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A. Farooqui[a] & E. Sridharan[b]
[a] Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India
[b] University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India, New Delhi, India
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Incumbency, internal processes and renomination in Indian parties

A. Farooqui[a*] and E. Sridharan[b]

[a]*Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India;*
[b]*University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India, New Delhi, India*

This paper analyses a critical aspect of the internal functioning of five major Indian political parties, namely the nomination of candidates for parliamentary elections, focusing on the pattern of renomination of former candidates and incumbents. The data are analysed against the literature on the structure and functioning of Indian parties, and interview material on the process of nomination in the 2009 and 2004 elections. From the perspective of a six-fold typology of centralisation of nomination processes drawn from the comparative literature, it is found that all the parties analysed are in either the second-most centralised, or even most centralised categories, and that for the three major national parties, Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party and Communist Party of India (Marxist), past performance plays a role in nominations, the majority of incumbents being renominated in the post-1989 period.

Keywords: nomination; renomination; candidate; incumbent; election; party; committee

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Introduction

This paper examines a particular aspect of the internal dynamics of major Indian parties of varying types, namely the process of nominating candidates for the parliamentary elections to the lower house (Lok Sabha), which is directly elected from 543 single-member constituencies by the plurality rule (first-past-the-post) system. The aim is to get a picture of the internal processes of various parties and relate them to the nomination outcomes, and see if this is related to party type, to whether there are institutionalised selection processes within parties, and to whether early elections make a difference. We compare the pattern of nominations in each election with the previous election over

*Corresponding author. Email: adnan.farooqui@gmail.com

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time in the light of our knowledge of the nomination processes gleaned from post-2009 interviews about the nominations processes in 2009 and 2004 with key party functionaries involved. We select for our study, the two major national parties, the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and two other parties defined as national parties by the Election Commission of India (ECI), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and the largest of what are defined as state parties by the ECI (and referred to in common parlance as regional parties, those that have significant vote shares in less than four states – in most cases effectively one state), the Samajwadi Party (SP). For the CPI (M), the BSP and the SP, we analyse their nomination processes only in their states of strength since they are marginal forces outside these states. Hence, we analyse the nominations of the CPI (M) in its three stronghold states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura only, and those of the BSP and the SP in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) only.

Our research is informed by the normative importance of the intra-party nomination process in national situations in which, as William Cross has argued, either or both of representational and policy outcomes are determined by who gets to be nominated by major parties because this substantially determines who gets to be elected, i.e. the composition of the legislature and cabinet (Cross, 2008). In the Indian case, nominations are very important for representational outcomes in a heterogeneous society and also, less definitively, for policy outcomes, the latter being more leadership-determined. This study has larger implications for predictable career paths for candidates within parties, entry barriers for new candidates, and in turn, whether there are incentives for working within existing parties as against moving to other parties or floating new parties.

Comparative candidate nomination processes and internal democracy

In this section, we review the comparative literature on internal democracy and candidate nomination processes in political parties in long-standing democracies. Broadly speaking, following Lars Bille, there are six types of nomination processes in political parties in Western European parliamentary democracies, ranging from completely top-down to completely bottom-up at the two extremes, with four intermediate levels of decentralisation or participation by the party rank-and-file, or in other words, by levels of inclusiveness of the selectorate for nominations. These fall, from the most to the least centralised, into the following six broad categories:[1]

(1) Candidate selection is completely controlled by the national party leadership.
(2) Subnational party organs propose names but national leadership makes the final decision.

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(3) The national leadership provides a list of names from which the subnational party organs make the final selection.
(4) Subnational party organs make nomination decisions, but need the final approval of national leaderships, and the latter can add or delete names according to various criteria.
(5) Subnational party organs control the entire process and make the final decisions.
(6) Nomination decisions are based on membership ballots, which are not the same as an open primary, but nevertheless the closest to grassroots participation.

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In the context of the present project, the USA represents the decentralised extreme, that of party primaries for presidential and Congressional elections. However, it needs to be noted that these party primaries are conducted by state and local officials, publicly funded and under public law, not by party officials under party rules and with party funds. This system came into effect for presidential primaries from 1912 to 1968, running in parallel to the party convention, and since then has become the determinant of candidacy for public office.[2]

India lies near the other extreme in that most of its major parties are at the completely or near-completely top-down of the six types of party nomination processes, with the national party leadership having the final say. From interview data pertaining to 2009 and 2004, and the literature on Indian parties, we can classify the Congress, BJP and CPI (M) as being in the second most centralised category and the BSP and SP as in the most centralised top-down category.

Most European parties fall in between these extremes. In Bille's broad survey of party nomination rules and how they changed from 1960 to 1990 (covering as many as 57 parties in 1960 and 71 in 1990) in Western Europe, he found that the

> predominant candidate selection procedure in force around 1960, as well as that at the beginning of the 1990s, is the one in which the subnational party organizations control the process completely. Around 1960, and also around 1990, nearly half of all the parties applied this approach. In 1960, only Austria, Belgium, Ireland and the United Kingdom did not have any parties granting subnational organs this influence. Around 1990, only Ireland and pre-1992 Italy were in this situation.[3]

Thus, he found that most the parties fell in category (5). Furthermore,

> The second most widely used candidate selection method is the one that gives the right to decide on the subnational party organs, subject to the approval of the

> national party organization. Around one-third of the parties belonged to this category in both 1960 and 1989. In sum, then, more than three-quarters of the parties have rules that give the subnational party organizations the power either to control the process completely or, at least, to have a major and substantial influence. The parties in question cover the whole ideological spectrum and they are present in all countries. There is thus no pattern regarding either party families or countries.[4]

Thus, three-quarters of the parties fell in categories (5) or (4), that is, in the relatively decentralised part of the range of types of nomination procedures.

Lastly, a move towards party primaries based on membership postal ballots, somewhat akin to US-style primaries but distinct from the latter in that they are conducted by party officials under party rules and limited to party members, has been in evidence, increasing from under one-fifth of the parties in 1960 to about a quarter in 1990, representing an increase in the selectorate for candidate nomination. It should be noted that these classifications are based on formal party rules and that informal mechanisms for greater leadership influence over the process can and do exist in many countries. However, the general trend has been towards larger and more inclusive selectorates and more influential subnational party organs in this process.[5]

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Party types and internal democracy

Here it is relevant to mention that the literature tends to relate internal democracy to party type, and party types are supposed to have evolved in a certain sequence. Thus, Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair argue for an evolutionary sequence of party types, based on their relationship to civil societies and states in different stages of economic and social development, each with its typical internal organisation and pattern of functioning (Katz & Mair, 1995). They argue that nineteenth-century clientelist parties of notables gave way to mass parties, of the industrial working class, based on trade unions. In turn, these gave way in the post-World War II period of the rapid growth of the welfare state, the white-collar middle class and the post-industrial service economy, to Otto Kirchheimer's catchall party or electoral–professional party, and eventually the cartel parties, both of the moderate left and right, in the post-1970s period, closely integrated with the bureaucracies of a managerial state deeply enmeshed in the economy, which Katz and Mair argue are adaptations of the mass parties to the rise of catchall parties.[6] They view the increase in internal decentralisation and democratisation of nominations processes over 1960–1990 (expansion of selectorates) in the context of pressures to so democratise felt by catchall parties that were pitted against mass parties, and then felt by cartel parties against these and each other. The moves to democratise and decentralise were made to combat the phenomena of political apathy, low

turnout and shrinking party membership by incentivising people by participation in party nomination processes.

However, this West European sequence ignores two important types of parties in India (out of three important types – catchall or Congress parties, ideological parties and ethnic parties).[7] First, ideological parties of the Left and the Right, that is, the CPI (M) and its Left Front allies, and ideologically rightist parties like the Hindu nationalist BJP and the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. Second, ethnic parties based on particular caste blocs like the BSP, based on the Scheduled Castes, and the SP, based on the Other Backward Classes (OBC), principally the Yadavs, the main OBC caste in the state of UP. Both SP and BSP are based in UP and enjoy a considerable degree of support from the Muslim minority due to the latter's fear of the BJP. While catchall parties like the Congress might have to depend more on nominating candidates representing various social or ethnic groups to retain their allegiance, ethnic parties might have more autonomous leaderships due to strong ascriptive allegiances, and might try to construct majorities by striking coalition deals with other parties, delivering an ethnic bloc vote in return, akin to the consociational politics of ethnic elites described by Lijphart (1977). However, they could also try to expand the social base of their parties to construct majorities by forming broader and more inclusive caste clusters. Likewise, ideological parties might also have more committed voter bases than catchall parties, somewhat akin to ethnic parties.

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Election nomination processes in Indian parties

Early studies of the process of nomination of candidates in the then dominant umbrella party, the Congress, in the 1950s and 1960s revealed the following patterns and evolution. Roy (1966, 1967a, 1967b) found that the party was still groping for a mechanism to stabilise the relationship between the different organisational levels of the party in selecting candidates in the 1957, 1962 and 1967 elections. The process generally followed was that applications would be made at the local level although it is not clear if they were largely made to the District Congress Committees (DCCs) or the Pradesh Election Committee (PEC). The PECs were to make decisions on nomination based on consultation with the DCCs given that the latter bore the burden of local mobilisation and campaigning. A PEC representative would attend the meetings of the DCCs that covered the relevant parliamentary constituencies. Analogously, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) would depute a representative to participate in the meetings of the PECs. However, while the Central Election Committee (CEC) was normally supposed to approve the decisions of the PECs, it reserved for itself the right to have the final say.

> Roy found two contradictory tendencies: the tendency of centralization of command and concentration of decision-making power into the hands of the higher level organs growing out of the necessity to inject order and rationality into a process which is highly vulnerable to the pushes and pulls of parochial claims. Opposed to this is the tendency towards fragmentation of authority which reflects pressures from below for autonomy and power.[8]

In the 1962 election the selection process gave relatively greater weight to the lower levels of the hierarchy, including to the Mandal Congress Committees and the Panchayat Samitis, levels below the DCCs. In the 1967 election, the process became somewhat more centralised since intense competition for nominations at the local level, including newly mobilised caste groups, necessitated mediatory interventions by the CEC to resolve conflicts due to casteism, communalism and localism. Candidates now applied directly to the PEC and while it was obligatory for them to consult the DCCs, the PEC became relatively more influential. The point to be noted here is that the tendency to centralisation of nominations is not just due to a unilateral centralising power drive by the top leadership but due to intense local-level factional rivalries rendering the DCCs and sometimes PECs dysfunctional and requiring and inviting mediation by the top.

Roy's account is supported by Palmer (1967) for the 1967 election. He found that:

> For the Congress and for most other parties, mandal, district, state and national committees were involved in the selection procedure .... In general, but by no means universally, the recommendations of the subordinate committees on the State level were endorsed. These committees ... in many cases (they) could not agree and therefore simply referred the selections to the national committees. (Palmer, 1967)

He noted that non-Congress parties wait to see who the Congress candidate is before nominating their own candidates, a point also noted by Narain and Lal (1969).[9] While the account of Narain and Lal is in general agreement with those of Roy and Palmer, the former are sceptical of finding a uniform pattern in the practice of nominations, the latter being situationally determined, the key interaction being between the character of the party and the nature of the constituency, which they elaborate as being the nature of factionalism and bossism in the party at the local and state levels on the one hand and the caste composition of the constituency on the other.[10]

Kochanek (1968) broadly agrees with the above authors but adds the important point that whatever the formal criteria, the criterion that carried greatest weight with the selection committee, whether DCC, PEC or CEC, was the candidate's ability to win, and that this depended considerably on the social – caste

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and religious community – composition of the constituency, which were always factored in to the selection process (Kochanek, 1968). He also adds that, in the context of the 1967 election which like the three earlier elections saw simultaneous parliamentary and state assembly elections, the state level selection process, formally managed by the PECs, was dominated by Chief Ministers, and the latter's main concern was that the majority of assembly candidates should be constituted of their followers and should enable them to form a government. This led to non-accommodation of dissident factions in several states and large-scale defections and independent candidatures by dissident Congressmen for the first time. Thus, the concern with victory prospects, factionalism in the selection process and the concern with caste and community were key factors in the selection process, going back to the 1950s and 1960s.

For the 2009 election and to some extent for 2004, we have the following detailed information from interviews with party functionaries, necessitated by the long gap in the literature after the 1970s.[11] In the case of the Congress, key functionaries were categorical that the elaborate bottom-up process described in the earlier literature became much more centralised after the Congress split of 1969 and the suspension of internal elections to the AICC from 1972, and that the restoration of the AICC elections since 1992 restored the balance only somewhat.[12]

The formal processes of candidate nomination in Indian parties in 2009 were as follows. In the Congress party, there was an elaborate system consisting of observers sent to each of 543 Lok Sabha constituencies who prepare reports on potential candidates in their constituency for the DCC and the Pradesh (State) Congress Committee (PCC). The DCCs and PCCs give inputs to the State Election Committee (SEC) in each state, which sends a panel of names listing the pros and cons and relevant details of each potential candidate to the AICC. The AICC appoints a Screening Committee for each state which consists of important party leaders, including a senior member of the Congress Working Committee, two senior leaders who do not belong to the state, the state PCC chief and the state Congress Legislature Party leader. The Screening Committees prepare a docket listing the pros and cons and relevant details of each potential candidate and send these to the CEC of the party, the highest organ in the process, which makes the final decision. Although the process is supposed to begin and be completed early, well ahead of the election campaign, which begins just after the last date for withdrawal of nominations, a few days after the last date for nomination of candidates by parties, in actual practice the screening and nomination process begins late and drags on to the last moment. This is deliberate because early nomination is feared to lead to disappointed nominees either leaving the party or sabotaging the nominee's prospects (see note 12). The process is one in which the central party organisation makes the final selection based on the dockets sent up by the

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SECs and centrally appointed Screening Committees for each state, although even at that level there are senior leaders for each state who do not belong to that state and hence are supposed to play the role of neutral arbiters.

In the BJP, there are just two formal levels of decision, the SEC and the CEC. The SEC is the final authority for municipal and local government-level elections in each state, with there being no need for names of potential candidates to be sent to the CEC. For state assembly and parliamentary elections, SEC plays a recommendatory role, recommending names of candidates for each constituency but the CEC makes the final selection. Earlier, the CEC would usually accept the SEC's choices, with a few exceptions. However, in 2009 there was a significant change from 2004, part of an ongoing shift from the early 2000s, following the BJP's entrenchment in power nationally from its 1999 re-election. In 2009, unlike earlier, the SEC did not make a choice for each constituency and provide a list of preferences. It merely forwarded all the names to the CEC. And the CEC was itself sidelined by the formation of informal 'core groups' for each state by the central leadership, which included certain key central leaders (Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj, Venkaiah Naidu, Ananth Kumar) and selected state leaders. Some individuals were on the 'core group' of two or more states and wielded enormous clout and functioned arbitrarily and with little knowledge of the grassroots realities in the states concerned.[13] Thus, the 'core groups' made the final selection, in effect, which was rubber-stamped by the CEC after perfunctory debate on only a few seats. In 2009, the process started nine months before the election and was chaotic and degenerated into a centralised process.

If the CEC cannot agree on nominees for certain constituencies, the BJP president is empowered to make the decision. This was so not only in the 2009 national election but also in some state assembly elections before that. Unpublished surveys for internal consumption were commissioned by the party president, hiring three different polling firms of allegedly doubtful integrity, whose results were used to justify preconceived notions and certain selections.[14] Additionally, the extra-party Hindutva ideological 'movement' organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) played an influential role in nominations in 2009 in some states (Madhya Pradesh (MP), Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and also in Delhi, Haryana, Assam and Orissa), exerting pressure towards rewarding ideological loyalty over constituency-level victory prospects. The RSS functionaries on loan to the BJP party organisation (*sangathan mantris*) no longer perform the function of constituency-level assessment of a candidate's strengths that they used to in the pre-2000 period, but rather, that of a lobby within the party for promoting ideological loyalists.

On the whole, there has been a shift within the BJP since 2000, and particularly since 2004, from field-oriented nomination and internal evaluation processes that assessed 'merit', that is, victory prospects, from constituency-

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level feedback from grassroots workers to central party organisation-oriented nomination processes which rewarded those who had cultivated connections at this level. This is further discussed in the second last paragraph of this section. There has been a greater emphasis on caste as a factor in nominations, particularly in the states of UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and MP, and in Delhi, Haryana, Assam and Orissa, according to confidential interviews with key functionaries.[15]

In the CPI (M), we focus on the nomination processes in its three stronghold states, West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura.[16] In the CPI (M), the State Committee draws up the list of nominees for Lok Sabha candidates, which is cleared by the Politbureau of the Central Committee. However, this last step is basically a formality. It is the State Committee which essentially makes the nomination decision, particularly if some Central Committee members happen to be contesting from the state for the Lok Sabha. The (State) Committee Secretariat, which is the executive body of the State Committee, prepares a list of candidates after going through lists prepared in consultation with the District Committees (of the Party). Since parliamentary constituencies overlap districts, two District Secretariats might be consulted in cases of overlapping constituencies. The State Committee consists of about 80 members, of which 7–8 might be MPs and another 25–30 MLAs. This is the pattern in West Bengal, the numbers being smaller in Kerala and much smaller in Tripura. As of 2012, a two-term limit for MPs is proposed, and has already been introduced in Kerala.

On what basis are candidates selected? The CPI (M) being a cadre-based party of about one million members, the key criterion is having been active in party work in their area. Potential candidates will need to have gained recognition in their area of work in the party's mass organisations and fronts, for example, among college teachers. There is some consideration given to caste/community, less so in West Bengal where caste politics is less important, more so in Kerala where caste and religion play a greater role in electoral politics. Also, in Kerala, the vote share difference between the rival coalitions, the CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front and the Congress-led United Democratic Front being typically very narrow (1–2 per cent), there is a greater emphasis on wooing the floating vote, and hence, caste/community considerations are factored in to a greater extent. However, caste/community considerations play a much smaller role in the CPI (M), according to the party, compared to other parties, the track record of candidates in party activity being much more important. Linked to this is the pattern of relatively high repetition of winners and candidates, particularly in West Bengal, in 2009 and 2004. Repeating the candidates in the same constituencies, which is a strong pattern, is also linked to recognition in local party work, and to the fact of coalition politics, in which seats are shared with smaller partner parties which have sub-state local bases from which candidates are repeated.

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In contrast to the above three national parties, in which there are institutionalised internal processes of selection in which proposed nomination start from below and move upwards although the final decision is made by the national leaderships, the nomination processes in the SP and BSP are very tightly controlled by the top.[17] The process in the SP is a top-down one in which party president Mulayam Singh Yadav takes the final decision on all MP and MLA candidate nominations, although he does this in informal, not institutionalised, consultation and bargaining with other major party leaders. While there is a formal process in which each constituency unit of the party sends up 8–9 possible names, the SP being effectively a single-state party this process is constantly intervened in by Yadav and those close to him since he knows a very large number of local leaders of his party personally and is in constant touch with them. In the SP, nominations are again ultimately about victory prospects. However, also pertinent are a combination of caste and religion (to make various caste groups and the Muslim minority feel represented), and, though to a lesser extent than the BSP, about candidates who can bring resources to the party and at least partly fund their campaign – the SP did give candidates some campaign funds (Rs. 5 million to a few tens of millions).[18] Caste matters not only in constituency-specific ways depending on the local demography but also has an effect on adjacent constituencies and on the state as a whole since party leadership resorts to 'caste balancing' in which no caste is seen to be 'over-represented' state-wise or in a region of the state to keep all segments of the social base of the party happy, while also trying to reach out to new social segments by offering nominations to candidates belonging to them. However, old loyalties and personal connections with Yadav, a veteran grass-roots political activist, also matter.[19]

In the BSP, the nomination process is centrally about money and candidates are expected to 'buy' their nominations by making contributions to the party, to be paid personally to the leader, Kumari Mayawati. The process begins with potential candidates approaching the district coordinators and mandal (covering 2–3 districts) coordinators, who are party functionaries, with initial payments for sending their names up to Mayawati. They then have to make direct payments to be considered for the nomination. In addition to money totalling anywhere between Rs. 5 million and tens of millions to be paid for a nomination in various ways including in purchase of campaign materials, as in the case of the SP caste balancing is a factor, and over and beyond this there was an attempt in 2009, beginning earlier in the UP assembly election of 2007 which the BSP won, at 'social engineering', that is, at constructing a majority by giving nominations to persons from a wide range of castes, principally, upper castes, outside the party's usual social base of the Scheduled Castes.

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There were some attempts before 2007 to forge a broader caste base for the BSP. Kanchan Chandra is of the view that the BSP has always attempted to forge a broad social coalition and has attempted to reach out to the upper and backward castes since the early nineties. This was done at first by building an alliance with the SP, BJP and Congress, and later by appointing upper-caste office bearers and nominating a large number of upper-caste candidates. According to Chandra, though the groups included in the BSP's new social base might be same as the Congress, their terms of mobilisation are very different (Chandra, 2007). While the ticket distribution by the Congress party gave due consideration to caste identity, it did so quietly and kept it insulated from the identification of issues. Groups were targeted through patronage but rarely through the rhetoric of identity. In contrast, the BSP has done this through an open appeal to ethnic identity. While earlier, for the BSP, appeal to ethnic identity was restricted to Dalits, it now included its new social allies.[20]

Scholars like Sudha Pai have argued that failure of the BSP–SP alliance led to a change of strategy by the BSP in which it made a transition from a radical movement to a Dalit-based party with a primary aim of capturing state power (Pai, 2009). In order to realise this goal, the party followed a strategy of widening its social-base by giving tickets to non-Dalits and forming a coalition with the BJP. Though the party managed to broaden its base and increased its tally, by the latter 1990s, the BSP had hit a ceiling and was in need of a new strategy to fulfil its goal of forming a government on its own. Pai argues that the BSP did so by keeping its Dalit base intact and seeking support from twice-born castes – Thakurs, Vaishya and notably Brahmins. It also avoided bickering over ticket distribution by not contesting a number of by-elections and boycotting local elections in 2006.[21]

Sohini Guha argues that a committed Dalit poor in UP is willing to vote for a BSP candidate irrespective of caste as she has faith in the BSP's overall commitment to their long-term socio-economic empowerment (Guha, 2007). This is what makes them forgo patronage benefits in the short run and facilitates the BSP's nomination of candidates from Upper Castes, OBC's and Muslims, groups that only vote for the BSP when the party fields a candidate from their own community. For her the BSP has been able to attract multiple social groups within its fold by promising and delivering patronage based benefits to its non-'bahujan' voters while providing programmatic benefits to its core supporters.[22]

Christophe Jaffrelot carries forward the argument and states that the Dalits tend to vote for the BSP for both substantive and symbolic reasons. According to him, it will be wrong to classify the BSP as a Dalit party only on the basis of the social profile of its candidates. This is so because a large number of BSP candidates are from groups other than Dalits. Dalits vote for the BSP

because its leader is a Dalit, but more so because, irrespective of the caste or social profile of its candidates, its agenda is 'Pro-Dalit' (Jaffrelot, 2012).

From the literature, we can conclude that while there have been earlier attempts at 'social engineering' by the BSP, the 2007 election was the first major electoral success of the strategy and it was based on a calculated nomination strategy that took caste into account. Overall, the BSP is the most centralised and top-down of all the parties we look at, with Mayawati tightly controlling the process and intervening at any stage (see note 19).

Is there any general principle discernible in candidate selection across parties? The general criterion is 'merit', a holistic judgement on current victory prospects taking all factors into consideration, and the general rule of thumb is 'sitting-getting', in Indian political parlance, that is, incumbents get the nomination unless they are perceived to be no longer likely to win, for example, if there are potentially damaging corruption or criminal charges against them, although this does not by itself rule them out. Caste and (religious) community considerations are very important factors and are taken into consideration in assessing current victory prospects but there is no mechanical formula based on caste/community. Past performance, and hence, 'sitting-getting' is also not an inviolable principle.

A further complication affecting renomination is the fact of coalition politics in which parties share seats in order to pool votes at the state level against the principal rival party or coalition. This entails not contesting in constituencies allotted by coalition agreement to one's coalition partner, and if such a seat happens to have been contested the last time by one's party, renomination of the candidate, even an incumbent, cannot happen. However, within both the major alliances, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, both the number of seats allotted to each partner in a state and the particular seats allotted, tend to be fairly rigid and allow of adjustments only within a narrow band.[23] There is no smoothly adjusting electoral market mechanism whereby a party can claim greater support on the basis of intervening assembly elections, for example, which leads to surrender of seats by a partner party. The only way to be able to contest significantly more seats is to break the coalition deal and go it alone, for example, as the Congress did in UP and Bihar in 2009. Therefore, while coalitional seat-sharing has some effect on renomination, it has only a rather limited effect.

Three hypotheses on party type, internal processes and nominations

Before we present the Indian nomination data, we construct three hypotheses from our reviews of the comparative and Indian literature on party nominations, and from the interview material, against which we will later examine the nomination patterns.

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We will examine the following three hypotheses:

(1) Early/snap elections, as in 1980, 1991, 1998 and 1999, or emergency/crisis elections as after Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984, will result in high rate of renomination of incumbents and nominees because the MPs will not have finished even the major part of their terms and it will be more difficult for party leaderships, particularly if relatively new, to deny them nominations.
(2) Ethnic (that is, caste- and/or religion-based) and ideological parties have a more loyal and committed, even if smaller, voter base, and therefore the leaderships of such parties have more leeway to drop incumbents without losing the support of their voters since such support is not for particular candidates representing particular interest groups. Catchall parties, on the other hand, depend on group representation and patronage for retaining their support base and hence should find it more difficult to drop incumbents.
(3) Parties with institutionalised internal processes for nomination starting from below will find it more difficult to drop incumbents compared to parties with centralised, top-down selection processes. In the Indian context, parties that are most centralised by Bille's six-fold classification of centralised control of nominations, such as the BSP and SP, will find it easier to drop incumbents than more institutionalised parties which are at the second level of centralisation like the Congress, BJP and CPI (M).

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The nomination data on five major Indian parties

We consider the nomination of candidates for five major parties, the BJP, CPI (M), BSP and SP, for the part of their existence that is relevant to such analysis, that is, when they are significant national parties or leading parties in their states. For the Congress, we consider the nomination data for the entire post-independence period, focusing on renominations in each election compared to the previous election from the second general elections of 1957 until 2009; for the BJP, from the time of its emergence as a significant party, that is renominations from 1991 to 2009, and likewise for the CPI (M) which emerged as a regionally significant party from 1967, that is renominations from 1971 onwards. We consider CPI (M) only in its three stronghold states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. For the SP and the BSP, we focus on the 2004 and 2009 elections only for the state of UP, for the period of their emergence as the two leading parties in the largest state, UP, and with significance in national politics – their external support to the UPA I government was crucial in not making the Left Front's support pivotal for its survival.

A point to note is that there was a delimitation of constituencies before the 2009 election. We consider, for the purposes of this paper, the same constituency to mean constituencies which retained the same name. This is a proxy for the boundaries having changed only a little. In India, 101 constituencies (19 per cent of constituencies) changed from 2004 to 2009 according to our definition of name change, that is, 101 constituencies (19 per cent of constituencies) in 2009 were not matched by any constituency of the same name in 2004. For the state of UP, 11 out of 80 constituencies underwent a name change. As part of the delimitation process a small percentage of constituencies were unreserved or reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which would have additionally affected renominations.

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Congress

Taking the entire 1957–2009 period for the Congress (Table 1), the party has nominated 38 per cent (2611/6801) of its candidates of the preceding election. Looking at the data for the Congress from 1957–2009, we also conclude that the party has renominated a majority of its incumbents, hence largely adhering to the 'sitting-getting' thumb rule, the total percentage of winners getting renominated being 57 per cent (2079/3680). However, what needs to be explained is the substantial 43 per cent of incumbents who were not renominated. This is too high to be explained by the triple factors of death, defection to another party, or retirement from politics from one election to the next. It clearly shows that the party nomination process drops incumbents and brings in fresh blood to a considerable extent.

In 1989, Congress was faced with a united opposition and a house divided, Rajiv Gandhi being weakened by the Bofors arms imports payoffs allegations. Hence, the party repeated 68 per cent of its incumbents. From then on the party chose to repeat 65 per cent, 65 per cent, 70 per cent and 77 per cent of the winning candidates in 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999, respectively, climbing to historical highs by the end of the 1990s. This could be because of the two elections taking place in quick succession (1991 after 1989, and 1999 and 1998 soon after 1996) and the party going ahead with the incumbents rather than scouting around for fresh faces and risking dissidence within its ranks in the wake of three lost elections (1989, 1996 and 1998) which saw the party plunge to historic lows. In 2004 and 2009, the party repeated 64 per cent (73/114) and 71 per cent (103/145) of incumbents, respectively.

Comparing the data for the Congress between the time period 1952–2009 and 1991–2009 (Table 2) we see no significant difference in the percentage of contestants of previous elections getting renominated. What is interesting is the rise in number of incumbents getting renominated. For the two time periods

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Table 1. INC (1957–2009).

Indicators	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	Grand total
Renominated (by same party)/ nominated in previous election	174/ 479 (36%)	178/ 490 (36%7)	144/ 488 (30%)	149/ 516 (29%)	221/ 441 (50%)	155/ 492 (32%)	218/ 492 (44%)	302/ 517 (58%)	253/ 510 (50%)	189/ 500 (38%)	158/ 529 (30%)	184/ 477 (39%)	137/ 453 (30%)	149/ 417 (36%)	2611/ 6801 (38%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/nominated in previous election	82/ 479 (17%)	108/ 490 (22%)	117/ 488 (24%)	142/ 516 (28%)	186/ 441 (42%)	139/ 492 (28%)	209/ 492 (42%)	297/ 517 (57%)	241/ 510 (47%)	181/ 500 (36%)	145/ 529 (27%)	164/ 477 (34%)	127/ 453 (28%)	112/ 417 (27%)	2250/ 6801 (33%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/ nominated in previous election	92/ 479 (19%)	70/490 (14%)	27/ 488 (6%)	7/516 (1%)	35/ 441 (8%)	16/ 492 (3%)	9/492 (2%)	5/517 (1%)	12/ 510 (2%)	8/500 (2%)	13/ 529 (3%)	20/ 477 (4%)	10/ 453 (2%)	37/ 417 (9%)	361/ 6801 (5%)
Renominated by different party/ nominated in previous election	7/479 (2%)	10/490 (2%)	12/ 488 (3%)	33/ 516 (6%)	13/ 441 (3%)	57/ 492 (12%)	11/ 492 (2%)	10/ 517 (2%)	11/ 510 (2%)	34/ 500 (7%)	25/ 529 (5%)	19/ 477 (4%)	14/ 453 (3%)	5/417 (1%)	256/ 6801 (4%)
Incumbents renominated/winners in previous election	168/ 364 (46%)	163/ 371 (44%)	129/ 361 (36%)	137/ 283 (48%)	215/ 352 (61%)	76/ 154 (49%)	208/ 353 (59%)	282/ 414 (68%)	159/ 244 (65%)	159/ 244 (65%)	98/ 140 (70%)	109/ 141 (77%)	73/ 114 (64%)	103/ 145 (71%)	2079/ 3680 (57%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	80/ 364 (22%)	102/ 371 (28%)	107/ 361 (30%)	132/ 283 (47%)	183/ 352 (53%)	68/ 154 (44%)	202/ 353 (58%)	278/ 414 (67%)	159/ 244 (65%)	156/ 244 (64%)	96/ 140 (69%)	102/ 141 (72%)	68/ 114 (60%)	81/ 145 (56%)	1814/ 3680 (49%)
Renominated (by same party)/ contestants in the current election	174/ 490 (36%)	178/ 488 (37%)	144/ 516 (28%)	149/ 441 (34%)	221/ 492 (45%)	155/ 492 (32%)	218/ 517 (42%)	302/ 510 (59%)	253/ 500 (51%)	189/ 529 (36%)	158/ 477 (33%)	184/ 453 (41%)	137/ 417 (33%)	149/ 440 (34%)	2611/ 6762 (39%)

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Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/contestants in the current election	82/ 490 (17%)	108/ 488 (22%)	117/ 516 (23%)	142/ 441 (32%)	186/ 492 (38%)	139/ 492 (28%)	209/ 517 (40%)	297/ 510 (58%)	241/ 500 (48%)	181/ 529 (34%)	145/ 477 (30%)	164/ 453 (36%)	127/ 417 (31%)	112/ 440 (25%)	2250/ 6762 (33%)
Incumbents renominated/ contestants in the current election	168/ 490 (34%)	163/ 488 (33%)	129/ 516 (25%)	137/ 441 (31%)	215/ 492 (44%)	76/ 492 (15%)	208/ 517 (40%)	282/ 510 (55%)	159/ 500 (32%)	159/ 529 (30%)	98/ 477 (21%)	109/ 453 (24%)	73/ 417 (18%)	103/ 440 (23%)	2079/ 6762 (31%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/contestants in the current election	80/ 490 (17%)	102/ 488 (21%)	107/ 516 (21%)	132/ 441 (30%)	183/ 492 (37%)	68/ 492 (14%)	202/ 517 (39%)	278/ 510 (55%)	159/ 500 (32%)	156/ 529 (29%)	96/ 477 (20%)	102/ 453 (23%)	68/ 417 (16%)	81/ 440 (18%)	1814/ 6752 (27%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1952–2009.

Table 2. INC aggregate 1952–2009 and 1991–2009.

Indicators	INC (1957–2009)	INC (1991–2009)
Renominated (by same party)/nominated in previous election	2611/6801 (38%)	1070/2886 (37%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/nominated in previous election	2250/6801 (33%)	970/2886 (34%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/nominated in previous election	361/6801 (5%)	100/2886 (4%)
Renominated by different party/nominated in previous election	256/6801 (4%)	108/2886 (4%)
Incumbents renominated/winners in previous election	2079/3680 (57%)	701/1028 (68%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	1814/3680 (49%)	662/1028 (64%)
Renominated (by same party)/contestants in the current election	2611/6762 (39%)	1070/2816 (38%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/contestants in the current election	2250/6762 (33%)	970/2816 (34%)
Incumbents renominated/contestants in the current election	2079/6762 (31%)	701/2816 (25%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/contestants in the current election	1814/6762 (27%)	662/2816 (24%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1952–2009.

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1957–2009 and 1991–2009, the respective percentages are 57 per cent and 68 per cent. What perhaps explains this is the decline in Congress fortunes in the early 1990s and the party finding it increasingly difficult to win elections and therefore relying on the incumbents.

Bharatiya Janata Party

The BJP renominated a substantial minority (43 per cent) of its candidates and a great majority (76 per cent) of its incumbents in elections from 1991 to 2009. In the elections held in 1991, 1998 and 1999, in particular, the BJP renominated a large number of incumbents (Table 3). Elections in 1991, 1998 and 1999 were close elections with very little gap between the successive elections in 1989 and 1991, 1996 and 1998, 1998 and 1999. Hence, it would have made sense for the party to avoid new faces and internal dissidence and continue with the incumbents. Current victory prospects of candidates were important criteria here and the underlying principle was 'sitting-getting'. However, what needs to be

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Table 3. BJP (1991–2009).

Indicators	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	Grand total
Renominated (by same party)/nominated in previous election	111/225 (49%)	144/468 (31%)	193/471 (41%)	223/388 (58%)	172/339 (47%)	125/364 (34%)	968/2255 (43%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/nominated in previous election	96/225 (43%)	136/468 (28%)	188/471 (40%)	212/388 (55%)	168/339 (50%)	86/364 (24%)	886/2255 (39%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/nominated in previous election	5/225 (2%)	8/468 (2%)	5/471 (1%)	11/388 (3%)	4/339 (1%)	39/364 (11%)	72/2255 (3%)
Renominated by different party/nominated in previous election	2/225 (1%)	3/468 (1%)	6/471 (1%)	4/388 (1%)	11/339 (3%)	13/364 (4%)	39/2255 (2%)
Renominated in the by same party (winning)/nominated in previous election	68/85 (80%)	76/120 (63%)	143/161 (89%)	160/182 (88%)	139/182 (76%)	69/138 (50%)	655/868 (76%)
Renominated by same party in same constituency (winning)/nominated in previous election	66/85 (78%)	75/120 (63%)	141/161 (88%)	153/182 (84%)	135/182 (74%)	52/138 (38%)	622/868 (72%)
Renominated (by same party)/contestants in the current election	111/468 (24%)	144/471 (31%)	193/388 (50%)	223/339 (66%)	172/364 (47%)	125/433 (29%)	968/2463 (39%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/contestants in the current election	96/468 (21%)	136/471 (29%)	188/388 (49%)	212/339 (63%)	168/364 (46%)	86/433 (20%)	886//2463 (36%)
Renominated in the by same party (winning)/contestants in the current election	68/468 (15%)	76/471 (16%)	143/388 (37%)	160/339 (47%)	139/364 (38%)	69/433 (16%)	655//2463 (27%)
Renominated by same party in same constituency (winning)/contestants in the current election	66/468 (14%)	75/471 (16%)	141/388 (36%)	153/339 (45%)	135/364 (37%)	52/433 (12%)	622//2463 (25%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1991–2009.

explained is the 24 per cent of incumbents who were not renominated over 1991–2009. This figure is too high to be explained by death, defection or retirement from active politics from election to election. The BJP like the Congress drops incumbents and brings in fresh faces. A point to be kept in mind is that after 1996 the BJP was attempting to expand beyond its traditional upper-caste and urban voter base through what it called social engineering which implied bringing in nominees from newer segments of society.

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Looking at the data for CPI (M) for the period 1971–2009 (Table 4), we discern that the CPI (M) is the only party which has consistently renominated a very high percentage of former candidates across parties, higher than the other parties. The party renominated a majority of its former candidates, 56 per cent (252/455), unlike the Congress and BJP, in the elections held from 1971. There has been only one instance, in 2004, where a former CPI (M) candidate has defected and contested on a different party ticket. The CPI (M) has renominated a large majority, 73 per cent (221/305), of its incumbents since 1971. These findings probably reflect the fact that the party has contested seats mostly from its three stronghold states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, where it has either been in power for very long periods (West Bengal, 1977–2011, Tripura, 1993–2013) or alternated in power every term (Kerala since 1982). It would seem to make sense, in this context, to allow politicians the continuity to build political careers and also become the identifiable face of the party for the voters in the constituency.

Comparative picture for the Congress, BJP and CPI (M) in the post-Congress hegemony phase, 1991–2009

The 1989 election marked the end of Congress hegemony in that the Congress plurality of votes no longer converted to a majority of seats, and since then all elections have resulted in hung parliaments and minority governments or coalition governments. Hence, it is useful to compare the three major national parties, Congress, BJP and CPI (M) on renomination of candidates and incumbents since the 1991 election, the first after the 1989 watershed. We focus on the renomination of former candidates and of incumbents to see if any patterns are discernible and then try to explain those patterns. The patterns that emerge are as follows (from Table 5) for the Congress, BJP and CPI (M) for the period 1991–2009.

Of the candidates nominated between the years 1991–2009, only the CPI (M) renominated a majority (59 per cent or 154/262) of its former candidates;

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Table 4. CPI (M) (1971–2009).

Indicators	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	Grand total
Renominated (by same party)/nominated in previous election	16/27 (59%)	19/51 (37%)	16/31 (52%)	29/41 (71%)	18/43 (42%)	29/43 (67%)	24/41 (59%)	25/42 (60%)	28/43 (65%)	27/46 (59%)	21/47 (45%)	252/455 (56%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/nominated in previous election	14/27 (52%)	16/51 (31%)	13/31 (42%)	26/41 (63%)	17/43 (40%)	28/43 (65%)	22/41 (54%)	25/42 (60%)	28/43 (65%)	27/46 (59%)	19/47 (40%)	235/455 (52%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/nominated in previous election	2/27 (7%)	3/51 (6%)	1/31 (3%)	3/41 (7%)	1/43 (2%)	0/43 (0%)	0/41 (0%)	0/42 (0%)	0/43 (0%)	0/46 (0%)	2/47 (4%)	12/455 (3%)
Renominated by different Party/nominated in previous election	0/27 (0%)	0/51 (0%)	0/31 (0%)	0/41 (0%)	0/43 (0%)	0/43 (0%)	0/41 (0%)	0/42 (0%)	0/43 (0%)	1/46 (2%)	0/47 (0%)	1/455 (2%)
Incumbents renominated/ winners in previous election	9/14 (64%)	16/24 (67%)	14/17 (82%)	27/37 (73%)	15/21 (71%)	24/29 (83%)	22/30 (73%)	23/30 (77%)	27/32 (84%)	25/31 (81%)	21/40 (53%)	221/305 (73%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	7/14 (50%)	13/24 (54%)	12/17 (71%)	24/37 (65%)	0/21 (0)	24/29 (83%)	22/30 (73%)	23/30 (77%)	27/32 (84%)	25/31 (81%)	19/40 (48%)	196/305 (64%)
Renominated (by same party)/contestants in the current election	16/51 (31%)	19/31 (61%)	16/41 (39%)	29/43 (67%)	18/43 (42%)	29/41 (71%)	24/42 (57%)	25/43 (58%)	28/46 (61%)	27/47 (57%)	21/48 (44%)	252/476 (53%)

(*Continued*)

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Table 4. Continued.

Indicators	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	Grand total
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/contestants in the current election	14/51 (28%)	16/31 (52%)	13/41 (32%)	26/43 (61%)	17/43 (40%)	28/41 (68%)	22/42 (52%)	25/43 (58%)	28/46 (61%)	27/47 (57%)	19/48 (40%)	235/476 (49%)
Incumbents renominated/ contestants in the current election	9/51 (18%)	16/31 (52%)	14/41 (34%)	27/43 (63%)	15/43 (35%)	24/41 (59%)	22/42 (52%)	23/43 (53%)	27/46 (59%)	25/47 (53%)	21/48 (44%)	221/476 (46%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/ contestants in the current election	7/51 (14%)	13/31 (42%)	12/41 (29%)	24/43 (56%)	0/43 (0%)	24/41 (59%)	22/42 (52%)	23/43 (53%)	27/46 (59%)	25/47 (53%)	19/48 (40%)	196/476 (41%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1967–2009.

Table 5. Overall record for the Congress, BJP and CPI (M), 1991–2009.

Indicators	INC	BJP	CPM
Renominated (by same party)/ nominated in previous election	1070/2886 (37%)	968/2255 (43%)	154/262 (59%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/ nominated in previous election	970/2886 (34%)	886/2255 (39%)	149/262 (57%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/ nominated in previous election	100/2886 (4%)	72/2255 (3%)	2/262 (1%)
Renominated by different Party/nominated in previous election	108/2886 (4%)	39/2255 (3%)	1/262 (0.4%)
Incumbents renominated/ winners in previous election	701/1028 (68%)	655/868 (76%)	142/292 (74%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	662/1028 (64%)	622/868 (72%)	140/192 (73%)
Renominated (by same party)/ contestants in the current election	1070/2816 (38%)	968/2463 (39%)	154/267 (58%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/ contestants in the current election	970/2816 (34%)	886/2463 (36%)	149/267 (56%)
Incumbents Renominated/ contestants in the current election	701/2816 (25%)	655/2463 (27%)	142/267 (53%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/ contestants in the current election	662/2816 (24%)	62/2463 (25%)	140/267 (52%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1989–2009.

the BJP 43 per cent (968/2255) and the Congress 37 per cent (1070/2886). The difference between the BJP and the Congress is marginal, primarily due to the decline in BJP fortunes in 2004 and 2009.

Analysing the fate of the incumbents between 1991 and 2009, and hence, the prevalence of the 'sitting-getting' thumb rule or otherwise, we find that all three parties renominated a majority of their incumbents. The BJP renominated 76 per cent (655/868) of its incumbents, the CPI (M) 74 per cent (142/192) and the Congress 68 per cent (701/1028).

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Viewing the renominations across parties from the perspective of the percentage of renominees in the total number of candidates nominated in a given election, we get the following picture. With the exception of the CPI (M) in several elections, and a few elections for other parties (Congress in 1989, BJP in 1999), only a minority of candidates in any election were candidates in the previous election, a result which holds even more strongly for incumbents (rows 7 and 9 for candidates and incumbents, respectively, in the tables).

Comparative picture of the five parties over the last two elections, 2004 and 2009

Comparing the five major parties that we analyse in the paper in the 2004 and 2009 elections can potentially yield useful insights into party behaviour on nominations. Comparing Congress, BJP, CPI (M), SP and BSP for the years 2004 and 2009 (Tables 6 and 7 for the BSP and SP specifically, and Table 8 comparing all five parties) we discover the following patterns.

Table 6. BSP (2004–2009).

Indicators	2004	2009	Grand total
Renominated (by same party)/nominated in previous election	14/85 (17%)	13/80 (16%)	27/165 (16%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/nominated in previous election	13/85 (15%)	8/80 (10%)	21/165 (13%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/nominated in previous election	1/85 (1%)	5/80 (6%)	6/165 (4%)
Renominated by different Party/ nominated in previous election	3/85 (4%)	3/80 (4%)	6/165 (4%)
Incumbents renominated/winners in previous election	6/14 (43%)	9/19 (47%)	15/33 (46%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	6/14 (43%)	4/19 (21%)	10/33 (30%)
Renominated (by same party)/ contestants in the current election	14/80 (18%)	13/80 (16%)	27/160 (17%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/contestants in the current election	13/80 (16%)	8/80 (10%)	21/160 (13%)
Incumbents renominated/contestants in the current election	6/80 (8%)	9/80 (11%)	15/160 (9%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/contestants in the current election	6/80 (8%)	4/80 (5%)	10/160 (6%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1999–2009.

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Table 7. SP (2004–2009).

Indicators	2004	2009	Grand total
Renominated (by same party)/nominated in previous election	28/84 (33%)	18/68 (27%)	46/152 (30%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/nominated in previous election	28/84 (33%)	10/68 (15%)	38/152 (25%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/nominated in previous election	0/84 (0)	8/68 (12%)	8/152 (5%)
Renominated by different Party/ nominated in previous election	6/84 (7%)	10/68 (15%)	16/152 (11%)
Incumbents renominated/winners in previous election	15/26 (58%)	15/35 (43%)	30/61 (5%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	15/26 (58%)	8/35 (23%)	23/61 (38%)
Renominated (by same party)/ contestants in the current election	28/68 (41%)	18/75 (24%)	46/143 (32%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/contestants in the current election	28/68 (41%)	10/75 (13%)	38/143 (27%)
Incumbents renominated/contestants in the current election	15/68 (22%)	15/75 (20%)	30/143 (21%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/contestants in the current election	15/68 (22%)	8/75 (11%)	23/143 (16%)

Source: ECI Statistical Reports on General Elections 1999–2009.

The Congress party renominated only 33 per cent (286/870) of its former candidates. For the BJP the figure was 42 per cent (297/703), for the CPI (M) 52 per cent (48/93) and for the SP and BSP, a relatively low 30 per cent (46/152) and very low 16 per cent (26/165), respectively. Clearly, with the exception of the CPI (M), the 'sitting-getting' rule does not apply to candidates, least of all to the BSP and SP, in the last two elections.

Defections and nominations by other parties were much higher in the case of the SP in particular. As an indicator of politicians defecting to other parties before elections in search of nomination, 11 per cent (16/152) of SP candidates were nominated by some other party, and likewise, 4 per cent (6/165) BSP candidates, 2 per cent Congress (19/870), 3 per cent (24/703) BJP candidates and 1 per cent CPM (1/93). The SP's and BSP's former candidates for the years 2004 and 2009 nominated by other parties were in the SP's case, the BSP (11) and Congress (3), BJP (1), National Labour Party (1) and the BSP's case, the SP (2), Shiromani Akali Dal (1) and BJP (3).

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Table 8. Aggregate for Congress, BJP, CPI (M), SP and BSP 2004–2009.

Indicators	INC	BJP	CPM	SP	BSP
Renominated (by same party)/nominated in previous election	286/870 (33%)	297/703 (42%)	48/93 (52%)	46/152 (30%)	27/165 (16%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/ nominated in previous election	239/870 (28%)	254/703 (36%)	46/93 (50%)	38/152 (25%)	21/165 (13%)
Renominated (by same party) in different constituency/ nominated in previous election	47/870 (5%)	43/703 (6%)	2/93 (2%)	8/152 (5%)	6/165 (4%)
Renominated by different Party/nominated in previous election	19/870 (2%)	24/703 (3%)	1/93 (1%)	16/152 (11%)	6/165 (4%)
Incumbents renominated/winners in previous election	180/259 (70%)	208/320 (65%)	46/71 (65%)	30/61 (49%)	15/33 (46%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/winners in previous election	149/259 (58%)	187/320 (58%)	44/71 (62%)	23/61 (38%)	10/33 (30%)
Renominated (by same party)/contestants in the current election	286/857 (33%)	297/797 (37%)	48/95 (51%)	46/143 (32%)	27/160 (17%)
Renominated (by same party) in same constituency/ contestants in the current election	239/857 (28%)	254/797 (32%)	46/95 (48%)	38/143 (27%)	21/160 (13%)
Incumbents Renominated/contestants in the current election	180/857 (21%)	208/797 (26%)	46/95 (48%)	30/143 (21%)	15/160 (9%)
Incumbents renominated in same constituency/ contestants in the current election	149/857 (17%)	187/797 (24%)	4/95 (46%)	23/143 (16%)	10/160 (6%)

Renominations from the same constituencies and by the same parties?

Two other important findings from the all the tables above, taken together, are as follows.

All parties, when they renominate either candidates or incumbents, tend to renominate them overwhelmingly from the same constituency (rows 2, 3 and 5 of the tables contain information on this). The only exception seems to be 2009 because the delimitation of constituencies, mentioned earlier, necessitated a certain degree of renomination from new constituencies, that is, those whose names were changed. Likewise, only a small percentage of politicians defected to and obtained nominations from other parties (row 4 of tables).

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Renomination of former candidates and incumbents

In conclusion, does the 'sitting-getting' rule of thumb for candidate and incumbent renomination apply in general?

For candidates, the pattern is as follows. Overall, with the exception of the CPI (M) which renominated 56 per cent of candidates since 1971, the 'sitting-getting' rule of thumb does not apply to any party except for occasional years when over 50 per cent were renominated (only 1989 for the Congress since 1957, and 1999 for the BJP since 1991). For the BSP the renomination rate was as low as 17 per cent. However, a substantial minority of candidates, on average, were renominated for the Congress (38 per cent), BJP (43 per cent) and SP (30 per cent) for the relevant periods, indicating that while the rule of thumb might be a starting point in the internal process, particularly for parties with institutionalised internal processes that start from the bottom, the actual criteria are the candidate's current victory prospects, and that applying this criterion the majority of losing former candidates tend to get eliminated at some stage in the internal processes described in the literature review.

For incumbents, the pattern is as follows. Overall, the Congress renominated 57 per cent of its incumbents over the 1957–2009 period, the post-Congress hegemony period of 1991–2009 seeing a rise to 68 per cent. In contrast, it renominated only a minority of incumbents in the first four elections in our dataset, 1957–1971, falling to a low of 36 per cent in 1967. After 1977, it fell below 50 per cent only in 1980 (49 per cent). The BJP renominated a high overall 76 per cent of incumbents in the 1991–2009 period, the CPI (M) 73 per cent over 1971–2009, the SP 49 per cent and the BSP 46 per cent over 2004–2009. Clearly, the 'sitting-getting' rule of thumb applies to nomination of incumbents, or at the very least is the starting point for the internal processes of parties, particularly for those that have relatively institutionalised selection processes that start from the bottom. However, since the percentage of incumbents dropped is also very considerable, and for the BSP

and SP a majority, as was the case for the Congress up to 1971, the internal processes of parties also weed out incumbents for varying reasons including most probably, from interview material, because of incumbent's current victory prospects look poor, and to accommodate new faces sometimes representing new sections of the electorate the parties want to woo.

How do the three hypotheses fare?

How do these patterns relate to our three hypotheses on party type, early/snap elections, institutionalisation of selection processes, and nominations?

The hypothesis about early/snap elections tending towards higher repetition of incumbents finds the following degree of support. There were five early elections, 1971, 1980, 1991, 1998 and 1999. The hypothesis gets support as far as the BJP is concerned in that its renomination of incumbents in the last three early elections (80 per cent, 89 per cent and 88 per cent) is higher than its overall for the period (76 per cent). The hypothesis also gets support, although less strongly, for the CPI (M), whose renomination of incumbents in the last four early elections (82 per cent, 83 per cent, 77 per cent, 84 per cent) was above its overall for the period (73 per cent). The picture for the Congress is more mixed. The first two early elections were after the 1969 and 1978 splits in the Congress, which were also reflected in the lower than overall rate of renominations of candidates, as a significant number of former candidates and incumbents went to the breakaway factions or the Janata party, respectively, after 1969 and 1977 and 1978. The rates of renomination in 1991, 1998 and 1999 (65 per cent, 70 per cent and 77 per cent) were higher, however, than the overall 57 per cent for the entire period, and in the last two early elections higher than the 68 per cent overall figure for the post-1989 period. The post-assassination election of 1984 also saw a higher renomination percentage than all but one election until then, perhaps a new leader (Rajiv Gandhi) coming to power less than two months before the election not having the time or inclination to make changes in what was to an extent a plebiscitary election. Conversely, we might add, a weakened leadership in 1989, due to the Bofors allegations, also might have been constrained to renominate a large percentage of incumbents.

The hypothesis of ethnic or ideological parties that can take their voter base more or less for granted and hence being more autonomous in dropping candidates, finds support in the relatively low renomination rates for both incumbents and candidates by the caste- and community-based BSP and SP compared to the Congress, BJP and CPI (M). However, if one looks at the ideological parties like the CPI (M) and BJP we find a relatively high rate of renomination of incumbents. For both, the relative stability of their core voter base has to be balanced against the more institutionalised process of selection that

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both parties have. Also, party leaderships, even if more autonomous due to assured core voters based on ideology and not on interest group representation and patronage, might not be inclined to drop their incumbents if they calculate that they are likely winners. For the BJP, we have to factor in the fact that of the six elections since 1991, three were early elections. Also, for the BJP we need to factor in the fact that in the post-1989 period, particularly after 1996, it was in the process of becoming a more catchall party that was consciously expanding beyond its traditional core voter base of the urban, upper castes and middle classes.

Constituency instability in nominations, and other-party acceptance of defectors, are fairly low, indicated by nominations by the same party from another constituency, and other-party nominations of a particular party's candidate, both being under 5 per cent for the overall period of most parties. However, the ideological parties, BJP and CPI (M), show the least degree of defection or shuffling of constituencies. The larger point that emerges about relationship of incumbents to constituents is that there is a fairly strong relationship that is reflected in the low rate of reshuffling of constituencies in renominations.

The hypothesis of parties with more institutionalised and bottom-up internal processes for candidate selection finding it more difficult to drop incumbents finds support. The Congress, BJP and especially CPI (M), have a significantly higher rate of renomination of incumbents, majorities in each case, compared to the BSP and SP which have dropped the majority of their incumbents in each of the two elections since they emerged as significant parties. However, this has also to be viewed against the background of party strategy in each of these elections. The BSP and SP have both attempted to broaden their base and incorporate new segments of the electorate in their stronghold state of UP over this period. This implies including members of such segments as candidates in at least some constituencies. In practice, this means reaching out to caste groups that would normally be outside the party's fold or making a catchall pitch that would attract votes. Outreach to new caste groups has been termed 'social engineering' by the BJP and has been attempted by the BSP and SP. Such outreach dictates accommodative politics to newly mobilised groups or groups traditionally with other parties, which means giving them representation in nominations, which could also imply dropping incumbents in a large percentage of constituencies to include candidates who represent groups that are being wooed. The leadership of ideological or ethnic parties could, if they were so inclined, deny nomination to incumbents and former candidates without losing the support of their core voters. The larger point that comes out from the data and interviews about the relationship of candidates to party hierarchies (leaderships) is that the major Indian parties are leadership-dominated and find it possible to drop the majority of candidates of the past election.

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Conclusion

This paper is a first cut at the relationship between incumbency, renomination and internal processes in some major Indian parties. It is based on trying to relate the renomination data to three hypotheses related to election timing, party type and internal processes, based on the existing comparative and Indian party nomination literature and interview material. We have demonstrated support for the 'sitting-getting' rule for incumbent renomination, though not for candidate renomination, and predominant support for the two hypotheses on early elections, and on institutionalised internal selection processes, tending to result in higher rates of repetition of incumbents, while yielding mixed support for the hypothesis that ethnic and ideological parties with assured voter bases can more easily drop incumbents. More definitive conclusions will require detailed interview material on nomination strategy for each election, something that is not possible given that some of the key players are no more, and even those that are still with us will not be able to recall the precise details of much earlier elections, even of the 1990s. However, a potentially fruitful direction for additional work is state-level patterns of renomination for both Lok Sabha and assembly elections, particularly for the past decade for which key actors might remember procedural details.

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Notes

1. The categorisation below paraphrases Bille (2001).
2. See Aldrich (1995) and Epstein (1986) for the evolution of party organisation and primaries.
3. Ibid, pp. 367–368.
4. Ibid, p. 368.
5. For such trends across a range of countries, see Bille (2001), LeDuc (2001), Hopkin (2001) and Rahat and Hazan (2001).
6. See Kirchheimer (1966) for the catch-all party; Panebianco (1988) for the electoral–professional party; Katz and Mair, 'Changing Models . . . .', for the cartel party.
7. For a detailed typology of political parties, see Gunther and Diamond (2001); for a typology applied to India, see Sridharan and Varshney (2001).
8. Ibid, p. 835.
9. Palmer, ibid, p. 280, and Narain and Lal (1969).

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10. Narain and Lal, ibid, 210–211.
11. There is very little work focusing on candidate renomination from 1970s onwards. Hence the jump from the candidate nomination process from the 1970s to the 2009 election.
12. Confidential interviews, 31 August 2009, and 25 December 2010, respectively, with two Central ministers involved in the Congress nomination process, and likewise, 14 June 2012, with a former Central minister and chief minister involved in the process.
13. Confidential interview, 4 January 2011, and follow-up telephonic interaction with key BJP party functionary dealing with assessment of potential candidates, evaluation of party electoral prospects and observer for the election nomination process in some states.
14. Interview, see note 20; this opinion of the polling firms was this functionary's opinion, which was critical of the party president.
15. Confidential interview, 4 January 2011, and follow-up telephonic interaction with key BJP party functionary dealing with assessment of potential candidates, evaluation of party electoral prospects and observer for the election nomination process in some states.
16. The account below is based on a detailed interview with Prakash Karat, General Secretary of the CPI (M), 29 October 2012.
17. When we speak of institutionalised processes, these need not necessarily be democratic. They can be controlled or guided processes. However, they are processes with stages nevertheless, and not arbitrary decisions or interventions by the top leadership.
18. Interview with an editor and newspaper proprietor who was a BSP candidate in 2009 and who was earlier an SP member of parliament and knows both parties very well from the inside as a long-time associate of their top leaders, 15 February 2011; he is now again with the SP.
19. Interview with an editor and newspaper proprietor who was a BSP candidate in 2009 and who was earlier an SP member of parliament and knows both parties very well from the inside as a long-time associate of their top leaders, 15 February 2011.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Interviews with party insiders in the Congress, BJP, SP and BSP involved in the nomination process including two current and two former Central ministers in both the Congress and the BJP, and with Prakash Karat, General Secretary of the CPI (M), 29 October 2012.

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