Chapter I

THE THEORETICAL FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction

Participation in party activities is a rarer and higher form of political participation than "voting."\(^1\) Compared to the members of the general electorate, party activists, who constitute a very small percentage of the total electorate,\(^2\) shoulder a much greater responsibility for managing the political system. An empirical investigation of the determinants and sub-processes of people's participation in political parties may therefore be seen as a worthwhile endeavour on the part of a student of political behaviour.

The subjects of the present study are the organizational activists of the Congress (O),* Praja Socialist and Swatantra party units in Baroda City. A study of their "party participation" and an exploration of certain behavioural dimensions of the party organizations operated by them constitute the twin broad themes of this inquiry.

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1. For a useful schematization of the hierarchy of political participation, see Lester Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p.18. Why party activists merit research attention will be explained more fully in a subsequent section of the present chapter.

2. In a national sample survey of Indian voting behaviour, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, it was found that only 7.8 per cent of the national sample were members of political parties. See Bashiruddin Ahmed, "Political Stratification of the Indian Electorate," Economic and Political Weekly, VI, nos. 3-5, Annual Number 1971, p.252.

* After the split of the Congress Party into the Congress(O) and the Congress(R), the Baroda unit of the party was continued to be within the Congress (O), and it is the ruling party in
Admittedly, the data used here have their spatial and temporal limitations. But their analysis is intended to be of a wide import. The three party units, data on whose activists are used here, are viewed as three "cases" which illustrate the operation of (1) certain generic aspects of people's participation in political parties and (2) certain behavioural dimensions of party organizations. Accordingly, the main objective of the present research, it is claimed, is to obtain analytic knowledge about certain generic problems of "party participation" and party organization through an examination of the evidence provided by the activists of three particular party organizations of a particular place at a particular time. Needless to say, this study is not intended to be either a journalistic survey or a mere historical narrative of the politics of the three aforementioned party units.

This chapter spells out the specific objectives of the research and explains their theoretical significance. A review of the relevant previous studies is also made.

The Objectives of the Research

Just as a voting behaviour study analyses how and why people take part in elections, so does a party participation study seek to find out how and why people join and take part in the organizational life of political parties. Viewed the Baroda Municipal Corporation. Only lately have a few "dissidents" joined the Congress (R), which, at the time of this writing, has only 3 members in the Municipal Corporation.
as a study of the determinants and sub-processes of party participation, the present research seeks to answer the following sets of questions:

1. Who are the persons who join and take part in the organizational life of political parties? What, in other words, are their demographic and social characteristics?

2. How have they been politically socialized and how have their political career patterns developed?

3. What are the motivational and ideological determinants of their participation in political parties?

4. What are their value perspectives and role perceptions?

5. How involved are they in the performance of certain political tasks, such as party organizational and campaign-related tasks?

While seeking answers to the aforementioned questions relating to the individual activists of the three major party units in Baroda City, I shall simultaneously be making an attempt to explore certain behavioural dimensions of the party organizations operated by these activists. Before describing these behavioural dimensions of the party organizations, which are sought to be analysed in this study, I should explain the nature of the assumed linkage between the study of "party participation" and the study of "party organization." In order to do so, I may refer once more to an analogy between a voting behaviour study and a party organization.
participation study.

A voting behaviour study, in effect, unravels the behavioural character of what Campbell and Kahn have called the "citizen sector" of the political system. Similarly, a study of the political behaviour of party organizational activists helps unravel certain behavioural dimensions of the organizations operated by them. The party organization, as pointed out by Samuel J. Eldersveld, is a social organism consisting of "a set of individuals populating specific roles and behaving as member-actors of a boundaried and identifiable social unit." In a sense, the behaviour of a party organization is compounded of the behaviour of the individuals who operate it. "A party," writes Neil A. McDonald, "functions by entering into the behaviour pattern of individuals."

This line of reasoning, obviously, is very much in the tradition of the behavioural approach to political analysis. This approach, as pointed out by a prominent team of its practitioners, seeks to go "beyond the data supplied by constitutions, statutes, administrative decrees, or judicial

6. For a persuasive discussion of the reasons for the need to use this approach for the study of Indian politics, see Duncan B. Forrester, "Approaches to the Study of Indian Politics," Political Studies, Vol. xvi, number 2 (June 1968), pp.277-284. After reviewing the major works on Indian politics which have
decisions - themselves evidence, directly or indirectly, of political behaviour - to a more complete description of governmental structure-in-action." The distinctive feature of the behavioural approach is its attempt "to describe government as a process made up of the actions and interactions of men and groups of men." 7

In the present research, therefore, I have attempted to explore certain behavioural dimensions of the executive organizations of the Congress, Praja Socialist and Swatantra party units in Baroda City through an analysis of the social backgrounds, attitudes and activities of the persons who operate these organizations. Admittedly, the party organizational activists do not represent the whole party and, therefore, the generalizations made on the basis of the data pertaining to them would be valid, not vis-à-vis the total organism of the party, but vis-à-vis the executive organization of the party.

The total membership of a political party may be thought of as being composed of the following categories of members: (1) the ordinary or nominal members, who normally have been conducted according to the legal, historical-institutional and 'behaviourist' approaches, Forrester observes: "On the whole I think that when one has made every qualification and cautionary remark and reservation about the Behaviourists, their approach is still preferable to any of the others we have discussed." (p.284.)

8. ibid, pp.64-65.
do not do anything beyond signing their membership slips and paying the required fees; (2) the active members, who, besides paying a higher fee than the ordinary members, also undertake certain tasks prescribed by the party; (3) the organizational activists, who operate or manage the regular organizational life of the party; and (4) the top leaders, who wield great power over the party organization.

For a comprehensive analysis of the entire party organism, all these categories of party members and the voter-supporters of the party would have to be studied. The present study is not so wide in its scope. Its focus and emphasis is on the organizational activists of the three major parties of Baroda City. A brief discussion of the political careers and political roles of the top leaders of these three party units will also be attempted. Finally, a brief treatment will also be made of the caste composition of the active membership bases of the Congress and Swatantra party units, and of the age and occupational distribution of the active members of the Congress.

The data used for the present analysis have a time-limitation since they were gathered at a particular time (see Chapter II below). No attempt has been made to find

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out if any of the party organizational activists has changed his party affiliation after he was interviewed. Such an effort was not warranted by the theoretical objective of the research, which, as already stated, was to gain analytic knowledge about certain generic problems of party participation and party organization through an examination of the evidence provided by the activists of three particular party units of a particular place at a particular time.

Having indicated some of the limitations of the data on which the present analysis is based, I may now pass on to a consideration of the specific behavioural dimensions of the party organization which are to be explored in the subsequent chapters. One of the behavioural aspects of the party organization is its social composition. This can be known from the social and demographic characteristics of the party organizational activists, which are analysed in Chapter III.

The political career patterns of the party activists help explain another behavioural dimension of the party organization, namely, its "careerism." Obviously, a party organization which is operated mostly by political novices would be strikingly different from a party organization

10. In Chapter II, I have indicated the recent change in the party affiliations of two leaders, viz. Messrs. N.D. Chokshi and Chandrakant Parikh.
which is operated mostly by political veterans. This aspect of the party organization is explored in Chapter IV.

A third behavioural aspect of the party organization is its system of incentives. This can be gauged from the party activists' motivations and current satisfactions, which are analysed in Chapter V. Fourthly, a party organization may be viewed as a structure of attitudes. In a fundamental sense, a political party is what its personnel believe and perceive. Hence the need for exploring the value perspectives, role perceptions and ideological orientations of the party organizational activists. This is done in Chapter VI and in part of Chapter VII.

Fifthly, the party organization is a task group. The party is engaged in the performance of such activities as vote mobilization, candidate selection and party organizational maintenance. For a behavioural analysis of the party organization, therefore, we must also explore the task performance of its personnel. This is attempted in Chapter VII.

A final analytic dimension of the party organization is related to the problem of oligarchy vs. internal democracy. The "pre-ordained form" of the structure of power in all political parties, according to Robert Michels, is oligarchy.\(^\text{11}\) The "iron law of oligarchy" as formulated

\[^{11}\text{Robert Michels, Political Parties (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958; the original German edition was published in 1911), p.13.}\]
by him, has developed into "one of the sturdiest propositions in political science" and all mature studies of the party organization must have to reckon with it. I shall also seek to refer the findings of the present study to the oligarchic model of the party organization. What the oligarchic model means, how it has been empirically researched upon and modified by earlier researchers, and what aspects of it are explored in the present study may now be indicated.

Excursus on the Problem of Oligarchy Vs. Democracy in the Party Organization

The oligarchic theory of party leadership has been demonstrated, with "conclusive proof," by Robert Michels in his book, Political Parties, in which he analysed the nature of the power-distribution within the democratic socialist parties of early twentieth century Europe. He did not concern himself with the conservative parties because they were avowedly of an "oligarchical character." He rather chose to demonstrate that there were "immanent oligarchical tendencies" even in those parties which were publicly and professedly committed, advocating or fostering democracy. 13

Michels' general conclusion was that in a political party, as in any other large-scale association, democracy and organization are antithetical to each other and that the leaders inevitably become independent of control by their followers. He wrote:

Reduced to its most concise expression, the fundamental sociological law of political parties ... may be formulated in the following terms: "It is organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy." 14

Some component propositions of the oligarchic model of the party organization, as propounded by Michels, may be stated as follows: 15

1. That the party organization is a bureaucracy involving a division of labour, specialization, professionalization and leadership stability.

2. That the leaders of the party organization undergo a process of embourgeoisement whereby they become "detached" from (or, in other words, unrepresentative of) the rest of the members of the party.

3. That the leaders, aided by the bureaucratic requirements of the party organization, will inevitably form an oligarchic group (or, in other words, a "closed caste") which will rule in its own...

15. Ibid., Ep. 36-37, 166-67, 234, 405-406 and 417-18.

interests and contrary to the interest, and independent of the control, of the mass of the party. 4. That the competent few, who constitute the oligarchic group, will come to exercise "almost unlimited" power over their "electing masses," who only retain their right "at stated intervals, to choose masters to whom in the interim they owe unconditional obedience."

Michels' thesis, which has been outlined above, has had a great amount of respectability in political science. A powerful support to his thesis is found in Maurice Duverger's famous book, Political Parties, in which he concluded: "In consequence the leadership of political parties ... presents dual characteristics: it is democratic in appearance and oligarchic in reality."\(^{16}\) The reality of the "boss" and the "machine" in American political parties has been attested to by many political analysts.\(^{17}\)

In more recent times, the oligarchic model of the party organization has been challenged, modified and substituted for. A very notable empirical invalidation of the oligarchic model and the suggestion of an alternative model is made by Samuel J. Eldersveld in his Political Parties: A

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16. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (London: Methuen and Co., 1954; the original French edition was published in 1951); p.133.
17. A useful resume of the findings of some such studies may be found in Fred I. Greenstein, The American Party System and the American People (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall 1965), chapter IV.
Behavioural Analysis. In this book the author reports the findings of his methodologically sophisticated and theoretically innovative study of the Republican and Democratic party organizations in Wayne Country, U.S.A. Eldersveld found that the iron law of oligarchy was empirically incorrect. The power structure of these two parties was found to be stratarchic and pluralized, and not oligarchic. It was, in other worlds, a "reciprocal deference structure" with a considerable "balkanization of power relations." 

Eldersveld found that the total leadership of the party, far from approximating to Michels' conception of a single elite managerial class, was, in fact, pluralized into several considerably autonomous strata or echelons of leadership. He further found that the leadership at any one of these strata or echelons was itself pluralized into several subcategories of leadership based on distinct social backgrounds, political career patterns, political perspectives and upon differential degrees of task performance. Borrowing Lasswell and Kaplan's phrase, Eldersveld therefore suggested that a "stratarchic" model befits the reality of the party hierarchy. His conclusions merit quoting in detail:

18. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964. In this connection, mention should also be made of the pioneering study by Lipset, Trow and Coleman which "challenged" the appropriateness of the oligarchic model to describe the internal politics of trade unions. See Seymour Martin Lipset et al., Union Democracy (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956). 
19. Eldersveld, op. cit., p.9 
Throughout this analysis we have emphasized that the party is not a neatly pyramided bureaucracy, an elite class, or an oligarchy. Theories of the ruling class, or of oligarchy, disguise more reality about the party than they disclose .... The party is also a "stratarchical" control structure, rather than an elitist command structure. Power is devolved and proliferated to echelon commands, decision-making is autonomized at the lower reaches of the structure, and deference is not exclusively upward, but reciprocal .... Finally, we see the party, not as a singular body of elites, but as an aggregate of career classes performing differential structural functions, yet not moulded into a hierarchy of subelites whose power prerogatives and structural status are closely determined by a top leadership group.21

There are several reasons why the oligarchic model is inappropriate to describe the structure of power in political parties and why the model of stratarchical or pluralized leadership is to be preferred. These reasons may now be considered. Obviously, the reasons discussed below are applicable to political parties which operate within a democratic framework.

In a democratic set-up, membership in a political party is voluntary, and not compulsory. There is choice even as regards the particular party which one may join. A major factor, therefore, which limits the emergence of oligarchic leadership in the party is the ability of its membership either to replace the leaders or to leave the party when it finds that its wishes are flouted by their leaders.

Secondly, political parties are organizations seeking to maximize support and to win elections and as such they are under a compulsion to formulate and implement their policies through processes of discussion and debate, bargaining and compromise. "All leaders," writes Peter Y. Medding, "are subject to the constraining influence of the consensual power available to their followers." The oligarchic notion of a "compact phalanx" of leaders imposing their will on their mass of followers is not applicable to the organizational life of political parties which seek to maximize internal support and achieve electoral success.

Yet another shortcoming of Michels' thesis is its simplistic emphasis of the distinction between the leaders and the led. Probably out of a predilection for class theories, Michels made a single structural horizontal division of the party organization into the oligarchic group (which is cohesive and bourgeoise) and the mass of followers (which is amorphous and proletarian). This is an oversimplified and empirically incorrect picture of the party organization. It ignores the existence, within the party, of relatively independent subcategories of leadership based upon age and ideology, religion and region, occupation and value orientations. A more realistic picture of the pattern of party leadership is painted by Peter Y. Medding in the following words:

All groups within the party including institutional, interest, or ideological groups must be divided into leaders and followers. Non-leaders from one perspective may, therefore, be leaders from another ... some may act as leaders on certain issues, but not on others. 23

In the light of the aforementioned reasons, it may be concluded that every party is necessarily characterized by some degree of internal democracy. To quote Eldersveld again, "While admittedly party systems in different countries will vary in degree of strataarchy, exploratory research suggests the real probability that there is a strataarchical element in all such systems ..." 24

In a theoretically informed investigation of the problem of intra-party democracy in a provincial unit of the Italian Socialist Party, Samuel H. Barnes found that there operated, within the same party unit, some factors which facilitated internal democracy and some other factors which restrained democratic tendencies. It was found, for instance, that the short supply of political competence among the "members" of the party unit was a factor which restricted its democratic functioning. There was, however, a general commitment, both among the activists and among the leaders, to the norm of intra-party democracy. This, combined with the "inability of the leaders to dominate the communica­tions channels reaching the membership," it was shown,

23. Abid., p. 15.
facilitated democratic tendencies. Insightfully, Barnes concluded:

It is better not to say that a unit is democratic or undemocratic but rather that it is more or less democratic, depending upon how large a portion of the population is able meaningfully to influence decision makers. Thus democracy is at least in principle a quantifiable variable ....

Democracy is therefore never wholly achieved. There are always factors that favour and others that limit democracy.26

Barnes' and Eldersveld's conclusion, namely, that within any democratic party "there are always factors that favour and others that limit democracy" is supported by the findings of several researches some of which will be reviewed in a subsequent section of this chapter.27 In the light of these findings and in the light of the foregoing explanations, it may rightly be concluded that it would be a futile exercise to seek to find out if, in a democratic set-up, a given party is oligarchic or democratic. Such an "either ... or" formulation of the problem will not serve any useful purpose because there will be some degree of internal democracy in all party units which operate within a democratic framework. Instead, therefore, of asking if a given party is internally democratic or oligarchic, it

26. Ibid., p. 214. In this connection, see also Seymour Martin Lipset et al., op. cit., p.13.
27. See, in particular, my review of the studies by Ramashray Roy and Renate Mayntz in this chapter.
would be relevant and profitable to seek to assess the degree of its internal democracy.

Operationally, the task of specifying the degree of internal democracy in a given party unit involves the identification of the factors which facilitate and the factors which restrain democratic tendencies. The identification and measurement of such democratising and anti-democratic factors can be done in two ways. One way of doing it is through an examination of the roles actually played by the "leaders" and the "followers" in the formulation and implementation of the major decisions of the party unit. Such an inquiry, which can appropriately be done through the participant observation method, will reveal the extent of decisional participation of the "leaders" and the "followers." The other way of exploring intra-party democracy, which is followed in the present inquiry, is through an examination of what may be called meta-decisional factors, such as the characteristics, attitudes and activities of the party actors - be they leaders or followers - which serve as determinants of the degree and style of their decisional participation.

In chapters III through VIII, while analysing the data pertaining to the social backgrounds, perceptions,
attitudes and activities of the organizational activists and top leaders of the three aforementioned party units, I have looked for factors which facilitate and factors which restrict the development and operation of democratic tendencies. The underlying hypotheses relating to this specific objective of the inquiry are stated below:

1. The more heterogeneous the social composition of the party organization, the greater the prospects for internal democracy.

   The social composition of the party organization will be indicated by the social characteristics of the party organizational activists. The rationale of the above assumption is that a socially diverse party organization would have within it a diversity of interests to cope with. It can, therefore, maximize internal support only through a process of aggregation and compromise, and not through oligarchic control.

2. The greater the extra-party associational involvement of the party organizational activists, the greater the chances for internal democracy.

   The justification for this hypothesis is offered by the theory of the mass society and the theory of political
pluralism. The theory of the mass society tells us that an atomized, amorphous mass of people stands the risk of being made the "pedestal of an oligarchy." This is also the insight of the theory of political pluralism, which says that associational memberships enhance the individuals' capacity to protect their rights against oligarchs or would-be oligarchs. This is succinctly expressed by Lipset, Trow and Coleman as follows:

... democracy is most likely to become institutionalized in organizations whose members form organized or structured subgroups which while maintaining a basic loyalty to the larger organization constitute relatively independent and autonomous centres of power within the organization. Or to put it in another way, democracy is strengthened when members are not only related to the larger organization but are also affiliated with or loyal to subgroups within the organization.

3. The presence, within the party organization, of many activists who have been self-recruited (and not drafted by the party elite) into it is an indication of a lack of any oligarchic screening and selection of new entrants.

4. Party activists whose party activism is motivated for personally instrumental satisfactions will seek to maintain a "mutually exploitative relationship" with their party

28. See, in this connection, Seymour Martin Lipset et al., op. cit., pp. 15-16
29. Ibid., p. 15.
leaders. The presence of such activists with personalized expectations is a countervailing force against anti-democratic tendencies within the party organization.

5. If there is a widespread respect for the norm of intra-party democracy among the organizational activists of a party unit, then, the chances of an oligarchic group emerging or operating in that party unit are considerably reduced.

In bringing this section to a close, I may point out that the exploration of intra-party democracy through the examination of the aforementioned variables and hypotheses constitutes only one of the several specific objectives of the present inquiry. The other objectives have already been explained in the previous section.

The Theoretical Significance of Local Party Units and their Activists

The importance of the present study accrues from the functional significance of political parties, regarding which Sigmund Neumann writes: "The viability of a party system becomes a test for the stability of a social and political order."\(^{30}\) Political parties constitute a functional subsystem of the larger political system. They function as articulators and aggregators of interests, as agencies of

political education and political recruitment, as formulators of public policies and as "catalysts of governmental performance." The functional significance of political parties, as correctly observed by Lucian Pye, accrues not only from "their representative functions, their adaptive capabilities, and their stabilizing roles" but also from their role in "initiating, managing, and consolidating dynamic political change and development." For the effective performance of these functions, political parties depend ultimately upon their local units and more especially upon the personnel who operate these local units. It is inconceivable how the national and state-level organizations of a party can function except on the basis of their local units which would recruit cadres, spread the party's ideology, collect money and mobilize electoral support. Effective local units are,


33. See, in this connection, Myron Weiner, Party Building
thus, of the essence of political parties, for, without the former, the latter would not be distinguishable from chiques, clubs or groups of notables, which, in fact, were the antecedents of the modern political party in many a Western nation. It is for this reason that "local units" enter into the very definition of political parties. This is indicated by the second of the four definitional properties of the political party, which according to two contemporary political scientists, are:

(1) continuity in organization - that is, an organization whose expected life span is not dependent on the life span of current leaders; (2) manifest and presumably permanent organization at the local level, with regularized communications and other relationships between local and national units; (3) self-conscious determination of leaders at both national and local levels to capture and to hold decision-making power alone or in co-alition with others, not simply to influence the exercise of power; and (4) a concern on the part of the organization for seeking followers at the polls or in some manner striving for popular support.

An insight into the significance of the role played by local party organizational activists may also be gained from the consideration that they constitute a strategic middle link between the national and state-level governmental and party leaders on the one hand and, on the

other, the members of the general public. They, as pointed out by Rajni Kothari, not only serve as mediators in the resolution of social conflicts, or as brokers in the aggregation of local interests but also act as mobilizers and legitimizers of the governmental system.36

Two special features of the Indian political system enhance the importance of our local party units and their activists. These are the segmented nature of our social system and the rapid pace of social and political mobilization that is currently under way. The segmentation of the social system contributes to the "balkanization" of party organizations.37 Simultaneously, in context of rapid social and political mobilization, the national and state-level political decision-makers become more dependent upon local political elites.38

A final consideration of the significant role played by local party organizational activists is that their involvement in party-building is directly related to the process of political development, which involves the institutionalization of politics through viable political organizations.39 To quote Lucian Pye, "... political

36. See Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, p. 91.
development is related to an increased ability to organize associations of people and to manage complex structures. By their involvement in party-building, the organizational activists of the urban and rural units of our political parties play a significant part in the creation and development of viable political organizations through which the institutionalization of the democratic process of politics becomes possible.

The present study, I must hasten to add, is not designed to examine the impact of the Baroda units of the Congress, Praja Socialist and Swatantra parties upon the process of political development. Our objective, as already explained above, is limited to exploring certain behavioural dimensions, rather than the functional consequences, of these party units. Our line of reasoning is that the party can render its functions for the larger political system only if it can get performed for itself certain essential tasks by its activists. That is why the forms and determinants of people's participation in political party organizations need to be studied.

Review of Previous Studies

Despite their theoretical significance, the local activists of Indian political parties have not received

sufficient research attention at the hands of political scientists. In contrast, their counterparts in some foreign countries have been much researched upon. The works of Eldersveld and Barnes, which have helped shape the over-all design of the present investigation, have already been referred to at some length in a previous section of this chapter. I shall also be referring to some more of their substantive findings which compare or contrast with those reported in the subsequent chapters.

Another "foreign" study which has addressed itself directly to the problem of intra-party democracy is Renate Mayntz's participant observation study of leadership selection in a district unit of a German political party. Mayntz found that there operated some factors which facilitated internal democracy and some other factors which restrained it. Some of the democratizing factors were: 1) absence of over bureaucratinization; 2) lack of any leadership monopoly over the communication media; and 3) the non-attractiveness of party offices on account of which their incumbents were not particularly motivated to hold on to them at all costs. Some of the anti-democratic factors observed by Mayntz were: 1) a certain amount of insulation of the higher office-holders from the rank and file; and 2) a lack of "institutionalized participation by lower levels in matters of policy-formation."

42. ibid., p. 188.
The literature on the forms and determinants of people's participation in political party organizations in some foreign countries, notably in the U.S.A. and U.K., is indeed very extensive. The political recruitment, social characteristics, extra-party associational involvement, political ideas and activities of party activists in Britain have been studied, among others, by Rose, Berry, Donnison and Plowman, and Abrams and Little. Similar studies of local party activists in the U.S.A. have been reported, among others, by Crotty, Harned, Hirschfield et al., Rossi and Cutright, Marvick and Nixon, Bowman and Boynton, and Conway and Feigert. A comparative study of the political socialization of local party activists in selected locales of the U.S.A. and Canada have been reported by Kornberg and Smith. Norman N. Miller has researched upon the forms and determinants of people's participation in selected rural units of a political party in Tanzania.

Turning to the Indian scene, we are startled by the extreme paucity of studies of people's participation in

43. and 44. See the entries against these names in the Bibliography below.
45. Allan Kornberg and Joel Smith, "The Development of a Party Identification in a Political Elite" (Mimeographed paper obtained from the authors, c/o Duke University.)
political party organizations. There has also been lacking a sufficient amount of research output on the behavioural nature of the urban and rural units of our political parties. In 1968, in a searching review of the then existing works of note on Indian political behaviour, a scholar had to observe sadly: "The study of Indian political behaviour has hardly yet begun and the need for a large amount of field work in this area is pressing."47 In the very recent past there have appeared a few good studies of Indian political parties. These and some earlier studies of note which pertain to the present inquiry are reviewed below.

The present review will be restricted to studies which deal either with local party units or with party activists and to studies which are concerned with the organizational and personnel properties of the three parties, whose local activists are studied here. I shall first review the works on the Congress party.

Paul R. Brass, Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh48 is a study of the effectiveness of the Congress party in organizing popular support and maintaining internal unity in five selected locales, viz. the city of Kanpur and the districts of Gonda,

Aligarh, Deoria and Meerut. The study is based on data gathered through interviews with 250 political leaders and on information from newspapers, and bibliographical and documentary sources.

Money, government patronage and, above all, adaptation to the dominant castes have been identified as the major sources of Congress power. But such "adaptation" has resulted in a serious organizational problem for the party. "Organizationally," writes the author, "the Congress is a collection of local, district, and state factions forming alliances and developing hostilities in a constant struggle for positions of power and status in Congress-controlled institutions of state and local government." (p. 232.)

Riven by factional conflicts, the party has been experiencing greater difficulties in maintaining internal unity than in winning electoral support. In fact, the party's electoral defeats in the five locales studied were found to have been caused more by factional conflicts than by any other factor.

Some of the contributory factors of factionalism were:
1) the absence of any serious threat from the opposition parties; 2) the presence, within the Congress, of an ideological consensus; and 3) the absence of authoritative leadership. The persistence of factions has been shown to be dependent upon the ability of faction leaders to distribute material benefits to their followers. Thus, in
his case studies, Brass identified the following bases of faction-building: 1) the private economic resources of the faction leaders; 2) the leaders' control over institutions of local self-government and co-operation; and 3) access to state government patronage. "A faction in Uttar Pradesh," writes Brass, "is an organization based upon the ties between a leader and his followers, an economic patron and his dependents, a lawyer and his clients." (p. 236.)

Irrespective of what the basis for faction-building was, the primary organizing principle of factions in all the five "cases" was found to be the same, viz. personal enmity between or among faction leaders, all of whom were rivals for power and prestige. Factions were not the mere political equivalents of the ideological, economic or communal/caste divisions in the society. Factions were found to cut across these divisions and groupings.

This non-ideological, non-economic and non-communal character of factions was found to be related to the nature of the party's leadership in each of the five locales studied. Everywhere, the party's leadership came from the dominant castes and from the economically dominant groups. And it is within this elite group that factional conflicts took place. Factional leaders, in other words, did not belong to or represent rival socio-economic or ideological groupings; they were rivals only
in their claim for power and prestige. To quote Brass:

The major divisions in the population of the city, which find expression in social and economic conflicts, simply do not exist at the leadership level of the Kanpur Congress. Few Congress leaders belong to or represent the discontented groups in the city. Factional conflicts in the Kanpur Congress take place within an elite group and largely reflect issues of status among members of the elite rather than the broader social and economic issues which divide majority and minority communities or elite and mass in Kanpur. (p. 184)

What is easily the most significant contribution to the study of Indian local party units is Myron Weiner's Party-Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress. This is an empirical exploration of the success factors of the Congress party. It analyses how the party has been successful in recruiting cadres, resolving internal conflicts and winning elections. Weiner argues that the best way of examining how these tasks are carried out by the party is through an analysis of its functioning at the local level. Weiner's underlying assumption accords so closely with that of the present study that it merits quoting in detail:

To understand how the party copes with its environment, one must see how the party functions at the local level. The capacity of the state and national party units to work rests ultimately on the performance of the constituent units which actually recruit members and deal with the public in their day-to-day activities. If the local units are unable to raise money, recruit cadres, win electoral support, and, at a minimal level, resolve internal disputes, it

hardly seems likely that the state and national organizations can function. In a fundamental sense, therefore, party building involves the creation and successful performance of the party at the constituency level. (p. 9.)

Using a clinical rather than statistical approach, Weiner examined the working of the Congress party units in the cities of Calcutta and Maduri, and in the districts of Kaira, Belgaum and Guntur. In this brief review I can not do full justice either to the wealth of data or to the theoretical insights contained in the book, I will only refer to some of the major findings of the study.

Weiner found that the success of the Congress party was due to the adaptation and aggregation tasks performed by its activists. "All my hypotheses," writes Weiner, "are related to a single theme: that Congress party leaders, in order to succeed politically, are concerned, first and foremost, with doing whatever is necessary to adapt the party to its environment ... Congress is primarily concerned with recruiting members and winning support. It does not mobilize; it aggregates. It does not seek to innovate; it seeks to adapt." (pp.14-15.)

Congress leaders, Weiner found, were engaged in the performance of "expediting, arbitrational, and constructive work roles." In the performance of party organizational tasks (v.g. recruiting members and resolving internal
disputes), these leaders were assisted by the party's resourceful system of incentives, which included "a modernist ideology, conviviality, opportunities for improving one's social status, material rewards, and the satisfaction of being of service." (p. 475.)

Weiner's book also contains some very useful tabular information about the age, caste and occupation of the active members of the Congress party in Kaira and Belgaum. These specific findings shall be referred to in chapter III below.

The local Congress units studied by Weiner did not conform to the oligarchic model. Rival social groups and competitive local elites were so successful in "gaining a share of power within the local Congress party" that internal conflicts and factionalism were never found to be absent. Weiner points out that these internal conflicts have not succeeded in destroying the party because there have been "legitimized and institutionalized roles and procedures for the handling of conflict." (p. 479.) Conflict resolution has been carried out, not through any oligarchic domination or control, but through processes of aggregation and adaptation.

Stanley A. Kochanek's *The Congress Party of India: The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy* is a very competent

and useful analysis of the post-independence developments in the Congress party. Part I of the book offers a detailed analysis of the party-government relationships at the national level as typified in the relationship between the Congress president and the prime minister. The composition and decision-making processes of the Congress Working Committee are analysed in Part II. Part III, portions of which are directly relevant to the present inquiry, deals with the nature of the party's active membership and leadership. On the basis of party records and with the aid of party officials, Kochanek was able to gather information about the occupation, age and caste of 1341 active members of the Congress from the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal. Some of his specific findings relating to these variables will be cited in chapter III below. At this point I will restrict myself to quoting his conclusions, which accord so closely with the theoretical theme of the present research.

Comparing the social composition of the active membership base of the Congress with that of the higher strata of the party's leadership, Kochanek writes:

As one passes from a study of the active membership which composes the mass base of the Congress to a survey of the various levels of the party elite in the organizational and parliamentary wings, it becomes evident not only that the decision-makers do
not reflect a cross-section of society but also that they do not even reflect a cross section of the party base itself." (p. 357.)

Kochanek's analysis revealed that the higher strata of party leadership tended to be drawn disproportionately from the "top of the social pyramid." This did not mean that the party's leadership was oligarchic. To the contrary, the author attests to the "democratic functioning of the party in itself." (p. xx.) This is so, he points out, because there has been a good deal of factionalism, a "considerable circulation of elites" (p. 400.) and a "marked process of decentralization from which has emerged a system of interdependence between centre and state, and between state and district, Congress party units." (p. xx.)

Ramashray Roy, in an article, entitled "Factionalism and Stratarchy: The Experience of the Congress Party," has analysed the patterns of power distribution between the party's top command and its local units in the context of selecting candidates for the 1962 Indian general elections. Roy found that if a local unit is "controlled by either a single, cohesive group or by a dominant group with ineffectual opposition, it will gain in power and autonomy at the expense

of the top command. The top command, however, tended to have the upper hand over those local units in which two factions, "poised against each other," failed to evolve, by themselves, any modus operandi. The top command, it was also shown, tended to gain control over those local situations where "a minority group in power faces a large opposition." Roy concluded:

Empirical analyses of party life and organization undoubtedly disclose tendencies toward each of these polar concepts (i.e. democracy and oligarchy), and in democratic parties the devolution (i.e. democratic) tendency is much more marked ... Our data show that the nature of factional competition is a crucial variable in determining the extent of influence and power that the top command exerts on lower echelons.

Our concern, so far, has been with the studies of the Congress party. Let us now turn to a review of the studies dealing with the other two parties, viz. the PSP and the Swatantra party.

An early major study of opposition parties in India is Myron Weiner's Party Politics in India: The Development of a Multi-Party System. It is a "historical-institutional" analysis of the role of party leaders and party militants in the splits and mergers that have characterized the growth of such opposition parties as the P.S.P., the Marxist left parties, the Jan Sangh and other Hindu Communal parties. At the time of Weiner's study, the opposition

52. Ibid., p. 908. Emphasis in Original.
parties were not primarily concerned with capturing political power. This anti-power posture, combined with a "consensus on the basic party thesis," appeared to hinder not only coalition formation between opposition parties but also toleration of internal opposition within each of the opposition parties. The leftist parties, in particular, had rigid rules of discipline and were, by and large, "one-faction parties with a single leader."

Angela S. Burger's *Opposition in a Dominant Party System* is a study of the processes and problems related to the generation and maintenance of electoral support by three opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh. The parties studied are the Jan Sangh, the P.S.P. (the Praja Socialist Party) and the S.S.P. (Samyukta Socialist Party). A part of the book is devoted to an analysis of the social backgrounds and political career patterns of the elected MLA's of these three parties in the 1962 general elections. The rest of the study is devoted to the elaboration and testing of a number of working hypotheses related to the mobilization of electoral support by the opposition parties. The party-electorate relationships, which the hypotheses seek to explain, are investigated through six constituency studies. One of these hypotheses which was confirmed in the study, reads as follows: "On the constituency level, 54. Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1969."
the stronger the tensions between the leaders of a victorious opposition party and those of the dominant party, the less able the opposition party leaders to obtain benefits for their supporters." (p.277.) The explanation for this hypothesis was that the ability of the victorious opposition candidates to perform any "expediter role" for their electoral supporters required the action or the acquiescence of "political bodies likely to be controlled by the dominant party or of administrative officials ultimately responsible to the dominant party." (pp.15-16.)

Regarding the organizational life of opposition parties, the author attests to their "decentralization." At the state-level, the dominant party controls the governmental apparatus and occupies a majority of the legislative offices. This provides the state-level leaders of the dominant party with "some leverage" both against the national organization and against the local units. The opposition parties, in contrast, do not have such a "focal point" at the state level. In their case the linkage between local units and state-level organizations is based mainly on personal loyalties and ideological considerations. In their case, again, the state-level leaders have no patronage or material benefits to offer to the local units. Such a situation leads to a great amount of "downward deference" within the party hierarchy.
The only major study of the Swatantra party is Howard L. Erdman's *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*, which analyses the generative forces, emergence and growth of the party. As an organization, the party is characterized as an "holding company" for diverse interests, or as "little more than an umbrella under which a number of disparate elements have taken refuge." (p. 162). Erdman distinguishes the following categories of "partners" in the "Swatantra Coalition": 1) existing parties and caste groups which merged with the Swatantra; 2) aristocrats; 3) non-aristocratic "old warriors" from the Congress; 4) non-aristocratic non-Congress "old warriors"; and 5) former administrators. This heterogeneous partnership is more or less paralleled by an heterogeneous elite structure, which although being predominantly Hindu, upper caste and generally conservative has within it some non-Hindu and lower caste elements also.

Organizationally, therefore, the party is an "enigma."

The author comments:

Swatantra, at least for the moment, has a weak bureaucratic structure within which its notables function, and there is, not surprisingly, little identification with the party as such. This is particularly important because of Swatantra's dependence on aristocrats, because many of the latter retain the old "style" and inject "feudal" values

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into the party, i.e. they tend to resist the regularization of party control, either from above or from below, and they still cherish territorial control on the basis of highly personalized loyalties. (pp.161-162.)

The weakness of the party's bureaucratic structure, referred to above, hinders the emergence of organizational oligarchy, while at the same time, the persistence of "highly personalized loyalties" of the "old style" is a factor indicative of the existence of what Duverger called "personalized oligarchy." 56

A general observation pertinent to all the studies reviewed above is that none of them was designed either to explore systematically the social backgrounds, political career patterns, political perspectives and task performance of local party activists or to analyse the nature and degree of relationships among these variables. Unaided by systematically obtained empirical data on these variables and their interrelationships, our knowledge of the determinants and sub-processes of people's participation in political party organizations and our understanding of the behavioural nature of the local units of our political parties would remain fragmentary and superficial. Hence the present exploration, whose specific objectives as spelt out in a foregoing section of this chapter, pertain to the twin themes of party participation and party organization.

56. See Maurice Duverger, Political Parties, p.154.
Another striking thing about the existing literature, reviewed above, is that none of them offers a systematic, quantitative and comparative analysis of the activists of more than one party in any one particular local setting. A previous study, which, like the present one, offers a quantitative and comparative analysis of the local activists of more than one party in one urban locale in India, is V.M. Sirsikar's "A Study of Political Workers in Poona." This "pilot study" of 135 "active workers" of the Congress, the P.S.P., the C.P.I. and the Jan Sangh in Poona City provides very useful insights into the social backgrounds, recruitment factors, party loyalties, decisional participation, task performance, etc. of the local party workers. The present study, which, in a way, is a continuation of the line of inquiry followed by Sirsikar, explores such additional variables as the motivational and ideological determinants of party participation and party affiliation. The present study is also distinctive in its theoretical focus on certain determinants and sub-processes of party participation and on certain organizational properties of political parties.