 2443). In other words, the "helping backward groups" was now interpreted as creating development for the SC community at large, not making SC candidates competitive in elections.

Similarly, in 1969, the Minister of Law and Social Welfare, Mr Govinda Menon, moved for yet another extension of the quota system: "Our attempts to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, our attempts to bring them up to a level which is equal to the rest of the population of the country have not fully succeeded. So far as I am concerned, I do not believe that the depression which was effected by the Hindu society on the Scheduled Castes could be rectified in two or three decades" (Lok Sabha Debates, December 8 1969, p. 282).

In 1980, 1989, 1999 and 2009, the same arguments were repeated and the policy was extended. The wording was similar every time. In 2009, Minister of Law and Justice, Mr. M. Veerappa Moily introduced the bill to amend the constitution in the following way: "the reasons which weighed the Constituent Assembly in making the provisions with regard to the aforesaid reservation of seats [...] have not ceased to exist" (Lok Sabha Debates, August 4 2009, pp. 299-300).

In every debate there were a few voices speaking up against the extension. During the debate in 1959, the independent MP B.C. Kamble argued that it is absurd to grant quotas on the basis of untouchability when untouchability was abolished by the Indian constitution (Lok Sabha Debates, November 30 1959, p. 2450). In 1969, the Swatantra Party MP M.R. Masani summarized many of the arguments against reservations in one speech (Lok Sabha Debates, December 8 1969, pp. 299-300):

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

These arguments were not engaged by the other MPs, and every time this issue was discussed, the ministers and MPs reiterated the history of the Poona Pact, Ambedkar's hard work and Gandhi's involvement in trying to uplift deprived groups such as the SCs. In this way, the arguments of the past — that were no longer about political representation, but about development for SCs — were handed down from one parliament to the next.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have traced the history of how the political reservations in India took shape through a negotiation process that lasted from about 1905 until the signing of the Indian Constitution in 1950. Group-wise political representation first arose from the British attempt to appease religious minorities. The India Act of 1919 and the British Communal Award of 1932 then institutionalized quotas for many groups, including the depressed classes (or SCs). The main spokesperson of the SCs, Ambedkar, argued that SCs had a distinct group identity and needed to be represented by someone from their own community. The Poona Pact signed by Gandhi and Ambedkar further entrenched the promise of guaranteed representation for SCs, but also made Ambedkar give up the demand for separate electorates. Ambedkar saw this as a defeat, as he thought reserved seats with joint electorates would guarantee representation, but not incentivize SC leaders to work for SC interests. provision of reserved seats for religious groups were then removed from the draft constitution, because communal representation was seen as the source of the conflict that led to the partition of India and Pakistan. Yet, the assembly chose to keep the reserved seats for SC, because these quotas were justified by the need to help a deprived and marginalized segment of the Hindu Community in becoming electorally competitive. Yet, the drafters of the constitution were adamant about having joint electorates, so that SC politicians would be integrated into mainstream politics rather than becoming champions of SC interests.

The institutional result of this historical process is therefore a quota system that was a compromise between many different political goals. The designers of the Indian constitution were keenly aware of the incentives created for the representatives elected from reserved constituencies. They were strongly opposed to a system that created politicians working only for their own group. For the majority of the political elite at the time any kind of group-wise representation was seen as evil, because it reinforced existing social cleavages. In defending reserved seats, the debate pointed to SCs being too economically deprived to be competitive in unreserved political constituencies. There is therefore a clear disjuncture between the rhetorics of socio-economic upliftment of post-independence parliamentary debates and the initial intentions of the reservation system

The result of this long history of reservations, is that quotas have become entrenched as the most common safeguard for minorities in India. Quotas in government services and educational institutions have been expanded to include Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and the political quota system has been expanded to local level politics for SCs, STs, OBCs and women. There is also an ongoing discussion about getting quotas for women and Muslims in state assemblies and in parliament. But this has led to complicated debates about how many positions can actually be reserved, and how to deal sub-quotas within the reservations system. Also, since the expectation of the reservation system has gradually shifted from being about political integration to being about development for the SC community at large, the reservations have been seen as a failure by many commentators. The reservations for SCs have, in fact, been very effective at doing what they were designed to do: Include members of a marginalized group in the ruling elite in order to break caste boundaries and make SCs more competitive in open elections.

Chapter 3

Identification strategy

In Chapter 1 I described how SCs were given electoral quotas in India's state assemblies. All constituencies in India are single-member districts, and in reserved constituencies only SCs can run for election even if they are a small minority of the population in that constituency. The boundaries of the constituencies, as well as their location is determined by the Delimitation Commission. In this dissertation I focus on the constituencies that were chosen to be reserved in the 1970s, and remained reserved until 2007.

One of the main challenges to studying the effects of quotas, as to many other observational studies, is that the quotas for SCs were systematically, not randomly, assigned in the 1970s. To try to get around this selection problem, I adopt the potential outcomes framework, or the Neyman-Rubin framework, as laid out by Neyman (1923), Rubin (1974, 2006) and Holland (1986). Under this framework, if we think of quotas as a treatment, then every constituency in India is assumed to have two potential outcomes, Y_{i1} if the constituency receives treatment and Y_{i0} if the constituency does not receive treatment. The treatment effect for unit i is then defined as:

$$\tau_i = Y_{i1} - Y_{i0} \tag{3.1}$$

In this study I am interested in identifying the effect of quotas by estimating the average treatment effect of the treated (ATT), which can be defined as:

$$\tau|(T=1) = E(Y_{i1}|T_i=1) - E(Y_{i0}|T_i=1)$$
(3.2)

However, this equation cannot be easily estimated, since we cannot observe both Y_{i1} and Y_{i0} simultaneously for any one unit, as only one of them occur in real life. This is often referred to as the fundamental problem of causal inference.

If quotas had been randomly assigned, and we had assumed that the potential outcomes of one unit did not depend on the treatment of other units (stable-unit treatment value assumption or SUTVA), then equation 3.2 could have been estimated consistently by simply taking the difference in the sample mean among the reserved and the general constituencies.

Since quotas were non-randomly assigned, however, we cannot assume balance on potential confounding variables in the sample of reserved and general constituencies. However, by knowing exactly how the quotas were selected (selection on observables), we can assume that the potential outcomes for each constituency is independent of treatment assignment once conditioning on the variables that were used to assign the treatment. In other words, I can assume as if random assignment to treatment by conditioning on X, where X is the variables used for treatment assignment. According to Rosenbaum and Rubin(1983) treatment assignment is strongly ignorable if:

$$\{Y_0, Y_1 \perp \!\!\! \perp T\} \mid X \tag{3.3}$$

$$0 < Pr(T = 1|X) < 1 \tag{3.4}$$

This implies that the *conditional* distributions of potential outcomes are the same for treated and control groups. Equation 3.4 is important because it states that a given value of X can not guarantee the treatment outcome. This means that if there are values of X that are only observed for observations in the control group, these observations will be dropped from the analysis. Given strong ignorability, it follows that the ATT can be estimated as:

$$\tau|(T=1) = E\{E(Y_i|X_i, T_i=1) - E(Y_i|X_i, T_i=0)|T_i=1\}$$
(3.5)

Thus, we can identify the effects of quotas in India if we can figure out exactly how they were selected. In the next section I will explain how the quotas for SCs were selected in the 1970s.

3.1 Selection on observables

How were the reserved constituencies selected?¹ Every ten years, after the decennial census, the Election Commission of India is supposed to appoint a Delimitation Commission to redraw political boundaries. At the same time, they are supposed to select which political seats are to be reserved for SCs and STs. Until now, a Delimitation Commission has been formed in 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002. As mentioned in the introduction, the large gap in time between the delimitation of the 1970s and the 2000s was the result of a concern with high birth-rates in some Indian states. The population size was originally meant to be the same in every constituency, and over time it became evident that the high population

¹To get the historical information I needed for this section, I first went through several secondary sources about the delimitation. I then tried to contact the individuals who had worked on the delimitation at that time in order to hear an account from a primary source. I was able to get an interview with one of them, Mr Mehendiratta, who now is a senior legal advisor in the Election Commission of India. Through a long interview with him, I tried to form a picture of the process of the delimitation. He had also written a book about the work of the Election Commission and the Delimitation Commission which served as an important source. In addition, I applied for access to the Record Room, an internal archive of the Election Commission of India, and in February 2011 I went through the internal documents of the Delimitation Commission from the 1970s.

growth in certain parts of India would lead to a dramatic change in the number of political seats granted to each state if the principal of equally-sized constituencies was upheld. To avoid encouraging higher birthrates, it was decided to "freeze" the boundaries of political constituencies in 1976, and, with it, the geographic location of the reserved seats. A new delimitation was first initiated after the 2001 census, and the new delimitation came into force in 2008. The result was that political constituencies remained the same from 1974 until 2007, allowing us to study places that have been continuously reserved for more than 30 years.

The Delimitation Commission that was set up in 1973 followed the instructions in the Delimitation Act of 1972, and based their work on population figures in the Census of India from 1971. The work of the Delimitation Commission was meticulously recorded and kept in the archives of the Election Commission of India. I studied the work of the Commission by going through these records.² The first draft of new constituencies was completed in the Election Commission premises in New Delhi. The Commission had gotten district-wise booklets from the Census of India, with information about the overall population, SC population and ST population of each village in India, according to the 1971 census. A group of civil servants then consulted these booklets and maps of the districts, and drew out suggested new constituencies.

When drawing out boundaries, each state was first assigned a number of constituencies, and these constituencies were then assigned to the districts within the state proportionally to the population size of the district. Districts were then divided into that number of constituencies. State assembly constituency boundaries therefore generally do not cross district boundaries. While drawing out constituencies, the aim of the Commission was to make constituencies geographically coherent areas with a similarly sized electorate. The Delimitation Act (1972, article 9.1.a) specified that attention should be given to "physical features, existing boundaries of administrative units, facilities of communication and public convenience." Despite the instructions to draw out areas with a similarly sized electorate, the number of seats in the assembly and the geography of the area led to considerable variation. It was for example accepted to have a lower population size in constituencies in hilly areas because the terrain made it hard for politicians to travel and visit all their constituents. Looking at the 15 states that I focus on in this study, the smallest constituency created during the delimitation in the 1970s was Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, with a population of 242,840. On the other extreme, Rampur in Uttar Pradesh (UP) had a population of 242,840.

After state assembly constituencies had been drawn out, contiguous constituencies were joined together into Lok Sabha constituencies, also with an aim of being geographically coherent and with approximately the same number of voters. Lok Sabha constituencies can therefore cross the boundaries of districts. In most states there are more Lok Sabha constituencies than districts, so there are usually more assembly constituencies within a

²I am grateful to the Director of Statistics Yashvir Singh for granting me access to these records. Soon after I consulted the records they were transferred to the National Archive in New Delhi, where they are now publicly available.

district than within a Lok Sabha constituency. On average across India's 15 largest states, administrative districts include about 11 state assemble constituencies on average, while Lok Sabha constituencies contain about 7 state constituencies on average. Figure 3.1 shows an example of these different boundaries in the state of Haryana. The top plot in the Figure shows how assembly constituencies fit into administrative districts, and the bottom plot shows how they fit into Lok Sabha constituencies.³ Efforts were not made to make districts and Lok Sabha constituencies overlap nicely. As can be seen in the Figure, Haryana has 11 districts and 10 parliamentary constituencies, but although the numbers are similar the boundaries are still quite different.

Once all the constituency boundaries had been drawn, the next step was to select which seats were to be reserved. According to the Delimitation Act of 1972 (article 9.1.c) there were two criteria for the selection of reserved seats: (1) that the proportion of SCs should be high in selected constituencies and (2) that the reserved constituencies should be geographically spread out within the state. In practice this meant that states and then districts were assigned a reserved seats on the basis of the proportion of SCs in their population.⁴ The percent SCs in each constituency was given by the booklets with data from the 1971 census. If a district was eligible for a reserved seat, the constituency with the highest proportion of SCs within the district was assigned to be reserved. If a district was eligible for more than one seat, the two constituencies with the highest proportion of SCs, which were not bordering each other and preferably not in the same block or subdivision, were supposed to be chosen to be reserved. Similarly reservations were given to Lok Sabha seats with a high proportion SCs within a state that were not bordering each other and preferably not in the same Division of the state.

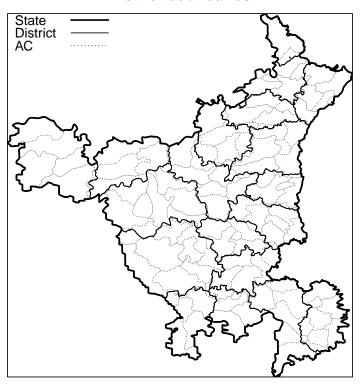
At the next step of the delimitation process, each state was asked to select five of their Members of Parliament (MPs) and five of their Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to serve as Associate Members of the Commission. These Associate members were asked to go through the suggested constituencies and provide local knowledge about geography and infrastructure that might make the constituencies unpractical. The Delimitation Commission also travelled to each of the states and had open public meetings where they heard the opinions of people about how the borders should be redrawn. At this stage of the delimitation process there was therefore some room for political maneuvering, but the Commission seems to have been very keen to avoid politically motivated suggestions biasing their choses. For example, in the resume (summary) of the public sittings and meetings with Associate members in various cities in Madhya Pradesh in 1974 it was written that "[s]everal proposals were made for revising the extent of the seven constituencies in the district with the main object of shifting the SC seat [...] These proposals were also made in the meeting with the Associate Members but were not accepted by the Commission. We may not make any

³Minor differences in boundaries for districts and assembly constituencies are due to the administrative and electoral map files coming from different sources and not overlapping perfectly.

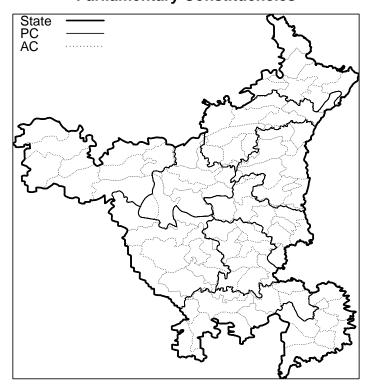
 $^{^4}$ For example, since 13.3% of the population in Andhra Pradesh is SC, and since the state assembly has 294 political seats, 13.3% of those 294 seats were reserved. Similarly, if a district had 13% SCs and 6 political seats, then $6*0.13=0.78\approx 1$ seats would be assigned to that district.

Figure 3.1: Assembly constituencies of Haryana showed within district and parliamentary constituencies boundaries

District boundaries



Parliamentary Constituencies



change in the extent of the constituencies." The extent to which the Delimitation Commission ignored suggestions they perceived as politically motivated can be gaged from a letter of March 29 1975 from Bhogendra Jha, Associate Member from Bihar, who writes: "We beg of you to express our shock and surprise at the proposals having almost totally hushed aside duly signed and argued proposals by three-fourths of the associate members. Even criterias of geographical compactness, administrative boundaries, communication facilities, etc. have not been given the least consideration in several cases."

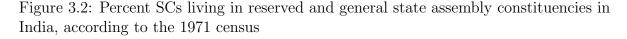
There are some exceptions to the Delimitation Commission assigning the constituencies with the highest proportion of SCs to be reserved for SCs. In some cases the constituency with the highest proportion of SCs also had the highest proportion of STs and was therefore reserved for STs. In some other cases the Commission chose to pick the constituency with the second highest proportion SCs to be reserved because it was argued that the area with the highest proportion of SCs had already been reserved for the past 20 years, and that this led to people in the area losing interest in politics. Other than that, the records suggest that the Commission was fairly faithful to their task of selecting reserved seats on the basis of the concentration of the SCs in the population and spreading the reserved seats out within the state.

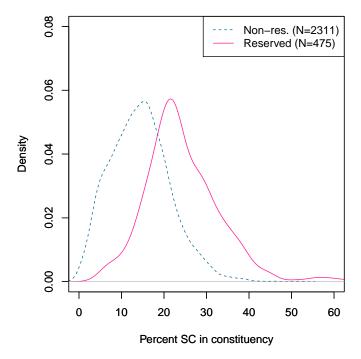
The result of this step-wise selection process is great variations in the proportion of SCs in reserved constituencies, and several examples of constituencies with high proportions of SCs that were not reserved. In fact, the percentage of SCs living in reserved constituencies according to the 1971 data ranged from 4% to 66.5% (in Bihar and West Bengal respectively), while there were also general constituencies where SCs constitute up to about 50% of the population. The distribution of the percent SCs in reserved and general seats is shown in Figure 3.2.⁵ The report delimiting each of the constituencies was published in 1976,⁶ but some states (such as UP and Orissa) started using the new delimitation already in 1974. The number of reserved seats was then adjusted slightly for some states in 1977 following the revision of the population figures for the SCs in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act of 1976, but other than that they remained unchanged until 2008.⁷

⁵These percentages were acquired from the Record room of the Election Commission of India by Rikhil Bhavnani, and formed the basis of the data merging work described in the next section.

⁶The report is available online at [URL] http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/delimitation_pub_rpt.aspx.

⁷Interestingly these adjustments was made on the basis of estimates, since the Commission did not have access to caste wise population figures. In the internal documents of the Election Commission of India it was written that "[i]t is worth mentioning that the detailed census caste wise was done unto 1931. Thereafter, the census done every ten years was not so detailed. In the SC & ST Orders (Amendment) Act, 1976, some changes relating to some of the castes and tribes have been made in the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The figures relating to these Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the 1971 Census were obviously not available and therefore the relevant figures for the 1971 Census was estimated but the R.G.'s office on the basis of the 1931 Census, or any later census during which detailed figures for the particular caste or tribe might have been collected. The detailed figures given by the R.G. to us may, therefore, in some cases vary widely from the actual figures that would have been arrived at, had the relevant figures been collected during 1971 Census. In any case, section 5(4) of the Act provides that the population figures so notified by the R.G. shall be final and shall not be questioned in any court of law. There may,





Since the selection mechanism for reserved seats is known, and since there is considerable overlap in the distributions of reserved and general seats, matching on the variables used to select the quotas should ensure good balance on observable and unobservable confounding variables and allow us to identify the effects of quotas. In the next section I describe the data used for matching. The operationalization and collection of outcome variables will be described in relevant chapters.

3.2 Baseline data used for matching

The Delimitation Commission set down in 1972 selected the constituencies reserved for SCs using data from the Indian census of 1971. This is therefore the baseline data in my analysis. There were two major challenges to working with the 1971 census data.⁸ First, the data were not electronically available. Second, the geographical units of the census are

however, be some public criticism regarding correctness of some of these figures and it is from this point of view that there has been some hesitation on the part of the R.G.'s office in getting these figures released to the public" (from file no 281/SC-ST/77).

⁸I collaborated with Dr Rikhil Bhavnani in solving these problems and developing the census dataset for 1971 and 2001. The details of how we developed the data is further explained in Bhavnani and Jensenius (2012).

different from political constituencies. The first problem was solved by scanning the books with block-level census data (the administrative level below district, usually called tehsil, taluk or firka) for the 15 largest Indian states in 1971. The scanned copies were made electronic with the use of text recognition software (OCR) and remaining mistakes were manually cleaned.⁹

The second problem was solved by manually writing a merging code for the political data and the census data. The estimated census values for each constituency are based on block level data weighted by population. Typically, there were approximately 1.5 blocks within the area of a constituency, and the estimated constituency level values were therefore the sum of the census values for the whole block and half of the values for the other block.¹⁰ Since the constituency level estimates are population-weighted estimates, they might be biased at the constituency-level, but since there is no reason why these inaccuracies should be systematic or correlated with whether a constituency is reserved or non-reserved, averages across reserved and non-reserved seats can be treated as unbiased.

3.3 Balance statistics

To eliminate as much as possible of the selection bias resulting from the quotas being non-randomly assigned, I matched state assembly constituencies on the variables used to select the reserved seats in the 1970s. Each of the reserved state assembly constituencies in the sample was matched to a non-reserved constituency within the same district and parliamentary constituency, which was as similar as possible in terms of percent SCs in the population. I matched state assembly constituencies on parliamentary constituency because

⁹There were many mistakes in the data because of the poor quality of the original documents, and the performance of the software. The cleaning work consisted of setting up logical tests for all the data such as male+female=total, rural+urban=total, sum(all blocks in a district)=District etc. Where these tests were negative, the numbers were checked up against the original census publications and corrected. I am very grateful to the approximately 20 research assistants who have helped out with this tedious work.

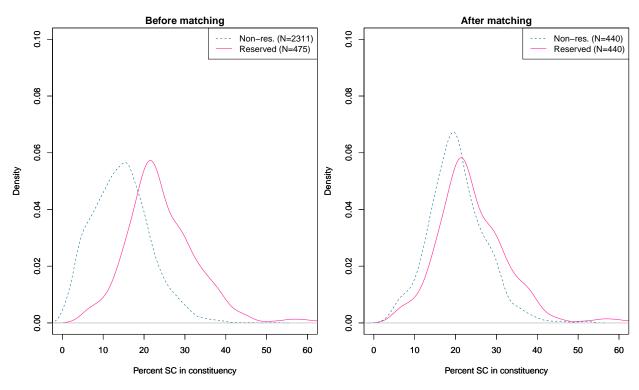
 $^{^{10}}$ We started out with block level census data and the Delimitation report of 1976 specifying which blocks fall into each constituency. We had the total population of the constituencies from Election Commission documents from the 1970s and the population for each block in the census data. The merging files were created by calculating the proportion of the population of a block that fell into a constituency. For example, if the Delimitation report listed that Constituency x (population 150000) consisted of all of block A and part of Block B (each having a population of 100000), then the census values for Constituency x = values for Block A + half the values for Block B. In some cases, two or more constituencies consisted of parts of the same two blocks. In these cases the exact proportions could not be calculated. We solved these cases in two different ways. In most cases, we used the notes about the exact population proportions referred to in the notes of the Delimitation Commission from the 1970s. These notes were accessed by the author in the record room of the Election Commission in New Delhi during February 2011. These records were soon thereafter transferred to the National Archive in New Delhi where they are now publicly available. In the few cases where I could not find written sources among the records of the Delimitation commission, I made estimates of the population based on the average population size of villages in that region and the number of villages in the constituency. A list of the cases were such estimates were made is part of the data documentation which will be released with this data.

some of the parliamentary constituencies also are reserved, and having a different treatment at the parliamentary level could bias the findings. This way, each of the matched pairs have the same reservation status at the parliamentary constituency level. Since there is usually just one reserved constituency in a district, this meant that in most cases the constituency with the highest proportion of SCs in a district (reserved) was matched to the one with the second highest proportion of SCs within that same district (non-reserved).

By matching on the selection mechanism of reserved seats, I assume that the matched pairs are much closer to being exchangeable, that they are closer to being as if randomly assigned to be reserved or non-reserved. This means that we should expect to see balance on all possible confounding variables, and looking at the matched pairs we do find a much improved balance on the proportion SCs in the constituencies and excellent balance on a range of observed variables available in the dataset from 1971.

Figure 3.3 shows how much closer to each other the reserved and non-reserved constituencies are on the variable percent SC in the population. Before matching the average percentage of SCs in non-reserved constituencies was 14% compared to 24% in the reserved constituencies. After matching the non-reserved constituencies have an average of 20.4% SCs, while the percentage in reserved constituencies was still 24%. It is not surprising that there still is a difference in the samples, since constituencies were selected to be reserved because they had the highest proportion of SCs in the district.

Figure 3.3: Balance on the proportion of SCs in general and reserved constituencies



Covariate	Before	matching	After matching		
	t p-value	KS p-value	t p -value	KS p-value	
Population size	0.16	0.02	0.22	0.96	
Non SC non-workers	0.44	0.35	0.38	0.79	
SC non-workers	0.27	0.11	0.52	0.62	
Literacy rate non-SC	0	0.07	0.47	0.95	
Literacy rate SCs	0	0	0.62	0.92	
Agricultural labor non-SC	0	0	0.78	0.97	
Agricultural labor SC	0.95	0.94	0.77	0.99	
Percent ST	0.44	0.19	0.59	0.98	

Table 3.1: Difference in means for treated and control and balance output from matches

Table 3.1 shows the balance statistics before and after matching on a selection of variables from the 1971 census data (note that I did not match on any of these variables, they simply balance out by matching on the proportion SCs). The table reports p-values from a t-test and a bootstrap Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test. P-values close to 1 suggest that the difference in the average values in the non-reserved and reserved constituencies are statistically insignificant from 0, in other words that they are very similar to each other.

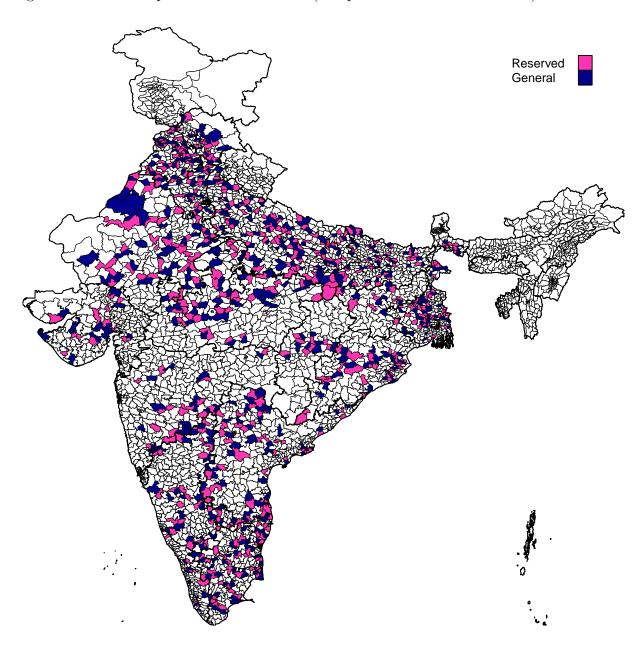
Figure 3.4 provides an illustration of the balance on the same variables that are listed in Table 3.1. The values on the left side of the figure show the average difference in the values in reserved and non-reserved constituencies before and after matching. The triangles in the figure show the p-values of the difference in distribution test (KS-test) in the two groups before matching. The smaller the value, the more different are the distributions of the two groups. The circles show the p-value after matching. That the circles are further to the right than the triangles shows that the groups are much more similar after matching. Figure 3.5 shows the location of the 440 matched pairs of constituencies

¹¹These are the default tests provided by the function MatchBalance in the Matching package developed for R by Jas Sekhon (2011). Before matching the comparison is between 2311 general seats and 475 reserved seats. A few cases were dropped because of the exact matching on district and parliamentary constituency. After matching the comparison is therefore between 440 reserved seats and 440 matched general seats. A two-sample t-test is used before matching, since there is no reason to assume the same variance in the two samples before matching, while a paired t-test is used after matching. The KS is a nonparametric test of the difference in one-dimensional probability distributions.

Figure 3.4: P-values from a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test before matching (BM) and after matching (AM) $\,$

	Diff. BM	Diff. AM			
Population size	-2519.2	-709.8	A		•
Non SC non-workers	0.2	-0.1	A	•	
SC non-workers	0.5	-0.1	A	•	
Literacy rate non-SC	-1.7	-0.2	A		•
Literacy rate SCs	-2.7	-0.1	†	•)
Agricultural labor non-SC	-2	0.1			•
Agricultural labor SC	-0.1	-0.1			•
Percent ST	-0.3	-0.1	A		•
▲ Before matching KS p-value • After matching KS p-value			0.00	P-values	1.00

Figure 3.5: Matched pairs of constituencies (440 pairs from 15 Indian states)



3.4 Looking only at previously general areas

One problem with the matching approach presented in the previous section is that it picks up constituencies that used to be both general and reserved before 1974. When looking at some slow-moving variables over a long period of time (such as development variables in Chapter 5, this might not be a problem. As long as the starting point for the matched pairs is the same in the 1970s, it is interesting to look at the change in development indicators in the matched pairs over time. However, when looking at variables that change quickly (such as electoral turnout in Chapter 7), this approach will not be picking up the desired treatment effect. Then we might only be interested in looking at what happens with places that were un-reserved before 1974. Since all the political boundaries were reorganized in the early 1970s, there is no way of exactly checking whether a constituency was reserved or non-reserved before 1974. However, it is possible to make an approximation. Comparing the delimitation reports of 1967 and 1976, it is possible to create fuzzy links of constituencies. A fuzzy link is the constituency in 1967 containing the largest part of the 1976 constituency.¹²

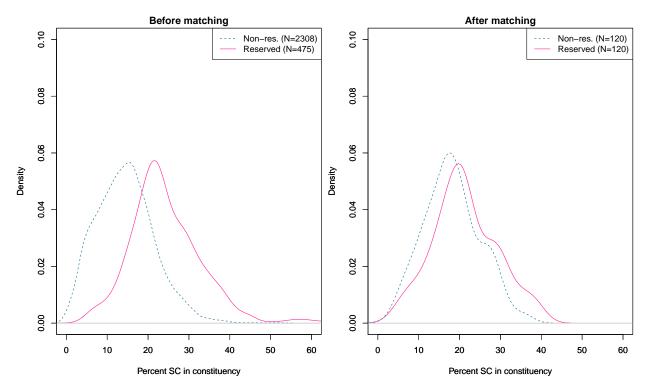
Using the fuzzy links, I reran the matching models comparing only constituencies that used to be non-reserved before 1974 and then either stayed non-reserved or became reserved. First, the sample was restricted to areas that were not reserved for any group before the delimitation in the 1970s. This reduced the sample to 2305 constituencies of which 134 were reserved for SCs after the delimitation. Second, each of the reserved constituencies in the sample was matched to the general constituency within the same district and same Lok Sabha seat that had the proportion of SCs in the population closest to that of the reserved constituency and used to be in the same type of Lok Sabha constituency. In this case the number of matched pairs is reduced to 120 because of reducing the dataset to former non-reserved constituencies. The balance of observables is excellent, as can be seen in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2. Using the fuzzy links to previous political constituencies also allow us to check balance on political variables. As can be seen in the Figure, the matching exercise greatly improves balance on electoral turnout in a constituency. Before matching the difference is more than six percentage points, while after matching the difference is less than one percentage point.

Figure 3.6 shows balance on the percent SCs. In this case the balance is even better than it was in the larger set of matches, probably because several areas with a high percent SCs have been removed by looking only at places that used to be general. In this case the general constituencies in the matched pairs have an average of 18.2% of SCs while the SC seats have an average of 21.3%.

This second matching approach might seem better since it looks at only places that used to be unreserved. However, there are some disadvantages to this approach too. Mainly,

¹²Constituencies were linked up by manually comparing the delimitation reports from 1967 and 1976. In cases where constituencies remained unchanged they were coded as a perfect match. In most cases, however, new constituencies consisted of parts of two or more former constituencies, and the old constituency with the largest overlapping population was coded as a fuzzy match to the new constituency. This work was done in collaboration with Rikhil Bhavnani and with the excellent help of several RAs.

Figure 3.6: Distribution of percent SCs in the population in reserved and general constituencies, all of which were general before 1974



since many reserved areas were reserved before 1974 too, this approach reduced the number of constituencies in the sample, particularly areas with a high percent SCs. Also, since the links between old and new constituencies are approximations using the largest overlapping constituency, we are sometimes picking up constituencies of which only a bit more than half of the area used to be reserved and throwing away some constituencies of which a large part used to be reserved. This means throwing away a lot of valuable information. For this reason I use both these matching models in my work as robustness checks of each other. Figure 3.8 shows the location of these 120 pairs of matched constituencies across India.¹³

¹³I have also run the matches in several other ways to look for better balance and check the robustness of all results. Some examples of this is (1) matching on SC-percent and confounding variables within the state instead of within the district, achieving excellent balance on all the variables, including SC percent and percent turnout. (2) Matching constituencies on the type of constituency it was before 1974, but including both general and reserved constituencies. (3) Reducing the sample only to places that had the same reservation status at both state assembly and parliamentary level, and thereby comparing places that were reserved at both levels to places that were not reserved at any level. (4) All of these models with a restriction imposed on how far apart the matched pairs can be on the variable percent SC (caliper). The findings presented from the project are robust to all the different specifications and also to running linear models on the matched data controlling for percent SCs constituencies.

Table 3.2: Difference in means for treated and control and balance output from matches (previously general areas)

Covariate	Before	matching	After	After matching	
	t p-value	KS p-value	t p-value	KS p-value	
Population size	0.16	0.02	0.26	0.85	
Non SC non-workers	0.44	0.40	0.66	0.87	
SC non-workers	0.27	0.11	0.69	0.80	
Literacy rate non-SC	0	0.09	0.70	0.93	
Literacy rate SCs	0	0	0.28	0.98	
Agricultural labor non-SC	0	0	0.20	0.87	
Agricultural labor SC	0.94	0.96	0.43	1.00	
Percent ST	0.46	0.17	0.87	0.98	
Turnout	0	0	0.11	0.56	
Number of cand.	0	0	0.68	0.99	
Effect. number of cand.	0	0.03	0.61	0.95	

Figure 3.7: P-values from a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test before and after matching

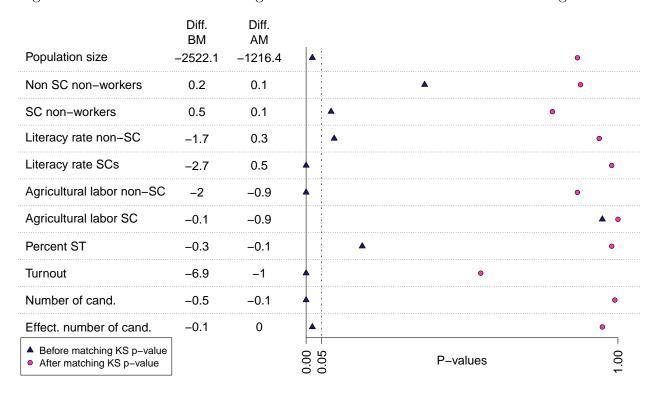
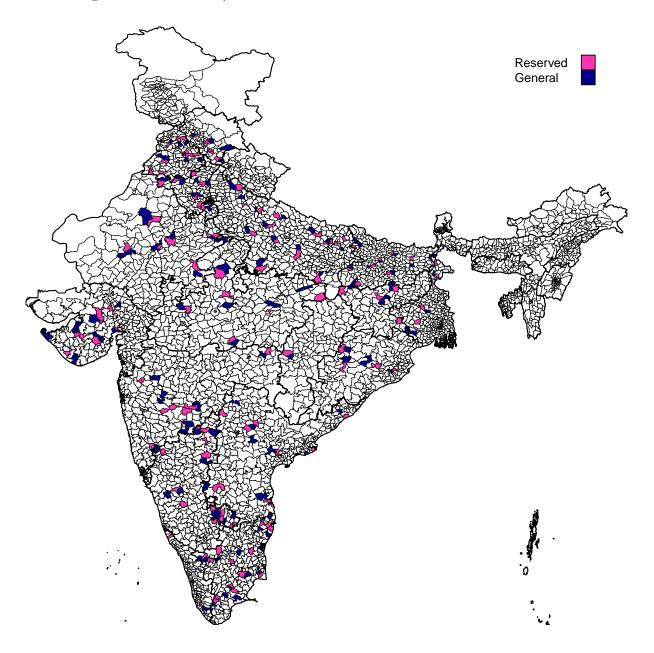


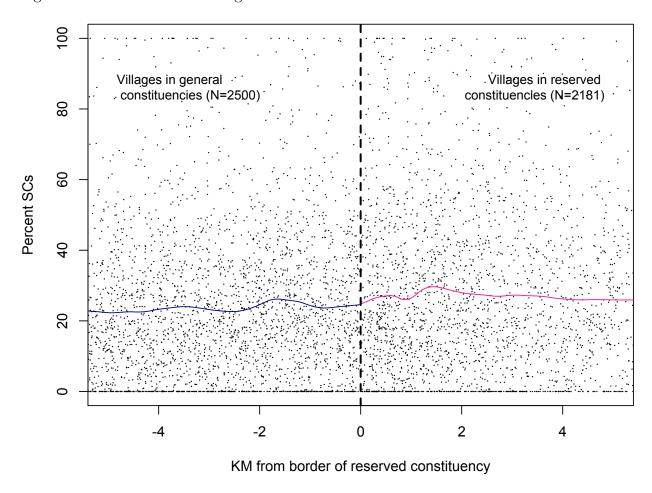
Figure 3.8: Matched pairs of constituencies (120 pairs from 15 Indian states, all of which used to be general before 1974)



3.5 Dealing with migration

One of the assumptions essential to making causal inference from this matching analysis is the stable-unit treatment value assumption (SUTVA), or that the treatment assignment of one unit in no way affects the treatment assignment of other units. Migration is a potential SUTVA violation in the case of reserved seats for SCs in India. Most migration in India is that of workers from villages going to cities to look for better employment opportunities. This is not a problem for the matching analysis, since it would probably occur at about the same rate across the matched pairs of constituencies. A problem arises only if people move to or from reserved constituencies because they think the goods provision or political leadership is better or worse there. This would alter the aggregate development statistics on each side, for example because there is an influx of unemployed workers in reserved constituencies, and would therefore make it hard to conclude much from the statistical analysis.

Figure 3.9: Percent SCs in villages close to border of reserved constituencies



Without local level data on migration patterns, it is hard to know whether this has

occurred. One way of looking at it, however, is to look at village level population figures from the 2001 census. We know that the SC population was higher in reserved constituencies than in general constituencies in the 1970s, but it was probably very similar right at the borders of reserved and general constituencies. We can therefore look at the percent SCs living in the villages right on the border of reserved and general constituencies. If there has been a systematic pattern of SCs moving across the border into reserved constituencies in the search for better living conditions, we might be able to see a lower percent SCs on the general side of the border and a higher percent living in villages on the reserved side of the border. Figure 3.9 shows that there is no discontinuity in the percent SCs living in villages on each side of the border to reserved constituencies. The plot is based on a random sample of 20.000 villages from across India. For each village I calculated the distance in km to the closest border of a reserved constituency. Villages in reserved constituencies were assigned a positive distance, while the other villages were given negative values. In the Figure I show the 4681 villages in this sample that were within 5km of a border. The trend line plotted through the data is a locally fitted regression line, estimated separately for the positive and negative values in the plot. The fact that the lines almost meet, and have no sudden drops or rises close to the border area. 14 This does not say anything about SCs or others crossing the border in order to attend school or take up work in another constituency, which would also represent a SUTVA violation, but does suggest that there has been no systematic migration from one side of the border to the other.

3.6 Limitations to my approach

In the empirical chapters of this dissertation I will present findings using the matches identified in this chapter. Using these matches should greatly improve balance on unobservable confounders, and therefore make us more confident in drawing causal conclusions from the findings. However, there are a few limitations to this approach that I would like to mention before proceeding.

First, by matching up constituencies and comparing them, I am able to say something about changes over time in reserved constituencies compared to very comparable general constituencies. I believe this is an important level of analysis both in terms of the political response to politicians from the voters in the constituencies, and the actions of politicians. But it is not the only important level. By looking at the constituency level, I might be overlooking important local level differences that have occurred, for example in the area that the politician is from, which might not be consequential enough to affect the overall pattern in the constituency. On the other hand there might be diffuse effects of SC representation that

¹⁴The plot was created from GIS coded village level population data, created by ML-info and accessed through the Harvard University Library. Distances were calculated by creating a layer of borders to reserved constituencies, and then calculating the distance from each village in the dataset to each of these borders using the function gDistance in the rgeos package in R. The local regression lines are estimated with the locfit function in the locfit package in R.

are not measurable at the constituency level. The SC community in India has seen a lot of change during the time period I have looked at, they have experienced an emergence of many prominent political leaders, they have developed at a faster pace than other communities, and there is a clear reduction in bias against the SC community in the society at large. It might be that the mere presence of SCs in the legislative assemblies has helped to humanize the SC community in the eyes of other politicians, has made it more politically correct to fight for the rights of SCs or has shifted the policy debate in a pro-poor direction. Thus, in a similar way to how the presence of women in politics in many countries of the world has led to a gradual change in the policy debate, the presence of SCs might have done the same. Such diffuse or indirect substantive effects are hard to measure because the real counterfactual case is not a non-reserved constituency, but an India without reservations. I can not conclude anything about such diffuse effects in my study design.

Second, my work can only be as good as the quality of the data I use. I have matched constituencies on the basis of data from the Indian census, the Indian Election Commission and delimitation reports. During the process of working with this data, I have come across many errors: The Election Commission reports are not consistent in their coding of a constituency as reserved or not, census data is missing or wrong, and the research assistants who have helped me enter and clean the data sometime made errors. In order to avoid measurement errors I have run many cross-checks on all my data files in order to detect inconsistencies, and when I have found problems I have tried to correct them to the best of my ability rather than just throwing the cases out of the datasets. For much of the data I have also had separate research assistants working on separate data files in order to increase the reliability of coding and corrections, and I have gone over most of the work of my research assistants myself as an extra quality check. However, there might still be measurement errors in the data I use.

Finally, as with any matching model, my model relies on several assumptions, including the assumption of selection on observables and balanced unobservables in my matched data. As has been explained in this chapter, I have spent time and energy trying to ascertain the accuracy of these assumptions, but as in any observational study I am faced with the limitations of the real world. I therefore cannot be sure to have achieved perfectly balanced matched pairs. For this reason I always present the patterns in the full data before I present the matching analysis, as well as several robustness checks.

Chapter 4

Who are Indian MLAs?

Reservations for SCs in state assemblies have been in place since the 1950s, and they have been effectively enforced: In reserved constituencies there have only been SC politicians. But who are these SCs who run for election and win political positions? Are they different from other Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) in India? This chapter is about Indian MLAs, and how SC MLAs might differ from the others.

4.1 The daily life of an MLA

Officially, the main task of Indian MLAs is to represent their constituents in the state assembly. Each of the Indian states has a state assembly based in the state capital, which consist of a Governor and either one or two houses. The lower houses are usually referred to as the legislative assemblies (*Vidhan Sabha* in Hindi) and the upper houses are called the legislative councils (*Vidhan Parishad* in Hindi). According to the Indian constitution, the legislative assemblies can have between 60 and 500 members. The assemblies are summoned by the Governor, and are supposed to meet with no more than six months between the end of one session and the beginning of the next one. When the assemblies meet, the MLAs take part in drafting and passing bills, and they can voice the opinion of their constituents during the debates.

In reality, the work in the legislative assembly is a minor part of the work of an MLA. Only 3% of surveyed MLAs report assembly work as the task they devote the most of their time to (Chopra, 1996, p. 151). This is partly because state assemblies in India only meet for a short period of time every year. In a paper about the legislative activity of state assemblies across India between 1967 and 2007, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2013) show that that the assemblies on average meet about 40 days in a year, that the average number of meeting days

¹Currently six states have Legislative Councils, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra and UP.

²Part VI, chapter III about the State legislatures.

³Although there have been Acts of Parliament to allow Sikkim, Goa and Mizoram to have even smaller assemblies.

has been declining over time, and that some states (such as Haryana) consistently have as few as 10 sittings in a year. Chopra (1996, p. 12) similarly reports from interviews with MLAs in Haryana that the assembly is convened only to fulfill the constitutional requirements, and that most political decisions were taken by the executive.

Even when they are present in assembly meetings, MLAs seem to play a very small role in the drafting of bills and have little room for protesting a bill proposed by the executive. When they attend meetings in the state assemblies they are expected to speak when instructed by their party leaders and vote according to what the party has decided (Chopra, 1996, p. 12). Parties often have one MLA assigned as the "party whip", i.e. a person who is in charge of making sure the MLAs followed party line. Since most votes in assemblies are taken by voice vote (avaaz, saying "aye" or "no"), it is also very easy for the party to see, and control, how MLAs vote.

Much more important to the MLAs are all their unofficial tasks of delivering pork, blessing occasions, and helping people out with their individual problems. Several local level politicians (pradhans, heads of village councils) that I interviewed, stated that the MLA in their constituency was the most important contact person in their job, and that being in the same party as the MLA, or otherwise having a good connection to the MLA, was key to being able to get work done in their village. The pradhans I talked to said that they would usually approach the MLA about planned projects that had not been implemented, and ask the MLA to plead their case to the bureaucrat in charge of implementing the project or to a higher political authority.

The regular contact between MLAs and the bureaucracy was confirmed in several of my meetings with bureaucrats. For example, one senior IAS officer in Himachal Pradesh said that he was daily contacted by MLAs who wanted to help someone get a favorable job transfer.⁴ A community development officer in Uttar Pradesh (UP) that I interviewed claimed to not be much in touch with politicians, but during the interview he was called up by two MLAs and two pradhans.⁵ A District Commissioner in Himachal Pradesh also told me that MLAs sometimes try to help their constituents by sending letters with people who come to see him or by contacting him directly, but that when something really matters to them they might even threaten the bureaucrat with an unfavorable transfer or with hurting someone in their family (although he said that this was much more common un UP than in Himachal Pradesh).⁶

According to Chopra (1996, p. 151), 74% of the MLAs he had surveyed in Haryana said that the role they mainly performed was to attend to constituents or create development in their constituency. In a recent survey of citizens, bureaucrats and politicians in Bihar, Bussell (2012, p. 4) also finds that when citizens need to access some public service, they will use some alternative route to the "official route" about half the time and that they will approach a politician about 5% of the time. The politicians that were surveyed reported

⁴Interview by the author in Shimla, October 11 2010.

⁵Interview in western UP, February 4 2011.

⁶Interview by the author, October 13 2010.

that they spent between 21 and 36 percent of their time dealing with requests for favors or help of some kind. They also reported that between 52 and 80 percent of their visitors in the capital were individual citizens Bussell (2012, p. 21). In Chopra's sample (1996, p. 102), 19% of the MLAs reported that they met with less than 19 people every day, 31% said 20-49 people, 10% said 50-99 people, 21% said 100-150 people, while 13% claimed to meet with more than 150 people per day.

Because so much of the time of an MLA is spent interacting with constituents, they usually have a meeting room in their house where they receive visitors every day. When I interviewed MLAs, I often first met them in these meeting rooms, where supporters were gathered to talk and people came and went with requests of different kinds. Several politicians told me that they met with more than 100 people every day. According to my respondents, people come with all sorts of requests, like help to get a card proving their caste status or economic status (because these are needed to receive certain government benefits), complain that some development work has not been implemented, ask to be recommended for a job or a job transfer, get help in a fight over land, or to extend an invitation to some event. Many also come to give gifts or express their gratitude for some work that was done previously in order to maintain good relations for the future. It is also common for MLAs to have a group of party workers surrounding them during these meetings, who may be sent out on missions to solve problems. These younger politicians are often aspiring leaders who are powerful in some local area because of their close relationship to the MLA, and also strengthen the power of MLAs by being their eyes and ears in different parts of the constituency.⁷

Working efficiently, being well-connected and getting things done (or at least maintaining and image of this) is essential to the popularity of MLAs. Several MLAs I talked to emphasized that it was very hard work to maintain their network and their support. One of the most exhausting days during my field work was a day traveling with an SC politician in UP. We left his office at 7am and returned back at 10pm. During this time we visited 5 or 6 villages, and the politician had addressed several caste groups in each village. We had not eaten anything except the biscuits and nuts offered with the tea in each village, and we had not taken any breaks. From what I gathered, this was a typical day in the life of this politician.

Another non-SC MLA told me that he got up at 5am every day, met with constituents in his house between 7am and 10am, and then travelled out into his constituency to talk to people or have meetings. He said that he kept records of all the people who approached him and that he talked to 50-300 constituents every day who came to him about ration cards, job transfers or problems with the police. Of all the requests, he claimed to be able to help out in about half the cases. He told me that to sort out a problem he would first call contacts on the phone, but that if nothing happened he would send one of his party workers, and as a last resort he would go to the government office or police station himself to deal with a situation.⁸

⁷See Price and Ruud (2012) for several fascinating accounts of the importance of these relationships.

⁸Interview in Lucknow, November 20 2010.

A senior non-SC politician in UP, who had been a minister several times, said that he lives in the state capital and only travels to his constituency about once a week. When he visits the constituency 2000-3000 people come to his car and to his house with requests. He always brings with him one assistant and also gets help from the headmasters of local colleges (which he owns) to record all the requests. He said that about half of the requests he got where about some development project, such as the need for a school or a road, while the other half were about individual issues. In his experience, most things could be solved by making a phone call, and he rarely had to follow up on things to get them done. This seemed to be because he often called directly to the relevant minister in power, although he was part of the opposition. He said that the ministers usually listened to him because he had built good relations with them when he was in power.⁹

The politicians I talked to all seemed to have slightly different strategies for getting things done. The most well-connected ones clearly only needed to call up a minister or a highly-ranked bureaucrat. Often the politicians would make a bit of a show out of dealing with a request in this way, for example by immediately phoning up some contact and ordering that something should be done immediately. In other cases they might help the person by drafting a letter to the right authority, or by promising to talk to someone later on. Politicians with few contacts seemed to have fewer people come to them for help, and their main way of getting work done seemed to be to write letters, stage a protests, or send party workers to surround the relevant government office (gherao). And here there seemed to be a difference between SC politicians and non-SC politicians that I talked to. Among the non-SC politicians I encountered, some seemed like grass-root activists who worked hard to maintain their network and reputation, while others had a royal demeanor of being very powerful and well-connected. None of the SC politicians I talked to gave the impression of being royal in the same way. Although some of them seemed very accomplished and experienced, they did not seem to have the power of calling up any minister and getting anything done.

This difference between SC and non-SC politicians was visible in how they talked, dressed and behaved. For example, a typical powerful non-SC politician would wear a white kurta (Indian long shirt) and would often speak to their follower in simpler Hindi than what they seemed able to, as if they were speaking to children. On the other hand, several of the SC politicians I talked to seemed eager to impress by speaking very sanscritized (shudh) Hindi and wearing a full western suit in the heat. Somehow, the first approach gave an impression of superiority, while the latter gave an impression of an inferiority complex. Interestingly, the most experienced SC politicians I talked to were much more relaxed both in their way of dressing and behaving, typically wearing a disheveled shirt. They did not, however, have the same air of superiority as some of the senior non-SC politicians.

There was also a clear difference in how people seemed to perceive SC politicians and other politicians. Many of my respondents stated that SC politicians used to be useless (nalayak), but that they were better now that they were had become more educated. However, as was mention in the introductory chapter, it was repeatedly stated that SC politicians were

⁹Interview in Lucknow, November 23 2010.

"weaker" than other politicians. I will return to this issue of being powerful in the Chapter 5.

4.2 Becoming an MLA

MLAs are elected to the legislative assemblies from single member constituencies.¹⁰ The legislative assemblies are elected for a five year term, but can be extended in the case of emergency rule. It can also be dissolved by the Governor before its terms is up upon the request of the Chief Minister.¹¹

State assemblies are competitive, and it can take a lot of effort to even become a candidate for an MLA seat. Most candidates have climbed a long political ladder before they become an MLA candidate. Chopra (1996, p. 92) reports that in his survey of MLAs, 49% of the sample reported having held positions in their party, 35% reported having been active in student politics, and 41% reported having held positions in their village council or been involved in peasant activities. Only 8% of the MLAs that were surveyed said that they had run for election with no previous political background. It is probable that those running for election with no previous political experience managed to win because they were famous actors or actresses or otherwise well known in their constituency.¹²

In Meerut (in western UP) I met a young SC politician who was trying to climb his way up to becoming an MLA candidate.¹³ He told me that he had been trying to build a political reputation and following for the last 10 years, and that he had done so by starting up an NGO for SCs. His organization supported the education of talented SC children, collected and distributed old clothes, and also tried to help out people in his area with their various issues with dealing with the state. When I met him, he had just been elected to a position in the district level council (*zilla panchayat*), and was talking about trying to "get a ticket" from one of the large parties in order to run in the next state assembly election.

To get a ticket means to be allowed to run for a political party. In some parties, working the way up through the party is the only way of getting a ticket, while other parties have made this a money machine. It is hard to come by good numbers for how common it is to pay for a candidature. According to an article in India Today, the Congress Party formally started charging Rs. 5000 for applying to be a Congress candidate in the 2002 state elections in UP, but that many ticket-seekers in addition had paid Rs. 25,000-75,000 for getting an audition with members of the committee selecting candidates in order to strengthen their candidacy. It is also common practice for potential candidates to bid for a candidacy by

¹⁰An exception to this rule is that the Governor of the state can appoint one extra member to represent the Anglo-Indian community if this community is found to be under-represented.

¹¹Between 1974 and 2007, UP had as many as 10 elections, while Jammu and Kashmir only had 4. Among the 15 largest states in India that are covered in this study, all other states than UP had 7 or 8 elections during this time period.

¹²India has a strong tradition of famous actors entering politics. See for example Dickey (1993) for a fascinating account of this phenomenon.

¹³Interview February 5 2011.

giving a large donation to the party. For example, before the 2002 state elections in UP, the BSP changed their candidates in some constituencies half-a-dozen times, and party insiders said that these were cases of someone else upping the bid of the existing candidate.¹⁴

According to one of the MLAs I interviewed in UP, many of the candidates in UP bought their party tickets for Rs. 2-3 million, although people with a very strong political track-record or following might not have to pay. Another of my respondents in Western UP said that the trend to buy political tickets was quite new, and he argued that it had led to more corruption, because politicians had to make back the money they spent in getting the ticket. A senior MLA in Western UP also claimed that the price for tickets was one of the main reasons for the criminalization of UP politics, because only criminals could afford to pay the prices. Interestingly, several of my respondents also told me that the cost of a ticket generally was much lower in reserved constituencies than in general constituencies, because the potential candidates often were poorer and because those constituencies were less competitive.

Another major cost related to becoming an MLA is paying for the election campaign. Chopra (1996, p. 177) reports that 69% of the MLAs he surveyed in UP said they had used personal funds in their campaigns in addition to collecting funds from the public, businesses, and their political parties. Officially, India has had restrictions on the how much can be spent on election campaigns since independence (specified in the Representation of the People Act (RPA) of 1951). In reality, though, these restrictions could easily be circumvented since they did not include restrictions on support from political parties or independent supporters. The expenditure ceiling has gradually been increased over time, but has always remained well below actual expenditure levels. In 1997 the maximum expenditure for a campaign in a parliamentary election was increased from Rs. 450,000 to Rs. 1.5 million (and from Rs. 150,000 to Rs. 700,000 for state assembly elections) (Gowda and Sridharan, 2012, p. 229), while the National Election Audit conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in 24 sample parliamentary constituencies in 1999 estimated that the average winner spent Rs. 8.3 million in their campaign and the average runner-up spent Rs. 6.8 million (Gowda and Sridharan, 2012, p. 234).

Across the 15 states that I focus on in this study there was an average of about 9.5 candidates in each constituency between 1974 and 2007,²⁰ but there was a lot of variation

¹⁴India Today, January 21 2002: "Playing the cash card."

¹⁵Interview in Lucknow, November 20 2010.

¹⁶Interview in Western UP, February 6 2011.

¹⁷Interview in Meerut, February 5 2011.

¹⁸In a fascinating paper about the electoral business cycle of cement consumption in India, Kapur and Vaishnav (2011) also show ways in which black money is fed into election campaigns by the business community.

¹⁹In October 2003, the ceiling was further increased to Rs. 1 million for a state assembly campaign, and in February 2011 it was increased to Rs. 1.6 million (Gowda and Sridharan, 2012, p. 230).

²⁰These are numbers from the election reports available at www.eci.gov.in, which were converted to html, scraped of their contents, and corrected with the help of several research assistants. The full dataset is available www.francesca.no.

across the states. In Bihar and UP, states known for high levels of corruption, there was an average of about 14 candidates in each constituency, while in West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh the averages were about 5.5. These averages also conceal great variation across constituencies, as there was only one or two candidates in some constituencies, while one constituency in Tamil Nadu had as many as 1033 contesting candidates during the 1996 state assembly elections.²¹



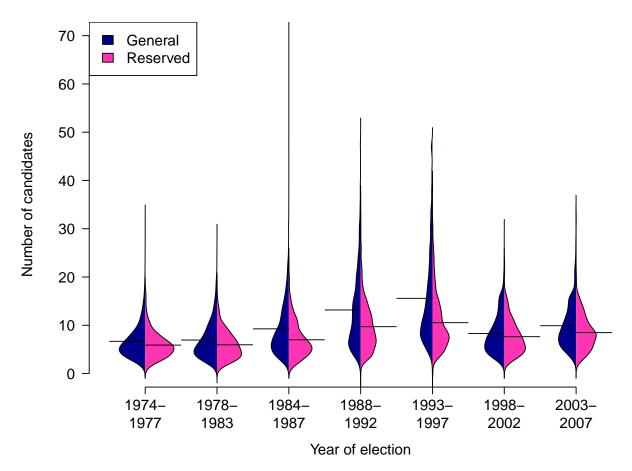
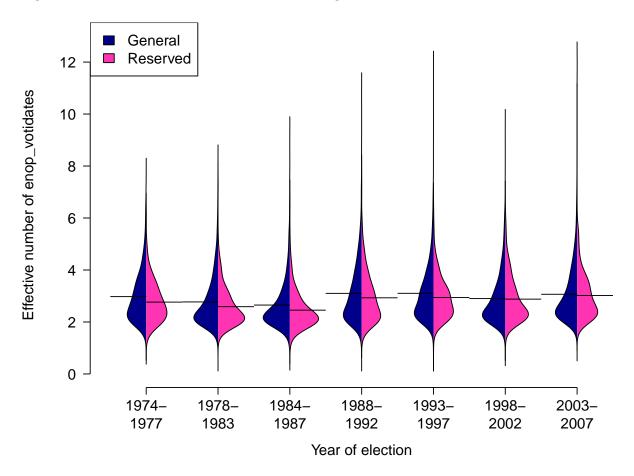


Figure 4.1 shows the number of candidates in general and reserved constituencies between 1974 and 2007 for the 15 largest Indian states. Here the elections have been ordered into

²¹According to an interview with Mr. Mehendiratta, legal advisor in the Election Commission of India (ECI), on February 17 2011, the high number of candidates was a protest action by people who were unhappy about the rate of development in the constituency. The protesters thought the ECI would have to cancel the elections because of the high number of candidates. However, the ECI took the challenge and produced a ballot paper that was a 70 page booklet with candidate names. Symbols were given to each candidate by picking up random items at the market, boxes for woolen blankets were made ballot boxes, and the election took place.

five-year periods that roughly correspond to the election cycles of the states.²² For each five-year period, the left side of the plot gives the distribution of the number of candidates across all of the general constituencies, and the left side of the plot gives the distribution of the number of candidates running in constituencies reserved for SCs. The horizontal lines cutting through the distributions indicate the average values. As can be seen in the plot, the average number of candidates is consistently lower in the reserved constituencies than in the general ones, and all of these differences are highly statistically significant (p < 0.01 in welch t-tests).

Figure 4.2: Effective number of candidates in general and reserved constituencies over time



Considering that the pool of potential candidates is much lower in reserved constituencies

²²I say roughly, because some states held more elections than other states. For example, most states held 7 elections between 1974 and 2007, while UP had 10 elections. This means that some of the 5 year time periods will contain 2 elections for the same state. I still chose to present the data in this manner because the presentation by year captures state wise variation and therefore does not give a good representation of the pattern in India as a whole. Similarly, the presentation by election number leads to a comparison of state-elections that are far apart in time, and therefore also fails to represent the country-wide trend.

than in general ones, it is not surprising to see fewer candidates. It is more interesting, however, to look at the candidates that manage to capture most of the vote. This can be summarized by looking at the effective number of candidates,²³ as can be seen in Figure 4.2. On average, the effective number of candidates across all the years is about 3. In the first elections after the new delimitation came into place, this number is slightly lower in reserved constituencies than in general ones, but over time it evens out, and in the last few elections there is virtually no difference between general and reserved constituencies.

4.3 Money, prestige and discrimination

The high, and increasing, cost of running for election makes personal wealth key to electoral victory. Indian politicians do tend to be much wealthier than the average Indian. This is also arguably one of the main reasons for the criminalization of Indian politics (e.g. see Vaishnav, 2012). Looking at the self-declared asset reports for candidates running for state elections in 28 states between 2003 and 2009, Vaishnav (2012) reports that the median net worth of an MLA is around 3.2 millions Indian rupees, while the average worth of MLAs is Rs. 19.9 millions, suggesting that some MLAs are very wealthy. In comparison, the median worth if the self-declared assets of MLAs in seats reserved for SCs was about Rs. 1.5 million, and the average was Rs. 4.1 million. In other words, SC MLAs are generally much poorer than other MLAs. Vaishnav (2012) also finds that although many MLAs in India face criminal charges, this is much less common in reserved constituencies. SC MLAs are therefore less associated with the kind of money and 'muscle' power than other politicians.²⁴

In addition to starting out wealthy, entering politics is often seen as a way of getting wealthier. Chopra (1996, p. 84-85) notes that although most MLAs state that they decided to become politicians in order to serve the people in their area, it seems clear that many of his respondents were motivated mainly by the potential for profit that can come from holding office. Corruption in rampant in India, and holding a political position gives access to resources that can be used not only for helping others but also to enrich one's own family. Using the data of self-reported assets from 2003/2004 and 2008/2009 and a regression discontinuity design, Bhavnani (2012) shows that MPs and MLAs in India increased their assets by an average of 25% over their five years in power. He also shows that 5-8% of the politicians in his sample had a suspiciously large increase in their assets during their time in office.

Holding office is also associated with considerable prestige. In the sample of surveyed MLAs, 76% said they thought their status had improved after they became an MLA, and 69% of them said they thought this trend would continue in the future (Chopra, 1996, p. 164-

These numbers are calculated with the formula $ENOC = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2}$ from Laakso and Taagepera (1979), where p_i is the percent of the votes of each candidate in the election.

²⁴The median and mean worth of SC MLAs in non-reserved constituencies is slightly lower than that of SCs in reserved seats, suggesting that the few SCs who win in non-reserved seats are not competitive because they are unusually wealthy.

65). This also seems to be the case of SC MLAs, clearly power and money help reduce caste boundaries. When I asked my SC MLA respondents whether they had faced caste based discrimination, most of them said that they had experienced it when they were younger, but not after they got into office. One SC MLA in UP answered: "Personally no, people would not dear, but if I come to a place with Dalits friends then they would not be given tea." Similarly, an SC MLA in Himachal Pradesh told me that he saw a lot of discrimination against SCs in villages, but that people generally were very respectful to him. Another SC MLA from UP told me that he recalled being asked to sit separately in school as a child, but that he no longer faced discrimination after he got educated. He thought that SCs who get wealthy or powerful do not experience caste based discrimination.

But not everyone confirmed this story. A senior SC politician in Karnataka told me that he still sees a lot of discrimination even against powerful SCs. As an example he told about how he recently had gone to a village and wanted to see the temple. The priest came out to greet him in order to prevent him from going inside the temple without being impolite about it. After all, this was a senior politician. Realizing what the priest was trying to do, he repeated that he wanted to see the temple and went in anyway. Afterwards he heard that there had been a fight in the village about the issue of him entering the temple.²⁸

A senior upper-caste IAS officer in Himachal Pradesh also told me about this from his perspective. He claimed that in his constituency, which was reserved, his upper caste friends were unhappy that only SCs could run for election in their constituency. He said that they complain about this to each other, but that they would never speak about it to SCs or treat a politician badly, because they still wanted their work done. He also claimed that many SC politicians self-impose some of the practices of untouchability in order to keep the good-will of upper caste voters. For example, he told that one SC MLA who he had invited for dinner in his house chose to eat outside and not enter the house.²⁹

This shows that although SCs might experience much less discimination when they become powerful, educated and rich, there are still instances of caste-based bias against them.

4.4 Male and female MLAs

Indian politics is known to be male dominated, and most politicians are male. In fact, there are only about 5% women among all the MLAs in India's 15 largest states from 1974 to 2007. There has a very slight and gradual increase in the percent women in state assemblies over time, but the percent women is still only about 7% in the last election cycles. There is a pattern, however, in that there are more female MLAs in reserved constituencies. However,

²⁵Interview by the author in Lucknow, November 21, 2010.

²⁶Interview by the author in Shimla, October 12 2010.

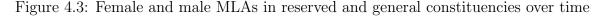
²⁷Interview by the author in Meerut, February 5 2011.

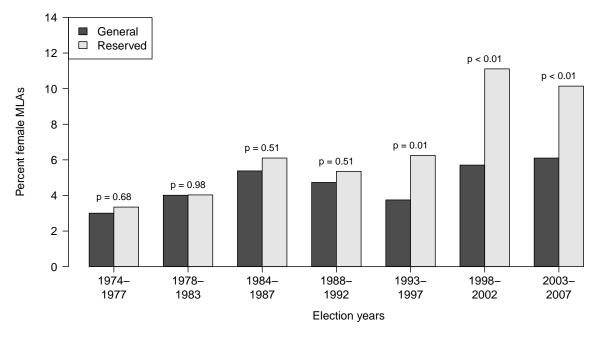
²⁸Interview by the author in Bangalore, February 23, 2011.

²⁹Interview in Shimla, October 11 2010.

the increase seems to be mainly due to an increase in the percent of women winning elections in constituencies reserved for SCs.

Figure 4.3 shows the percent women among the MLAs in reserved and general constituencies over time. As can be seen in the figure, the percent women among the MLAs was about the same in reserved and general constituencies in the 1970s and 1980s, but since 1990s, there has been a clear increase in the percent female MLAs in reserved constituencies. During the last two election cycles, the percent female MLAs in general constituencies was 5.7% and 6.1% respectively, while in the reserved constituencies there were 11.1% and 10.1% female MLAs. Both of these differences are highly statistically significant (p < 0.01 in a two-sample permutation test).





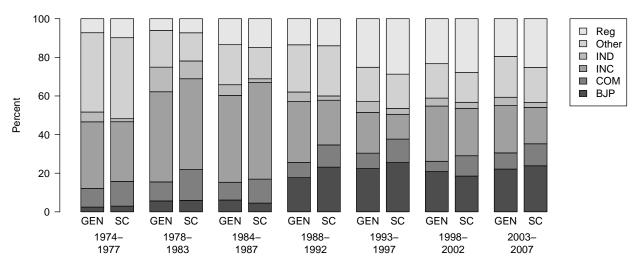
Women have gradually become more outspoken in India. In the 1990s women were given reserved seats in local governing bodies, and discussions were also ongoing about reserving seats for them in the state assemblies and national assembly. It is possible that women are more competitive in reserved areas exactly because the political competition is less about money and 'muscle'. It might be that in reserved constituencies elections center more on issues and performance and less on the ability to buy or intimate voters. If this is the case, the increase in female legislatures might be an indicator of a healthier electoral competition in reserved constituencies than in other ones. Another less encouraging interpretation, however, is that as political parties face pressure to increase the percent women among their candidates they do so by placing female candidates in reserved constituencies rather than general ones in order to be responsive to the pressures without removing powerful general-category male candidates from the lists. These are mere speculations, and it is hard to draw any conclusions

without further probing the motivations for parties, politicians and voters, but this will be an exciting future avenue for research.

4.5 The political party affiliation of MLAs

Another important factor to look at is which parties MLAs from reserved and general constituencies represent. Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of the political parties of MLAs in India between 1974 and 2007. The data covers about 2550 MLAs from general constituencies and 500 MLAs from reserved constituencies from the 15 largest states in India.³⁰ Here too the data has been divided into 5 year periods that roughly correspond to when each of the states hold their elections, and I have divided the parties into the Indian National Congress (INC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), communist parties (mainly CPI and CPI(M)), regional parties (Telugu Desam Party, DMK, AIADKM and so on), other parties (mainly Janata Party and Janata Dal), and independent MLAs.

Figure 4.4: The party affiliation of MLAs in reserved and general constituencies over time



In this full data, the patterns in reserved and general constituencies do not look dramatically different, but some small differences are noticeable. For example, the proportion of MLAs from regional parties seems to be higher in reserved seats than in general seats, and there are fewer independent MLAs in reserved seats. This is an important pattern, considering the accusations that SC MLAs are more dependent on their parties than other politicians.

³⁰ST MLAs are excluded form the sample, and the exact numbers vary a bit from election to election because of missing values in the original ECI election reports. This data has been scraped from the election reports available at the ECI website.

An important question related to the party affiliation of MLAs, is whether or not they tend to be in parties that are in the ruling coalition of the state government. To look at that, we need information about which parties formed the cabinet in each state over time. The cabinet data that I use in here includes information about which MLAs held positions in the state cabinet and which parties they represented, in the 15 states under study from 1977 to 2007. In cases were there were several cabinets between the times of two assembly elections, the data includes the first cabinet that was formed after the election.³¹ Based on this data I created a list of which parties were part of the ruling coalition in each state for each election cycle, and then coded each MLAs by whether or not they had run for a party that was a member of this ruling coalition.

Table 4.1: Percent of MLAs belonging to parties in the ruling coalition in the state assembly (sample sizes in parentheses)

	1977-	1979-	1984-	1989-	1994-	1999-	2004-
	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2007
General: % MLAs	77.60	72.70	66.20	63.90	63.50	72.30	67.20
in ruling coalition	(1813)	(2691)	(2565)	(3070)	(2881)	(2662)	(2819)
Reserved:% MLAs	80.00	73.70	76.00	71.10	69.00	75.60	73.00
in ruling coalition	(345)	(521)	(508)	(636)	(594)	(513)	(562)
P-value	0.31	0.63	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.11	0.01

Table 4.1 shows the percent of MLAs in general and reserved constituencies that ran for a party that ended up in the ruling coalition of the state assembly in that election period. The sample size is reported in parentheses, and the sample size is smaller for the first election cycle because this data does not include information about the cabinets before 1977. As is clear in the table, SC MLAs are consistently more likely than non-SCs MLAs of being members of parties that are in power. For several of the election cycles, the difference is statistically significant in a Welch two sample t-test, as is reported in the last line of the table.

Matched sample

The figures presented in the previous section are descriptive patterns in the full sample of constituencies, which could be confounded by the fact that reserved constituencies tend to be poorer than general constituencies. In this section I therefore look at the same patterns in a reduced, matched, dataset, in which the groups of reserved and general constituencies

³¹Most of this data was collected by Rikhil Bhavnani (for more details about the data, see Bhavnani, 2011), but I expanded his dataset by adding in missing years and states. Several years of the UP data were collected directly from the Lok Sabha secretariat in Lucknow in collaboration with Gilles Verniers. Other gaps were filled by visiting archives in the concerned states, and in a few cases by sending Right to Information requests to the state assembly archives.

to be more similar. The procedure for matching constituencies was described in Chapter 3. Since the goal is to compare constituencies with a more comparable socio-economic profile, not look at the effect of becoming reserved in 1974, I use the larger set of matched pairs, which includes all the reserved constituencies, whether or not they were reserved before 1974.

Figure 4.5: The party affiliation of MLAs in reserved and general constituencies over time, on 440 matched pairs of constituencies

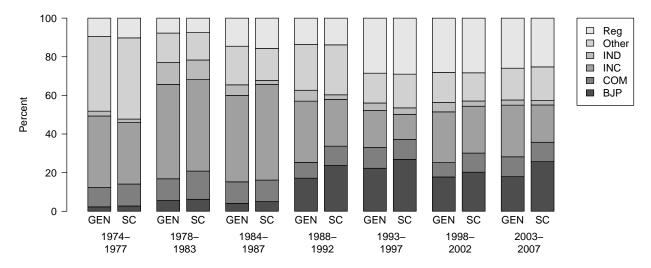


Table 4.2: Percent of politicians belonging to parties in the ruling coalition in the state assembly (sample sizes in parentheses)

	1977-	1979-	1984-	1989-	1994-	1999-	2004-
	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2007
General:% MLAs	74.80	73.20	66.80	63.30	63.70	69.70	64.90
in ruling coalition	(298)	(452)	(440)	(550)	(512)	(445)	(487)
Reserved: $\%$ MLAs	80.20	72.60	75.70	71.30	68.20	75.50	72.50
in ruling coalition	(298)	(452)	(440)	(550)	(512)	(445)	(487)
P-value	0.12	0.82	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.05	0.01

Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of political parties for MLAs in the matched pairs of 440 reserved and 440 general constituencies over time. In this matched data, the patterns look more similar, but there are still some clear differences. Most notably, SC MLAs are less likely to be independent than MLAs from comparably placed general constituencies, and they are more likely to be members of BJP. This is interesting, considering that the Congress Party is often promoted as the defender of SC rights. I have sometimes heard it said that Congress wins most of SC seats, but as is apparent in the Figure, the distribution of parties that win in reserved constituencies is very similar to that of general constituencies.

In this matched sample too, we see a correlation between reservations and being in a party in the ruling coalition. As can be seen in Table 4.2, there is no statistically signifiant difference between MLAs from reserved and general constituencies between 1979 and 1983, while after that SC MLAs are systematically a little more likely to be in the ruling coalition.

4.6 The educational profile of MLAs

The education of politicians is one topics that came up frequently during my interviews. Some claimed that SC politicians are less efficient in their work because they were less educated, while others mentioned that SC politicians were doing a poor job in the beginning because they were not well educated, but that now that they are educated, they are doing a good job. Looking back in history, we unfortunately do not have much aggregated information about the socio-economic profiles of MLAs across India. However, in a new dataset for UP, we have information about the educational background of all the MLAs that held office between 1974 and 2007. The data was entered based on information in the assembly-wise publications Who's Who, which contain personal information about MLAs such as their educational background and employment history. Figure 4.6 shows an example of a page in one of these books, from which the data collection was done.³²

Education is a problematic indicator of the quality of a politician. For example, it is entirely possible for a politician to hold a PhD without being able to muster much local support for their political goals. Similarly, if a person with only a few years of schooling is elected to be an MLA, this suggests that the person has some other qualifications that compensate for a lack of formal education. Still, in a country with widespread illiteracy, it is interesting to look at the overall education level of politicians over time, and also to see whether there is a differences between SC and non-SC politicians. For the purpose of this analysis, I recoded the information about the educational background of MLAs in the dataset into four categories:

- 1. Less than 10 years of schooling
- 2. More than 10 years of schooling, but not a university graduate
- 3. Graduate (BA or Diploma)
- 4. Post-graduate (MA or PhD)

Figure 4.7 shows the proportion of MLAs in UP within each education category. For the state assemblies in the 1970s, educational information was only available for about a fourth of the MLAs. For the later years, however, information is available for more than 80% of the

³²These publications were obtained by Gilles Verniers and the author from the UP Vidhan Sabha Archives in 2010. The educational data used here form part of a larger dataset maintained by Gilles Verniers with profiles for the MLAs of UP since 1951 – the UP State Assembly Legislators data set – which is an expanded version of the dataset used in Jaffrelot and Kumar (2009).

Figure 4.6: Example of page in a Who's Who



योगेन्द्र सागर, श्री

निर्वाचन क्षेत्र-27,बिल्सी (अ0जा0), जिला-बदायूं। दल-बहुजन समाज पार्टी।

पिता-कृष्णप्रकाश सागर। जन्मितिथि-1 जनवरी, 1964। जन्मस्थान-ग्राम-तिलोकपुर (बदायूं)। धर्म-हिन्दू। जाति-जाटव (अनुसूचित जाति)। शिक्षा-स्नातक। विवाहतिथि-11 दिसम्बर, 1987। पत्नी का नाम-श्रीमती प्रीती उर्फ पुष्पासागर। सन्तान-एक पुत्र, एक पुत्री। व्यवसाय-कृषि।

नवम्बर, 1993 के मध्याविध चुनाव में प्रथम बार भारतीय जनता पार्टी के टिकट पर और अब दूसरी बार अप्रैल-मई, 2007 के सामान्य निर्वाचन में आप बहुजन समाज पार्टी के टिकट पर उत्तर प्रदेश विधान सभा के सदस्य निर्वाचित हुए हैं। आप वर्ष 1992 में भारतीय जनता पार्टी के जेल भरो आन्दोलन में जिला कारागार, बदायूं में दो दिन बन्दी रहे। वर्ष 1997 से 2000 तक आप आई0टी0आर0 कम्पनी के अध्यक्ष (राज्य मंत्री) रहे हैं। आप उ0 प्र0 विधान सभा की अनुसूचित जातियों, अनुसूचित जनजातियों तथा विमुक्त जातियों सम्बन्धी संयुक्त समिति (2008-2009) के सदस्य रहे और सम्प्रित संसदीय शोध, सन्दर्भ एवं अध्ययन समिति (2009-2010) सदस्य हैं। पर्यटक के रूप में आपने नेपाल की यात्रा की है।

जनसेवा में आपकी विशेष रुचि है तथा मक्के की रोटी तथा सरसों का साग प्रिय है।

मुख्यावास-म0नं0-5, बिल्सी, बदायूं। कुल मतदाता-2,23,624, कुल मतदान-1,09,077, प्राप्त मत-1-श्री योगन्द्र सागर उर्फ अनू-44,876, प्रतिशत-41.14 %, 2-श्री आशुतोष मौर्य उर्फ राजू-39,073, प्रतिशत-32.82 %, (समाजवादी पार्टी)।

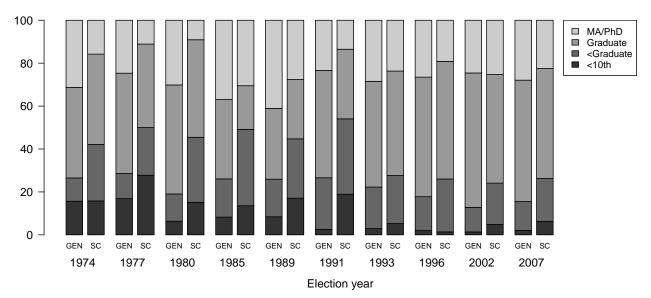


Figure 4.7: Percent of MLAs in each education category in UP 1974–2007

MLAs. Considering that the literacy rate in UP was 45% according to the 1971 census (and 37% for SCs), the education level of the MLAs seems quite high. In the 1974 assembly, 16% of the MLAs are listed as having less than 10 years of schooling, 42% are reported to have been graduates and 28% are listed as having MAs or PhDs. But this is not the same for SCs and non-SCs: 31% of the non-SCs are reported to have MAs or PhDs, while the number is only 16% among SC MLAs. The differences in education levels are statistically significant for the first 5 elections (p < 0.01 in chi-square tests). However, the gap between SCs and others grows smaller over time, and for the last five elections, the differences are no longer statistically significant.³³

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has been about the Indian MLAs, their daily lives, how they get elected, and who they are. It is clear that most of the job of an MLA is not to work in the state assemblies, but rather to meet with their constituents and try to help out with their requests. In that way, MLAs serve as the link between Indian citizens and the state. But MLAs are not average Indians, they tend to be wealthy, highly educated, and well-connected. By being in office many of them also become even wealthier and better connected, and they feel that they gain more prestige.

³³I do not present matched data for education since the sample size is already small because of missing values, and using matches only from UP makes the sample even smaller. Also, the pattern looks about the same on the matched.

During my interviews I was told that SC MLAs are 'weaker' than other politicians. From my own encounters with SC MLAs it rather seemed like many SC politicians lacked the self-confidence that makes some Indian politicians seem like royalty. SC MLAs are less wealthy and slightly less educated than other MLAs. There are also fewer candidates in reserved constituencies and according to some of respondents one does not have to pay as much money to get "a ticket" in a reserved constituency as in other constituencies. The lower level of competition therefore seems to have a positive consequence in curbing some of the corruption that is prevalent in the competition for political power. There are also more female MLAs in reserved constituencies, perhaps exactly because they are less competitive and less about money and 'muscle'.

Chapter 5

Experience and Power

The electoral quotas in India's state assemblies and the Lok Sabha have guaranteed SCs a political presence, but have not guaranteed them access to positions of power other than these legislative positions. Although SC politicians have held office in reserved constituencies since the 1950s, it is commonly heard that SC politicians are "weaker" than other politicians. The SC leader Kanshi Ram wrote that SC politicians are sycophants or stooges [chamchas] who only follow the orders of party leaders (Ram, 1982). Similarly, several of the politicians, bureaucrats and activists that I interviewed across India in 2010 and 2011 referred to SC politicians as "useless" [nalayak] or less powerful than other politicians. One top politician in Himachal Pradesh made it clear to me that he thought SC reservations have been good for society because they ensured the presence of a marginalized group, but that the politicians elected in reserved constituencies are less efficient and less qualified than other politicians. I was also told several times that even when SC politicians are given positions of power, like a cabinet position, they are not entrusted with important portfolios.

The importance of education and experience was raised by several of my respondents. An SC politician in Uttar Pradesh (UP) told me that SC politicians tend to be "weak" politicians because parties like to pick SC candidates they can control, but that the ones who are educated and experienced are no longer controlled by their parties. In Karnataka, a prominent SC politician stated that it was unfair to call all SC politicians chamchas because those who are experienced do a very good job and are picked for important posts. He thought that without reservations there would have been very few SCs in power, and that the reservation system has allowed qualified people to get to power, gain experience and make an important political impact. Several of my respondents also argued that there is a strong bias against uneducated and inexperienced SC politicians, but that experienced SC politicians are respected and entrusted with as much responsibility as other politicians. But how common is it actually for SC politicians to hold positions of power?

In the previous chapter I showed that SC politicians were less educated than other politicians in the 1970s, after the location of reserved constituencies were moved, but that their

¹Interview in Lucknow, November 21 2010.

²Interview in Bangalore, February 23 2011.

qualifications have improved over time. In this chapter I explore two other sets of variables that can serve as indicators of the power of SC politicians.

The first set of variables is about the political experience of politicians. The variables come from a unique dataset of rerunning and re-election patterns for SC and non-SC politicians in 15 Indian states between 1974 and 2007. I show that although few incumbents were re-elected in reserved constituencies right after the delimitation in the 1970s this difference quickly evened out, and that after the first election there is little difference in how many SCs and non-SCs incumbents have been re-elected. SC politicians in India therefore had a similar level of political experience as other politicians.

I then look at whether SC politicians have been included in the state level cabinets. Cabinet membership is an important indicator of real political power, because they give politicians direct access to the bureaucracy and to other powerful politicians, and also often power over a ministerial budget. Using data on cabinet membership in 15 Indian states 1977-2007, I see that SCs have been given a gradually larger share of cabinet positions, but that they seem to have been systematically, although not dramatically, under-represented in the highest-level cabinet positions. There are clear differences across both parties and states, and it is not the case that political experience is enough to make SCs as competitive as other politicians. Looking at examples of portfolios held by ministers in Uttar Pradesh between 1974 and 2007 also shows that there is some truth to the perception that SCs are not given the most influential portfolios.

Overall, though, quotas have clearly made it possible for SC politicians to gain political experience and be entrusted with powerful positions and portfolios. Looking at the small presence of women in cabinets (on average 5%) can serve as a reminder that the presence of traditionally under-represented groups in cabinets is related to their share of the seats in the legislative assemblies, and that this presence does not necessarily increase on its own over time. The considerable presence of SCs in cabinets in India can therefore be seen as a success of the quota system.

5.1 Rerunning patterns

The data for the rerunning patterns of MLAs in the 15 Indian states under study, covers 117,183 candidates in 3,320 constituencies between 1969 and 2007. The data was created by selecting the top 5 candidates in each constituency in each state election and coding whether or not each candidate was among the top 5 candidates in the previous election in the same constituency, what position they held in the previous election, and what party they ran for.³

³The data was created on the basis of my own political data, which is described in more detail in Chapter 7. The data was created in collaboration with Pavithra Suryanarayan. In order to improve the reliability of the data, each of us got a data team to code up the data separately. We then compared the entries, and sent the data back for recoding in cases of inconsistencies between the two datasets. As of August 2012, we had run this reliability check for 10 of the states in the dataset.

Since it is particularly interesting to see how many candidates were experienced in the first election after the new delimitation came into place in 1974, I needed to include in the dataset candidates that ran in the same area before the delimitation. I therefore included candidates from the "same" constituency before the delimitation in coding this data.⁴ The correspondence between constituencies before and after the delimitation is not perfect, but does allow for some approximation of how many politicians ran for re-election when the political borders changed.

Candidates were only coded as rerunning if their name appeared among the top five candidates within the same constituency in two consecutive elections. I also looked only within the same constituency because of the difficulty of identifying people by name in other constituencies. There are always many candidates with the same name within a state, and if they run in another constituency for another party it is hard to know whether or not it is the same person. Similarly, it is hard to know whether a candidate is the same as a candidate with the same name running several elections earlier. The measure for rerunning candidates that I have chosen therefore minimizes the erroneous coding of candidate as rerunning when they are in fact not rerunning, but probably under-reports how many candidates were actually rerunning.

The questions of interest in this chapter are how common it is for incumbents to rerun in reserved and general constituency, and whether rerunning incumbents have fared worse in reserved constituencies than in general ones. In the full rerunning candidates dataset, there are 24,782 incumbents across the constituencies and years, of which 3,832 were from reserved seats. Among these incumbents, 63% of the ones in reserved seats ran for re-election, while 66% of the ones in general seats ran for re-election.

Figure 5.1 shows the percent of rerunning incumbents over time. Since states hold elections at different times, I present the data as intervals of about 5 years which roughly correspond to the election cycles of the states.⁵ In the first election after 1974, 46% and 42% of the incumbents ran for re-election in both general and reserved constituencies respectively, while later on the percent incumbents running for re-election ranges from about 60 to 76 percent. In the most recent elections, there seems to have been a pattern of fewer incumbents running for re-election in reserved constituencies.⁶

It is not surprising that the proportion of rerunning candidates was lower in the first election after the delimitation than in other election years. After all, the boundaries changed, politicians faced new constituents, and the reservation status changed in many constituencies. In fact, it might seem surprising that the proportion of rerunning incumbents was as high as 42% in reserved constituencies, considering that none of the general category candidates

 $^{^4}$ See Chapter 3 about how I linked constituencies before and after the delimitation

⁵As a robustness check, I have also analyzed the data by year and by election number after the delimitation.

⁶The p-values reported above each of the paired columns are produced using perm.test from the exactRankTests library in R. I use this non-parametric difference in means test to avoid having to make the assumption of the samples from reserved and general constituencies having the same variance. The results are not substantively different when I run Welch t-tests.

Figure 5.1: Percent incumbents who ran for re-election in general and reserved constituencies

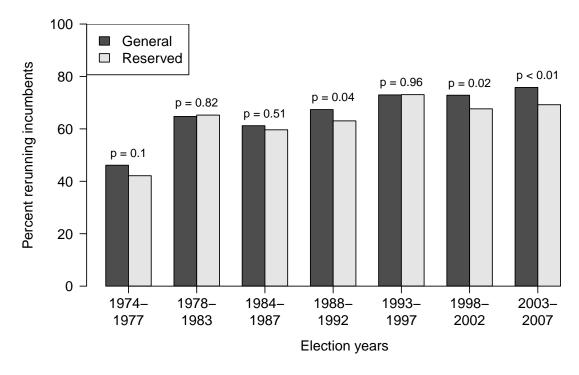
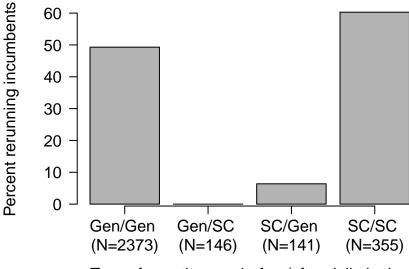


Figure 5.2: Percent incumbents who ran for re-election in the first election after the delimitation



Type of constituency before/after delimitation

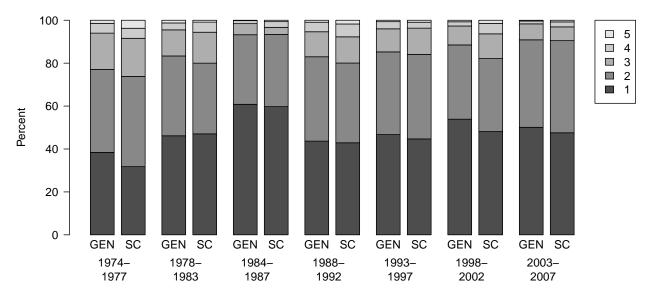


Figure 5.3: Position of rerunning incumbents in state elections 1974-2007

were allowed to run for election in newly reserved areas. If we break up the numbers into the type of constituency both before and after the delimitation, we find that constituencies that changed reservation status actually had very few rerunning incumbents. Figure 5.2 shows that in the first election after the delimitation, a bit less than half of the incumbents in general constituencies ran for re-election when their constituency remained general, while nobody re-ran in a constituency that became reserved. This is probably because none of the incumbents in general constituencies were SC and that they therefore were no longer eligible to run for election in the constituency. Among the SC incumbents whose constituencies became general, about 6% ran for re-election, while in constituencies that remained reserved 60% ran for re-election.

When looking at these numbers, it is important to remember that it is not altogether an individual choice to run for re-election. As was discussed in the previous chapter, all the major parties in India tightly control who are nominated as candidates (who are "given tickets"), and it is difficult to run without the support of one of the major parties. That very few of the sitting SC incumbents were given a chance to run for re-election when their constituencies became general suggests that the parties did not see these SC incumbents as competitive candidates in an open election.

Even more interesting than rerunning patterns is how incumbents fared in the elections when they reran. Among all the incumbents who ran for re-election across the years, about 49% won the election and about 37% came in as number two. In Figure 5.3 we see the distributions of positions for incumbents who ran for re-election in general and reserved constituencies over time. In the first election after the delimitation, only 38% of the candidates in general constituencies and 31% of candidates in reserved constituencies won the election. This suggests that a change in political boundaries makes politicians less competitive.

The situation was even worse for the SC incumbents who tried to run in a newly dereserved constituency. Of the 9 SC incumbents who ran for re-election in a constituency that had become general, only one won the election, while three of them got the second highest number of votes. It is a striking finding that only 9 out of 149 SC incumbents ran for re-election once their constituency became general in the 1970s, and that only one of them won the election. This shows that although SC candidates are politically experienced and have about the same re-election rate within reserved constituencies as general candidates in general constituencies, they are not competitive when they run against general category candidates.⁷

Rerunning candidates in a reduced sample

In the previous section we saw descriptive rerunning patterns in reserved and general constituencies among all the incumbents across India's 15 largest states. That means that the patterns may be correlated with other factors that distinguish general and reserved seats. Constituencies became reserved for SCs because they had a higher proportion of SCs in the population, and therefore tended to be more rural with an overall lower level of development. In this section I therefore reduce the sample to a matched pair of constituencies. By doing so, we can see whether the rerunning patterns differ in reserved and general constituencies once we have controlled for confounding factors. In the case of rerunning patterns, it matters whether a constituency used to be reserved or not before 1974, since there is likely to be much more continuity in constituencies that were reserved both before and after the delimitation. In this section I therefore look at 120 pairs of constituencies that all used to be non-reserved before 1974, and that were similar in all other ways than that 120 of them became reserved in the 1970s delimitation (see Chapter 3 for how these pairs were selected).

Figure 5.4 shows that percent of incumbents running for re-election in reserved and general constituencies in this reduced sample of matched data. All of these constituencies are from the category Gen/Gen and Gen/SC that were presented in Figure 5.2. We have already seen that no incumbents ran for re-election in a newly reserved constituency. Since all the matched pairs used to be general constituencies, it is therefore not surprising to see that none of the incumbents ran for re-election in the first cycle of elections after the delimitation. In comparison, about half of the incumbents in general constituencies which stayed general ran for re-election. By the second election, however, the differences evened out, and in the following years there was no systematic difference in how many incumbents ran for re-election in the constituencies.

Conditional upon rerunning, however, SC incumbents did not fare any worse than their non-SC colleagues. In Figure 5.5 we can see that between 38 and 60% of the rerunning incumbents in both general and reserved constituencies won the election, and that most of of the rest were runner-ups in the election. For some of the years, slightly fewer of the

⁷Although I have not done a systematic study of it, the same pattern is visible after the 2008 delimitation. Among the SC MLAs in Uttar Pradesh who were elected in 2007, only 10 ran for re-election in general constituencies in the 2012 election and none of them were elected.

Figure 5.4: Percent incumbents who ran for re-election in general and reserved constituencies 1974–2007, on matched data

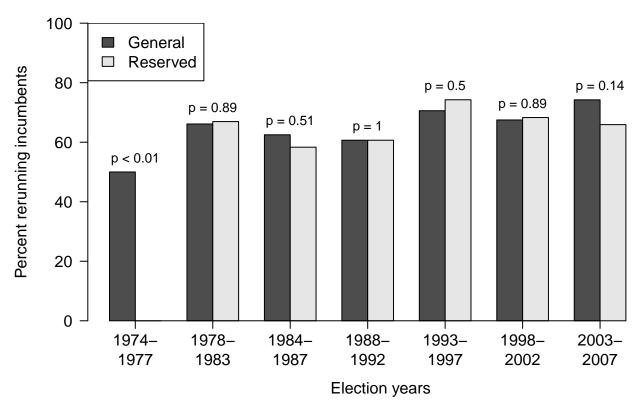
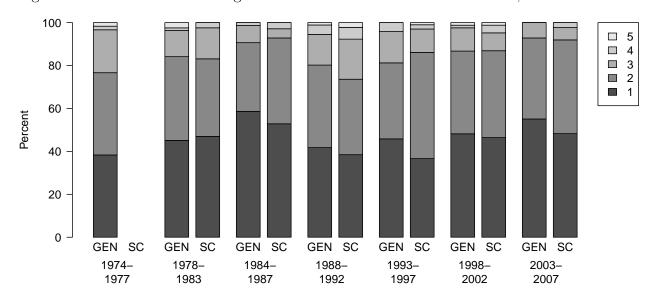


Figure 5.5: Position of rerunning incumbents in state elections 1974-2007, on matched data



rerunning SC incumbents won the elections, but the differences in percent winners are not statistically significantly different for any of the election cycles. These findings suggest that once we control for confounding variables, the differences in rerunning patterns are small between candidates in reserved and general constituencies.

5.2 SCs and cabinet membership

Another important indication of power in Indian politics is to hold cabinet positions. Holding a position in the cabinet is associated with high status and access to a lot of resources, and it is commonly heard that politicians will use their time in power to enrich their own group. For example, a senior bureaucrat in Himachal Pradesh told me that a recent minister of education had only appointed principles from his own caste while he was in office. After every election in India, there is therefore a negotiation about who gets what cabinet positions, and newspapers often talk about these negotiations as if they are mainly about handing out clientelistic goods to party loyalists.

At the time of discussing the reservation policy in legislative assemblies in the 1940s, discussions were also ongoing about reserving seats for SCs in cabinets. The Advisory Committee on Minorities was responsible for recommending policies regarding minority safeguards to the Constituent Assembly. When the report from the Committee was introduced to the Constituent Assembly on August 27 1947, it was made clear that some members of the committee had proposed that minorities should have reserved seats in Cabinets in proportion to their population, but that the committee had reached the conclusion that a constitutional provision of this character would give rise to "serious difficulties," and that the main criterion for selecting ministers should be to select politicians who would be able to command the confidence of the legislature (report reprinted in Appendix in CAD, 1999, vol. 5, p. 243). Instead, the report suggested that the constitution should "draw the attention of the President of the Union and the Governors of Provinces to the desirability of including members of important minority communities in Cabinets as far as practicable" (reprinted as an Appendix in CAD, 1999, vol. 5, p. 243).

The suggestions from the Minorities Committee were met with general support from the Constituent Assembly. The representative from the Central Provinces, Dr. P. S. Deshmukh, argued that the composition of Cabinets should not "be hampered by insurmountable difficulties of taking minority representatives as of legal and constitutional right nor are our percentages of recruitment going to be worked up to the second decimal as would certainly have been the case had the various representatives of the minorities insisted upon reservation in those spheres also" (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 27 1947).

But not all the representatives in the Assembly agreed to the recommendations given in the report. The SC representative S. Nagappa made a strong speech in support of reservations in the cabinets (CAD, 1999, vol. 5, August 27 1947, p. 207):

⁸Interview in Shimla, October 11 2010.

[I]t would have been better if there is an assurance for a minority community Member to be included in the Cabinet, and it would have been more satisfactory if there had been a statutory provision. For instance I want to quote my own province. It is a province of 215 members. There are about 30 Harijans. They form one seventh of the Legislature and their population is 1/5th. They are 8 millions out of total of 49 millions. They form 1/5th of the population, they form 1/7th of the legislature, but what is their share in this Cabinet? According to the strength of the Members they would have been two because they are 1/7th and when the whole Cabinet is 14 or 13 it should have been two, but when the question came up, they have abolished a Harijan [SC] post. They have made it 13 and have not given one. I say that if the Harijans are not going to elect ministers it is left to the Premier to select. The quota must be statutorily reserved. I feel that we should not be at the beck and call of the Premier. Let the Premier select the Ministers according to his choice. Why should we think that he has done us a great favour? It is out due share. We are not asking for anything gratis. So, Sir, this is how injustice will be done. Today we see with our naked eyes that injustice was done and therefore, it would have been better if an assurance is given to these minorities regarding their position in the Cabinet.

Now, Sir, it is not possible to make minority communities the Premiers, because the Premier is expected to command the confidence of the majority party. So it is no good to expect rotation to be applied for the Premiership. But there is every provision, every possibility, every probability to choose the Governors of the Provinces by rotation from among the various communities. It would have been easy if this had been included in the Report.

[...] I would suggest that it would have been better if it had been provided in the Report itself, for instance, a particular community will have its share according to its population. I do not want to rob Peter to pay Paul. It is very bad policy. I want my due share; though I am innocent, ignorant, dumb, yet I want you to recognise my claim. Do not take advantage of my being dumb. Do not take advantage of my being innocent. I only want my due share and I do not want anything more.

Despite this strong speech the majority of the Assembly supported the report, and no groups were guaranteed positions in cabinets in India. Efforts were made, however, to include SCs in cabinets. Looking at the practices of including SCs in cabinets between 1950 and 1979, Galanter (1979, p. 440) writes that it "early became convention to have at least one Scheduled Caste cabinet minters at the Centre and in each of the states." Table 5.1 shows the number of SCs in state cabinets from all across India from independence until the middle of the 1960s.

Table 5.1: Number of SCs that held cabinet positions in state cabinets across India 1953-1965

	Ministers	Deputy	Parliamentary	Total
		Ministers	Secretaries	
1953	14	4	4	22
1954	13	7	4	24
1955	15	7	4	26
1956-57				
1957-58	14	7	4	25
1958-59	14	10	2	26
1959-60	14	8	2	24
1960-61				26
1961-62				28
1962-63				30
1963-64	18	7	0	25
1964-65				24

Adapted from Galanter (1979, p. 442).

Cabinet membership for SCs across India 1977–2007

Data about cabinet membership for SCs is not systematically recorded, but can be estimated by looking at all the members in state cabinets and determining whether or not they were elected from the reserved constituencies. The dataset I will be using in this section includes information about the first cabinet formed after each state election in India 1977–2007. This data was originally collected by Rikhil Bhavnani (for more details about the data, see Bhavnani, 2011), but was expanded by the author to include missing years and states. The data includes information about the type of position held by each of the MLAs that held a position in the cabinet (Chief Minister, Cabinet Minister, Minister of State with an Independent Charge or Minister of State), but not their portfolios. In Indian state cabinets most of the members are usually MLAs, but some are members of the legislative council in the state, of Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. These non-MLAs members are not included in this dataset.

Table 5.2 shows the states included in the data, the number of seats in the constituencies (according to the 1976 Delimitation report), the average size of the cabinets recorded in the data, and the number of cabinets included in the dataset between 1977 and 2007. It also shows the percent SCs in each of the state assemblies and the percent SCs included in the cabinets in the state. Overall SCs are slightly under-represented in cabinets compared to

⁹Several years of the Uttar Pradesh data were collected directly from the Lok Sabha secretariat in Lucknow in collaboration with Gilles Verniers. Other gaps were filled by visiting archives in the concerned states, and in a few cases by sending Right to Information requests to the state assembly archives. I am very grateful to Rikhil Bhavnani for letting me build on his data for this chapter.

their share of the assemblies in the data. SCs held 16.7% of the seats in the assemblies included in the table, but only held about 13.2% of cabinet positions.

The table shows some interesting cross-state variation. As is evident from comparing the proportion SCs in the assemblies in each state and their share of cabinet positions, SCs have been close to proportionally represented in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra. They have clearly been under-represented in states like Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In Karnataka, SCs have held a higher proportion of cabinet positions than their share in the assembly. This high number is the result of a very high representation of SCs in the Janata Dal government that got to power in 1994 and the Congress government that got to power in 1999, that each included 7 SC MLAs in their cabinets according to this dataset.

Table 5.2: Cabinets included in dataset

	Size of	Percent SCs	Average%	Average size	Cabinets
	assembly	in assembly	SCs in cabinet	of cabinet	in data
Andhra Pradesh	294	14	13.3	25	7
Bihar*	324	15.6	14.9	34	8
Gujarat	182	8.3	8.2	22	7
Haryana	90	18.9	15	17	7
Himachal Pradesh	68	24.6	21.3	12	8
Karnataka	224	14.9	17.1	25	7
Kerala	140	9.4	6.4	18	8
Madhya Pradesh**	320	17.1	13.2	28	6
Maharashtra	288	6.8	6	26	7
Orissa	147	19.5	14.1	23	7
Punjab	117	24.8	17.6	22	7
Rajasthan	200	18.8	16.9	24	7
Tamil Nadu	234	18.2	10.1	20	8
Uttar Pradesh***	419	21.4	16.2	33	9
West Bengal	294	21.3	9.9	41	7
Total	3341	16.7	13.2	25	110

^{*}In 2000 Bihar was split into Bihar and Jharkandh, and only Bihar with 243 constituenices is included in this dataset for the years after that.

It is also interesting to look at the patterns of cabinet positions over time. Between 1977 and 2007 the number of constituencies reserved for SCs remained the same (16.7% in this group of states), while SC politicians gradually got more cabinet positions. Figure 5.6 shows the distribution of cabinet seats between politicians elected from reserved and

^{**}In 2000 Madhya Pradesh was split into Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and only Madhya Pradesh with 230 constituencies is included in this dataset for the years after that.

^{***} In 2000 Uttar Pradesh was split into Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal, and only the 403 constituencies of Uttar Pradesh is included in this data for the years after that.

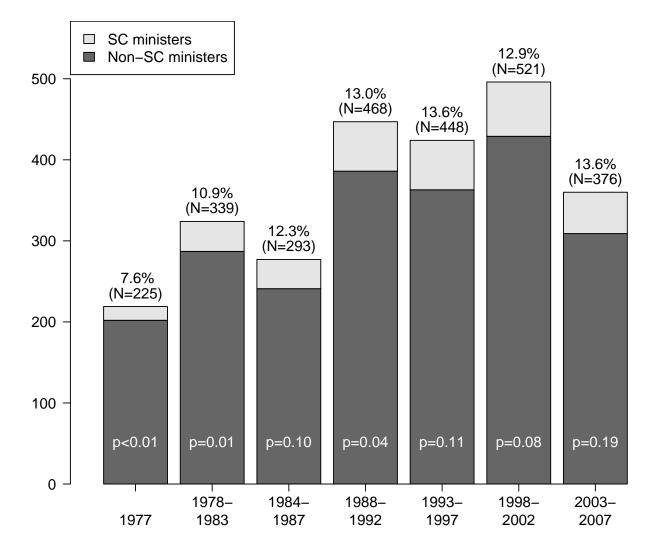


Figure 5.6: Number of ministers elected from reserved and general constituencies over time

general constituencies between 1977 and 2007. Since states hold elections at different times, I once again present the data as intervals of about 5 years which roughly correspond to the election cycles of the states. ¹⁰ In the states that held elections in 1977, SCs only held 7.4% of the cabinet seats. ¹¹ Over time, however, the percent SCs in cabinets increased and stabilized at about 12-13% of the seats. The p-values reported in the figures are from two-sample permutation tests comparing the difference in the proportion of SC and non-SC

¹⁰As a robustness check, I have also analyzed the data by year and by election number after the delimitation.

¹¹This includes Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

MLAs holding a cabinet position. As we can see, the percent SCs in cabinet positions is consistently lower than their share of the assemblies, and the difference between the percent SCs and non-SCs holding cabinets positions is statistically significantly different for some of the years.

Figure 5.7: Number of high level ministers (excluding Ministers of State) elected from reserved and general constituencies over time

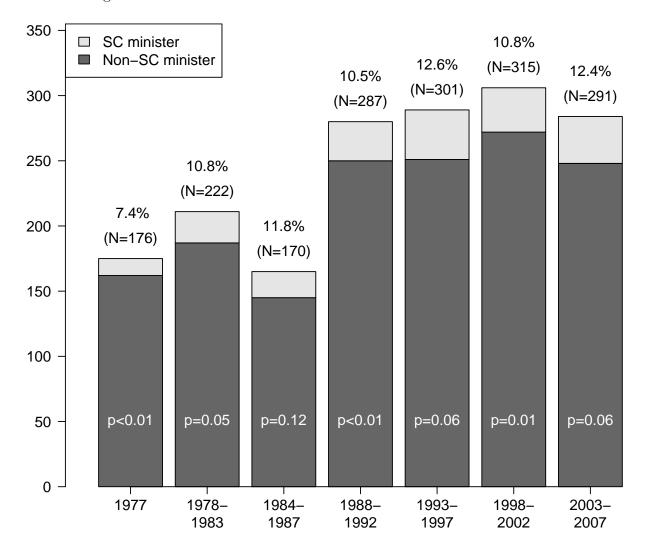


Figure 5.6 shows that the numeric representation of SCs in cabinets has been considerable (although not proportional to their representation in the assemblies). But what type of positions have they held? In work on women's representation in politics it is often showed that despite women's quotas and a presence in legislative assemblies, the higher up you come in the hierarchy the lower the female representation (see e.g. Bashevkin, 1993). There are

famous examples of SCs holding positions of power — such as Dr Ambedkar becoming the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee and Damodaram Sanjivayya becoming India's first SC Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh in 1960 — but how common is this?

If we look only at higher level positions (excluding those listed as Minister of State or Minister of State with an Independent Charge) in the cabinet dataset, the proportion of SCs is slightly lower than in all cabinet positions. In this dataset, only one SC was ever Chief Minister: Mayawati in UP.¹² In Figure 5.7 we can see the distribution of non-SCs and SCs in these more prestigious positions. Here too we see that SCs have been represented, but that their share of high-level cabinet positions has consistently remained below the 16.7% of seats that SCs hold in the state assemblies, and this difference is statistically significant for most of the election cycles.

The pattern shown in the figures can be interpreted both in a positive and in a negative way. It can be seen as negative that SCs have been systematically under-represented in cabinets in many Indian states. At the same time, this under-representation is not as dramatic as one could have expected when hearing people talk about SC politicians being weak and unimportant. The large presence in cabinets can also be seen as a successful side effect of the quota system. Members of cabinets are mainly selected from the sitting MLAs in the state, and had SCs not had such a large presence in the legislature, it is unlikely that they would have had such a large presence in the cabinets. Looking at the presence for women in the same dataset (Figure 5.8) shows that women have had a very small presence in cabinets. In the case of women, their representation in the cabinet is consistently slightly higher than in the legislature. For example, in the assemblies included in the 1977 data, women only held 2.8% of seats in the legislature, while they held about 5% of the cabinet positions. In later years the proportion of women in the cabinets corresponds quite well to their number in the legislatures. However, since women are dramatically under-represented in legislatures their numbers have also remained low in cabinets, and we can imagine that SCs would have had a similarly small, or even smaller, representation both in the legislatures and in cabinets if they had not had electoral quotas.

5.3 SC representation and political parties

An interesting variation to look for is whether some parties tend to include more SC politicians in their cabinets than others. The Indian National Congress (INC) has traditionally presented itself as a party defending SC rights, and later, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has explicitly run on an SC platform. It is therefore interesting to see whether they in fact have included more SCs in their cabinets when they have been in power.

In Figure 5.9 we see the percent SCs in cabinets dominated by different parties. As is apparent in the figure, there are major differences between the parties. The party that has

¹²During the time period of the dataset Sushilkumar Shinde was also Chief Minister of Maharashtra for two years, but since he came to power in the middle of a legislative term, his cabinet is not included in the dataset.

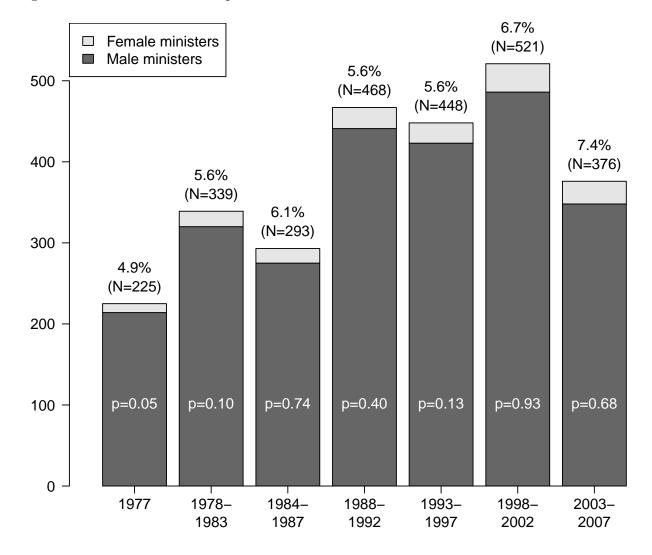


Figure 5.8: Women in cabinet positions in India 1977–2007

had the most SCs in their cabinets is Janata Dal (JD) with 16.6% SCs, closely followed by BSP with 16.5% SCs (these data include both BSP's coalition with BJP in 2002 with about 11% SCs, and BSP's 2007 cabinet with 27% SCs). Next in line is the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) with 14.9% SCs.

Since the political parties have been in power in different states, it is deceiving to look only at these percentages. For example, although the Shiv Sena (SHS) in Maharashtra has had an average of 6.9% SCs in their cabinets, this is actually proportional to the 6.8% SCs that held legislative seats in the Maharashtra legislative assembly between 1974 and 2007. We should rather consider the p-value from significance tests of the difference in the proportion of SCs and non-SCs in the assemblies that were given a cabinet positions (p-

values reported at the bottom of each bar in the figure). Looking at these p-values, we can roughly divide the parties into those that have a proportion of SCs in their cabinets that is similar to the proportion of SCs in the legislatures they are selected from (p-values larger than 0.05) and those with a presence of SCs that is statistically significantly lower than in the legislatures. We see that INC, BSP, JD, SHS, Samajwadi Party (SP) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) have all had a proportion of SCs in their cabinets that is proportional to the SCs in the legislatures from which they were selected. On the other hand we see that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the different communist parties, the regional parties in Tamil Nadu ADK/AIADMK and DMK, Janata Party (JNP) and SAD have had a presence of SCs in their cabinets that is statistically significantly smaller that the percent SCs in the legislative assemblies. The small values for the communist parties is mainly driven by the CPI(M) governments in West Bengal which have generally included a small proportion of SCs in their cabinets.

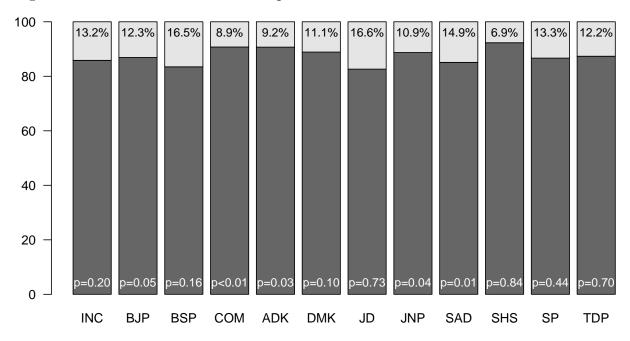


Figure 5.9: Political Parties and SC representation in Cabinets

5.4 Experience and cabinet membership

In my interviews with politicians and bureaucrats, several of my respondents mentioned that experienced SC politicians worked well and were given important positions. In this section I therefore explore whether experienced SC politicians are as likely to become ministers as non-SC politicians.

I operationalize experienced as whether the politician was in power in the same constituency in the previous election period, based on the rerunning data described earlier in this chapter. Figure 5.10 shows the percent of incumbents who were re-elected in their constituencies over time. It is important to note that the low numbers to a large extent are driven by the low rerunning rates that we already saw earlier in the chapter. Since less than half of the incumbents ran for re-election in the first elections after the delimitation, and less than half of those were re-elected, only 19% and 16% of incumbents in 1977 stayed in power in their area. This is therefore an under-estimation of the actual proportion of experienced politicians, since many politicians ran for election in a different area after the delimitation (particularly those who had been in power in an area that changed reservation status). In later elections the numbers of re-elected incumbents ranged between 20 and 30%, and for the elections in the 2000s, the proportion experienced MLAs was statistically significantly lower in reserved constituencies than in general ones.¹³

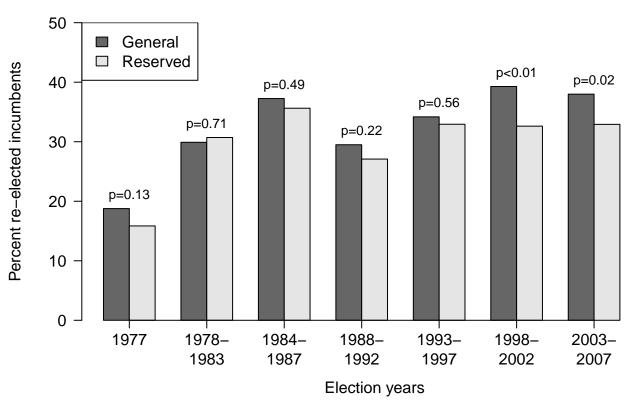


Figure 5.10: Percent experienced incumbents in general and reserved constituencies

Could it be that the under-representation of SCs in cabinets was a result of SC politicians

¹³The p-values reported above each of the paired columns are produced using perm.test from the exactRankTests library in R. I use this non-parametric difference in means test to avoid having to make the assumption of the samples from reserved and general constituencies having the same variance. The results are not substantively different when I run Welch t-tests.

being less experienced than non-SC politicians? And is it true that only inexperienced SCs are subject to discrimination, while experienced SCs are treated similarly to experienced non-SCs? In Table 5.3 we can see the result of logistic regression models of the propensity of an MLA to become a member of cabinet.

The main explanatory variables of interest in the model are whether or not the MLA are elected from a constituency reserved for SCs, whether they are experienced (re-elected incumbents in their own constituency), and the interaction between these two terms. The first model pools all the data together in order to look at the overall pattern in the data. Here we see that there is a strong negative correlation between being from a reserved constituency and becoming a member of cabinet, and there is a strong positive correlation between being experienced and becoming a member of cabinet. More importantly, however, the interaction term between the two variables is negative and significant, suggesting that the difference in the propensity to become a minister between SCs and non-SCs is even larger among experienced politicians than among inexperienced ones. This is the opposite pattern of what was claimed by the politicians and bureaucrats I interviewed. The patterns are robust to including state-election fixed effects that control for the overall size of each cabinet and other factors particular to the formation of cabinets after each election in each state. All the standard errors reported in the Table are clustered by the constituency, in order to account for correlations between the observations on the same constituency over time.

In Model 3, I include several other controls to check the robustness of the pattern. First, I include a dummy variable for whether the MLA is a member of one of the political parties in the ruling coalition. Not surprisingly, MLAs who are not members of one of the ruling parties are unlikely to become members of the cabinet. I then include a dummy variable for being a male politician. The coefficient on this variable is small and insignificant, because as we saw previously in this Chapter, women have a presence in cabinets that is roughly proportional to their representation in the legislatures. I also include the number of candidates that ran for election in the constituency of the MLA, and the turnout in the constituency, which both serve as proxies for the competitiveness of the constituency. I would expect to see that an MLA returned from a competitive constituency is more likely to become a member of cabinet, since they might be powerful politicians. This is indeed the pattern we see in the data. I also include the margin of victory of the MLA, since this gives an indication of how powerful they are in their constituencies. Here too we see a positive and highly statistically significant coefficient. Finally, I include a variable for the proportion SCs in the constituency. Model 4 also includes state-election fixed effects.

Despite including these controls, the direction of the main explanatory variables remain the same, although the interaction term between being from a reserved constituency and being experienced is no longer statistically significant in Model 4. Figure 5.11 provides an illustration of the predicted probabilities that come out of Model 4. The Figure shows the distributions of predicted probabilities of an MLA in the ruling coalition becoming a member of cabinet. I have plotted separate distributions for an inexperienced SC and non-SC and an experienced SC and non-SC. The rest of the distribution depends on which values the other covariates in the model takes on.

Table 5.3: Propensity for MLAs to become a minister 1977–2007

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	-2.35***	-2.24***	-7.71***	-7.76***
	(0.03)	(0.43)	(0.30)	(0.53)
SC politician	-0.21**	-0.27***	-0.30***	-0.29***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Experienced	0.79^{***}	0.84***	0.91***	1.03***
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)
SC*Experienced	-0.22^{*}	-0.21^{\dagger}	-0.25**	-0.14
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Member of ruling coalition			4.63***	4.90***
			(0.28)	(0.27)
Male			-0.15^{*}	-0.18**
			(0.07)	(0.07)
Number of candidates			0.02***	0.01***
			(0.00)	(0.00)
Percent Margin of victory			0.01***	0.01***
			(0.00)	(0.00)
Turnout			0.02***	0.02***
			(0.00)	(0.00)
Proportion SCs			0.00**	-0.01^{***}
			(0.00)	(0.00)
State-election fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes
N constituencies	22884	22884	22387	22387
AIC	15614.49	15067.68	13426.55	12884.12
BIC	15743.10	18733.10	13747.20	16667.78
$\log L$	-7791.24	-7077.84	-6673.27	-5970.06
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Standard errors clustered by constituency in brackets.

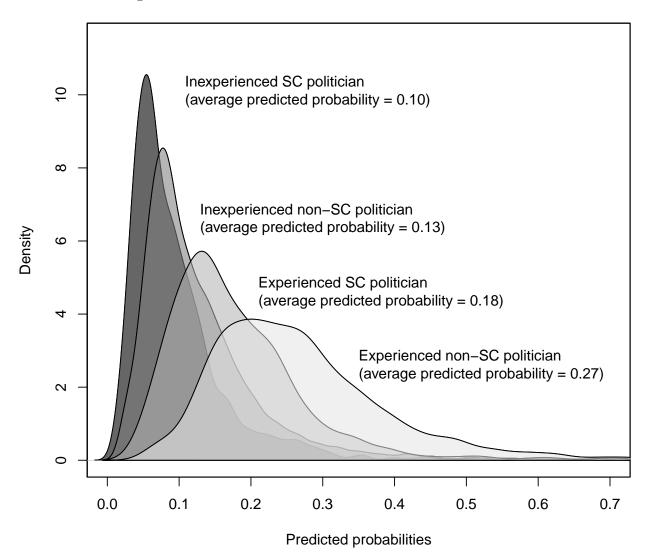
As is clear in Figure 5.11, the average predicted probability of an inexperienced SC politician who is a member of a party in the ruling coalition becoming a member of cabinet is 0.07. The probability for an inexperienced non-SC politician in 0.14. These probabilities are low for both SCs and non-SCs but SCs are clearly less favored. Experienced SCs have a slightly higher probability of 0.17. This means that experience weighs up for the caste disadvantage, but the group that is clearly the most likely to become members of cabinet are experienced non-SCs. The negative interaction between being an SC politicians and being experienced is reflected in that the gap between SCs and non-SCs is larger among the experienced than among the politicians who are inexperienced. These findings go against the perception by some of my respondents that SCs are as likely to get positions of power

[†] significant at p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

when they are experienced.

Overall, the under-representation of SCs in cabinets does not seem to be the result of SCs being less experienced than other politicians. But could it be that this is the case in some of the states with a low representation of SCs in their cabinets? In Table 5.2 we saw that particularly Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh had a much lower representation of SCs in their cabinets than in their assemblies. In Figure 5.12 I report the average predicted probabilities for becoming a member of cabinets for different states. For each state I ran the specification for Model 4 for the data of the state, only replacing the state-election fixed effects with election fixed effects. For each of the state-wise models I estimated the average

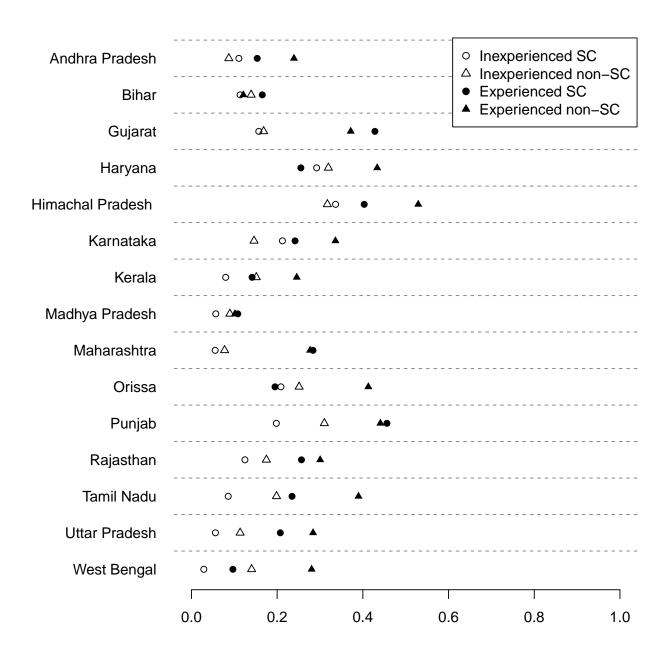
Figure 5.11: Predicted probabilities for MLAs who are members of parties in the ruling coalition becoming members of cabinet



predicted probabilities for an MLA in the ruling coalition becoming a member of cabinet.

The Figure shows some interesting state-wise differences. For example, Uttar Pradesh, seems to have the same pattern as the national average, with non-SCs being more likely to become members of cabinets than SCs, but that experienced SCs are more at a disadvantage than inexperienced SCs. Punjab, on the other hand, has a pattern more similar to what was reported by my respondents: That inexperienced SCs were discriminated against, but

Figure 5.12: State-wise predicted probabilities for becoming a member of cabinet 1977–2007



that experienced SCs were as likely to get positions of power as experienced non-SCs. In Maharashtra, experience seems to be a much more important factor than caste in determining cabinet membership, but since Maharashtra has a small number of reserved seats the pattern is based on a very small sample size. For most states, however, experienced non-SCs are quite a bit more likely to become members of cabinets than experienced SCs.

Overall, the pattern that emerges is that SCs are a bit under-represented in positions of power, even when controlling for factors such as being members of parties in the ruling coalition, being experienced and being electorally competitive. For most states experienced SC politicians are more powerful than inexperienced non-SC politician, but less than non-SC politicians with similar qualifications.

5.5 Types of portfolios

In addition to the numeric presence of SCs in cabinets across India, it is interesting to look at what portfolios they have been given. In this case I look at a more detailed dataset that includes all the cabinets that were formed in Uttar Pradesh (UP) between 1974 and 2007, and which includes both the members of cabinets who were not MLAs (cabinets usually include some members of the upper house and sometimes also members of parliament) and the portfolios of the cabinet members. While there were 10 elections in UP during this time period, there were 21 cabinets. Table 5.4 shows the percent of cabinet positions that have been held by SCs in each cabinet in UP between 1974 and 2007.

UP is famous for the rise and success of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which ran on a platform of working for SCs. SCs have held 21.4% of the positions in the UP assembly, but as we saw in Table 5.2, only 16.7% of the cabinet positions in UP between 1977 and 2007 were held by SCs. The presence of SCs is a little more (17.5%) when we look at all the cabinets in UP between 1974 and 2007 and also include those cabinet members who were not MLAs, but SCs have still clearly been under-represented. Figure 5.13 provides an illustration of the proportions of SCs in UP cabinets over time.

Looking first at an early example, the Congress government ruling UP from 1974 to 1976 was led by Chief Minister Hemwati Anadan Bahuguna. The cabinet had 21 members, of which 2 were elected from reserved constituencies. The two SCs in the cabinet were Baldev Singh Arya from Uttarkashi constituency, and Ramji Lal Shayak from Siwalkhas constituency. Both of these constituencies were newly reserved areas, but both politicians had been elected as MLAs from the Congress party in other constituencies in the 1950s and 1960s. They were therefore not newcomers in politics, and their portfolios were also quite substantial. Baldev Singh Arya was made cabinet minister with the portfolios Collective Development, Panchayati Ray (local government), and Provincial Guard, while Ramji Lal

¹⁴This data was obtained by Gilles Verniers and the author from the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha Archives in 2010. The data form part of a larger dataset maintained by Gilles Verniers with profiles for the MLAs of Uttar Pradesh since 1951 – the Uttar Pradesh State Assembly Legislators data set – which is an expanded version of the dataset used in Jaffrelot and Kumar (2009).

Table 5.4: Cabinet sizes and percent SCs in cabinets in UP 1974–2007

Year	Chief Minister	Main	Size of	SC in	Percent
		party	cabinet	cabinet	SCs
1974	Hemwati Anadan Bahuguna	INC	21	2	9.52
1976	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	31	3	9.68
1977	Ramnaresh Yadav	JNP	52	5	9.62
1979	Banarsi Das	JNP	46	6	13.04
1980	V. P. Singh	INC	54	10	18.52
1982	Shripati Mishra	INC	45	11	24.44
1984	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	49	8	16.33
1985	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	36	9	25.00
1986	Veer Bahadur Singh	INC	36	8	22.22
1988	Narayan Datt Tiwari	INC	48	9	18.75
1989	Mulayam Singh Yadav	JD	61	10	16.39
1991	Kalyan Singh	BJP	56	5	8.93
1993	Mulayam Singh Yadav	SP	28	6	21.43
1995	Mayawati	BSP	33	11	33.33
1996	Mayawati	BSP	46	10	21.74
1997	Kalyan Singh	BJP	119	16	13.45
1999	Ram Prakash Gupta	BJP	91	13	14.29
2000	Rajnath Singh	BJP	86	13	15.12
2002	Mayawati	BSP	90	10	11.11
2003	Mulayam Singh Yadav	SP	103	18	17.48
2007	Mayawati	BSP	56	15	26.79

Shayak was given Technical Education, Primary Education and Secondary Education. Although there were only two SC members of cabinets, both of them therefore seem to have been taken seriously and given important responsibilities.

In the case of UP this seems to be the pattern for the Congress cabinets. In 1980, another Congress cabinet was formed by V.P.Singh. In this case the cabinet had 54 members (48 were MLAs) and 6 members from reserved constituencies. Although the percent SCs is lower than the percent SCs among the Congress politicians in the assembly, some of these SC ministers held important portfolios such as justice, legislative and parliamentary affairs, revenue, home guard and civil defence. One of the SC cabinet ministers held the portfolios of SC welfare, social welfare, police welfare, and youth welfare. These are not portfolios with large budgets and may be interpreted as portfolios you would give to an uninfluential politician. All over, though, SCs seem to have been given considerable power in this cabinet.

The BJP has a less impressive track-record when it comes to giving SC politicians positions of power. In Kalyan Singh's BJP government that got to power in 1991, there were 61 members (46 MLAs) and only 6 SC members. This representation of less than 11% SCs has

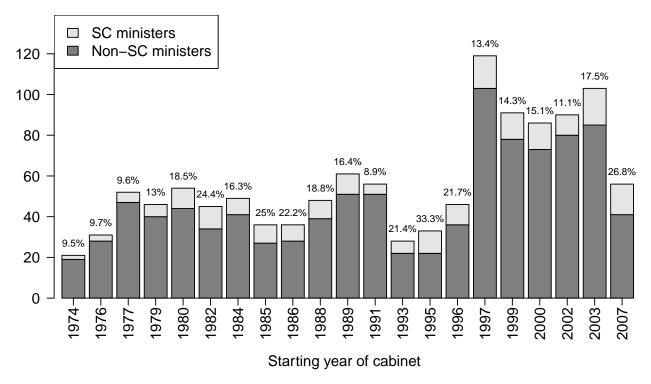


Figure 5.13: Number of SC ministers in Uttar Pradesh over time

been among the lowest representation of SCs in UP. In addition, the SCs seem to have been given portfolios that are not associated with much power. Among the SC members only one was a cabinet minister, and he was given adult education, technical education, and science and technology. These are not among the more prestigious portfolios. The other SCs were ministers of states (deputy ministers) for civil supplies, public work, power and panchayati raj. As we saw in previous figures, BJP tends to under-represent SCs in numeric terms, and this example shows that they also tend to give the SCs in their cabinets unimportant positions.

Both SP and BSP on the other hand have given SCs a numerically large presence in their cabinets, and have given them important positions. In Mulayam Singh Yadav's SP government that came to power in 1993, 21% of the cabinet members were SC, and they held portfolios such as prison, home guards, civil defence, rural, urban and regional development, welfare and medical education. They were therefore not placed into portfolios typically associated with SCs.

The absolutely strongest presence of SCs in a UP cabinets, however, was seen in the 2007 cabinet formed by BSP. The presence of SCs was actually not very large in the 2002 BSP government (when they were in coalition with BJP), but when BSP got to power alone, SCs were given 27% of the cabinet positions. Mayawati kept many of the most important portfolios herself. In addition to being Chief Minister, she also had the responsibility for portfolios such as general administration, secretariat administration, intelligence, appointments, jus-

tice, economics and statistics, state revenues, and defence. Other SCs in her government had portfolios such as finance, rural development and elections, so in this case SCs clearly held many positions of power.

5.6 Conclusion

While SCs have held 16% of all seats in the Indian state assemblies and national parliament since 1950, many have argued that they have not de facto had any power. In this chapter I have explored how powerful SC politicians are by looking at rerunning patterns and their presence in cabinets. I first looked at whether incumbent SC politicians ran for re-election, and whether they were re-elected. If an incumbent is re-running, this indicates that there is enough support in the population to make it worthwhile to try, and that the politician is supported by a political party. If they are re-elected, this means that the politician has some political experience. Except for the first election after the delimitation, when many incumbent politicians could not run for re-election because the boundaries and reservation status of their constituency had changed, SC MLAs have rerunning and re-election patterns that are similar to other politicians. There was therefore no strong evidence that SC politicians in India are less experienced than other politicians.

I then explored the presence of SCs in state cabinets across India. When I interviewed politicians and bureaucrats I heard SC politicians referred to as "weak" with little power, and that when they were given cabinet membership they would be given less prestigious portfolios than non-SC politicians. Others, however, claimed that when SC politicians are experienced they are given positions of power. The truth is somewhere in between of these claim. Looking at cabinet membership across India between 1977 and 2007, SCs have had a considerable presence in cabinets throughout the time period. In lower level positions, such as Minister of State, SCs were close to proportionally represented, while they had less than a proportional share of higher level positions. During this whole time period, however, here were only two SC Chief Ministers. There are also clear differences between the states, with some states consistently having a representative presence of SCs in the cabinet, while other states only have one or two SC representatives. For the most part, however, there seems to be a conscious effort of including SCs in cabinets, even without a formal provision for reservations of cabinet positions.

Experience is not enough, however, to make SC politicians as likely to get a cabinet position as other MLAs. My analysis shows that although experienced SCs are more likely to hold cabinet positions than inexperienced non-SC politicians, they are less likely to hold positions of power than experienced non-SC politicians. It is also clear that in several cases, such as the BJP government in UP in 1991, SCs were not given any of the most sought-after cabinet positions. The Congress party and SP in UP seem to have given their SC politicians portfolios associated with more power, but it was clearly only in the BSP cabinet in 2007 that SCs ended up holding a lot of powerful positions.

At the same time, the fairly large and consistent presence of SCs in cabinet positions

can be seen as a success of the quotas for SCs in legislative assemblies. Looking at how few women there are in cabinets across India can serve as a reminder that cabinet membership does not come on its own and that SCs would probably have held a much smaller share of cabinet positions if they had not had reserved seats in the legislature.

Chapter 6

Perceptions of representation

In January 2011 I was interviewing villagers in western Uttar Pradesh in India about their perceptions of political representation in their area. The Chief Minister of the state was a SC woman at the time, the only SC that became Chief Minister according to the cabinet data presented in the previous chapter. The SC Chief Minister, Mayawati, was a *chamar*, a member of the sub-caste that traditionally dealt with processing and manufacturing leather. When I asked a group of *chamar* women in one village whether they supported Mayawati, they all answered affirmatively: "Hamari hai, chamar ki beti hai" [she is one of us, she is the daughter of a *chamar*]. This was enough to support her.

A completely different image emerged from an interview with an SC activist in the northern state Himachal Pradesh in October 2010. He was from a political constituency that had been reserved for SCs since 1976 and had therefore lived his whole grown-up life in a constituency with SC representation. "What does this mean?" I asked, "do you think your group has better access to the politician than other groups?" He looked angry and answered: "It makes no difference. The representatives follow the party line and are only concerned about themselves and their families. All that reservations have done is to pacify the caste people [SCs] and to get the upper caste people angry that they can't run for election." These kinds of divergent opinions show that it can not be taken for granted that SCs feel more represented in constituencies reserved for SCs.

This chapter looks at attitudinal effects of quotas for SCs in India. Using data from the Indian National Election Studies (NES) conducted right after the general elections in 1971 and then in 2004, I explore responses to questions about how satisfied voters are with the political system.¹ It is clear that despite some negative attitudes towards SC politicians among elites that I have interviewed, there are small differences in the perceptions of representation among voters. I then look at questions from a smaller recent survey from western Uttar Pradesh, which suggests that voters who have lived in a reserved constituency for a long time are more positive to SC politicians than voters who live in villages that have

¹I am very grateful to the Lokniti for providing access to the NES 2004 data during the Summer Workshop on Research Methodology at Shimla in 2009.

recently become reserved. There also seems to be evidence of less caste bias against SCs in areas that have reserved for a longer time.

6.1 Quotas and feelings of representation

As discussed in Chapter 1, descriptive representation is when the legitimacy of a representatives rests on having the same characteristics as the represented (Pitkin, 1972). Mansbridge (1999, p. 628) argues that "descriptive representation promotes goods unrelated to substantive representation." Much of the literatures on minority representation in the US has focused on such non-material benefits to representation. Several studies show that both black and white politicians were less likely to communicate to representatives not of their race (Gay, 2002; Broockman, 2012), and Hickey (2010) shows that more descriptive representation for minorities can create more trust in politicians among minorities and thereby increase their communication with the political elite. Marschall and Ruhil (2007) find that blacks report higher levels of satisfaction with public services when they are represented by blacks in city hall. There are also several examples of studies showing that people eschew interactions with an out-group, and that regular interactions with the out-group can help them overcome this psychological barrier (Emerson, Kimbro and Yancey, 2002; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008; Green and Wong, 2008; Paluck and Green, 2009).

In recent work on village level quotas in India, Chauchard (2013) finds that increased representation of SCs in village councils has a positive effect on the interactions between non-SCs and SCs in villages in Rajasthan, in that it reduces inter-group stereotyping and prejudice. Similarly, work on village level quotas for women in West Bengal has shown that first-time female leaders are evaluated more negatively than male leaders, even if they actually perform better in office, but that the bias is reduced over time (Beaman et al., 2009; Duflo and Topalova, 2004). Bhavnani (2009) also finds that female candidates are more successful in areas that have experienced female leadership before.

The chamar villagers I talked to in Uttar Pradesh expressed that they felt represented by Mayawati because she is a member of the same caste group as them. The SC activist in Himachal Pradesh, on the other hand, did not seem to feel more represented by the system because of living in a reserved constituency. He suggested that non-SCs living in reserved constituencies were angry because they could not run for election. Similar arguments have been made repeatedly throughout the history of quotas in India. At the time of the discussion of the 1961 Two-member Abolition Bill, MP Mahavir Tyagi argued that: "As soon as you reserve a constituency for Scheduled Castes, 80 per cent of the population of that constituency will feel frustrated because their sons cannot offer themselves as candidates from their home constituency."²

In previous chapters I have reported from interviews where politicians and bureaucrats call SC politicians weak and useless. But how prevalent is this feeling? Do SCs generally feel more represented in reserved constituencies than in general constituencies? And have there

²Lok Sabha Debates, February 16 1961, p. 359.

been attitudinal effects of quotas for SCs in state assemblies? In the next three sections I will look at responses to questions in three different surveys to try to answer these questions.

6.2 Perceptions in 1971

The first survey I look at is the Indian National Election Study from 1971. This was a survey conducted soon after the Indian national election in 1971.³ The questionnaire includes a number of questions about how people voted, their motivations for voting a certain way, and their political opinions. It sampled 4,922 people from 19 states in India, of which about 15% of the sample are self-reported SCs, which is close to the actual national average. However, only about 8% of the sample live in a parliamentary constituency reserved for SCs, and only about 11% live in a state assembly constituency reserved for SCs. Reserved constituencies are therefore under-represented in the sample. When I exclude people living in a constituency reserved for STs, I am left with a sample of 4,522 people in 19 states.⁴ Since the samples for each state are very small, we cannot hope to get state-wise estimates of differences between the responses for the voters living in reserved and general constituencies, but we can get an overall impression of the differences.

In this study I am focusing on reserved seats in state assemblies, while the survey was conducted right after a national election. Ideally, I would like to divide people into groups depending on whether they lived in both a reserved parliamentary constituency (PC) and state assembly constituency (AC) or both, or none, but the sample size does not allow it. Instead I separately compared reserved and general PCs and ACs, and I report the differences separately in this section.

Do SCs in reserved constituencies feel more represented by the political system than SCs in non-reserved constituencies? Do non-SCs feel politically alienated or disenfranchised in SC constituencies? Two questions in the NES questionnaire allow us to approach an answer to these questions. One survey question asked whether or not people felt their vote had an effect. Another question asked whether the respondents believed that politicians cared about what people like they thought.

In Table 6.1 we see responses to the question about whether people felt their vote had an effect. About 68% of the sample gave a response to this question, and they answered Yes, No, or Maybe. The percentages given in the table are the percent of the people who

³The first Indian National Election studies were a series of face-to-face surveys of adults in India in the periods immediately following the 1967, 1971, 1979, and 1985 national elections. This survey data was based on the research of Samuel Eldersveld of the University of Michigan, Ahmed Bashiruddin of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi, and Dwaine Marvick of the University of California-Los Angeles, and are available at ICPSR website (Eldersveld, Ahmed and Marvick, 2011). Unfortunately, constituencies are given different codes in the surveys than the ones used in Election Commission publications. It is therefore hard to determine which constituencies were reserved. Fortunately, the 1971 survey included indicators for whether constituencies were reserved or not, allowing me to use the 1971 sample for this analysis.

⁴I choose to exclude the ST constituencies in order to get a clear comparison between SC constituencies and general constituencies.

did give a response who answered Yes. It is interesting to see that both reserved PCs and ACs have a higher proportion of the respondents saying that they felt their vote had an effect. The difference also seems to be larger for non-SCs than for SCs, and it is statistically significant in the case of PCs.⁵ There are differences among SCs too, but for SCs living in reserved constituencies the sample size is small, making it hard to draw conclusions from it. In addition, many people did not answer this question, and if we take the percentages of affirmative answers on the basis of all the people in the sample, the differences are not as strong. In any case, however, this data does not provide any evidence that people feel less part of the political system or less represented because they live in a reserved constituency.

Table 6.1: Percent who thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country (NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	73.2 (2424)	87.3 (204)	p < 0.01
SC individuals	72.9(369)	75.8(33)	p = 0.72
Total	73.2 (2829)	85.5 (241)	p < 0.01

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	74.0 (2389)	77.8 (239)	p = 0.19
SC individuals	72.5 (345)	77.2(57)	p = 0.46
Total	73.8 (2771)	77.9 (299)	p = 0.12

This pattern is not repeated in the question about whether the respondents believe that politicians care about what they think. About 86% of the respondents answered this question, and as we can see in Table 6.2, SC individuals were a little less likely to respond that they believed politicians carde about what they thought. There are small differences, however, across reserved and general constituencies. The strong feelings of non-SCs against living in reserved constituencies are not reflected in these responses.

The responses to these questions in 1971 does not seem to support the often stated argument that non-SCs feel frustrated about living in reserved constituencies. These negative perceptions might therefore be a phenomenon of the elite that actually aspire to hold political office or be closely related to someone in political office.

6.3 Perceptions in 2004

The data used in this section is from the National Election Study (NES) conducted by the research organization Lokniti right after the general election in India in 2004. Some 27,189 respondents from 31 states were asked about their political opinions on a range

⁵The significance test I use here and in the other tables in this section is a two sample permutation test.

Table 6.2: Percent who believed politicians cared about what they thought (NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	31.1 (2969)	34.6 (263)	p = 0.24
SC individuals	28.9 (539)	26.5 (49)	p = 0.72
Total	30.7 (3554)	33.9 (319)	p = 0.25

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	31.7 (2897)	28.4 (335)	p = 0.21
SC individuals	28.8 (500)	28.4 (88)	p = 0.94
Total	31.4 (3444)	28.0 (429)	p = 0.15

of topics. The respondents were picked using a multi-stage stratified random sampling strategy. A set of assembly constituencies were randomly selected from each Indian state (with their probability of selection being weighted by their population size). Within each selected constituency, polling stations where then randomly sampled. Finally, individuals were sampled by systematic random sampling from the voters' lists of each selected polling station.⁶

The sample includes 15.1% SCs (excluding self-reported SCs who were also self-reported Muslims, since Muslims are not officially categorized as SCs). The original NES question-naire used the same constituency codes as the Election Commission of India, but include information about wether a constituency was reserved or general. In this case, I merged in variables indicating if the political constituencies were general or reserved. This enabled me to code every individual in the NES dataset as living in a Parliamentary Constituency (PC) that is general or reserved for SCs/STs, in a State Assembly Constituency (AC) that is general or reserved for SCs/STs, or any combination of these. The actual proportion of SCs in the population at that time was about 16%. The sample is drawn from 421 PCs and 934 ACs, of which 12.4% PCs and 13.7% ACs were reserved for SCs, while the actual number was about 15%. In this case too, there is a slight under-representation of SC constituencies in the sample. Excluding ST constituencies from the sample reduced the sample size to 22,116 individuals across 380 PCs and 794 ACs in 27 states.

In this survey too, questions were asked about whether the respondents thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country. As in the previous section, I report on patterns across PCs and ACs separately. In Table 6.3 we see the proportion of people in general and reserved PCs who responded affirmatively to the question (as opposed to No and $Don't\ know$) and the sample size for each group.

Among Scheduled Caste individuals living in general constituencies, about 68% of the

⁶More information about the data collection process can be found on the Lokniti website [URL] www.lokniti.org.

sample said that they felt that their vote had an effect. Similarly, this number was 67% for SCs living in reserved constituencies. The third column in the table reports the p-value from a non-parametric t-test comparing the difference in these response rates.⁷ The high p-value suggests that the difference in the answers of people living in general and reserved constituencies is statistically indistinguishable from 0. In other words, there is no difference in how SCs living in general and reserved constituencies felt about their vote. The same is the case for non-SCs living in general and reserved constituencies, of whom 71% and 70% answered that their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country.

Table 6.3: Percent respondents who thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country (NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	70 (16011)	69.9 (2438)	p = 0.93
SC individuals	68.3 (2851)	67.4 (816)	p = 0.64
Total	69.7 (18862)	69.3 (3254)	p = 0.60

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	70 (15696)	69.7 (2753)	p = 0.74
SC individuals	67.5(2770)	69.8 (897)	p = 0.20
Total	69.6 (18466)	69.7 (3650)	p = 0.92

The numbers presented in Table 6.3 show that there is neither a positive nor a negative correlation between SC quotas and how voters felt about the efficacy of their vote in 2004. This suggests that there is no effect of the quota on how represented people feel by the political system. But this pattern could be biased. As was discussed in Chapter 3, constituencies were chosen to be reserved because they had a higher proportion SCs, and this also meant that they had a lower level of literacy and a higher proportion of the population working as seasonal agricultural laborers. This survey sample seems quite representative of the population in India, with an average of 15% SCs in the general ACs, and an average of 24.6% SCs in ACs reserved for SCs. But that does not make reserved and general constituencies any more comparable.

In order to try to limit the bias inherent in SC constituencies being different from other constituencies, I reduced the sample of the survey to the 440 matched pairs of constituencies that were found to be very similar to each other at the time the quotas were implemented in 1974 (see Chapter 3). These constituencies have a very similar socio-economic profile, and are therefore more comparable than the whole sample of constituencies. Not all of these constituencies were present in the survey sample, but 196 of them were. Since constituencies were randomly sampled within states for this survey, these constituencies should be a fair representation of all the matched pairs. Also, since individuals were randomly sampled within

⁷Here too I used a permutation test (perm.test in R).

constituencies, we should have a representative sample of people from those constituencies. The reduced sample of the survey has 5,219 people from 159 PC and 196 ACs in 17 states. In the reduced sample the average percent SCs is 22.4% in the reserved ACs and 21.% in the general ACs, suggesting that we are now comparing people from much more similar constituencies.

Table 6.4 shows the results for the perception of the efficacy of the vote in the reduced sample. In this case too, the percent SC individuals who thought their vote had an effect was slightly lower than the percent non-SCs who thought so. There is virtually no difference, however, in the response rates of people living in reserved and general constituencies. In both reserved and general ACs and PCs, about 70% of non-SCs thought their vote had an effect.

Table 6.4: Percent respondents who thought their vote had an effect on how things were run in the country (NES 2004, reduced sample of matched constituencies)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	69.6 (2625)	69.6 (1456)	p = 1.00
SC individuals	67.4(632)	67.6 (506)	p = 0.95
Total	69.2 (3257)	69.1 (1962)	p = 0.94

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	70.4 (1970)	69.0 (2111)	p = 0.34
SC individuals	66.7(528)	68.2 (610)	p = 0.58
Total	69.6 (2498)	68.8 (2721)	p = 0.54

In the 1971 survey we looked at a question about whether respondents thought politicians cared about what they thought. This question was not asked in the 2004 survey. Instead, I looked at a question about whether respondents were satisfied with the work of their Member of Parliament (MP) during the last five years. Looking at the full survey sample in Table 6.5, there is no difference in the response rates among non-SCs, but SCs living in reserved PCs report less satisfaction with the performance of their MP than SCs living in general PCs. The same pattern emerges among SCs living in a reserve AC, and this suggests that the pattern might be the result of selection bias rather than of actual opinions.

In Table 6.6 I therefore look at the responses to the same question in a reduced sample. In this case the differences between SCs evens out and there is no statistically significant difference between people living in reserved and general constituencies. What the answers in these surveys show is that the responses to questions are remarkably similar across the types of constituencies, so although elites that I interviewed talked about a grudge against SC politicians among non-SCs living in reserved constituencies, I can find no evidence of such feelings in surveys of ordinary voters. It might seem disappointing to some, however, that SCs living in reserved constituencies do not seem to be feeling any more represented than

Table 6.5: Percent respondents who were satisfied with the work of the politicians in their area (NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	52.3 (16011)	53.8 (2438)	p = 0.16
SC individuals	$51.0\ (2851)$	46.6 (816)	p = 0.03
Total	52.1 (18862)	52 (3254)	p = 0.92

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	52.4 (15696)	52.6 (2753)	p = 0.87
SC individuals	50.4(2770)	48.7 (897)	p = 0.37
Total	52.1 (18466)	51.6 (3650)	p = 0.59

SCs in other parts of the country. In fact, there is a weak pattern of SCs living in reserved constituencies reporting *lower* levels of satisfaction with their politicians. This could be because of an expectation of SC politicians doing more for them as fellow SCs, and that they were disappointed to find that SC politicians work very similarly to other politicians (see Chapter 8).

Table 6.6: Percent respondents who were satisfied with the work of the politicians in their area (NES 2004, reduced sample of matched constituencies)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	54.7 (2625)	52.1 (1456)	p = 0.10
SC individuals	49.1 (632)	50.4 (506)	p = 0.65
Total	53.6 (3257)	51.6 (1962)	p = 0.17

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	53.9 (1970)	53.7 (2111)	p = 0.90
SC individuals	50.9(528)	48.5 (610)	p = 0.42
Total	53.2 (2498)	52.5 (2721)	p = 0.60

6.4 Survey in Uttar Pradesh

The findings in the previous sections show that there is not much of a difference in how represented people feel in reserved constituencies and general constituencies, but the National Election Surveys do not directly ask questions pertaining to the opinions about SC politicians and other politicians. In order to further probe for attitudinal effects of SC quotas, I look at data from a recent survey of voters in the Western part of Uttar Pradesh.⁸

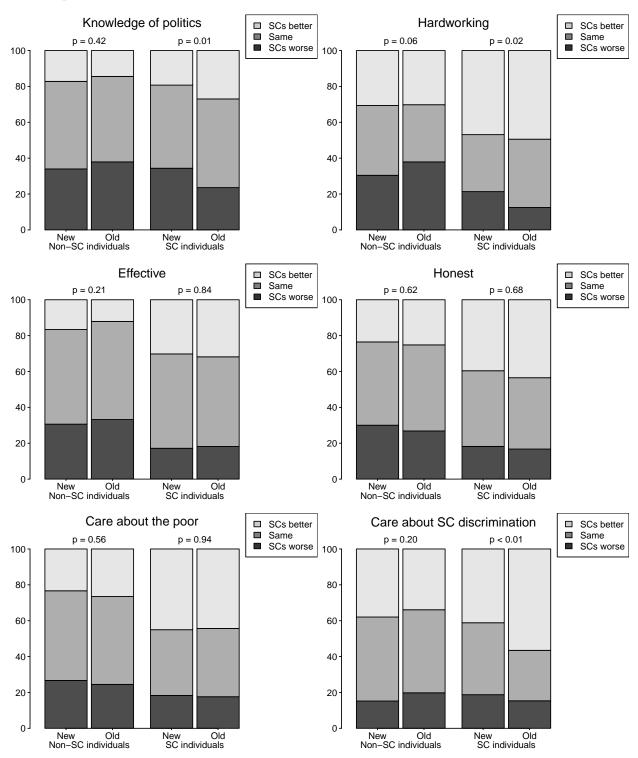
The goal of the survey was to look for differences in perceptions of politics, politicians, and caste bias of voters who had lived in a general or reserved constituency for a long time. Two areas in western UP were identified that are currently in a reserved constituency, but that include villages that used to be in both a general and a reserved constituency. Overlaying GIS maps with geo-coded villages and maps with old and new constituency boundaries, I picked villages that were closer than 5 km from the old constituency boundary but now all fall within the new reserved constituency. I then entered village level information about these villages from the 1971 census and matched up villages from each side of the old boundary based on their population size, SC population size, literacy rate and location on the maps.⁹ In each of the two locations I picked the 5 pairs of constituencies with the best balance on the matching variables, the result is therefore a sample of 20 villages in two reserved constituencies. In each constituency there are 10 villages, five of which have been in a reserved constituency since 1974 and five of which have been reserved since 2008 (but have had an SC politician since spring 2012, since that was the first state election in UP since the new delimitation). Within each of the villages I sampled 100 people from the voters' lists, based on a systematic random sample (systematic in order to avoid picking members of the same household, since households are listed together in these lists). Of the sample of 2,000 people, 1,349 (67%) were interviewed.

In this survey we asked people questions about their perceptions of SC politicians. In one question the respondents were asked to compare SC politicians to non-SC politicians on a range of topics. Respondents could answer that SC politicians do better, the same, or worse than other politicians on each of the issues. Figure 6.1 shows the breakdown of the answers to some of the questions. In each plot, the first two columns show the answers among non-SCs in newly reserved constituencies and old reserved constituencies. In other words, it compares non-SCs who have lived in a reserved constituency for less than a year, to non-SCs who have lived in a constituency that has been reserved for SC politicians since 1974. In the newly reserved villages the sample size of non-SCs was 506 and the sample size of SCs was 192. In the old reserved constituencies the sample size of non-SCs was 298 and the of SCs was 352. The p-value reported above the columns are from a Pearson's chi-squared test comparing the responses of non-SCs in a newly reserved and an old reserved constituency. The third and fourth columns in the plot does the same for SC individuals living in newly reserved and old reserved constituencies.

⁸This survey was prepared in collaboration with Dr Anil K. Verma at the Christ Church College in Kanpur, and implemented by his survey team in January 2013.

⁹Here I used the GenMatch function in the Matching package in R (Sekhon, 2011).

Figure 6.1: Percent voters who think SC politicians are better, the same, or worse than non-SC politicians



Not surprisingly, we see that SC voters are more positive to SC politicians than non-SC voters, but not dramatically so. While many elites that I interviewed had a clear perception of SC politicians being less able and effective than other politicians, most respondents in this survey seem to believe that SC politicians and non-SC politicians are similar in how they work.

SC voters are more likely to respond that SC politicians are more hardworking, more effective, more honest, and care more about the poor. However, the responses are not very clearly following caste lines. There were many non-SCs who responded that SC politicians performed better than non-SC politicians, particularly in the case of the questions of them being hardworking and caring about discrimination against SCs. There were also many SCs who responded that non-SCs did a better job, or were as good as SC politicians.

As was seen in the previous sections, the differences in the perceptions of voters who had lived in reserved and non-reserved areas were not very large. All of the respondents now live in a reserved constituency, but there is no clear condemnation of SC politicians neither in the newly reserved nor in the old reserved areas. The most notable difference in the responses is that SCs who have lived in a general constituency for a long time tend to be less positive to SC politicians than SCs who have lived in a reserved constituency all their lives. SCs who have lived in a general constituency respond similarly to non-SCs to most of the questions, while SCs who have lived in a reserved constituency for a long time are more likely than non-SCs to say that SC politicians are more knowledgable about politics, more hardworking, and care more about SC discrimination. Having lived in a reserved constituency for a long time, therefore seems to have given them a positive impression of SC politicians.

Some other interesting difference emerged when I asked the respondents about their perceptions of why the quotas for SCs had been put in place. In one question, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Political reservations for SCs were meant to create more development for the SC community." Respondents could weakly or strongly agree or disagree, but I have recoded it here to be a dichotomous variable of agreeing or disagreeing. As we can see in Table 6.7, SCs living in a general constituency were the most likely to believe that quotas were intended to create development for SCs, while SCs who had lived in a reserved constituency for a long time were the least likely to think so. The difference in the response rate of the SCs in newly reserved and old reserved constituencies is highly statistically significant.

Respondents who have lived in a reserved constituency for a long time – both non-SCs and SCs – were also much less likely to report that quotas have resulted in more development for SCs, as we can see in Table 6.8. While 77% of the respondents in newly reserved areas thought that quotas have led to more development for SCs, only 63.7% of the respondents in a previously reserved area thought so. This difference is also highly statistically significant. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, there does not seem to be much evidence of SCs particularly having benefited from living in reserved constituencies in terms of development outcomes, and SC politicians themselves claim to be working for all groups in their constituencies, not only SCs. Voters with more experience with SC politicians seem to be more aware of this reality than those who have just become part of a reserved constituency.

Table 6.7: Percent of respondents who agreed with the statement: "Political reservations for SCs were meant to create more development for the SC community"

	Newly reserved AC	AC reserved since 1974	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	73.9 (506)	77.5 (298)	p = 0.25
SC individuals	82.3 (192)	72.7(352)	p = 0.01
Total	76.2 (698)	75.0 (651)	p = 0.59

Table 6.8: Percent of respondents who agreed with the statement: "Political reservations for SCs have created more development for the SC community"

	Newly reserved AC	AC reserved since 1974	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	78.7 (506)	63.1 (298)	p < 0.01
SC individuals	74.0 (192)	64.2 (352)	p = 0.02
Total	77.4 (698)	63.7 (651)	p < 0.01

A different pattern emerges when we look at questions about bias against SCs. As we can see in table 6.9, 76.4% of the respondents in newly reserved areas and 71.7% of the respondents in previously reserved areas agreed to the statement "SCs have been treated badly in the past because of their caste identity." The difference is small between SCs in different areas, of which almost 80% agree that SCs have suffered from bad treatment in the past. However, among non-SCs there is a large difference. Some 75.7% of non-SCs in newly reserved areas agreed that SCs have been treated badly in the past, while only 62.8% of the non-SCs living in previously reserved areas thought so. This difference could be explained by non-SCs feeling that SCs have gotten their share of power and influence because of their experience of living in a reserved area. It could also be that in their life-time they have seen less bad treatment of SCs than non-SCs living in neighboring villages that were not reserved.

Table 6.9: Percent of respondents who agreed with the statement: "SCs have been treated badly in the past because of their caste identity"

	Newly reserved AC	AC reserved since 1974	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	75.7 (506)	62.8 (298)	p < 0.01
SC individuals	78.1 (192)	79.3 (352)	p = 0.76
Total	76.4 (698)	71.7 (651)	p = 0.05

The differences in responses is even more striking when looking at responses to whether people thought that "SCs are still treated badly because of their caste identity." As we see in Table 6.10, about 69% of SCs in newly reserved areas agreed to this statement, while only 59% of the SCs in reserved areas thought so. This difference of 10 percentage points is highly statistically significant. It suggests that SCs who have lived in a reserved area for

a long time are less likely to feel badly treated than SCs in villages that had just become reserved. The difference in the responses among non-SCs is even larger. While about 51% of non-SCs living in a newly reserved village think that SCs are still being treated badly, only about 31% of non-SCs who have lived in a reserved constituency for a long time think so.

These differences are striking, especially bearing in mind that the surveyed voters live in villages that are only a few kilometers apart, and are very similar in all ways except for their previous reservation status. What the responses suggest is that SC reservations have led to a considerable reduction in caste bias in the reserved areas.

Table 6.10: Percent of respondents who agreed with the statement: "SCs are still treated badly because of their caste identity"

	Newly reserved AC	AC reserved since 1974	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	50.9 (505)	30.9 (298)	p < 0.01
SC individuals	68.8 (192)	59.1 (352)	p = 0.03
Total	55.8 (697)	46.2 (651)	p < 0.01

6.5 Conclusion

During my interviews with politicians, bureaucrats and activists in India, I heard different claims about the emotional and attitudinal responses to quotas for SCs. Some claimed that SCs felt more represented by SC politicians simply because they belonged to their own group, while others said that there has been a back-lash of non-SCs feeling frustrated by living in reserved constituencies. Looking to literature from the rest of the world, there is reason to believe that there could be both such a positive and such a negative reaction to the quota system. Looking at surveys, however, no such patterns emerge. There is no difference in responses about the efficacy of the vote or how satisfied voters are with the work of their politicians.

Looking at a recent survey conducted in western Uttar Pradesh, however, there is some evidence that villagers that have lived in a reserved area for a long time have a more positive evaluation of SC politicians than those in villages that have recently become part of a reserved constituency. There is also evidence of less caste discrimination in areas that have been reserved for a longer time. The negative attitudes against SC politicians therefore seem to be more of an elite phenomenon than a general pattern in the population, and although SCs do not report being happier with their representation in reserved areas, quotas seem to have led to a reduction in caste discrimination.

Chapter 7

Quotas and turnout

In studies of politics in developing countries, is often assumed that voters tend to vote ethnically and feel more represented when one of their own is elected to office. The reverse side of this argument is that voters feel less represented where someone from another group is in power. The electoral quotas for SCs represents a major intervention in the electoral system, by mandating that only SCs can run for election in 16% of all political seats. This means that the SC population gets a chance to vote for candidates from their own ethnic group, something they rarely get the opportunity to do in non-reserved constituencies. At the same time, since the quotas for SCs came into effect, some critics of the quota system have claimed that their only effect is to make non-SCs frustrated that their co-ethnics cannot run for election in their constituency.

In the previous chapter I showed that there are small differences in how represented voters feel in reserved and general constituencies, and how satisfied they are with the work of their politicians. In this chapter I explore the effect of SC reservations on electoral turnout in state assembly elections in India from 1967 to 2012. This time period includes the last election in each state before the 1976 delimitation came into effect (in 1974), and the first election after the 2008 delimitation came into effect in 2008. The chapter has four sections. First, I discuss how some of the political science literature assumes a positive correlation between minority representation and turnout, because it is expected that minority voters will turn out to vote in higher numbers when someone from their group is in power. This is contradicted by literature on India, that shows that the turnout in elections is slightly lower in reserved constituencies.

In the second section, I look at constituency-level turnout data for more than 4,000 political constituencies across India from 1969 to 2007. Using the matched pairs identified in Chapter 3, I find that after the new location of quotas came into effect in 1974, there was an average drop in turnout across India of more than 9 percentage points in constituencies that went from being general to reserved. Over time this gap in turnout narrowed, but after 30 years of reservations there was still a remaining difference in turnout of 4.3 percentage points.

In the third section of the chapter I explore the mechanisms that can explain this turnout

gap. Using the Indian NES surveys from 1971 and 2004, I present evidence that both SCs and non-SCs turned out in lower numbers in reserved constituencies, and that this seems to be due to weaker mobilizing capabilities of SC politicians. I also show that the size of the initial drop in turnout is strongly correlated both with the education level in the constituencies and with self-reported caste-bias in each state. This suggests that the drop in turnout can be explained both by weaker mobilizing capabilities among SC politicians and with bias against SC politicians among non-SCs.

But does caste bias and weaker mobilizing capacity explain the convergence in turnout over time? Did the un-informed voters get less biased against SC politicians as they got used to having SCs in power, or has there been an overall trend of voters being less biased and SC politicians being more capable? To answer this question I repeat the matching exercise for constituencies that became reserved in 2008. Looking at turnout in the elections of 18 state before and after the 2008 delimitation, I find an average drop of about 3.5 percentage points in places that went from being general to reserved. The drop is smaller than the remaining gap in turnout in constituencies that had been reserved for 30 years. This suggests that the observed convergence in turnout is not due to a learning effect among voters in reserved constituencies in particular.

7.1 Representation and turnout

Why should we expect the electoral turnout to be different in reserved constituencies than in other constituencies? In the literature about descriptive representation in the United States, turnout in elections is often mentioned as an important consequence of increased minority representation. Many accounts of the effects of minority representation are optimistic; focusing on how the presence of African American politicians or candidates make African American voters feel politically empowered, increases their likelihood of turning out in elections, and is associated with increased knowledge of the political system (see Bobo and Gilliam Jr, 1990; Bositis, 1999; Banducci, Donovan and Karp, 2004; Voss and Lublin, 2001). Studying the Latino community in the US, Pantoja and Segura (2003) find that the presence of a Latino representative in the state assembly, state senate or US House, makes Latino voters feel less politically alienated.

The other side of this story is that majority group voters might get less interested in politics, and less inclined to turn out to vote, in areas controlled by a minority representative (Bositis, 1999). Gay (2001) shows that the election of minority politicians to Congress has a negative effect on the political involvement of the majority community, while it does not boost political engagement among minority voters. Barreto, Segura and Woods (2004) similarly find that residing in a majority-Latino district increases the propensity of Latino voters to turn out in elections, while it decreases the propensity to vote among non-Hispanic voters. They also argue that it is really the level of competitiveness of a district that determines turnout, and that both serious competition between parties and between races can be important determinants of turnout. Existing literature from the US thus suggests

that minority groups might turn out in higher numbers where a minority representative is in power, while the majority group might turn out in lower numbers.

Turnout in India

After independence from the British colonial rulers in 1947, the political sphere in India was dominated by the urban elite. Gradually, however, the lower classes started turning out in higher numbers in elections and gradually began to occupy more political seats (Jaffrelot and Kumar, 2009; Yadav, 2000). Contrary to the situation in many countries in the world, the turnout in India in the 1990s was the highest among the rural poor. However, in the elections in the 2000s this pattern was no longer prevalent. Kumar (2009, p. 50) shows that in the 2004 and 2009 general elections the turnout rate is almost the same among the upper, middle and lower classes, but that older people and SCs tend to turn out in slightly higher numbers than other communities. Diwakar (2008) also finds that turnout tends to be lower in urban areas than in rural areas, is positively correlated with literacy rate, and negatively correlated with the number of electors in the constituency. She also finds that the closeness of the election (margin of victory) is strongly negatively correlated with turnout, but does not find a significant correlation with the number of candidates who run in the election.

How can these patterns be explained at the micro-level? In a series of interviews with villagers in Andhra Pradesh, Price and Srinivas (2013) argue that voters mainly turn out to vote for two reasons: First, because many villagers in India feel unimportant and alienated by the elite in power, and that at least on that one day of the election their opinion is taken into account. The vote is perceived as giving someone an identity because they are listed in the voter registry. One lower class voter is quoted to have said that not voting is like being non-existence. Second, Price and Srinivas (2013) argue that voters turn out in order to be able to make demands on politicians.

A similar set of arguments was made by Ahuja and Chhibber (2012), based on focus groups in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu and survey evidence from nationally representative surveys. They show that groups with different relationships to the state give different reasons for voting. The non-poor, who often have some kind of connection to the state and feel quite represented by the democratic system, report that they vote because it is their civic duty and because it allows them to make claims on the state. The poor, however, that have little to do with the state in their daily life, vote because it is their right. The authors report that one poor voter told them "I am because I vote on Election Day. Otherwise, what is my stature in this society?" (Ahuja and Chhibber, 2012, p. 394) Another voter told them "An election is the one event which ties us to the government. Politicians, people like you, journalists — everyone comes looking for us. If we did not vote, there would be no elections, and no one would know of our existence" (Ahuja and Chhibber, 2012, p. 394).

There is little disagreement in existing literature that group identity is an important part of political choices in India. Chandra (2004) argues that India is a patronage democracy where patronage is distributed along ethnic lines. She argues that ethnic identification

becomes important because of the lack of information about politics among voters. Group identity also plays a major role in who is nominated to political positions. Jaffrelot and Kumar (2009) describe how political parties carefully select their candidates according to the caste, clan and religious composition of each constituency, in order to maximize votes on the basis of group identity. In my interviews with party representatives from Congress, BJP, SP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh, it also became evident that the proportions of different *jatis* (sub-castes) in each constituency was a major concern for who the parties chose to field as candidates in the elections.

If ethnicity is so important in Indian politics, we should also expect it to affect turnout and vote choice, and we should expect to find that changing the ethnicity of politicians with the use of quotas would result in dramatic changes in turnout. Yet, only a few studies have attempted to look at the effect of SC reservations on turnout. McMillan (2005) uses survey data from 1971 and from the 1990s to show that turnout has been somewhat lower in Scheduled Caste constituencies than in the rest of the country. He also notes that it seems like turnout rates in non-reserved and reserved constituencies have converged over time. But, how much of this convergence has to do with the reservation policy, and how much is due to the general trend in the turnout patterns in the country? Reserved constituencies have a higher proportion of Scheduled Caste voters than other constituencies, and these traditionally marginalized groups are exactly the ones who have started turning out in higher numbers over the last few decades. In fact, McMillan (2005, p. 239) himself points out that the patterns he observes "may be more a reflection of the type of constituency which is selected as a reserved constituency than any influence of reservation itself." Mori and Kurosaki (2011) also observe a lower turnout in the parliamentary constituencies that are reserved for Scheduled Castes than in non-reserved constituencies, but this is also a descriptive result where we cannot distinguish between selection effects and the effect of the quotas themselves.

So far, data limitation and difficulties in controlling for confounding variables has made it hard to estimate how large the gap in turnout in reserved and non-reserved constituencies really has been. Using a new and complete dataset of electoral outcomes in India 1969-2012, and limiting the selection bias by comparing matched constituencies, I show that SC quotas had a strong initial negative effect on turnout in the 1970s, and a moderately negative effect on turnout after the most recent delimitation in the 2000s. I will argue that it is not the characteristics of the voters, but the group identity of politicians as well as their mobilizing capabilities that explain this difference in turnout. First, however, I will present some evidence from interviews that suggests that reservations have been associated with a drop in turnout among both non-SCs and SCs.

Perceptions of the effects of SC reservations on turnout

A drop in turnout is one of the main negative effects of reservations that has been pointed out throughout its history. At the time of drafting the Delimitation in the early 1970s, the Delimitation Commission received a large number of letters and petitions asking for changes to political boundaries in order to shift locations of reserved seats. One Member

of Parliament in UP wrote to the Delimitation Commission asking them to move a reserved seat out of Unnao district. She argued that in that district "four assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha Constituency has become reserved for Scheduled Castes and there is already a General feeling amongst the general population with the result that General voters will be less enthusiastic at the time of casting their vote in the election." Similarly, MLA M.S. Maravi pleaded for moving another reserved seat: "As this constituency has been a reserved constituency since 1957, there is a great resentment among the voters of majority communities of this area; and that is why the percentage of the polling of this constituency always remains lowest in the whole district. Besides, this percentage is decreasing in every general election."

The idea that reservations lead to a drop in turnout was also pointed out by several of the politicians, bureaucrats and SC activists that I interviewed in India in 2010 and 2011. Three main types of explanations were given for how voters in India have responded to electoral quotas. First, as was already discussed in the previous chapter, I was told several times that non-SCs feel less represented in reserved constituencies than in other constituencies. According to a high-ranked bureaucrat in Himachal Pradesh, non-SCs living in reserved constituencies are unhappy that nobody from their group can run for election.² Similarly, a prominent SC activist in UP told me that in his experience non-SCs living in reserved constituencies are not interested in voting in elections because nobody from their own caste community is running for election.³ He argued that this was because they did not expect SC politicians to work for their interests. In other words, the expectation expressed in my interviews was that non-SCs expected SCs to work more for the interests of the SC community in the constituency, while SC voters did not think that this would happen.

A politician in UP gave another explanation for why non-SCs might be less interested in turning out to vote in reserved constituencies. I talked to him in his meeting room on the first floor of his house. On his desk there was a huge pile of thick envelopes. He pointed to the pile and explained that they were wedding invitations. According to him, constituents care the most about politicians being part of their daily happiness and sorrow [sukh aur dukh], and that he therefore would be able to win an election simply by attending funerals and weddings. SC politicians, he argued, might not be invited to, or attend, as many family events as non-SC politicians, because people might be uncomfortable having them eat with their other guests. In this way SC politicians lose the goodwill that he himself, as an uppercaste politician, benefits from. He argued that this lack of good-will would make fewer voters interested in coming out on election day.⁴

Finally, according to many of my respondents voters turn out because of bribes, gifts and coercion. They stated that the turnout is lower in reserved constituencies because SC politicians are less able to use such coercive methods. As one SC politician in Uttar Pradesh

¹Letter by Smt Ganga Dai to T Swaminathan, dated August 16 1973. Available in the files of the Delimitation Commission, file number 282/UP/73 vol I.

²Interview in Shimla October 11 2010.

³Interview in Lucknow November 21 2010.

⁴Interview in Lucknow November 24 2010.

put it: "Turnout is lower in reserved constituencies because SC politicians have less money to throw around so the elections are less glamorous. People vote for glamour.⁵ Similarly, a former *pradhan* in Himachal Pradesh argued that turnout to a large extent is driven by financial bribes, and that turnout is likely to be lower in reserved constituencies since SCs generally have less money to give away than other politicians.⁶ The same point was made in a more pessimistic way by a non-SC opposition politician in UP: "People vote on the basis of food and alcohol that is distributed during elections, therefore people with money control the vote.⁷

In sum, from my interviews I learned that SCs might in some cases feel good about being represented by one of their own, but that they are not necessarily more likely to turn out to vote, because they do not expect the politicians to do anything more for them than any other politician would. On the other hand, non-SCs were said to be less likely to turn out to vote in reserved constituencies, because they did not think SC politicians would work for them or because SC politicians could not pay enough bribes to get people to come out to vote.

7.2 Data and analysis

To look at the effect of quotas on turnout, I needed data on turnout. After every election in India, the Election Commission of India compiles the constituency-wise data from the election. These data are available online in PDF reports.⁸ In order to use the data, however, it needs to be transformed into soft copy. For this project, I downloaded each of the PDFs that are available online, and extracted the data content. The result of this work is a unique dataset of political outcome variables for the 306 Indian state elections from 1951 to 2012, including variables for electoral turnout and which constituencies were reserved for SCs or STs in each election.⁹

For the purpose of this chapter, I focus on the change in the electoral turnout in constituencies that became reserved as a result of the delimitation in the 1970s. I use matching to identify this effect, as was explained in detail in Chapter 3. When looking at turnout, which can change rapidly, I am interested in identifying the change from right before to right after the delimitation, and mainly the change in areas that went from being general to reserved. For this reason, the matched pairs I look at in this Chapter are the 120 matched pairs of constituencies that all used to be general before 1974. In order to see what happened to turnout over time, I also repeated the matching exercise for turnout right before and after the 2008 delimitation.¹⁰

⁵Interview in Lucknow November 19 2010.

⁶Interview in Shimla October 13 2010.

⁷Interview in Lucknow November 25 2010.

⁸www.eci.nic.in

⁹The full electoral dataset and further information about the scraping work is available at www.francesca.no.

¹⁰For the 2008 delimitation, the constituencies were linked up by overlaying GIS maps from before and

The resulting data set includes constituency level information about electoral results for 27 Indian states 1967 to 2012 (187 state assembly elections from before 2008 and 18 elections from 2008 to 2012). The data includes more than 4,000 constituencies in each election, of which about 3,000 were general, about 560 reserved for SCs and about 300 were reserved for STs. Tor most of the analysis in this paper (with the exception of the boxplots in the next section showing turnout in India over time), I exclude all the constituencies that are reserved for STs in order to compare turnout in general constituencies to turnout in constituencies reserved for SCs.

Turnout in India 1969 to 2007

How has turnout in Indian state elections changed over time? Figure 7.1 shows the distribution of the constituency-wise turnout by year from 1969 to 2007. During this time period each state held 7.7 elections on average, but some states held fewer and some more, for example, Uttar Pradesh had 11 elections during this time period. On average, the turnout across the constituencies in these elections was 63%, but as is apparent, there is great variation in the constituency-wise turnout across time and space. Across the constituencies, turnout ranges from 0 to 100 percent according to the official records, but in many state elections the turnout was unusually high or low due to political events in the state (such as in Punjab 1992).

The pattern looks more stable if we pool the election results into 5 year intervals, roughy corresponding to one election for each state, as is shown in Figure 7.2. While the year-wise plot brings out the variation in turnout among states, this pooled data shows that the pattern across the country has remained quite stable over time.

If we split the turnout figures into general and reserved areas, however, the pattern looks quite different. Figure 7.3 shows the average turnout in general constituencies compared to constituencies reserved for SCs over time. The plot on the left shows average turnout values in reserved and general constituencies, while the plot on the right shows the difference in the average turnout in each group, with a 95% confidence interval from a two-sample difference in means test. The dotted line for 1974 indicates the time when the new delimitation was implemented. The values to the left of the dotted line show the turnout in the last election held before the delimitation, in the constituencies that has the greatest overlap with each of the constituencies in the sample.

after the delimitation. In this case, I used the old constituency with the largest overlapping area as the match for each new constituency. Because the borders in the different map files are not perfectly aligned, these matches are not perfect. The maps from before 2008 were created by the company MLinfo, while the maps from after the delimitation were from the India based company GISmap IN. This merging work was done in collaboration with Sam Asher at Harvard University.

¹¹The exact numbers vary a bit for each cycle of elections due to minor changes in the delimitations (for example, the allocation of reservations were adjusted in the late 1970s and some of the states in the North East had delimitations at other times than the rest of the country) as well as missing values in the original PDFs from the Election Commission.

Figure 7.1: Distribution of constituency-wise turnout in state assembly elections in India 1967-2007, by year

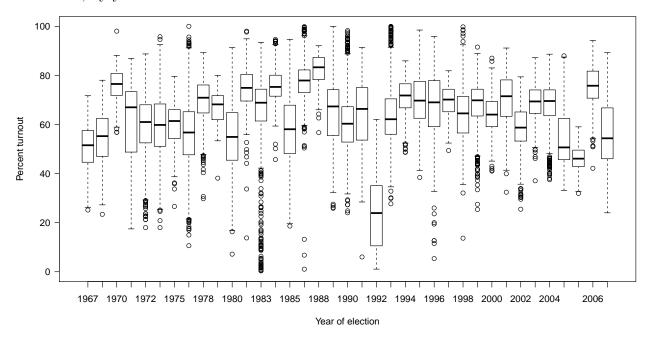


Figure 7.2: Distribution of constituency-wise turnout in state assembly elections in India 1967-2007

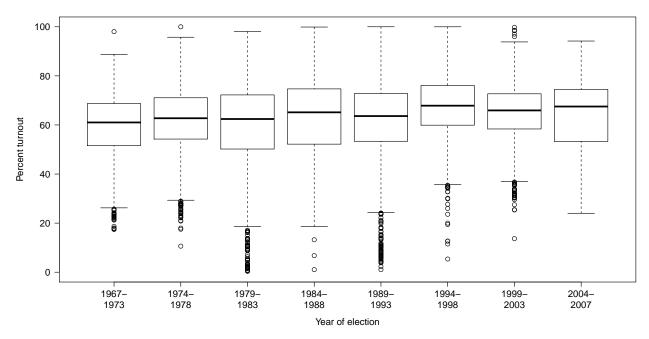


Figure 7.3: Average turnout in reserved and non-reserved constituencies in state assembly elections in India 1967-2007

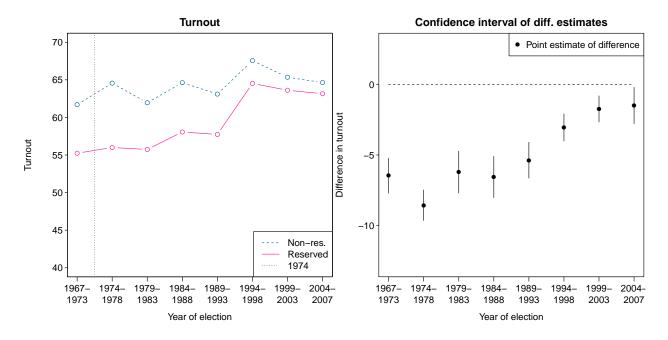
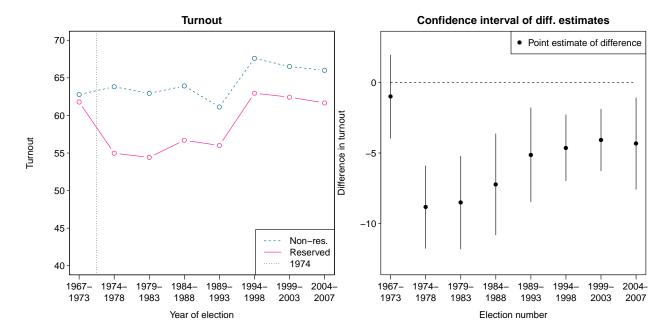


Figure 7.3 reveals several interesting patterns. First of all, it is apparent that the turnout has on average been much lower in reserved constituencies, although this gap narrowed over time. At first glance it might look like voters responded negatively to SC candidates, but then got used to their presence over time. However, if the turnout gap had been affected only by the implementation of quotas, then the turnout should have been the same in general and reserved constituencies before these quotas were implemented. The fact that there was a large gap in turnout even before the quotas were rotated to the positions specified in the 1970s delimitation, suggests that constituencies that were reserved after 1974 were fundamentally different from the ones that were not reserved even before the reservations came into effect. The patterns are therefore clearly biased. This means that the narrowing of the gap in turnout over time could be the result of the general trend of the lower classes and SCs turning out to vote in larger numbers over time. In the next section I try to get around this selection bias by looking at matched data.

Turnout pattern on matched data

In order to get around the bias created by reserved seats being non-randomly assigned in the 1970s, I limit the sample to 240 constituencies that used to be non-reserved and of which 120 were as if randomly assigned to be reserved for SCs in the 1970s. These are the 120 pairs of constituencies that were identified in Chapter 3, and as was shown in that chapter they were very similar in every way, expect that the reserved constituencies have a

Figure 7.4: Average turnout over time in matched constituencies in state assembly elections in India 1967-2007 (N=240)



slightly higher proportion SCs in the population on average. I choose to use the smaller set of matched pairs, consisting only of places that used to be un-reserved before 1974, since I am interested to see how voters respond to their constituency becoming reserved for the first time.

Figure 7.4 shows the turnout over time in the matched reserved and general constituencies. The matched pairs had a similar level of turnout in the last election before the delimitation, suggesting that they are indeed more comparable than looking at the full sample of reserved and general constituencies (see Chapter 3 for balance statistics). The only change that occurred in 1974 was that half of these constituencies were assigned to be reserved. This change is associated with a large and statistically significant drop in the electoral turnout. Existing literature about turnout in India suggests that voting is higher among the more education, higher in urban areas and higher in areas where there is more political competition. However, these factors are on average the same across the reserved and non-reserved matched constituencies. The turnout gap can therefore not be explained by traditional explanatory variables. The matching allows us to be quite confident that the difference is not spurious, and that the whole difference was the result of the constituencies becoming reserved.

The average turnout in each group, the difference in means, and the p-value from a difference in means test, are reported in Table 7.1. In the table we can see that the average drop in turnout was about 9 percentage points on average, and that the difference was highly statistically significant.

In both the table and the figure, we can also see clearly that the difference in turnout

	1967-	1974 -	1979-	1984-	1989-	1994-	1999-	2004-
	1973	1978	1983	1988	1993	1998	2003	2007
Turnout general	62.78	63.81	62.93	63.92	61.13	67.59	66.51	66.00
Turnout reserved	61.78	54.97	54.42	56.70	56.00	62.96	62.43	61.66
Difference	-1.00	-8.84	-8.52	-7.22	-5.13	-4.63	-4.08	-4.34
P-value t-test	0.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01

Table 7.1: Average turnout over time in reserved and matched non-reserved constituencies

between general and reserved constituencies gradually grew smaller over time. The differences between the gap in the first round of elections after the reservations were implemented (1974-1978) and the last four election cycles shown in the table are all highly statistically significant (p < 0.01 in permutation tests). Despite the reduction in the gap over time, there was still about a 4.3 percentage point difference in turnout in the reserved and general constituencies after quotas had been in place for 30 years, and this difference is highly statistically significant.

7.3 Exploring mechanisms

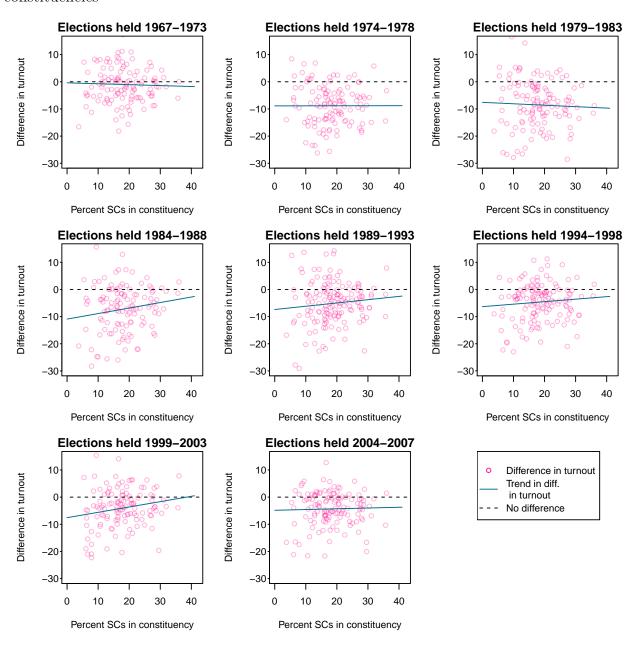
In the previous section we saw that the average turnout dropped dramatically in constituencies that became reserved in the 1970s. The patterns in turnout shown in the previous section raises a number of questions. Who stopped turning out to vote? Why did they stop turning out to vote? And why did the turnout in reserved and general constituencies converge over time? In this section I explore different data sources in an attempt to provide some answers to these questions.

Who stopped turning out to vote?

The logical first question to ask is who in the electorate were turning out in lower numbers. From expectations in the literature and my interviews, we should expect to see fewer non-SCs turning out to vote in reserved constituencies than in general constituencies, and perhaps also a higher turnout rate among SCs.

One way of looking at this is to plot the turnout rate in constituencies against the proportion SCs in their population. Figure 7.5 shows the difference in turnout in each of the 120 matched pairs of constituencies plotted against the proportion of SCs in the general constituency in the pair. As expected, there is no difference in turnout before the delimitation, when all of the constituencies were still general. After the delimitation there is – as we have already seen – a large average difference in the turnout in reserved and general constituencies, although there is great variation in the turnout levels in both reserved and general constituencies.

Figure 7.5: Correlation between percent SC and difference in turnout in the 240 matched constituencies



If non-SCs had started turning out in lower numbers, but SCs turned out at about the same rate as in other constituencies, we should expect to see a larger difference in turnout in constituencies with a high proportion non-SCs. In that case the trend lines in the plots would have a positive slope. It is interesting to see that in the first two elections after the delimitation there is seemingly no correlation between turnout and the percent SCs in the constituencies. In later elections, however, we see the expected pattern. This suggests that there was an initial, large drop in turnout among both SCs and non-SCs, but that SCs started turning out to vote at a normal rate again after two elections.

Another way of approaching the question of who stopped turning out to vote is to look at survey data. To do so I used the the Indian National Election Surveys from 1971 and 2004 (see Chapter 6 for more information about these surveys). The first survey is from before the 1970s delimitation came into effect, and I am therefore looking at turnout patterns in the constituencies that were reserved at the time. It is till choose to use this survey, since it is the only survey from the 1970s and 1980s that I have access to that includes the indicators I need to separate the sample into reserved and non-reserved constituencies. Another drawback of using this survey data is that like in other surveys people tend to exaggerate their political participation. Out of the total sample in the NES71, about 79% percent reported that they voted in the 1971 general election, while the actual turnout in the election was 55%. Similarly in the NES 2004 the self-reported turnout was 85% and the actual turnout in the election was 58%. It is important to bear that in mind when looking at the patterns in the data. However, it is still interesting to look at the difference across type of constituency, as I have not reason to believe that people would over-report their voting more or less in reserved constituencies.

Looking first at self-reported turnout in parliamentary constituencies (PCs), as shown in Table 7.2, the turnout is about 2 percentage points lower in reserved PCs than in general ones, but this difference is not statistically significant. There are also very small differences in the self-reported turnout among SCs and non-SCs.¹³ Looking across reserved and general state assembly constituencies (ACs), however, there is a clear difference. Here we see a similar turnout rate among SCs and non-SCs in general constituencies, while the self-reported turnout is quite a bit lower in reserved ACs. While 80.6% of the respondents living in state assembly constituencies claimed to have turned out in the election, only 72.3% of the respondents in constituencies reserved for SCs claimed to have turned out. This difference of 8.3 percentage points is highly statistically significant, and it is consistent with the actual observed difference in turnout reported in Table 7.1.

If we look at the self-reported turnout among SCs and non-SCs, we see that both groups turned out in lower numbers than their peers in general constituencies, but that there was a larger drop among non-SCs than SCs.¹⁴

¹²The constituencies that were reserved in 1971 had only become reserved in the 1967 delimitation, they were therefore also newly reserved seats.

¹³It is in later years that the SCs and other lower classes start turning out in higher numbers, as explained by Yadav (2000) and Jaffrelot (2003).

¹⁴One of the reasons for the lower turnout among both SCs and non-SCs in reserved constituencies

Table 7.2: Percent self-reported turnout in the 1971 election (NES 1971, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	79.8 (3449)	77.9 (312)	p = 0.42
SC individuals	79.5(633)	77.4(62)	p = 0.70
Total	79.8 (4139)	77.9 (382)	p = 0.41

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	80.6 (3360)	71.8 (401)	p < 0.01
SC individuals	80.2 (592)	73.8 (103)	p = 0.14
Total	80.6 (4008)	72.3 (513)	p < 0.01

Turning to survey data from 2004, the differences in turnout are no longer visible in the data. Table 7.3 shows self-reported turnout across reserved and general PCs and ACs in the full survey sample. Here we see that the self-reported turnout is slightly higher in reserved than in general constituencies. However, this is likely to be the result of turnout being higher among the poor and among the lower castes than among other groups. In fact, as we can see in the Table, the self-reported turnout is several percentage points higher among SCs than among non-SCs.

When reducing the sample of the NES 2004 to reserved constituencies and comparable general constituencies (see Chapter 6 for more about the procedure), there is little difference in the turnout in reserved and general constituencies. The only pattern that is close to being statistically significant is that SCs in reserved PCs have a slightly higher self-reported turnout than SCs in general PCs. There is no difference in the self-reported turnout among non-SCs.

The survey data suggests that both SCs and non-SCs turnout out in lower numbers in reserved constituencies in 1971, while turnout levels are quite similar in 2004. The figures from the 1971 survey correspond well with the actual turnout gap, while in reality the average turnout in reserved constituencies was about 4 percentage points lower in reserved constituencies at the time of the 2004 survey.

Unfamiliar candidates?

One possible explanation for the drop in turnout could be that voters were faced with new unfamiliar politicians because of the delimitation. The implementation of new political

could be the socio-economic differences between the constituencies. In order to control for socio-economic differences in this survey data, I would ideally like to look at a reduced sample where the proportion of SCs and the socio-economic patterns in the reserved and general constituencies is more similar. Unfortunately, I have socio-economic data for the constituencies that were formed in 1974, but not for these previous constituencies, so I am unable to control for such differences.

Table 7.3: Percent respondents who said they voted in the general election (NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	84.5 (16011)	85.1 (2438)	p = 0.46
SC individuals	86.8 (2851)	89.2 (816)	p = 0.06
Total	84.8 (18862)	86.1 (3254)	p = 0.06

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	84.3 (15696)	85.9 (2753)	p = 0.03
SC individuals	87.1 (2770)	88.0 (897)	p = 0.51
Total	84.7 (18466)	86.4 (3650)	p = 0.01

Table 7.4: Percent respondents who said they voted in the general election (NES 2004, reduced sample of matched constituencies)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	87.3 (2625)	86.3 (1456)	p = 0.36
SC individuals	87.7 (632)	90.9 (506)	p = 0.08
Total	87.4 (3257)	87.5 (1962)	p = 0.91

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	86.9 (1970)	86.9 (2111)	p = 0.98
SC individuals	89.0 (528)	89.2 (610)	p = 0.93
Total	87.3 (2498)	87.4 (2721)	p = 0.93

boundaries after the delimitation represented a political shifts in many constituencies. The politicians who were in power had to face new constituents, and many constituents were given the electoral choice between candidates they had never heard about before.

As was shown in Chapter 5, an average of 66% of incumbents in general constituencies and 63% of incumbents in reserved constituencies ran for re-election between 1974 and 2007. In the first election after the 1970s delimitation, however, the numbers were a bit lower, with about half of the incumbents running for re-election in areas that remained general, about 60% running for re-election in areas that remained reserved, very few SC incumbents running for re-election in a newly de-reserved areas, and no incumbents running for re-election in a newly reserved constituency.

Overall, the delimitation did therefore result in a large change in the political landscape in newly reserved and de-reserved seats. But, as we also saw in Chapter 5, by the second election the rerunning rates were the same in general and reserved constituencies. If the number of experienced candidates was a key explanatory factor for the difference in turnout,

we should therefore expect to see the gap growing smaller already by the second round of elections. The fact that the gap remains as large in the next round of elections suggests that it was not the lack of familiarity with candidates that depressed turnout.

Capacity to mobilize voters

If the lower level of turnout was just a matter of bias against SCs, we should expect to see more of a drop among non-SC voters and less of a drop among SC voters. However, this does not seem to be the pattern in the data. It could therefore be that the lower turnout is related to SC politician having weaker networks to mobilize voters and less money to buy off voters. There is some evidence for this in the data. One of the questions in the NES71 and NES 2004 is whether a candidate, party workers or canvasser had come to their house before the election to ask for their vote. The ability of candidates to reach voters can be seen as an indicator of how extensive their network is and how able they are to mobilize voters to come out to vote on election day.

Table 7.5: Percent respondents who were contacted by a candidate, party workers or canvasser before the 1971 election (sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	43 (3413)	43.1 (311)	p = 0.98
SC individuals	38 (629)	41.9(62)	p = 0.54
Total	42.3 (4098)	43.3 (381)	p = 0.70

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	44.2 (3327)	33.2 (397)	p < 0.01
SC individuals	41.0(590)	22.8(101)	p < 0.01
Total	43.8 (3972)	31.2 (507)	p < 0.01

As we can see in Table 7.5, about 42% of people living in a general PC and about 43% of those living in a reserved PC report that they were contacted by someone asking for their vote before the election. Looking across the type of PC, there is no discernible difference in how many people were contacted in reserved and general constituencies. Slightly fewer SCs claimed to have been contacted in general constituencies than in reserved ones, but the difference is not large, and not statistically significant.

Looking at the AC level, however, the differences are quite large. In this case, about 44% of people living in general ACs reported having been contacted, while only about 31% of people living in a reserved AC said that they were contacted. In this case there is also a large difference between how many SCs and non-SCs reported having been contacted, with only 22.8% of SCs in SC constituencies having been contacted.

But why is there is a difference between reserved and general ACs and not reserved and general PCs? This could be an artifact of the sample, for example, if the sample by chance consists of SC ACs with particularly weak mobilization during the 1971 election. However, it could also be because the mobilization of voters in parliamentary constituencies happens through the networks of state level politicians and local politicians, and that the patterns of who are contacted therefore depends more on the politicians in the state assembly than the higher level politicians. If this is the case, then this supports the idea that SC politicians at the local level had weaker networks to mobilize voters than non-SC politicians.

The observed patterns fit very well with the turnout patterns, suggesting that the capacity of politicians to mobilize voters was a key determinant of turnout. While most of the literature on turnout in India has focused on the characteristics of the voters, such as their education level and caste group, it should not be surprising that the networks and campaign efforts of politicians are important determinants of turnout levels.

Table 7.6: Percent respondents who said they were contacted by a candidate, party worker or canvasser (NES 2004, sample sizes in parentheses)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	52.1 (16011)	53.0 (2438)	p = 0.42
SC individuals	51.7 (2851)	55.8 (816)	p = 0.04
Total	52.1 (18862)	53.7 (3254)	p = 0.09

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	51.9 (15696)	54.0 (2753)	p = 0.05
SC individuals	$52.2\ (2770)$	53.7 (897)	p = 0.42
Total	52.0 (18466)	53.9 (3650)	p = 0.03

Table 7.7: Percent respondents who said they were contacted by a candidate, party worker or canvasser (NES 2004, reduced sample of matched constituencies)

	General PC	PC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	57.0 (2625)	54.9 (1456)	p = 0.20
SC individuals	57.4(632)	56.9 (506)	p = 0.86
Total	57.1 (3257)	55.5 (1962)	p = 0.24

	General AC	AC reserved for SC	Significance test
Non-SC individuals	56.4 (1970)	56.2 (2111)	p = 0.89
SC individuals	58.3 (528)	56.2 (610)	p = 0.47
Total	56.8 (2498)	56.2 (2721)	p = 0.66

Looking at the data in the 2004 survey, as summarized in Table 7.6, there is very little difference in the responses of the voters living in reserved and general constituencies. In this case voters in reserved PCs and ACs report higher levels of contact with politicians than voters in general constituencies. Politicians in reserved constituencies definitely seem to have caught up in the efforts to get out the vote.

Looking at data from a reduced sample, as shown in Table 7.7, there is again very little difference between the responses of voters in general and reserved constituencies. About 57% of voters in general PCs and ACs say that they were contacted by a party worker or politician before the election, while about 56% of voters in reserved constituencies were contacted.

The difference in the responses in the NES71 and NES 2004 is informative. The capacity of SC politicians to mobilize voters seems to have been lower in the 1970s. This is not surprising considering that we have seen in earlier chapters that they were less experienced, less educated, and held fewer positions of power. SC politicians seem to have been "weaker" politicians in the 1970s. The result was that both SCs and non-SCs turned out in lower numbers in the first elections after new constituencies became reserved in the 1970s. Over time, however, SC politicians gained political experience, know-how, and the capacity to mobilize voters, and based on the plots in Figure 7.5, it seems like SC voters returned to the polls. The remaining turnout gap in later elections might, however, be the result of bias against SC politicians among some non-SC voters.

Caste bias in voting

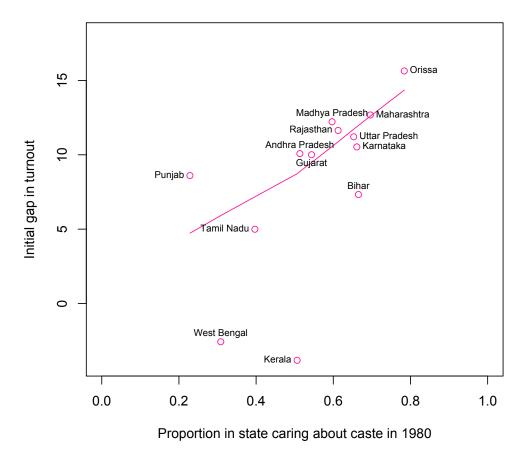
Studying the link between bias and outcomes is difficult, because we do not have indicators for bias at the constituency level. We can, however, look at state level tendencies and try to discern differences from that. In a pre-poll survey from 1980 with 3,617 respondents from across India, respondents were asked some questions that can be used to estimate the propensity for voters to care about their caste identity when they vote. One question read: "Q2: Now let us talk of your caste-community — how much concern would you say you have for the condition and problems of your caste/religious group — not at all, some or a lot?" To create an estimate of the caste bias in each state in the sample, I calculated the proportion of respondents in each state that answered "some" or "a lot" to that question.

Figure 7.6 shows the correlation between the proportion of people caring about the condition of their caste in a state, and the size of the initial drop in turnout in reserved constituencies in that state in the 1970s. There is a strong positive correlation between the two variables: In states where people say they care about caste we see a much larger average drop in turnout.

Over time, the gap shrinks in all the states that had a large drop in turnout, but in states with strong castism, such as Maharasthra, there is still a considerable remaining gap after 30 years of reservations.

Many would suggest that it is education and not castism that explains the state-wise variation. It is hard to determine whether it is caste bias or education level that really is the most important explanatory factor since they are highly correlated at the state level, and I do

Figure 7.6: Correlation between caste bias and drop in turnout in reserved constituencies in the first election after 1976 delimitation



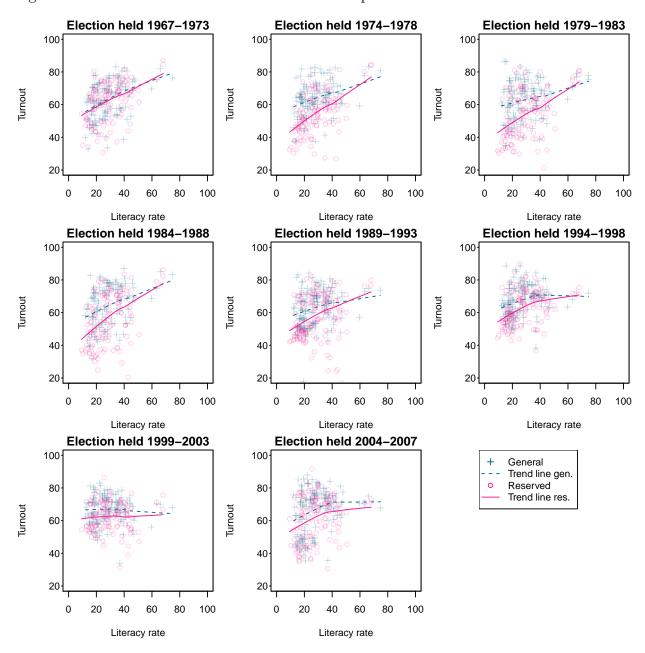
not have constituency level estimates of caste bias. Education level can in some way be seen as a proxy variable for caste bias, since it is likely that a more educated population is less prejudiced against fellow citizens. Figure 7.7 shows the turnout in the matched constituencies plotted against the literacy rate in each constituency, as recorded in the Indian census from 1971.¹⁵

Figure 7.7 shows the constituency level turnout plotted against the constituency level education level in each of the 240 constituencies in the matched dataset. The lines show the local tendency in the data for non-reserved and reserved constituencies respectively. It is clear from the first plot that turnout generally was strongly correlated with the education level of the electorate. From the later plots it is also clear that the drop in turnout in reserved constituencies was the highest in constituencies with a low literacy rate, while there was no

¹⁵The data is estimated at the constituency level by Bhavnani and Jensenius (2012), as described in more detail in Chapter 3.

 $^{^{16}{}m I}$ use the lowess function in R for these lines, which uses a locally-weighted polynomial regression to create the smoother.

Figure 7.7: Correlation between education and drop in turnout in reserved constituencies



drop in turnout in constituencies with a high literacy rate.

These findings suggest that there might be several forces leading to the turnout being lower in reserved constituencies. Initially, SCs politicians seem to have had a lower capacity than other politicians to mobilize voters, and this resulted in lower turnout among both SCs and non-SCs. Over time, however, the capacity of SC politicians seems to have improved and the remaining gap in turnout seems to be the result of bias against SC politicians among illiterate non-SC voters.

7.4 Less bias in reserved constituencies?

In the previous sections I have showed that the drop in turnout in reserved constituencies can be explained by SC politicians having less of an ability than other politicians to mobilize voters, but that there also seems to be a bias against SC politicians among uneducated non-SC voters that has grown weaker over time. Part of the gradual converge in turnout in reserved and general constituencies over time can therefore be explained by SC politicians gaining experience and mobilizational capacity. But has there also been a learning in reserved constituencies?

The delimitation in 2008 provides an excellent opportunity to test whether there has been a change in attitudes among voters only in reserved constituencies, or whether there simply is a gradual time trend of less bias against SCs (for example because of the increasing education level across the country). In a recent paper, Natraj (2011) shows that constituencies that went from being non-reserved to reserved after the delimitation in 2008 experienced a large drop in turnout in the first election after the borders had changed. She looks at a sample of three states and uses an regression-discontinuity design (in practice very similar to the matching design in this work) to identify the change in turnout. She finds an average drop of 6 percentage points relative to a baseline of 69% turnout and an increase in turnout of four percentage points in constituencies that went from being reserved to general. Since her paper came out, many more states have held elections.

In this chapter I use data from 18 of the states that had elections since 2008.¹⁷ To identify matched pairs, I used the same strategy as described in Chapter 3: I restricted the sample to constituencies that were general from 1974 to 2008 and then matched the post-delimitation constituencies within the same district and same Lok Sabha constituency on the percent SCs in their population.¹⁸ I used a caliper of .5 to restrict the maximum allowed difference in the percent SC. This resulted in 153 matched pairs that were very similar in every way, except that half of them became reserved for the first time in 2008.

¹⁷The states I use are Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir also held elections in the relevant time period, but these states were not delimited in 2008 and I therefore do not have the percent SC in each constituency which I need in order to match the cases.

¹⁸The percent SCs in each constituency is provided in the 2008 delimitation report, which is available online at www.eci.nic.in.

Figure 7.8: Average turnout in 306 previously general matched constituencies in state assembly elections before and after the 2008 delimitation

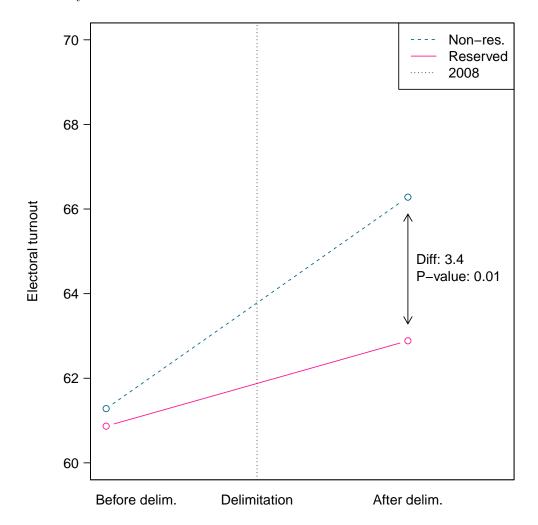


Figure 7.8 shows the turnout for these matched pairs before and after the 2008 delimitation. As expected, the average turnout was close to the same in the two groups before the delimitation (they were all non-reserved), but on average the increase in turnout was smaller in newly reserved constituencies than in the constituencies that remained general. This average difference in turnout is, therefore, actually smaller than the average difference that remained between the constituencies that had been reserved and general for more than 30 years. If the change in attitudes among voters had been a phenomenon specific to reserved seats, we should have seen a larger turnout gap in areas that had not been reserved before. The fact that the difference in turnout between newly reserved seats and constituencies that remained general in the 2000s is smaller than the remaining difference in turnout in constituencies that had been reserved for a long time, suggests that the convergence in

the turnout gap in reserved constituencies between 1974 and 2007 is not a learning effect particular to reserved constituencies.

7.5 Conclusion

Turnout is often mentioned as an important effect of increasing representation for minorities. Work on minority representation in the US suggests that having a minority politician in power will make minority voters feel more empowered and increase their likelihood of turning out in elections. Some recent studies, however, have found that minority representation does not increase minority turnout but rather has the negative effect of depressing turnout among majority group voters. In this chapter I have explored these ideas in the case of SC quotas in India.

Existing literature on India suggests that turnout among SC voters is slightly higher than among other voter groups, but that turnout in reserved constituencies is slightly lower than in general ones. In previous work, the size of this difference has not been clearly identified. Using a unique dataset of electoral turnout at the constituency level in India 1969-2012, and using matching to eliminate potential confounding variables, I show that the implementation of SC reservations in India in the 1970s resulted in a drop in turnout of 9 percentage points on average.

Evidence from surveys suggest that the initial drop in turnout occurred both among SCs and non-SCs and can at least partly be explained by SC politicians having a weaker capacity to mobilize voters than other politicians. Over time, however, it seems that SCs returned to the polls, while non-SCs kept turning out in lower numbers. Since the difference in turnout in reserved and general constituencies is strongly correlated with self-reported concern about caste among voters in each state and with the education level in each constituency, it seems that the remaining difference in turnout might be the result of caste bias.

The convergence in turnout in reserved and general constituencies could also in part be the result of a learning effect among the voters. To test for that I looked at the change in turnout in places that became reserved for the first time after the 2008 delimitation. If there had been a learning effect in reserved constituencies, we should again have seen a large drop in turnout in these newly reserved constituencies. Instead we see only a small drop in turnout in newly reserved constituencies. This suggests that voters in newly reserved constituencies are no more biased against SC politicians than those who have lived in a reserved constituency for a long time, and that SC politicians have gotten better at mobilizing their voters to come to the polls.

Chapter 8

Development from representation?

"I know that if they [SC quotas] go on working, they [SCs] will perhaps attain further progress in educational, administrative and other fields [...] we have to remember that if they had made progress in those directions, that progress too is, to a large extent, due to their representation in the legislatures" (Lok Sabha Debates, November 30 1959, p. 2447)

Electoral quotas for Scheduled Castes (SCs) have brought members of a marginalized community to power in India's state assemblies since the Indian constitution came into effect in 1950. SC politicians have been poorer and less able to mobilize voters than other politicians, and it is unlikely that they would have been elected without the quotas. This is an achievement in itself. In addition, however, many have expected them to help improve the socio-economic conditions of the SC community at large. In this Chapter I explore the link between SC representation in state assembly constituencies and the socio-economic well-being of the SC population in those constituencies. Comparing matched pairs of constituencies from across India, I find that 30 years of quotas had neither a positive nor a negative effect on the literacy rate, percent workers or percent agricultural laborers among SC or non-SCs.

These zero-impact findings are not surprising when listening to the responses of SC politicians about how they perceive their role in politics. The story that emerged from my interviews with politicians across India, was that SC politicians get embedded in the political game like all other politicians, and that faced with the same institutional and electoral incentives, SC representatives tend to behave the same as other politicians. In other words, we should rethink the assumption that minorities will necessarily try to actively benefit their own group.

At the same time, the zero-impact findings at the constituency level do not preclude that the SC community has benefited from quotas in a more diffuse or indirect manner. When evaluating the effects of quotas it is therefore important not only to consider the direct substantive effects, but also such indirect substantive effects.

8.1 The search for socio-economic effects of quotas

When talking about increased representation of women and minorities, people often have high hopes for the benefits that might accrue from them. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a large literature looking for a link between the descriptive and substantive representation both for the case of women and minorities in the US. There is a more limited literature, however, on minority representation in the rest of the world. What should we expect from SC representatives in India? If they are vote driven we should expect them to work similarly to other politicians when faced with the same electoral incentives. If they are citizen-candidates who care about their community we should expect them to actively work more for SCs than other politicians. Even if they are not actively working for their community they could still be doing so indirectly by having shared political interests with their group. But if they work more for SCs than others, are they then adequately representing their non-SC constituents?

Over the last few years, a number of studies have explored the effect of electoral quotas in India on the allocation of funds to public goods, and development indicators for reserved areas. The interest in this topic seems to have come from the semi-random implementation of quotas for women in village councils. Since 1993, one third of seats have been reserved for women, the locations of these seats have been rotated at the time of each election, and the locations of the seats are supposed to be randomly assigned. This therefore comes close to being a natural experiment where the treatment was to bring a woman into a position in power.¹

The working assumption in this literature seems to be that women and minorities will actively or indirectly benefit their own group once in power. Yet, the findings are not conclusive. With data from West Bengal and Rajasthan, Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004b,a) show that women politicians tend to invest more in goods that women express an interest in: In West Bengal they invest more in water and road projects and less in non-formal education, while in Rajasthan they invest more in water and less in roads. With a sample of more than 35,000 respondents across 24 states, Duflo and Topalova (2004) also show that villages with female political leaders tend to have a better supply of drinking water facilities. Bardhan, Mookherjee and Torrado (2005) look at data from West Bengal and find that women leaders in reserved seats improve the targeting of subsidized loans to disadvantaged groups but at the same time worsen the targeting of employment grants. The effects are interacted with measures of land inequality and they find that the effect is lower where inequality is high, suggesting that local elites have stronger social control in those areas. Raabe, Sekher and

¹The assumption of random implementation is problematic, though, since the 'randomization' was done locally, leaving room for political maneuvering.

²The data used is a survey with 36,542 respondents in 2,304 villages across 24 Indian states, collected by the NGO Public Affairs Center. They were able to match the survey entries to reservation status data in 11 states for the questions of household satisfaction and availability of public services (Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). They matched up the survey to 9 other states when looking at public services such as cleanliness, maintenance etc (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal).

Birner (2009) offer a comprehensive literature review of the study of women's reservations and present new findings on the basis of survey evidence from Karnataka. They show that reservation policies for women stimulate the political participation of women in rural areas, shift rural service provision to public goods that reflect gender preferences, and improve the access to and the quality of public services.³ But not all studies find major effects of women's representation. Ban and Rao (2008) examine a variety of policy indicators and find small effects. They argue that budgetary restrictions at the panchayat level could explain the zero-findings. They also find that women in reserved seats are significantly less likely to have meetings with higher level politicians than male politicians Ban and Rao (2008, pp. 512-13).

Until about 2000 there had been few empirical studies of quotas for SCs and STs, but with the interest in women's quotas there was also an increase in the interest for quotas for SCs and STs. These quotas are harder to study because their location was selected on the basis of the proportion of the group in the population.⁴ Studies of SC quotas have therefore had a hard time dealing with how to identify their effects. Besley, Pande and Rao (2005) look at survey evidence from four southern states in India and find that a higher proportion of SCs in ruling positions lead to more benefits for the SC community. Similarly, Bardhan, Mookherjee and Parra Torrado (2009) find evidence from West Bengal that places where the position of pradhan (village president) was reserved for SCs saw an increase in benefits to the village as a whole, an increase in the goods targeted to female-headed households, and to the group of the pradhan. Using a regression discontinuity design, however, Dunning and Nilekani (2013) find no evidence of SC politicians channeling development funds to their own group once they get to power.

There have been very few attempts to study the effects of the state and national level quotas. These quotas have been in place longer and they bring with them access to much larger resources. The lack of studies is probably due the lack of data at the political constituency level in India and that it is also hard to identify the effect of the state level quotas, since they were non-randomly assigned. Pande (2003) tries to get around these difficulties by taking advantage of the time lag between the census and the implementation of the next delimitation in the 1960s and 1970s. Looking at aggregate effects on resources allocated to SCs by state assemblies, she finds no evidence that having more SCs in positions of power increase spending on policy issues that interest SCs, although she does find a weak positive correlation between the number of SCs in the state assembly and transfers allocated to SC communities. Chin and Prakash (2011) use the same identification strategy as Pande to look at the effects of reservations on poverty, measured as people living below the poverty line according to the National Sample Surveys between 1960 and 2000. They find no significant effect of SC reservation on any of their poverty measures, and in fact, cannot rule out a weak negative effect of SC representation on the urban poverty rate.

³Quotas are also argued to have a long-lasting political effect, as they increase the representation for women even after the quotas are gone (Bhavnani, 2009).

⁴For a detailed description of the selection of SC quotas at the village level, see Dunning and Nilekani (2013).

8.2 Expectations of developmental effects

The current literature is not alone in expecting development effects from quotas. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the debate about quotas in India gradually changed from being purely about representation to being about development for the SC community. Over time there are also repeated references to the important developmental role of SC politicians. For example, in a letter to the Delimitation Commission in the 1970s, MLA M.S. Maravi suggested moving the location of a proposed reserved seats: "This is a most backward area where the condition of harijan tribes [SCs] is most miserable. If this constituency is declared as a reserved seat, then there will be a possibility of getting more financial help for this area and by this, the development works would be enhanced in this area."

When evaluating the performance of reserved seats in 1979, Galanter (1979, p. 445) wrote that reserved seats "clearly have a substantial redistributive effect. Not only through their law-making activities, but through their ability as legislators to intercede, obtain contracts and distribute patronage, reserved seats produce a substantial flow of resources to these groups." Similarly, when I asked an SC MLA in Karnataka what the purpose of quotas for SCs was, he repeatedly answered that political power is the key to all other forms of development.⁵

Voters also have an expectation of more development for SCs in reserved constituencies. As was reported in Chapter 6, about 76% of the voters surveyed in western UP thought that political reservations for SCs were meant to create more development for the SC community, and 77% of voters in newly reserved constituencies and 64% of previously reserved constituencies thought that reservations have led to more development for SCs.

In the next section I will present data showing the development for SCs and non-SCs in reserved and general areas, and show that there is no evidence in the data of SC politicians actively working more for the SC community.

8.3 Data and analysis

Since the goal in this chapter is to look at development indicators for SCs and non-SCs at the constituency level, I chose to use variables from the census data from 2001 (which was the last census released before all the political boundaries changed in 2008).

There are several advantages to using the census data. First, the census data is the only data source with development indicators at the village and block level for all of India.⁶ Getting data at this disaggregated level was essential for creating estimates of the variables for political constituencies. Second, since the baseline data in the analysis was census data, looking at the same variables 30 years later makes it possible to compare changes in de-

⁵Interview by the author in Bangalore, February 23 2011.

⁶The large surveys that are conducted in India, such as the National Sample Survey, do not have indicators for political constituencies and do not release the indicators for geographic location below the district level.

velopment indicators in reserved and general seats from 1971 to 2001, rather than absolute values. Third, the census data reports data separately for the SC population and the rest of the population, thereby making it possible to study outcomes for the SC population and non-SC population separately.

One of the limitations of using the census is that the data contains a limited number of variables that can be used as indicators of development. The variables included are population size, the breakdown of the occupations of people counted in the census, the numbers of literate and non-literate, as well as number of non-working people.

The 2001 census data was merged with political variables using GIS software to overlay maps of the political boundaries of 2001 and maps of block level boundaries in 2001.⁷ In this case the merging was done by area-weighting. Since there is no reason why inaccuracies in these estimates should be systematic, we believe that the estimates can be treated as unbiased when we look at averages across the sample.

The resulting dataset has constituency level estimates of all the census variables from the 2001 Primary Census Abstract (PCA) and the SC/ST PCA for 3,347 state assembly constituencies from the 15 largest Indian states.⁸ This data was combined with the constituency-wise estimates of variables in the 1971 census, as was described in more detail in Chapter 3. In the analysis that follows all constituencies that were reserved for STs have been excluded, in order to compare SC constituencies to general constituencies. The final dataset used for the analysis in this paper therefore includes 2,311 general constituencies and 475 SC constituencies.

From the variables available in the census data I chose to focus on three sets of variables. The first is the literacy rate among SCs and non-SCs. This is an important variable considering how low the literacy rate is in the Indian population, and how much voters care about education and see it as the key to social mobility. Politicians have the power to affect literacy rates in their constituencies by getting funds allocated to specific schooling projects or following up on whether the bureaucracy is doing their job of building schools in the constituency, by checking up on whether teachers show up at schools and whether SC children get access to the classroom, and by using the discretionary MLA funds on books, uniforms or scholarships.⁹

⁷This work was done in collaboration with Rikhil Bhavnani, and has been described in more details in Bhavnani and Jensenius (2012).

⁸The states included in the data are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. There are missing values in Bombay Municipality, where a manual match was made difficult because all the names and the size of the wards were changed between the time of the 1971 census and the Delimitation. There are also some additional missing values from urban areas in the 2001 data, where the GIS-maps were not detailed enough to be able to get sensible data estimates.

⁹The census of India defines literate in the following way: "A person aged 7 years and above who can both read and write with understanding in any language has been taken as literate. It is not necessary for a person to have received any formal education or passed any minimum educational standard for being treated as literate. People who were blind and could read in Braille are treated to be literates. A person, who can neither read nor write or can only read but cannot write in any language, is treated as illiterate. All children

The second variable I look at is the percent workers in a constituency. This variable captures all people in the population who have some form of work, both full-time and parttime. 10 Unemployment is high in India, and having a stable income is crucial to the socioeconomic standing of a family. Much of the contact between politicians and their constituents is related to the topic of getting a job or getting transferred into another position. Politicians have the power to affect who gets hired to positions and who gets transferred. One high level bureaucrat I talked to in Himachal Pradesh told me that he was contacted daily by politicians trying to get someone in their network hired in some position. He estimated that about half the interactions between citizens and politicians are about transfers and jobs. 11 Another of my respondents in Bangalore emphasized that politicians have the power to increase local employment by putting pressure on the bureaucracy to start construction work in the area, or by using their contacts to attract business investors to their area. He also said that as an SC MLA, he felt that one of his main achievements was to help reduce the backlog in hiring SCs to reserved positions in the bureaucracy. 12 If SC MLAs systematically work to fill reserved governmental positions and get SCs hired in other positions too, we might be able to see that the percent workers among SCs is higher in reserved constituencies than in general ones.

In addition to working for jobs, the SC MLA from Karnataka that I just cited said that his other main achievement was to fight for the land rights of SCs in his constituency. Getting land has been a major issue for SC activists, since land is key to both social respect and social mobility. The third set of variables is therefore the percent agricultural laborers in a constituency. These are usually landless laborers who work for wages in someone else's farm. There are many more agricultural laborers among SCs than among non-SCs. It is therefore interesting to see whether reservations have an effect on the percent of SCs and non-SCs involved in agricultural labour.

In order to separate the effects of the potential targeting of benefits to SCs in SC con-

of age 6 years or less, even if going to school and have picked up reading and writing, are treated as illiterate" (GOI, 2001a).

¹⁰The census of India defines literate in the following way: "Work is defined as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation may be physical and/or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also includes effective supervision and direction of work. It even includes part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity. All persons engaged in 'work' as defined above are workers. Persons who are engaged in cultivation or milk production even solely for domestic consumption are also treated as workers. Reference period for determining a person as worker and non-worker is one year preceding the date of enumeration." (GOI, 2001a).

¹¹Interview with the author in Shimla, October 11 2010.

¹²Interview with the author in Bangalore, February 23 2011. SCs have reserved slots in government positions, but these quotas are usually not filled, allegedly because of a lack of qualified candidates.

¹³Interview with the author in Bangalore, February 23 2011.

¹⁴The census of India defines literate in the following way: "A person who works on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share is regarded as an agricultural labourer. She or he has no risk in the cultivation, but merely works on another person's land for wages. An agricultural labourer has no right of lease or contract on land on which She/he works" (GOI, 2001 a).

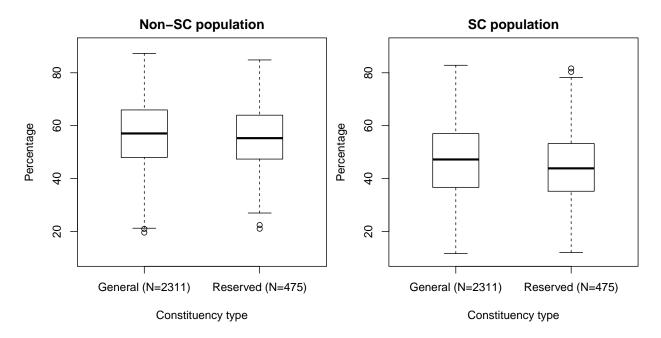
stituencies, I look at the outcome variables separately for SCs and non-SCs. If SCs had worked more for SCs than for other communities we should see a more rapid rate of growth for SCs in reserved constituencies than SCs in general constituencies.

Some descriptive analysis

The full data of literacy rates in the 2001 census shows that there was a small difference in the overall literacy rates in reserved and general constituencies. In general constituencies the average literacy rate was 54.7%, as compared to 52.7% in reserved constituencies. The difference in means is statistically significant (Welch's unpaired t-test, p < 0.01).

There is no statistically significant difference, however, in the percent workers or the percent agricultural laborers in reserved and general constituencies according to the 2001 census. In both types of constituencies there was an average percent of 40% workers and about 12% agricultural laborers.

Figure 8.1: Distribution of the literacy rate among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies in 2001

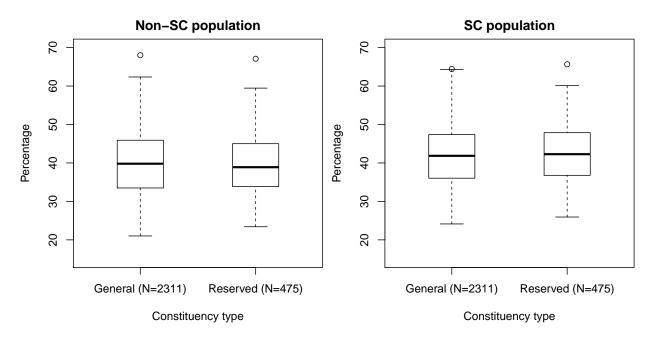


The difference in literacy rate is larger if we look at at the non-SCs and SCs separately. Figure 8.1 shows the distribution of the literacy rates among non-SCs and SCs in general constituencies and constituencies reserved for SCs. There is about a one percentage point difference in the average literacy rates for non-SCs (p = 0.1). Among SCs living in reserved constituencies, the average literacy rate was 44.2%, while the average literacy rate among SCs living in general constituencies was 46.9%. This difference is highly statistically significant (p < 0.01).

The values for percent workers and percent agricultural laborers look quite different for SCs and non-SCs, but not so different across the constituencies. Figure 8.2 shows the percent works among SCs and non-SCs in reserved and general constituencies. As we can see, among non-SCs there were about 40% workers across both types of constituencies and among SCs there were about 42% workers across both types of constituencies. Thus, in both types of constituencies there were about 2 percentage points more workers among SCs. This difference is mainly due to more women working among SCs.

The difference is larger for agricultural laborers. As we can see in Figure 8.3, across the constituencies in the sample, an average of 20% of SCs worked as agricultural laborers according to the 2001 census, while only about 10% of non-SCs worked as agricultural laborers. The range of the data is also quite different: In one constituency 53.4% of SCs were registered as agricultural laborers, while the maximum was 30.9% for non-SCs.

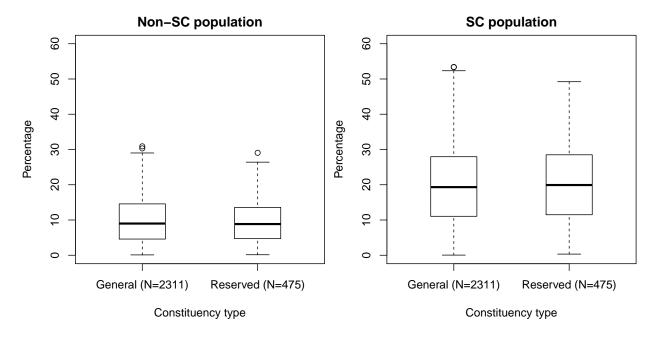
Figure 8.2: Distribution of the percent workers among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies in 2001



These figures show that in 2001, the literacy is lower in reserved than in general constituencies, while there are small differences in the percent workers and there percent agricultural laborers.

One should be careful about drawing conclusions from looking at this data from 2001. Constituencies were chosen to be reserved in the 1970s on the basis of having a high proportion of SCs in the population. When this selection took place, the literacy rates were not only much lower across the board, but also lower in reserved constituencies than in general constituencies. Figure 8.4 shows the change over time for non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies. Among non-SCs, the literacy rates in general constituencies was

Figure 8.3: Distribution of the percent agricultural laborers among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies in 2001



31.4% on average in 1971, and only 29.7% on average in reserved constituencies. Among SCs, an average of 16.1% were literate in general constituencies versus 13.4% in reserved constituencies. Both of these differences in means are highly statistically significant (p < 0.01).

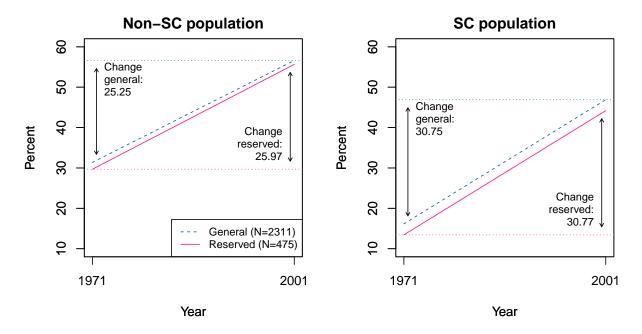
The change over time, however, was almost the same in general and reserved constituencies. The literacy rate of non-SCs increased with 25.25 and 25.97 percentage points on average in general and reserved constituencies, and this difference of 0.72 percentage points is not statistically significant. Similarly, the literacy rate among SCs increased with 30.75 and 30.77 percentage points in general and reserved constituencies, and this difference of 0.02 percentage points is also statistically insignificant.

Looking at changes over time in percent workers and percent agricultural laborers also shows very small differences between general and reserved constituencies: There simply does not seem to be a structural difference in the development patterns across constituency types. However, these patterns could be biased. In the next section I therefore look at changes over time on matched data.

Matching models

To reduce as much as possible of the initial difference between reserved and general constituencies, I reduced the sample to a set of 440 matched pairs of constituencies. These pairs were identified to be very similar a the time of the assignment of reservations in the 1970s. A description of how the pairs were selected and balance statistics for the matches

Figure 8.4: Change in literacy rate among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies 1971–2001



is provided in Chapter 3. The matched pairs includes constituencies that used to be both reserved and general before 1974, but that were *as if* randomly assigned to be reserved in the 1970s, and had a very similar socio-economic profile at that time.

Table 8.1: Matching estimates of differences in development in reserved and general constituencies

Difference est.	Standard Error	P-value
-0.27	0.41	0.52
-0.08	0.51	0.87
0.27	0.40	0.50
0.25	0.46	0.58
0.19	0.56	0.73
-0.03	1.08	0.98
	-0.27 -0.08 0.27 0.25 0.19	-0.08 0.51 0.27 0.40 0.25 0.46 0.19 0.56

N = 2786, and number of matched pairs is 440

Table 8.1 reports the matching estimates for six different outcome variables. The first reported variable is the difference in the change in the non-SC literacy rate in reserved and general constituencies 1971–2001. In other words, the estimate takes the average change in literacy 1971-2001 in reserved constituencies (which was 25.8 percentage points) and subtracts the average change in literacy 1971–2001 in general constituencies (which was 26 percentage points). The difference of 0.27 percentage points suggests that the literacy rate

Figure 8.5: Change in literacy rate among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies 1971–2001, on matched data

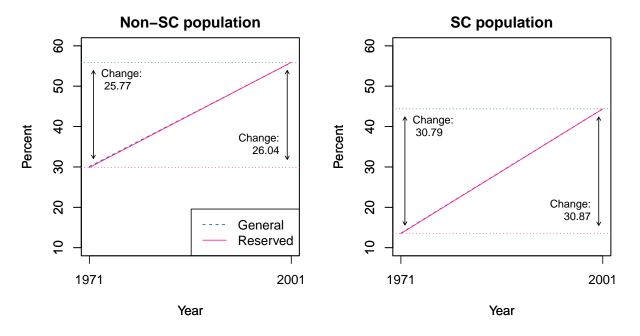


Figure 8.6: Change in percent workers among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies 1971–2001, on matched data

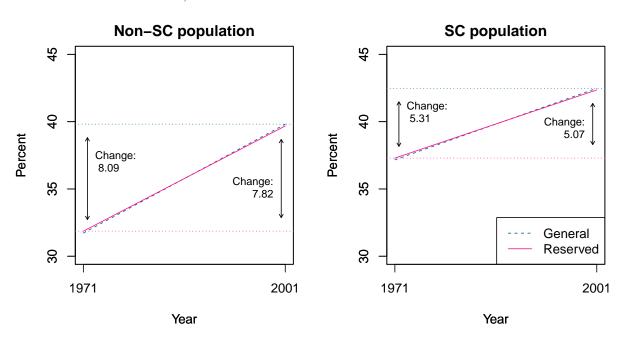
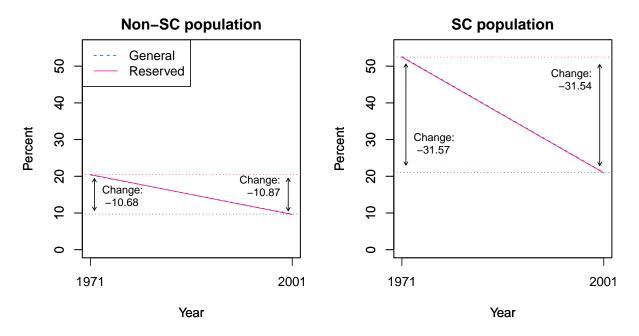


Figure 8.7: Change in percent agricultural laborers among non-SCs and SCs in general and reserved constituencies 1971–2001, on matched data



among non-SCs in general constituencies grew 0.27 percentage points more on average than the literacy rate among non-SCs in reserved constituencies. This means that the average treatment effect of the treated (ATT) of reservations on the non-SC literacy rate is -0.27 percentage points. This difference is statistically insignificant. The number is also very small in terms of real-life implications: With an overall change in literacy over time of more than 25 percentage point, a difference in change of 0.27 percentage point is not a large difference.¹⁵

The second variable presented in the table is the difference in the growth in literacy among SCs in reserved and general constituencies. Once again we see an estimate that is close to 0 and statistically indistinguishable from 0. The third and fourth rows show the difference in change in the percent workers, and the fifth an sixth row show the difference in change in percent agricultural laborers. Once again all the difference estimates are small and insignificant.

For all of the variables, the null estimates are also precise enough to rule out all but substantively minimal effects. For example, the confidence interval for the change in the change in non-SC literacy rate is -1 to 0.5. The changes over time in this matched dataset are illustrated in Figures 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7.

¹⁵I am presenting first differences to compare the change over time in general and reserved constituencies. Comparing the actual values in reserved and general constituencies in 2001 also yield statistically and substantively insignificant findings.

8.4 Robustness checks

While I have only presented variations on three outcome variables in this paper, the average change from 1971 to 2001 is not different in reserved or general constituencies for any of the variables in the primary census abstract data, including the number of people involved in farming and industry, the gender gap in literacy and occupations, and changes in population size of the constituency.¹⁶

Table 8.2: Matching estimates of the difference in literacy rates and percent non-working people in general and reserved constituencies (reduced sample)

	Difference est.	St. Error	P-value
Change in non-SC literacy rate, non-SCs	-0.33	0.80	0.68
Change in literacy rate, SCs	-0.19	0.93	0.84
Change in percent workers, non-SCs	0.60	0.84	0.48
Change in percent workers, SCs	0.49	0.90	0.59
Change in percent agr. labor, non-SCs	-0.42	0.99	0.67
Change in percent agr. labor, SCs	-0.36	2.11	0.87

Note: The data is 240 constituencies that used to be general before 1974, and of which 120 became reserved after 1974. They are matched on district, parliamentary constituency and percent SC.

There are many ways of checking the robustness of these findings. In this section I will briefly present three such robustness checks. First, there could still be bias in the starting point of comparison in our matched pairs in the previous section, since the matched pairs used included both previously reserved and general constituencies. To check for that I also checked for the development patterns in the smaller set of matched pairs, the 120 pairs of constituencies that all used to be general before 1974. The procedure for selecting these pairs and balance statistics are provided in Chapter 3. Table 8.2 shows the matching output for the same variables as were reported in Table 8.1. As is clear in the table, none of the outcome variables come out statistically significant or with substantively large differences.

Another important robustness check is to look at variation by state. In this case, there is more variation in the estimates, but the sample sizes are also smaller. Figure 8.8 shows the difference in the change in non-SC and SC literacy rates over time in reserved and general constituencies. As is apparent in the figure, the differences between reserved and general constituencies are small at the state level too, and none of the differences are statistically significant. The same holds for the other outcome variables.

Finally, is this just a question of politicians being more likely to work for SCs if the majority of voters are SCs? Figure 8.9 shows the change in literacy among SCs and non-SCs in reserved and general constituencies plotted against the percent SCs in the population of each constituency. These are the literacy rates for the 440 matched pairs plotted against the per-

¹⁶The change in population size is important because the population size of a constituency is strongly negatively correlated with the change in literacy.

Uttar Pradesh (N =144)

West Bengal (N =84)

P=0.21

P=0.98

2

4

0

Diff. in change over time (SC-GEN)

-2

Non-SC literacy rate SC literacy rate P=0.81 P=0.8 Andhra Pradesh (N =72) Andhra Pradesh (N =72) Bihar (N =80) P=0.09 Bihar (N =80) P=0.61 Guiarat (N =24) P=0.98 Gujarat (N =24) P=0.73 Haryana (N =34) P=0.45 Haryana (N =34) P=0.72 P=0.87 Himachal Pradesh (N =28) Himachal Pradesh (N =28) P=0.65 Karnataka (N =56) P=0.73 P=0.85 Karnataka (N =56) P=0.78 Kerala (N =24) P=0.63 Kerala (N =24) P=0.5 Madhya Pradesh (N =74) P=0.94 Madhya Pradesh (N =74) P=1 Maharashtra (N =30) P=0.95 Maharashtra (N =30) Orissa (N =42) P=0.82 Orissa (N =42) P=0.23 Punjab (N =50) P=0.81 Punjab (N =50) P=0.93 P=0.6 Rajasthan (N =62) P=0.99 Rajasthan (N =62) P=0.27 P=0.29 Tamil Nadu (N =76) Tamil Nadu (N =76)

P=0.43

P=0.73

-2

0

Diff. in change over time (SC-GEN)

Figure 8.8: State-wise change in literacy rates in matched reserved and general constituencies

cent SC in each constituency. What we see in the plot is that there is no correlation between the percent SCs and the change in literacy rates in reserved or general constituencies.¹⁷ As we saw in Figure 8.5, the literacy rate among SCs increased considerably between 1971 and 2001. What the matching estimates show is simply that the rate of this increase has been about the same in reserved and general constituencies, and what Figure 8.9 shows is that the rate of increase has been about the same in places with a small and a large SC-community.

Uttar Pradesh (N =144)

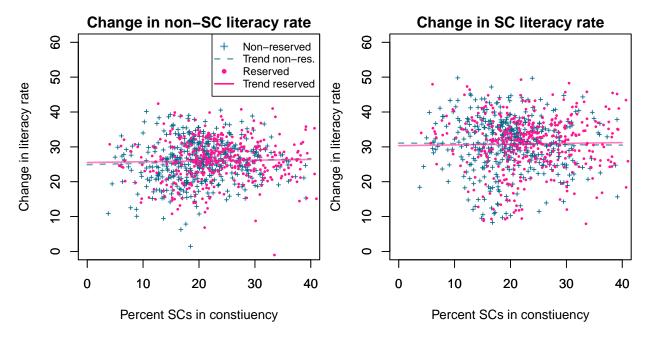
West Bengal (N =84)

8.5 Why SC politicians are similar to other politicians

The data analysis above shows quite unequivocally that there was no systematic difference in the development patterns in reserved and general constituencies in India between the 1970s and 2001. This might seem like a surprising finding for those that either expected to see SCs doing better in reserved constituencies, or that SC politicians in general did a poorer job than others.

¹⁷There is similarly no correlated between the change in non-working people and the SC-percent in the population.

Figure 8.9: Change in literacy rates in matched reserved and general constituencies, plotted against the proportion of SCs in each constituency



When conducted interviews with politicians, bureaucrats and political activists across India in 2010 and 2011, some of the questions I asked them were about how politicians affect the development patterns in their constituencies. Throughout my interviews the answers were surprisingly consistent. My respondents thought (i) that politicians do have the power to enhance development in their constituencies (although through favors rather than policy). (ii) SC quotas have not led to more development for SCs because SC politicians do not work more for SC interests than other politicians do. (iii) SCs politicians might want to work more for SC interests, but electoral incentives and party control prevent them from doing so.

The first point about whether politicians can enhance development in their constituencies is important because it determines whether it is worthwhile to study the effect of politics on development. According to my respondents, MLAs play a crucial role in terms of enhancing the socio-economic development for their constituencies. As we saw in Chapter 4, politicians spend most of their time trying to help constituents out with their various complaints and concerns, and they are believed to be important for the development in their constituencies. This supports the idea that we should except to find constituency level effects of who is elected to political office.

Have SC MLAs channeled more funds and favors to SCs than other MLAs? My respondents did not think so. I was repeatedly told that SC politicians follow the party line and will channel funds to those who support the party. Several bureaucrats I talk to claimed that there was no systematic difference in the work of SC MLAs and other MLAs. One bu-

reaucrat told me that SC MLAs used to be less efficient than other politicians because they were less educated, but that there no longer was any difference between them. He claimed that SC politicians try to work for everyone in their constituencies in order to gain support from as many voters as possible.¹⁸ A local SC politician in UP told me that he would really like to work for the SC community, but that he realized that the higher up in the political system he climbed, the more he would have to follow party line.¹⁹

Through the responses it became clear that political parties have an enormous influence on the actions of politicians in India. This is not obvious, considering that political parties in India often are referred to as weak and disorganized (e.g. see deSouza and Sridharan, 2006). In a recent paper, however, Chhibber, Jensenius and Suryanarayan (2012) argue that the strength of parties varies considerably across Indian states and that some parties are very powerful. It is also generally the case that the party leadership decides who gets to run for election using the party label. This means that the party leadership will not select a candidate who they think will diverge from the party line. I often heard during my interviews that SC politicians would never be given the opportunity to run for office if they were not palatable to the party leadership. Similarly, an SC activist in Himachal Pradesh told me that SC politicians are picked by political parties because they are loyal to the party, and that once they get to power they forget about their caste and work according to the strategy of the party.²⁰ One SC politician in Uttar Pradesh told me that "[a]ll the parties choose very weak SC politicians, if the politician gets too vocal they will kick that person out."²¹ Similarly, an SC politician in Himachal Pradesh told me that he had wanted to focus his campaign on working for SC interests, but that his party refused to let him run until he changed the campaign to follow party line.²²

Electoral incentives was the other main reason given for why SC politicians do not work for SC interests. SCs are generally a minority group in SC constituencies, and I was repeatedly told that an SC who ran on an SC profile would not win an election because he would lose the non-SC votes. One SC politician in UP said "I have to work for all, for the majority of the voters, how would I otherwise win the election?" Another UP politician explained to me that the goal of reservations is to have the needs of SCs represented, but that his job as a politician was to work for everyone in his constituency. He praised reservations for having brought himself, the son of a poor worker, into a position of power, but also seemed sad that he was not able to do more to help the SC community because only a few of his voters were SCs. A senior SC politicians in Himachal Pradesh even told me that SC politicians tend to do less for SCs than other politicians because they are scared of losing non-SCs votes if

¹⁸Interview in Solan, October 15 2011.

¹⁹Interview in Meerut, February 5 2011.

²⁰Interview in Shimla, October 11 2010.

²¹Interview in Lucknow, November 21 2010.

²²Interview in Shimla, October 11 2010.

²³Interview in Lucknow, November 21 2010.

²⁴Interview in Meerut, February 5 2011.

they seem "too SC". 25 The electoral incentives also affect who gets nominated by parties, since parties will not want to nominate a candidate who they think will lose an election.

There was also variation in what the politicians I talked to saw as their responsibility once in office. While it is easy to jump to the conclusion that SC politicians will feel responsible for working for the interests of SCs in their area, this cannot be taken for granted. Most of the politicians I talked to proclaimed that their responsibility once in office was to further the interests of their voters, irrespective of their caste. In fact, not a single SC politician I talked to claimed to work more for the SC community than for other groups among their voters.

From these interviews it seemed clear that SCs politicians do not (or do not wish to say) that they work actively for the SC community. SCs politicians are limited in their actions both by their political party and by the wish to be re-elected. The SC politicians who get to power in reserved constituencies are the ones who are willing to follow the line of the party leadership and work for non-SC voters. They might be slightly more concerned about the SC community than other politicians, but among those I interviewed, they saw their main responsibility as working for anyone who had voted for them, not for the SC community. In other words, we cannot assume that a minority politicians necessarily will act in the interest of their group, since they become agents of their parties in the same way as all other politicians.

8.6 Conclusion

In literature about minority representation is often assumed that increasing a group's representation will translate into tangible policy outcomes that benefit the represented group. This has definitely been the expectation many have had of quotas for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India. According to the Constituent Assembly Debates, quotas were put in place to 'help' the SC community, and they were extended with the justification that SCs had still not reached the same level of socio-economic development as other groups. Part of the reason for this expectation is that politicians in India serve an important role as local 'fixers'. They use their contacts to attract resources to their constituency, they put pressure on the bureaucracy to implement existing schemes, they try to influence who gets hired in governmental positions and who gets access to schools. If SC politicians have used these resources systematically in a way that benefits the SC community for 30 years, this should become visible in development indicators at the constituency level. In this Chapter I have looked at several development indicators and found no differences in the development patterns among SCs in reserved and general constituencies. These findings hold up to a number of robustness checks, including looking at state-level estimates and reducing the sample to places that were general before 1974.

My findings show that SC politicians have not actively worked to benefit the SC community. Using evidence from interviews with politicians and bureaucrats across India, I argue

²⁵Interview in Shimla, October 10 2010.

that this is because SCs are a minority of the electorate, because parties control candidate nominations, and because SC politicians see it as their role to work for all their voters irrespective of their caste group.

These findings do not, however, preclude the possibility that SCs would have been substantively worse off without quotas. The SC community in India has developed at a faster pace than other communities since 1971, and this could be because the mere presence of SCs in the legislative assemblies has helped to humanize the SC community in the eyes of other politicians, has made it more politically correct to fight for the rights of SCs or has shifted the policy debate in a pro-poor direction. Thus, in a similar way to how the presence of women in politics in many countries of the world has led to a gradual change in the policy debate, the presence of SCs might have done the same. Such diffuse or indirect substantive effects are hard to measure because the real counterfactual case is not a general constituency, but an India without reservations.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have explored the effects of electoral quotas for the former untouchables, the Scheduled Castes (SCs), in state assemblies in India. My motivation for studying these quotas was both empirical and theoretical. Empirical in that there have been few studies of this large and extensive quota system and I was curious about its effects, and theoretical in that this quota system is one example of many attempts to guarantee the representation of under-represented groups in politics. Throughout the chapters in this work I have done my best to draw empirical conclusions based on quantitative data as well as interviews. I have tried to stay away from the many normative issues that arose from the findings. In this conclusion I will take a step away from the details of my empirical analysis and try to first make an overall evaluation of the quota system for SCs on the basis of my findings, and then try to engage some of the many difficult normative issues that relate to these findings. In the last section I then summarize some of the lessons learnt from the case of electoral quotas for SCs and discuss some of the implications for minority representation in India and other countries.

9.1 Evaluating electoral quotas for SC

Electoral quotas for SCs in India came into effect in 1950. Since then SCs have had reserved positions in state assemblies and the national parliament proportional to their share of the population. While many electoral quotas, such as candidate quotas or party quotas, do not necessarily lead to a major increase in the representation of the intended beneficiaries, reserved seats have the advantage that they guarantee a specific numeric representation. In other words, these reservations have been successfully implemented in the sense that SCs have held the political positions in reserved constituencies. But what else has come out of this extensive quota system?

The empirical analysis in this work has at least four main take-away messages. The first is about political power, because it is clear that electoral quotas for SCs have given representatives of the SC community more political power than they would probably otherwise

have achieved. By guaranteeing their political presence, quotas have allowed SC politicians to gradually gain political experience and build political networks. It is evident from looking at longitudinal data that SC politicians started out as 'weaker' candidates than others, with less education, less experience, and a lower capacity to mobilize voters through party networks. Over time, however, SC politicians seem to have become more qualified – both in terms of their educational profile and their political track-records – and we see that they tend to be members of the same political parties as other politicians, have similar re-election rates, and hold positions of power in state cabinets. They also claim to be respected in their work: SC politicians I talked to said that as they gained a political reputation people would not dare to treat them badly. Power clearly trumps caste differences.

Considering that untouchability was a very strong social boundary, the presence of SCs in the political elite can be seen as a major achievement in itself. But the success is only partial. The goal of the drafters of the Indian constitution was for quotas to be in place only for 10 years in order to integrate SCs into mainstream politics and for SCs to subsequently compete in open elections with other groups. Yet, after more than 60 years of quotas, SCs still do not seem to be competitive enough to win open elections in large numbers. Looking at self-reported asset declarations, SC politicians that ran for election between 2004 and 2009 were much poorer than other politicians and, considering that money is important for nomination and election in Indian politics, SC politicians are at a disadvantage. It is also a reality that SCs hardly ever get nominated or elected in general constituencies, even when running for re-election in a newly de-reserved constituency. Reservations have therefore not achieved its goal of making SC politicians competitive in open elections, even after more than 60 years.

One of the discussions at the time of independence was about whether to grant SCs quotas in cabinets. The Constituent Assembly decided not to do so, but instead to encourage Governors to ensure the representation of SCs. The presence of SCs in cabinet positions is, therefore, an interesting indicator of their political power. As we saw in Chapter 5, SCs have held a large share of cabinet positions, although consistently less than their share in state assemblies. They have also often been given cabinet portfolios that are seen as unimportant. The slight under-representation of SCs in cabinet positions seem to reflect on the general impression that SC politicians have been slightly less powerful than other politicians, but not dramatically so. Comparing the presence of SCs to the presence of women can serve as a reminder that SCs have gotten a much larger share of real political power than other under-represented groups.

The second main empirical finding is that SC politicians seem to have been performing very similarly to other politicians, and that there is no systematic difference in the development patterns in reserved and general constituencies. Considering that a large share of voters, many political commentators and many politicians are convinced that quotas are about creating development for SCs — and that another large share of them believe that development has suffered in reserved areas because SC politicians are not influential — it is quite striking to see that there is no overall difference in the literacy rates, employment rates or the type of employment in reserved and general constituencies. SC politicians have

clearly not done such a bad job that development has suffered overall and they have not privileged their own co-ethnics, at least not enough to see it at an aggregate level even after 30 years.

Looking at the history and design of the quota system, this finding is neither surprising nor disappointing. SC politicians in India are elected to reserved constituencies where the majority of their voters are non-SC, they are members of the same political parties, and face the same bureaucratic constraints. In other words, they are faced with the same incentives and constraints as all other politicians. Those SC politicians who wish to work exclusively for SC interests would neither be able to secure a nomination for a major party or be able to win a majority of the votes in their constituencies. The way the quota system is designed, therefore, brings to power politicians who are willing to be co-opted into mainstream politics and behave like mainstream politicians.

To some, this might seem like a failed quota system, because it has not guaranteed the substantive representation of the SC community. It can also be seen as a success, since it has successfully integrated SCs into mainstream politics. An important theoretical takeaway from these findings is that we cannot take it for granted that minorities or women will necessarily work for their respective groups' interests. While majority-group politicians are usually assumed to be incentive-driven, minority representatives are often thought to be more group-oriented in their motivations. My interviews with SC politicians showed that they saw themselves as much as representatives of all their voters as other politicians and that they did not see it as their task to focus their efforts on working for SC rights. At the same time, politicians might not be actively trying to substantively benefit their own community and might still do so indirectly. Politicians might be shifting the policy debate in the legislature in the preferred direction of their co-ethnics, simply because of their shared experience with members of their own group. My analysis compared the development in reserved constituencies to very similar general constituencies. It could, therefore, only pick up on constituency-specific effects. As a result, it is still possible that SC politicians have influenced state policies towards SCs, but if so, it seems to have happened in an indirect manner and not because SC politicians have actively tried to do so.

The third major take-away from my analysis is that while several members of the political elite that I talked to seemed somewhat biased against SC politicians, voters report the same level of satisfaction with SCs and other politicians. In my own survey from western Uttar Pradesh there was also a clear pattern that voters who had lived in a reserved constituency for a long time evaluated SC politicians as more hardworking, effective and honest than other politicians, as well as much more likely to care about the poor and about caste discrimination. According to the same survey, respondents were also less likely to report poor treatment of SCs in areas that had been reserved for a long time. Although this survey was limited to only 20 villages in two districts, these finding suggest that SC reservations might have helped reduce caste boundaries and caste discrimination. This is an exciting finding and an important avenue for future research.

The last conclusion from my empirical work was perhaps the most surprising to me. Going into my field work, I expected to find that that SCs thought positively about quotas for SCs

and that non-SCs would be more negative. It surprised me to find that most people outside of the political profession knew little about the electoral quota system and did not care much about it, that people working in politics were for the most part positive, and that SC activists were strongly against them. Several upper caste bureaucrats and politicians told me that reservations are important because they aim to counter-act centuries of discrimination and exclusion. Their arguments were similar to those of upper caste politicians at the time of the drafting of the constitution, talking of representation for under-represented groups as a democratic good and SCs as a deprived community in need of the help offered by a benevolent elite. It is perhaps partly these kinds of comments — that often sound patronizing — that make some SC activists perceive the reservation system negatively. Among activists I talked to, some argued that quotas have prevented a revolution among the lower classes by giving a false impression of SCs being included in the political system. Others emphasized the issue that the design of the quotas have prevented 'real' representatives of the SCs to get to power. These differences in opinion reflect the political disagreements about the purpose and design of the quota system of the 1930s and 1940s and serve as a reminder that the design of these quotas was the result of a political struggle between people with different ideals regarding how representational democracy should look.

As mentioned in the introduction, Galanter (1979, p. 450) called the quotas a "partial and costly success," and McMillan (2005, p. 320) concluded that "[t]he clearest direct effect of electoral reservation is to provide a guaranteed minimum number of legislators from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes" and that "[a]s such, electoral reservation becomes little more than a scheme of political trickle-down, where the substantive interests of the socio-economically disadvantaged are served by symbolic representation, with the hope that, somehow, this will lead to a more equitable society" McMillan (2005, p. 327). My conclusions are a little more positive than those of these authors. As just argued, I also believe that the quotas for SCs have only been a partial success, because SCs are still not electorally competitive, but it has not been a very costly one. My evidence also supports McMillan's claim that SC representatives have not actively worked for the substantive interests of their group, but that the quota system was not designed in a way that would allow them to do so, and that this therefore can not be expected from them. The substantive interests of SCs have been represented by political parties and the SC community has seen a much more rapid rate of growth than other groups in India. This quota system was designed to break caste boundaries and I think it has been very successful in doing so.

9.2 The normative debate

Although the discussion about quotas in this dissertation has focused on various empirical aspects of the policy and its consequences, the analyses inevitably raise a number of normative questions. In this section, I focus on some of these questions.

The most pressing one, to my mind, is the one arising out of the discussion in the previous section: What is a 'real' SC representative? To try to think about this, it is useful

to return to the discussion about representation in Hannah Pitkin's seminal book from 1972. Through her work she explores and discusses several different views of representation that she encountered in political philosophy and political science writings. The first interpretation she discusses is a formalistic view of representation, that "a representative is someone who has been authorized to act" (Pitkin, 1972, pp. 38-39). This view "defines representing in terms of a transaction that takes place at the outset, before the actual representing begins. To the extent that he has been authorized, within the limits of his authority, anything that a man does is representing [...] There can be no such thing as representing well or badly; either he represents or he does not." (Pitkin, 1972, p. 39).

The opposite of this formalistic "authorization" view, is the "accountability" view of representation, which Pitkin (1972, p. 55) thinks has become the most important aspect of representational thinking in discussions of democracy and legitimacy. The accountability view, she argues, is a response to the authorization view and is often talked about as "real" representation: that representatives have to be answerable to their constituents through some mechanism, such as elections. Representation can also be understood as that of "standing for" someone else or something else. This is what she calls descriptive representation, representation by being similar to the represented in some way. In some sense, SC politicians who have come to power through quotas are descriptive representatives of the SC community. But theorists of descriptive representation tend not to focus on the attributes of individual politicians and, rather, talk about whether a whole assembly is representative of the population. This is because they believe the purpose of the descriptive representative is to voice opinions from all groups in society in order to put pressure on the executive to rule with everyone's best interests in mind. The individual politician, Pitkin (1972, pp. 75-66) argues, can therefore not be thought of as a descriptive representative and it makes little sense to correlate the characteristics of each single politician with the characteristics of their constituents.

The confusion about the representativeness of SC politicians arises from the fact that they are chosen on the basis of their descriptive identities as SCs, but are held accountable in elections by a majority of non-SC voters. They are doing their job by substantively representing all their constituents in a similar way as other politicians. Had they paid much more attention to the SCs in their constituencies, they would have rendered non-SCs in reserved constituencies unrepresented.

This leads directly into another question: is descriptive representation necessarily a good thing in itself? Is there a point in electing SC politicians, women, or other representatives chosen because of some descriptive characteristic, if they do not pay special attention to the needs of their group? Are female politicians good representatives of women if they do not have children? Is a wealthy SC politician a good representative of SC interests? In Chapter 8, I argue that I find no evidence of a direct link between descriptive and substantive representation for SC politicians at the constituency-level, nor do I think that most SC representatives actively work for the interests of SCs in India's legislative assemblies. SC politicians are often not typical members of the SC community, since they are often wealthy, highly-educated and have never experienced discrimination because of their caste. Yet, I

still believe their presence can serve an important role. Even if SC politicians are not particularly representative of their group and might not be actively working for the interest of that group, descriptive representation might serve an important role in affecting political deliberation and policy choices indirectly, by affecting the attitudes toward the group among other legislators and by making these other politicians accustomed to respecting the opinions of a group they might otherwise have chosen to ignore.

Another important question is whether SCs would have been better off if the quota system had been designed differently? This was the main point of disagreement about quotas in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the SC political leader Dr Ambedkar was fighting an electoral system in which SCs would select their own representatives. At different points of the discussions he suggested reserved seats with separate electorates (only SCs could vote for SC candidates), primaries where only SCs could elect candidates to run for election in reserved areas, veto powers for SCs in certain matters, and a requirement of a minimum vote share among the SC community in reserved areas. All of these are systems in which SC representatives would be answerable to an SC electorate. What he did not want was a system where SC politicians were answerable to a non-SC electorate, which is the case for SC politicians in India today.

Gandhi and the members of the Congress party were opposed to group-wise representation, because they thought it would result in a more divided society. The discussions of group-wise representation for Muslims had ended up in a bitter political struggle that resulted in the division of India and the creation of Pakistan and as a result they were vehemently against any policy that could have a divisive effect. This mood was dominant among the members of the Constituent Assembly. The elite at the time would not allow it. It is impossible to know what would have happened if SCs had been granted separate electorates. It is likely that there would have been more of a political mobilization of the SC community at an earlier point in time and that there would have been more parties running on an SC platform. It is also likely, however, that SCs would have been more excluded from the ruling elite and would not have been part of the ruling coalitions and cabinets in the way that they have been. SC politicians might have fought more for SC rights, but they might have been less successful in being heard because they were still a minority group in the legislature. In other words, SCs might not have benefited any more in substantive terms from the quota system they wanted.

The reality is also that after Gandhi's hunger strike against separate electorates in 1932, a system in which SC politicians were answerable to an SC electorate was no longer a viable political option. The real choice was between reserved seats and no reserved seats. The question is, therefore, whether SCs would have been better off without reserved seats. Based on my analysis in this dissertation I would argue that SCs have been much better off with reserved seats than without them. It is unlikely that many SCs would have been elected in open elections and the presence of SCs in positions of power have habituated the ruling elite to including SCs in decisions of power. If we look to the political situation for women in India, it is clear that political power for under-represented groups does not necessarily gradually increase over time. The representation of women in state assemblies and parliament has

hardly increased over time, even though there are many qualified women who could run for political office. The fact that there is evidence of SCs gaining political experience, reducing caste bias, and gaining real political power shows that the quotas have been beneficial for the SC community, even if the representatives do not actively work for SC rights.

Another important normative question is whether it is a good thing for a constituent assembly to limit the democratic choice of future voters by implementing policies such as electoral quotas. In a first-past the post electoral system it is up to the majority of the people in a constituency to choose its political representative. When quotas are enforced, voters are severely restricted in their vote choice and also hindered from offering themselves as political candidates. It is interesting to note that by restricting the voters' choices in this way we actually see substantively more women winning elections, as well as fewer politicians with criminal records and large fortunes. The quotas have, therefore, brought to power politicians that are not only more representative of the average SC, but also more representative of the average non-SC Indian.

A clear drawback of these quotas, however, is that they have given power to one fairly arbitrary social group at the cost of other groups. SCs are an artificially created group of people who have less and less in common over time as some of them enter the middle and upper classes and as caste-based discrimination becomes less common. SCs are also not the only under-represented and marginalized segment of Indian society. As more and more groups demand safeguards, and more and more political positions and jobs are parsed out to different sub-categories of a population, the situation does become more and more intolerable for those communities that do not qualify for special privileges. In the case of quotas in jobs and educational positions, this has therefore resulted in a backlash from upper castes who feel they lose their opportunities to get the societal positions they aspire toward. The distribution of safeguards is a slippery slope where it is hard to draw a line for who should be beneficiaries. As Galanter (1984) describes in much detail, India has slowly sunk down in a quagmire of reservation policies that have made many citizens feel badly treated. This is one of the many costs of using political tools such as reservations to engineer the representation of groups in politics and other arenas. The case of SCs is clearer than that of other groups because of the intensity of discrimination this group has faced historically, but as the differences between SCs and other groups grow smaller, the reservation policies become less and less justifiable.

So how should the future look for the reservation system in India? In 1928, the Nehru report concluded that the best way of safeguarding the interests of all minorities in India was to have a proportional voting system. The proposal of a PR system was raised repeatedly during the discussions of the Indian constitution, but was rejected on the grounds that it would be too complicated for Indian voters, of which most were illiterate and unfamiliar with elections. Those arguments were valid in the 1940s, but they are no longer valid today. Indian voters are now accustomed to the practise of voting, they are fairly well-informed regarding political options, and literacy rates have risen at a steady pace since independence. SCs, Muslims, women and other under-represented groups might not be competitive in a majoritarian electoral system with single-member electoral districts, but

they would be competitive in multi-member constituencies. Moving to a PR voting system would, therefore, be the best way of ensuring fair representation of more diverse interests in the India of the future.

9.3 Lessons learnt

The case of quotas for SCs in India is informative. Not only is it an extensive quota system that has been in place for a very long time, but it was also meant to benefit a group that has suffered horrendous social injustice in the past. This case is also interesting because it highlights the importance of the design of electoral systems. Those involved in determining the design of the quota system were members of the dominant elite of the time and they, therefore, chose a system that would help to integrate what they saw as a marginalized segment of their own community rather than incentivizing the group to mobilize as a separate community. The strategy was successful in doing what it was designed to do, but it has been criticized heavily by several of the political leaders of the SC community for being designed that way.

It can be tempting to expect a lot from a quota system. We want quotas to empower groups, create substantive benefits for the intended beneficiaries at the same time as not hurting other groups. To some extent politics is a zero-sum game, though, and we cannot expect an intervention in the electoral system such as quotas to have no negative consequences or limitations. There might not be a good way of designing electoral institutions that both integrate groups and give each group the voice they want. Proportional electoral systems are better at including a variety of interests, but do not have the centripetal effect of forcing groups to create coalitions across caste boundaries. Each institutional design has advantages and disadvantages and there are clear tradeoffs between the consequences of different electoral rules.

At the same time as discussing quotas for SCs, the Constituent Assembly was considering giving quotas to women and religious minorities. These other groups were not granted quotas and remain politically under-represented even today. Had SCs not been given quotas, it is unlikely that they would have been well represented in politics. Quotas are a crude measure that counter-acts the unrepresentative nature of plurality voting systems. Changing the electoral system might be a more effective way of improving the diversity among elected representatives. Given a plurality electoral system, however, quotas may be a necessary way to bring under-represented groups to power.

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