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Caste Mobility in Urban Welfare Politics: A Theoretical Appraisal of Political Socialization beyond Traditional Caste Alignments in Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines caste mobility in urban welfare politics in Uttar Pradesh through a theoretical appraisal of political socialization beyond traditional caste alignments. Caste has historically played a central role in shaping political identities, electoral preferences, and political mobilization in Uttar Pradesh. However, rapid urbanization, educational expansion, occupational diversification, migration, and changing socio-economic conditions have created new contexts in which caste identities interact with class, occupation, welfare access, and urban citizenship. The paper employs a theoretical framework combining Pitirim A. Sorokin's (1959) Social Mobility Theory and Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba's (1963) Political Socialization Theory. Sorokin's framework helps explain how changes in social and economic position can transform the significance of inherited caste identities, while Political Socialization Theory explains how political attitudes and orientations develop through social experiences and interactions with political institutions. The paper argues that urban welfare programmes and state citizen interactions can become important mechanisms of political socialization by shaping perceptions of government performance, political participation, and political preferences. It further contends that welfare-oriented politics does not necessarily replace caste politics but may reshape and intersect with caste identities through emerging class, occupational, educational, and urban experiences. The study contributes to understanding changing political alignments and the evolving relationship between caste mobility, welfare politics, and political socialization in contemporary Uttar Pradesh.

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INTRODUCTION

Caste has remained a significant organizing principle of political life in Uttar Pradesh, but the relationship between caste identity and political behaviour has increasingly been influenced by urbanization, socio-economic mobility, welfare access, and changing forms of political socialization. The traditional tendency in caste politics was to focus on stable community identification, caste based mobilization and electoral deals. As the urbanization of space has evolved, however, the social landscape has changed and education, occupation, migration, income, housing, and access to public services have started to overlap with caste. The emergence of lower-caste political assertion has been viewed as an important change in North Indian politics by Jaffrelot (2003), and the shifts in group organization and political competition show how this process of political mobilization can take place. The shift is crucial in Uttar Pradesh where the population is huge and the urban centers are growing. The government of India's Census 2011 shows that cities and towns have become a major arena of political and socio-economic engagement, comprising 22.27% of the population of Uttar Pradesh (Government of India, 2011). In the cities, like Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Meerut, and Ghaziabad, people of different castes, occupations, education and economic statuses converge. Caste identities can, thus, coexist with new modes of social mobility and political identification in the context of urbanization (Patel, 2022). Welfare politics contributes an additional crucial aspect of this process. India's housing and urban development initiatives have increased interactions between citizens, urban local bodies and the state through programmes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Urban (PMAY-U) that were launched in 2015 (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2015). Urban programmes are also undertaken by the Uttar Pradesh Government, including urban governance, infrastructure, urban development, sanitation, and housing (Government of Uttar Pradesh, 2026). These welfare arrangements can shape citizens' perceptions of the state and performances of political parties beyond their caste inheritance (Mishra & Attri, 2020; Deshpande et al., 2019). The paper, in the light of this background, theoretically explores the issue of caste mobility in urban welfare politics, and questions the role urban welfare experiences, socio-economic mobility and urban citizenship play in the political socialization of post-caste society. Pai (2022) also notes a shift from the older social-justice to newer social-aspirations, social-development, and social-welfare oriented approaches to politics in Uttar Pradesh by the lower castes. The paper thus aims at linking up the concepts of caste mobility, urbanization, welfare politics and political socialization in a theoretical framework in order to facilitate the understanding of shifting political alignments in the contemporary Uttar Pradesh.

Problem Statement

The traditional understanding of politics in Uttar Pradesh has largely emphasized caste as a stable basis of political identity, electoral mobilization, and party alignment; however, rapid urbanization, socio-economic mobility, educational expansion, occupational diversification, migration, class differentiation, and growing interaction with welfare and urban institutions are creating new conditions for political behaviour. Urban areas like Lucknow, Kanpur, Noida, Ghaziabad, Varanasi, Agra and Meerut expose people to different caste groups and expose traditional caste networks to a lesser degree of exclusive influence, but also lead to the formation of new caste structures and political bargaining. Access to welfare services, houses, sanitation, jobs, infrastructure, and public services are other links between citizens and the state that can shape their political attitudes, participation, and assessment of political parties. The issue, thus, is not whether caste has vanished from the urban political arena, but

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whether caste identities and political allegiances are being reshaped by mobility and the shifting nature of urban life. The current accounts of these new intersections between caste, welfare, class, occupation, migration, education and urban citizenship might not be able to capture the emphasis on fixed caste blocks. The study, therefore, aims at addressing the issue of understanding how these processes are driving the political socialization process and are helping to create fluid, negotiated and possibly welfare and aspiration-based political alliances that go beyond the traditional politics of caste in UP.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are to examine how caste mobility in urban Uttar Pradesh transforms traditional caste identities and political alignments; to analyse how urban welfare politics shapes political socialization, political participation, and political preferences among different caste groups; and to assess how education, occupation, class, migration, and urban citizenship contribute to emerging political alignments beyond traditional caste-based politics in Uttar Pradesh.

Methodology

This study adopts an interpretive research approach using qualitative document analysis (QDA) to critically examine caste mobility, urban welfare politics, and changing political alignments in Uttar Pradesh. It theoretically analyses how urbanization, socio-economic mobility, education, occupation, class, migration, welfare experiences, and urban citizenship influence political socialization beyond traditional caste alignments. Approximately 50 documents published between 2000 and 2025 are purposively selected from the Census of India, Government of Uttar Pradesh, NITI Aayog, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Election Commission of India, National Sample Survey Office, relevant government reports, policy documents, electoral statistics, urban development reports, and peer-reviewed literature accessed through Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria comprise official reports, census and electoral data, policy documents, and scholarly studies relevant to caste mobility, urbanization, welfare politics, political socialization, migration, and urban citizenship, while newspapers, blogs, opinion articles, duplicates, and irrelevant sources are excluded. The documents are analysed through repeated reading, open coding, categorization, thematic development, and theoretical interpretation. Major themes include caste mobility, welfare politics, political participation, socio-economic mobility, education, occupation, class, migration, urban citizenship, and electoral alignments. Analysis is guided by Sorokin's Social Mobility Theory (1959) and Almond and Verba's Political Socialization Theory (1963). Triangulation across government data, policy documents, electoral records, and academic literature strengthens analytical reliability and theoretical validity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Caste Mobility and Transformation of Traditional Caste Identities and Political Alignments in Urban Uttar Pradesh

Caste mobility in urban UP makes caste a more flexible social and political identity which is not primarily hereditary or village-based. Vaid, 2018, identifies education, Government Job, Industry jobs, small business, migration and professional jobs as opportunities created by cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Meerut, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Noida and Ghaziabad. The state government's Uttar Pradesh in Figures 2022 using Census 2011 data projected 44,495,063 urban residents (or 22.27% of the population) in Uttar Pradesh.

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Some traditional controls, such as reliance on powerful landlords and caste-based livelihoods, are weaker in urban areas, but urbanization does not eradicate caste – caste networks in housing, marriage, employment and neighbourhood associations persist (Vaid & Heath, 2010). In this way, mobility often alters an individual's socio-economic status and public identity, but does not fully eradicate caste identity. This means occupational mobility without complete social equality. A member of a Yadav, Kurmi, Maurya, Nishad, Jatav or Pasi caste can transition from agriculture-based work or traditional work to transport, construction, retailing, and education, public sector, and wages-based service. (Jeffrey et al., 2004). Urban caste associations, student associations and welfare networks aid migrants in getting shelter, employment, credit, and political connections. The study of Rayeen community of Uttar Pradesh reveals the use of a traditional profession of a community of vegetable vendors, the chaudhari, caste associations, and the Rayeen Foundation to attain upward status and electoral representation in the 2023 year (Deshpande, 2024). These groups transform caste into a tool for collective bargaining (Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2006). However, the situation of urban poverty and discrimination remains unchanged: NITI Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023 showed that India's urbanization rate improved its opportunities, but not equitably, as the rate of multidimensional poverty in urban areas remained at 5.27 per cent, while in rural areas it was at 19.28 per cent in 2019-21.

Political coalitions are therefore more fractured and more open to negotiation. Previously, Samajwadi Party was linked with Yadav Muslim mobilization and Bahujan Samaj Party was an umbrella of Dalit-Bahujan project, especially in terms of political assertion of Jatavs (Duncan, 1999). Urban mobility has facilitated the push for smaller castes for separate recognition, tickets, reservations and influence. There has been a transition from big bloc politics to bargaining between sub-castes as seen in different political parties like Apna Dal (Kurmi), Suheldev Bharati Samaj Party (Rajbhar), NISHAD Party (Nishad, Mallah and Kevat communities) and Mahan Dal (Maurya, Shakya and Kushwaha groups). BJP has linked with Hindutva and welfare politics, reaching out to the non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits and attempting to bring in the caste groups into the broader Hindu political fold (Gautam, 2023). The lessons of the Lok Sabha election of 2024 are apparent. The Election Commission had 37 seats won by the SP, 33 by the BJP, six by the Congress, two by the Rashtriya Lok Dal, one by Apna Dal (Soneylal) and one by the Aazad Samaj Party in the 80 constituencies of Uttar Pradesh. The finding suggests that caste mobility does not make the voters "post-caste" rather it helps them to change their allegiance based on the urban issues, welfare provision, representation, religious identity and experienced exclusion (Singh & Trivedi, 2025). In Ayodhya, the SP candidate Awadhesh Prasad secured 48.59% of the total votes compared to 43.81% for the BJP candidate Lallu Singh while in Ghosi, Rajeev Rai, the SP candidate, beat Arvind Rajbhar of the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party with 44.96% votes to 43.14%. From these outcomes, it is clear that urbanization of caste identities is at once aspirational, strategic and competitive.

Urban Welfare Politics, Political Socialization, Participation, and Political Preferences among Caste Groups

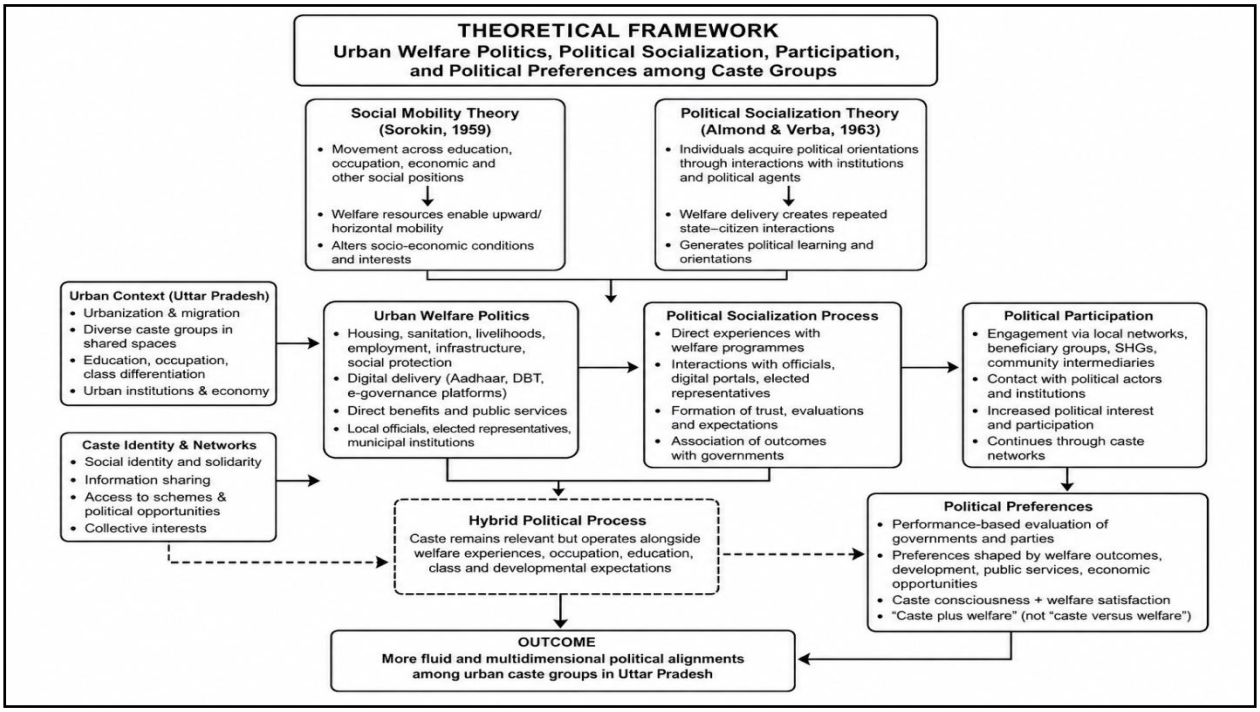
Welfare politics can have an impact on political socialization as welfare programmes involve frequent encounters between citizen and state (Elliott, 2011). This is especially relevant in the state of Uttar Pradesh which has seen urbanization increase the number of social arenas in which caste identities play a role alongside education, occupation, migration and access to public services. According to the Census of India 2011, approximately 22.3% (44.5 million) of

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the population of Uttar Pradesh was residing in urban areas (Government of India, 2011). Lucknow, Kanpur, Ghaziabad, Agra, Varanasi and Meerut are major urban centres that engage different caste groups in common institutional and economic settings. In the framework of Social Mobility Theory, Sorokin (1959) claims that occupational, economic, educational, and other mobility can be factors in moving one move from one social position to another. In urban UP, this mobility may diminish the singular political significance of caste heritage and people may acquire new occupational and class interests. So, in certain ways, access to welfare could be one of the many issues that would lead citizens to rethink the political parties and the state.

The Social Mobility Theory of Sorokin (1959) is useful in understanding welfare benefits and how they interact with the changing of the caste positions. Welfare programmes in urban areas may offer provision that affects access to housing, sanitation, livelihoods and basic services, including the potential for upward or horizontal mobility. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Urban (PMAY-U), initiated in 2015, aimed to resolve the housing problems of the eligible urban households, and the Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U), which was launched in 2014, addressed the sanitation issues and eradicated open defecation in urban areas (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2015; Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2014). These interventions are especially important for economically disadvantaged and historically marginalized caste groups. For instance, households' socio-economic situation can change due to access to housing, sanitation, formal employment opportunities, or urban infrastructure, setting new expectations about government services and performance (Chhotray et al. 2020). This framework, then, is conceptually useful for understanding welfare as more than just redistribution but a possible means of social mobility that can alter the socio-economic bases of political identity.

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework of Urban Welfare Politics and Caste-Based Political Behaviour



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The theoretical framework for the relationship between urban welfare politics, caste identity, social mobility, political socialization, participation and political preference in Uttar Pradesh is presented in Figure 1. It combines the theories of Social Mobility Theory (by Sorokin) and Political Socialization Theory (by Almond and Verba) to describe the relationship between political orientations and welfare access, urban experience, education, occupation, and socio-economic mobility. The framework renders the dynamics of caste networks and their influence on political communication and collective interests visible, and suggests that continuous interaction between the state and the citizens contributes to political learning and participation. These processes create a hybrid "caste plus welfare" political process which leads to more fluid and multidimensional political alignments in the cities. Second major theory is Political Socialization Theory developed by Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba (1963). Political socialization is the process by which an individual develops political orientations, values, attitudes and patterns of participation. In urban welfare politics, citizens know about the government institution directly through the experiences of dealing with the community welfare applications, community welfare organizations, elected representatives, local officials, and the government's digital portals. The shift of welfare delivery to the digital environment has further reinforced this interaction. Administrative institutions have become a significant part of citizens' daily political lives thanks to the introduction of the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system and digital public-service platforms like Aadhaar. The tremendous amount of direct financial interaction between the government and people is reflected in the cumulative amount of money transferred by DBT, which amounted to more than ₹44 lakh crore as of March 2024, reported by the Government of India (2024). Such interactions can create political learning; beneficiaries can make welfare comparisons with specific governments, assess government performance in administration of welfare programmes and form preferences about continuity, availability and effectiveness of government welfare programmes (Goyal & Kumar, 2022).

This can also have an impact on the political participation of various castes. Welfare beneficiaries can be more politically active via local networks, welfare associations, neighbourhood groups, self-help groups, community intermediaries and political contacts with elected representatives. Welfare politics, however, does not mean the end of caste-based political activities. Instead, caste can supply social networks that carry information about schemes, which's eligible and what their paperwork needs to consist of, and the availability of political opportunities. Jaffrelot (2003) work shows the historical significance of political mobilization of the lower castes in the North and Chandra (2004) documents the power of ethnic and caste-based political organizations in mobilizing voters through groups based strategies. Thus, urban welfare politics might generate a new hybrid political process where caste salience is found alongside welfare satisfaction, developmental aspirations, occupation, education, and class. An OBC or Dalit citizen from an urban area, therefore, might consider political parties based on their caste representation and his or her personal experiences of housing, sanitation, job openings, infrastructure, or social protection. Thus, the welfare politics in the cities can influence the political preferences without leaving behind the caste politics completely and moving to non-caste politics (Kailash, 2024). Sorokin's (1959) Social Mobility Theory and Almond and Verba's (1963) Political Socialization Theory indicate that an alteration in socio-economic roles coupled with regular interaction between the state and the citizen could result in a change in the understanding of political choices among caste groups. This is important for Uttar Pradesh, where urbanization has resulted in more diverse political settings. Welfare programs can produce performance-based assessments of the government,

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and caste networks can have an impact on political communication and collective interests. At the political level then, the resulting political behaviour can be interpreted as 'caste plus welfare' and not merely 'caste against welfare'. In cities, voters can have a sense of 'caste consciousnesses alongside growing preferences for welfare provision, development, public services, economic opportunity and government responsiveness. This theoretical approach is helpful to understand the urban political alignments in Uttar Pradesh in the present times, which may not be as casted as the traditional electoral alignments (Bardhan et al., 2024).

Education, Occupation, Class, Migration, and Urban Citizenship in Emerging Political Alignments beyond Traditional Caste Politics in Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh, education has emerged as an important vehicle to transcend caste identities. The growing number of school students, young people and professionals in school and university systems has led to younger generations being situated in such institutions where interactions with caste intersect with common educational and occupational experiences (Syal, 2012). According to Census of India 2011, overall literacy rate in Uttar Pradesh was 67.68, male literacy rate was 79.24 while female literacy rate was 59.26 (Government of India, 2011). Students from different caste and regional backgrounds can meet each other at universities or higher-education centres like the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and the University of Lucknow. Education thus can raise such political issues as jobs, merit, reservations, gender equality, examination opportunities, and access to the public sector. But education is not a panacea to replace caste. Instead, it gives individuals other political labels by which caste interests are to be understood and other political notions of professional development and social mobility (Ciotti, 2009).

The occupation also helps to create a variety of political interests. With the shift from agriculture and hereditary occupations to paid work, manufacturing, construction, transport, retail and information technology and professional services, there are interests that do not always find expression in traditional caste organizations. This can be seen in the National Capital Region districts of Gautam Buddh Nagar, Ghaziabad, Lucknow, and Kanpur where job diversification in industrial and services sectors has increased the diversity in occupation of the people (Chandrasekhar & Mitra, 2019). As per PLFS 2023–24, self-employment was also a significant part of India's work force, and regular wage and salaried work a significant proportion of the urban work force (Government of India, 2024). Occupational diversification can therefore help to foster political demands for wages, employment security, entrepreneurship, transport, housing, taxation, infrastructure, and social protection. A young entrepreneur, a private sector worker, a government employee or an informal worker might have a caste identity as well as look at political parties based on other economic and occupational factors. A young entrepreneur, a private sector worker, a government employee or informal worker could have a caste identity and at the same time examine political parties through economic and occupational factors.

Another way in which political polarization is expressed is via Class. There is significant diversity even among people of the same caste as a result of urbanization: people of one caste can include government officials, professionals, businessmen, informal workers, and students, women in domestic service and youth who are jobless. This could mean there are significant differences between their material interests and their political priorities (Vaid, 2023). In the context of the state's development trends, the Economic Survey of Uttar Pradesh 2024 highlights the role of services, industry, and urban economic activity getting a more

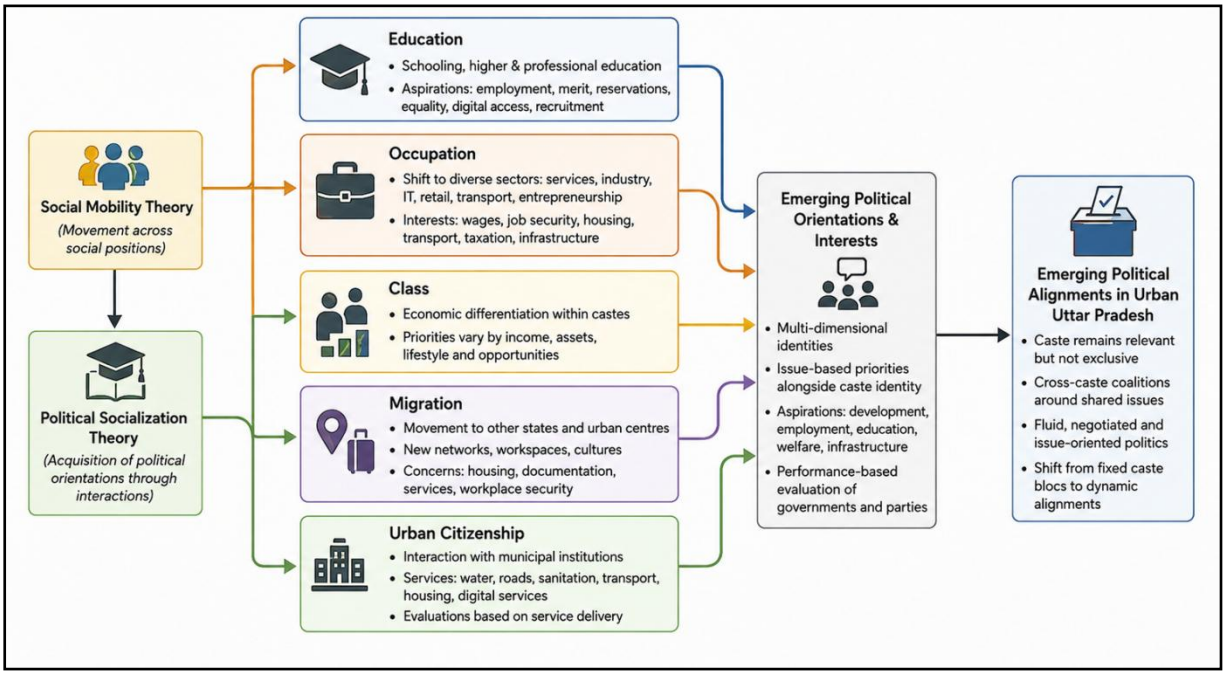
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significant role in the state's pattern of development (Government of Uttar Pradesh, 2024). This class divide can undermine the notion of a caste as a monolithic political unit. While for the middle class, infrastructure, education, taxation, employment and administrative efficiency may take precedence, low-income populations may be more concerned with food security, housing, sanitation, and health services and livelihood support. Political parties then have an increasing motivation to build alliances based on common economic bases of the population and not just on the basis of caste arithmetic.

Migration exacerbates the conventional caste-based political identification. Historically Uttar Pradesh has been a major state in the migration streams of Indians with significant movement to economically dynamic states such as Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, etc. Migration means being exposed to new labour markets, languages, social groups, institutions and political cultures. Millions of persons shifted their residence within the country in the Census 2011 and the major reasons were employment, marriage and education (Government of India, 2011). Migration from smaller towns and villages to Lucknow, Noida, Ghaziabad, Kanpur etc. also affects the political networks within Uttar Pradesh. Migrants can have both social and political issues – as they build social support networks through caste association and also have other urban concerns that are political, such as issues of rental housing, transport, employment documentation and urban services and security (Chandrasekhar & Mitra, 2019). So, migration is not always accompanied by the disappearance of caste; instead, different social linkages are established during migration which contributes to the construction of political preferences.

Figure 2: Theoretical Framework of Emerging Political Alignments in Urban Uttar Pradesh



Source: *Author*

The theoretical relationship between social mobility and political socialization and between education and occupation, class, migration and urban citizenship is represented in figure 2. These variables influence the emerging political orientations, issue based priorities

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and performance based assessments that leads to more flexible, negotiated, and cross-caste political formations in urban Uttar Pradesh. The most robust institutional feature of these new alignments is urban citizenship. Urban citizenship differs from the village politics in that it requires "ongoing engagement" with municipal institutions on issues of water supply, roads, sanitation, waste disposal, public transport, housing, property registration and access to electricity, as well as digital public services (Auerbach & Kruks-Wisner, 2020). The 74th Constitutional Amendment has led to urban local self-governance through the creation of municipalities and Nagar Panchayats, thus giving a constitutional form to citizens' engagement in urban governance (Government of India, 1992). Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has then launched initiatives like Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT and DAY-NULM that focus on urban infrastructure, basic services and livelihoods (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2015). These institutions and programmes are able to promote citizens' assessment of the political actors based on performance and service delivery (Kumar, 2022). This new political coming together in urban Uttar Pradesh can, therefore, be explained as a multidimensional phenomenon, where caste is significant as a social identity, education is significant as a source of aspirations, occupation as an economic as well as a source of interests, class as a source of interests, migration an important source of social networks, and urban citizenship as a direct link with institutions of governance. This does not lead to the elimination of caste politics, but rather is accompanied by more fluid political identities, where caste plays alongside education, occupation, class, mobility, welfare expectations and urban citizenship. This is a movement from caste-based attitudes towards negotiated and issue-based political engagement, especially among the younger, better-educated, mobile, and economically more varied urban populations (Datta, 2018).

Sorokin's Social Mobility Theory (1959) and Almond and Verba's Political Socialization Theory (1963) can be used to explain the relationship between education, occupation, class, migration and urban citizenship and emerging political alignments in Uttar Pradesh. Sorokin's model is able to account for the impact of mobility between education, occupation and economic activities on social position and the development of political interests that could go beyond inherited caste identity. As people participate in education, work outside of their village, and encounter class divisions, they may be exposed to new institutions, jobs, and social networks, which can lead to aspirations for work, infrastructure, school, housing, and economic opportunity in urban UP. The work of Almond and Verba (1963) on the Political Socialization Theory also supports this view by elucidating the impact of these experiences on political orientations as they relate to school, workplace, political organizations, municipal institutions and the state. The importance of urban citizenship is emphasized because face-to-face contact with local governments and social service providers may be a way to influence citizens to assess services and administrative performance of their governments. In neither theory is it assumed that the caste system will simply vanish away. Instead, Sorokin is able to help explain the shift in social status of people, and Almond and Verba, the shift in their political attitudes and behaviors. Caste–mobility, class–occupational interests and migration–citizenship experiences are increasingly influencing emerging political alliances in the state of Uttar Pradesh, as suggested by the theories together.

Limitations of the Study

This study has certain methodological limitations arising from its reliance on qualitative document analysis. Although documentary evidence provides valuable insights into caste mobility, urban welfare politics, political socialization, and changing political alignments in

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Uttar Pradesh, it cannot directly establish actual changes in individual political attitudes, voting behaviour, caste consciousness, welfare dependence, or political participation, which require surveys, interviews, field studies, or longitudinal evidence. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as direct evidence of voter behaviour or electoral causation but as a theoretical appraisal based on available documentary and secondary evidence. The study may also face limitations arising from variations in data availability, differences in urban contexts, regional inequalities, and the diverse socio-economic experiences of caste groups across Uttar Pradesh.

Directions for Future Research

Future research should move beyond documentary and theoretical analysis towards mixed-methods research combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Surveys and interviews with urban voters from different caste groups could examine how education, occupation, class, migration, welfare access, and urban citizenship influence political attitudes and preferences. District-level case studies of Lucknow, Kanpur, Ghaziabad, Noida, Varanasi, Agra, and Meerut could identify variations in caste mobility and welfare-based political socialization. Future studies should also examine the experiences of migrants, youth, women, informal workers, middle-class households, and welfare beneficiaries to understand emerging political identities. Comparative and longitudinal research could further assess whether welfare experiences and socio-economic mobility produce durable changes in caste-based political alignments or merely modify existing caste loyalties. Such empirical research would strengthen the theoretical understanding of caste mobility, political socialization, and emerging forms of urban political participation in Uttar Pradesh.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that caste mobility in urban Uttar Pradesh is not leading to the disappearance of caste but to its transformation from a relatively fixed, hereditary and locality-based identity into a more flexible, negotiated and politically strategic form. The new social environments brought about by urbanization, education, occupational diversification, and migration have reconfigured the relationship between caste and aspirations, economic interests and citizenship experiences. Sorokin's Social Mobility Theory (1959) is an important explanation for such a transformation, as it shows how changing social, occupational and economic positions can affect the social positions and interests of groups and individuals. In urban Uttar Pradesh these mobilities can not only reduce some of the traditional caste dependencies, but also fuel the reconfiguration of caste groups based on new expectations of representation, welfare, employment, education and social mobility. The study also finds that urban welfare politics has come to play a significant role in political socialization. Direct experiences of the state through welfare programmes and interactions with government institutions shape perceptions of government performance, political participation and political preferences. These experiences can be understood as political socialization through the work of Almond and Verba (1963) which views the process as political socialization in relation to the political orientations of individuals, which can be understood through the interactions with public institutions, political representatives, welfare agencies, workplaces and larger urban social networks. Therefore, it is important to analyze political preference of the various castes in terms of more than just traditional castes. Political assessment increasingly includes access to welfare, welfare services, housing, sanitation, employment and perceptions of administrative responsiveness. This process is reinforced by education and occupation, class, and migration and urban citizenship, which generate multiple and overlapping political identities. But the

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argument that urbanization leads to a 'whole new politics' after caste is not supported by evidence. Instead, caste remains a determinant of social networks, political organization and collective bargaining and is now increasingly entangled in class concerns, expectations of welfare, occupational goals and urban citizenship. Thus, the Social Mobility Theory of Sorokin (1959) and Political Socialization Theory of Almond and Verba (1963) suggests that the current political landscape of Uttar Pradesh is primarily defined as negotiated political alignment where caste is still playing a key role, but also alongside new socio-economic and institutional experiences. The new political system is thus not a displacement of caste-based politics, but a reshaping of it via mobility, welfare, citizenship and new political socialization.

Ethical Consideration

The study is based entirely on secondary data obtained from publicly available government reports, census records, electoral data, policy documents, and academic literature; therefore, no human participants were involved and formal ethical approval was not required. All sources have been appropriately acknowledged through academic citation, and the analysis and interpretation presented in the study are the responsibility of the author. ChatGPT was used only for language refinement and grammatical correction; intellectual ownership, theoretical interpretation, analytical responsibility, and academic integrity remain solely with the author.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

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