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The years 1964 and 1967 stand as two crucial landmarks in the democratic development of India's political systems both at the center and in the several states. In the three years since Nehru's death in May, 1964, Indian politics entered fully into a major test of legitimacy.¹ Since 1964, the national leadership of the Indian National Congress has three times demonstrated its ability to handle smoothly the first stage of India's process of legitimizing democratic political authority—that of transferring power from a charismatic leader to his successors within the dominant party.² After the 1967 General Elections, Indian politics moved to a second stage to confront the problems of transferring power from the previously dominant Congress to diverse parties and party coalitions in more than half the Indian states.³

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¹ The analysis here has been influenced by Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), esp. pp. 407–412.

² The successions have been amply documented by Michael Brecher in *Nehru's Mantle: The Politics of Succession in India* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966) and in "Succession in India 1967: The Routinization of Political Change," *Asian Survey*, 7 (July, 1967), 423–443.

³ A transfer of power at the state level took place as early as 1957 in Kerala. However, Kerala has always been considered an exceptional state and its politics have been considered an aberration in a general pattern of Congress dominance. The change in 1967 is far more massive and is widely believed in India to presage the defeat of the Congress at the center. When and if this oc-

The purpose of this paper is to examine the implications for party development in India of the ways in which power has been transferred from the Congress to multi-group coalitions in the three north Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. Specifically, I am concerned with the structural characteristics of the developing party systems in the three states; with the roles played in the systems by parties, factions, and individuals; and with the impact of the ways in which the systems function upon government formation and stability. I will argue that north Indian political parties operate in systems in which inter-party ideological divisions are less decisive in the formation and breakup of governments than intra-party divisions. Under these conditions, opportunities exist for independents and party defectors to hold the balance and dictate terms to the established parties. The activities of such political entrepreneurs impart fluidity and flexibility to party politics in north India. They also raise the question whether the minimum conditions of stable government provided by the Congress in the first two decades of independent government in India can be provided in multi-party systems in which the Congress monopoly of power is broken.

I. NORTH INDIAN PARTY SYSTEMS

Until now, the predominant model used to describe the Indian party system has been that of one-party dominance. The model, developed by Rajni Kothari⁴ and W. H. Morris-Jones⁵ had two prominent features. The first was that the system provided inter-party competition but no alternation of power. The second was that the usual functions of opposition parties in a

cursor, Indian democracy will enter its third test, that of transfer of power at the center.

⁴ Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India," *Asian Survey*, 4 (December, 1964), 1161–1173.

⁵ Morris-Jones' views on the one-party dominant system are presented most systematically in his "Dominance and Dissent: Their Inter-relationships in the Indian Party System," *Government and Opposition* 1 (August, 1966), 451–466. See also his *Government and Politics of India* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964), ch. V, and "Parliament and the Dominant Party," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 17 (Summer, 1964), 296–307.

democracy were in India shared between opposition parties and groups within the Congress. That is, opposition parties acted essentially as catalysts for groups within the Congress to articulate discontent and bring about leadership changes in the dominant party.

All models are simplifications of reality, which emphasize the factors considered to be determining forces in a system. The dominant party model emphasized the amorphousness of the Congress and its absorptive capacity. It paid less attention to contrary patterns of political behavior which have now become decisive. Before 1967, the alternations in power which had occurred in P.E.P.S.U. and in Kerala and the coalition governments which had existed in Orissa and in Andhra Pradesh might have been viewed as deviant cases. After 1967, transfers of power to non-Congress parties or coalitions occurred in more than half the Indian states.

Second, the model properly emphasized the importance of patterns of communication and interpenetration between the Congress and non-Congress organizations, which continue to exist in important respects. However, there have been two important features of those patterns of communication which now work against the maintenance of Congress dominance. First, inter-party communication has always been a two-way process. Factions in the Congress have sometimes capitalized upon issues raised by opposition parties to gain advantage in struggles for power within Congress. However, factional rivalry has often been sufficiently intense within the Congress and party loyalties so weak that opposing factions have been willing to carry their conflicts to the point of defeating the Congress organization or defecting from it.⁶ Second, some opposition parties have been serious about taking power from the Congress and have been unwilling to act only by applying pressure on the "margin" of Congress power. During and after the 1967 elections, the opportunity came in many states for dissident factions in the Congress to win power outside the Congress by joining with opposition parties which were making a determined bid for power.

Third, the Congress "system" was never a single one-party dominant system. Rather, it consisted of a national party system with links to the states and seventeen regional multi-party systems in which the Congress was dominant. Each multi-party system had its own distinctive features, despite a common pattern

of Congress dominance. In Kerala, Congress "dominance" existed only in the sense that the Congress continued to poll the largest number of votes in the state.

Finally, all the systems have contained not only parties and factions within parties, but significant non-party elements—both independents and individuals who have passed from one party to another in search of individual power and prestige.

In the aftermath of the 1967 elections, the Congress-dominated multi-party systems have been replaced in north India by highly complex systems in which parties, factions, and individuals all play important roles. The kinds of coalitions which emerged after the 1967 elections and which are likely to emerge in future depend upon the interactions of these three kinds of forces, which do not act in a random fashion, but according to the logic inherent in the particular balance of forces which exists at a given moment. The ability of the Congress to form a government now depends on its own internal cohesion and factional structure at the moment of opportunity, as well as upon the cohesion of the forces arrayed against it. Similarly, the ability of a non-Congress coalition to form a government depends upon the willingness of the parties to compromise their differences and to maintain greater cohesion than Congress. Finally, independents and defectors come into prominence whenever the balance between the Congress and alternative coalitions is close.

Congress Factions. After the elections, the Congress was reduced to a minority in the legislatures of the three north Indian states. Nevertheless, as the largest single party in each of the three states (see Table 1), it was open to the Congress to attempt either to form a minority government or to form a government with the support of independents or other parties. A brief review of the structure of factional conflict in the Congress in these three states at the time will show how variations in patterns of factional organization influenced the ability of the Congress to form a government.

In all three states, the Congress was affected by a continuing decline in organizational coherence and an intensification of internal factional strife. In the Punjab, the Congress organization was in complete disarray, still struggling to reacquire some organizational coherence in the aftermath of the dismissal in 1964 of a strong leader, Pratap Singh Kairon. The party was so fragmented that it could not select a leader before the opposition coalition was formed and had selected its leader. In a very delicately balanced house, where the first to act had the advantage, a diverse inter-party coal-

⁶ See Paul R. Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL VALID VOTES AND SEATS WON BY PARTY IN THE 1967 ELECTIONS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES IN BIHAR, UTTAR PRADESH, AND PUNJAB

Party	Bihar		Uttar Pradesh		Punjab	
	Votes %	Seats No.	Votes %	Seats No.	Votes %	Seats No.
C.P.I. (M)	1.28	4	1.27	1	3.19	3
C.P.I.	6.91	24	3.23	13	5.27	5
S.S.P.	17.62	68	9.97	44	.72	1
P.S.P.	6.96	18	4.09	11	.51	0
CONGRESS	33.08	128	32.20	199	36.56	47
Swantantra	2.33	3	4.73	12	.51	0
Jan Sangh	10.42	26	21.67	98	9.84	9
<i>Regional Parties</i>						
J.K.D. ^a	3.33	13	—	—	—	—
Akali Dal (Sant)	—	—	—	—	24.68 ^b	24
Akali Dal (Master)	—	—	—	—	—	2
Republican	0.18	1	4.14	10	1.79	3
Independents	17.88	33 ^a	18.69	37	16.94	10
Total	99.99	318	99.99	425	100.01	104

Source: India, Election Commission. *Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967*, Vol. II (Statistical).

^a Thirteen independents in Bihar were actually associated with the J.K.D. so that the strength of the J.K.D. in the Bihar Assembly immediately after the elections was 26.

^b Approximately 20% of the vote for the two Akali parties was won by the Sant Akali Dal.

tion was able to move faster and form a government before the Congress could muster its forces for an attempt.

In Bihar, there were four Congress leaders who reputedly hoped to become chief minister after the 1967 elections by defeating during the elections as many as possible of the Congress candidates supporting their rivals. After the elections, a contest for the leadership of the Congress Legislature Party was held between two of the "big four," Mahesh Prasad Sinha and Binodanand Jha, in which the latter was defeated by one vote. Although the Congress was relatively far from power in Bihar, with only 128 seats out of 318, Pandit Jha and 34 other Congress legislators made it clear in a statement released to the press that even if Mahesh Prasad Sinha had any idea of making an attempt to form a government, they would not support him.⁷

In Uttar Pradesh, in addition to the two long-standing, rival Gupta and Tripathi groups contending against each other, a third group of ostensible supporters of the outgoing chief minister, Mrs. Kripalani, had been formed.⁸ How-

ever, the outgoing chief minister was "exiled" to Delhi, Kamalapati Tripathi was defeated in the general elections, and C. B. Gupta was left as the clear choice for Leader. A situation of tri-group conflict had been transformed into single-group dominance, which made possible the unanimous election of C. B. Gupta as Leader of the Legislature party. Gupta, with what he thought was the backing of the whole party, succeeded in outwitting and outbidding an opposition coalition in gaining the support of the independents and in forming a government. However, that government was brought down within less than three weeks by a major defection from Congress ranks and was replaced by a non-Congress government.

groups in Uttar Pradesh, see Brass, *op. cit.*, ch. III, and Bruce Graham, "The Succession of Factional Systems in the Uttar Pradesh Congress, 1937-1967," (unpublished paper). For Bihar and Punjab, see Ramashray Roy, "Intra-Party Conflict in the Bihar Congress," *Asian Survey*, 6 (December, 1966), 706-715 and Paul Wallace, "The Political Party System of Punjab State (India): A Study of Factionalism," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1966).

⁷ *Indian Nation*, March 5 and 7, 1967.

⁸ On the origin and development of Congress

Thus, the patterns of internal competition in the Congress varied significantly in the three states. In Punjab, the pattern was one of multi-group competition so chaotic as to prevent early election of a leader. In Bihar, multi-group competition coalesced into a temporary evenly-balanced polarity which made the election of a leader possible, but prevented him from leading the party effectively. In Uttar Pradesh, one group emerged dominant after the election, a leader was unanimously elected, who acted skillfully in forming a government, but then could not maintain cohesion in his own party to provide stable support for the government.

Inter-Party Competition. The one-party dominant system covered a wide variety of regional variations in the structure and features of inter-party competition. In the three north Indian states, the one-party dominant system has now been replaced by multi-party systems. The practical and theoretical question now raised by the rise of multi-party systems in north India is whether the developmental tendencies are toward immobilism or fluidity in the systems. There is a superficial resemblance between the north Indian party systems and Giovanni Sartori's model of a polarized, multipolar, and centrifugal party system,⁹ but patterns of inter-party competition and coalition deviate significantly from what should be expected on the basis of the European precedents. Table 1 shows the 1967 election results for the legislative assemblies in north India. The Table, arranged loosely from Left to Right in the upper portion, with the CPI (Marxist) representing the extreme Left and Swatantra and Jan Sangh the extreme Right, shows that there is both extreme pluralism and a high degree of polarity (that is, in Sartori's use of the term "polarity," there is a very wide spectrum of

opinion reflected among the legislative parties). The systems share with their European counterparts also the existence of a massive center, occupied by the Congress, and multiple lines of cleavage. The party system in each state is cleft by combinations of divisions of varying importance in each case along the following dimensions—socialism and conservatism, secularism and communalism, national orientation and regional orientation, pro-system and anti-system.

In all three north Indian states, the Congress occupies the center position which, from an ideological point of view, can be described as moderate nationalism, national unity, constitutionalism, planned development, and secularism. On either side of the Congress are more or less strong tendencies towards aggressive nationalism (Jan Sangh), regional autonomy (Akali Dal [Master]), anti-constitutionalism (CPI [M]), *laissez-faire* liberalism (Swatantra), and communalism (Jan Sangh and the Akali parties). Moreover, the electoral trend has been towards radicalization. The strength of the center has decreased and that of the extremes has increased over the four general elections.¹⁰

Despite the superficial resemblance of the north Indian party systems to the center-based European party systems, there are three distinctive features which differentiate them from their European counterparts. One is the absence of anti-system challenges from the Right and the decline of anti-system tendencies on the Left. There are no monarchical parties in north India nor can either Jan Sangh or the Akali Dal be considered fascist parties in the European sense. On the Left, the tendency in recent years has been towards increasing commitment of the CPI to the parliamentary system. Second, the formation of diverse multi-party coalition governments against the Con-

⁹ Giovanni Sartori, "European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism," in La Palombara and Weiner, *op. cit.*, ch. V. Sartori's model is derived from the party systems of contemporary Italy, the French Fourth Republic, and Weimar Germany. These systems are characterized by a "lack of basic consensus in which the distribution of opinion covers the maximum conceivable distance" (polarization), multiple lines of cleavage (multipolarity), and "growing radicalization" (centrifugal tendencies); see pp. 138-139. Sartori is not always clear and consistent in his definitions, but the model is far more useful than the conventional descriptions of European multiparty systems and is especially useful for purposes of comparison of and distinction among multiparty systems, which may vary considerably from one political system to another.

¹⁰ From 1952 to 1967, the Congress share of the popular vote has declined from 41.47% to 33.1% in Bihar, while the combined Communist vote has gone from 1.1% to 8.2% and the Jan Sangh has increased from 1.2% to 10.4%. In Uttar Pradesh, Congress has declined from 47.9% to 32.2% while the Communist vote has gone from .9% to 4.5% and that of the Jan Sangh from 6.4% to 21.7%. In Punjab, Congress secured 34.8% of the vote in 1952, rose to a high of 47.5% in 1957, and declined to 36.6% in the reorganized Punjab. The Communist vote has been transmuted since 1952 in the Punjab from 5.3% to 8.5% while that of Jan Sangh has gone from 5.0% to 9.8%. Figures from India, Election Commission, *Report on the First General Elections in India, 1951-52* and *Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967*.

gress after the elections distinguishes the north Indian party systems from the European systems, which have contained ideological rigidities limiting possible party coalitions. In the European systems described by Sartori, the extreme parties have been traditionally excluded from government while coalitions based on a dominant center party have enjoyed a monopoly of power. In north India, the extremes have been included and the center party at least temporarily excluded. Third, the north Indian party systems are characterized not only by extreme pluralism but by a very strong element of non-party voting for independents.

Independents and Defectors. Table 1 shows that 33 independents were elected to the Bihar Assembly and that independents polled 17.9% of the total vote, more than any other single party except Congress and the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP). Even this figure does not accurately reflect the extent of independent voting and the number of independents elected in Bihar, for the Jan Kranti Dal (JKD) was a party composed of independents supported by the Raja of Ramgarh and Congress defectors who left the party before the election. The JKD has since then broken up. In Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, independents play a similarly large role in the political systems. Thirty-seven independents were elected in Uttar Pradesh and ten in Punjab, with the total independent vote in the two states reaching 18.7% and 16.9% respectively. In Uttar Pradesh, the independent vote was larger than that for all parties except Congress and Jan Sangh. In Punjab, it was larger than the vote for all parties except Congress and the Akali Dal. After the elections, the fluidity of the systems was increased further by party defections from the SSP in Bihar, from the Congress and other parties in Uttar Pradesh, and from Congress and the Akali Dal in Punjab.

Clearly, neither the one-party dominant system model nor the European-derived model of a center-based multi-party system applies to the complex and fluid systems which exist in north India. The one-party dominant system model no longer applies because the era of Congress dominance has ended. The model of a polarized multipolar party system does not apply because ideology does not play the same rigidifying role which it plays in Europe and because opportunists in the shape of independents and party defectors play a decisive balancing role in the systems. In the remainder of this paper, the roles played by ideology and opportunism in the north Indian party systems will be demonstrated as they affected the for-

mation and breakup of the non-Congress governments in the three states.

II. THE FORMATION OF THE NON-CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS: THE EXCLUSION OF IDEOLOGY

The ways in which the non-Congress governments were formed differed significantly in the three states in terms of the parties forming the coalitions and the weight of particular parties in each coalition, in terms of the roles played by independents, and in terms of the extent to which defections from Congress to the opposed coalitions were involved. However, the three initial non-Congress governments had in common the fact that diverse party coalitions were put together covering the entire political spectrum. There is no doubt that, at least in terms of the principles expressed in party manifestoes, many of the parties which formed these coalitions are incompatible partners. Moreover, some of the parties hesitated, for ideological reasons, before entering the coalitions. Yet, ultimately all non-Congress parties joined in all three states, if not in the government itself, in the legislature parties formed to provide support to the government.

In all three states, the procedure followed was similar. In the week following the announcement of the election results, united legislature parties were formed, comprising all non-Congress parties and some of the independents. Minimum common programs were framed, comprising 33 points in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and 11 points in Punjab. The united legislature parties also elected leaders, who then began talks with the governors of their states preparatory to the formation of governments. In the meantime, the party leaders comprising the coalitions met together to discuss issues and problems as they arose and to negotiate on the distribution of portfolios. In all three states, "coordination committees" were formed which included the prominent organizational as well as legislative leaders of the various parties to coordinate both the views of the parties making up the coalitions and the views of the parliamentary and organizational wings of the mass parties.

The formation of diverse inter-party coalitions, involving in some cases alliances among parties which had till yesterday refused to cooperate against the Congress for ideological reasons, required some symbolic justification. Only the SSP leadership required no justification for their actions since they had consistently called for such alliances to defeat and remove the Congress from power both before and

after the elections. The cynical view for the post-election alliances was simply that the "lure for office" had proved irresistible. However, there were many party leaders who were reluctant to join the coalitions for ideological and other reasons even after the elections. Discussions and interviews with party leaders and ministers in the three states and in Delhi indicated that, in addition to the desire for office, there were four main considerations and tendencies which influenced the decisions of the parties to coalesce—popular demand for such coalitions, the ability of the parties to formulate minimum common programs, pragmatic and accommodative tendencies in the parties, and the recognition of the necessity for adjustment to regional conditions.

Popular Demand. One of the most common reasons given by men from all parties in the three states for the formation of non-Congress coalition governments was that public opinion demanded it. While there can be legitimate grounds for skepticism about references to public opinion to justify party practices in an overwhelmingly rural and illiterate society, it is true that there was marked discontent against the Congress among articulate segments of public opinion in cities and towns throughout north India. There was, for example, widespread feeling among the middle classes that development programs had not proceeded at a sufficiently rapid pace during the twenty years of Congress rule and that corruption, fostered by venal Congress ministers, had become widespread in government and society. There were also more specific grievances—especially discontent over price increases on the part of students, teachers, and government employees; discontent among Muslims over their failure to achieve their demand for recognition of Urdu as the second official language in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; and discontent among both Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab over the reorganization of the state and the way in which it was implemented. In addition, the elections took place at a time of major crisis or transformation in all three states—the worst famine in a century in Bihar; an unprecedented strike of half a million government employees in Uttar Pradesh; the reorganization of the Punjab and its trifurcation among three states.

The combination of all these factors produced a marked atmosphere of antagonism towards the Congress in the cities and towns and a desire for an alternative government. It was not simply that opposition party leaders felt impelled toward unity by the demand for change, but that once it became clear that an

alternative to the Congress was possible, many party leaders felt it would have been politically dangerous to oppose such a change.¹¹

The Common Programs. Although the party leaders, therefore, found a ready sanction in public opinion for the formation of non-Congress governments, they had still to face charges levelled by Congressmen and others that these coalitions represented unprincipled alliances among parties whose ideologies were incompatible. To such charges, the most frequent answer was that no compromise of basic principles was involved in the formation of the non-Congress governments because all parties had agreed upon minimum common programs which did not affect the ideologies of the parties. For example, ministers from the two most sharply opposed parties in the coalitions, Jan Sangh and the Communists, made comments such as the following in response to the question as to how such opposed parties could work together.

People wanted an alternative to Congress. We prepared an agreed minimum program. Keeping our respective ideologies apart, we decided to implement the program. [Bihar Jan Sangh minister]¹²

On many major issues, we differ, but that is the concern of the central government—foreign policy, socialism. So, I don't think for many years to come, there will be very big differences between Jan Sangh and Communists. [Uttar Pradesh Communist minister]¹³

¹¹ For example, an SSP minister commented upon the delay in the PSP's decision to join the non-Congress government in Bihar and their ultimate decision to do so in this way: "They [the PSP leaders] thought they would be nowhere if they went against the wishes of the people, who wanted non-Congress governments." A Jan Sangh minister in Bihar, asked how long he thought the non-Congress government would last, gave a reply which indicated a similar attitude towards public opinion: "I think it will last because we all are afraid of this public opinion. . . . No party will dare to take the blame of deserting this government." A Jan Sangh minister in Punjab, asked why a non-Congress government had been formed instead of a coalition with the Congress, replied: "Everybody was opposed to Congress. The general swing is not with the Congress. If we go with the Congress, we are also doomed." Citations from interview documents BG 29: 13; BG 35: 27; PG 17: 3.

¹² Interview document BG 32: 5.

¹³ Interview document UPII 30: 1.

The programs varied in the three states in terms of the number of points and the emphasis given to problems specific to each state, but the points can be classified into a number of categories: 1) concessions to various interest groups—students, teachers, government employees, supporters of Urdu; 2) rectifications of alleged Congress misdeeds—release of political prisoners, institution of judicial enquiries into charges of corruption against Congress ministers and into police firings under the Congress regime; 3) withdrawal of unpopular measures and taxes—grain procurement orders, previous increases in taxation, the land revenue; 4) provision of various agricultural benefits; 5) promises to provide efficient administration, eliminate corruption, and check rising prices. There is very little in programs such as these which affects the basic ideological viewpoints of the parties and, in fact, with the exception of one point in the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar programs, no substantial disagreements arose initially on any of these issues.

On only one issue, that of recognizing Urdu as the second official language of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, was there a stalemate. Several parties in the coalitions felt themselves committed by their previous statements to include this point in the common programs. Although the Jan Sangh joined the coalitions in these two states, the party refused to commit itself to this point and submitted a note of dissent. It is clear that this question touches Jan Sangh ideology and sentiment on a vital point, that of its view of national unity and integrity and its attitude toward the Muslim minority. Jan Sangh insistence on the issue supports the view long held of it that the party is more dogmatic on or at least more concerned with cultural and communal issues than with economic issues. Although Jan Sangh leaders indicated willingness to make specific concessions toward the encouragement of the Urdu language, they were not willing to provide the symbolic satisfaction to the Muslim minority of having Urdu declared as a second official language. Inter-party divergence on the issue also indicates the continued importance in north Indian politics of a major ideological cleavage between Jan Sangh and other parties. At the same time, the inclusion of the point on Urdu in the programs did not prevent the Jan Sangh from joining the coalitions nor did it prevent other parties from joining with the Jan Sangh even though this meant that the point could not be implemented by the coalition governments.

Pragmatic and Accommodative Tendencies in the Parties. Insofar as the parties joined together only because of popular demand and only on the basis of rather limited common

programs, it is possible that the non-Congress governments may represent only a brief transition which may be followed by an ultimate ideological polarization. However, interviews with the ministers revealed pragmatic and accommodative strains in the parties which make it equally likely that future coalitional politics will retain their present fluidity. These strains were revealed both on specific policy issues confronting the state governments and in the general attitudes of party leaders toward accommodation with other parties. A Communist minister in Uttar Pradesh, questioned about his views on state trading in foodgrains—a major plank in the Communist party platform replied: "There is no other way but state trading, but none of us want to hasten our theories. Let's experiment even with free open market for two years; but, if we fail, let's try state trading."¹⁴ A Jan Sangh minister in Bihar commented on the formation of the non-Congress government in Bihar and the attitude of Jan Sangh toward it in the following way: "So, all right and left have come together. We [Jan Sangh] are neither right nor left. We approach the problem straightaway."¹⁵ In Punjab, where politics have tended toward communal polarization between Hindus and Sikhs during the last twenty years, the leader of the Akali opposition in the Punjab Assembly, who became chief minister of the state after the 1967 elections, remarked in October, 1966, that even if the Akalis were in a position to form an exclusively Akali government after the election, he would not favor it. Asked why not, he replied:

Well, you see, to begin with, . . . the leaders in the center have already prejudiced people against the Akalis in spite of the fact that their behavior has been commendable throughout agitations, most non-violent. But still we would like to tell people in Punjab that we do not wish to form one-community government. Let everybody be satisfied with the government. . . so that we can unitedly work for prosperity of the state.¹⁶

Statements such as these were made by many other ministers interviewed. They suggest the possibility that ideological differences among parties in north Indian politics occur in the context of a political culture in which tendencies toward ideological rigidification are softened by pragmatism and mitigated by desires for accommodation.

Adjustment to Regional Multi-Party Systems. In addition to the influence of pragmatic and accommodative tendencies mitigating ideologi-

¹⁴ Interview document UPII 30: 8.

¹⁵ Interview document BG 35: 25.

¹⁶ Interview document PG 6: 50.

cal differences, many party leaders saw a necessity for putting aside national principles and national ambitions to adjust to local conditions. For example, the Jan Sangh opposed the reorganization of the Punjab and continues to oppose in principle the existence of linguistic states in India. Yet, on the issue of the disposition of the predominantly Hindu, but Punjabi-speaking city of Chandigarh, which remained a matter of serious controversy between Punjab and Haryana and among people in Chandigarh itself,¹⁷ the Jan Sangh adjusted to local sentiment in each area. The Jan Sangh in Punjab does not oppose the inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab; the Jan Sangh in Chandigarh favors the continuance of a separate status for the city; the Jan Sangh in Haryana favors its inclusion in Haryana.

One of the most thoughtful statements of the need to adjust to local conditions was provided by a PSP minister in Bihar, whose party engaged in considerable soul-searching and delay before entering the state party coalitions. The minister commented on the PSP decision to join in the following manner:

If the PSP thinks, as it thought in past years, where a day will come and it will sweep off the Congress rule from a state or states or the whole nation, it would be wrong. No set formula in the fast-developing political situation can be applied throughout India. In the situations of Bihar and Bengal and also U.P. now, what is the picture? No one single party is able to gain a stable government. Monopoly of power enjoyed by the Congress is broken. A kind of power vacuum exists and Communists are very much on the scene. As we know the Communist party of either variety, it would not be a happy spectacle to see that the tool of administration is utilized to subvert democracy or national freedom. There are risks in joining a government run by so many parties pulling in different directions, but the PSP had to take these risks. It would be all right to take a purist stand, speak to the people about the party creed and programs and all that. But, according to me, this purism would be synonymous with pusillanimity and escape.¹⁸

This statement is noteworthy in three respects.

¹⁷ Under the reorganization, the old Punjab state was divided into four segments. A new Hindi-speaking, predominantly Hindu state of Haryana was created; the capital city of Chandigarh was made into a union territory; the hill areas of the old state were transferred to Himachal Pradesh; and, the remaining Punjabi-speaking, predominantly Sikh areas became the residual state of Punjab.

¹⁸ Interview document BG 33: 10.

It recognizes that an era has ended and that Indian politics are undergoing great changes whose ultimate direction is not clear and that the PSP as a party must play a role in the directing of those changes. There is, second, the presence of a strongly articulated ideological antagonism towards Communists. Third, despite this strong opposition to one party in the coalition, there is the reluctant recognition that the PSP is but one party among many, forced to operate in multi-party situations which vary from state to state.

Ideology and Party Politics in North India. There is no justification for concluding, on the basis of the rationales given by party leaders in north India for their participation in multi-party coalitions, that ideology is an insignificant force in north Indian politics. There is continued evidence of major ideological cleavages among the parties. Moreover, some of the parties believed that they would be able to implement portions of their programs even in the coalition governments and issue conflict between the parties played an important role after the formation of the non-Congress governments. The basic argument of this paper, however, is that political parties and party politicians showed a willingness either to ignore or to compromise on issues of principle, which they did not demonstrate on issues of power.

In the functioning of the non-Congress governments, two kinds of issues arose—those which divided parties and groups consistently over time on an intelligible basis, and those on which the lines of conflict were not entirely clear, but were proximately related to shifts of alignment affecting the fates of governments. The first category included such conflicts as those over the status of Urdu, over procurement of foodgrains, and over the abolition of the land revenue.

The Urdu issue continued to divide and distinguish the parties in the coalitions during the functioning of the non-Congress governments. The left parties, particularly, pressed for concessions to Urdu, including the declaration of Urdu as the second language in both Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Reports in the press referred to a crisis in the Bihar cabinet in August 1967 on the Urdu issue. However, the Jan Sangh remained firmly opposed to the declaration of Urdu as a second language, while permitting certain concessions to be made, such as the printing of important government notices in Urdu. No defections of parties or significant groups from the governments occurred on the issue in either Uttar Pradesh or Bihar.

Another issue which early appeared to threaten the survival of the Uttar Pradesh government occurred over the decision of the cabinet

to procure 500,000 tons of foodgrains. Two separate threats to the stability of the Uttar Pradesh government arose on this issue—one from the organizational wing of the Jan Sangh, the predominant party in the coalition, and the second from an *ad hoc* legislative inter-party interest group of big farmer members of the legislative Assembly and Council. The Jan Sangh ministers maintained cabinet responsibility on the issue and succeeded in persuading members of their organizational wing to refrain from making public announcements opposing procurement. However, the objections of the inter-party legislative group, which itself included many Jan Sangh members, were satisfied only by a compromise whose effect was to reduce the amount of foodgrains to be procured from 500,000 tons to 200,000 tons. Again, however, no major defections from the government or from government supporters in the Assembly occurred on this issue.

The most serious and prolonged issue of this type, which divided the parties on clear lines, occurred again in Uttar Pradesh on the land revenue issue. The demand for land revenue abolition was a major public commitment of the SSP especially and one to which all other parties had committed themselves in the formation of the common programs. In Punjab, land revenue was not a serious issue. In Bihar, the land revenue was remitted without prolonged controversy in the government. In Uttar Pradesh, however, the chief minister, Charan Singh, was a man who had well-formed views on the issues of both land revenue and state financial resources in general. He refused to agree to abolish the land revenue completely until alternative resources could be found. The result was a stalemate and crisis in the Uttar Pradesh government which threatened to bring the government down. An initial decision on the issue was taken by the Uttar Pradesh government in July, by which it was agreed that 50% of the land revenue would be abolished on holdings up to 6.25 acres, beginning after the current *kharif* crop. Internal divisions in the SSP on the issue developed, however, and the SSP continued to insist on further concessions. The crisis in the government continued for several months, leading ultimately to an SSP-CPI alliance on the issue and their joint resignations from the government. Again, however, on the land revenue issue, as on the procurement issue, a compromise was reached which permitted the return of the two parties to the government at the end of October, 1967.

The resolution of these three crises in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh suggest again that there are differences of principle between the major par-

ties. For the new system of coalition politics to function effectively, some issues, such as that over recognition of Urdu, must be sidestepped, whereas others must be compromised. In the first two years of coalition politics in north India, these methods of dealing with principled inter-party divisions were used frequently and effectively to resolve cabinet crises.

Issues which were not so easily resolved, however, were those which were connected with intra-party factional divisions and personal conflicts and which affected the inter-relationship of groups within the parties and their position in the governments. Such issues frequently arose only after a split in one of the parties or in government had occurred and they provided a basis for building support to bring a government down rather than a cause for internal government division. Even more difficult to resolve were those conflicts in which no discernible issue of principle could be detected, in which opportunists and political entrepreneurs traded their votes openly for ministerial office. In fact, the formation and fall of the non-Congress governments depended primarily on such issues and forces.

III. THE FORMATION AND FALL OF THE NON-CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS: PROBLEMS OF OPPORTUNISM, INTRA-PARTY DIVISIONS, AND LOCAL POWER¹⁹

From the 1967 elections up to July, 1968, eight governments had been formed, and seven had fallen in the three north Indian states. Although the details of each cabinet crisis varied and the fall of the Charan Singh government in Uttar Pradesh was uniquely complex, a fairly typical pattern of cabinet crisis developed. After the formation of each government, it became known that a prominent individual belonging to a faction in the Congress or in a non-Congress party was disaffected with the government because he was not satisfied with his place in the government or was not given a position in it. The disaffected leader then began to gather supporters, while criticizing the government in general terms for "corruption" or for failure to implement portions of the common program rapidly enough. Finally a prominent public event occurred or an issue was found which provided the leader with an immediate cause for defection with his loyal supporters.

The defecting leader was then given the opportunity to form a government, which in the

¹⁹ Except where otherwise cited, the information in this section has been derived from the *Statesman*, the *Searchlight*, the *National Herald*, and the *Tribune* (Ambala).

last two years was either a non-Congress coalition or a minority government with Congress support. In either event, the defecting leader became the new chief minister, many of those who defected with him received ministerial office, and a new crisis soon began. In the interim between two governments, the opposing forces in the legislature continually bargained for the support of independents and potential party defectors. The game came to an end in Uttar Pradesh and in Bihar when the governors became convinced that no stable coalitions were possible and that the Assembly should be dissolved and new elections should be called.

Patterns of conflict and alliance which developed in the legislatures of the three north Indian states revealed three distinctive features affecting the stability of governments—the key roles of independents and individual party defectors, the importance of intra-party divisions and cross-party alliances of factions, and the significance of inter-party conflicts over local power outside the legislature in the districts. These patterns can best be illustrated by reference to specific cabinet crises.

Bihar. The first non-Congress government in Bihar came to power with greater ease and more promise than its counterparts in either Uttar Pradesh or Punjab. It was an exclusively party coalition in which independents played no role and were not needed for support. Moreover the Congress was in a clear minority position with only 40% of the seats in the house and was badly divided. The non-Congress government had a relatively sound majority of 169 in a house of 318 and functioned with little open disagreement on issues of principle. Yet the government was brought down by a no-confidence motion on January 26, 1968 and was replaced on February 1 by a minority defectors' government with the support of the Congress. This ministry lasted until March 20 when it was replaced by a new non-Congress coalition government strengthened by the addition of 17 defectors from the Congress. This last government fell on June 25, 1968, after a major defection, and President's Rule was declared in the state.

All three cabinet crises were brought about by large-scale defections, the first two involving intra-party splits and the third involving the defection of an entire party from the government. In all three cases the precipitating causes of the crises were either non-principled factional divisions or questions of personal power and ambition. However, the three cases also reveal the diversity of social forces and cleavages which exist in the Bihar Assembly and around which factional groups can be built.

The first cabinet crisis involved a conflict between personal power and party interest in the SSP in which an attempt by the national party leadership to insist upon party interest failed against personal ambition and caste sentiment. The crisis arose when Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal, a prominent state SSP leader from a "backward caste," elected to the national parliament but not to the state Assembly, accepted a portfolio in the Bihar government. In order to remain in the ministry, Bindeshwari Prasad would have had to resign his parliamentary seat, which would then have had to be recontested by the SSP in a bye-election. When the induction of Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal into the Bihar cabinet came to his attention, it immediately annoyed the leader of the SSP, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, who put the matter bluntly and publicly that Bindeshwari Prasad's action "amounted to using the party machinery to climb the ladder of power."²⁰

In response to Dr. Lohia's accusation, Bindeshwari Prasad went to Delhi, was sworn in as a member of Parliament, had a long conversation with Dr. Lohia (who advised him to resign from the Bihar cabinet),²¹ and then went back to Patna, where he showed no inclination whatsoever to resign his ministry. Moreover, his supporters from his own caste began sending telegrams to Dr. Lohia protesting the prospect of Bindeshwari Prasad's resignation and, privately, they informed the party leadership that there would be a split in the party on the part of Bindeshwari Prasad's supporters if he was forced to resign from the government.²² Ultimately, the latter happened. On August 28, 1967, Bindeshwari Prasad finally resigned, but claimed to be taking with him 25 defectors from the united legislature party (SVD), including 18 from the SSP, and he succeeded in forming an alliance between his newly-formed Soshit Dal and the Congress by means of which the government was ultimately brought down. In the end, Bindeshwari Prasad transformed a personal discomfiture into ultimate victory in state politics when he was sworn in as chief minister of the state on February 1, 1968.

In justifying his original resignation and in building the support necessary to bring down and replace the united front government, Bindeshwari Prasad emphasized caste and community issues, thereby turning SSP party policy against itself. He charged, as Dr. Lohia also had done, that the state SSP had not followed party policy in failing to see to it that 60% of

²⁰ *Indian Nation*, March 12, 1967.

²¹ Interview document BG 31: 11.

²² *Indian Nation*, March 20, 1967.

the cabinet positions were provided for backward classes, scheduled castes, Muslims, tribals and women. The charge was true, but it is important to note that the question of Bindeshwari Prasad's political morality was raised before the representation issue and that there was nothing in SSP party policy which required that Bindeshwari Prasad himself should be in the cabinet.

The Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal ministry was short-lived. It depended for its majority on the support of the Congress. However, the formation of the Mandal government and Congress support for it immediately became an issue in internal Congress politics. The dominant factions in the Bihar Congress, especially the followers of the previous chief minister, K. B. Sahay, supported the Mandal ministry, while several minority Congress factions, especially that of former chief minister Pandit Binodanand Jha, opposed. On March 19, with the defection of seventeen prominent Congress MLAs, the Mandal ministry was defeated. Bholu Paswan Shastri acted as the spokesman for the Congress defectors, was elected the new leader of the SVD on the following day, and formed a new SVD government on March 21.

The fall of the two Bihar governments have in common their close association with inner party divisions, in the SSP and in the Congress. The fall of the Paswan ministry occurred in a somewhat different manner and was related to the interests of a cohesive "party" in the Assembly, whose interests were identical with the interests of one man, the Raja of Ramgarh. The latter had been one of the greatest *zamindars* in Bihar before *zamindari* abolition. He and his family had played an active role in Bihar politics since independence, leading a group of personal followers which varied in number in the Assembly from 17 or 18 to nearly 50. His closest family members and dependents followed the Raja from his original Janata party into the Swatantra party for a time, then into the Congress, from Congress to the JKD and into the first non-Congress government, from the JKD/BKD to the Janata party again and into the Paswan ministry, and finally into opposition against the Paswan ministry causing its downfall.

The consistent bases of the Raja's actions in Bihar politics have been to maintain his group of personal followers and to find a position of prominence for himself in order to protect his interests and those of his family. Those interests include extensive mining properties and forest lands, the need for protection against the state government, which has long been prosecuting several cases against him in court on var-

ious charges, notably default of payments of his bills, for which the Raja is famous. In the first non-Congress government, the Raja insisted that he and his brother be given the portfolios of mines and minerals and forests. His demand was resisted by several parties in the coalition, but was ultimately conceded. The Paswan ministry accepted him into the cabinet, but refused to give him Mines and Minerals. On June 16, the Raja resigned from the ministry "on grounds of health," but the chief minister, who resigned ten days later, claimed that the issue was demands made by the Raja against the public interest which he as chief minister could not accept.

The ways in which the three Bihar governments fell indicate that there were three decisive factors affecting the stability of cabinets—the personal ambitions of frustrated ministers, internal party divisions, and cross-party or single-party legislative interests, such as those of the middle castes or those of a great landlord-industrialist and his personal dependents. It is important to note that, on several occasions, the PSP and the SSP in Bihar resigned from government or refused to participate in governments until certain issues were agreed upon. However, none of the three cabinet crises could be attributed to the defection of a party on an issue of principle.

The importance of inner party divisions and legislative interest groups in the Bihar Assembly are reflected in the changes in party allegiance and the formation of new groups which occurred between March, 1967 and June, 1968, as shown below (Table 2).

The general tendency of the shifts is clear. Movement was predominantly from the established, relatively stable parties and from the independents to new legislative groups or revived parties such as Jharkhand (which had previously merged with Congress) and Janata (which had been the dominant force in the BKD). The legislative groups are either factional splinters from larger parties, united on a personal or personal-cum-interest basis, or parties representing particular interests, such as Janata or Jharkhand (a party of tribals).

It is premature to draw any conclusions about the comparative cohesion of the larger parties. At one extreme, the two Communist parties lost no members, whereas the Congress lost 18% of its membership. The percentage losses for the SSP, the Jan Sangh, and the PSP were 16%, 12%, and 11% respectively. More important for purposes of my argument is the very significant fluidity in the house revealed by the total number of defections. Altogether, 87 members in a house of 318 or more than 27%

of the membership changed their affiliation in a little more than a year.

Uttar Pradesh. In Bihar, the first non-Congress coalition was brought down after the defection of a minister frustrated in his attempts to achieve personal power. In Uttar Pradesh, the non-Congress coalition was made possible only by a major defection from the Congress by a prominent Congressman of forty years' standing in the party who went over to the opposition with sixteen of his followers on April 1, 1967. Charan Singh had been known in Uttar Pradesh Congress politics for the previous twenty years as a man of considerable political skill, but also of integrity and principle. It was generally recognized that Charan Singh had well-formed views, which he expressed with intellectual clarity on most public issues, especially those affecting agriculture. He was also known to have been politically and intellectually dissatisfied with his colleagues in the Congress for many years, especially with the leader of the party, C. B. Gupta, for whom he had no respect.

Charan Singh's defection falls into the category of defections which arise out of inner party conflicts and are related to issues in a diffuse way, but very specifically to questions of power. The proximate cause of Charan Singh's defection was the failure of negotiations between him and C. B. Gupta on the composition of the Gupta ministry. The sources of conflict between Charan Singh and C. B. Gupta go back ten years and more. The justification for the defection was the alleged corruption and administrative incompetence of the previous Congress regime and some of its members. The immediate consequence of the defection was to place Charan Singh and his closest followers in the seat of state power. Charan Singh and six (of 16) of his supporters were taken into the cabinet. The defectors were heavily overrepresented in the non-Congress government installed on April 5, 1967. Out of 28 ministers and deputy ministers, the 7 defectors who were taken into the ministry comprised 40% of the original defectors and 25% of the ministry compared, for example, to 8 Jan Sangh ministers representing only 8% of Jan Sangh strength in the house.

Neither the Congress nor the SVD government in Uttar Pradesh ever had a safe majority. Both governments depended from the beginning not only on party defections but on the shifting allegiances of independents. Initially, the Congress by itself had 198 seats compared to 188 seats for the combined opposition parties, with 37 independents holding the balance. In the week preceding the formation of

TABLE 2. CHANGES IN PARTY AFFILIATION IN THE BIHAR ASSEMBLY FROM MARCH, 1967 TO JUNE, 1968

	Party Membership	
	March, 1967	June, 1968
<i>Established Parties</i>		
Congress	128	105
SSP	68	57
Jan Sangh	26	23
CPI	24	24
CPM	4	4
PSP	18	16
Swatantra	3	1
RPI	1	1
<i>New Parties and Legislative Groups</i>		
BKD (formerly JKD)	26	2
Soshit Dal	0	38
Lok Congress Dal	0	22
Janata	0	18
Independents	21	5
Jharkhand ^a	9	2

SOURCE: *Statesman* June 30, 1968.

^a In March, 1967, the Jharkhand party members were in the Congress party so that the 9 members listed then were actually at the time included in the Congress strength of 128.

the Congress government, there were hectic negotiations between the Congress and the SVD for the allegiances of the independents who frequently promised their support to both sides. Ultimately, the Governor determined through personal interrogation of party leaders and independents and through demands for clear indications from the independents of where they stood that the Congress had the better claim. Once the decision was made that the Congress would form the government, almost all the independents fell into line. In the first division in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on March 17 on the election of the Speaker, the Congress secured 226 votes to 188 for the opposition, indicating either that 36 out of 37 independents had voted with the Congress or that the Congress had gained some votes from the opposition parties directly. The tables were, of course, turned on April 1 when Charan Singh crossed the floor with 16 of his supporters from the Congress. When the figures for independents and party defectors are added together, the extent of the fluidity revealed in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly up to that date comes to 54

members in a house of 424, not counting 5 defectors claimed at one stage by the Congress from the opposition.

Charan Singh's SVD government revealed a greater variety of internal stresses than any of the other governments discussed in this paper. There were issue conflicts over Urdu, procurement and the land revenue. There were problems of intra-party cohesion within the large parties making up the coalition and there were inter-party conflicts over questions of local power, of party-building in the districts. In fact it is difficult to identify unequivocally the decisive factors which led to the fall of the Uttar Pradesh government both because of the variety of internal strains and because Charan Singh ultimately resigned without a vote of no-confidence.

Between the months of November 1967 and February 1968 a three-way split developed among the parties in the cabinet. Charan Singh continued to be supported primarily by the group of defectors who had crossed the floor with him and by the smaller parties and independents in the coalition. The leadership of the chief minister was, however, increasingly opposed and thwarted by the actions of the CPI and the SSP on the one hand and by the Jan Sangh on the other hand. The disaffection of the three large parties with the chief minister was closely interwoven with intra-party divisions in the SSP and with an inter-party struggle for power between the Jan Sangh and all other components of the SVD.

A central source of strain arose out of attempts by the Jan Sangh ministers to use their portfolios particularly those of the cooperation, local self-government, and education departments, to nominate members of the Jan Sangh party to powerful district cooperative, local government and educational institutions. Open dissatisfaction with the actions of the Jan Sangh ministers was expressed on several occasions by members of all parties in the SVD. A second source of strain related to the efforts of a faction in the SSP led by Raj Narain, a member of parliament, to assert a dominant role in state SSP politics and in the SVD government. In these efforts, the SSP adopted agitational tactics to pressure the SVD government while continuing to support the government in the legislature.

The sequence of events which ultimately led to the resignation of Charan Singh began with the resignation of the CPI ministers on November 20, ostensibly because of differences with the chief minister on issues related to the use of the police in political agitations and the release of government employees and others who had

been jailed for their activities in various agitations in the past. Although the CPI ministers withdrew from the government, they continued to support the government in the Assembly. The SSP contingent continued in the government until January 6, but increasingly oriented its activities toward public agitations on the land revenue issue, on the release of government employees held in detention, and on the demand for elimination of English from use for government purposes.

On January 6, the SSP ministers also resigned on these issues, but like the CPI continued to vote with the SVD in the Assembly. Although both the CPI and the SSP related their withdrawals to public issues, one persuasive interpretation of their motives was that the public issues were secondary and that the primary factor was "the discomfiture of the two parties" which "arose from the fear that the Jan Sangh by exploiting the portfolios in its control was worsening them in the struggle for political influence at the district and lower levels."²³ Under the circumstances, there was little profit for the two parties to remain in the government. Nor could they incur public displeasure and precipitate an undesired general election by bringing down the government. The only alternative, therefore, was to continue to support the government, but to build their party strength and public appeal by agitational methods. The withdrawal of two of the three large parties in the cabinet was followed within a few days by a split between Charan Singh and the Jan Sangh. The break came when the chief minister reshuffled the Jan Sangh portfolios without the consent of the party leaders, taking away from them both cooperation and local self-government, and replacing them with relatively less powerful and more innocuous portfolios, such as public works and animal husbandry. The Jan Sangh accepted the reshuffling without withdrawing from the government, but the party leaders now joined with some of the SSP leaders in calling for the resignation of Charan Singh and his replacement by a new leader.

The demand for a new leader intensified both inter-party and intra-party differences. Swatantra, the Republicans, the BKD, and the independents continued to support Charan Singh, while the Jan Sangh insisted upon his replacement. The SSP, the PSP, and the CPI divided on the issue. Charan Singh resigned on February 18 and President's Rule was declared on February 26. Attempts by the SVD and the

²³ "Charan Singh's Shrewd Politics," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3 (January 20, 1968), 183-184.

Congress to build internal cohesion and win the support of a majority in the Assembly were made over the next two months, but the Governor ultimately decided that no stable government was possible and dissolved the Assembly on April 16.

Three factors seem to have been predominant in the resignation of Charan Singh—the disaffection of the three large parties with Charan Singh personally, conflict between the Jan Sangh and all other forces in the government over local power, and the adoption by a faction in the SSP of an agitational role in state politics. In his letter of resignation, Charan Singh stressed his dissatisfaction with the faction in the SSP led by Raj Narain and his right as chief minister to reshuffle portfolios. Issues of principle between the parties played only a secondary role in the disintegration of the SVD coalition. The SVD coalition lost its cohesion primarily through personal conflicts over the leadership; through intra-party divisions on the leadership question which affected most of the parties in the coalition; and through inter-party conflict for power, outside the cabinet and the Assembly, in the districts where local party activists maintain a continuing struggle for local power.

Punjab. The formation of the first non-Congress government in Punjab, its fall, and the strains affecting the stability of the minority defector's government which replaced it with Congress support illustrate sharply the key roles played by independents, individual defectors, and intra-party divisions in the major parties. In Punjab, the initial balance between the Congress and the united front coalition was so close that even independents had to be rewarded with government posts to win their support. The non-congress front was able to elect a leader faster than the Congress and, simultaneously, to win over the support of five independents to give it a majority of 53 members in a house of 104. In order to insure the allegiance of the independents, four out of five were given ministerial positions. Even so, the majority of the united front remained tenuous and was continually threatened by the efforts of the Congress to win over independents, by the efforts of the Maharaja of Patiala to form a third alternative government under his own leadership, and by the threat of defections from within the Akali Dal, the leading party in the front. To ward off the threat of a defeat, the united front ministry felt obliged to offer a ministerial position to anyone willing to defect from the Congress. Six new supporters were acquired from the Congress in this way. In the process, two Akali legislators who were not taken in the ministry re-

volted and left the Akali Dal. Thus, the front leadership was caught in the position of being forced to offer ministries to independents and defectors from the Congress to maintain its majority, while it simultaneously lost the loyalty of party members who had not been similarly rewarded.

The early Akali defections proved to be a prelude to a more serious defection from within the government itself by the seniormost Akali minister in the cabinet after the chief minister. Lachhman Singh Gill had been a rival of Gurnam Singh, the chief minister, for leadership in the Akali party and was known to be dissatisfied with his own position and with the fact that his personal supporters had not received offices in the government. During the months from August through November, the united front government was affected by a variety of strains, including inter-party differences on policy issues as well as personal differences over portfolios. Inter-party conflict occurred on policies for scheduled castes, on the language issue, and on government policy toward labor agitations. The Republican party leaders expressed discontent on government policy toward scheduled castes, the Gill group in the Akali party demanded the elimination of Hindi from official use by the state government whereas the Jan Sangh favored continued use of Hindi, and the Communist party demanded a liberal policy toward labor agitations.

On November 23, Lachhman Singh Gill succeeded in combining a variety of discontented elements and in leading fifteen legislators out of the United Front, including five Sant Akalis, one Master Akali party member, six independents, and three Republicans. The Gill-led defection, therefore, combined the discontent of two minor parties, Republicans and Master Akalis, with discontent arising out of intra-party divisions and the personal discontent of independents. The decisive weight in the defection was, however, clearly with the dissident Akali faction and the independents, including among the latter several Congressmen who had previously defected from the Congress to the united front.

Gill combined his Akali and independent followers into a new legislative party, winning the support of the Congress for a new government under his leadership, and was sworn in as chief minister on November 26 with the support of the Congress, but without its participation in the government. The creation of the Gill government led to a new and complex division in the Punjab Assembly into four distinct groupings. The Gill ministry constituted one bloc in the Assembly and the remnant of the united front its bitter opponent. The Congress, how-

ever, divided internally into two inner party subcoalitions based on pre-existing groups in the party, now divided on the issue of support for the Gill ministry. Gian Singh Rarewala, the leader of the Congress legislative party and some of his allies and supporters began to express opposition to the Gill ministry. Rumors became increasingly common that the Rarewala group was interested in forming a Congress government with the support of some or all of the anti-Gill Akalis. However, a subcoalition in the Punjab Congress opposed to the leadership of the Gian Singh Rarewala group insisted upon continued support for the Gill ministry. In other words, the situation in the Punjab Congress was now similar to the position in the Bihar Congress at an earlier point, with a dissident group in the Congress opposed to a move toward power led by an opposing group in the party. In the middle of June 1968 the coalition pattern in the Punjab Assembly remained as described here, with the Gill ministry in an increasingly untenable position and division in the Congress moving toward a climax with a request by 23 out of 43 Congress MLAs to the Congress President for permission to remove Gian Singh Rarewala from his leadership of the Congress legislative party because of his moves to withdraw support from the Lachhman Singh Gill ministry.

Patterns of Coalition Politics in North India. The first two years of coalition politics in north India have revealed a complexity of patterns of conflict and alliance and a considerable diversity of political forces and interests in the legislative assemblies. There are, first, the large, organized parties which sought for the most part to provide stable governments in north India by putting aside their ideological differences. There were three main impediments which frustrated the attempts of the larger parties to dominate the assemblies. One was the limitation on the possible inter-party alliances imposed by the primary division in the assemblies between the Congress and the non-Congress parties. A second limitation followed from the first. The limitation of inter-party alliances to the non-Congress parties gave disproportionate weight in the governments to the newly formed legislative groups, which then sought to limit the dominance of the larger parties. Thus, in Uttar Pradesh, Charan Singh and his Jan Congress came into conflict with the Jan Sangh in a struggle over portfolios, which finally contributed to the fall of the non-Congress government. The third impediment to the dominance of the large parties was the decisive importance of intra-party divisions, which affected coalition patterns in two ways. First, intra-party di-

visions frequently led to defections, most notably from the Congress, the SSP and the Akali Dal, which brought down the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh and the initial non-Congress governments in Bihar and Punjab. Second, intra-party divisions twice prevented the Congress from attempting to form coalition governments in Bihar and Punjab.

Thus, both inter-party and intra-party divisions placed limits on the possible coalitions which could be formed in the assemblies. It is worth stressing, however, that these limitations are variable. They are not the kinds of limitations which permanently restricted coalitions in the unstable party systems of Fourth Republic France, Weimar Germany, or contemporary Italy. Access to government power is open to all parties and groups in the Assembly provided the right bargains can be struck.

In addition to the large, organized parties, there is a wide variety of small parties and legislative groups in the assemblies of north India. Some of these smaller parties reflect social divisions, others reflect traditional bases of power, and still others are personal groups based upon factional association. In the first category of parties reflecting social divisions are parties such as Jharkhand in Bihar, representing the tribal peoples of Chota Nagpur, and the Republican party, which seeks to represent the low caste groups of north India. The best example of a party based on traditional influence is the Janata party of the Raja of Ramgarh in Bihar.

Then too, there are the *ad hoc* legislative groups of independents and party defectors, which are sometimes based on caste sentiment or on leader-follower ties or on alliances of mutual convenience. Under the regime of Congress dominance, the tendency in the assemblies was towards absorption of such groups into the Congress. In the new system of coalition politics, the tendency is towards proliferation of such groups, which are now in a position to bargain for portfolios with potential alliance partners among the bigger parties.

Finally, there are the independents and individual party defectors who are either local notables with ties only to their supporters in the constituencies or are men of little or no influence and stature who have nothing to lose and everything to gain by offering their votes in a closely balanced legislature in exchange for a minor portfolio in government. For such men, the stakes of political bargaining have also risen. When the Congress dominated the assemblies, independents might move into the Congress in order to receive the patronage of a faction leader in the party who might possibly provide benefits for his constituents and hopefully a Con-

gress ticket for the next election. Now it is possible for any man in the assembly to become a minister.

In general, a comparison of the roles played by the large parties, on the one hand, and intra-party factions, small parties, and opportunists, on the other hand, suggests that the predominant influence of the large parties is toward stability whereas the predominant influence of intra-party and non-party forces is toward instability. In short, the stability of north Indian politics, parties, and governments is not threatened by ideological rigidities in the party systems but by looseness in the systems caused by the existence of large numbers of independents and the relative absence of strong party identifications. In any closely balanced legislature in north India, there will always be some independents or some party members who will be willing to change loyalties whether it be for the sake of principle, for the sake of a ministry or, in some cases, as one respondent put it, for the sake of a license to ply a truck.

IV. CONCLUSION

Many of the features of coalition politics which emerged in the aftermath of the decline of the Congress from its dominant position in north Indian politics existed during the heyday of Congress dominance. Intra-party divisions, party defections, shifting allegiances of independents, conflicts among Congress factions for local power through the control of key government departments, and the formation of legislative interest groups in the Assembly all occurred when Congress exercised a monopoly of power. Moreover, these kinds of strains frequently led to the toppling of Congress governments by dissident factions in the Congress. The difference then was that the arena of conflict and the diversity of interests and personal ambitions that could be expressed were limited to the Congress. Power at the state level was available only within the Congress. Movement into opposition was movement outside the arena of power. The arena has now become as broad as the legislative Assembly as a whole. The key change is now that all parties, groups, and organized interests have acquired access to power.

If we assume, as I believe we must, that the decline of the Congress is only partly reversible and that the return of Congress dominance throughout the Indian Union is the remotest of the possibilities to be considered for the future development of politics in India, then we are in need of new perspectives to deal meaningfully both with the complexity of the developing systems of coalition politics and with the variability

of developing party systems in the Indian states generally. The pattern of coalition politics described here is simply too complex to be contained within the dominant party system model. Moreover, neither the patterns described here nor the dominant party system model are valid for some of the other Indian states, most notably Madras, where a single cohesive party, the DMK, has successfully replaced the Congress and where the development of a classic two-party system is a reasonable possibility. In brief, I am arguing that the Indian states provide a vast field for comparative studies of developing party systems, of which there are already a considerable variety in existence, and which can be compared both with each other and with party systems in other parts of the world. In this paper, I have attempted to describe the predominant tendencies and patterns of coalition politics in the developing party systems of north India. My argument can be summarized in the following points:

(1) Before the 1967 elections, the political regimes which dominated north Indian politics were best described as multi-party systems with one party, the Congress, dominant. Now that the Congress monopoly of power has been broken, the model of the one-party dominant system is no longer useful.²⁴ The formation of party coalitions and the stability of state party systems and state governments in north India have depended in the past two years and are likely to continue to depend in the immediate future upon the factional structure of the Congress, intra-party divisions in the other large parties, the relations among the parties, and the roles played by independents and party defectors.

Although north Indian state party systems resemble certain of the historical and contemporary European multi-party systems, they do not suffer from the rigidities of those systems. The predominant tendencies in the developing north Indian party systems are toward openness, fluidity, and inclusiveness. No parties have been excluded from the system or from government.

(2) The absence of rigidities in the systems does not mean that there are no anti-system parties in the states nor does it mean that ideology plays no role in party politics in these

²⁴ For the contrary view that "the dominant party system is . . . only modified by fresh forms of competition, not replaced," see W. H. Morris-Jones, "From Monopoly to Competition in India's Politics," *Asian Review*, I 1 (November, 1967), 1-12.

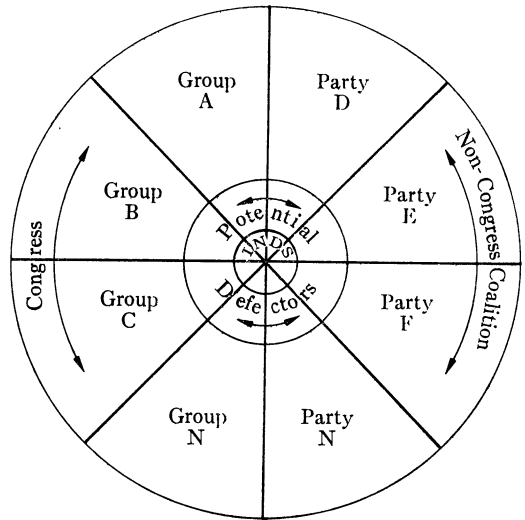
states. Ideological differences exist among the parties and each state party system varies in its ideological emphasis. However, ideology has not so far prevented the functioning of the systems. Ideological polarization in the state party systems cannot be ruled out in the long run, but the predominating tendencies do not lie in that direction at the moment. Inter-party conflicts on matters of principle were more easily reconciled in the past two years than inter-party conflicts which related to party power in the government and in the districts.

(3) Far from suffering from ideological rigidity, the systems display a high degree of looseness and fluidity. In Sartori's terms, these are "structured party systems,"²⁵ but the dominance of parties and party policies in the systems is limited by the key importance of non-principled intra-party divisions and by the presence of atomizing tendencies in the shape of large numbers of independents and political entrepreneurs. Until 1967, the Congress benefited exclusively from the existence of such forces, which operated on the fringes of Congress power and were sometimes absorbed or used by factions in the Congress against each other. In the aftermath of the 1967 elections, the Congress is, as it were, suffering for its sins in this respect since the opportunists and entrepreneurs now have a wider field for maneuver and greater opportunities for achieving power.

The ways in which the north Indian party

²⁵ Sartori distinguishes between a "structured party system" in which "at least one or two of the existing parties have acquired . . . a national platform, a unified symbol, and some stable organization also at the local level, so that they are perceived by the country at large as the natural foci and channels of the political system" and a system in which there is "party atomization," that is, "a highly fragmented pattern in which parties are mostly a facade covering loose and shifting coalitions of notables. In this stage the party system is still evanescent qua system: parties have no real platform, hardly a national spread, no centralized or coordinated organization, and even less anything resembling a stable organization." Sartori, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168. What makes Indian party systems so interesting from a developmental point of view is that there are both structuring and tendencies toward atomization. My argument is that party development in India requires the consolidation of the predominance of the parties and the elimination of atomizing tendencies or at least the control of such tendencies so that they do not prevent the creation of conditions for stable and effective government.

systems functioned in the past two years can be represented conveniently in the form of the following diagram.



The diagram brings out the central role played in the contemporary north Indian party systems by independents and potential party defectors, whose activities affect all parties. Indeed, even groups within the Congress are affected; for, although an entire group may leave the Congress to find opportunities elsewhere, a Congress group is itself a loose structure, from which individuals may detach themselves. The model also recognizes the continued importance of the Congress in the system as a whole and the fact that the Congress contains within it sub-groups, which may vary in number and in the extent of their mutual antipathies. The arrows on the outer ring of both sides of the circle represent the tensions among groups in the Congress and among parties in the non-Congress coalitions. In general, the arrows in the diagram are meant to reflect the fluidity of the system and the fact that independents and defectors, Congress groups and non-Congress parties, may at any time change sides.

The diagram also leaves open two other possible patterns of coalition politics which did not occur in the past two years, but are likely to become feasible when the pariah status of the Congress wears off. One is that the Congress may decide to play the role of a European center party and attempt to reestablish a relative monopoly of power by bringing into coalition smaller parties with narrow interests or similar ideology. The other possibility is that Congress may be forced to accept a position as only one party among many and adopt a strategy of

openness to all or most parties. In fact, it is possible that the first development may occur in some states, the second development in other states, depending upon the relative strength of the Congress and the ideological balance in individual party systems. The return of the Congress to power is, in fact, a real possibility in all three states, but it is highly unlikely that the Congress will ever again be able to dominate the systems in the same way as in the past either throughout the Indian Union or in any single state in north India.

The north Indian party systems which have replaced the Congress-dominant systems have proved incapable of providing stable, effective government in the first two years of coalition politics. The persistence of instability in the systems works against the interests of all the large parties and threatens to replace political leadership over policy making with bureaucrat-

ic rule. An alternative to chronic political instability and bureaucratic rule can arise only through the more effective organization of the large parties and increased coherence within them. Such a development is within the realm of possibility, but it is likely to be a labor of decades. The DMK in Madras has demonstrated that it is possible to build a disciplined, cohesive party organization in a developing society capable of taking power from the dominant party and ruling effectively. The nature and diversity of social divisions in north India make it unlikely that a single party will be able to emulate that feat. However, if the patterns of coalition politics which have been described in this paper are reliable guides to future political patterns in north India, then an increase in party organization and party ideology provides more likely conditions for government stability than a politics of power and personal ambition.