

Chapter 3

Evolution of Voting Behaviour since Independence

In this chapter, several aspects of aggregate voting behaviour are examined. The basic trend in the evolution of aggregate voting behaviour will be grasped on the basis of a statistical analysis of the Lok Sabha election data. In the first chapter, the evolution of Indian party politics was described. In this chapter, I will show quantitatively the evolution of Indian politics on the basis of aggregate voting behaviour, through Lok Sabha election data. The results of the quantitative analysis correspond, by and large, to the description in the first chapter. In addition, a rough sketch of the regional diversity of aggregate voting behaviour will be made by examining voter turnout by State. It is important to understand the regional differences in political behaviour in a country that is as diverse as India.

1. Periodisation of Contemporary Politics Based on Lok Sabha Elections

In this section, I will try to periodise contemporary political history based on Lok Sabha election data. This periodisation is important for understanding political dynamism after Independence. The data set, which is reorganised on the basis of Bhalla and Singh's district data, as well as raw data from the Lok Sabha elections, is examined to discern continuity and discontinuity in Indian political development. I would like to examine the percentage of voter turnout, the percentage of Congress votes polled, the number of candidates per one million voters, and the percentage of votes polled by the first and second candidates. For the number of candidates and voter turnout for India as a whole, the data set to be used is based on the boundaries of

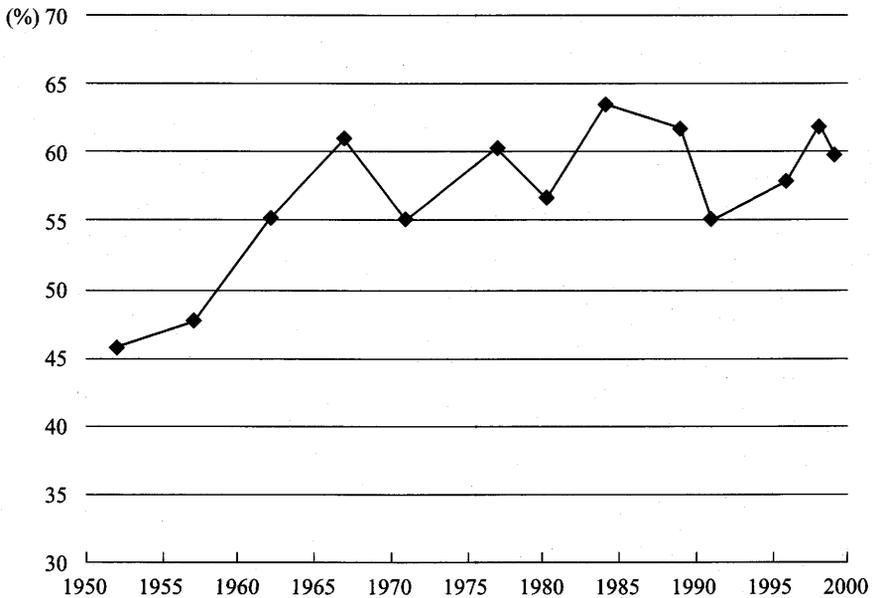
Lok Sabha constituencies. Although these analyses do not indicate a completely identical periodisation, by and large, the results show that the period of the 1970s, on the whole, was the most turbulent and transitional period in the five decades of independent India, with the exception of the period just after Independence.

Continuity and Discontinuity of Voter Turnout and the Party System

First of all, the long-term change of voter turnout has to be examined. It is because the level of aggregate electoral participation is a basic indicator in the political system in the sense that the higher the level of electoral participation is, the more legitimate the polity is. The turnout can indicate the level of the legitimacy which the society endows to the polity.

Figure III-1 shows percentage voter turnout from the first Lok Sabha election in 1952 to the 13th in 1999. Turnout increased continuously from 1952 to 1967 and then levelled off at around the 60 percent level, showing

Figure III-1
Voter Turnout, 1952-1999



Source: Made by the author from the data of Reports issued by the Election Commission of India on the Lok Sabha elections.

fluctuations of about 5 percent. After 1967, the peaks of turnout came in 1977, 1984 and 1998. These peaks seem to correspond to important political developments. In the 1977 election, the impact of the state of emergency and the massive repression, especially in the northern part of the country, was still vivid among the people. Because of this, anti-Congress feelings were prevalent, and seem to have been a main factor raising the turnout. In the case of the 1984 election, the source of the impact was clearly the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, which caused a large wave of sympathy for her son Rajiv, the new Prime Minister, as well as the anti-Sikh violence in north India. Although Rajiv was also assassinated in 1991, the impact of Indira's murder was much larger. She was a "charismatic figure" who was at the centre of popular perception, as clearly indicated by some studies.¹ In the case of 1998, the election was important in producing the first authentic BJP coalition government at the centre, following intense electoral competition.² The intense competition in the electoral process seems to have contributed to the high turnout, which, however, will be examined later. At any rate, Figure III-1 reveals that the turning point in the trend of aggregate-level turnout came around 1970.

The next step for the periodisation of the contemporary history of mass politics is to check for continuity or discontinuity in aggregate voting behaviour using the data set based on Bhalla and Singh's districts. Continuities at the level of electoral participation as well as party preference are examined. A simple Pearson's correlation coefficient between the percentages of voter turnout of two consecutive Lok Sabha Elections is shown in Table III-1. The same correlation coefficients are calculated for the number of candidates. The table also shows the correlation coefficient between the percentages of Congress votes for two consecutive Lok Sabha Elections. The percentage polled by Congress is taken up as a proxy variable to represent the overall party preference pattern. The Congress party, led by the Nehru family, has been the biggest party since Independence in terms of votes polled, though it fell into second position in terms of the number of successful candidates after 1998. It is, therefore, natural to take the percentage of votes for Congress as a representative variable for overall pattern of party preferences.

The calculation of the correlation coefficients is made from Bhalla and Singh's district-based data set. The number of samples is 244 for voter turnout, 256 for number of candidates, and 138 for percentage of votes for Congress. Samples (Bhalla and Singh's districts) which include at least one Lok Sabha constituency that does not have a corresponding value are excluded from the calculation. This is done to exclude samples with missing

Table III-1
Voter Turnout, Number of Candidates, and Congress Vote Percentage:
Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between Consecutive Lok Sabha Elections

Correlation between	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1991	1996	1998
	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999
Voter Turnout Percentage	0.805	0.893	0.872	0.801	0.763	0.852	0.899	0.865	0.837	0.805	0.813
Statistical significance	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Number of Candidates	0.392	0.523	0.503	0.422	0.495	0.690	0.640	0.579	0.597	0.659	0.674
Statistical significance	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Congress Votes Percentage	0.120	0.342	0.289	0.437	0.727	0.168	0.093	0.513	0.721	0.786	0.665
Statistical significance	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

Note:

- 1) OLS is applied
- 2) N=244, 256, and 138, in the case of Voter Turnout, Number of Candidates, and Congress votes percentage (based on Bhalla's Districts). The numbers of samples are different because of missing values and exclusion of outlier samples (2 cases in the Number of Candidates in the 1996 election).
- 3) "***" Statistically significant at 1% level.

values. For voter turnout, there are not many such samples, but in the case of Congress votes percentage, many samples contain missing values and, therefore, are excluded. Generally speaking, there are many cases of electoral cooperation, and as a result even the biggest national party cannot field candidates in all constituencies. In addition, in some States the Lok Sabha elections have been cancelled. In 1989, for example, the election in Assam was not held due to ethnic conflict. There are inevitably many missing values even in the data for the biggest party, due to such events.

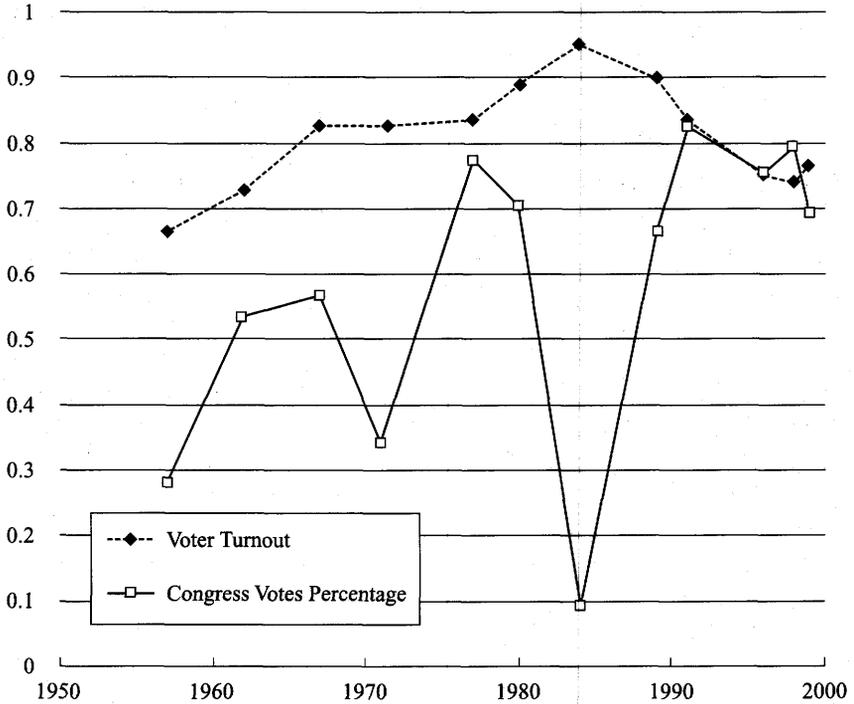
In addition to the correlation coefficients between consecutive two elections, the deviations of 12 Lok Sabha elections from the average pattern are also examined by the principal component analysis. The principal component analysis was adopted to make a standard variable from which the distance of original variable can be measured. The first principal component of turnouts, for example, is extracted from the 12 turnouts data from 1957 to 1999, which summarises 66.1% of the variance of the 12 turnouts data. The first principal component, which is made artificially here, can be considered to be an average pattern for the 12 turnouts. Thus, it can be used as a standard pattern from which the position of each original variable can be measured. The generality and peculiarity of the 12 turnout variables can be measured by calculating the correlation coefficients between the first principal component and each turnout data, which are shown in Figure III-2. The same procedure is also applied to the data set for Congress votes. The first principal component based on the 12 Congress vote variables is extracted, and the correlation coefficients between the principal component and the Congress votes in the 12 elections are similarly calculated, which are also shown in the same figure. The first principal component summarises 39.3% of the variance of the 12 Congress votes, revealing that the data for the 12 Congress votes are more diversified than the turnout data.

Based on Table III-1 and Figure III-2, it can be said that first, it is obvious from the table that there is very high continuity for turnout compared to Congress votes. The correlation coefficients of the turnout for consecutive elections are between 0.76 and 0.90. The lowest correlation coefficient is that between the 1977 and 1980 elections, and the second lowest between the 1971 and 1977 elections, indicating that the 1977 election was a rather peculiar one. It can be said that the impact of the state of emergency and the subsequent formation of the Janata Party were the factors raising the level of discontinuity.

The deviation from the average pattern can be observed from Figure III-2. The turnouts in the 1980s are especially close to the first principal component, and hence, the average pattern. It is significant that the level of

Figure III-2

Deviation from the Average Pattern, Voter Turnout and Congress Votes: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between the Variable in Each Election and the First Principal Component Extracted from the 12 Election Data of the Variable



Note:1) N=244 in the case of Voter Turnout, and 138 in the case of Congress Vote percentage (based on Bhalla's Districts).

2) All the correlations are statistically significant at the 1% level except for the correlation between the first principal component of the 12 Congress Votes and the 1984 Congress Votes.

continuity is quite high and changes in a continuous pattern. There are no sharp discontinuities in the graph, again showing the stability of turnout. The stability suggests that electoral participation which is an aspect of overall voting behaviour, is structured and linked with the basic social structure, as will be examined later.

Secondly, the level of continuity of votes for Congress is clearly low compared to that of turnout. In particular, the correlation coefficients between 1957 and 1962, 1980 and 1984, and 1984 and 1989 are not statistically significant at the 1 percent level. On the whole, the correlation

coefficients are very low from 1957 to 1989, but clearly rise after the 1989 elections. There can be two reasons for this.

One is the exceptionality of the 1971 and 1984 elections, as shown in Figure III-2. The exceptionality of the 1984 election is especially conspicuous. The patterns of distribution of Congress votes in the elections are located far from the average pattern. The exceptionality can be revealed from the fact that the correlation coefficient between the elections of 1967 and 1977 (skipping the 1971 election) is 0.381, and that of 1980 and 1989 (skipping the 1984 election) 0.380, with both correlation coefficients being statistically significant at the 1 percent level. The discontinuity of these elections, especially that of 1984 election, is obvious. In both elections, the Indira Gandhi factor appears to be essential in explaining the exceptionality. In the 1971 election, the split of Congress party organisation and her populist electioneering using the slogan of "Garibi Hatao" are considered to have led to more widespread support among the electorate and, as a result, disturbed the distribution of the Congress votes. In the case of the 1984 election, the assassination of Indira Gandhi had a very strong disturbing impact on the electorate. The impact was so strong, in fact, that the correlation coefficient of Congress votes between the 1984 and the 1989 elections is as low as 0.093.

The transformation of the basic pattern of party preference, along with increasing electoral participation, is considered to be another reason for the exceptionality. As shown in Figure III-1, turnout increased continuously from the first election to the 1967 election. It is likely that from Independence up to the 1967 election, various social groups that had not been very active in elections, such as SCs, Other Backward Classes, etc., were gradually entering the electoral arena. The period can be seen as the era of increasing electoral mobilisation. This electoral mobilisation is closely related to increasing social mobilisation. The social mobilisation of so-called Other Backward Classes (hereafter OBCs)³ was particularly important, because of their vast population size and the fact that they were not necessarily supportive of Congress dominance. Their gradually increasing participation in the electoral arena might have been a disturbing element to the Congress support base.⁴

The party system from Independence to the 1960s is called a "one party dominant system." The Congress party was at the centre of this dominance, with stable majorities in the Lok Sabha and major State Legislative Assemblies. However, examining electoral continuity, we find that the electoral basis of the dominance was not as stable as it superficially appeared to be. Table III-1 and Figure III-2 show that the electoral support basis of

Congress was generally unstable from election to election during the period. However, the instability at the lower level was concealed by the stability at the higher level, namely, the Lok Sabha. Given this instability, opposition parties could have grown rapidly. However, no major opposition party was able to expand by absorbing the dissatisfaction of the electorate during that period, because they were divided from one another. Moreover, it was rather difficult for the unstable electorate to find alternative opposition parties at the State or Union level in the 1950s and 1960s. Until the 1960s, there were few influential alternative parties, which could have replaced Congress in the State or Union level. It was only after the 1967 election that a situation emerged where disgruntled voters could find alternative parties to replace Congress in State Legislative Assemblies. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (hereafter DMK) in Tamil Nadu was a typical case involving the exit of Congress and the entry of a regional party.⁵

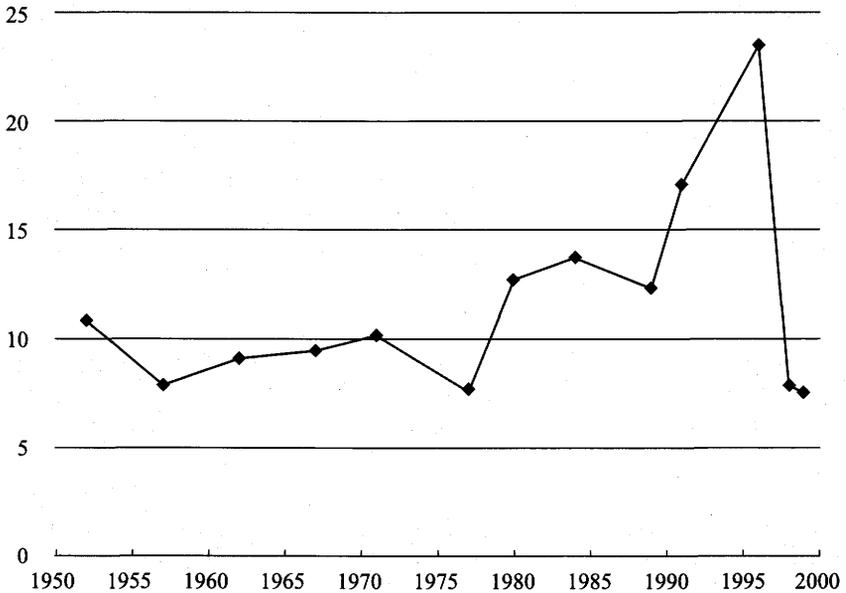
On the other hand, the period after 1970s was, in a sense, the second stage of electoral mobilisation. It is true that the level of electoral participation of some backward communities, such as the STs, was still rather low in the 1970s and 1980s. But except for such minor communities, it can be said that most of the major social groups had established firm relations with the electoral process by the 1970s. In addition, the floating stratum that supported the Congress party in the 1950s and 1960s seems to have diverged to other parties by the 1980s, especially regional parties. Consequently, after the 1980s, with the exception of the 1984 election, it is considered that those who voted for Congress party were those who were rather more firmly committed to it, meaning the core elements of Congress supporters.

Because of the two reasons mentioned above, a certain level of continuity of the Congress party preference pattern among electorate can be observed after the 1977 elections, though with the exception of 1984. In particular, the level of continuity after the end of the 1980s is fairly high, according to Table III-1 and Figure III-2.

Number of Candidates and Convergence to Two Major Candidates

The number of candidates can be considered an indicator of another aspect of the level of politicisation of society. The number of candidates may increase due to the germination of political parties or the fragmentation of parties. It might also increase because of a proliferation of independent candidates who have no relations with the existing parties. These phenomena — germination, fragmentation, and increasing independent candidates — are

Figure III-3
Number of Candidates per 1 Million Electorate, All India, 1952–1999



Source: Made by the author from the data of Reports issued by the Election Commission of India on the Lok Sabha elections.

Note: In order to prevent the entry of insincere candidates, the amount of deposit money was pushed up several times in the 1998 and 1999 elections. This is the basic reason for the sharp fall after 1998.

all related to the overall politicisation of society. Figure III-3 shows the number of candidates per one million electorate. The graph appears to move in correspondence with the two factors.

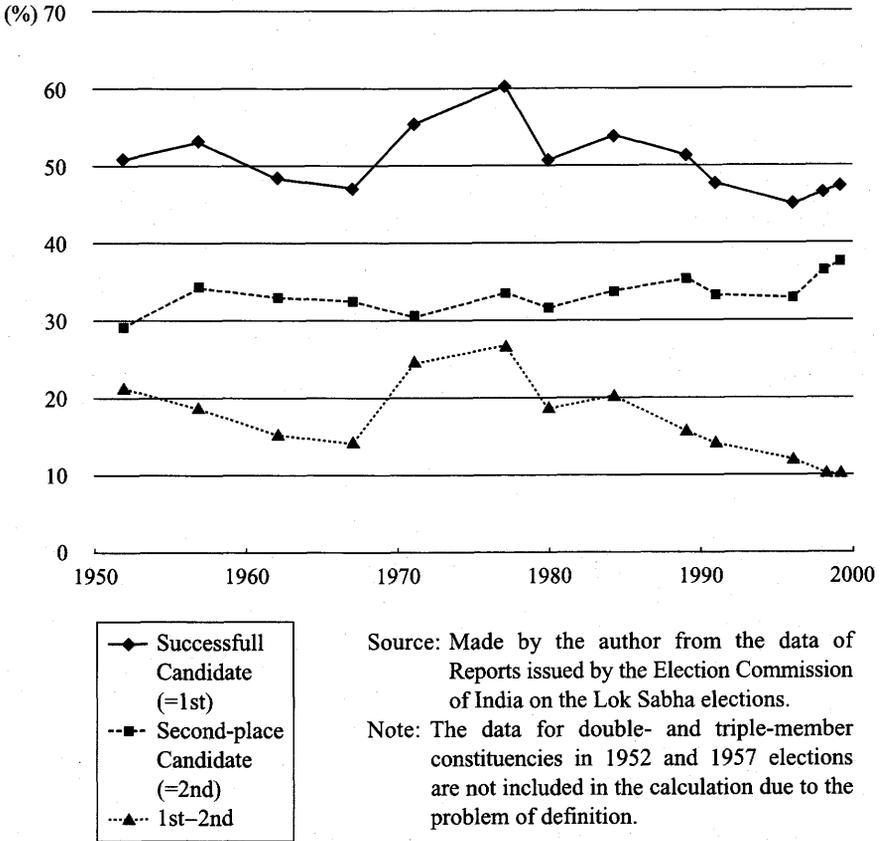
The first is the basic trend of increasing politicisation of Indian society. But there are two exceptions. The first exception was the first election in 1952, which was held in the highly politicised atmosphere just after Independence. For one thing, this full-fledged election based on universal adult franchise was the first experience for the political parties, and for another, the party system itself was not yet stabilised. The number of candidates decreased by the next election following the stabilisation of the party system, with the centre of the system being occupied by the Indian National Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru. The second exception was caused by the abrupt institutional change in 1998. In the 1998 Lok Sabha election, the security deposit was raised from merely Rs. 500 in 1996 to Rs.

10,000, in an attempt to discourage frivolous candidatures.⁶ In 1996 election, there were two constituencies where more than 400 candidates entered the election. One case was the Nalgonda constituency in Andhra Pradesh, where 480 candidates stood for election. This was because Jala Sadhana Samakhya, a non-government organisation, fielded 473 candidates to protest the Government's failure to implement the Srisailem Left Bank Canal project, which would have helped solve the district's water problems. Another case was the Belgaum constituency in Karnataka, where 452 candidates entered into the electoral fray. It happened because Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti, which has been fighting since 1956 to get the Marathi-speaking border area merged with Maharashtra, tried to attract the attention of the nation by having over 400 of its activists enter into the election.⁷ However, the hiking of the security deposit 20 times in 1998 reduced the number of candidates dramatically, as shown in the graph.

The second factor is the "tightness" of the party system, which is well illustrated in the 1977 and 1989 elections. On both occasions, the density of candidates dropped clearly. In 1977, the Janata Party was established as an amalgamation of four main opposition parties against Congress led by Indira Gandhi, at a time when an anti-Congress mood was prevalent. It is fairly clear that the integration of the main opposition parties and the resulting tight political competition with Congress had a tendency to discourage other candidates from entering into the electoral fray. The same effect, though slightly weaker, was observed when anti-Congress electoral cooperation was established between the National Front and BJP on the one hand, and the National Front and the Left Front on the other, in 1989. It seems obvious that the tightness of the party system observed in 1977 and 1989 had the effect of discouraging minor candidates from standing for election.

Although there has been an increasing trend in the number of candidates, this does not mean that all the candidates are significant in the electoral competition. Figure III-4 shows the average percentage of votes obtained by the successful and second-place candidates, and the difference between them. It is very surprising to note that the sum of votes for the first and second placed candidates comes to around 80 to 90 percent in every election. The candidates placed third or below in terms of votes polled are almost insignificant in the electoral mathematics. It is also surprising that the difference between the percentage of votes for the elected candidate and the runner-up has been decreasing, with the exception of the 1970s. These two features, the tendency of votes to converge to the top two candidates and the tendency of the votes of the top two candidates to equalise, suggest that so-called "Duverger's law" is working at the constituency level. Duverger's law

Figure III-4
Average Percentage of Votes Obtained by the Successful and Second-place Candidate, and the Difference between Them, All India, 1952-1999



states, “simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system.”⁸ The first-past-the-post system in India seems to show that the same effect is working at least at the constituency-level. At the Union level, however, meaning the Lok Sabha, the multi-party system has prevailed from the end of the 1980s. The seemingly contradictory tendency between the two different levels can be better reconciled if we take into consideration the State level dynamics of the party system, which seemed to converge into the two-party system in many States on the basis of the constituency-level tendency toward convergence observed after the 1980s. Riker, in his 1982 paper, thought that the Indian as well as Canadian cases were exceptions to

Duverger's law.⁹ But the convergence into two parties or coalition party groups seems to have taken place in the State-level.¹⁰ This is not strange if we take into consideration the fact that India is an aggregation of various nationalities or ethnic groups and adopts federalism as a form of polity. In any case, in this section, only the general trend at the constituency level and the factors disturbing the general trend have to be pointed out in order to get a better perspective of the periodisation.

It can be recognised in view of Figure III-4 that the converging effect of the first-past-the-post system exist at least at the constituency level, though the picture in the 1970s has to be considered an exception. The disturbances observed in the graph are considered to have been brought about by the turbulent political evolution in the 1971 and 1977 elections. Again, these elements were the collapse of the old Congress organisation and populist electioneering engineered by Indira Gandhi in the 1971 election, and the state of emergency and subsequent formation of the Janata Party and the massive defeat of Congress in the 1977 election.

Although there was only about a 3 percent increase in aggregate Congress votes from the 1967 to 1971 elections, the split of the Congress party in 1969 into Congress (R) led by Indira Gandhi and Congress (O) led by a conservative "syndicate"¹¹ disturbed Congress' support bases, a phenomenon that was accelerated by the populist electioneering by Indira Gandhi. These two political events mobilised people to vote in favour of Indira Gandhi's Congress, whose candidates were winners in 352 out of 518 constituencies. In the 1977 election, the strong impact of the internal emergency and the formation of the Janata Party can be understood from the fact that this hurriedly formed new party got 41.3 percent of the votes and 295 seats in the Lok Sabha. The strong "wave" of support for the Janata Party was obvious. These two elections led to extensive disturbances in the overall pattern of party preference of the electorate in favour of the winning party, resulting in a widening gap between the percentage of votes received by the elected candidate and that of the runner-up.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the elections of the 1970s, which had exceptional disturbances, had a lasting impact on the convergence process. In Figure III-4, the gap between the elected candidate's votes and those of the runner-up (1st-2nd) in the 1950s and 1960s shifted upward under the political impact of the 1970s. In other words, the political impact of the 1970s was not a mere exception. It prepared a new stage from which the party preferences of voters were reorganised or converged into a new pattern.

Periodisation: Continuity and Discontinuity

In a nutshell, on the issue of electoral participation, the level of continuity is basically very high, though the 1977 election is somewhat of an exception. On the other hand, the level of the continuity of party preference pattern is on the whole low, especially before the 1970s. In addition, a clear exceptionality can be seen in the 1971 and 1984 elections. For party preference, a converging tendency is basically observed, with the exception of the two elections in the 1970s. Finally, the graph of the average number of candidates shows a basically increasing tendency during the period when there were no major institutional changes. The important exceptions are the 1977 and 1989 elections. The tightening party system restrained minor candidates from entering into the electoral fray. But the level of tightness is considered to have been lower in the 1989 election than in 1977, according to the graph.

Based on the above analysis, it can be safely stated that the 1970s was clearly a crucial transitional period dividing the contemporary mass political history of India. By the 1970s, the initial stage of electoral mobilisation of major social groups had been completed, with a few exceptions. In addition, the party system was shaken by Indira Gandhi in the 1970s. These mutually related processes of electoral mobilisation and the disturbance of the party system prepared the political stage from which viable alternatives to the Congress party emerged in the State Legislative Assemblies first and then in the Lok Sabha.

It should be noted that the 1984 election was an exceptional case. It was exceptional because of the impact of Indira Gandhi's assassination. And the 1989 election was also rather exceptional case, because of the high level of tightness of the party system in the election. If we understand these two elections in the 1980s as exceptional, and if we put more importance on the turnout, it can therefore be safely stated that the 1970s was clearly the most important transitional period.

2. Regional Differences in Voting Behaviour

The importance of regional difference cannot be over-emphasised in a vast country like India. Each State is equivalent to one country in Europe in population and area. In this section, a rough sketch of the diversity of aggregate voting behaviour will be shown on the basis of voter turnout, which is the most fundamental indicator of voting behaviour. It is, therefore,

not inappropriate to explain the diversity by referring to the turnout of each State.

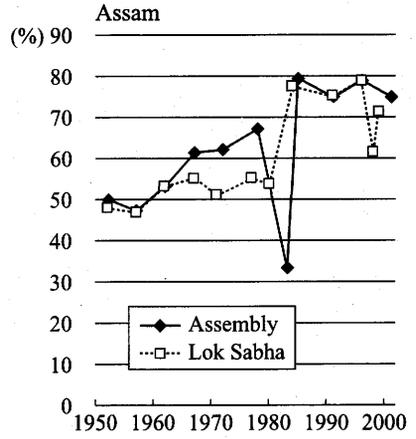
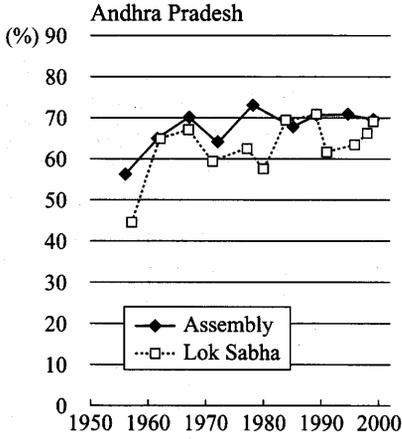
The 15 graphs in Figure III-5 show turnouts in the both State Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha elections for each State. As mentioned before, the elections at both levels were basically held simultaneously up to the 1967 general election. Therefore, the turnouts were approximately the same up to the 1967 general election. They reveal an extensive diversity among States. It would be almost impossible to make a typological classification of the 15 States clearly in terms of turnout. However, some characteristic States can be discerned. Those that show monotonously increasing turnouts, both in the State Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha, are Bihar and Orissa. Although there are fluctuations, the turnout in Bihar increased basically monotonously from around 40 percent to 60 percent, while in Orissa it rose from around 34 percent to 60 percent. These two States were the least developed of India. However, they have also been developing socially and economically, though the speed of the development has been slow. It might be that the process of socio-economic development brings about an increase in electoral participation.

Kerala is a contrasting case. The turnouts for both State Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha elections have been in the highest band among the major States throughout the five decades. Kerala is known as a socially developed State. Although economically it cannot be considered to be one of the most prosperous States, its educational level is the highest, especially for women. The crude literacy rate increased from 47 percent in 1961 to 80 percent in 2001. But the turnout did not increase along with the social development. One reason is obvious. The turnout was already around 70 percent in the 1950s and was as high as 84 percent in the mid-term election held in 1960. The turnouts in the 1950s were quite high, even if compared with the turnouts of Bihar and Orissa today. Because the turnouts were already so high, it was difficult for them to increase any further. Another possible reason might be the importance of other factors in determining electoral participation. In Kerala, for example, political competition between Congress and the CPI/CPI(M) has been very intense since the 1950s.¹² This intense competition between major parties may have mobilised votes, resulting in the higher turnout irrespective of the level of socio-economic development. Approximately the same thing can be said in the case of West Bengal after the 1960s, where the Left Front led by the CPI(M) has been in intense competition with Congress. The effects of the competition will be examined in the next chapter.

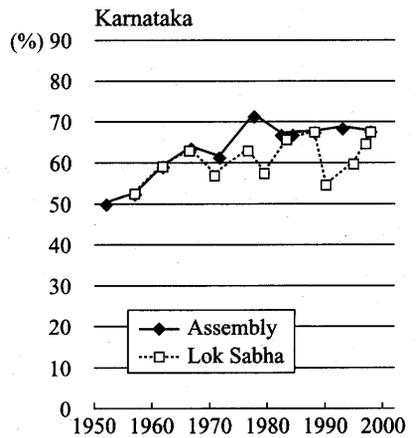
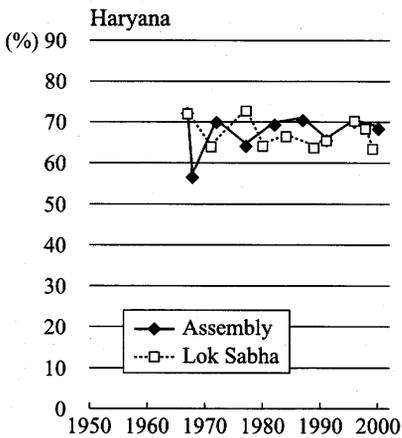
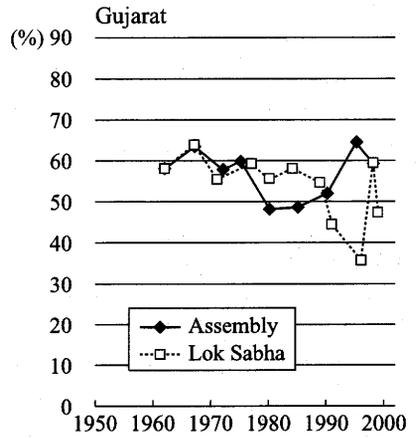
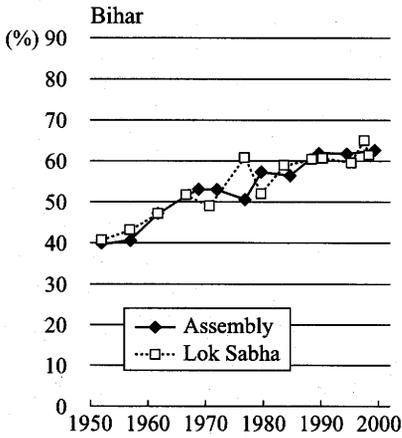
Concerning the comparison of turnouts between State Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, it can be stated that the turnouts in State

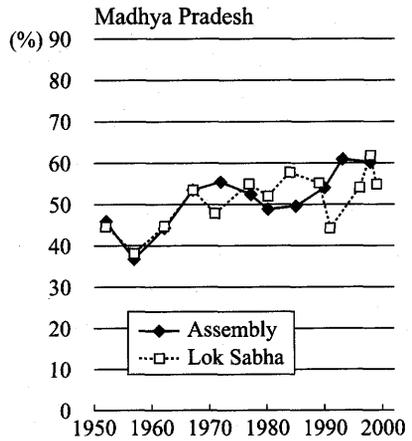
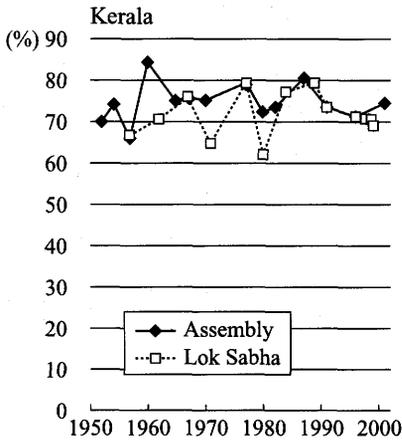
Figure III-5

Turnouts in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly Elections in Each State

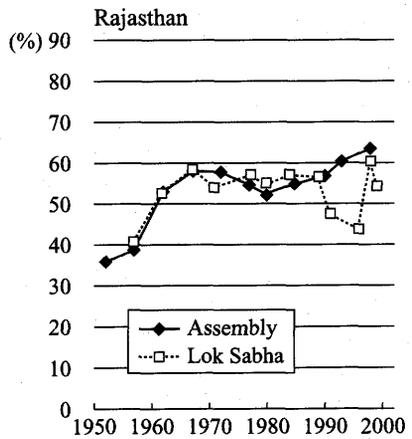
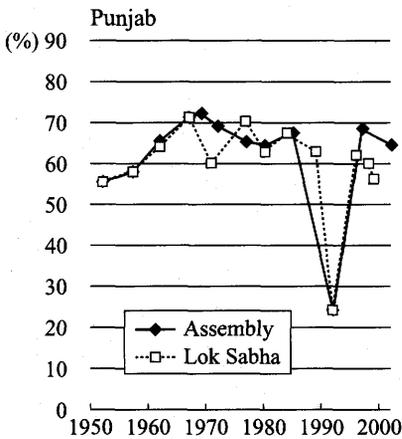
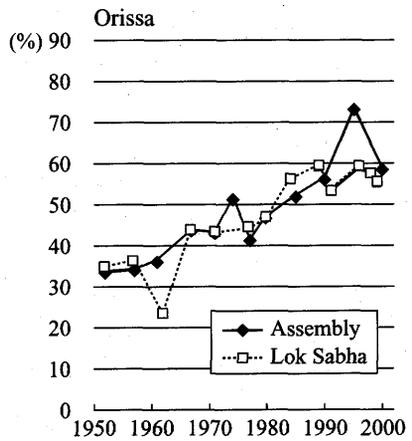
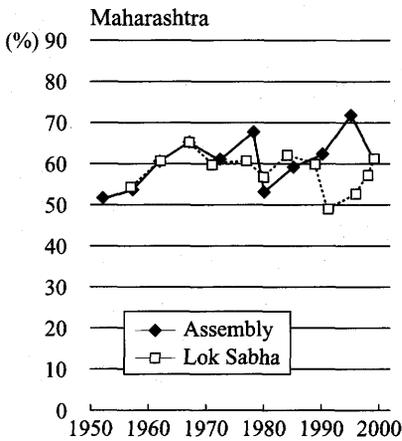


Note: The 1956 elections of Andhra and Telengana regions were held in 1955 and 1957 respectively.



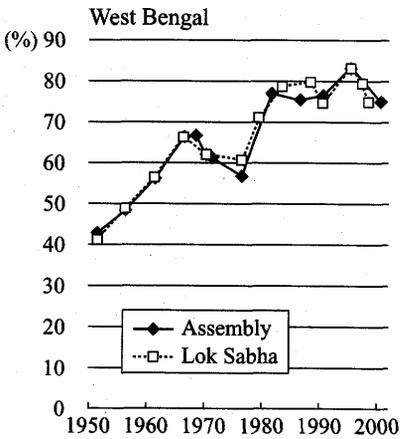
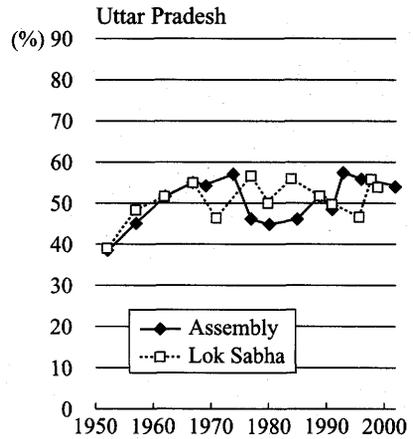
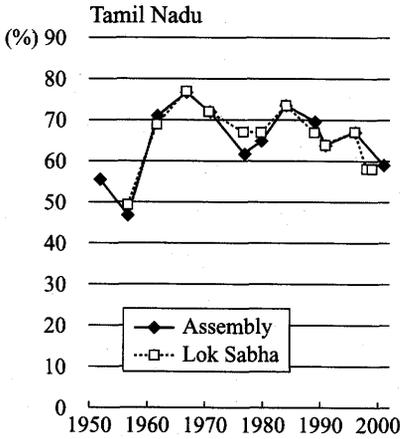


Note: Data of 1952 and 1954 are those of Travancore and Cochin



Note: In those cases of 1952, 1957, and 1962, data include that of Haryana:
In the cases of 1952, and 57, data do not include those of PEPSU.

(continued)



Source: Made by the author from the material below.

Lok Sabha: Data before 1967 are from: Singh, V. B. and Shankar Bose. 1986. *Elections in India: Data Handbook on Lok Sabha Elections 1952-85*. New Delhi: Sage; Data after 1967 are collected from: Reports of Election Commission of India on the 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996 Lok Sabha general elections; Collected also from: <http://www.eci.gov.in/ARCHIVE> (accessed: 9 October 2002).

State Legislative Assembly: Data before 1985 are from: Singh, V. B. and Shankar Bose. 1987. *States Elections in India: Data Handbook on Vidhan Sabha Elections 1952-85, Vol. I, II, III, IV, and V*. New Delhi: Sage; Data after 1985 are collected from: <http://www.eci.gov.in/ARCHIVE> (accessed: 9 October 2002).

Note: Some of turnout data in the 1950s and 1960s are missing because it is very difficult to get the values corresponding to the geographical boundary of the present States due to the State Reorganisation of 1956 or bifurcation of Bombay in 1960 and old Punjab in 1966, etc.

Legislative Assembly elections are generally somewhat higher than in the Lok Sabha elections. Some studies have claimed that people are more likely to vote in elections at a more familiar level.¹³ According to this theory, the turnout should be higher in the panchayat elections than State Legislative Assembly elections, and in the State Legislative Assembly elections than Lok Sabha elections. For the elections up until 1967, this hypothesis cannot be tested because both levels of elections were generally held simultaneously. It was, therefore, natural that both levels of election showed approximately the same turnout. After 1971, the figures seem to endorse, by and large, the theory, with the exception of the 1977, 1984 and 1989 Lok Sabha elections. In the case of 1977 and 1984, the special political contexts that raised the turnout in the Lok Sabha elections have already been explained.

The impact of the state of internal emergency and the tightening of the party system in 1977, and of Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, seem to have led to increased turnouts for the Lok Sabha elections. The impact of the assassination, especially, was so strong that it could be observed in almost all the States. In the case of the internal emergency, the impact could be seen clearly in the northern and western parts of India, such as Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, as well as Kerala. The reason may be that the excesses or violations of human rights during the internal emergency were especially frequent in these areas¹⁴ and the opposition parties amalgamated into the Janata Party were traditionally prominent in these areas though Kerala was an exception in this case. Finally, in the case of the 1989 Lok Sabha election, the factor which raised the turnout in the States was considered to have been the active involvement of the State-level regional parties in electioneering. A "tightness" of the party system emerged in the 1989 election, with the formation of Janata Dal and the National Front, which was competing with Congress both at the centre and State levels. The National Front was a coalition of Janata Dal and other major regional parties. The close linkage of politics in the centre and the major regional parties led to heightened electioneering in the States, and mobilising the electorate intensively.

Let us look, for example, at the case of Andhra Pradesh. After 1967, the turnouts for the Lok Sabha elections in the State were relatively lower than those of the State Legislative Assembly elections, with the exception of the 1984 and 1989 Lok Sabha elections. In the case of the 1989 election, it was very important that N.T. Rama Rao's Telugu Desam Party was a member of National Front, resulting in the higher level of electoral mobilisation in the State. Approximately the same thing could be said for Karnataka and other States. In Karnataka, Janata Dal led by R. K. Hegde was in tight competition

with Congress. However, the breakdown of cooperation between the National Front and BJP and the collapse of the National Front itself in 1990 weakened this tightness, and as a result the turnouts for the Lok Sabha election in 1991 dropped compared to those for the State Legislative Assembly elections.

Finally, it is noted that the turnouts of both State Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha elections is generally sensitive to the large scale violent political turbulence. State Legislative Assembly election in 1983 in Assam and both Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections in 1992 in Punjab were such cases. Large scale ethnic violence prevented the electorates from participating elections in these cases.

Considering the variety of evolutionary patterns of the turnout between States, it is necessary to introduce State dummy variables in order to represent the peculiarity of States in the regression analysis. At the same time, these variables can improve the accuracy of estimation of other explanatory variables. State dummy variables can be included in the category of political motivation variables because they can be assumed to represent the macro political motivational structure peculiar to States.

Notes

- ¹ Chhibber, P. K. 1999. *Democracy without Associations: Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavages in India*. New Delhi: Vistaar, pp. 126–131.
- ² The BJP took power in the central government for the first time after the 1996 Lok Sabha Election, but held office for only 13 days. It collapsed immediately because it did not have a majority in the Lok Sabha and could not find any appropriate coalition partners.
- ³ The concept of Other Backward Classes includes the socially and educationally backward classes as prescribed in Article 15 (4) and 16 (4) of the Constitution of India, but excludes SCs and STs. The concept of OBCs was invented to compensate for the social disability of under-privileged groups, irrespective of religion, who are socially and educationally as backward as SCs and STs but who are basically free from the social stigma of untouchability. The importance of the OBCs comes from their numerical strength, which was roughly estimated at 52% of the total population in the Mandal Commission report published in 1980. See, Government of India. 1984. *Report of the Backward Classes Commission First Part (Volumes I & II) 1980*, (Chairman: B. P. Mandal). Delhi: The Controller of Publications, p. 56.
- ⁴ See, for example, Kondo, Norio. 2001. "The Backward Classes Movement and Reservation in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh: A Comparative Perspective." in

- Hasan, Mushirul and Nariaki Nakazato (ed.). *The Unfinished Agenda: Nation-Building in South Asia*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- ⁵ See, for example, Barnett, Marguerite Ross. 1976. *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- ⁶ The candidate's security deposit is forfeited if he or she is not elected and fails to secure more than one-sixth of the total valid votes polled in the constituency.
- ⁷ Concerning Nalgonda, see, *Frontline*. 1996. "Reports from the States: Election diary." 31 May. Concerning Belgaum, see, <http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/feb/16bel.htm> (accessed: 28 April 2003). The samples including the two constituencies are excluded as outliers in the regression including the 1996 Lok Sabha election.
- ⁸ Duverger, Maurice. 1963. *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, p. 217.
- ⁹ Riker, William H. 1982. "The Two-party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76, no. 4, December.
- ¹⁰ See, Sridharan, E. 1997. *Duverger's Law, its Reformulations and the Evolution of the Indian Party System*, Center for Institutional Reform and The Informal Sector (University of Maryland), Working Paper no. 35, February.
- ¹¹ The "Syndicate" was a group of conservative Congress leaders which constituted the collective leadership after Nehru's death. It included Atulya Ghosh, S.K. Patil, Sanjiva Reddy, Kamaraj, and S. Nijalingappa. See, for example, Brecher, Michael. 1969. *Political Leadership in India: An Analysis of Elite Attitudes*. New York: Praeger, pp. 134–137.
- ¹² See, for example, Nossiter, T. J. 1982. *Communism in Kerala—A Study in Political Adaptation*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 105–139.
- ¹³ See, for example, Chandidas, R. 1972. "Poll Participation Slump." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15 July.
- ¹⁴ Government of India. 1978. *Shah Commission of Inquiry, I, II & III*. Delhi: Government of India Press.