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Minority Electoral Politics in a North Indian State: Aggregate Data Analysis and the Muslim Community in Bihar, 1952–1972*

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The practice of electoral democracy places a hard dilemma before minority groups. If the members of the minority want to participate as fully equal members of the polity, they must integrate themselves into the larger group and play the games of politics according to the majority's rules, but they do so at the risk of seeing their minority identity and culture disappear. If on the other hand they insist on retaining their solidarity and group identity, they must act as a cohesive unit, a tactic which will underline their separateness from the larger society but at the risk of continued isolation and political impotence for the group. The French Huguenots in the United States might be said to be a prototype of the first kind of minority, while the Amish of Pennsylvania could serve as an extreme example of the second.

For most minority groups the two strategies amount to unrealistic and undesirable endpoints on a continuum, and in practice both are pursued at the same time in diluted form: the group adopts enough of the behavioral practices of the larger polity to participate successfully in the political process, while at the same time retaining its own identity and in fact continuing to behave as a distinct entity in the political process. Such at least have been the findings of most of the recent literature on minority group politics in the United States.[1]

Some groups are geographically concentrated and have found it possible to exercise local domination through the political process, although often at the cost of equality in the political system as a whole. An example would be the French in Canada, who for many decades appeared quite content to dominate Quebec, especially in matters of language, education and religion, even though they did so at the price of second class status in the rest of the Dominion.[2]

Minority groups that are geographically dispersed, however, cannot pursue such a strategy, for they have no significant areas of local control into which the collective ego may retreat. Blacks in America are an obvious case in point. Only in a few rural counties in the deep South and in crumbling, ghettoized cities of the North do they have a majority of the population; everywhere else they are only a small portion of the body politic.

In British India there were a number of areas of the first type, where Muslims were dominant, even though the subcontinent as a whole had an overwhelming majority of Hindus. The Partition in 1947, however, insured that the Muslims remaining in the Indian Union would be a minority of the second kind, for virtually all the Muslim-dominant areas went to Pakistan in the Radcliffe award that determined the boundaries of the new countries.[3] During the constituent assembly deliberations that began

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[1] See, for example, Edgar Litt, *Ethnic Politics in America: Beyond Pluralism* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1970), and Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970); also the volumes of readings edited by Brett W. Hawkins and Robert A. Lorinskas, *The Ethnic Factor in American Politics* and by Harry A. Bailey, Jr., and Ellis Katz, *Ethnic Group Politics* (both Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1970 and 1969 respectively). Historically and comparatively in multiethnic societies, there have been a number of other situations beside those noted here; see Philip Mason's encyclopedic study *Patterns of Dominance* and also his *Race Relations* (both London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[2] See D. Kwavnick, "The Roots of French-Canadian Discontent," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 31 (November, 1965), 509–523. On the strategies of various French Canadian political leaders, see Michael Oliver, "The Strategy of French Canadian Participation in Canadian Politics," a paper presented at the International Political Science Association Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan, September 1960.

[3] Kashmir has a population that is more than two-thirds Muslim, but its internal politics have been of a rather special character that does not typify the rest of the country. Otherwise Assam (as constituted in 1961) has the highest proportion of Muslims (23.3 per cent) of any of the states. As to districts, only Murshidabad in West Bengal and Malappuram in Kerala have a majority of Muslims. In a sense there did remain for a short time after Partition in 1947 an area of Muslim dominance, for the "communally reserved" constituencies set up under the Government of India Act of 1935 provided legislative representatives for the Muslim community. India continued to be governed under this act until the new Constitution came into effect in 1950.

after independence, it was thought by some that minority religious groups should be allotted legislative seats on a quota basis, but in the end it was decided that all groups would compete for the same seats, and the first general elections of 1951–52 were conducted on that basis.[4] Since then the Muslims have had to compete with the majority Hindu community on the latter's own electoral ground.

This paper employs an aggregate data analysis based on mapping to examine that competition in the north Indian state of Bihar, a unit of about 56 million people in 1971 (roughly the same in population as France) and approximately 67,000 square miles (about the size of the state of Washington). First some consideration will be given to the problems involved in doing aggregate data analysis with the Indian data and the advantages and deficiencies of various methods of ecological analysis thus far evolved to cope with these problems. The method to be used in this paper will then be presented, and an analysis of Muslim representation and participation in six Bihar Legislative Assembly elections from 1952 to 1972 will be undertaken.

Aggregate Data Analysis and Indian Politics

It seems at first glance strange that there has been thus far relatively little aggregate data analysis of Indian elections. The two major requisites for such work—voting returns and socioeconomic data—are available in abundance. There have been five national elections with profuse accompanying numerical data; and the Indian Census of 1961, which will run to more than a thousand volumes when completed, holds tantalizing prospects of almost endless and rewarding research to the student of politics interested in ecological analysis. The abundant statistical coverage at all levels from state down to village may be compared with data from the five elections. For India such an opportunity has a particular appeal, because survey data are expensive, methodologically and administratively difficult to obtain in such a huge country, and therefore exceedingly rare.[5] In spite of the resurgence of interest in "ecological" political analysis generally in recent years,[6] though, the promised Indian feast of aggregate data analysis has for the most part proven lamentably meager.

There are two major reasons for the failure to exploit this resource. One is the political integrity of the Election Commission, which has insisted on redrawing the constituency boundaries after every census, so as to make representation as equitable as possible. The practice most certainly buttresses the structure of parliamentary democracy in India, but it does make life frustrating for the political scientist, who consequently cannot compare elections across redrawn constituencies without a great deal of trouble.

The other problem is the general lack of geographical fit between census tracts and electoral constituencies.[7] The census units are almost invariably the administrative units of revenue village, police *thana/tehsil,* district, and so on; the constituencies, on the other hand, are drawn to ensure equal populations, and wander over administrative boundary lines with a fine contempt for the scholar's convenience.

A number of schemes have been devised in recent years to overcome this problem of mismatching census and constituency boundaries, all in varying ways unsatisfactory. One method is to rectify the political units with the census units, and this is the approach that has been employed most often. With seats for Members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Indian states (MLA's) it is easy to aggregate to the district level, for in only a very few of the 300-plus districts in India do political boundaries cross district lines.[8] The continuity of district

[4] On the decision to eliminate reserved seats for Muslims, see Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 144–156. Reserved seats were retained for the Scheduled Castes (Harijans, or Untouchables) and Scheduled Tribes.

[5] There are exceptions, unfortunately thus far few. The major effort to date has been the work of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi and that of the opinion pollster E. P. W. da Costa. Some of the findings of the Centre's 1967 election survey have been published in *Asian Survey*'s symposium issue on "Elections and Party Politics in India," 10 (November, 1970). Ramashray Roy of the Centre analyzes a survey done for the 1969 election in his *The Uncertain Verdict* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1972). As an example of da Costa's work, see "The Indian General Elections 1967, the Structure of Indian Voting Intentions: January 1967, A Gallup Report with Analysis" (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Opinion, 1967).

[6] See for instance Mattei Dogan and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Quantitative Ecological Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), and Richard L. Merritt and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Comparing Nations: The Use of Quantitative Data in Cross-National Research* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

[7] R. Chandidas examines the problem in considerable detail in "Ecological Correlates of Politics: Problems of Data Equivalence," a monograph presented to the Data Confrontation Seminar held at the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, University of Michigan, 1969 (mimeo.).

[8] This is the procedure used by W. H. Morris-Jones and B. Das Gupta in "India's Political Areas: Interim Report on an Ecological Investigation," *Asian Survey,* 9 (June, 1969), 399–424; also by Donald S. Zagoria, "The Ecology of Peasant Communism in India," *Amer-*

boundaries over time lends added attractiveness to the use of the district level, making possible the comparison of results for all elections, not just those held in the periods between constituency redelineations. The existing socioeconomic data are much richer for the districts than for subordinate units; published data by district are readily available on agricultural output, acreage under different crops, per capita income, industrial undertakings and electricity use, but are available either not at all or only with great difficulty for smaller units.[9]

The procedure also has important shortcomings, however.[10] Most serious is the likelihood of the ecological fallacy.[11] To aggregate a number of seats into one district (average population per district: more than 1½ million) and then treat the district as a unit involves the assumption that there is a common underlying behavior in the district as a whole; that is, that the various parts of the district are behaving electorally like the district. When the "parts" are constituencies for MLA's, the assumption is dubious, for each constituency is at least in some sense *sui generis*. In the larger districts, which may contain up to 30 MLA seats, the homogeneity assumption becomes virtually untenable. By using such data we can find out a great deal about district voting behavior, and this knowledge is in itself significant, but any inferences about constituency voting behavior are very tenuous indeed. The tenuousness is compounded by the fact that most of the non-Congress parties do not run candidates in every MLA seat, so that a party that runs just four candidates, all of whom win, might well have the same percentage of the district level vote (and the same statistical value) as a party that runs 15 losing candidates.

It is, of course, possible to aggregate to levels above the district. Elkins has found six regions in South India that differ significantly among themselves, while state-level ecological analyses have recently been published by Heginbotham and Weiner.[12] The state is a natural unit in the political sense, and is logically better suited for comparison with equivalent units than is the district. Also it is considerably easier to obtain current socioeconomic data at the state level.[13] But the states are scarcely electorally homogeneous within themselves; they vary hugely in size, and they are so few as to make statistical treatment extremely precarious.

It is also possible to aggregate data at levels below the district. One method is to use the constituency rather than the census/administrative area as the basic unit of analysis, as Benjamin and Blue have done.[14] Using seats for Members of the national Parliament (MP's) as their units, they have employed a method of fitting 330 districts to 480 constituencies in such a way that they end up with ten deciles of constituencies. This technique permits the use of the full range of socioeconomic data available at district level, while avoiding the previously mentioned problem of mixing several constituencies into a single unit. The disadvantage is that the resulting data must then be treated as deciles rather than as individual constituencies. One is left in effect with a sample size of ten, and must use rank-order comparisons like the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney

ican Political Science Review, 65 (March, 1971), 144–160; and David J. Elkins, "Social Mobilization, Social Structure, and Politics: Evidence and Qualifications," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 1971. An earlier exercise along these lines is reported on in Government of India, *Census of India 1961*, Vol. I, *India*, Part I-A(i) and (ii), *Levels of Regional Development in India*, by A. Mitra (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1965 and 1966). Much of the Chandidas project was devoted to fitting seats for members of the national Parliament to district areas, a much more difficult task, because these parliamentary boundaries do overlap district lines; see his "Ecological Correlates."

[9] See, for instance, the lists of predictor variables employed in Morris-Jones and Das Gupta, "India's Political Areas," and Zagoria. The large number of variables available at district level also permits the use of statistical techniques like principal components analysis to ameliorate the problems of multicollinearity among the predictors. See Biplab Das Gupta, "Socio-Economic Classification of Districts: A Statistical Approach," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6 (August 14, 1971), 1763–1774; and also W. H. Morris-Jones and B. K. Das Gupta, "More Dealings with Districts," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, New York City, March 1972.

[10] Many of these shortcomings are pointed out by Morris-Jones and Das Gupta in "India's Political Areas."

[11] Since W. S. Robinson's classic essay in 1950, the literature on the "ecological fallacy" has become fairly extensive. Hayward R. Alker, Jr. surveys this literature in his "A Typology of Ecological Fallacies," in Dogan and Rokkan, pp. 69–86. For Robinson's original piece, see "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals," *American Sociological Review*, 15 (August, 1950), 351–357.

[12] Elkins; Stanley J. Heginbotham, "The 1971 Revolution in Indian Voting Behavior," *Asian Survey*, 11 (December, 1971), 1133–1152; Myron Weiner, "Political Development in the Indian States," in *State Politics in India*, ed. Myron Weiner, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 3–58.

[13] For instance, from the yearbook put out by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India *India: A Reference Annual*.

[14] Roger W. Benjamin and Richard N. Blue, with Stephen Coleman, "Modernization and Political Change: A Comparative Aggregate Data Analysis of Indian Political Behavior," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 15 (May, 1971) 219–261.

test or graphic analyses,[15] eschewing more precise statistical techniques such as multiple regression that are possible with larger populations and more exact measurements of each unit of observation.

If one is willing to forsake the rich lodes of district level data for the sparser socioeconomic deposits at subordinate levels, a good deal of worthwhile analysis is still possible. Brass has used as his unit of measurement the subdivision, an administrative (and census) area intermediate between the district and the MLA constituency.[16] There is an initial problem of some severity here, as MLA seats often cross the subdivisional boundaries, but Brass overcomes it by aggregating subdivisions up to the point where constituency and administrative boundaries do coincide. The resulting population of units is a good deal larger than would be the case if districts were used, and thus the individual unit is much closer to the MLA constituency level. The disadvantages are that the units vary considerably in size (depending on how many subdivisions are clustered together to make up any given unit), and as before, a number of MLA constituencies are being consolidated as one unit.

Matching Census and Electoral Geography

For some types of socioeconomic data, it is possible to overcome virtually all of the problems mentioned in the preceding section and to obtain a good fit between census and electoral units. The method used here is based on isoplethic mapping, which connects areas of equal concentration of population. Such an approach permits the researcher to use both the census data and all the voting data by individual MLA constituency.

Before getting into the details of isoplethic analysis, it would be useful to have a picture of Muslim distribution in the state as a whole. Bihar state had a Muslim minority of 13.48 per cent at the time of the 1971 census, as against an all-India figure of 11.21 per cent. This statistic represented a substantial growth for the Muslim community in Bihar, for it had increased its numbers by 31.3 per cent over the ten years since the 1961 census, while the state population as a whole grew by 21.3 per cent.[17]

The Muslims of Bihar are definitely not distributed evenly over the state. The seventeen districts of Bihar show considerable variation around the mean of 13.5 per cent, ranging from 4.0 per cent for largely tribal Singhbhum District in the southern Chotanagpur plateau to 39.9 per cent for Purnea District, which almost borders the new nation of Bangladesh in the east.[18]

As analysis proceeds to lower levels, the unevenness of the Muslim population becomes much more pronounced. For the 1961 census, communal data were published for the development block, or *anchal*, of which there are almost 600 in Bihar, averaging around 80,000 in population at the time of the census. Unlike many Indian socioeconomic variables, the Muslim distribution among these anchals is geographically continuous and so lends itself to the isoplethic mapping technique. Figure 1 offers an isoplethic map of Bihar's Muslim population based on data for the individual anchals.[19] Points of equal Muslim "density" are connected by lines, similar to the elevation lines on a topographic map or the isobars on a weather map.

The most striking aspect of the map is the extremely heavy concentration of Muslims in the most easterly part of Purnea District, where a number of blocks are more than 50 per cent

[15] *Ibid.* This method is also limited to Parliamentary seats, as the state Legislative Assembly seats are far too small (usually 1/6 of a Parliamentary seat) to be compared individually with districts.

[16] Paul R. Brass, "Ethnic Cleavages and the Punjab Party System," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, New York City, March 1972. Yet another method is to select a sample of Legislative Assembly seats that do fit the census boundaries exactly; the difficulty here is that most of the seats do not fit and so must be thrown out of the analysis. See Harry W. Blair, "Elections and Aggregate Data Analysis at the Block Level in Bihar, 1967–1969," also a paper presented at the March 1972 meeting just noted.

[17] Government of India, *Census of India 1971,* Series I—India, *Paper 2 of 1972: Religion,* by A. Chandra Sekhar (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1972), pp. 16, 95. Bihar's Muslim population grew by 13.9 per cent during 1931–41, decreased by 7.3 per cent during 1941–51, then increased by 32.3 per cent during 1951–61. Apparently what had occurred during the 1950s was a significant reverse migration from East Pakistan back into Bihar after the large outward flow during and after the Partition of 1947. See Government of India, *Census of India 1961,* Vol. IV, *Bihar,* Part I-A(i), *General Report on the Census,* by S. D. Prasad (Patna: Bihar Secretariat Press, 1968), pp. 484–485. The Hindu-Muslim ratio of about 7-to-1 in 1961 and 1971 fits roughly into what Mason would call a "competitive" type; cf. *Patterns of Dominance,* pp. 60–65.

[18] Purnea did in fact border East Pakistan after the Partition, but a slice of about 700 square miles was transferred to West Bengal in 1956, as a part of the States Reorganization Act. See Marcus F. Franda, *West Bengal and the Federalizing Process in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 8–61.

[19] Data from which the map was derived were obtained from the district census handbooks that formed part of the 1961 census, e.g., Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, *Census 1961, Bihar District Census Handbook 1: Patna,* by S. D. Prasad (Patna: Secretariat Press, 1966), pp. 90–93. Data for the 1971 census by block had not become available by the time of writing this article.

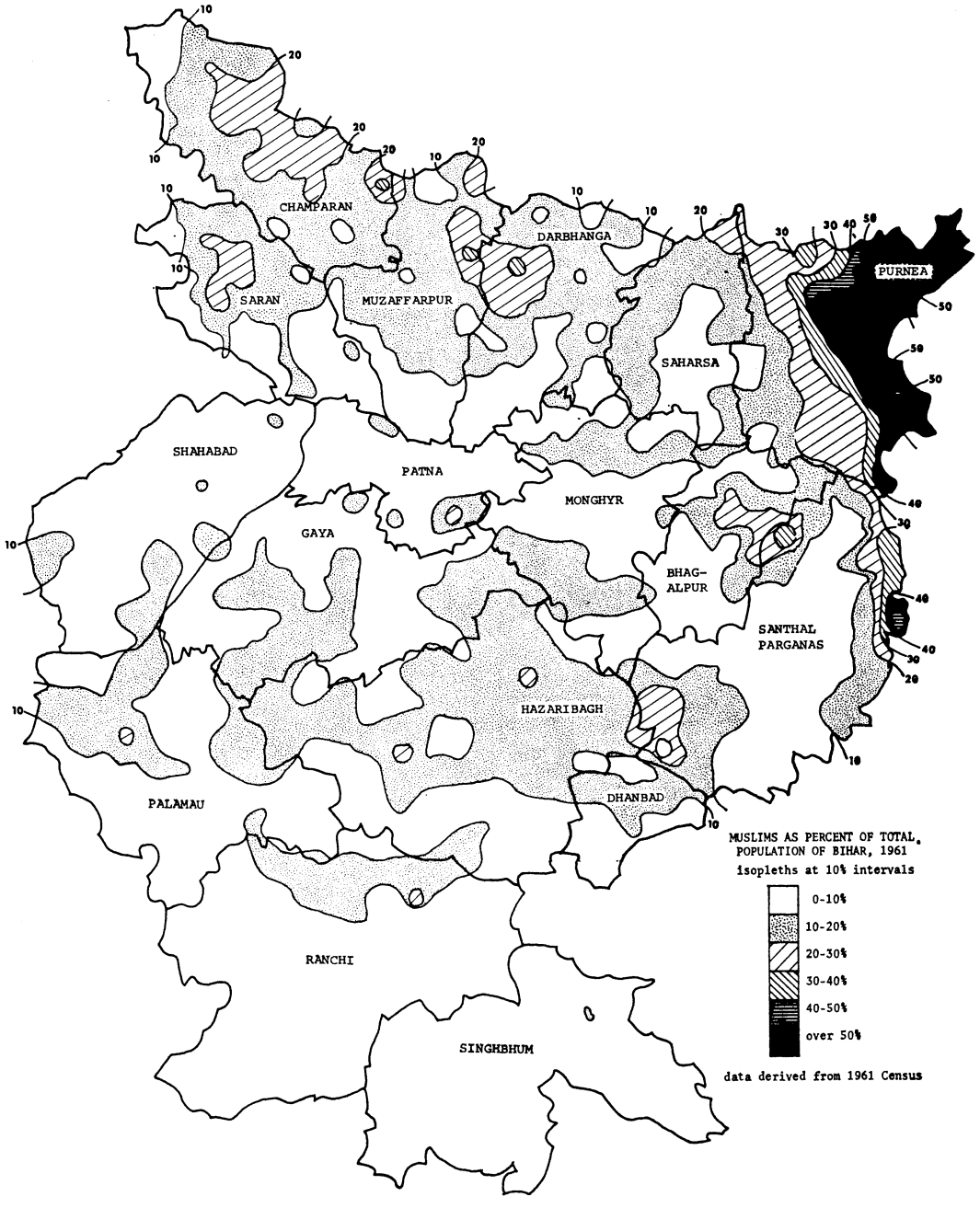


Figure 1. Muslim Population in the Districts of Bihar.

Muslim. Though they are less immediately apparent, there are other considerable concentrations as well. The northern districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, and Saran all have sizable concentrations that are more than 20 per cent Muslim, and the first three have small pockets that are more than 30 per cent. Perhaps the most interesting distribution is that found in Santhal Parganas, which has one area that is more than 40 per cent Muslim, and two others that exceed 30 per cent, while at the same time more than half the district is less than 10 per cent Muslim. Also of interest is the broad swath of territory running through the

north central part of the state from west to east (roughly along the path of the Ganges River) in which the Muslim concentration is very low, in fact less than one per cent in many blocks. The southern districts of Chotanagpur have few Muslims, except for a few small areas with concentrations of more than 20 per cent.

Muslims in the Electoral Process

When examined at the statewide level, the data on voting for Muslim candidates, presented in Table 1, show no general secular trend over the six elections that have been held since 1952.[20] As might be expected from the Western experience, the minority Muslim community has in every election at both state and national level polled substantially fewer votes for its candidates than its 12.5 per cent of the population. Likewise, the number of Muslims elected to office has been far fewer than would be the case if they were proportionately represented.[21]

The vote given to Legislative Assembly candidates rose during the first three general elections,[22] and then peaked out at just under eight per cent in the 1962 poll, after which it

[20] The first four general elections included both the state Legislative Assembly and the national Parliament. Because of the chronic instability that characterized state politics after the 1967 elections, the Assembly was dissolved in 1968 and new elections were held in 1969. Elections for the Parliament, due by the five-year constitutional requirement to be held at least by 1972, were called a year early by Mrs. Gandhi and thus were held in 1971. The Assembly held its sixth election in March 1972.

[21] The United States House of Representatives elected in 1972, for example, had only 11 black members out of the total 435, while the population of the country is about 11 per cent Negro. For an analysis of Muslim representation in another state of India (Andhra Pradesh), see Rasheeduddin Khan, "Muslim Leadership and Electoral Politics in Hyderabad: A Pattern of Minority Articulation," *Economic and Political Weekly* 6 (April 10, 1971), 783–794 and (April 17, 1971), 833–840, esp. 837.

[22] A study based on the first three elections concluded, partly on the basis of data similar to those given here for the 1952–1962 period (i.e., showing a rising proportion of the vote for Muslim candidates), that the Muslim community was being successfully integrated into the Indian political system. See Gopal Krishna, "Electoral Participation and Political Integration," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 (Annual Number, February 1967), 179–190. See also, in rebuttal, Imtiaz Ahmed, "Indian Muslims and Electoral Politics," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 (March 11, 1967), 521–523; and more recently Ahmed's "Secularization," *Seminar*, 144 (August 1971), 22–26; and in addition, Rajni Kothari *Politics in India* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), pp. 245–247.

Table 1. Muslim Candidates in Bihar: Vote Polled, Candidates and Winners, 1952–1972

Legislative Assembly (MLA's)	1952[e]	1957	1962	1967	1969	1972
% of valid vote polled by Muslims	4.53	5.84	7.88	6.80	6.27	7.45
Muslims as % of candidates	4.70	6.73	7.19	8.00	6.18	8.17
(*n*)[a]	(72)	(90)	(110)	(162)	(133)	(162)
Muslims as % of winners	7.01	7.86	6.60	5.66	5.97	7.86
(*n*)[b]	(22)[d]	(25)	(21)	(18)	(19)	(25)
Parliament (MP's)	1952[e]	1957	1962	1967	1971	
% of valid vote polled by Muslims	2.35	4.39	6.31	4.20	3.37	
Muslims as % of candidates	2.03	5.29	8.15	5.08	6.41	
(*n*)[a]	(4)	(10)	(19)	(16)	(27)	
Muslims as % of winners	5.66	5.66	3.77	3.77	5.66	
(*n*)[b]	(3)	(3)	(2)	(2)	(3)	

[a] Number of Muslim candidates.

[b] Number of Muslims elected.

[c] In the 1952 Legislative Assembly election, there were a total of 330 seats in Bihar. The major part of the area composing 14 of these seats (4 in Purnea District and 10 in the former Manbhum District) was transferred to West Bengal in 1956, and data on these seats (2 of them won by Muslims) are not included here. Since 1957 there have been 318 seats.

[d] Includes one Muslim Congress MLA returned in an uncontested election.

[e] In the 1952 Parliamentary election, there were 55 seats allotted to Bihar. The major part of one double-member constituency (i.e., 2 seats) in Manbhum District was transferred to West Bengal in 1956, and data on it are excluded here. Since 1957 there have been 53 seats.

Source: Official returns through 1969, newspaper reports for 1971 and 1972 elections.

declined to a bit over six per cent in 1969, then rose again in 1972. The national Parliament vote for Muslims has lagged behind the Assembly vote by at least 1½–2 per cent in each election, with the gap increasing to more than 4 per cent if the 1971 and 1972 contests are compared. The disparity may be due to the difference in scale of constituency. Six seats for members of the Assembly are contained within each seat for a member of the Parliament, so that while the MLA candidates may be able to capitalize on small pockets of Muslim concentration, the MP seats cover such a wide area that these pockets are of negligible importance. Thus more Muslims are willing to contest at the Assembly level and, whether as cause or effect of this tendency, Muslim candidates collectively do better at the lower level.

The number of Muslim candidates particularly at the MLA but also at the MP level has gone up as the overall number of entrants has increased.[23] In 1952, there were only four Muslim MP candidates, about two per cent of the total, the proportion rose a bit over each succeeding election through 1962, then leveled off at around five or six per cent.

The number of candidates, though, may not be a very accurate measure of minority political strength, for anyone who wants to put up the required deposit of 250 rupees may declare himself an MLA candidate in an election, and for twice that sum he may file nomination papers as an MP contestant. This is not a great deal of money, and consequently there are large (and apparently increasing) numbers of publicity seekers and "nuisance candidates" who are sponsored by more powerful political operators to drain off a few votes from an opponent, but who have not the remotest chance to win.[24] In the 1967 Assembly election, 49.3 per cent of the entrants each polled less than 10 per cent of the vote, in 1969 the portion rose to 56.7 per cent, and in 1972 dropped very slightly to 54.0 per cent.[25] Muslim candidates reflected this general pattern, with 53.1 per cent of the MLA contestants each receiving under 10 per cent of the vote in 1967, 54.1 per cent in 1969, and 56.8 per cent in 1972.

[23] From 1532 to 1983 for MLA's during 1952–1972 (the maximum was 2153 in 1969), and from 197 to 421 for MP's during 1952–1971.

[24] On nuisance candidates in Bihar, see Harry W. Blair, "Caste, Politics and Democracy in Bihar State, India: The Elections of 1967" (Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1969), pp. 146–148.

[25] To cut down on the number of petty candidates, the government requires that the nomination deposit be forfeited if a candidate does not get at least one sixth (16⅔%) of the vote. This discouragement seems ineffective, however, for 1301 MLA entrants lost their deposits in 1967, 1366 in 1969, and 1254 in 1972.

Considerably more important than the number of candidates in the race, of course, is the number that win. Here the Muslims evidence roughly the same patterns as in the two categories already considered. In the Assembly, the number of MLA's elected began at 22, or about 7 per cent, increased to almost 8 per cent, dipped to a little less than 6 per cent in 1967 and 1969, then recovered to the 1957 level in the last election. The MP's returned from the Muslim community have held steady at 2 to 3 per cent throughout the period.

In terms of proportional equity, Muslims have had for most of the period about half as many representatives at both levels as they would be entitled to on the basis of strict proportionality. It might be pointed out, though, that they are by no means the most slighted group in Bihar in the way of underrepresentation. As has been shown elsewhere, lower caste Hindu communities such as the Kahars, Nais, Dhanuks, Tatwas, and Telis, all of whom have significant populations in Bihar, have been represented in the Vidhan Sabha much more poorly than the Muslims, while upper caste groups of the "twice-born" strata, like Brahmans, Bhumihars and Rajputs, have been and are grossly overrepresented.[26]

The Geography of Muslim Voting

The geographical pattern among the MLA seats won by Muslims emerges in Figure 2. In the 1950s, when the Congress was at the zenith of its power, both in national and state politics, it regularly won with overwhelming majorities at the polls. In 1952 and 1957 the Congress swept more than two-thirds of Bihar's MLA contests, including in both cases all but one of the Constituencies carried by Muslim candidates. The 1952 and 1957 maps in Figure 2 indicate some victories in the heavily Muslim area of eastern Purnea District (cf. Figure 1 for district names and Muslim population), also in those regions of Champaran, Saran, Darbhanga and Bhagalpur districts where Muslims amounted to more than 20 per cent of the population.[27] There were almost as many seats

[26] Harry W. Blair, "Ethnicity and Democratic Politics in India: Caste as a Differential Mobilizer in Bihar," *Comparative Politics*, 5 (October, 1972), 107–127. This pattern of inequality has continued through the 1972 election as well; see N. K. Singh, "Bihar: Many Faces of Caste Politics," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 (April 8, 1972), 748–749.

[27] The 1961 population data are being projected backward in time, a practice which necessarily entails the possibility of inaccuracies, just as does the forward projection to 1972 later on in this paper. In effect, it is being assumed that the Muslim population of Bihar is expanding at roughly the same rate as the population as a whole. This was distinctly not the case in the 1940s

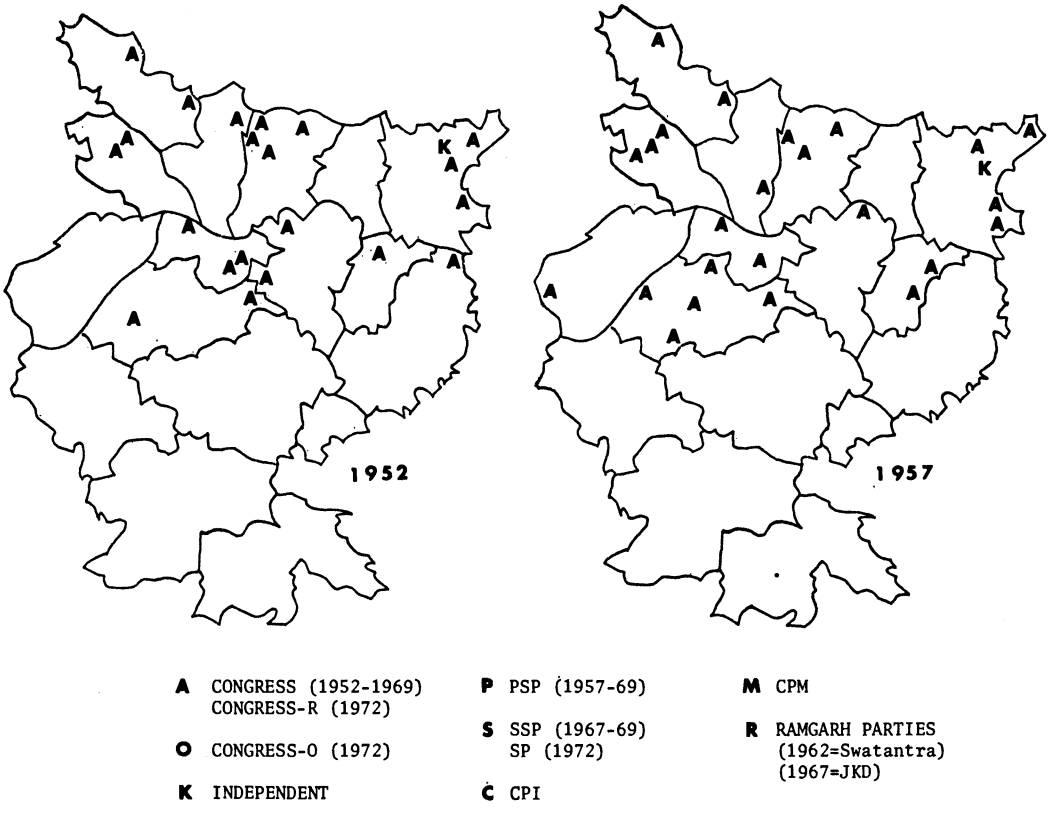


Figure 2. Muslims Elected to Bihar Legislative Assembly, 1952–1972.

Note: Boundaries for 1952 map have been adjusted to compensate for changes made after that election (cf. note c to Table 1). Between the 1962 and 1967 elections, a small change was made in the boundary dividing Monghyr and Saharsa Districts (cf. Figure 1); this change is reflected in the maps here.

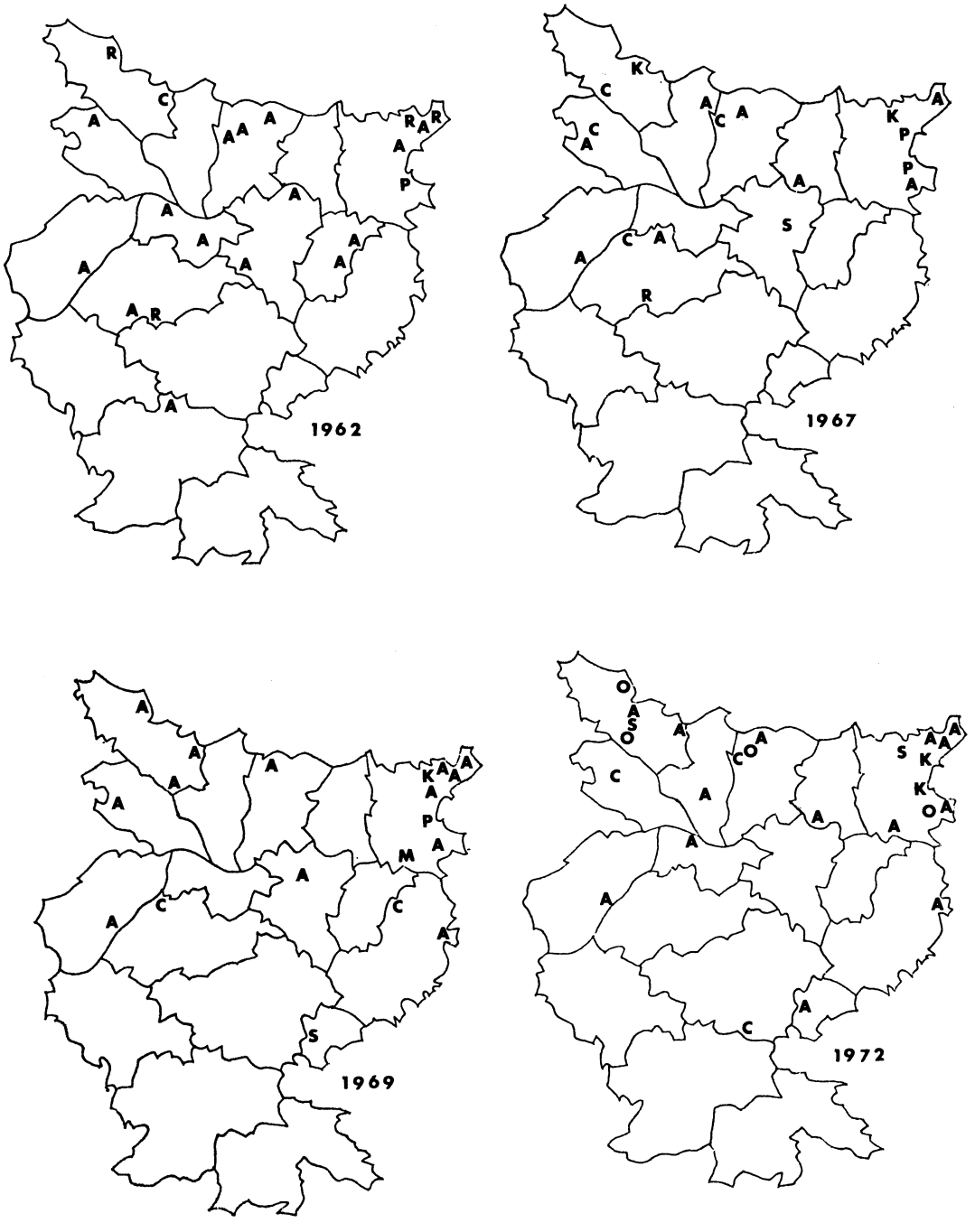
won, however, in areas of very negligible Muslim concentration, such as the seats in Shahabad, Patna, Gaya, and Monghyr districts. Altogether 21 of the 47 seats won by Muslims in the two elections were located in areas where there were fewer than 20 per cent Muslims.

One could point to the halcyon days of communal toleration during the 1950s as the reason behind this success, and indeed that decade does seem in retrospect a calm interlude between the violence of the Partition and the communal riots that were to bedevil Bihar in 1964 and 1967. A more likely explanation lies in the Congress hegemony of the time; it could and did elect almost anybody it chose to run anywhere.[28]

In 1962, Congress strength diminished somewhat in the state as a whole, and we find corroborating evidence in the map, for this time only 15 of the 21 Muslim MLA's were returned by the Congress. The new Swatantra Party under the leadership of the Raja of Ramgarh won 50 seats in Bihar (giving it second rank in the state assembly), including four filled by Muslims. All told, nine seats were won

and early 1950s (cf. note 17, above) but is, one hopes, not an unreasonable assumption for the period since then. A caveat should also be added concerning constituency boundary changes over time. Because the geographical delimitation of seats was changed for the 1957 elections and then again for the 1967 elections, statistically precise comparisons cannot be made across all six elections for all seats, though a great many seats have remained almost intact geographically ever since 1952.

[28] It might be pointed out that while the Congress was electing so many Muslim MLA's in the 1950s, Muslim representation on the vitally important Bihar Pradesh Congress Executive Committee was significantly diminishing. In the 1930s and 1940s, Muslim membership on this committee averaged about 20 per cent, but in the 1950s it decreased to the level of 5–6 per cent. See Ramashray Roy, "Dynamics of One-Party Dominance in an Indian State," *Asian Survey*, 8 (July, 1968), 553–575; and his "Caste and Political Recruitment in Bihar," *Caste in Indian Politics*, ed. Rajni Kothari (New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1970), pp. 228–258 at 242–244.



by Muslims in areas of low (under 20 per cent) Muslim dominance.

The fourth general elections of 1967 saw the eclipse of Congress rule in Bihar, and the Congress share of the Muslim MLA's dropped as well, to only 8 of 18. The Communist Party of India (CPI) picked up four, the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) two, and its rival, the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) took one. The Ramgarh group had collapsed the Swatantra Party by moving out, detouring through a dalliance with the Congress in 1966 and into a new party

called the Jana Kranti Dal (JKD), which returned one Muslim MLA.

In the midterm poll of 1969, the Congress again failed to capture a majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly, but it did improve its Muslim holdings from 8 to 12 seats; the CPI picked up two; while its rival, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)—usually abbreviated CPM—took one: and the Praja and Samyukta Socialists held at one each. More significantly, a trend that had begun in the 1962 election had now become quite apparent. There were now only 6 Muslim MLA's from areas that had less than 20 per cent Muslim population, while 13 were returned from regions that were more than 20 per cent Muslim, and 8 of these held seats from areas where the minority comprised more than 40 per cent.

Between the 1969 and 1972 elections came the split in the Congress that resulted in a majority group, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Congress (Ruling), or Congress-R, and a smaller dissident group, the Congress (Opposition), or Congress-O. In Bihar, as in most of the states, the Congress-R claimed the major share of the former united Congress MLA's. In the 1972 election the Prime Minister's Congress improved its position greatly by winning a majority of 167 seats in the Assembly, an outcome reversing that of the 1967 and 1969 polls.

The return to Congress hegemony also saw a return in Muslim representation to the levels of the 1950s. Altogether 25 Muslims became MLA's, the same number as in 1957 (see Table 1). Some 14 Muslims won MLA seats on the Congress-R ticket, against only 4 for the Congress-O, and 7 for other parties and Independents. The 1972 geographical pattern shows some degree of resemblance to the 1957 distribution but more similarity to that of 1969: a concentration of MLA's in the heavily Muslim areas of Purnea and Champaran districts, with fewer scattered elsewhere. As in 1969, 8 of the 25 were elected from areas more than 40 per cent Muslim, against 5 in 1957, while only 8 of the 1972 contingent came from areas of less than 20 per cent Muslim population, as opposed to 12 in the 1957 contest.

From the maps in Figure 2, it would appear that across the six elections Muslims are becoming not more but less integrated within the political system. It is becoming easier for Muslims to get elected from areas where their coreligionists are strong in numbers, but at the same time it is becoming more difficult (though there are significant exceptions) for members of the minority to win office where their numbers are weak. This conclusion will be strengthened in the next section.

Statistics of Muslim Population and Voting Patterns

We now move to a consideration of the statistical relationships between the measures of Muslim population developed from Figure 1 and voting patterns at the constituency level. Upon a map similar to that used in Figure 1 (but larger in scale, so as to permit a greater degree of exactness) a second map, containing an outline of the MLA constituencies for the 1957 and 1962 elections was superimposed. An estimate of the Muslim population for each seat could then be gained by observing the pattern of isopleths within its area, and each seat was then given a code for one of six ordinal categories.[29] The process was repeated for the 1967 delimitation, which was in effect for the 1969 and 1972 elections as well,[30] thus making it possible to compare a measure of Muslim population directly with election results for individual Legislative Assembly constituencies.

Correlations between Muslim population and vote for Muslim candidates over the last five elections appear in Table 2.

Here we find confirmation of the data previously explored in Figure 2, though the shift is not evident until the end. There is a barely perceptible rise in the correlation for 1962 over that for 1957, meaning that vote for Muslim

[29] The ordinal categories used were 0–5 per cent, 5–10 per cent, deciles up to 40 per cent over 40 per cent. A test for accuracy was made by comparing the estimates arrived at in this fashion with direct census data on Muslim population for 69 MLA seats scattered around the state that actually do match up with the census units. The correlation (r) between the Muslim population estimated from the isoplethic map and the actual Muslim population for the 69 seats was .939. Using r^2, we could say that the degree of "congruence" was 89 per cent.

[30] Because of difficulties in the delimitation for the 1952 election, this analysis was not performed for the first general elections. No attempt was made to perform the same technique for Parliamentary constituencies, which are each six times the size of a State Assembly seat, because it was thought that the problem of "ecological fallacy" was too great. A number of techniques have been developed by geographers for working out correspondences between maps using different areal units. See, for instance, Arthur H. Robinson, "Mapping the Correspondence of Isarithmic Maps," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 52 (December, 1962), 414–425. (The terms "isarithmic" and "isoplethic" are often used interchangeably.) There has, however, been little interest in using such techniques on electoral data. For an exception, see Peirce F. Lewis, "Impact of Negro Migration on the Electoral Geography of Flint, Michigan, 1932–1962: A Cartographic Analysis," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 55 (March, 1965), 1–25.

Table 2. Correlations Between Muslim Population and Vote for Muslim Candidates for Bihar Legislative Assembly, 1957–1972[a]

	1957	1962	1967	1969	1972
Pearson *r*	.568	.574	.545	.684	.678
Number of seats[b]	59	84	100	95	96

[a] All correlations are significant at the .001 level.

[b] This figure represents the number of MLA seats which Muslim candidates contested. In 1957 there were Muslim entrants in ten additional seats, which are excluded here because they were double-member constituencies and could not be compared on the same basis as the single-member seats. Double-member seats were eliminated after 1957.

candidates was slightly more closely related to Muslim percentage of population in the second election.[31]

[31] It cannot, of course, be inferred from the increase in correlation that a greater proportion of Muslims voted for Muslim candidates in the 1962 election than in 1957, though that is probably the case. Given the statistics of Table 2, it is possible (albeit unlikely) that Muslims as individuals turned away from Muslim candidates in 1962. All we can say definitely is that Muslim candidates received more votes in general in areas more heavily populated with Muslims.

In 1967 there was a very slight drop and then in 1969 a considerable jump to .684, yielding an r^2 which accounts for about 47 per cent of the variance, as against the 32 per cent provided by the 1957 data. The 1972 data show a persistence of the 1969 pattern. There does indeed seem to have been a shift in Muslim vote-getting power to the Muslim areas of the state.

This change in voting patterns for Muslim candidates has not been paralleled by any sweeping shifts in the relationship of Muslim population to the electoral fortunes of a particular party, as is seen in Table 3.

In 1952, 21 of the 22 Muslim MLA's were Congressmen, and in 1957 the number rose to 24 of 25. Muslims were generally viewed as a

Table 3. Correlations Between Legislative Assembly Vote by Party and Muslim Population in Bihar, 1957–1972

	1957[a]	1962	1967	1969	1972
Congress[b]	.233** (210)[c]	.139* (318)	−.007 (318)	.276** (318)	.093 (261)
Congress-O					−.072 (269)
CPI	−.401** (40)	−.076 (85)	−.064 (97)	−.101 (165)	−.055 (55)
Socialist/SSP[d]		−.116 (131)	−.135 (200)	−.037 (193)	.022 (252)
PSP	.076 (150)	.166* (199)	.332** (181)	.132 (94)	
Jana Sangh	−.250 (21)	.045 (75)	−.052 (268)	.153** (301)	−.005 (265)
Ramgarh Parties[e]	.001 (78)	.053 (259)	−.055 (164)	.012 (137)	
Shoshit Dal				−.103 (125)	

* Indicates correlation significant at .025 level.

** Indicates correlation significant at .001 level.

[a] Includes only single-member seats for 1957. Subsequent elections eliminated the double-member constituencies.

[b] Indian National Congress through 1969, Congress-R in 1972.

[c] Number in parentheses indicates candidates fielded by that party in that year (number on which correlation is based).

[d] Socialist Party in 1957 and again in 1972, SSP in 1967 and 1969.

[e] Janta Party in 1957 and 1969, Swatantra in 1962, JKD in 1967.

special constituency of the Congress, under the protection and patronage of Maulana Azad and others at the national level. The correlation of .233 for the 1957 election is evidence of this special relationship, in that the Congress did do significantly better in the Muslim areas than the other parties did.[32] The correlation dropped considerably in the 1962 election, however, and even more five years later.

There were numerous rumors in Bihar at the time of the 1967 election that Muslims were deserting their traditional support of the Congress.[33] At least some of these rumors had a foundation in the activities of the Majlis-e-Mushawarat, a politically oriented Muslim association formed in 1964. Although the Majlis backed Congress candidates for about half the seats in the Bihar Assembly, it openly supported non-Congress contestants for the other half.[34] The Majlis' effect on Muslim voters cannot be discerned from the present data, but it is the case that Congress support in Muslim areas dropped to the extent that the correlation between Muslim population and Congress electoral support completely vanished in 1967.

In 1969 the trend reversed itself. Though the Congress won ten fewer seats in the state as a whole and polled almost three percentage points less in the popular vote than in 1967, it did quite well in the Muslim areas. The r-value of .276 corresponds well with the impression given by the 1969 map in Figure 2, which showed Congress winning most of the Muslim seats in northeastern Bihar.

Whatever relationship was restored in the 1969 election disappeared in 1972, perhaps as part of the fallout from the Congress split. The Congress-R managed to retain a slight correlation with Muslim population, though not a statistically significant one, while the Congress-O wound up with a negative relation, even though it ran 30 Muslim candidates, as against only 28 for the Congress-R.

Both the Communist Party and Samyukta Socialist (in 1972 simply the Socialist) Party claim in their propaganda to be especially interested in the welfare of the Muslim minority, but support for both parties has been negatively correlated with Muslim population in all five elections, except in the case of the Socialists in 1972, when the correlation was a scarcely noteworthy correlation of +.022. The Shoshit Dal (literally, "exploited movement") arose as a short-lived splinter group from the SSP in late 1967, announcing that it, unlike its parent party, would devote itself to the betterment of the "backward" communities of Bihar, including Muslims.[35] In electoral behavior, however, it followed the ancestral pattern in finding its votes negatively correlated with Muslim population in its only time at the polls in 1969.

The Communists, on the other hand, were thought by some to be getting support from unexpected Muslim quarters in 1969, for there were a number of rumors to the effect that the Muslims of Bihar had received directions from the "ruling group" in Pakistan to vote for the CPI.[36] The correlation of −.101 between Muslim population and CPI vote in Table 3 gives little support to this belief.

Alone among the leftist parties, the PSP's electoral support has a positive correlation with Muslim population, reaching a high-water mark of .332 in 1967, when two PSP Muslims were returned as MLA's. Between 1969 and 1972 the PSP and SSP merged to form the new Socialist Party (SP), and it may very well have been the legacy of PSP popularity in Muslim areas that accounted for the very slight positive correlation between Socialist vote and Muslim population in 1972.

On the right, the various parties led into the electoral fray by the late Raja of Ramgarh have never displayed any degree of voting strength related to Muslim density, though the Raja's 1962 political vehicle, the Swatantra Party, did elect four Muslim MLA's. The primary reason for the negligible correlations probably lay in the source of the Raja's electoral strength, his home base and vast landholdings in Hazaribagh District, where he invariably won most of the seats (in many cases with his own relatives)

[32] Because of the constituency delimitation problem mentioned above, correlations were not calculated for the 1952 elections. Again, it must be emphasized that Table 3 does not measure the relationship between voting *by Muslims* and voting for particular parties. It only measures the relationship between *Muslim population* and voting for the individual parties.

[33] As reported to the author, who was in Bihar at the time of the 1967 elections.

[34] Zaheer Masood Quraishi, "Electoral Strategy of a Minority Pressure Group: The Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat," *Asian Survey*, 8 (December, 1968), 976–987. Whatever success the Majlis had was rather short-lived, for it had more or less collapsed by the time of the 1969 poll. See the same author's "Emergence and Eclipse of Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6 (June 19,1971), 1229–1234; also Theodore P. Wright, Jr., "Muslims as Candidates and Voters in 1967 General Elections," in *Fourth General Elections in India*, ed. S. P. Varma and Iqbal Narain, vol. 2 (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1970), pp. 207–224.

[35] On the Shoshit Dal, see Blair, "Caste, Politics and Democracy," pp. 334–338.

[36] Vishwanath Prasad Varma, "Analysis of Results," in *A Study of Mid-Term Elections in Bihar (1969)*, ed. V. P. Varma (Patna: Institute of Public Administration, Patna University, 1970), pp. 76–77; also his "District-wise Classification of Results," in the same volume, pp. 94–95 and 101.

and where the Muslim population is relatively small.

It has almost become part of the conventional political wisdom in India that the Hindu-oriented Jana Sangh does very well in Muslim areas, because the more Muslims that are visible, the more easily the Jana Sangh can employ its ability to arouse communal feeling among the Hindus and translate this animosity into votes for itself. This notion finds superficial support in the observation that in both 1967 and 1969, urban MLA seats in eastern Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur and Ranchi towns, all of which have some Muslim concentration, were carried by the Jana Sangh.[37] But when we look at the state as a whole, the relationship tends to disappear.[38] Through 1967 the correlation is weak, and even negative in two out of three cases. In 1969 there is a significant though low correlation, but in 1972 the pattern returns to that displayed in previous elections.

Conclusion

In terms of representation in the Legislative Assembly, Muslim fortunes have oscillated, up to a high of 25 MLA's in 1957, down to 18 or 19 in the late 1960s and then back up to 25 in the 1972 poll. The portion of the vote obtained by Muslim candidates has undergone a similar oscillation. At the same time, however, there has been a more definite one-way trend in the geographical distribution of vote for Muslim candidates, who have been getting their votes more and more from areas of substantial Muslim population. In statistical terms, the Muslim population "explained" a good deal more of the vote for Muslim candidates at the end of the period than at the beginning. Muslim numbers have been making themselves felt politically in the last two elections, but what appears to be increasing Muslim cohesiveness in these areas is coming at the cost of Muslim candidates' ability to exert appeal in regions of little Muslim numerical strength. In terms of the dilemma posed at the beginning of this paper, solidarity appears to be winning over integration.[39]

Still, there is considerable evidence that integrative factors have not completely disappeared. For one thing, not all the Muslim MLA's get elected from Muslim strongholds. Some Muslim politicians do continue to poll high percentages of the vote in areas where their co-religionists are few. Indeed, the fact that in this paper we can refer to areas of 20 and 30 per cent Muslim population as "strongholds" indicates that any real communal polarization is a long way off. Equally important, the low correlations between Muslim population and vote for any particular party, especially in the most recent election, mean that no party is wedded in its electoral fortunes to the statistics of communal demography. Further, there is no evidence from past elections that any party would stand to gain greatly if at all by an appeal to communal feelings.

In all political systems the dilemma between integration and sociocultural identity that faces minority groups is at bottom an insoluble one, for generally both goals are deeply desired, but the complete realization of either one must necessarily mean the repudiation of the other. The most satisfactory arrangement would appear to be that employed by many ethnic groups in America: pursuit of a portion of both goals simultaneously, so that while neither is totally achieved, both are in part accomplished. If that is so, Bihar's Muslims are probably making the best of their opportunities; more Muslims are getting elected in Muslim areas, but Bihar politics has not become polarized along communal lines, for some Muslims can still be elected from non-Muslim areas.

[37] There are only 13 seats out of the total 318 in Bihar that could be called in any way genuinely urban. The Jana Sangh won 2 of the 13 in 1972.

[38] Craig Baxter disputes the existence of such a relationship in *The Jana Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), pp. 234–235. Angela Burger also takes issue with the thesis in her Uttar Pradesh study, *Opposition in a Dominant Party System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 199–200. But see also Morris-Jones and Das Gupta, "India's Political Areas," 416; B. D. Graham, "A Report on Some Trends in Indian Elections: The Case of Uttar Pradesh," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies,* 5 (November, 1967) 179–199 at 191; and Imtiaz Ahmad, "Religion in Politics: A Comment," *Economic and Political Weekly,* 7 (January 8, 1972), 81–86 at 84–85.

[39] For other electoral systems, evidence for the salience of religious cleavage appears mixed; in some it continues to be of major importance, while in others it is barely noticeable in electoral behavior. See Arend Lijphart's study of 10 Western systems, "Class Voting and Religious Voting in the European Democracies," Survey Research Centre, Occasional Paper No. 8 (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 1971).

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