

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

1	Migrants and Machine Politics	1
2	How Brokers Emerge	41
3	How Brokers Cultivate Clients	85
4	How Patrons Select Brokers	129
5	How Patrons Respond to Brokered Requests	177
6	Conclusion	217

References 253

Index 269

1

Migrants and Machine Politics

THE ALLEYWAYS OF Tulsi Nagar, a slum settlement in the Indian city of Bhopal, were abuzz in November of 2018. With the state assembly elections just a few weeks away, campaigning was in full swing. The walls of many *jhuggies* (shanties) across the slum had been painted with the symbols of the two major parties fighting the election: the open hand of the Indian National Congress (Congress), India's centrist party of independence, and the lotus flower of the ascendant, Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Posters were hung throughout Tulsi Nagar featuring headshots of Uma Shankar Gupta, the incumbent BJP legislator in Bhopal Southwest, the constituency in which Tulsi Nagar is located. Plastered next to these posters, and in some instances over them, were posters of the Congress candidate, P.C. Sharma. Both candidates regularly visited Tulsi Nagar to give speeches and ask residents for their votes.

Beyond Tulsi Nagar, the elections promised to be intensely competitive across Madhya Pradesh, the central province of which Bhopal serves as the capital city. Observers believed that there was a good chance that the BJP would lose its provincial majority in the state after being in power for fifteen straight years. These same tremors echoed within Bhopal Southwest. Rumors circulated in the weeks leading up to the election that Gupta, the incumbent, had developed cracks in his base of electoral support. Many voters felt that he had done little to improve local conditions. Moreover, Sharma was a veteran Congress politician who was viewed as especially popular. With anti-incumbency in the air, the vote margin between Gupta and Sharma promised to be razor thin, requiring the full efforts of both candidates to chase after every last vote.

At the center of this chase for votes were Tulsi Nagar's twenty-four party workers—eight of whom worked for the Congress and sixteen for the BJP. Far from being under the thumb of a local don, residents were wooed by these two

dozen workers, who fiercely compete amongst one another for followings, even with other workers of the same party. The most influential BJP worker in Tulsi Nagar at the time of the election was Rajesh, a lifelong resident of the settlement who enjoys a large public following.¹ Rajesh's local political standing had become so prominent in the past decade that he purchased a separate home in Tulsi Nagar just for his *netagiri* (leadership/politicking activities). The fifteen other BJP workers were spread out across the settlement, holding varying ranks in the BJP's organizational hierarchy, each seeking to displace Rajesh in the local pecking order. Congress workers were similarly scattered across the slum, with Prakash being widely regarded as the most influential of the eight.

Party workers do not descend on Tulsi Nagar only during elections. Instead, they are ordinary residents of the slum, living with their families and facing the same threats of eviction and underdevelopment as their neighbors. This embedded status gives them direct, daily access to Tulsi Nagar's several thousand voters. The workers' local influence with residents is built through quiet and sustained efforts to help them between elections, by petitioning bureaucrats and elected representatives to address mounting trash, clogged drains, water shortages, unpaved roads, and difficulties obtaining state-issued documents. Such influence is far from static. During our years of working in Tulsi Nagar we witnessed party workers rise and fall in popularity, as residents continually re-evaluated which was best positioned to assist them.

These oscillations reverberate up to the highest levels of political leadership in the city. Political elites like Gupta and Sharma must continually assess which local leaders in Tulsi Nagar to formally integrate into their party organizations and bestow with limited party positions. A party worker's current level of popularity is of paramount concern as it determines their ability to mobilize support within vote-rich slums. Between the votes, political elites must also decide how to allocate scarce resources in response to the many demands for assistance from slums across their constituencies. Such decisions have consequences for their reputations as responsive patrons, and thus their ability to win intensely competitive urban elections.

In short, party workers like Rajesh and Prakash form the everyday pathways that connect low-income voters in Bhopal's slums to the city's political elites. Thousands of party workers like those in Tulsi Nagar fan out across

1. All names throughout this book have been changed or anonymized to protect respondent privacy unless otherwise noted. The only exceptions are high-level politicians and high-profile public figures, who are easily identified and were interviewed on the record.

Bhopal's 400 slums—informal settlements that house just over a quarter of the city's population.² Yet the widespread presence of these party networks belies how recently they took shape. Several decades ago, most slums across Bhopal did not even exist.³ Once formed, these settlements had no established community leaders in their earliest years. Most residents, including Rajesh and Prakash, were recent arrivals from the countryside, lacking economic and social standing in the city, let alone political clout and connections.

How do slums like Tulsi Nagar transform from clusters of hurriedly constructed shanties into the epicenters of urban elections? How does informal authority emerge within them? How do slum leaders connect to parties and bureaucracies within the city? These related concerns converge into the central question motivating this book: how are poor migrants from the countryside politically incorporated into the growing cities of the Global South?

The rapid formation of political linkages among politicians, community leaders, and poor migrants in India's cities has been nothing short of remarkable. Nearly as remarkable has been the lack of systematic attention to studying how such formative processes have unfolded. In the pages that follow we document how political networks form to connect poor migrants with the heart of urban governments. We show how unraveling these processes yields new and counterintuitive insights about the ability of disadvantaged citizens to secure representation and responsiveness from city authorities, and to demand accountability from those who govern them. In doing so, residents of slums like Tulsi Nagar routinely defy the stereotypes used to portray them, and demand a starring role in the unfolding political drama of urbanization across much of the world.

Politics in the Global South's Expanding Cities

Residents of urban slums are not leading lives that are peripheral to the major political developments of our times. Quite the opposite: they are at the very center of global demographic shifts. Early in the twenty-first century, most humans lived in cities for the first time in recorded history.⁴ Between 1950 and

2. Government of India 2015, p. 107.

3. Urban slums like Tulsi Nagar are largely a post-Independence phenomenon in India's cities. UN-Habitat 1982.

4. The United Nations estimated that in 2007 the population of the world became more than 50% urban. United Nations 2018.

2050, the world is projected to transform from seventy-percent rural to seventy-percent urban. Almost all global population growth for the next three decades—roughly 2.5 billion people—is expected to occur in urban areas.⁵ And almost all of this growth will happen in Africa and Asia.⁶ India alone is expected to add 416 million urban residents during this time frame—the largest projected increase in the world.⁷

The conversion of migrant villagers into urbanites is a big part of this transformation, and has unfolded differently in the Global South than it did in Global North countries during their industrial revolutions.⁸ Those earlier periods in the North largely drew farm workers into factory jobs, and often into dense housing constructed in close proximity to manufacturing centers.⁹ Poor migrants to cities across the Global South are far more likely to toil in the informal sector, without assured wages or contracts and with little in the way of social protections.¹⁰ These migrants also frequently reside in self-constructed dwellings in informal settlements like Tulsi Nagar.¹¹ Slums now house almost one billion people worldwide, or one in eight people.¹² These neighborhoods are defined by weak or absent formal property rights, dense and unplanned housing, and severe inadequacies in essential public services. In South Asia, one in three urban residents—over 200 million people—now reside in slums.

These grim statistics trouble assumptions regarding the transformative potential of urbanization for low-income countries.¹³ The likelihood of such

5. United Nations 2018, p. 11. In contrast, the growth of the world's rural population has been slowing and is expected to peak at 3.4 billion in 2021, after which it is expected to begin a slow decline.

6. In 1950, only four out of every ten city-dwellers lived in low- and middle-income countries. Currently, more than seven out of every ten do.

7. United Nations 2018.

8. While much of the Global South's urbanization has been fueled by natural population growth within cities, roughly forty percent of urban population growth is estimated to come from rural-urban migration and the spatial expansion of cities. Montgomery 2008.

9. Rodden 2019.

10. See Hart 1973, p. 68, who draws on the experiences of migrant slum residents in Accra, Ghana to theorize the key distinguishing feature of informal sector work (a mixture of self-employment and non-wage-earning casual labor) as “whether or not labor is recruited on a permanent and regular basis for fixed rewards.” Informal employment characterizes ninety percent of India's labor force. Accountability Initiative 2020, p. 9.

11. On urban informality in the Global South, see Auerbach et al. 2018 and Grossman 2021.

12. See Goal 11 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

13. Glaeser 2011 sees the expansion of slum settlements as a sign of the desirability of the city—the city as a ladder for socio-economic upward mobility that draws the rural poor. At least

potential being realized requires a fine-grained understanding of how newly urban populations are woven into—or marginalized from—the life of cities. Dilemmas of economic inclusion, specifically inadequate supplies of jobs and housing, rightly inform discussions on urban futures. Yet equally important, and far less studied, are questions of *political* inclusion. To what degree can residents of places like Tulsi Nagar command political responsiveness and meaningful representation? The answers will determine not only their own wellbeing, but the political trajectories of the countries their migrations are transforming.

In the pages that follow, we will show that residents of India's urban slums are unlikely protagonists of city politics. Popular accounts of slums often depict their residents as politically passive, exhausted by dispossession, weakened by exclusion, or subdued within the clenched fists of local dons and venal municipal authorities. Against the grain of such narratives, we show slum residents are embedded in political networks with which they actively engage. This fact itself will not surprise many scholars of urban spaces. Within the field of political science, these networks are often described as *party machines*: pyramidal hierarchies of party workers that mobilize low-income voters during elections.

Yet urban machines, whether in New York and Chicago in the early twentieth century or present-day Accra or Buenos Aires, are almost always studied from the perspective of the elites who sit at their apex. From this vantage point, machine networks are principally understood as expedient conduits for politicians looking to cheaply amass votes. Their key purpose is to enable the disbursement of material handouts, often during campaigns and through intermediaries like Rajesh, in return for electoral support. The material benefits under this arrangement are humble and episodically provided. In return for these offerings, politicians hold citizens “perversely accountable” for delivering their votes.¹⁴ Such depictions lead wealthy residents, middle-class activists, and popular media to regularly lament that slums provide teeming and unthinking “vote banks” to Machiavellian elites.

This book flips the orientation through which urban political networks are studied. Doing so focuses our attention on how these networks are constructed at the grassroots level. Our key argument is that understanding how

in the Indian context, however, scholars have demonstrated that the urban poor are often “stuck” in slums, with few prospects for moving to propertied middle-class neighborhoods. Krishna 2013 and Rains and Krishna 2020.

14. Stokes 2005.

urban political networks form reveals who secures representation and accountability within city politics. Our book demonstrates that poor migrants in India do not serve as passive targets of elite machinations. Instead, they take active steps to ensure their place in city politics. Poor migrants build ties to governing authorities, principally through selecting their local community leaders. The latter's powers depend on their popularity among ordinary residents. Far from spaces pinned under the monopolizing thumbs of local strongmen, we find slums to be hotbeds of political competition. Established community leaders jostle among one another while also trying to fend off new upstarts seeking to attract their own followings.

Residents wield this competition for their affections to sow seeds of unexpected representation and responsiveness within the rough-and-tumble world of urban politics. They do not gift their support cheaply in return for election-time treats. Brokers must earn followings through daily efforts to help residents demand and secure a range of services from the state, from water connections to school admissions. The bottom-up construction of local leadership also ensures brokers reflect the qualities that residents value, which we reveal as often diverging from what parochial stereotypes of the urban poor expect.

This overlooked agency of poor migrants reverberates up the hierarchy of urban machines. Local party workers are not simply spigots through which politicians funnel handouts to buy votes, as they are commonly portrayed to be. Instead, these low-level party workers are informal representatives of the communities who have the power to select and replace them. Our bottom-up perspective also reveals the neglected agency and ambitions of party workers themselves. The local leaders we observed do not seek to remain perpetual intermediaries, endlessly content to win elections for others. Instead, they are careerists who aspire to climb up party hierarchies within the city. These unrecognized motivations prompt them to act differently than their images as painted in scholarly and popular accounts. For example, we find slum leaders in India frequently eschew exploiting ethnic divisions within their neighborhood. Instead, they favor more inclusive strategies for mobilizing broad swathes of support inside slums to help to launch political careers outside them.

For their part, political elites must work with the informal leaders that poor migrants select to represent their interests. Political elites cannot simply install their cronies as local leaders and expect residents to fall in line. In fact, we show that political elites prize slum leaders with traits that make them likely to prove effective in helping residents solve everyday problems in the city, thereby ensuring sustained popularity in the settlement.

These insights build on, and offer correctives to, a rich scholarship on urban politics in the Global South. Our study reveals unacknowledged forms of agency among poor migrants in shaping the political networks that govern them. Migrants then use these networks to demand accountability from elected officials. To be clear, we do not suggest slum residents face an inclusive and hospitable government. Indeed, many of the activities we document are catalyzed by systemic acts of state exclusion, eviction, and repression. Instead, we show that the representation and responsiveness that slum residents extract through their efforts is as hard won as it is imperfect, and worthy of acknowledgement and analysis, rather than either celebration or erasure.

How are the Urban Poor Incorporated into City Politics?

The political integration of the urban poor is often described in terms of failure, marginalization in urban governance, and dispossession by city authorities. In one popular account, Davis describes a “planet of slums” in which urban poverty pockets are little more than “living museums of human exploitation.”¹⁵ Less apocalyptic accounts still emphasize “differentiated citizenship” regimes which deny slum residents the public services that more privileged urbanites enjoy, while peppering the former with the threat of eviction.¹⁶

Alternatively, the urban poor are described as subjected to violence and mob rule. Scholars of urban violence have identified slums, particularly in Latin America, as “a hidden continent” of “criminal governance” in which local gangs enforce property rights, provide loans, and tax local businesses.¹⁷ In India, a vision of slums as lawless underworlds has been popularized in films and television, which depict slum residents as ruled by coercive kingpins like Mhatre in the 1998 Bollywood film *Satya*, Mamman in the 2008 Hollywood hit *Slumdog Millionaire*, or Ganesh Gaitonde in Netflix’s 2018 show *Sacred Games*.

The deprivations and hostility faced by the slum settlements we worked with are beyond question. Yet accounts focusing on these conditions often render residents as hopelessly docile in the face of repression and dispossession. The events we describe in Tulsi Nagar—and in the more than one

15. Davis 2006.

16. Heller et al. 2015; Bhan 2016.

17. Lessing 2020.

hundred other slum settlements with which we engage in this book—cuts sharply against such depictions. A homogenous view of slums as sites of exclusion prevents us from asking and answering critically important questions about how these settlements elbow their way into city politics.

Perhaps Tulsi Nagar's experiences are better anticipated by studies that argue wily city elites find it more profitable to incorporate the urban poor than to entirely exclude them. Tulsi Nagar's party workers illustrate one important and historically common pathway of inclusion through party machines. A venerable literature documents such machines as marked by three distinctive features. The first is their hierarchical, pyramid-shaped structures that link political elites ("patrons") to voters who support them ("clients"). These linkages are typically facilitated by intermediaries ("brokers") like Rajesh, who are entrenched in neighborhoods and forge face-to-face ties with voters.¹⁸ Second, machines are arranged geographically, with brokers controlling neighborhoods that are nested within the larger electoral domains of their patrons.¹⁹ Third, machines rely on the distribution of material spoils to win support—not lofty ideologies or policy promises.²⁰ These benefits can range from jobs, electricity connections, and access to hospital beds; to election-time handouts of cash and food; to local public goods like paved roads, sewers, and schools.

Many of the earliest examples of party machines come from cities of the United States, particularly during a period stretching from the Gilded Age (the last quarter of the nineteenth century) through the Second World War. From New York and Philadelphia to Kansas City and Chicago, machine bosses generated electoral support among poor European migrants by doling out jobs

18. Cornelius 1975; Fox 1994; Gay 1994; Auyero 2001; Hicken 2011; Szwarcberg 2015; Oliveros 2021.

19. Describing the geography of party machines in American cities, Trounstine 2008, p. 99, notes, "Machine parties were organized in a pyramid with hundreds of precinct workers at the bottom and one or a few party leaders at the top . . . the boss relied on the loyalty and support of many individuals working in the wards, precincts, blocks, and even individual tenements."

20. As Gosnell 1933, p. 21, noted, "When the spoils element is predominant in a political organization, it is called a political machine." Echoing this point, Banfield and Wilson 1963, p. 115, write, "A machine . . . is distinguished from other types of organization by the very heavy emphasis it places upon specific, material inducements and the consequent completeness and reliability of its control over behavior, which, of course, account for the name 'machine.'" And Scott 1969, p. 1143, asserts, "[The machine] relies on what it accomplishes in a concrete way for its supporters, not on what it stands for."

and public services. As the strength of these machines atrophied under institutional reforms and declining poverty rates, scholars observed similar organizations in low-income countries, most prominently in Latin American cities.²¹ In these Southern contexts, machines became identified as parties engaging in “clientelism:” a contingent, quid pro quo exchange of goods for support.²² These transactions revolve around election-time handouts meant to “buy” the poor’s votes—exchanges that are enforced by the watchful eyes of local brokers.

Such strategies are expedient for politicians looking to cheaply amass votes, and vulnerable migrant communities are often seen as the most fertile soil for clientelist strategies to take root. The insecurities faced by these “disoriented new arrivals” lead them to “prize instant advantages” and the episodic succor of clientelist handouts.²³ These vulnerabilities allow machines to craft electoral monopolies, thus pushing out competitors on the backs of poor migrant majorities. In doing so, machines invert accountability pressures within electoral politics, holding citizens who accept largesse accountable for their vote.

Party machines are thus described as organizations that callously use poor migrants to stifle competition, deliver paltry benefits, and subvert norms of accountability. Similar concerns underwrite popular ideas of slum politics in India, wherein residents are often understood to either sell their votes for handouts or mechanically assemble behind leaders of their caste or faith. Visiting Tulsi Nagar during elections, when most external observations of slum politics are fleetingly made, might well reinforce such impressions, with party workers like Rajesh distributing *biryani* (a popular meat-and-rice-based dish), liquor, and petty cash.

21. Gay 1994; Auyero 2001; Levitsky 2003; Greene 2007; Magaloni 2008; Weitz-Shapiro 2014; Szwarcberg 2015.

22. Stokes 2005; Nichter 2019; Nathan 2019. Gay 1990, p. 648, defines clientelism as “the distribution of resources (or promise of) by political office holders or political candidates in exchange for political support, primarily—although not exclusively—in the form of the vote.” Stokes 2011, p. 649, defines it as “the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?” Recent studies assert that any material strategy that lacks strict contingent exchange lies outside the realm of clientelistic politics. Nichter 2019, pp. 9–10.

23. Scott 1972, pp. 104–18. The detachment of migrants from the social roots of their villages has long been seen to prevent migrants from advancing their material interests in the city. See Durkheim 1933 [1897]; Wirth 1938; Nelson 1970.

Yet in our decade of observing political life in India's urban slums, we found residents repeatedly defying characterization as the pawns of political elites. They are not helpless, nor are they tricked into trading votes for trinkets. Instead, they engage in everyday forms of political participation, from petitioning elected representatives to protesting in front of government offices. Urban slum residents are not mere kindling for gang violence or exclusionary forms of ethnic politics. Instead, they often cross ethnic lines in seeking help and supporting local leaders. They are not cowering subjects of local kingpins. Far more often, urban slum residents actively select their community leaders, following those they see as best positioned to improve local conditions.

This multi-faceted agency we observed resonates with a literature on urban popular politics in the Global South, rooted in the disciplines of anthropology and geography. In this vein of scholarship, slums are approached as classic examples of "auto-construction," with residents cobbling together their homes and settlements themselves, brick-by-brick and organizing to secure public services and defend their modest gains from the bulldozers.²⁴ These innumerable acts of squatting, slapdash construction, and political assertion collectively shape the built spaces of cities.

Scholars have documented how such "subaltern urbanization" generates distinct forms of politics.²⁵ In his study of Tehran, Bayat traces how the poor have "quietly encroached" on the city through small-scale acts of illegal construction.²⁶ Holston describes a more assertive "insurgent citizenship" among poor migrants in Sao Paulo's periphery, who, over the course of twentieth century, transformed from disoriented squatters into citizens making demands on the state using rights-based language.²⁷ With reference to India, Chatterjee situates the urban poor within the world of "political society," where access to the state is secured through exertions of political pressure and negotiations with officials.²⁸

Due to the informality that pervades everyday life for the urban poor, such exertions and negotiations are understood to lie mostly outside the realm of codified law, and instead exist within a shadowy space that moves to bribery

24. Holston 2008; Roy 2011; Caldeira 2017.

25. See Roy 2011 and Caldeira 2017 for larger conceptual discussions on subaltern urbanization.

26. Bayat 1997.

27. Holston 2008.

28. Chatterjee 2004.

and electoral calculation.²⁹ A gritty improvisational sense of entrepreneurialism can prove critical within political society, as such *jugaad* helps claimants navigate dismissive bureaucracies and muster what political influence they can to get the attention of officials.³⁰ Also critical to these efforts are brokers like Rajesh, who, armed with their political connections and hard-earned know-how of dealing with public institutions, can smooth access to the state. The widespread use of brokers in India has led scholars to describe India as having a “mediated state,” where “blurry” boundaries between state and society are traversed by clever brokers on behalf their clients.³¹

The broad thrust of the literature on urban popular politics thus casts the poor as key actors in expanding cities.³² Surprisingly, though, scholars have not turned these insights about the political agency of the urban poor towards examining the poor’s role in the actual construction of the political networks that connect them to the state. The political brokers operating in political society are conceptualized as being suspended just above poor neighborhoods, within close enough reach to provide a bridge to the state but too distant to be influenced or held accountable. And these hierarchies are approached as static structures, populated by brokers who perform go-between activities for voters and political elites. Indeed, studies that otherwise stress bottom-up resistance and claim-making say little about how the political networks that are so pivotal to these efforts are built and reconstituted over time. In this book, we will show that the poor do not just work through political society to gain access to the state; they play a key role in shaping it, bending political networks through their everyday activities in ways that generate unexpected forms of accountability and representation.

How Political Networks Form During Urbanization

We study the political incorporation of poor migrants within the slums of India’s expanding cities, which are estimated to house more than sixty-five million people, a decade-old official figure that is likely an underestimate.³³

29. Gupta 2012.

30. Jeffrey and Young 2014.

31. Berenschot 2014. Gupta 2012.

32. Caldeira 2017, p. 9.

33. Census of India 2011. The Indian census has been conducted every decade since 1881 without delay, but the 2021 census was postponed by the government citing constraints imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. It is important to note that not all poor migrants in India’s cities

Of specific empirical focus in our book (as discussed further in Chapter 2) are squatter settlements (*kachi basti*), a pervasive type of slum in India's cities that are defined by their unplanned, haphazard, and unsanctioned construction by residents; crowded living conditions; initial (and for most, continued) lack of formal property rights over the land; and marginalization in the distribution of public services.³⁴ These are relatively young political environments, predominantly settled by low-income migrants who have moved from elsewhere in the state or country, or more locally from somewhere in the city or its immediate periphery. Residents face a range of vulnerabilities, stemming not only from material poverty but also from informality in employment and housing. Deprivation and newness make slums—and squatter settlements in particular—fertile terrain for the emergence of party machines.³⁵

The pervasive and emergent character of political machines in India's slums allows us to closely track how they form in real time. We trace these organizations in two north Indian cities—Jaipur (in Rajasthan) and Bhopal (in Madhya Pradesh). We focused on the BJP and Congress, the two major parties in each city, and also in Indian national politics. Our efforts were premised on ethnographic fieldwork, hundreds of interviews, and large-scale surveys of actors within each major tier of machine anatomy—ordinary residents, neighborhood-level political brokers, and municipal-level political patrons.

reside within slum settlements. Poor migrants in urban India who are less rooted-in-place include “pavement dwellers” (groups of people living on sidewalks, under bridges, and in transient tent camps) and a large population of circular migrants, who periodically shift to the city during the year to supplement their rural earnings (see Thachil 2017 on circular migrants). Circular migrants are often more marginalized and politically excluded from city politics than more settled slum residents (Gaikwad and Nellis 2021; Thachil 2020). They are an important urban population beyond the scope of this book and deserving of more systematic scholarly attention.

34. See Auerbach 2020, Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion on squatter settlements and what differentiates them from other urban poverty pockets that are referred to as “slums” in India (for example, dilapidated old city neighborhoods, urban villages, factory housing, and post-eviction resettlement colonies).

35. In this book, we use the broad term “slum” to describe the neighborhoods under study. We do so because squatter settlements are a common type of slum settlement and are colloquially and officially referred to as “slums” in India's cities. We also do so for ease of exposition. Readers should note, however, that squatter settlements are the specific empirical sites of our fieldwork and data collection efforts. Their acute vulnerabilities, migrant populations, and pervasive presence in India's cities make them especially substantively important and theoretically appropriate for our study.

A key insight from our multipronged fieldwork was the abundance of everyday political competition within slums. We observed brokers competing for the support of residents, party elites competing over influential brokers, residents competing for the attention of brokers, and brokers competing for promotion within party organizations. This competition was not restricted to election time. It is a persistent and crucial feature of the cities we study. And it is foundational to the construction of political networks linking slums to city authorities.

Drawing on this insight, we argue that slum residents are politically incorporated into cities via networks that form through interlocking processes of competitive political selection. We identify four major selection decisions—depicted in Figure 1.1—in which residents, brokers, and patrons choose one another. Our book is organized around the sequential analysis of these four selections, each of which is animated by a core question regarding the political incorporation of the urban poor.

First, we ask, *how does political authority emerge within poor migrant communities?* Since this authority takes the form of intermediaries like Rajesh, a different way of putting this question is: how do brokers emerge within their localities? Prior work has either neglected this question entirely or presumed brokers are appointed by political elites, from the top down. Conversely, we draw on ethnographic fieldwork to demonstrate slum residents actively choose their informal brokers (Arena A, Chapter 2). These selections are made through discrete moments like community meetings and informal elections, or via everyday choices over whom to seek help from and follow.

After establishing that residents select their local brokers, we analyze how they make these pivotal choices. We draw on a survey-based experiment with 2,199 slum residents to show how their decisions often deviate from popular assumptions regarding their political preferences. For example, residents do not reflexively assemble behind co-ethnic brokers. Instead, they often prioritize brokers who are most likely to prove competent in petitioning the state, including leaders who have high levels of education, and occupations that connect them to local municipal authorities. We later show that these same traits distinguish ordinary residents from actual brokers operating in slums: the kinds of effective leaders that residents want are often the kinds of leaders they actually get. This simple descriptive fact offers powerful evidence of the bottom-up construction of political authority, and the dynamics of representation within machine politics.

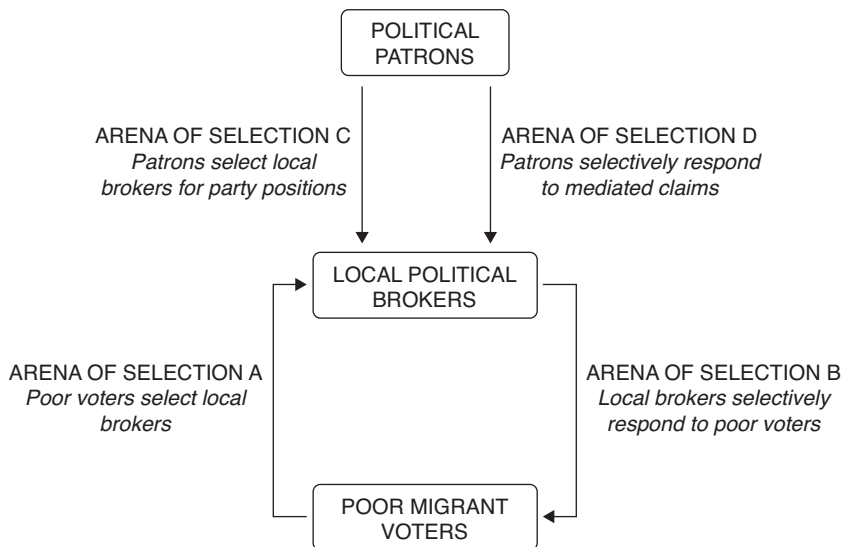


FIGURE 1.1. Four Arenas of Competitive Selection in Party Machines

Second, we ask *which poor migrants are served by these emerging political networks?* The answer depends on a second selection decision: which residents do brokers decide to cultivate as supporters (clients) within their settlements (Arena B, Chapter 3). Past scholarship has narrowly focused on to whom brokers distribute petty benefits during elections, in order to “buy” their votes. In such exchanges, brokers are expected to favor those residents whose votes they can most confidently verify, including members of their own partisan or ethnic community.³⁶

Yet we argue that brokers win support through everyday interactions, not election-time transactions. We observed slum leaders receiving a constant stream of requests from residents plagued by informality, poverty, and inhospitable bureaucracies. Residents view such daily assistance as far more important than episodic campaign handouts. At the same time, most brokers have limited time, resources, and political capital, preventing them from addressing every demand placed at their feet.

Which residents do brokers prioritize in evaluating these requests?³⁷ We find that rather than prioritizing residents they can most easily surveil, slum

36. Stokes 2005; Schaffer 2007; Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012; Hilgers 2012.

37. Scholars increasingly recognize the importance of “request fulfillment” as a central force animating machine politics. Nichter and Peress 2017; Nichter 2019.

leaders favor residents best positioned to boost their own local reputations for problem-solving. Drawing on a unique experiment with 629 slum leaders across our study cities, we argue that brokers prize socially influential residents who can spread word of the former's assistance, and avoid displays of ethnic favoritism that might constrict their followings. These preferences diverge from popular and scholarly portrayals of brokers, suggesting the need to revisit the assumptions behind such depictions. We then draw on evidence from residents themselves to show how their reports of who among them gets help align with the preferences expressed by brokers in our experiment.

These first two selections, underpinned by brokers competing for resident support and residents competing for broker assistance, drive the formation of political networks within poor urban neighborhoods. The next two competitive selection processes drive the formation of networks connecting these neighborhoods to the wider world of city politics.

Our third arena of selection asks *how do patrons select which local brokers to bring into their local party organization* (Arena C, Chapter 4)? Patrons looking to gain a foothold in low-income neighborhoods must decide whom to pluck from the pool of local leaders jostling for positions in their party organizations, and within their own personal factional fold. We draw on an experiment conducted with 343 local urban patrons to demonstrate how their decisions are shaped by the competitive nature of brokerage environments in slums. Intense inter- and intra-party factional competition over brokers leads patrons to prioritize loyalty not only to the broader party, but also to the patron.

Competition for votes also leads patrons to focus on a broker's popularity with residents. Interestingly, this concern leads them to prioritize a broker's everyday effectiveness in fulfilling resident requests for assistance, rather than a broker's election-time ability to mobilize crowds during campaigns, often via petty handouts. We then employ data on the career trajectories of our 629 slum leaders to show that the traits patrons value correlate strongly with actual promotion patterns among brokers within party organizations. The fact that patrons take into account the preferences of slum residents in deciding which brokers to include and promote reveals another important channel of accountability and representation within these political networks.

Fourth and finally, we ask, *given the daily barrage of claims patrons receive from brokers for local public goods, how do party patrons decide which claims to fulfill?* This fourth arena of selection (Arena D, Chapter 5) examines how patrons allocate limited public resources across brokers, and, by extension, the neighborhoods for which the latter speak. While prior scholarship has focused on

how politicians target resources to constituencies in a top-down fashion, we focus on how they respond to bottom-up demands from urban neighborhoods. We emphasize that such demands are often made by groups, rather than individuals, and are mediated through a local broker, rather than made directly by voters.

Our framework highlights how in evaluating these collective, brokered requests, patrons must make a three-level consideration. Patrons must bear in mind not only the characteristics of the constituency from which a request emanates, but also of the broker making the request as well as the nature of the good requested. This three-part decision-making process has received little attention in studies of distributive politics. We argue that patrons focus less on how much support their party has traditionally enjoyed in the settlement—the factor perhaps most emphasized by prior studies. Instead, they prioritize requests that best lend themselves to personal credit-claiming, or the ability to cut through the complex assemblage of actors and institutions involved in public service delivery to ensure that beneficiaries know the politician is responsible for the delivered service. Specifically, we show that politicians privilege petitions for local public goods that can be durably tagged, and are more likely to dismiss petitions made by brokers who are likely to be unwilling or ineffectual in facilitating their credit-claiming efforts.

How does our framework emphasizing competitive selection within machine politics advance our understanding of urban politics? Before turning to such contributions, it is important to address a few questions that our discussion so far provokes. First, in highlighting themes of agency and bottom-up accountability within urban political networks, we do not wish to ignore the significant limitations of these networks in improving the lives of slum residents. The competitive choices we study necessarily entail decisions over whom to exclude, not only whom to include. By examining each arena of selection, our book also documents how specific types of individuals and settlements are disfavored, under-represented, or left out of emergent urban political networks. For example, women, religious minorities, and recent arrivals into the slum are all disadvantaged or disfavored in different ways at specific levels of machine organizations.

Finally, in our conclusion, we discuss how machine networks entrench a highly localized, fragmented politics centered around addressing the immediate and ad-hoc demands of residents. We argue this piecemeal politics ensures persistent forms of dependency, inhibits coordinated claim-making across

settlements, and fails to deliver systematic policy-based improvements. Yet we caution readers against assuming that the removal of these networks would necessarily yield pro-poor programmatic politics. Even with all their limitations, these structures can equally be seen to provide a bulwark against an even more exclusionary, elitist, and repressive posture towards the urban poor.

Readers may also wonder why we do not analyze certain selection decisions. For example, we study how patrons select brokers, but not how brokers select patrons. This omission should not suggest that brokers are idle participants in the forging of these relationships. Chapter 4 shows brokers often initiate ties with patrons through their claim-making activities. Brokers, however, face more constrained choices over patrons than vice versa. The number of brokers relative to patrons within a local constituency, and the near uniform desires of brokers to obtain scarce party positions, strengthens the control patrons enjoy in these interactions. For this reason, we do not allocate an entire chapter to analyzing the preferences of brokers over patrons.

We also do not allocate an entire chapter to resident selection of patrons. In the distributive politics of India's cities, resident-patron interactions are frequently mediated by brokers, pushing resident efforts to approach patrons through the very networks examined in Chapters 2 and 3. Further, an examination of patron selection by residents shifts toward a more conventional study of electoral behavior, since the patrons we examine are elected representatives or candidates. Though we will touch on aspects of electoral behavior in several parts of the book—for example, the partisan preferences of residents and the partisan composition of settlements—our primary focus remains squarely on what we see as the more important and less studied question of urban politics: how party machines incorporate and respond to the urban poor between elections.

Our final note concerns the terminology of emergence and formation. This language should not suggest a sole focus on the initial origins of party machine networks, that is, during the earliest years of squatting in the communities under study. Instead, our use of this language is deliberate and analytically purposeful, meant to illuminate *ongoing* processes of competition and selection that make questions of emergence and formation of continued importance in understanding the mechanics of party machines. The political machines we study are unsettled, and in constant motion. They bear witness to innumerable stories of individual brokers rising and falling in influence, and the continued construction and reconstruction of linkages among residents, brokers, and patrons.

Tulsi Nagar's history illustrates this constant change, with selection processes dating back to the 1970s. Residents recall choosing Sharma from among several candidates to serve as the president of the settlement's newly formed development committee, the *Tulsi Kalyan Vikas Sangh* (Tulsi Welfare Development Association). While Sharma's selection was a watershed moment in Tulsi Nagar's history, it hardly marked the end of leadership change. Slum leadership does not have fixed term limits, and enterprising upstarts can make a go at slum leadership if they can convince other residents to support them. And other residents did rise up to challenge Sharma, sometimes through community meetings but more often through quieter acts of helping individuals and households, which would attract followers in a more piecemeal manner. At the time of our writing, Rajesh and Prakash still hold sway, but must fend off twenty-two other aspirants, one of whom may well rise to prominence by our next visit. Such perpetual motion demands a theoretical framework that centers on these repeated, every day, multi-level decisions that underpin the ongoing formation of machine networks.

Advancing Scholarship on the Politics of the Urban Poor

How do our arguments and evidence contribute to the venerable and interdisciplinary scholarship on the politics of the urban poor?³⁸ First, our work emphasizes the importance of studying how political networks form to connect poor migrants with party organizations in cities. Despite substantial research on urban party machines, scholars have yet to provide a systematic account of how those machines form. Early research on American cities provided accounts of machines in cities like Chicago or Kansas City, or biographies of bosses like William Tweed of New York and James Curley of Boston.³⁹ This literature outlined the aforementioned distinguishing features of machine politics: the targeted distribution of patronage; dense, pyramidal party organizations; and the importance of poor migrants as core support bases.⁴⁰

38. For an important review of the literature on politics in cities of the Global South, see Post 2018.

39. Ostrogorski 1902. Colburn and Pozzetta 1976.

40. In the words of Tom Pendergast, a famous boss of Kansas City, "What's government for if it isn't to help people. They're interested only in local conditions—not about the tariff or the war debts. They've got their own problems. They want consideration for their troubles in their house, across the street, or around the corner . . . They vote for the fellow who gives it to them." As quoted in Larsen and Hulston 1997, p. 72. As Shefter 1978, p. 270, notes, "There is general

Yet, scholars of American machines overlook how such organizations emerged. Biographical accounts of bosses assumed machines grew out of their propulsive charisma.⁴¹ Sociological studies saw machines as an inevitable result of underlying social conditions, in particular the presence of poor immigrants.⁴²

The lack of analytical attention to organizational emergence persisted as the study of political machines shifted to the Global South. This contextual transition also prompted a definitional shift. In studies of American politics, machines were seen as organizations providing benefits to generate support among their core constituencies. In studies of Latin America, machines became increasingly identified as parties practicing a more rigidly contingent subset of “spoils-based” strategies: clientelism.⁴³ Scholars now often use machine politics and clientelism interchangeably.⁴⁴

Recent studies on clientelism have largely focused on how parties enforce these more explicitly quid pro quo exchanges with voters.⁴⁵ Various

agreement among scholars that political machines were supported disproportionately by the poor and by voters of immigrant stock.” Gosnell 1933, p. 26, echoes this argument: “Party machines have been strongest in the rapidly growing urban communities, particularly in the sections inhabited by the poorer immigrant groups.”

41. As Trounstine 2008, p. 85, notes, “explanations of party building that rely on the extraordinary leadership qualities or desire for power of individual men are incomplete. They fail to account for the emergence of such leaders and so offer no predictive power.”

42. Yet, as Shefter notes, theories of the emergence of a political machine “must focus upon more than the social composition and characteristics of urban electorates; just because residents *can* be politically mobilized in a particular way [doesn’t mean] they *will* be.” Emphasis in original. Shefter 1978, p. 297. McCaffery 1992, p. 436, notes that scholars have failed to fully account for how political machines and machine bosses emerged in American cities, largely because most analyses have “rest[ed] on a static polar categorization of social groups in American cities.”

43. Stokes 2005; Nichter 2019; Nathan 2019.

44. Examples include Stokes 2005, p. 315, “Political machines (or clientelist parties) mobilize electoral support by trading particularistic benefits to voters in exchange for their votes.” Gans-Morse et al. 2014, p. 415, similarly note, “During elections in many countries, clientelist parties (or political machines) distribute benefits to citizens in direct exchange for political support.” An exception is Szwarcberg 2015, p. 7, who defines machines in a more organizational fashion, “Problem-solving networks are anchored in political machines—informal organizations that link party members with voters. Machines consolidate several problem-solving networks.”

45. Stokes influentially articulated this dilemma: “How does the machine keep voters from renegeing on the implicit deal whereby the machine distributes goods and the recipient votes for the machine?” Stokes 2005, p. 315.

investigations have explored how this enforcing ability is ameliorated or exacerbated by employing brokers to monitor voters, targeting particular types of voters, or engaging in iterative rather than spot exchanges.⁴⁶ Machines must not only verify electoral returns from voters but also ensure that their brokers do not shirk in their canvassing responsibilities.⁴⁷

An overwhelming focus on how machine bosses enforce compliance has reinforced a particular image of this form of politics. Machine politics is seen as marked by low competition, passive clients, exploitative brokers, and distributive strategies centered around ethnic favoritism.⁴⁸ By focusing instead on how machines form, we reveal the central role of various forms of competition in continually constructing these networks.⁴⁹ These competitive underpinnings ensure that the political integration of the urban poor is not simply a process marked by deprivation, exclusion, and control. Instead, they afford the urban poor an important, if imperfect, degree of representation and accountability within city politics. Contra “enforcement” studies, our “selection” framework demonstrates how machine politics is marked by high competition, active clients, entrepreneurial brokers, and a less central role for ethnic favoritism than commonly assumed.

46. For monitoring voters see, Stokes et al. 2013; Gingerich and Medina 2013; Rueda 2015. For targeting specific types of voters see, Stokes 2005; Nichter 2008; Schaffer and Baker 2015; Corstange 2016; Chauchard 2018; Cruz 2019. For an examination of iterative exchanges, Nichter 2019.

47. Medina and Stokes 2007; Stokes et al. 2013; Camp 2017.

48. Indeed, formal models of machines often specify a single dominant party, and even a single dominant broker within a locality. Gingerich and Medina 2013; Camp 2017. Gans-Morse et al., p. 430, discuss some of the challenges facing formal analysis of what they term “dueling machines,” which underpins some of the neglect of competition within studies of machine politics. There are numerous reasons behind such assumptions of low competition. Incumbents can deploy their control of the flow of public resources to ensure voter loyalty in spite of weak policy performances. Opposition parties who lack access to state benefits will struggle to compete. Such arguments find support from the experiences of dominant incumbents who maintained long reigns despite lackluster policy records. Examples of such parties include the PRI in Mexico, the Congress Party in India, the Peronists in Argentina, the ANC in South Africa, and the NDP in Egypt.

49. We build on prior studies that have noted the compatibility of political competition with machine politics. In the introduction of their influential volume on clientelism, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, p. 32, note, “From Bangladesh to Jamaica, clientelistic politics has operated through party competition.”

1. “Active Clients”: *Competition empowers clients to secure representation and accountability within machine organizations.*

Our framework goes well beyond reiterating the general point that the poor have political agency.⁵⁰ We argue that the interlocking selections that constitute machines enable the preferences of poor residents to *shape* the machines that link them to the state. Anthropological work on urban popular politics has rarely taken party organizations seriously as an object of study. Their depictions of the agency of the urban poor, therefore, do not encompass how residents actively construct local brokerage networks. Political scientists largely focus on how party elites select which brokers to work with, not how residents determine who in their communities rise into brokerage positions.⁵¹

In contrast, our book highlights how political elites cannot impose brokers on slum residents, either by parachuting their own people into settlements or by conferring informal authority on a resident. Instead, politicians looking to extend their reach within slums must choose from within the pool of informal leaders that residents have already chosen. The bottom-up dynamics we uncover generate a degree of representation and accountability within machine organizations, which our multi-layered data allows us to trace. For example, in Chapter 2 we demonstrate how residents value and select brokers who are educated, and hence more likely to prove knowledgeable and effective in procuring benefits from the state. Chapter 3 shows that actual brokers are distinguished from residents by higher levels of education, reflecting resident preferences. And in Chapter 4, we show how party patrons take resident preferences into account in making their selections, and select educated brokers to staff their local organizations.

We also show residents as willing to leave inept, corrupt, or coercive brokers and switch their support to better, more effective alternatives. Take Anil, who once proudly held the title of Congress *pramukh* (chief) in Tulsi Nagar—initially

50. Though, this too is a point worth underscoring, given that several core models of clientelism render poor voters as little more than passive recipients of election-time handouts. Stokes 2005; Nichter 2008; Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012. More recent research has sought to amplify the role of clients in making demands of local machine actors—Szwarcberg 2015, Nichter and Peress 2017—but have not gone so far as to argue clients actively shape machine structures.

51. We re-analyzed 82 recent studies of clientelistic linkages reviewed by Hicken and Nathan 2020 (discussed in Chapter 6). Only 17 studies (21%) discuss mechanisms of broker selection and only 1—Kennedy 2010—discusses selection by clients.

won through acts of courageous leadership to improve local conditions. His standing was taken away in the face of public scrutiny over his escalating *dadagiri*—physically and verbally abusing residents. Sapped of his public support, Anil was thrown out of the Congress, who saw their ties with him as an electoral liability. Congress politicians turned their attention to Laxman and Abdul, who had been building their brands by helping residents with their many problems.

Less dramatic than Anil's example, but with the same ultimate effect, is the story of Ramu, famous for his greased locks of jet-black hair. A group of residents never gathered to pick Ramu as their informal leader. Instead, he slowly built his brand in the late 2000s through a range of local service activities—most prominently, teaching other people how to cut hair (his own vocation) and petitioning the area MLA (member of the legislative assembly) for a community center. Ramu's modest following in Tulsi Nagar yielded a similarly modest position in the BJP's organization. In the few years leading up to the 2018 election, however, we heard reports that Ramu's efforts and efficacy were dwindling. His supporters scattered to other more active party workers in Tulsi Nagar. The examples of Anil and Ramu underscore the fact that resident selection of brokers is an important, ongoing, and often overlooked process that informs representation and accountability within the base layer of machine hierarchies.

2. "Ambitious Brokers": *Brokers seek careers over rents, and to mobilize voters rather than monitor them.*

Our book offers a new understanding of the roles and motivations of political brokers, a set of actors who have been at the center of a proliferating, interdisciplinary scholarship.⁵² Yet most of this scholarship has a functionalist flavor, focusing on what these actors do, with far less attention as to why they do it. For example, studies of clientelism in political science emphasize the role of brokers as the spies through which party elites monitor local voters, and the spigots through which they funnel campaign handouts. In such depictions, brokers' motivations are assumed to be little more than siphoning off some of the resources that parties give them during elections.⁵³

52. On India, see Wiebe 1975; de Wit 1997; Hansen 2001; Jha et al. 2007; Das and Walton 2015; Krishna et al. 2020. Brokerage in poor urban communities has also been documented in Venezuela (Ray 1969), Ecuador (Burgwal 1996), Mexico (Cornelius 1975), Brazil (Gay 1994; Koster and de Vries 2012), Peru (Stokes 1995; Dosh 2010) and Argentina (Auyero 2001).

53. Such assumptions are explicit within some formal models of machines. Larreguy et al. 2016.

Portrayals of brokers as merely spigots and spies underestimate the motivations and ambitions of these actors. The slum leaders we followed were not content to remain perpetual intermediaries, only seeking the chance to skim payments during elections. India's slum leaders enter brokerage in the hopes of moving upward in party hierarchies, and even receiving a party nomination to fight in a local election.

We are not the first to note the “progressive ambition” of brokers.⁵⁴ However, past studies have not documented how such ambitions align with actual patterns of broker mobility within party organizations, making little effort to trace their trajectories over time. Our study follows the movement of more than 600 slum leaders within and between parties, and examines the factors driving promotions among them. Broadly, we find that, while upward mobility is difficult, a significant proportion of brokers do rise to positions of prominence within party organizations. Their view of brokerage as a means for a political career cannot be dismissed as simply wishful thinking. Their rise, as locally selected leaders, also reveals another important channel through which poor migrants secure representation within urban politics.

Our research further reveals how careerist ambitions incentivize brokers to mobilize voters rather than to monitor them. Even the few studies that emphasize broker ambitions still argue such impulses are best served by effective monitoring.⁵⁵ By contrast, we argue brokers look to craft reputations as inclusive and effective problem-solvers and representatives of local interests. We show that a view of brokers as reputation-seekers better anticipates the kinds of residents they cultivate as clients, and hence the kinds of migrants to whose demands machines will be more or less responsive.

Furthermore, we demonstrate how the progressive ambition of brokers impacts their relationship with party patrons. The conventional view of brokers as rent-seekers highlights shirking or corruption as the major concern

54. We borrow the term “progressive ambition” from Schelesinger’s study of US legislators. Schelesinger 1966.

55. The two recent accounts that most clearly note the careerist ambitions of brokers are Camp 2017 and Szwarcberg 2015. For Camp, careerist ambitions drive brokers to bargain with party elites through the threat of exit. However, he views this threat as a tool to extract additional resources from party elites, not to fuel upward mobility within party organizations. Szwarcberg aligns most closely with our account and notes brokers seek political careers to become candidates themselves. However, she retains a view that such mobility is best achieved through effective monitoring. Szwarcberg 2015, p. 63.

patrons face in employing brokers.⁵⁶ The latter seek to pocket party resources without expending the requisite effort to win votes. Instead we find that the careerist ambitions of brokers motivate them to work hard on their party's behalf. However, their desire for promotion yields a different dilemma for patrons—how to ensure ambitious brokers do not defect to rival parties, or to rival patrons in the same party. We find that over one in four brokers openly admit to having switched parties, and predominantly do so because they are frustrated by a lack of advancement in their own party, or believe the rival party will promote them more quickly.

Once again, competitive pressures are central to the processes we uncover. Competition between brokers has often been unacknowledged, and such figures are often portrayed as singularly powerful within their communities. The intense competition we observed compels brokers to mobilize large followings in the search for promotion.⁵⁷ High levels of inter-party competition and intra-party factionalism compel patrons to pay close attention to a broker's potential for disloyalty.⁵⁸

3. “Multi-ethnic machines”: *Machines often avoid ethnic favoritism in diverse cities.*

Our findings question the presumed centrality of ethnicity within machine politics across much of the world. Classical studies of machines within US cities often noted their use of shared ethnic ties in forging relationships with voters.⁵⁹ Machines flourished within the enclaves set up by recent immigrants from Italy or Ireland. Local bosses in these neighborhoods built followings by invoking the ethnic status they shared with residents, and channeling benefits along ethnic lines.⁶⁰ This strategy was enabled by the clustering of immigrants from a particular country in a given neighborhood.⁶¹

56. Larreguy et al. 2016; Camp 2017; and Van Houten 2009.

57. In our review of prior studies, 55 studies make no mention of competition between brokers, and another 6 specify that individual brokers hold monopolistic control in their localities. Only 9 explicitly mention some form of broker competition, either within (3) or between parties (6).

58. Our focus on loyalty aligns with the work of Novaes 2017 who examines disloyal brokers in Brazil. Again, though, our accounts diverge in that his emphasis remains on how threats of defection are used to extract rents rather than promotions or nominations.

59. We follow Chandra 2006 in defining ethnic identities as descent-based attributes, including race, tribe, caste, and region-of-origin.

60. Luconi 1997.

61. As Bradley and Zald 1965, p. 163, note, “Capitalizing on the neighborhood segregation of their countrymen, and their own ethnic identification, political bosses appeared who were

Similarly, ethnic identities such as race, tribe, and caste have been shown to play a central role in structuring politics across the Global South. The presumed efficacy of ethnicity in structuring clientelist transactions has reinforced its importance. Ethnic identities are seen to provide markers for candidates to use when signaling who they will include in circuits of patronage.⁶² Shared ethnic networks can also facilitate trust between politicians and voters, or enable the former to monitor the latter's voting behavior.⁶³

India has been invoked as a paradigmatic case of a "patronage democracy" in which ethnicity is a central organizing force.⁶⁴ Contrary to these expectations, we find limited evidence that ethnicity plays a central role in the selection decisions that constitute political machines in Indian cities. Indicators of competence in solving everyday problems, notably education, appear more influential than shared ethnicity within resident decision-making about whom to seek help from and whom to follow. Moreover, the high levels of ethnic diversity within slums means that many residents do not even have a leader from their ethnic community available to follow. This constraint is especially apparent for narrowly defined ethnic categories such as caste, which are both the most socially meaningful to residents, and precisely those thought to best facilitate political cooperation and trust within clientelist exchanges.⁶⁵

The importance of shared ethnicity is even more strikingly muted within the calculations of ambitious brokers in cultivating their local clientele. In fact, the brokers we spoke to actively sought to avoid parochial reputations for favoring members of their own ethnic group. Such reputations constricted their potential support base within diverse slums, in turn hampering their chances for promotion and a political career.⁶⁶ Instead, we find slum leaders actively trying to construct multi-ethnic followings. For example, in Tulsi Nagar, Mishra, a high-caste Brahmin, was supported by a range of castes as well as by Muslims—so much so that he insisted the letterhead of Tulsi Nagar's development association include an image of both a temple and a mosque. Ramu, a member of a disadvantaged Dalit caste, attracted a range of followers,

supreme in their own bailiwicks." Of course, ethnicity was not always seen as predominant within US machines, e.g., Stevens 2009.

62. Fearon 1999; Chandra 2004; Posner 2005.

63. Habyarimana et al. 2007.

64. Chandra 2004.

65. Corstange 2016.

66. Our account therefore builds on important work on how multi-ethnic coalitions are forged in low-income democracies. Arriola 2012; Ichino and Nathan 2013; Koter 2013.

including high-caste Brahmins; and Abdul, a Muslim, counted hundreds of Hindus among his followers.

Instead of favoring members of their own caste or faith, slum leaders prioritize residents best positioned to boost the former's reputation within the slum's social world, including longtime veterans of the settlement. These findings are especially striking given that prior studies have anticipated political competition to enhance the centrality of ethnic identities in structuring machine politics.⁶⁷ The realities we uncover call for a rethinking of the most salient dimensions of inclusion and exclusion within urban machines, even in countries like India which are seen to have highly ethnicized politics.

4. "Politics Beyond Elections": *Urban politics needs to be studied between the vote.*

A focus on how parties verify and enforce electoral quid pro quo has predictably emphasized the study of how machines operate during elections. Our own review of eighty-two recent studies of clientelism, which we discuss in the concluding chapter, found a majority (52%) squarely focus on the election period, while only sixteen percent primarily focus on politics between the votes. This focus has further implications, including amplifying the importance of top-down strategies of mobilization, such as the distribution of campaign handouts in hopes of swaying voters at the polls.

By contrast, an examination centered on how machines form emphasizes the need to study the everyday life of these organizations. Our intensive fieldwork reveals that residents rarely choose which party or broker to support on the basis of petty gifts during campaigns. Even brokers openly confessed that the vast majority of slum residents are unaffected by the handouts they happily receive during elections. Nor is a broker's ability to mobilize attendance at campaign rallies regarded by clients or patrons as reliable signals of the broker's electoral influence. Canny voters in Indian slums often attend rallies for multiple parties and candidates, as both performative gestures and also to avail themselves of the small pleasures of food and socializing, while voting their preference in the booth. Instead, we provide evidence that both voters and party elites see a broker's problem-solving abilities between the votes as a more reliable indicator of the former's popularity than their efforts during campaigns.

Our quotidian focus also emphasizes how machines respond to bottom-up requests from residents. Scholars across a range of contexts increasingly recognize

67. Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, p. 34.

the importance of such citizen-initiated requests for distributive politics.⁶⁸ We build on these contributions by providing the first effort to systematically theorize and empirically trace patterns of responsiveness to resident requests up through the multiple layers of machine hierarchies. We study both how brokers decide which resident requests to prioritize (Chapter 3), and then how patrons decide which broker requests to prioritize (Chapter 5).

Situating our Study in the Context of Indian Slums

India's slums are important and theoretically productive spaces in which to situate a study on the formation of political ties between poor migrants and political elites.⁶⁹ Most slum residents either fall below the poverty line or teeter on it, with a single illness or injury capable of plunging a family into crisis.⁷⁰ Residents work in a bloated informal economy, and are vulnerable to eviction due to weak or absent property rights.⁷¹ In seeking to address these risks, and to secure basic public services, residents face dismissive government institutions that often require the intervention of political elites. These features of slums combine to make them the quintessential "garrisons" of popular politics in India's cities. They are precisely the type of settlements that have animated the literature on machine politics.⁷²

Yet a study on political machines within India is unusual. India's parties are often described as organizationally moribund at the local level. Instead of relying on durable and entrenched networks of party workers to mobilize voters, parties cobble together fleeting linkages with local elites. This characterization has been made with respect to our study states (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) and elsewhere in India.⁷³

68. Nichter and Peress 2017; Kruks-Wisner 2018. Despite such efforts, studies of bottom-up mobilization remain less prevalent than of top-down targeting. Our re-review of 82 recent studies of clientelist linkage found 33 studies (40.2%) focused exclusively on top-down targeting, compared to just 14 (17.1%) that focus on bottom-up requests.

69. Jha et al. 2007; Auerbach 2020.

70. Krishna 2010.

71. For a comparative discussion on informal economies, see La Porta and Shleifer 2014. On India's informal urban economies, see Gill 2012; Anjaria 2016; and Thachil 2017.

72. Chatterjee 2004; Harriss 2005.

73. For Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh see, Krishna 2007. For elsewhere in India, Kohli 1990; Krishna 2007; Manor 2010; Chhibber et al. 2014; Ziegfeld 2016. Manor 2010, p. 509, for

If India's parties are weakly organized at the local level, they then lack one of the defining features of political machines—hierarchically organized, face-to-face networks of party workers that connect voters and political elites.

Descriptions of weak party organizations, however, have flowed from studies of the countryside, not from cities.⁷⁴ With few exceptions, scholars have devoted little attention to studying how party politics works in India's cities.⁷⁵ Our book makes descriptive correctives to our understanding of political networks in urban India. Through close studies of Jaipur and Bhopal, we provide fine-grained pictures of local party organization in India's cities. We find that the BJP and INC (Congress) are both well-organized between and during the votes.⁷⁶ They have hierarchical structures that connect grassroots party workers to the highest strata of party leadership in the city.

The BJP and INC have nested, geographically defined committees of party workers. At the lowest level of both organizations is the humble polling booth committee, overseeing mobilization activities within areas of roughly 1,000 voters. Above the booth are committees at the levels of the municipal ward, block for Congress/*mandal* for BJP (the latter corresponding to the area of a state assembly electoral constituency), city (*sheher*), and administrative district (*zila*). Each committee is composed of a president (*adhyaksh*) as well as members with the positions of vice-president (*up-adhyaksh*), treasurer (*kosh-adhyaksh*), minister (*mantri*), secretary (*sachiv*), and general member (*sadasya*). In addition to the main party organization, both the BJP and INC have wings (*morcha*) and cells (*prakosht*) to organize specific sections of society. Most

example, writes, "Most . . . parties possess only limited organizational strength. In particular, most fail to penetrate effectively downward below intermediate levels to the grassroots."

74. Foundational studies of local politics in India include Bailey 1970, Wade 1988, and Krishna 2002. These studies, and their more contemporary counterparts—Dunning and Nilekani 2013; Kruks-Wisner 2018—fix their analysis on the countryside. What few studies we have on party organization in India's cities mostly focus on Mumbai, and the Shiv Sena Party in particular. Hansen 2001; Bedi 2017.

75. Exceptions include: Jones 1974; Oldenburg 1976; Berenschot 2010, 2011; Auerbach 2020.

76. India's historically dominant party, the Congress Party, was described in machine-like terms: "The Congress' apparatus comprised a series of 'vertical faction chains' that competed for power within the party across the country." Ruparelia 2015, p. 47 citing Kothari 1964, p. 1162. Propertied, high-caste local elites mobilized vote banks and distributed patronage in the districts. The political bosses that ran Pradesh (State) Congress Committees (PCC) elected organizational leaders and influenced the workings of legislative assemblies. The earliest studies of local Congress organization also used the language of machines to describe these networks. For example, Bailey 1970 refers to the Congress party as a rural machine in his study on Orissa.

relevant to our study are the party cells for slum residents (the *Kachi Basti Prakosht* in Jaipur and *Jhuggi Jhopri Prakosht* in Bhopal) and party wings for the Scheduled Castes, Muslims, and women.

We enumerate a staggeringly large number of party workers living across the 110 slums surveyed for this book: 663 party workers, each possessing a distinct position within a committee at one of the party organizational levels just described. These residents have amassed a following within their respective settlements, thus becoming *basti neta*, or slum leaders. Parties recruit slum leaders into their organizations by making them formal position-holders (*padadhikari*). These operatives work at the interface between poor voters and political elites in the city, thus representing classic political brokers. In this book, we use the term “political broker” to describe and refer to slum leaders. Likewise, the term “party worker” refers to a specific and large subset of slum leaders who hold a *pad*, or party position. These actors make up the bottom tier of party machines in India’s cities.

The Roots of Competition and Choice in Urban India

Why is there so much political competition in urban India, at all levels of the party machine hierarchy? We argue that several factors underpin the intense, ongoing, and multi-level competition that is so central to our theoretical framework. The first two factors are rooted in the micro social environments of slums: strikingly high levels of ethnic diversity and the recent emergence of these settlements in Indian cities. The third factor is institutional—the high levels of electoral volatility within India’s federal, multi-party, political structure. The final factor is the relative absence of coercion and organized violence, which cuts against popular portrayals of slum politics.

Ethnic Diversity in New Urban Spaces

Ethnic heterogeneity and the “newness” of slums converge to make conditions ripe for new forms of informal leadership, and enduring competition. Migration from states throughout India, as well as population movement within cities, produce novel patterns of diversity in slums that are not found in villages. Our sample of 2,199 slum residents across 110 settlements in Bhopal and Jaipur includes over 300 sub-castes (*jati*), stretching across all strata of the Hindu social hierarchy and a wide range of Muslim *zat*. In the average settlement, the *jati* fractionalization score is a remarkable 0.81, meaning that two

randomly selected residents have an 81% chance of being from a different *jati*.⁷⁷ Not a single settlement in our sample was homogenous in terms of *jati*.

Diversity in India's slums is not limited to the dimension of sub-caste. Only thirty-eight of our 110 settlements yielded a religiously homogenous sample, with most settlements including both Hindu and Muslim residents, and often other religious minorities as well. Residents also hail from a variety of villages, districts, and states. While most sampled residents (79.49%) come from the states in which our study cities are located (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh), they have migrated from a range of villages and districts. Other residents migrated from states throughout India, including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu. Not only are slums not transplants of villages, but most exhibit some regional and linguistic diversity.

Settlement-level diversity is the result of a scarcity of urban land for squatting and the need to be close to local labor markets, which push poor migrants of different castes, faiths, and regional identities into the same dense settlements.⁷⁸ Slums are located on fragmented pieces of land scattered across the city. Squatters tend to settle in areas that are environmentally sensitive—along railway tracks, riverbeds, and mountainsides—where they are less likely to face eviction due to a lack of competing interests over the space.

Squatters squeeze into these nooks in the city through gradual accretion—small, disjointed groups of squatters trickling into the settlement in a drawn-out manner, often over the course of months and years. Squatting in India does not unfold through coordinated, large-scale land invasions, as is sometimes the case in Latin America.⁷⁹ Poor migrants do not pre-organize with hundreds of their co-ethnics to capture a vacant area of land and establish an ethnic enclave. Instead, individual migrants and families are guided by pressing concerns over finding shelter and employment, which is sometimes facilitated by a contact in the settlement of arrival.⁸⁰ A shortage of land and squatting through accretion all but prevent the formation of ethnic enclaves, and contribute to the rich patterns of ethnic diversity described previously.

77. This measure had a standard deviation of 0.13.

78. For a more detailed discussion on these spatial constraints and reasons for migration, see Auerbach 2020, Chapter 7.

79. Squatting through gradual accretion describes the formation of slum settlements in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. UN-Habitat 1980.

80. Mitra 2003; Auerbach 2020.

(continued...)

INDEX

Boldface numbers refer to figures and tables.

- accountability: bottom-up, 83–84, 133, 175;
ethnicity and, 60
- Adityanath, Yogi, 247–48n84
- Africa: benefits received by brokers from a
political party, 134n7; bottom-up citizen-
state interactions in, 229; “co-ethnics,”
broker monitoring of, 100; ethnicity and
distribution of resources in, 196; political
parties and competitive machine politics
in, 227; political responsiveness and
credit-claiming in, 190–91
- agency: in making everyday claims, 221; of
party workers, 6; of slum residents, 6–7,
10–11, 21, 52–53, 82, 250–51. *See also*
bottom-up resident demands
- ambition: of brokers, 6, 22–24, 87, 99, 104,
127; formal organizational inclusion, bro-
kers and, 136–37; of low patrons, 179, 224
- Amnesty International, 249
- Argentina: broker abilities to secure resources,
studies of, 61–62n63; competitive machine
politics in, 233–34; political competition
in, 227; reputation, broker responsive-
ness to residents and, 103n52
- Asia, political parties and competitive ma-
chine politics in, 227
- Bajrang Dal, 247
- Benin, competitive machine politics in, 235
- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP): advancement
of brokers in, 137, 170; brokers in, 90;
- election activities in 2018, 90; first-time
candidates in 2019, 225; Hindu majori-
tarianism/nationalism and, 245–48;
Muslims and, 90, 116n88, 181, 197–98,
248; organization of, 28–29, 169; party
competition across India and, 220; party-
switching among supporters of, 224; per-
formance in recent national elections,
240–42, 244; support for in sampled set-
tlements, 32, 195; volatile dynamics of
party competition within, 225–26
- Bhopal: cost to pave alleyways, estimate of,
210; election activities in, 1–2; focus on,
35–36; population of an average municip-
al ward in, 104; wards and ward popula-
tions in, 182, 222
- BJP. *See* Bharatiya Janata Party
- bottom-up resident demands: across the
Global South, 228–32; brokers and,
82–83, 91, 135–36, 175, 216, 221; construc-
tion of local leadership and, 6, 13; ma-
chine organizations and, 21, 26–27, 127,
133, 228; responsiveness of patrons to, 16,
229 (*see also* patron responsiveness to
brokered requests); responsiveness of
ward councilors to, 209; by slum resi-
dents, 236; who contacts government
officials, 231. *See also* accountability;
agency; problem solving
- Brazil, competitive machine politics in,
233

- brokers: as ambitious, 6, 22–24, 87, 99, 104, 127; centralization and, 243–45; demand/need for, 126; entry into political parties, channels/options for, 140–43; ethnicity of, significance for brokered exchanges of, 197–99; female, 55, 91, 95–96, 137, 237; formal organizational inclusion sought by, 131–40; length of tenure of, 63n68; “low” (ward-level) patrons and, comparisons of, 145–49, **146**, **148**; machine politics, as a key organizational feature of, 221–22; partisan association of, significance for brokered exchanges of, 195–96, 199, 212–13; patron response to requests from (*see* patron responsiveness to brokered requests); petitioning, characteristics improving chances of success for, 180; political activities of, 91; political career trajectories/career histories of, 137–39, **138**, 166–71; precarity and the demand/need for, 50–52; problems addressed by, 52; problem solving by (*see* problem solving); resident claim-making, role in, 189–90; resident-patron interactions, mediation of, 17; selection of by patrons (*see* experiments in patron selection of brokers; patrons, selection of brokers by); studies of, 41–42; widespread use of, 11
- brokers, characteristics of, 89–91, 130–31; caste/ethnicity, 89–90, 94–95 (*see also* ethnicity); education, 68–70, 75–76, 79n108, 92, **93**; gender, 55, 91, 95–96; occupation, 70–72, 76, 92–94; residents distinguished from, 96–98; sample, construction of, 88–89
- brokers, cultivation of and responsiveness to clients by, 14–15, 85–87, 98–99, 127–28; broadcasting a reputation, 107–8; building an inclusive reputation, 104–7, 114, 223; building a personal reputation, 101–3; monitoring voters, 100–101; responsiveness, measuring and analyzing (*see* experiments in broker responsiveness)
- brokers, emergence and selection of, 13, 41–44, 82, 126–27; agency and accountability in, 82–84; choosing between aspiring leaders (*see* experiments in leadership selection); competition in, 55–58; evaluation of aspiring leaders, 58–59, 63–64; evaluation of aspiring leaders: capabilities in making claims on the state, 63, 70, 75–76; evaluation of aspiring leaders: connections to municipal government, 63, 70–72, 76; evaluation of aspiring leaders: distributive concern, 59–60, 73–76; evaluation of aspiring leaders: efficacy concern, 60–63, 76–78; extant narratives of, 42–43; pathways of selection, 57–58; precarity and, 51–52; probability of a resident becoming a broker, **97**; protests and, 54–55; resident preferences and, 91–98; in Saraswati, 44–48; sequence of, 52–54
- bureaucratic connectivity, 63
- caste identity: broker responsiveness and, 123–24; of brokers, 89–90, 94–95; categories of, 197; of low patrons, 147n40; political preferences and, 66–67; reputation-seeking and, 104–6. *See also* ethnicity
- centralization, local politics and, 241–45
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes, 242
- China, political competition in, 227
- Chouhan, Shivraj Singh, 33n89
- circular migrants, 12n33
- cities: ballooning through migration in the Global South, 219; decentralization needed in India’s, 241–42; politics in the Global South’s expanding, 3–7; politics of (*see* political machines). *See also* urbanization
- citizen agency. *See* agency
- Citizenship Amendment Act, 246–47, 250
- clientelism vis-a-vis machine politics, 9, 19–20, 21n50, 26
- competition: between brokers, 24; emergence of brokers and, 55–58; at every level of machine politics, 13, 224–26; patron selection of brokers and, 175;

- pervasiveness in machine politics of the Global South, 226–28, **228**; roots of: ethnic diversity in new urban spaces, 29–31; roots of: limits of muscle power, 33–35; roots of: multi-level electoral environment, 31–33; single-country studies highlighting the importance of, 232–35; slum leadership and, 47
- competitive brokerage environments, 63n67
- credit-claiming: centralization and, 245; neighborhood size and, 191, 193; partisanship in brokered exchanges and, 195–96; responsiveness to petitions/brokered requests and, 16, 180, 206–10; type of good and, 190–91, **192**; by ward councilors, 185–86
- Curley, James, 18
- education: importance of in urban slums, 69; as an indicator of leader competence, 70n89; levels of in India, 70n90; patron assessment of brokers based on, 156; patron selection of brokers and, 159–60, 164–66; of residents, brokers, and patrons, **148**; as a trait of slum leaders, 68–70, 75–76, 79n108, 92, **93**, 222, 236
- efficacy: electoral (*see* electoral efficacy); everyday, 155–56, 166–68 (*see also* education, patron selection of brokers and); loyalty and, patron choice in evaluating brokers, 172–74; patron assessment of broker, 155–57
- elected government, three-tiered system of, 31–33
- electoral behavior: ability of brokers to assess, 125–26; fluidity in vote choice, 32; phases of Indian national, 240n61; turnout, 125; vote-buying, 60, 101, 134. *See also* Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); Indian National Congress (INC)
- electoral efficacy, 155–57; patron selection of brokers and, 159, 164, 167
- elite responsiveness. *See* patron responsiveness to brokered requests
- ethnicity: broker responsiveness and, 114, 118, 120, 123–24; caste identity/regional identity as, 66–67; competition and ethnic diversity, 29–31; distributive concerns and, 59–60; efficacy and, evaluation of slum leaders based on, 76–78; ethnic diversity in sampled slums, **106**; ethnic indifference, building of inclusive reputations and, 223; limits of as explanation for the emergence of a broker, 47–48; patron selection of brokers and, 159, 162–63; political machines and, 24–26, 223–24; political responsiveness in brokered exchanges and, 196–99, 212–14; reputation-seeking and, 104–6; responsiveness to petitions/brokered requests and, 181; simplified portrayals of Indian politics based on, pushing back against, 223–24. *See also* caste identity
- experiments in broker responsiveness, 15; alternative interpretations of findings, 124–26; assistance received, resident traits and, 120–23, **122**; clients and neighbors, evaluation of, 117–19, **119**; findings, 112–17, 124; impact of resident traits on broker responsiveness, **113**; measuring broker responsiveness, 108–12; multi-ethnic support bases and, 123–24; questions about, 117; social desirability bias, potential for and checks on, 117–24
- experiments in leadership selection, 13, 64–66; comparing brokers and neighbors, **81**; correspondence to actual broker characteristics, 91–98; education as a trait of slum leaders, 68–70, 75–76, 79n108; effects of broker attributes on preferences for slum leaders, **74**; efficacy and ethnicity, 76–77, **78**; ethnicity (caste and regional identity) as a trait of slum leaders, 66–67, 73–75; findings, 72–80; interpretation of results, 77, 79; occupation as a trait of slum leaders, 70–72, 76; partisan identity as a trait of slum leaders, 68, 75; as a political preference, test for, 80–82

- experiments in patron responsiveness to brokered requests, 198–206, 214–15; credit-claiming logic in, 206–10; ethnicity and, 196–99, 212–14; findings, 206–15, 207; partisanship and, 199, 210–12, 213; requested goods and, 208; settlement size and, 200, 214
- experiments in patron selection of brokers, 158–61; broker achievement and findings, correspondence to actual broker promotion patterns, 166–71, 167; findings, 161–66, 163; loyalty or efficacy, choosing between, 172–74, 173–74
- Gandhi, Indira, 249n95
- Gandhi, Mohandas, 248
- gender: broker achievement within a political party and, 169; broker responsiveness and, 121; of brokers, 55, 91, 95–96, 237; of residents, brokers, and patrons, 148; of ward councilors, 184
- Ghana, competitive machine politics in, 233–34
- Golwalkar, M. S., 246n77
- Goods and Service Tax (GST), 242
- Gupta, Uma Shankar, 1–2
- Hindu majoritarianism/nationalism, 245–50
- Hindus, Muslims disfavored by, 236–37
- INC. *See* Indian National Congress
- income: average per capita, 106n58; increasing inequality of, 238–39; of residents, brokers, and patrons, 148
- India: conditions of underdevelopment in, 221; difference in political interaction across rural and urban settings, 222; Freedom House democracy ratings, decline in, 249n95; “Gilded Age”/“Billionaire Raj” of, 238–39; Hindu majoritarianism/nationalism in, implications of, 245–50; horizon of democracy in urban, 239–51; local politics in a centralizing democracy, 241–45; urban population of, 239
- Indian National Congress (INC): advancement of brokers in, 170; brokers in, 90; election activities in 2018, 1–2; first-time candidates in 2019, 225; formation of local political organization in Ganpati Nagar and, 218; organization of, 28–29, 169; party competition across India and, 220; party-switching among supporters of, 224; support for in sampled settlements, 32, 195; volatile dynamics of party competition within, 225–26
- Italy: position-holders in the Christian Democratic Party, 140n22; targeting of party supporters for particularistic benefits in, 194n38
- Jaipur: emergence of brokers in, 41; focus on, 35–36; Ganpati Nagar, physical and political development of, 217–18; population of an average municipal ward in, 104; responsiveness of brokers in, 85–87; wards and ward populations in, 182, 222
- Jana Sangh, 246
- Kashmir, 246
- Latin America: benefits received by brokers from a political party, 134n7; bottom-up citizen-state interactions in, 230; competitive brokerage environments in, 63n67; competitive machine politics in, 235; “co-partisans,” broker focus on, 100; political parties and competitive machine politics in, 227; urban politics in, 54n34
- local political operatives. *See* patrons
- local political organization: formation of in Ganpati Nagar, 218; machines and machine politics (*see* political machines); questions about the formation and processes of, 218–19
- loyalty: efficacy and, patron choice between in evaluating brokers, 172–74; partisan, 149–55; patron evaluation of brokers based on, 166, 168; personal, 152–53

- methodology: age and size of sampled slums, **51**; description, 36–37; descriptive statistics of survey respondents, **50**; for distinguishing characteristics of residents and brokers, 96; diversity in: from ethnography to experiments, 37–40; forced-choice conjoint experiments, 39, 64, 73n97–99, 116n88, 158 (*see also* experiments in broker responsiveness; experiments in leadership selection); interviews and surveys, 48–50; robustness checks, 72n96, 114n78; sample characteristics, 49–51; sample of brokers, 88–89; self-reported attitudes on survey questions, limits of, 223n10; slum lists, sources of, 49n20
- Mexico, political competition in, 227
- Ministry of Finance, 242
- Modi, Narendra, 240, 242–43, 248, 250
- Muslims: the BJP and, 90, 116n88, 181, 197–98, 248; broker achievement within a political party by, 169; disfavored by Hindus, 236–37; Hindu majoritarianism/nationalism and, 246–48
- Nath, Kamal, 226
- National Development Council, 242
- National Register of Citizens, 246
- NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India), 242n71
- occupation(s): broker responsiveness and, 107, 111, 115, 118–19, 121; selection of slum leaders and, 70–72, 76; shopkeepers, 110–11
- Pakistan, competitive machine politics in, 235
- Paraguay, competitive machine politics in, 235
- partisan connectivity, 63
- partisanship: broker responsiveness and, 116, 118, 122–23; centralization and, 244; of Indian voters, moderate level of, 224; limits of as explanation for the emergence of a broker, 47; partisan loyalty, 149–55; patron selection of brokers and, 159, 161–62; political responsiveness in brokered exchanges and, 193–96, 199, 210–12, **213**; responsiveness to petitions/brokered requests and, 181; selection of slum leaders and, 68, 75; slum, patron selection of brokers and, 160–61, 165
- patron responsiveness to brokered requests, 15–16, 177–82, 215–16; credit-claiming, priorities informing, 179–80 (*see also* credit-claiming); ethnicity and, 196–98; experiments in (*see* experiments in patron responsiveness to brokered requests); partisanship and, 193–96; political responsiveness to slum resident claims, 190–98
- patrons: centralization and, 244–45; competition and ambition among, 224–25; “slum walks” by, 129–30
- patrons, “low” (ward-level): ambition among, 179, 224; centralization and, 245; comparisons of brokers and, 145–49, **146**, **148**; credit-claiming by, 185–86, **186**; municipal/ward councilors as, 182–87; responsiveness of (*see* experiments in patron responsiveness to brokered requests); role of, 143–45
- patrons, selection of brokers by, 15, 129–33, 174–76; broker localities, 157; electoral and everyday efficacy, 155–57; experiments in (*see* experiments in patron selection of brokers); loyalty and efficacy as the twin concerns of patrons, 149; personal and partisan loyalty, 149–55 “pavement dwellers,” 12n33
- Pendergast, Tom, 18n40
- petitions: examples of, 189; for experiment in patron responsiveness to brokered requests, 201–6, **202–5**; features that facilitate credit-claiming, 179–80; request type, responsiveness in brokered exchanges and, 199–200, 206–9, **208**
- Philippines, the, competitive machine politics in, 235
- Planning Commission, 242n71

- political machines: across the Global South, cross-national survey evidence of, 226–32; advancing scholarship on, 18–27; arenas of competitive selection in, 14; centralization and, 244; coercion and violence associated with, 35; competition at every level of, 224–28, 228 (*see also* competition); constant change/motion of, 17–18; core targeting by, 194n38; demise of, concerns about, 17, 238–39; ethnicity and, 24–26, 223–24 (*see also* ethnicity); everyday life of, 26–27; features of in the extant literature, 8; formation of, 219–20; formation of during urbanization, 11–18; fractured politics reinforced by, 16–17, 238; Hindu majoritarianism/nationalism and, 248–50; Indian slums as a context for studying, 27–29; limits of, 16, 236–39; organizational dynamics of, elite responsiveness and, 179; refocusing the conventional perspective on, 5–11; role of brokers in, 221–22; selection framework on (*see* selection framework); single-country studies highlighting the importance of, 232–35
- political parties: brokers in, formal inclusion sought by, 131–40; competition between in India, 220; entry of brokers into, channels/options for, 140–43 (*see also* patrons, selection of brokers by); in Ganpati Nagar, emergence of, 218; Hindu majoritarianism/nationalism and, 249; individual trajectories of successful brokers in, 137–39, 138, 169–71, 170; party affiliation of brokers, 90, 99; party workers as connection between low-income voters and elites, 2–3, 29; volatility of candidate selection, 32. *See also* Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); Indian National Congress (INC)
- political patrons. *See* patrons
- problem solving: attributes boosting efficacy in (*see* education); emergence of leaders through, 58, 61–63; formal organizational inclusion as beneficial for, 135–36; importance of for brokers, 26, 98–99, 127, 233–34; as an important quality sought in local brokers, 222–23; patron evaluation of brokers based on, 166
- protests, emergence of political leaders through, 54–55
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), 246–47
- regional identity, political preferences and, 67
- religion: broker achievement within a political party and, 169; broker responsiveness and, 123; of brokers, 89–90
- representation: bottom-up dynamics and, 21; of disadvantaged citizens/slum residents/the urban poor, 3, 5–7, 20, 23; local, 182; machine politics and, 13, 15, 44, 175, 220, 236; of Muslims, 90–91; organizational inclusion of slum leaders as channel for, 133; roots of in selection of slum leaders, 82–84; of women, 91, 237
- reputation: brokers: alternative interpretations of, 124–26; brokers: building an inclusive reputation, 23, 25, 104–7, 114, 126–27, 223; brokers: building a personal reputation, 101–3; brokers: joint activities with patrons to enhance their reputation, 196; brokers: monitoring vs. reputational concerns, 114–15, 221, 223; brokers: prioritizing residents in best position to boost reputation of, 2, 15, 23, 26, 39–40, 87, 99, 107–8, 110–12, 123, 228; brokers: problem-solver, reputation as, 15, 23, 87, 99, 234; patrons: crafting individualized reputations, 186–87, 198; patrons: credit-claiming (*see* credit-claiming); patrons: inclusivity, reputation for, 197; patrons: responsiveness and reputations, 179–80; renaming of welfare schemes to burnish Modi's, 242, 245
- residents: characteristics distinguishing from brokers, 96–98; claim-making, characteristics of, 187–90 (*see also* petitions); complaints by, list of, 130; conversion from migrant villagers to urbanites, 4–5; group

- claims by, 187–89; group claims by, dearth of studies on, 178–79; Hindu majoritarianism/nationalism and, 250; petitions from (*see* petitions); responsiveness of brokers to (*see* brokers, cultivation of and responsiveness to clients by); selection of brokers by, 52–58; slum leader involvement in claims by, 189–90; time in settlement, broker responsiveness and, 111–12, 115, 120–21, 125. *See also* urban poor
- Saraf, Kali Charan, 238
- Saraswati: emergence of a political leader in, 44–48; population and setting of, 44; slum leader election rules in, 45
- Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar, 246n77
- Scindia, Jyotiraditya, 226
- selection framework, 20; “active clients,” 21–22; “ambitious brokers,” 22–24; “multi-ethnic machines,” 24–26; “politics beyond elections,” 26–27
- Senegal, competitive machine politics in, 234–35
- settlements. *See* slums
- slum leaders. *See* brokers
- slums, 48; as context for study of political machines, 27–29; ethnic composition of, responsiveness to brokered requests and, 201; ethnic diversity in, 29–31 (*see also* ethnicity); minimal violence in the politics of, 33–35; partisan composition of, patron selection of brokers and, 160–61, 165; partisan composition of, responsiveness to brokered requests and, 201; population size of, patron selection of brokers and, 160, 165; population size of, responsiveness to brokered requests and, 200, 214; portion of the population housed in, 4; transformation into epicenters of urban elections, 3; usage of the term, 12n35; worldwide population of, 219. *See also* squatter settlements
- squatter settlements, 12, 48. *See also* slums
- Thakur, Pragya Singh, 248
- Tweed, William, 18
- United States: local ward committees in Chicago, 143; party machines in, 8–9; Republican machine in Philadelphia, 140n22
- urbanization: formation of political networks during, 11–18; in India, 4, 239. *See also* cities
- urban political networks. *See* political machines
- urban poor: advancing scholarship on the politics of the, 18–27; agency of (*see* agency); as architects of the political networks connecting them to the state, 236; city politics, incorporation into, 7–11; conventional portrayals of, 43–44; political organization of (*see* political machines); selection framework for (*see* selection framework). *See also* residents
- violence, slum leadership and, 33–35
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad, 247
- vote-buying, 60, 101, 134