

Voting as a Family? Investigating Agency and Vote Choice in India

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Abstract

How much agency do they hold over their vote choice? Research shows that in many developing countries, individuals are socially and economically dependent on the household; accordingly, household members coordinate on a host of behaviors, including political participation. Where intra-household bargaining power is gendered, women in particular might therefore not exercise full agency over their vote. But how do we measure agency over vote choice? In many developing countries, policy preferences do not link neatly parties or candidates. Furthermore, in clientelist settings, any kinds of political preferences might be best served by the patron party. Consequently, it can be rational for all family members to vote for the same party, even if they differ starkly on policy priorities. Voting for the same party as other household members, therefore, is not proof of a lack of women's agency. We overcome this problem by using a novel measure of *preference-consistent voting* that checks whether women's vote is internally consistent, i.e., whether women voted in line with their own stated policy preferences, or instead subordinate their own preferences to other household members' priorities. Contrary to expectations based on the literature, we find that women no less likely than men to vote in accordance with their stated preferences; that women are no more likely than men to falsify their own preferences and vote according to other household members' preferences; and that household disagreement on policy priorities does not predict women's preference-consistent voting.

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1 Introduction

How do women vote, and how much agency do they hold over their vote choice? A vast literature on policy preferences and vote choice, often based on the US case, suggests that these decisions are taken at the individual level and affected by a number of personal factors, such as income, education, political knowledge or gender (Schlozman et al., 1994; Brady et al., 1995; Carpin and Keeter, 1996; Burns et al., 2001). However, according to this strand of research, despite voting being an individual act families might still exhibit agreement in voting behavior because of selection effects among spouses (Iyengar et al., 2018) or socialization effects on children (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Johnston et al., 2005); or because all household members share the same characteristics, such as their social class or ethnic identity, that are highly predictive of political behavior (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2000; Adida et al., 2016). At the same time, a growing body of research, focused primarily on developing countries, shows that one person's political behavior is often affected by other members of the household (Chhibber, 2002; Gottlieb, 2016; Khan, 2021; Cheema et al., 2022; Prillaman, 2023; Roscher, 2023). While agreement in vote choice might still be an expression of shared preferences and/or identities within the same family, or of strategic voting in the face of clientelism (Chandra, 2004; Corstange, 2016), it could also be the result of one-sided coercion of family members with less bargaining power (Gottlieb, 2016; Prillaman, 2023).

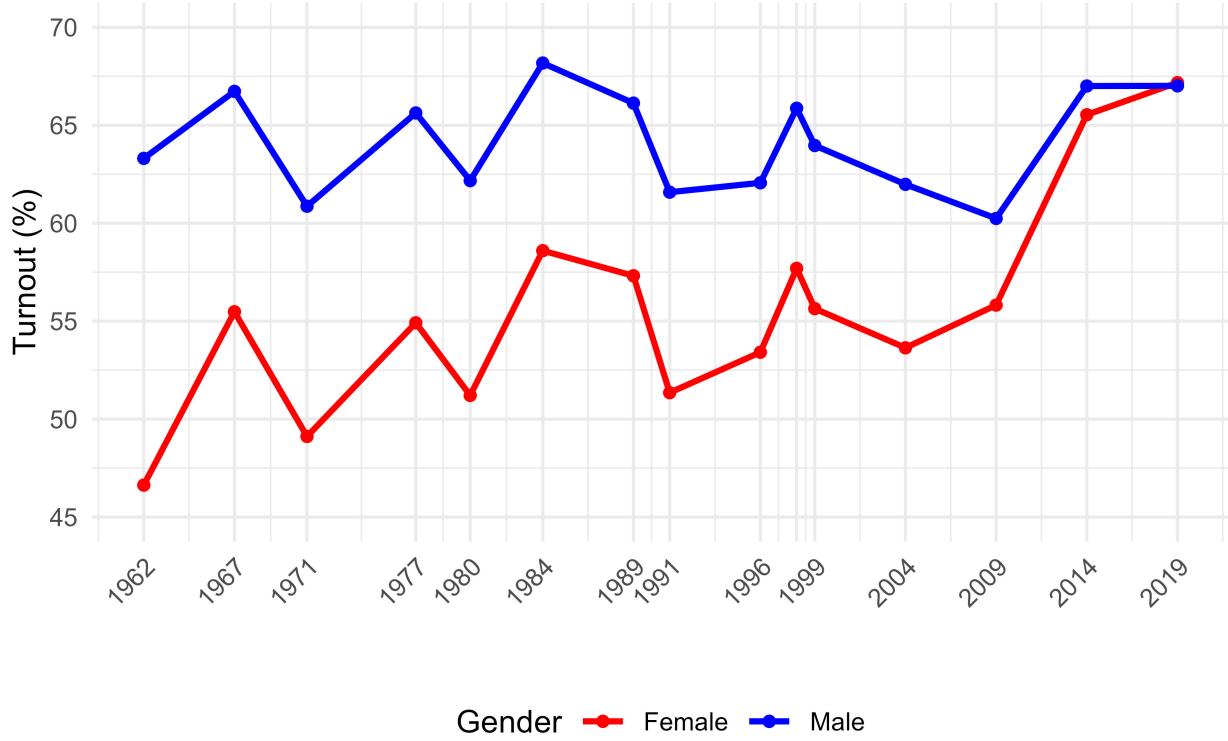
In contexts where voting decisions are influenced by other family members, women in particular might not exercise full agency over their vote choice. Research shows that empirically, bargaining power within households is often gendered, with women having less intra-household agency than men. Accordingly, many important decisions affecting women's lives, from reproductive and health decisions to choices regarding education and marriage, might be taken by older male relatives instead of by women themselves (Agarwal, 1997; Farré, 2013; Jayachandran, 2015). This pattern of household control can extend to political behaviors as well, including whether or not women run for office, attend public meetings, turn out to vote, or express their own preferences as opposed to their husband's (or other

male relative's) preferences (Chhibber, 2002; Gottlieb, 2016; Khan, 2021; Cheema et al., 2022; Prillaman, 2023). Yet vote choice might be different than other, publicly observable political behaviors, particularly when the ballot is secret and trust in elections is high, providing women who otherwise have low intra-household bargaining power with an opportunity to assert agency without public sanctioning (Roscher, 2023).

We investigate the extent of women's agency in vote choice in the context of India. Female turnout in India has been rising dramatically over the past 20 years in both state and national elections (Figure 1). Yet research has raised questions about the meaning of these increases in women's voting against the backdrop of patriarchal norms and individual dependence on the household (Prillaman, 2023). The prevalence of clientelism in India means households have incentives to coordinate on vote choice in order to bargain for maximum benefits with the state (Chandra, 2004, 2009), potentially leading to families trying to control women's vote (Prillaman, 2023). Yet all family members voting for the same party is not proof of a lack of women's agency: under ethnic clientelism, it is rational for all members of the same ethnic group to vote for the co-ethnic party. Even where party programs, not (only) clientelism, matter for voters' choices, men and women within the same household voting for the same party is only a sign of a lack of female agency if there is a clearly superior choice for women that they are forgoing in order to vote with the family. However, previous studies usually just *assume* that differing preferences over public goods between men and women should always lead to diverging vote choice between the genders. And yet, the same party might be the rational choice for women as well as men within a family, even if it is for different reasons.

We overcome this problem by using a novel measure of *preference-consistent voting* that checks whether women voted in line with their own stated policy preferences, or instead subordinate their own preferences to other household members' priorities. By situating our study in Delhi, a more urban, better developed setting, we ensure that ethnic clientelism is not the only driving principle in vote choice (Wilkinson, 2007; Auerbach and Thachil,

Figure 1: Turnout by Gender in National Elections in India



2018). Contrary to expectations based on the literature, we find that women no less likely than men to vote in accordance with their stated preferences; that women are no more likely than men to falsify their own preferences and vote according to other household members' preferences; and that household disagreement on policy priorities does not predict women's preference-consistent voting.

This article makes several important contributions to the literature. First, we contribute to the literature on women's political participation by developing the concept of preference-consistent voting to measure women's agency in vote choice. Unlike previous studies that assume that different policy preferences must lead to different vote choices, we acknowledge that policy platforms are less informative in the Indian context; and stress that women still exercised choice if their vote is internally consistent. Second, we contribute to a burgeoning literature that acknowledges the importance of the household – and of intra-household differences in bargaining power – for women's political participation, using a dataset that

interviewed multiple respondents per household to not just investigate women’s agency, but benchmark it against men’s. Finally, by situating our study in urban Delhi, we add to our understanding of the political geography of India, and potentially important differences between rural and urban polities for women’s political participation.

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. The next section develops the theory and spells out the hypotheses to be tested. Section 3 describes the data and measurements used, while section 4 provides results of our empirical investigation. The paper ends with a discussion and conclusion.

2 Argument & Hypotheses

How much agency do women in India exercise over their vote choice? That is, to what extent are they able vote in line with their own policy priorities, effectively translating their preferences into action? Traditional models have conceived of political behavior, including vote choice, as individual decisions, taken by an actor based on their personal cost-benefit analysis. A disjuncture between preferences and the actual vote, therefore, is not an issue. However, a large – and growing – literature has drawn attention to the role that the household plays in an individual’s political behavior. Where households are sites of bargaining and family members’ preferences differ, those with higher bargaining power might use it to force their own preferences on other family members, potentially distorting the relationship between an individual’s preferences and the way she votes.

Seminal models of the rational voter propose that a person’s political activity is based on their *individual* cost-benefit calculus: an individual will turn out if the benefits of casting a ballot outweigh the costs; and she will vote for the party that promises to deliver the greatest benefits to her (see, for example, Riker and Ordeshook, 1968; Kramer, 1983; Aldrich, 1993; Lau et al., 1997; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007; Cox, 2010). Any gender differences in political behavior, then, are driven by gendered differences in resource endowments (Verba

et al., 1978; Schlozman et al., 1994; Brady et al., 1995; Burns et al., 2001) or gendered effects of institutions, including electoral institutions (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer, 2012), the labor market (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006, 2010), or social norms (Inglehart and Norris, 2000, 2003).

Yet economists (and sociologists and anthropologists) have long drawn attention to the fact that individuals do not exist in a vacuum; instead, the smallest social unit is usually the family, not the individual. Members of the same household unit usually pool resources and responsibilities, and then share the resulting gains. If family members coordinate on a range of choices and activities, from having and raising offspring to divvying up housework to maximizing household income, they might reasonably affect each other's political behavior as well (Becker, 1981; Manser and Brown, 1980; Edlund and Pande, 2002; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006, 2010).

Becker's seminal work modeled the household as a unitary actor that reaps efficiency gains from a gendered division of labor, where women engage in childbearing and child rearing (driven by small biological advantages in birth and early childcare) while men focus on paid market activity. Because all family members have identical preferences and share all resources, everyone is better off by specializing in their respective tasks, thus maximizing overall household utility (Becker, 1981). By contrast, today's bargaining models assume that individuals forming a household may have differing preferences and bargain over the allocation of time, the distribution of household resources, and other choices. An individual's bargaining power within the household is determined by her outside options: the more credibly she can threaten to leave the household, the more say she will have in the allocation of resources and the distribution of gains (Manser and Brown, 1980; Agarwal, 1997; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006). Accordingly, market wages (or independent wealth) and remarriage chances are important determinants of bargaining power within a family. Empirically, the sexual division of labor, in which women have traditionally taken on the bulk of the care work and men the lion's share of income generation, disadvantages women by diminishing

their bargaining power within the household (Agarwal, 1997). By contrast, increased ease of obtaining a one-sided divorce (as well as falling marriage rates) and the socialization of care work improve women's bargaining power (Edlund and Pande, 2002; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006, 2010).

In a bargaining model of the household, gendered differences in political behavior, including vote choice, only manifest if and when women have enough bargaining power to act independently of the household. By contrast, where women have low bargaining power, their choices will be affected by other family members, likely making gender differences in vote choice less pronounced. Taken to the extreme, the household member with the most bargaining power can unilaterally dictate a woman's vote choice through coercion, effectively precluding her from exercising free choice - what Prillaman (2023) terms the "patriarchal political order" (p. 9) (see also Manser and Brown, 1980).

Indeed, a large literature has shown that households coordinate on political behavior, with family members affecting participation rates and choices of women in particular. As Duverger (1955) stated in one of the earliest investigations of women's voting behavior, "it is the husband and not the wife who decides which way the couple will vote" (p. 49); "any differences between the votes of the sexes therefore depend entirely on those of unmarried men and women" (p. 45-46).¹. While later studies noted moderate gender differences in vote choice, with women tending to vote somewhat more conservatively than men, the main determinants of voting behavior were supposed to be class, region, or religion, and therefore to differentiate households from each other, but not divide members of the same family unit (Inglehart and Norris, 2003).

Gendered differences in voting became more pronounced in Europe and North America, however, as these regions underwent important structural changes: with the decline in marriage rates and rise in divorce rates, as well as the growth of public service provisions that

¹ In fact, the extent to which politicians perceived women to be sharing their husbands' preferences, and therefore to vote along with them, played a role in the very decision to extend the franchise to women in the first place (Teele, 2018)

socialize some of the care work that women had traditionally been tasked with, such as child care or elder care, the household became a less permanent institution, while women's exit options became more viable (Edlund and Pande, 2002; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006). As a result, women in many of these places began acting more independently in their political lives, and to vote very differently from men. Women increasingly voted for parties left of center, while men's voting behavior changed little; this shift in female voting behavior created what is considered the "modern gender gap in voting" (Inglehart and Norris, 2000, 2003).²

However, most developing countries have not seen similar large-scale structural changes. Where the state only provides limited public goods, individuals largely depend on families for welfare improvement, risk mitigation, and social status (Cox and Fafchamps, 2007; Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2007). Accordingly, marriage rates remain high and divorce rates low in many developing countries, compared to most post-industrial countries. Appendix Figure A.1 visualizes the share of women aged 30 to 34 who are married (panel a) or divorced (panel b) across major world regions.³ The plot shows that marriage rates have, on average, fallen more steeply in Europe and North America than they have in Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia. According to the latest available numbers, 48 percent of females between 30 and 34 were married in North America, while 46 percent were in Western Europe and 44 percent in Northern Europe. By contrast, close to 69 percent of women in that age bracket were married in Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 77 percent were in North Africa in almost 90 percent were in South Asia. At the same time, households were, on average, larger in size in developing countries (see Appendix Figure A.2; Kramer (2020)).

Dependence on the collective combined with limited exit options means that the household will be a site of bargaining in many developing countries; and that bargaining power will

² Though recent research highlights that the influence of the family on the individual political behavior of men and women these regions may have waned, but not vanished (see, for example, Abrams et al., 2011; Iyengar et al., 2018).

³ Data comes from the UN World Marriage Report 2019, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.

likely vary considerably by gender and, to a lesser extent, age (Agarwal, 1997). Accordingly, recent research has shown that households affect a range of political behaviors for women in developing countries, from turning out to vote (Cheema et al., 2022; Prillaman, 2023; Roscher, 2023) to attending public meetings (Gottlieb, 2016; Prillaman, 2023) to running for elected office (Chhibber, 2002).

Vote choice, too, is likely to be a matter of coordination within the household, where those with less bargaining power might defer to those with more bargaining power when it comes to deciding on a candidate or party – or, conversely, those with the most bargaining power coerce those with the least bargaining power into falling in line (Giné and Mansuri, 2018; Khan, 2021; Prillaman, 2023). Accordingly, women might not get to take the ultimate decision of whom to vote for in an election.

However, if families share political preferences – for example, based on shared socio-economic status or shared ethnicity – as assumed in traditional models of the household as a unitary actor (Becker, 1981), it might not matter *who* within the family takes the voting decision: if everyone wants the same things, everyone should rationally want to vote for the same party anyways. In fact, one person “specializing” in political activities and representing the household’s shared preferences will be efficient in this scenario (Prillaman, 2023).

But a burgeoning literature shows that women’s policy preferences differ from men’s. In industrialized democracies, women tend to favor higher government spending, more redistribution, and the provision subsidized child care much more than men. This tendency toward traditionally left-leaning parties and policies is largely driven by women’s gendered life realities: having to provide the bulk of the care work and housework in the face of marriage becoming less permanent, and a future in which they would have to fend for themselves becoming more likely, led women to have very different preferences than men (Lott and Kenny, 1999; Edlund and Pande, 2002; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006, 2010).

In developing countries, too, it is women’s gendered life realities that lead them to have distinct policy preferences. Because household formation is much more permanent, and

public welfare provision minimal, women's preferences are often driven not by a desire to improve their outside options, but by the demands of the intra-household division of labor. For example, research has consistently found that women prioritize drinking water supply over roads (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Olken, 2010; Khan, 2017; Gottlieb et al., 2018). Where women are responsible for raising the children and taking care of the household, they are often in charge of fetching water, and more affected by contaminated water. Accordingly, they tend to care more about the provision of clean, safe water on their premises than men do. By contrast, where men are the main breadwinners, they will be most affected by the quality of infrastructure such as roads and bridges when traveling to work, while women are far less likely to use those. Consequently, women tend to care much less about infrastructure provisions than men do. Where women participate more equally in the work force, meaning they have bargaining power within the household because of their strong exit options, these differences in policy preferences attenuate (Gottlieb et al., 2018).

It is when women's distinct preferences are drowned out by household members with more bargaining power and differing preferences that women do not only have no agency over their vote choice, but actually might be made to vote *against their own preferences* (Khan, 2021; Prillaman, 2023). In her pathbreaking work, Khan (2021) showed that women in Pakistan prefer to communicate their husband's preferences, even in the face of financial incentives to communicate their own. The author surveyed married men and women about their policy preferences and offered to anonymously communicate either the respondent's own preferences or the spouse's preferences to a local representative. Women, on average, expressed distinctly different policy preferences from men, prioritizing health care and drinking water over roads and transportation. But only 25 percent of women compared with nearly 90 percent of men chose to have their own preferences relayed to the representative (p. 28). This gap grew with the perceived difference in spousal policy preferences (p. 33) and closed with women's intra-household agency (p. 37-38).

In India, too, evidence suggests that women have distinct policy preferences from men,

yet households often coordinate on vote choice, either through voluntary cooperation or coercion. In rural Madhya Pradesh, Prillaman (2023) found that husbands and wives differed significantly in their rank ordering of ten local government responsibilities.⁴ Women were much more likely than men to name drinking water provision and the construction of toilets as the most important issues, while men were significantly more likely to prioritize the construction of schools and health centers (p. 105-107).

Despite these stark differences in stated preferences, female and male respondents reported remarkably similar voting patterns in the most recent state elections, with comparable shares of both men and women voting for the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) and *Indian National Congress* (INC), the two main parties in Madhya Pradesh. However, women were significantly more likely to say they did not know whom they voted for. The author interprets this as “an important indicator of women’s more limited vote agency” (p. 103). Among married couples where both spouses disclosed their vote choice, 63 percent said they had voted for the same party, despite the lack of spousal agreement on local government responsibilities. Overall, this suggests a high degree of intra-household coordination on vote choice. What is more, women were much less likely than men to report that they had the most say over their own vote choice, at least among respondents aged 40 years or older. The study asked respondents to list all household members involved in deciding whom they vote for, and then indicate who has the most say over their vote choice. Less than 40 percent of women under 40, and around 45 percent of men in the same age bracket, reported they themselves had the most say over their own vote choice. Among respondents older than 40, more than 80 percent of men but only around 55 percent of women said they had the most say in their own vote choice (Prillaman, 2023, p. 99-100). The author assumed “that individuals who do not report that they have the most say over their own vote do not have

⁴ The ten local government responsibilities were road construction and maintenance, water provision, schools and education, health and health centers, toilet construction, housing construction, the provision of ration cards (BPL cards), reducing alcoholism, fighting violence against women, and providing Anganwadi (nutritional and educational services to young children) and ASHA (prenatal) services. Respondents were asked to rank all ten options from most important to least important, using picture cards representing each of the issues (Prillaman, 2023, p. 105).

complete agency in their vote choice” (p. 100). Women’s agency in vote choice, measured this way, did not increase with their political interest, their intra-household bargaining power, or closer preference alignment with their spouses (p. 111-113).

High household coordination in the face of gendered policy preferences has been shown in rural Uttar Pradesh as well. A study conducted in 2022 by one of the authors found that women cared substantially, and statistically significantly, more than men about employment: when asked an open ended question about which issues respondents thought was most important for their family right now, 54 percent of women but only 35 percent of male heads of households named employment and job opportunities. In only 255 out of nearly 700 households (37 percent) did both respondents agree on their highest priority; married couples were no more likely to agree than other types of respondents (36 percent agreement).

And yet, like in Madhya Pradesh, there is strong evidence that households in Uttar Pradesh coordinate on their vote choice. Of those respondents that disclosed their vote choice in the recently concluded state elections,⁵ almost 77 percent reported voting the same party. Among married couples, 75 percent indicated they had cast their votes for the same party. The survey also asked respondents outright about household coordination on vote choice.⁶ Less than 42 percent of women, but almost 63 percent of male heads of household said they decide by themselves whom to vote for. Conversely, almost 58 percent of women reported that their families decided whom everyone should vote for, while only 38 percent of heads of household said they deferred to the family. This suggests that women exercise less control over their own vote than heads of household.

Evidence from these two studies, then, suggests that women in rural Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, respectively, may not always exercise full agency over their vote choice.

⁵ Most of the survey was conducted before the 2022 Uttar Pradesh state elections. A follow-up after the election collected information on turnout and vote choice. Among the households with successful follow-up, both respondents disclosed their vote choice in only 63 percent of cases. Importantly, men and women were interviewed separately, and asked to indicate their vote choice by privately tapping a button on a touch screen.

⁶ The exact question wording was: “Do you decide on your own who to vote for, or does your family decide whom everyone in the house should vote for?”

At the very least, members of the same household seem to coordinate on their vote choice; in the worst-case scenario, women are outright coerced into voting for one party over another.⁷ If women participate without agency, that is without “the ability to make choices” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 436), they are, effectively, politically disempowered (Prillaman, 2023). This is not just normatively objectionable – as free and equal participation is a key pillar of democracy – but also raises important questions about the representation of women’s interests in politics in India. If women are made to vote for parties that are unlikely to care about female policy priorities, they effectively vote not just not in line with their own preferences; but *against* their own preferences, by increasing the vote share of parties that deal with male preferences over female preferences.

And yet, existing evidence does not allow us to evaluate whether women vote against their own preferences. Household coordination tells us about *how* women arrive at their vote choice; it does not, however, allow us to evaluate whether women actually made a suboptimal choice. Just because women coordinated with other members on whom to vote for does not mean that women necessarily voted against their own preferences: Voting for the same party despite diverging policy priorities can still be rational in the context of clientelism, as is the case in India.

India has been described as a patronage democracy “in which the state monopolizes access to jobs and services, and in which elected officials have discretion in the implementation of laws allocating the jobs and services at the disposal of the state” (Chandra, 2004, p. 6). Elected officials in India regularly use their discretion over the allocation of state resource for political gain, targeting benefits to supporters and withholding (or withdrawing) them from those that support the opposition (Chandra, 2004; Wilkinson, 2007). Accordingly, people support the parties and leaders they expect to be most likely to give them access to valuable state resources.

The exchange of votes for access to state resources often works along ethnic lines, where

⁷ Coercion is not the only way to coordinate, though. Coordination can also take the form of voluntary cooperation, deliberations, and/or internal democracy.

politicians target co-ethnics with clientelist benefits, and voters support co-ethnic leaders in expectation of rewards (Chandra, 2004). In fact, a number of Indian parties have historically been strongly associated with one (or few) ethnic group over others, because their leadership is largely drawn from that group and, in turn, they mostly target voters from that group. Examples include the *Bahujan Samaj Party* (BSP) as the foremost *Dalit* party – or, perhaps more accurately, the foremost Jatav party – in India (Chandra, 2004; Ahuja, 2019); the *Samajwadi Party* (SP) in Uttar Pradesh and the *Rashtriya Janata Dal* (RJD) in Bihar as prominent Yadav parties (Michelutti, 2004; Witsoe, 2009, 2011); or the *Nationalist Congress Party* (NCP) in Maharashtra, which is dominated by Marathas (Palshikar, 1994; Dahiwale, 1995). Indeed, research has shown that Dalits, and particularly Jatavs, benefited when the BSP was in power in Uttar Pradesh (Chandra, 2004; Pai, 2004); Yadavs have benefited in unprecedented ways from the rule of the SP in Uttar Pradesh and the RJD in Bihar (Michelutti and Heath, 2013; Witsoe, 2016); and Marathas enjoyed state patronage under NCP rule (Palshikar and Deshpande, 2020).

Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh both have a long history of ethnic clientelism, although there is important variation in the timing and the number of ethnic groups that were politically incorporated into clientelist parties (see, for example, Pai and Singh, 1997; Craig, 2002; Jaffrelot, 2003; Chandra, 2004; Krishna, 2007; Jaffrelot, 2009; Michelutti and Heath, 2013). This tradition of ethnic clientelism has consequences for our evaluation of household coordination on vote choice. Even if men and women prefer different goods and services to be provided by the government, it might still be rational for them to vote for the same party as long as there is only *one* party that can credibly commit to providing them with *any* benefits after an election. Disentangling whether a woman's vote choice accurately reflects her best shot at having her policy preferences realized, or instead represents a falsification of her own preferences, is therefore not straightforward in this context.

We overcome this problem by using a novel measure of *preference-consistent voting*. Instead of checking whether individuals with differing policy priorities voted for different

parties, we directly examine whether women vote for the party *they think is best at dealing with the issues they care about*. This allows us to examine whether women vote in line with their own preferences; or whether they might subordinate their own preferences to other household members’.

Our study was conducted in Delhi around the 2020 *Legislative Assembly* elections.⁸ Locating our examination of women’s preference-consistent voting in Delhi has several advantages, most notably the fact that ethnic clientelism is less likely to dominate voting behavior. This, in turn, allows for intra-household variation in the evaluation of parties’ competencies. Where ethnic clientelism is dominant, all co-ethnics of a party will assume that their co-ethnic party is best at dealing with *any* policy priorities they have. This means that there will be no intra-household variation in how family members think about different parties, since households usually share all ethnic identities (Chandra, 2004, 2012). By contrast, where clientelism is not based on ethnicity, but on class or space, for example, clientelist competition might mean that household members have actual choices between different brokers and, therefore, between different parties (Auerbach, 2016). Where clientelism is less prevalent overall, and politics is more programmatic, evaluations of parties’ competencies should vary even more.

Delhi is the national capital and India’s largest urban agglomeration. In 2018, the UN estimated that about 29 million people live in Delhi; the city was projected to overtake Tokyo as the world’s largest by 2028.⁹ Delhi is also one of the strongest regional economies in India, contributing nearly 4 percent of India’s GDP.¹⁰ In general, scholars of clientelism predict that with increased economic development and urbanization, clientelism will decline (Kitschelt, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012; Stokes et al., 2014). Research on India in particular has found that while clientelism is still prevalent in cities, it might operate in different ways

⁸ Legislative Assemblies in India are state legislatures. Even though Delhi is a Union Territory and not a full state – similar to Washington, D.C. in the US context – it still has its own state legislature. Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are directly elected through a first-past-the-post system every five years.

⁹ See [2018 update to the World Urbanization Report](#).

¹⁰ See [The Hindu](#), March 1, 2024, “[Delhi Govt presents Economic Survey](#)”.

than in rural settings. For one, urban clientelism is less defined by co-ethnicity and more by space and/or class than it is in rural India (Thachil, 2014, 2017; Auerbach and Thachil, 2018, 2020). Second, Delhi is home to one of the more programmatic parties in India, namely the *Aam Aadmi Party* (AAP), which grew out of the anti-corruption movement of the 2010s (Vaishnav and Swanson, 2015). We therefore expect ethnicity to be less determinant of vote choice among voters in Delhi state elections than it might be in more rural settings. This, in turn, means we can examine individuals' evaluation of party competencies; and, consequently, whether individuals voted in line with their own preferences.

Based on the literature described above, we expect that women, on average, will exhibit lower levels of preference-consistent voting than men. Women have been found to be more likely to falsify their preferences in favor of men's (Khan, 2021); and to be more likely to be outright coerced by other household members into voting along with them Prillaman (2023). Where household members have distinct (as opposed to shared) policy preferences, and vote choice is not entirely dictated by considerations of ethnic clientelism, then, we should expect that women's vote choice is less likely to be in line with their stated policy preferences than men's.

*Hypothesis 1: Women will be **less likely** to vote in line with their own policy preferences than men.*

Conversely, women should be more likely to falsify their preferences to vote in line with the household's preferences. When women do not vote in line with their own preferences, it is usually not because they randomly vote inconsistently, but because they instead defer to the male's preferences (Khan, 2021; Prillaman, 2023). This amplifies men's policy priorities and drowns out women's (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004). By contrast, men, at least older men, should be less likely to falsify their own preferences to vote along with someone else's priorities (Prillaman, 2023).

*Hypothesis 2: Women will be **more likely** to vote in line with other household member's*

preferences than men.

We further expect that levels of preference-consistent voting should be lowest for women in households that disagree on policy preferences. Where households share policy preferences, they are likely to want to vote for the same party anyways. By contrast, it is precisely when policy preferences diverge, and when different parties are associated with these different policy priorities, that individuals with higher bargaining power within the family have the most incentives to want to coordinate with other household members (Prillaman, 2023). We should therefore expect that women who disagree with male family members and/or more senior family members to be least likely to vote in line with their own stated preferences.

*Hypothesis 3: Women in households that disagree on policy preferences will be **less likely** to vote in line with their own policy preferences than women in households that agree on policy preferences.*

3 Data & Measurement

3.1 Survey Data

Studying the extent of intra-household agreement or disagreement on political preferences and behaviors empirically runs into important data limitations. By design, most election surveys sample only one respondent per household, which means that intra-household analysis is not possible. This is true for panel studies as well as large voter surveys such as the American ANES or the British BES. In the Indian case, too, the National Election Studies (NES) conducted by Lokniti-CSDS only interview one respondent per household. By contrast, panel studies that enumerate several – or even all – members of the household, such as the India Human Development Survey (IHDS), do not collect data on political attitudes and behaviors. To overcome this limitation, we designed a survey that aimed to interview three individuals within the same household, including at least one woman, making it possible to

evaluate political preferences and behaviors, including vote choice, within the household.¹¹

Our survey was conducted in Delhi between February 9 and February 11, 2020, the days immediately following the February 8, 2020 *Legislative Assembly* elections until just around the time that election results were officially announced.¹² Households were selected for interviews based on a stratified random sampling procedure. First, in each of Delhi's 7 *Parliamentary Constituencies* (PCs), 2 *Assembly Constituencies*¹³ (ACs) were randomly selected (for a total of 14 ACs) (see Figure 2). After checking the sampled ACs for representativeness in terms of demographics (i.e., share of Muslims and other minorities that often live segregated and therefore concentrated in only a few parts of the city), 4 polling stations were randomly selected in each AC (for a total of 56 polling stations). For each polling station, 10 registered voters were picked at random from the electoral roll, irrespective of gender. These randomly sampled voters constitute the "Main Respondents" in our survey: They were chosen to be interviewed at random; and by extension, their households were randomly chosen to be included in the survey.

However, other household members interviewed constitute a convenience sample of sorts: additional respondents within each household were surveyed non-randomly. Enumerators tried to interview at least two other people of voting age who were home at the time of the interview and willing to answer questions. This non-randomized element in the sampling procedure is due to feasibility constraints: Household sizes in Delhi are, on average, smaller than in more rural parts of India, making the universe of household members to sample from smaller for each household; people in Delhi are also more likely to work outside (and sometimes far away from) their home than in other parts of the country; and with Delhi

¹¹ See Prillaman (2023) and Roscher (2023) for other studies that survey multiple respondents within the same household in the Indian context.

¹² The survey was conducted by Cicero Associates, New Delhi, under the supervision of Dhananjai Joshi. The study protocol was approved by the NYU Abu Dhabi IRB (IRB #: HRPP-2020-25).

¹³ In India, an *Assembly Constituency* is the electoral constituency from which a state legislator (*Member of Legislative Assembly*, MLA) is elected. ACs are nested into *Parliamentary Constituencies* (PCs), which are the electoral constituencies from which a national legislator (*Member of Parliament*, MP) is elected to the lower house of the Indian parliament, the *Lok Sabha*. Delhi, for example, consists of 7 PCs and 70 ACs; each PC contains 10 ACs.

Figure 2: Assembly Constituencies Included in the Survey



being the capital, many people have been surveyed for opinion polls in the past, leading to survey fatigue. All of these factors make random sampling within households harder and increase the chance of non-response, and given the time constraints¹⁴ we opted for a convenience sample over a fully randomized sample instead.

A total of 560 households were randomly selected through this procedure, with a response rate of just under 88 percent (492 out of 560 households). Within each household, we had aimed for 3 interviews; on average, we completed 2.7 interviews, for a response rate of more than 90 percent within households (1342 out of 1476 interviews). Because we are only interested in family units, we excluded all individuals from our survey whose relationship to the Main Respondent was “not related” (N=47) or “other” (N=76).¹⁵ As we are looking

¹⁴ The survey was concluded before the announcement of official election results might distort self-reported vote choice answers.

¹⁵ That means we kept all those respondents who indicated being a spouse, child, parent, sibling, aunt or uncle to the Main Respondent.

at voting behavior, we excluded all respondents who reported not having voted in the Delhi state elections ($N=171$). Because we are interested in intra-household dynamics, we also had to exclude all households with only one respondent (after dropping non-related and non-voting respondents).

This leaves us with a final sample of 920 individuals across 355 households. Table 1 provides summary statistics at the household level for this sample. On average, households scored a 4.5 on a 6-point scale of household assets, making the sample quite middle-class.¹⁶ Three-quarters of households owned the house they lived in. Around 86 percent of our sample are Hindu, while just under 6 percent are Muslim; the rest are Sikh (6 percent) or Jain (1.7 percent). About 47 percent of our sample self-identified as belonging to the forward castes, approximately 34 as belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) and 20 percent self-identified as Dalit. Importantly, all households reported being ethnically homogeneous, allowing us to hold ethnic identity constant at the household level and instead looking at factors that vary between respondents within the same family when investigating voting behavior and preferences.

Table 1: Summary Statistics for Households

N Households	355
Share Hindu	0.8648
Share Muslim	0.0592
Share Upper Caste	0.4676
Share OBC	0.3380
Share Dalit	0.1859
Mean N Assets (of 6)	4.47
Share Owning House	0.7534
Avg No Respondents/HH	2.59
Avg No Female Respondents/HH	1.25

¹⁶ We asked respondents whether the household owned any of the following items: a fridge, a television, a washing machine, a computer or laptop, an air conditioner, and access to the internet. We coded each asset as 1 if someone in the family said the asset was available to the household; and as 0 otherwise. We then summed all six indicators into a single asset index that ranges from 0 to 6. Households were most likely to own a TV and least likely to own an air conditioner.

Of the 920 individuals in our sample, 478 are men and 442 women. At the individual level, men and women differ on certain dimensions, but not on others, as Table 2 shows. Female and male respondents are similar in age: the average age for female respondents was 42 years, while that for male respondents was 41.3 years; the difference is not statistically significant. Men in our sample were 4 percentage points more likely to have received formal schooling, for a total of 93 percent of male respondents having gone to school at all, compared to a little over 89 percent of female respondents. The difference is statistically significant ($p=.099$). Moving beyond an indicator for having received any schooling, men reported having gone to school longer than women. Male respondents indicated an average of 11.5 years of formal schooling, while female respondents had an average of 10.1 years of formal schooling.¹⁷ At 77 percent, men were much more likely to be in paid employment than women (44 percent). This difference is substantively large and statistically significant, with a p-value of less than .001. By contrast, when they worked, women and men reported comparable incomes, with an average close to 28,000 Indian Rupees (≈ 335 USD) per month.

Table 2: Individual-Level Summary Statistics for Full Sample

	Women	Men	P-Value
N	442	478	
Avg Age	42.05	41.32	0.4447
Share Literate	0.8937	0.9268	0.0999
Avg Yrs Schooling	10.09	11.48	0.0000
Share Job	0.4367	0.7699	0.0000
Avg Income	28045	28244	0.9712
Share Knows Local Councillor	0.9450	0.9320	0.9083
Share Knows MLA	0.8824	0.8619	0.4082
Share Knows MP	0.8597	0.9017	0.0622
Share Owns Phone	0.8824	0.9498	0.0003
Share Campaign Contact	1	1	
N Distinct Campaign Contacts	1.57	1.62	0.3894

We found only minor gender differences along most dimensions of political knowledge.

¹⁷ Notably, having finished high school (“12th pass” in India) opens up many more job opportunities compared to having finished only 10 years of schooling (“10th pass” in India), or being a high school drop out.

Ninety-four percent of women and 93 percent of men were able to correctly name their local municipal councilor.¹⁸ Similarly, 88 percent of female and 86 percent of male respondents correctly identified their state representative (Member of Legislative Assembly, MLA). Neither difference is statistically significant. However, significantly more men (90 percent) than women (86 percent) knew the name of their national representative (Member of Parliament, MP) ($p=.06$). Men were also significantly more likely to own a phone than women, at 95 percent compared to 88 percent ($p<.001$). By contrast, every single respondent recalled at least one canvassing visit from any political party to their house during the election campaign, meaning that 100 percent of our sample was exposed to campaign contact ahead of the elections. Even when we look at the number of distinct campaign contacts that respondents recalled, that is, the number of different parties that canvassed the household, men and women were similarly mobilized: women, on average, recalled 1.57 campaign visits, while men reported 1.62; the difference is substantively small and statistically not significant. This is in line with research that shows that party organization in Delhi includes many women in their rank and file who, in turn, are likely to canvass female voters (Goyal, 2020).

3.2 Measurement

Preference-Consistent Voting

To test Hypothesis 1, we analyze whether respondents' self-reported vote choice in the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections lines up with their expressed preferences. We draw on several different pieces of information from the survey to a) gauge respondents' policy priorities, that is, which potential government responsibilities they prioritize; b) understand respondents' evaluation of party competencies, i.e., which party they think would be best at dealing with different types of potential government responsibilities; and c) whether respondents voted for the party they consider most competent on the issues they care most about. From this

¹⁸ However, one area of Delhi where the study was conducted, Delhi Cantonment, did not fall under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi at the time, and therefore did not elect a local councillor. Respondents living in this area were excluded when calculating the share of correct answers.

information, we create our variable of interest, *preference-consistent voting*.

First, we looked at respondents' stated policy priorities. Respondents were asked what potential government responsibility they thought should be the incoming government's highest priority, among a list of 7 distinct responsibilities. The exact question wording was: "According to you what should be the priority for the next party that forms the government in Delhi?" The answer options, read out loud to respondents, were: affordable health care, improvement in schools and colleges for better education, provision of public facility such as food subsidy, prevention and regulation of traffic jams on roads, law and order situation, public transport, or prevention and control of pollution; respondents could also indicate "no preference."

Next, we looked at respondents' evaluation of party competencies. A battery of questions asked participants which party they thought was best at dealing with a range of potential government responsibilities, from improving education to maintaining law and order to providing electricity.¹⁹ Note that we are agnostic as to whether a party is actually (the most) competent in the respective issue area. Following the argument, this variable measures which party respondents consider the best at dealing with the issues they care about. We do not intend to measure whether this evaluation is correct. The reason is simple: Even if a respondent were to be mistaken about which party is competent at dealing with certain issues, as long as she votes for the party she thinks is competent, she does vote in line with her own stated preferences. What counts, therefore, is whether a respondent's vote choice is consistent with her evaluation of parties; not parties' actual strengths.

Finally, we use respondents' stated vote choice. All respondents who said they had voted in the most recent election were asked which party they had voted for. In order to minimize social desirability bias, and in-keeping with common practice, respondents were asked to indicate their vote choice using a touchscreen tablet. The display showed the exact candidates and parties that had just run for election, and respondents were asked to indicate

¹⁹ Importantly, this question was asked before respondents were asked about their policy priorities.

whom they had voted for by tapping the appropriate icon on the touch screen.²⁰

In order to determine whether respondents voted in line with their stated preferences, we conducted a two-step evaluation: we first identified a respondent's *best choice* given their preferences; and then whether her vote choice lined up with this best choice for *preference-consistent voting*. For example, if a respondent said that education is her highest priority, and that Party A is best at improving education, then her best choice would be Party A. We then compare her actual vote choice to her best choice. If she did indeed vote for Party A, she was considered to have voted in line with her stated preferences. The variable *preference-consistent voting* takes the value of 1 if a respondent voted for the party that was her best choice given her stated highest policy priority; and 0 otherwise. We coded all respondents that answered "don't know" to the question about party competencies as 0 as well. The reason is simply that if a respondent does not know which party would be best at dealing with her policy priorities, she cannot have consciously voted in line with her policy priorities.

However, this measure comes with some caveats. We did ask respondents which party they thought was most effective at handling a range of issues; but these do not perfectly match to the policy priorities that respondents could name. Of the 7 distinct priorities that respondents could name as the next government's top priority – namely health care, education, subsidies (such as ration cards), traffic, law and order, public transport, or pollution – we can only match 5 to issues associated with specific parties. Policy priorities and party competencies are matched up as follows:

The policy priorities of regulation of traffic and improvement of public transport have no corresponding questions that matches them to party competencies. We coded all those who said the next government's priority should be traffic management (7.2 percent of respondents) or improvement of public transport (2.6 percent) as not having voted in line with their preferences. However, results do not change if we instead code those respondents as having voted consistently with their preferences.

²⁰ However, despite the option to privately indicate whom they had voted for, about half of all respondents in our sample chose to verbally state their vote choice instead of discretely using the touch screen.

Table 3: Matching Policy Priorities to Party Competencies

Policy Priority	Party Competency
better education	improving government schools
affordable health care	improving government hospitals
prevention of pollution	prevention of pollution
law and order	containing corruption, improving women's safety
subsidies	providing electricity, providing water
regulation of traffic	<i>no match</i>
public transport	<i>no match</i>

Political (Dis)Agreement Within Households

To test Hypothesis 3, we conceptualize political agreement within the same household. Recall that we compare four distinct types of respondent pairs from our data to explore political agreement and agency in vote choice within the household: female-male pairs, where we chose the youngest interviewed woman and the oldest interviewed man in a household; married couples; female-female pairs; and male-male pairs. For each dyad, we code whether the two respondents agreed on their policy priorities; their evaluation of party competencies; and their reported vote choice. The variable *Agree Priorities* is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if both respondents named the same issue as their highest priority; and 0 otherwise. We coded all those who did not name *any* policy priority as 0 as well. The reason for this decision is simply that dyads where one person has no opinion on government priorities cannot possibly agree on their priorities.

The variable *Agree Party Competencies* is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if both respondents in the pair named the same party as being most competent at dealing with any one government responsibility; and 0 otherwise. For example, if both respondents said that Party A is best at improving government schools, then both agree on the party competency in the field of education. By contrast, if one respondent said Party A is best at improving government schools, while the other indicated Party B as most competent, then the pair disagrees on party competencies in the field of education. If party evaluations were driven entirely by ethnic clientelism, we would expect not just all respondents within the

same household, but all respondents belonging to the same ethnic group to agree in all their party evaluations.

Finally, the variable *Agree Vote Choice* is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if both respondents indicated they had voted for the same party, and 0 otherwise.

Other Variables

Several other variables are likely to play a role in preference-consistent voting. For one, higher intra-household bargaining power should make women less dependent on the household, and therefore more likely to act politically independently (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006; Prillaman, 2023). We we therefore include a measure of intra-household bargaining power in our analysis. We use information on whether or not a woman has an independent income, through either formal employment or casual work, as a proxy for the level of her intra-household bargaining power. *Working* is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if an individual has an independent income, and 0 otherwise.

Second, in order to assess party competencies, and to translate policy preferences into a preference-consistent vote, individuals need information. For one, a minimum level of education should ease the costs of collecting and processing political information, from understanding the voting process to evaluating political choices (Verba et al., 1978; Schlozman et al., 1994). In as much as higher levels of education also open better outside earning opportunities, they should also improve individuals' intra-household bargaining power (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2010). Higher levels of education correlate with increased levels of participation in the US, but not elsewhere; but *minimum levels* of education are good predictors of participation in many places . In as much as women, on average, enjoy lower levels of education than men in India, educational differences between the genders might mean differences in preference-consistent voting. We therefore include *Education* as a variable in our analysis. *Education* is a categorical variable with 7 levels that measures an individual's highest meaningful level of education in the Indian context. The levels are “Non-literate,” that

is, no formal schooling and no or low literacy; “less than primary education,” which means an individual did not successfully complete 5th grade but is literate; “primary school pass,” i.e., successfully finishing at least 5th grade but not 8th grade; “upper primary pass,” which means passing 8th grade; “10th pass,” that is, successfully completing 10th grade but not 12th; “12th pass,” which is the equivalent to completing high school in India; and “tertiary education” for any education past 12th grade, including undergraduate or graduate courses as well as professional courses.

A related, but not equivalent, concept is political knowledge. While having at least *some* education should ease the cost of acquiring political knowledge, the two are not synonymous (Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Verba et al., 1997). For example, being able to read will vastly reduce the hurdles associated with learning about the political process, about political parties, or the election date, for example. But not all individuals who can read will be equally informed on these topics. Political knowledge has been shown to boost participation, while research from around the globe has documented gender differences in political knowledge (Verba et al., 1997; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010, 2011; Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011; Goyal, 2023). Given that our concept of interest, preference-consistent voting, requires individuals to vote for the most competent party, a minimum amount of political knowledge should be necessary to form opinions about parties’ strengths and weaknesses. We therefore include a measure of *Political Knowledge* in our analysis. It measures whether a respondent was able to answer two knowledge questions correctly, namely whether she was able to correctly name her *Member of the Legislative Assembly* (MLA), that is, the representative in the state parliament; and/or to correctly name her *Member of Parliament* (MP), that is, her representative in the national parliament. We created a simple additive index, normalized to 1. *Political Knowledge* therefore takes the value 1 if a respondent answered both questions correctly; .5 if she answered one of the two questions correctly; and 0 otherwise.

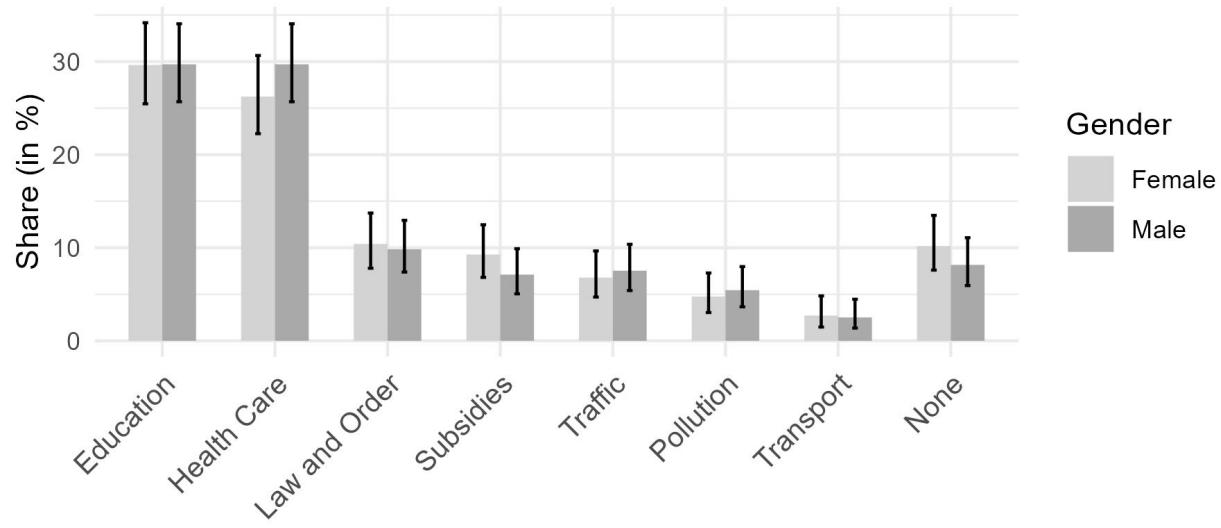
Finally, age should matter in preference-consistent voting.

4 Analysis

4.1 Policy Priorities

Unlike other studies described above (Gottlieb et al., 2018; Khan, 2021; Prillaman, 2023; Roscher, 2023), we do not find gender differences in policy priorities *in the aggregate*. Comparing women's and men's highest-ranking priorities produces a very similar picture. For both female and male respondents, education and health care were the top two priorities. Close to 30 percent of women and of men, respectively, said that education should be the incoming government's highest priority. Health care was the most important issue for 26 percent of women and almost 30 percent of men. A smaller – but again, roughly gender-equal – share of respondents prioritized law and order (10.4 percent of women vs. 9.8 percent of men); subsidies (9.3 percent vs. 7.1 percent); managing traffic (6.8 percent vs. 7.5 percent); fighting pollution (4.8 percent vs. 5.4 percent); and improving public transport (2.7 percent vs. 2.5 percent). Just over 10 percent of women and more than 8 percent of men did not name any policy priority. None of these gender differences are statistically significant.

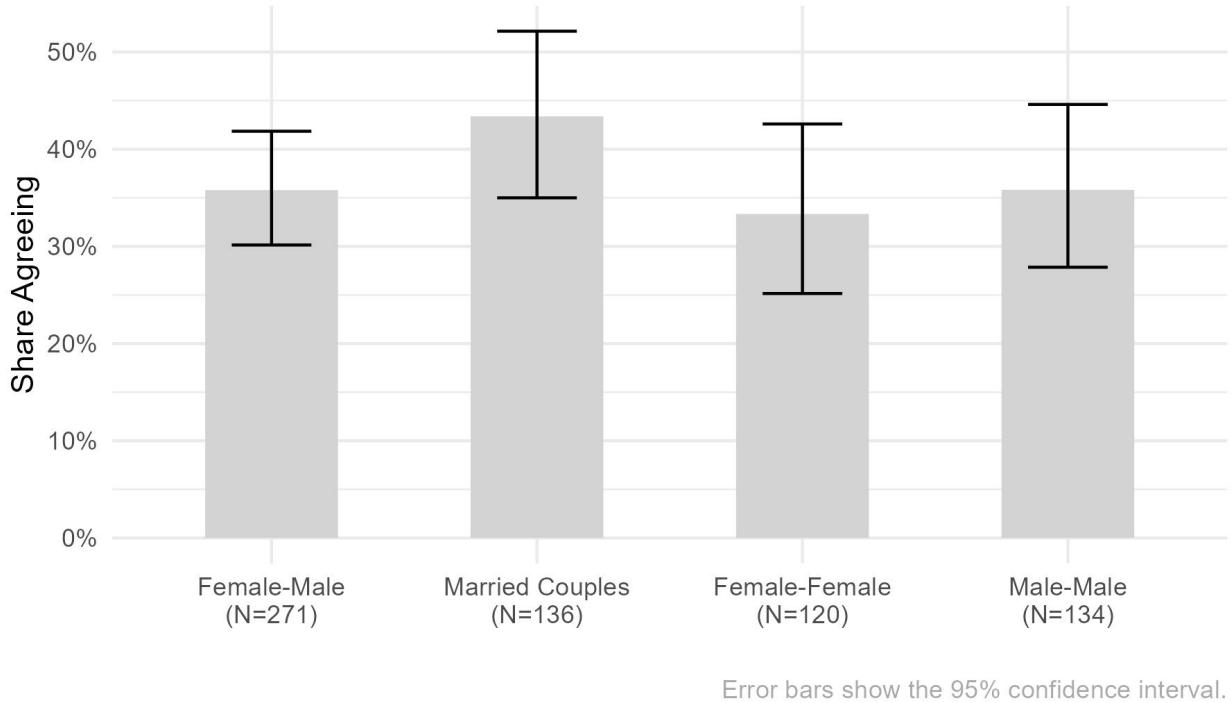
Figure 3: Highest Policy Priority, by Gender



Error bars show the 95% confidence interval.

However, these aggregates mask considerable disagreement *at the household level*. Recall that we compare four distinct types of dyads within households, and evaluate whether they agree on their highest policy priorities: female-male pairs; married couples; female-female pairs; and male-male pairs. We then checked whether they named the same issue as the incoming government's top priority. Respondents within the same household rarely agreed with each other on their top priorities (Figure 4). Only about one-third (36 percent) of female-male respondent pairs interviewed within the same household named the same issue. Agreement was highest when we limit ourselves to married couples: more than 43 percent of spouses interviewed prioritized the same issue. By comparison, only one third of female-female pairs agreed on their priorities, and less than 28 percent of male-male pairs did. Within the household, then, women and men often want different things from the government.

Figure 4: Agreement on Highest Policy Priority Within Households



4.2 Party Competencies

Before we assess women’s preference-consistent voting, we check whether evaluations of party competencies are driven by co-ethnicity, or whether they instead show variation within ethnic groups and households. Recall that all respondents were asked which party was most competent to fulfill a range of government responsibilities. In a world of perfect ethnic clientelism, all respondents within a household – and indeed, all respondents within an ethnic group – would consider the same co-ethnic party to be the most competent at *all* government responsibilities, since only the co-ethnic party can credibly commit to providing them with state resources after the election. However, if clientelism is less ethnic in nature, and/or less prevalent overall, we might see variation in the evaluation of party competencies within households, and should definitely observe variation in the assessment among members of the same ethnic group.

Indeed, we find considerable variation in the assessment of party competencies within households, as well as within ethnic groups. As Appendix Figure A.3 shows, a sizable share of households do not agree on party competencies. Households were least likely to agree on which party is most competent at dealing with pollution (between 46 and 54 percent of respondent pairs agreed); and most likely to agree on competencies in the field of health care (between 54 and 63 percent of agreement).

Within ethnic groups, as well, we find considerable variation. In each of the three broad caste groups – that is, among the upper castes, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and the Scheduled Castes (SCs) – between 52 percent and 67 percent of respondents agreed on party competencies (Appendix Figure A.4). However, co-ethnicity that drives ethnic clientelism is often more fine-grained than belonging to these broad caste categories (Chandra, 2004). We also check for agreement on party competencies within *jatis*, that is, smaller caste groups that might be more meaningful for forging co-ethnic ties. We do find considerable variation both across jatis as well as issue areas (Appendix Figure A.5).²¹ On average, about 60 percent

²¹ Appendix Figure A.5 plots agreement among the 10 single largest jatis/small caste groups in our sample.

of respondents belonging to the same jati agreed on party competencies. Finally, we check for agreement among religious groups. We find the most agreement on party competencies among Muslims, with an average of more than 70 percent agreement; while Hindus, Jains and Sikhs are much less likely to agree (Appendix Figure A.6). Overall, our data suggests that evaluations of party competencies were not purely – and perhaps, not even mostly – driven by considerations of co-ethnicity during the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections.

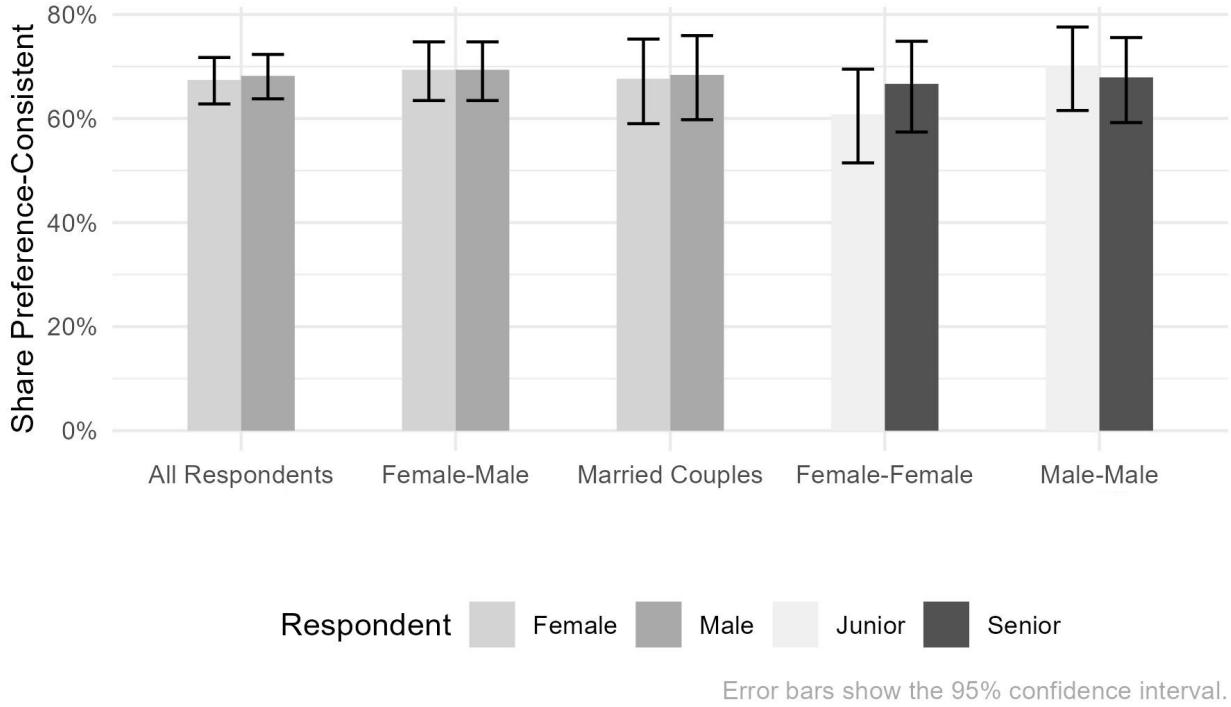
Taken together, sizable intra-household disagreement on policy priorities combined with intra-household (and intra-group) disagreement on party competencies means that there is potential for women’s and men’s *best choices* to differ. Recall that a respondent’s *best choice* is the party she thinks is most competent at dealing with the issue she cares most about. If women and men want different things from government, and at the same time think that different parties are best at dealing with these different issues, then they would be best served by voting for different parties, instead of voting for the same party. This, therefore, is a good setting to evaluate whether women are able to vote in line with their preferences; or whether household coordination on vote choice trumps preference-consistent voting.

4.3 Preference-Consistent Voting

Hypothesis 1 posits that women, on average, will be less likely than men to vote in line with their stated preferences. Figure 5 shows the share of respondents, by gender or seniority, who voted preference-consistent in the full sample, as well as in our four distinct subsamples that compare within-household pairs. As this plot visualizes, women were no less likely than men to vote in line with their stated preferences. Overall, a majority of respondents voted for the party they thought was best at dealing with their highest policy priority. On average, two-thirds of our sample exhibited preference-consistent voting behavior; only one-third voted for a party other than the one they deemed most competent at dealing with their policy priorities (or did not know which party would be competent).

We test Hypothesis 1 using OLS regression, estimating the following model:

Figure 5: Preference-Consistent Voting Within Households



$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta Female_i + \gamma Z_i + \epsilon, \quad (1)$$

where Y_i is the outcome of interest, that is, an indicator for preference consistent voting that takes the value of 1 if individual i voted consistent with their preferences and 0 otherwise; $Female_i$ is an indicator for whether the respondent is female or not; and Z_i is a vector of covariates, namely employment, education, political knowledge, and age. Here, β is the coefficient of interest.

Table 4 presents results. In the full sample, the coefficient on $Female$, an indicator for whether the respondent is female or not, is statistically indistinguishable from zero across all specifications. Column (1) presents results for a simple model that only regresses the outcome variable on gender. Column (2) adds control variables to the specification that should reasonably affect whether a respondent votes in line with her stated preferences. $Working$, an indicator variable for whether a respondent is currently working for income

or not, does not have a statistically significant correlation with preference-consistent voting. This is true even when we confine our analysis to only the women in the sample (see Appendix Table A.1). This result is surprising, given the emphasis in the literature on paid employment as the strongest predictor of women's intra-household bargaining power and, consequently, their independent vote choice (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006, 2010). The reason might be that in our sample, paid work correlates statistically significantly with education for women, but not for men: women are much more likely to work when they have at least graduated high school, and even more so if they have tertiary education (see Appendix Figure A.7 and Table A.4). At low levels of education, however, women are unlikely to work. For example, among illiterate women in the sample, only 25 percent work while 75 percent do not. By comparison, about half of those who passed 12th grade work, and around 55 percent of those with college education. For men, however, education plays a much smaller role in their work status. Almost 70 percent of illiterate men worked, compared to a little over 80 percent of those who passed high school and 75 percent of those with college education.

Education, in turn, is positively and statistically significantly associated with preference-consistent voting, as column (2) shows. Compared to the baseline category of having received no formal schooling at all, having formal education means a respondent is considerably more likely have voted in line with their preferences. That is true for all levels of education we measure in our data: having *some* primary school education (even without having finished primary school); having successfully completed primary education; having completed middle school; having passed 10th grade; having successfully completed high school; or having any time of tertiary education are all associated with substantially and statistically significantly higher conditional probabilities of preference-consistent voting. This is intuitively plausible, given that education should ease the information cost associated with not just determining personal policy preferences, but also with evaluating party competencies and matching personal preferences to those. The effect of education is stronger for women than for men (see Appendix Table A.1).

Table 4: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting

	Dependent variable:			
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)			
	OLS	Fixed Effects		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female	-0.008 (0.031)	0.018 (0.033)	0.001 (0.029)	0.014 (0.033)
Working (0/1)		0.050 (0.034)		0.026 (0.041)
Primary School Pass		0.130*** (0.050)		0.132** (0.064)
Pol Knowledge Index (0-1)		0.139** (0.059)		-0.162 (0.122)
Age (in yrs)		-0.001 (0.001)		-0.001 (0.001)
HH FEs	X	X	✓	✓
Observations	920	920	920	920
Residual Std. Error	0.468	0.464		

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses.

Political Knowledge, too, is associated with a higher likelihood of preference-consistent voting. Having full political knowledge – i.e., being able to correctly name both one’s state representative and the national representative – correlates with a 12.4 percentage point higher probability of voting in line with one’s stated preferences.

Finally, *Age*, measured in years, is not associated with preference-consistent voting. This result does not change when we use an indicator for whether a respondent is above 40 years of age or below. In contrast to findings from rural India (Prillaman, 2023), age does not seem to matter for whether respondents voted in line with their stated preferences or not.

Overall, then, we do not find evidence in support of Hypothesis 1. Rather, women in our sample were just as likely as men to vote in line with their expressed preferences.

Yet about one-third of women does not vote in line with their own stated preferences. Hypothesis 2 predicts that these women should be falsifying their own preferences to instead

amplify the preferences of men (or more senior family members). That is, women who do not vote in line with their own preferences should instead be voting in line with men's preferences. However, that is not what we find. Table 5 provides simple cross-tabulations that show, vertically, whether women voted in line with their own preferences and, horizontally, whether women voted the same as the male respondent.

Based on Hypothesis 2, we would expect that all, or at least most, women who do not vote in line with their own preferences instead vote the same as the male family member. That is not the case. Panel 5a looks at female-male pairs. Of the roughly 30 percent of female respondents who did not vote in line with their own preferences, only about half instead voted along with the male respondent. The rest voted *neither* in line with their own preferences nor along with the male respondent. This pattern is even more pronounced among married couples (panel 5b). When wives did not vote in line with their own preferences, they were more likely to vote different from their husband than to vote along with him. Panels 5c and 5d show that junior respondents, when they were preference-inconsistent, were slightly more likely to vote along with a senior respondent of the same gender than to vote against them.

Overall, our data does not support the hypothesis that women are likely to falsify their own preferences in order to amplify the voices of men. While a vast majority (62 percent) of women in the female-male pairs, for example, voted for the same party as the male respondent (right-hand column), for the lion's share (77 percent) this choice was *preference-consistent*. Similarly, almost 65 percent of wives voted for the same party as their husbands. But this voting behavior was consistent with women's stated policy preferences in 78 percent of those cases. That means that women did indeed vote for the same party as men in their household; but that this choice was in line with the policy priorities that women reported.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 posits that preference-consistent voting should be *less* likely when households disagree on their policy priorities. That is, when men and women within the same family want different things from government, women should be more likely to forego their own preferences. However, that is not what we find in our data. Figure 6 plots the

Table 5: Voting Inconsistent with Own Preferences Does Not Mean Voting with the Household

(a) Female-Male		
Share of Women Who	Voted Against Male	Voted With Male
Voted Inconsistently	16.61	14.02
Voted Consistently	21.40	47.97
(b) Married Couples		
Share of Women Who	Voted Against Husband	Voted With Husband
Voted Inconsistently	18.38	13.97
Voted Consistently	16.91	50.74
(c) Female-Female		
Share of Junior Women Who	Voted Against Senior	Voted With Senior
Voted Inconsistently	15.83	23.33
Voted Consistently	11.67	49.17
(d) Male-Male		
Share of Junior Men Who	Voted Against Senior	Voted With Senior
Voted Inconsistently	11.94	17.91
Voted Consistently	23.88	46.27

share of respondents who voted in line with their stated preferences, by household agreement on preferences. Women in household dyads that *share* preferences are just as likely to vote in accordance with their policy priorities as are women in households that *disagree* on policy priorities.

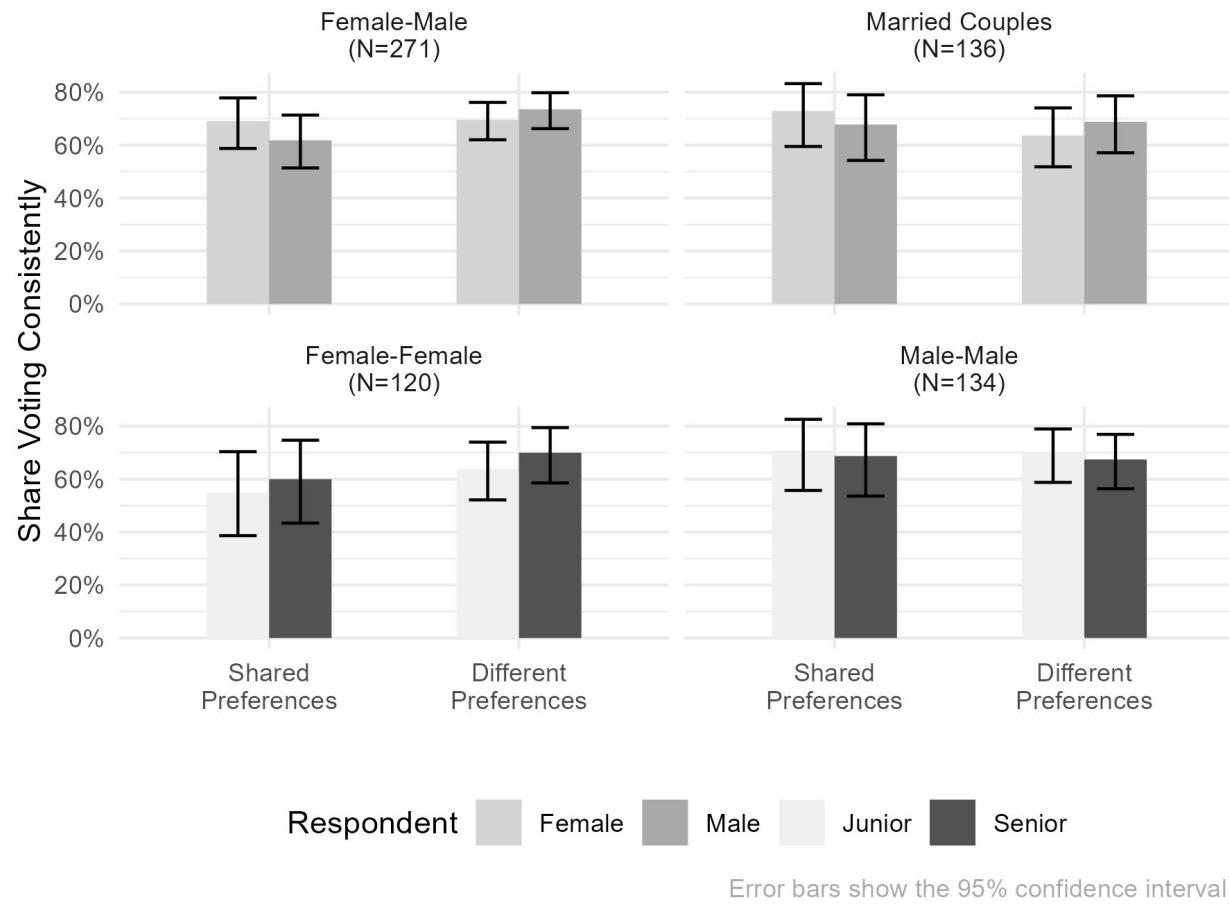
We use OLS regressions to estimate the following model:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta AgreePriorities_i + \gamma Z_i + \epsilon, \quad (2)$$

where Y_i is the outcome of interest, that is, an indicator for preference consistent voting that takes the value of 1 if individual i voted consistent with their preferences and 0 otherwise; $AgreePriorities_i$ is an indicator for whether the respondent agreed on their policy priorities with the other household member in the dyad; and Z_i is the same vector of covariates as before. Again, β is the coefficient of interest.

Tables 6 and 7 present results for the male-female pairs and the married couples in our

Figure 6: Preference-Consistent Voting is Independent of Household (Dis)Agreement on Preferences



sample, respectively. When looking at all male-female dyads, agreeing on policy priorities with the other respondents makes it *less* likely vote in line with one's preferences (columns (1) and (2)). The coefficient on *Agree Priorities* – an indicator for whether both respondents named the same policy preference – is negative and statistically significant. Those who agreed with the other surveyed family member were 11 percentage points *less likely* to vote in accordance with their own preferences. As column (4) shows, this peculiar finding is driven by men, not women. For female respondents, whether they agreed with the surveyed male family member or not made no difference to their probability of preference-consistent voting (column (3)).

Education again emerges as a statistically significant predictor for women's preference-

Table 6: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting and HH Agreement, Male-Female Pairs

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)					
	All	Women		Men		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Agree Priorities	-0.117** (0.058)	-0.095 (0.058)	0.026 (0.059)	0.007 (0.058)	-0.092 (0.059)	-0.112* (0.059)
Female	-0.040 (0.049)	-0.045 (0.052)				
Agree Priorities X Female	0.112 (0.083)	0.122 (0.082)				
Working (0/1)		0.006 (0.044)	-0.007 (0.058)	0.008 (0.057)	0.029 (0.072)	0.045 (0.069)
< Primary		0.312** (0.124)	0.336** (0.160)		0.343* (0.197)	
4th Pass		0.218** (0.095)	0.311** (0.125)		0.127 (0.148)	
8th Pass		0.179* (0.094)	0.220* (0.129)		0.135 (0.137)	
10th Pass		0.123 (0.079)	0.296*** (0.109)		-0.067 (0.115)	
12th Pass		0.215*** (0.076)	0.328*** (0.106)		0.088 (0.109)	
Tertiary		0.202*** (0.076)	0.341*** (0.109)		0.060 (0.108)	
Educational Difference (M-F)				-0.014** (0.006)		-0.008 (0.006)
Pol Knowledge Index (0-1)		0.154** (0.073)	0.152 (0.104)		0.145 (0.106)	
Knowledge Difference (M-F)				0.149 (0.122)		0.037 (0.122)
Age		-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.002)		-0.0003 (0.002)	
Age Difference (M-F)				0.002 (0.002)		0.002 (0.002)
Observations	542	542	271	271	271	271
R ²	0.007	0.042	0.059	0.035	0.057	0.028
Adjusted R ²	0.002	0.021	0.022	0.017	0.020	0.010
Residual Std. Error	0.461	0.457	0.457	0.458	0.457	0.459
F Statistic	1.341	1.947**	1.620	1.908*	1.558	1.555

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

consistent voting, but not men's. Having finished high school (12th pass) is associated with an 11 percentage point higher probability of voting in line with one's preferences for women, but not for men. Because a woman's relative intra-household bargaining power should matter for whether she is able to follow her own preferences, we also check for *Educational Difference*, that is, the difference (in years of education) between the male respondent's highest educational attainment and the female respondent's. As expected, a higher *Educational Difference* between men and women means women are less likely to exhibit preference-consistent voting: each additional year of educational attainment that the male respondent has over the female respondent makes it 1.5 percentage points less likely that she voted in accordance with her own preferences. By contrast, for men, education does not seem to matter for preference-consistent voting.

When we look at married couples (Table 7), coefficients are signed the same but no longer statistically significant. This might be a smaller sample size for couples, as we only have 136 husband-wife pairs in our data. For female-female pairs and male-male pairs in our sample, *Agree Priorities* also has no predictive power for preference-consistent voting (see Appendix Tables A.5 and A.6).

5 Discussion & Conclusion

In our analysis, we found no support for expectations that women should be less likely than men to exhibit preference-consistent voting (Hypothesis 1); more likely to falsify their preferences to vote in line with male household members (Hypothesis 2); or more likely to forego their own preferences when households disagree on policy priorities (Hypothesis 3). Instead, we found that women were just as likely as men to vote in line with their own preferences, with about two-thirds of both genders voting consistently. We also showed that even in cases when women vote inconsistently, they are not very likely to instead vote along with the men in their households. Finally, in households that disagreed on policy

Table 7: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting and HH Agreement, Married Couples

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)					
	All	Women	Men	(4)	(5)	(6)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Agree Priorities	-0.010 (0.081)	-0.019 (0.081)	0.080 (0.083)	0.087 (0.083)	-0.020 (0.082)	-0.003 (0.082)
Female	-0.052 (0.076)	-0.045 (0.082)				
Agree Priorities X Female	0.103 (0.115)	0.103 (0.115)				
Working (0/1)		0.006 (0.068)	0.045 (0.088)	0.055 (0.088)	-0.053 (0.111)	-0.011 (0.108)
Education: 12th Pass (0/1)		0.065 (0.060)	0.023 (0.086)		0.106 (0.084)	
Educational Difference (M-F)				-0.004 (0.009)		-0.004 (0.009)
Age		-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)		-0.002 (0.003)	
Age Difference (M-F)				0.003 (0.006)		0.006 (0.005)
Observations	272	272	136	136	136	136
R ²	0.005	0.013	0.015	0.017	0.018	0.011
Adjusted R ²	-0.006	-0.009	-0.015	-0.013	-0.012	-0.019
Residual Std. Error	0.469	0.469	0.473	0.473	0.470	0.471
F Statistic	0.444	0.593	0.491	0.561	0.585	0.363

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

priorities, women were no less likely to vote in line with their own preferences than they were in households that agreed on priorities. In our sample, then, women seem to exercise just as much agency over their vote choice as men, being able to translate their preferences into votes for parties they perceive to be most competent.

How do these findings compare to other work on female voters in India? To our knowledge, ours is the only study that looks at preference-consistent voting in India. But scholars have looked at other aspects of agency in vote choice. Two studies from rural Madhya Pradesh

and rural Uttar Pradesh both found that women have less say in their vote choice than men; but focused on the way decisions were taken rather than whether the voting decisions lined up with women’s preferences (Prillaman, 2023; Roscher, 2023). In both cases, women were more likely to say that other family members are involved in the decision whom to vote for, or might even have the most say in their vote choice.

Does self-reported coordination with other household members explain preference-consistent voting? We asked respondents two questions that get at the extent to which family might affect their own vote choice. First, respondents were asked “Whose opinion matters to in your decision to cast your vote?” Participants were then presented with 7 distinct options, namely the “local candidate,” “family,” “co-workers,” “friends,” “leaders of your caste and community,” “your own opinion,” or “other.” The second question asked respondents with which family member(s) they had discussed their vote choice. Unlike the first question, this item does not specifically ask about who influenced vote choice, but merely with whom a respondent *discussed* the choice; it might therefore be a weaker gauge of the family’s impact.

As Table 8a shows, comparable shares of male and female respondents said that their own opinion is what matters for their vote choice: 37 percent of men and 40 percent of women said so; the difference is not statistically significant. That share is comparable to the proportion of women who reported having the most say over their own vote choice in Prillaman (2023)’s study, and the percentage that said they decided on their own in Roscher (2023)’s study. Women in our sample, therefore, are not more likely to report that they made their decision completely independently from other household members than women in rural samples. Another 37 percent of men and 40 percent of women said that their family’s opinion matters when they decide whom to vote for. However, men were statistically significantly more likely to report that friends’ or neighbors’ opinions mattered to them than women. This is in line with findings from other studies that suggest that women’s networks are smaller than men’s, and they are therefore less likely to discuss politics with individuals outside their household (Prillaman, 2023; Gulzar et al., 2020).

Table 8b shows answers to the second question, namely with which family members respondents discussed their vote choice. Men were significantly more likely than women to say they had not debated vote choice with anyone in their family, with 25 percent of men saying so compared to 19 percent of women. By contrast, women were substantially, and statistically significantly, more likely to say that they discussed whom to vote for either with their spouse or with the family as a whole. More than 20 percent of women said they discussed voting with their husband; but only a little over 13 percent of men said they engaged in discussion with their wife ($p < .005$). Close to 40 percent of females said the whole family discussed vote choice, while only 34 percent of males said so ($p < .1$). Men, by contrast, were more likely to discuss the vote with senior family members. Again, these findings are broadly in line with those from other studies, that suggest that men discuss politics with men inside and outside the household, and defer mostly to seniority; while women are more likely to discuss politics with their spouses (Prillaman, 2023; Gulzar et al., 2020). The patterns of household coordination and political discussion in our sample, then, is not drastically different from those observed in rural samples.

Does that mean that our findings on preference-consistent voting would translate to rural India? There are several theoretical reasons to be skeptical. First, resource endowments differ significantly between urban and rural populations in India. Our analysis suggests that, in line with the literature, education and, to an extent, political knowledge correlate positively with preference-consistent voting. Both educational attainment and political knowledge were much higher in our urban sample than they are, on average, among the rural populations in other studies (Prillaman, 2023; Roscher, 2023). In as much as *some* education seems necessary to facilitate preference-consistent voting, overall rising literacy rates and particularly improving educational attainment for girls might make preference-consistent voting more likely in rural areas going forward as well.

A second concern relates to systematic differences between rural and urban polities. Auerbach and Kruks-Wisner (2020) draw attention to differences in the political geography

Table 8: Self-Reported Family Influence on Vote Choice

(a) Whose Opinion Matters for Your Vote Choice?

Whose Opinion Matters	Share Men	Share Women	Diff	P-Value
your Own Opinion	37.03	40.27	-3.24	0.35
Family	37.87	40.50	-2.63	0.45
Friends/People of Neighbourhood	9.21	4.52	4.68	0.01
Leaders of your Caste and Community	2.93	3.62	-0.69	0.69
Local Candidate	6.07	5.20	0.86	0.67
Co-Workers	6.90	5.88	1.02	0.62

(b) With Whom Do You Discuss Vote Choice?

Whose Opinion Matters	Share Men	Share Women	Diff	P-Value
None	25.10	19.23	5.87	0.04
Spouse	13.39	20.59	-7.20	0.00
Discussion with the Family as a Whole	33.89	39.59	-5.70	0.08
Father	4.81	4.75	0.06	1.00
Mother	3.14	2.49	0.65	0.69
Brother/Sister	3.35	2.71	0.63	0.71
any Other Senior Member of the Family	14.85	8.37	6.48	0.00
any Other Junior Member of the Family	1.46	2.26	-0.80	0.51

between urban and rural India. Importantly, they note that party organization in rural India is much weaker than in urban India, which means that “local party workers [...] are scarce in villages but abound in urban settings” (p. 11). This is in line with other recent research that has shown that urban party organizations in Delhi have recruited many more women in the wake of mandatory gender quotas in local government (Goyal, 2023), while women are largely underrepresented among the rank-and-file of more rural party organizations (Gulzar et al., 2024). Where women party activists are better able to reach female citizens – because they enter even gender-segregated spaces that male canvassers cannot – they can improve women’s campaign contacts and, consequently, their political knowledge (Goyal, 2023). Political knowledge should improve women’s ability to evaluate party competencies and to vote in line with their own preferences.

Indeed, we observe much higher levels of campaign mobilization in our sample than

studies on rural India have. One-hundred percent of all respondents surveyed recalled at least one canvassing visit by a political party ahead of the election.²² That means all women in the sample were contacted by at least one party. Even in mobilization intensity, we do not find significant gender differences. On average, women recalled 1.57 distinct campaign contacts, while men recalled 1.62; the difference is not statistically significant (see Table 2).²³ By contrast, Prillaman (2023) found large gender disparities in political mobilization in rural Madhya Pradesh. She writes, “while only 34 percent of all individuals were mobilized to vote, at least one person in more than 80 percent of households was mobilized” (p. 114). On average, 43 percent of men recalled being mobilized by a party worker or candidate, but only 25 percent of women did (p. 115-116). In rural Uttar Pradesh around the 2022 state elections, almost 73 percent of male heads of household recalled at least one party worker canvassing the house, while only 60 percent of female respondents did (Roscher, 2023).

However, women’s agency in vote choice in India, like in most places, is likely a spectrum. At one extreme, women have full control over their vote and cast ballots exactly as they please at all times; at the other, women are coerced by other household members into falling in line and, therefore, potentially voting against their own interests. Our Delhi sample surely came close to the first scenario, with women voting about as preference-consistent as men in our study. While there might be variation in women’s agency in rural India for the above-mentioned reasons, that does not mean that rural female voters exercise no agency.

²² We asked respondents separately whether any party worker from the Congress Party, AAP, BJP, BSP, or any other party had visited their house. The maximum number of distinct party contacts that any one respondent could report, therefore, was 5 (although only 10 respondents reported a visit from any “other” party).

²³ Even Goyal (2023), in her study of municipal elections in Delhi, found much lower levels of political mobilization across both genders. Just over 65 percent of men and close to 54 percent of women in her sample reported having been *personally* contacted by any party activist. The fact that we found much higher levels of party mobilization likely speaks both to the difference that level of government makes as well as to study timing. While Goyal looked at the 2017 municipal elections, we investigated Assembly elections. While local elections are important in India, it is reasonable to assume that parties expand more effort on Assembly elections than on municipal elections because power at the state level comes with access to vast resources (Chandra, 2004; Wilkinson, 2007). Furthermore, the AAP, one of the main contenders in Delhi elections, has its main stronghold in the Delhi Assembly, making performing well in these elections more crucial to the party’s survival. In addition, our survey was conducted between one and three days after the election, while Goyal’s was conducted 18 months after election day, making it more likely that memories of canvassing visits were fresh in our respondents’ minds.

In Prillaman (2023)'s study, almost 40 percent of women voted for a different party than their husband; and 25 percent did so in Roscher (2023)'s Uttar Pradesh sample. But as discussed before, voting for the same party as a family member alone is not yet a sign of coercion or preference falsification, especially in a context of ethnic clientelism: where only the co-ethnic party is likely to fulfill *any* policy priorities for an individual, pooling votes for the same co-ethnic party is a rational response. And Roscher (2023) found that women did express a strong preference for pooling votes within the family, with 82 percent of female respondents and 79 percent of heads of household saying it is desirable for everyone in the household to vote for the same party. At the same time, almost half of all female respondents in that study (46.1 percent) said it was acceptable for a woman to defy her family and vote for another party if she felt strongly about it. Further research is needed to determine how women in rural contexts think about the relationship between their political preferences and the parties running for election, and to what extent women's vote choice lines up with their expressed preferences.

Appendix

Table A.1: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting, By Gender

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)			
	Women	Men		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Working (0/1)	0.035 (0.045)	0.089 (0.059)	0.061 (0.052)	−0.007 (0.069)
< Primary	0.201 (0.135)	0.162 (0.187)	0.154 (0.158)	0.136 (0.253)
4th Pass	0.213** (0.101)	0.144 (0.127)	0.187 (0.118)	0.197 (0.147)
8th Pass	0.314*** (0.098)	0.111 (0.116)	0.118 (0.120)	0.157 (0.140)
10th Pass	0.200** (0.089)	0.151 (0.112)	0.032 (0.101)	0.040 (0.117)
12th Pass	0.265*** (0.086)	0.187 (0.117)	0.150 (0.094)	0.224** (0.113)
Tertiary	0.221** (0.090)	0.087 (0.128)	0.079 (0.094)	0.137 (0.117)
Pol Knowledge Index (0-1)	0.137 (0.086)	0.026 (0.118)	0.104 (0.086)	−0.038 (0.146)
Age (in yrs)	0.0001 (0.002)	0.0004 (0.002)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.003 (0.002)
HH FEs	<i>X</i>	✓	<i>X</i>	✓
Observations	442	442	478	478
Residual Std. Error	0.464		0.465	

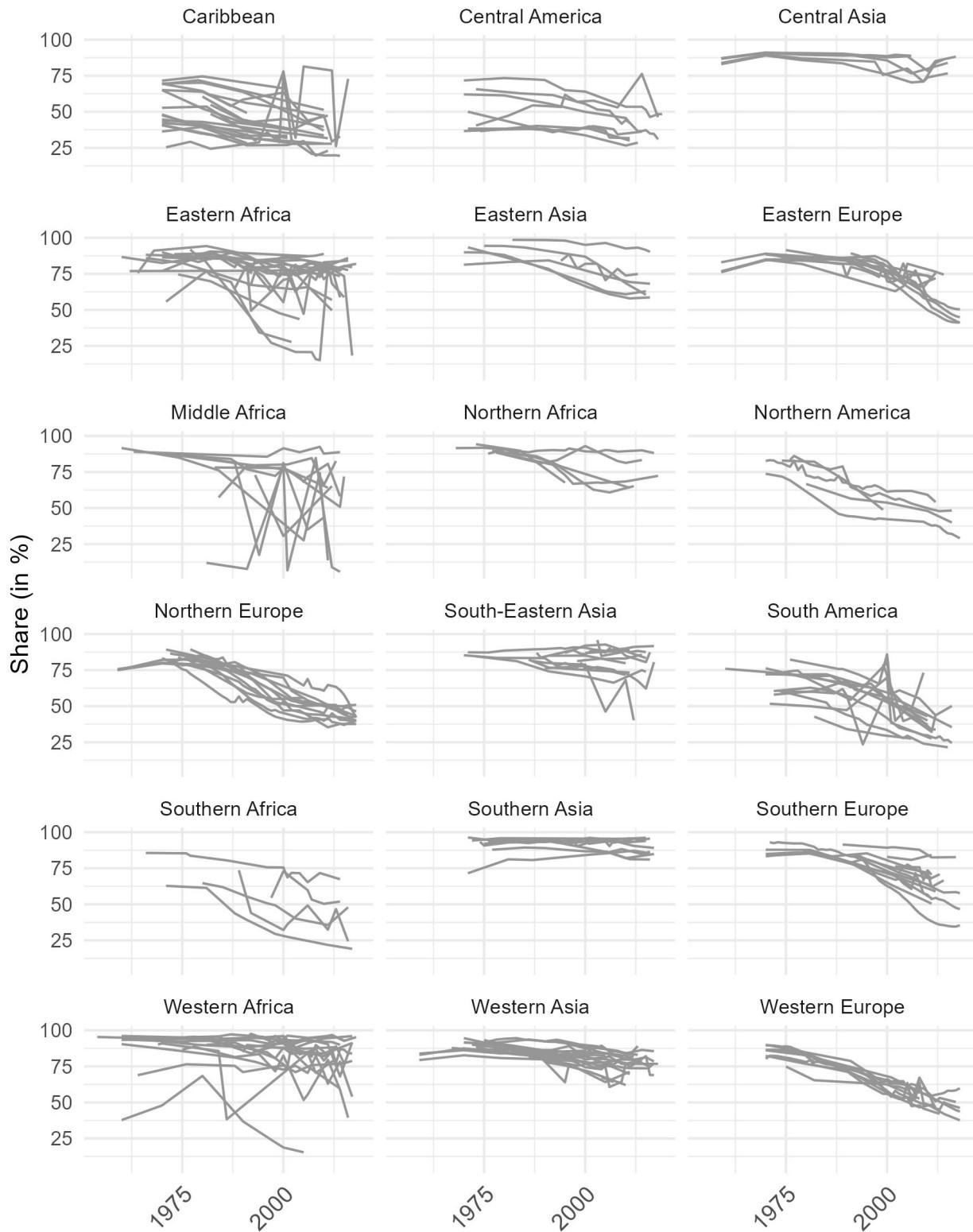
Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses.

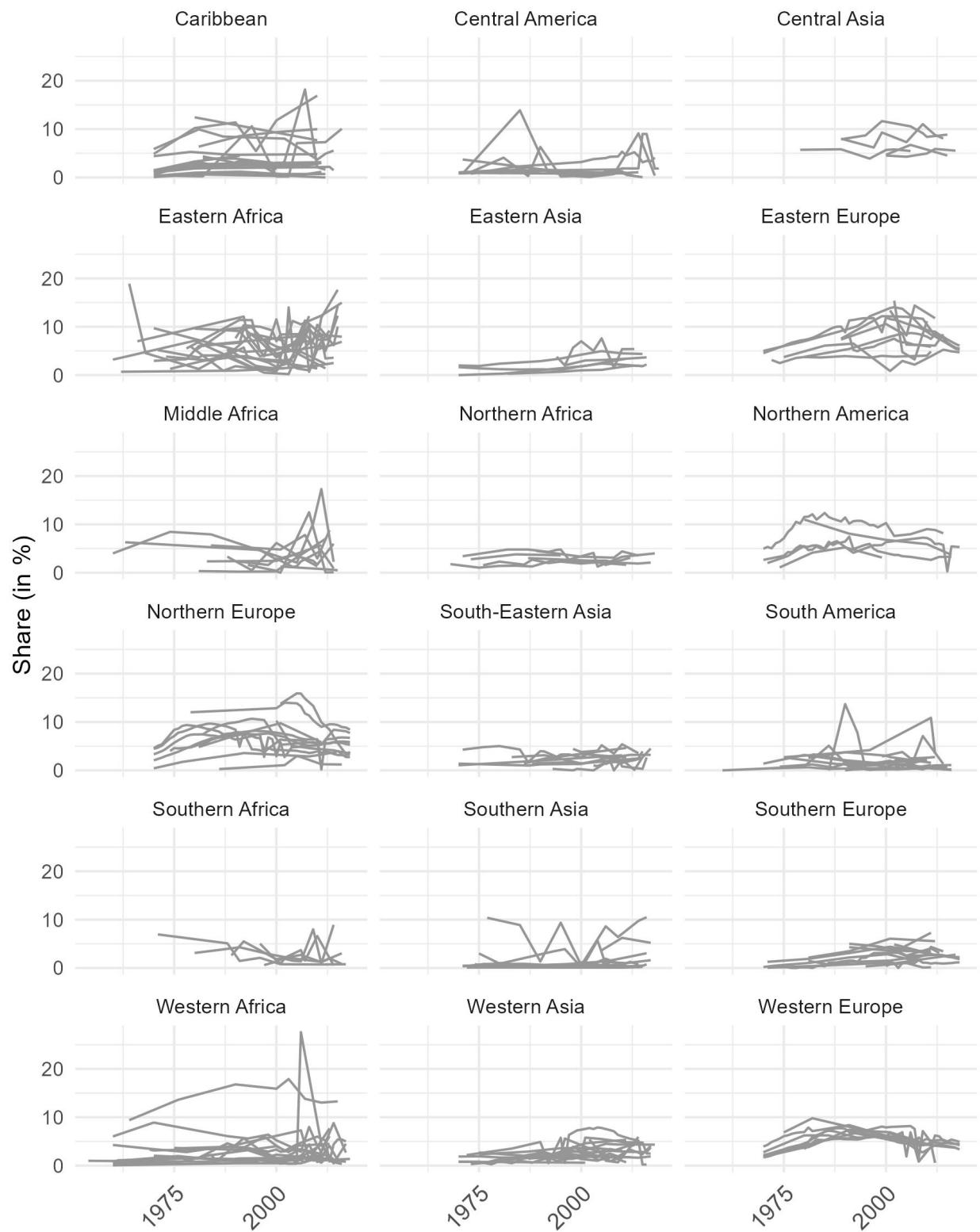
Figure A.1: Marriage and Divorce Rates Worldwide, Women Aged 30 to 34

(a) Share Married



Data Source: World Marriage Data 2019 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

(b) Share Divorced



Data Source: World Marriage Data 2019 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

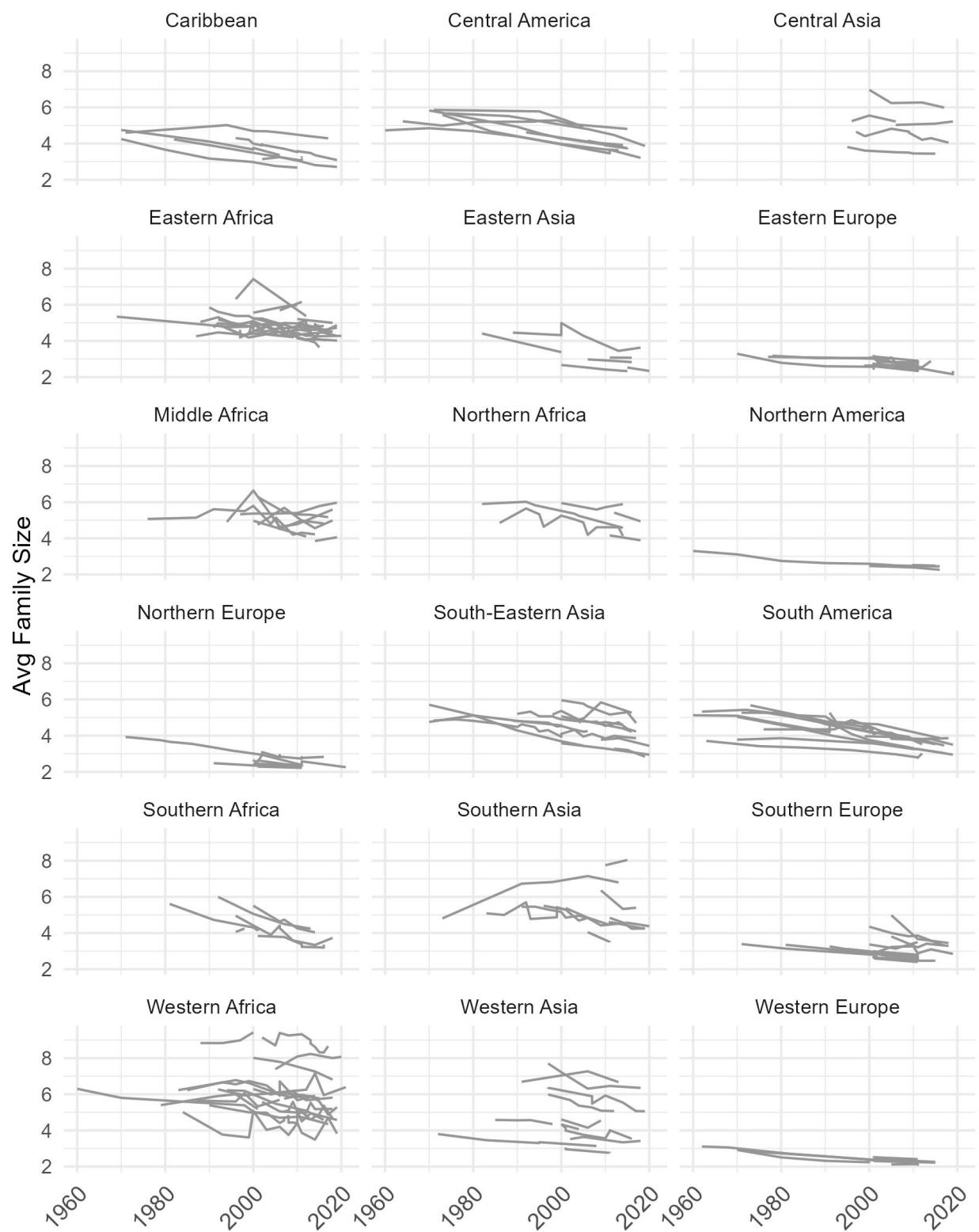
Table A.2: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting, Role of Education

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female (0/1)	0.018 (0.033)	0.017 (0.033)	0.020 (0.033)	0.013 (0.033)
Working (0/1)	0.050 (0.034)	0.056* (0.034)	0.052 (0.034)	0.060* (0.034)
Primary Pass (0/1)	0.130*** (0.048)			
10th Pass (0/1)		0.027 (0.036)		
12th Pass (0/1)			0.049 (0.032)	
Tertiary Education (0/1)				−0.011 (0.036)
Pol Knowledge Index (0-1)	0.139** (0.056)	0.143** (0.056)	0.135** (0.056)	0.146*** (0.056)
Age (in yrs)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)
Observations	920	920	920	920
R ²	0.021	0.013	0.015	0.013
Adjusted R ²	0.015	0.008	0.010	0.007
Residual Std. Error	0.464	0.466	0.465	0.466
F Statistic	3.841***	2.451**	2.813**	2.357**

Note:

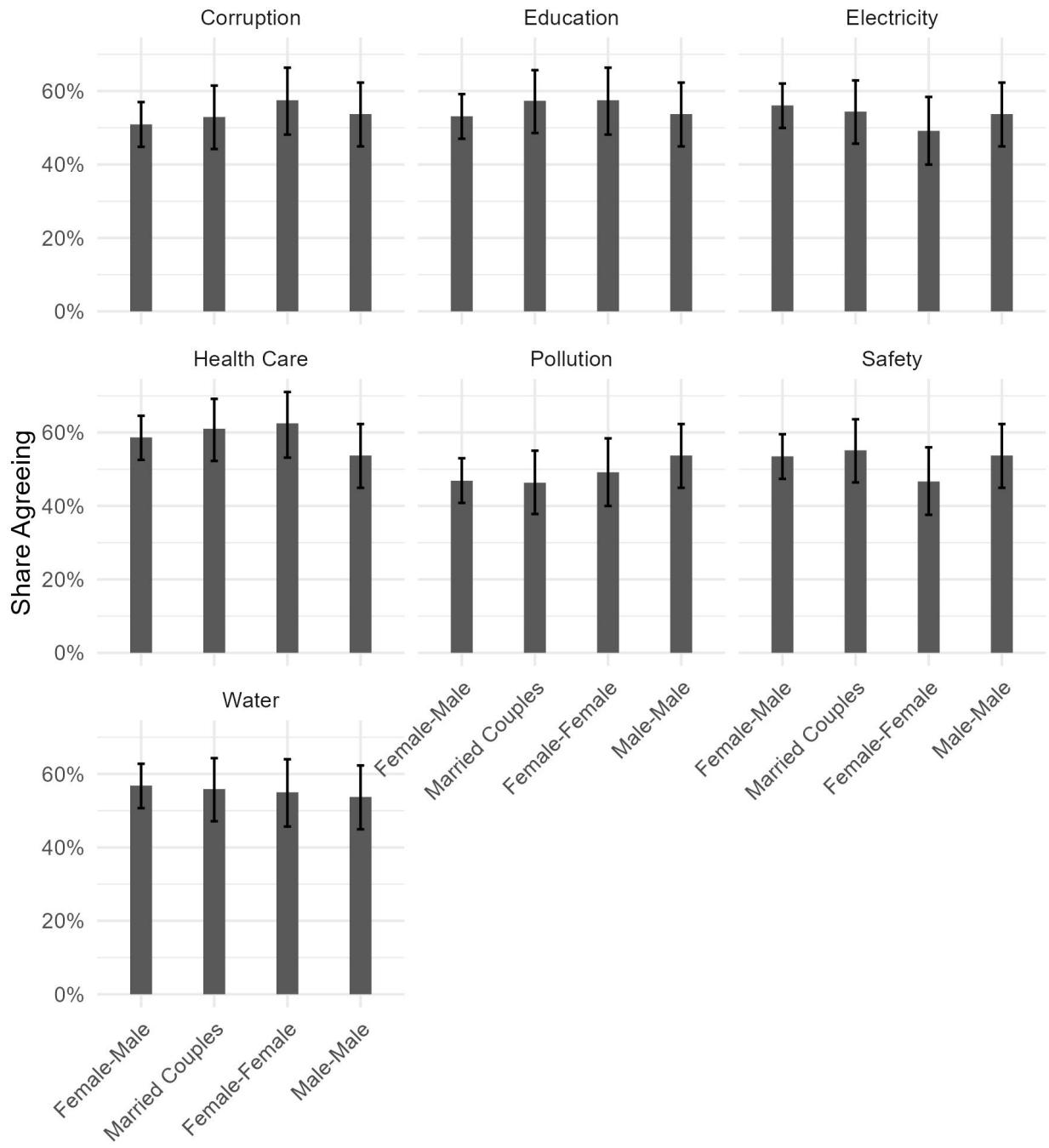
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure A.2: Average Household Size Worldwide



Source: Database on Household Size and Composition 2022 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

Figure A.3: Agreement on Party Competencies Within Households



Error bars show the 95% confidence interval.

Figure A.4: Agreement on Party Competencies Within Broad Caste Groups

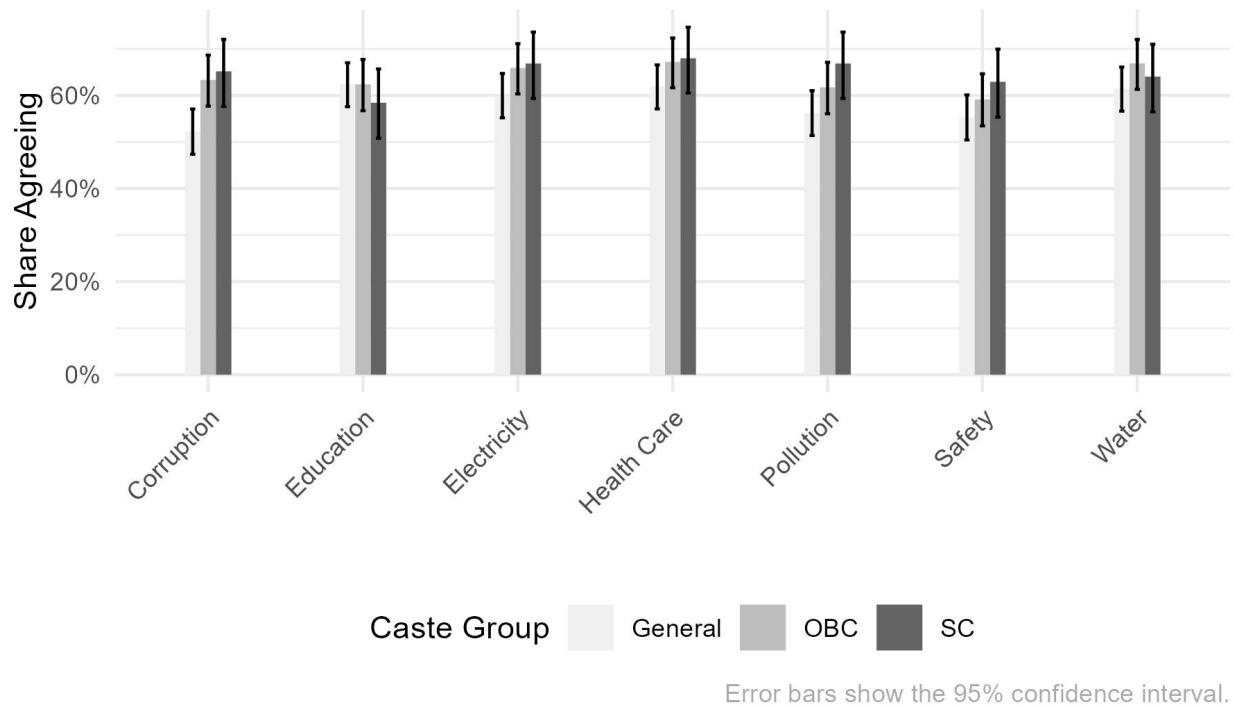
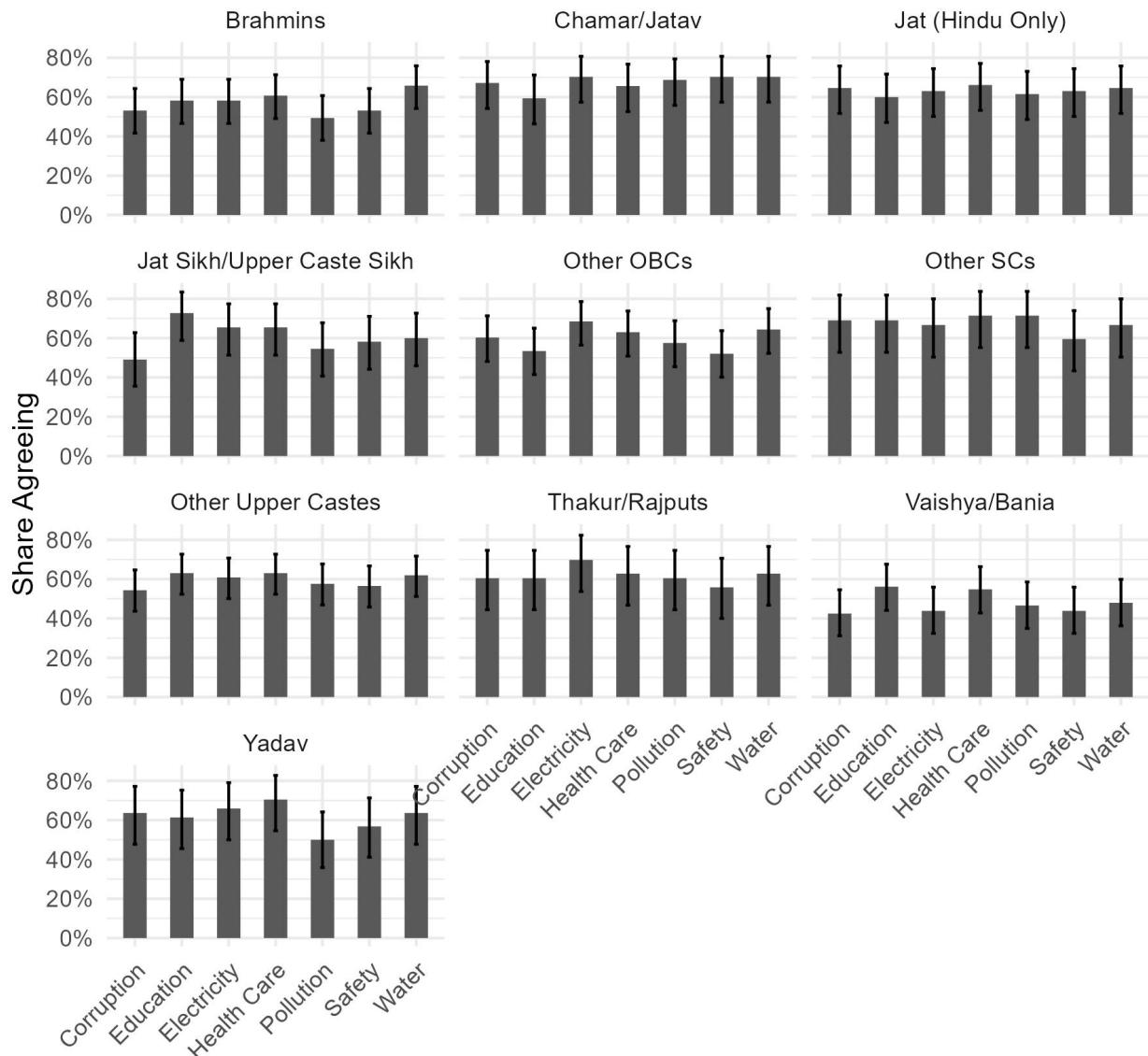


Figure A.5: Agreement on Party Competencies Within Jatis



Error bars show the 95% confidence interval.

Figure A.6: Agreement on Party Competencies Within Religious Groups

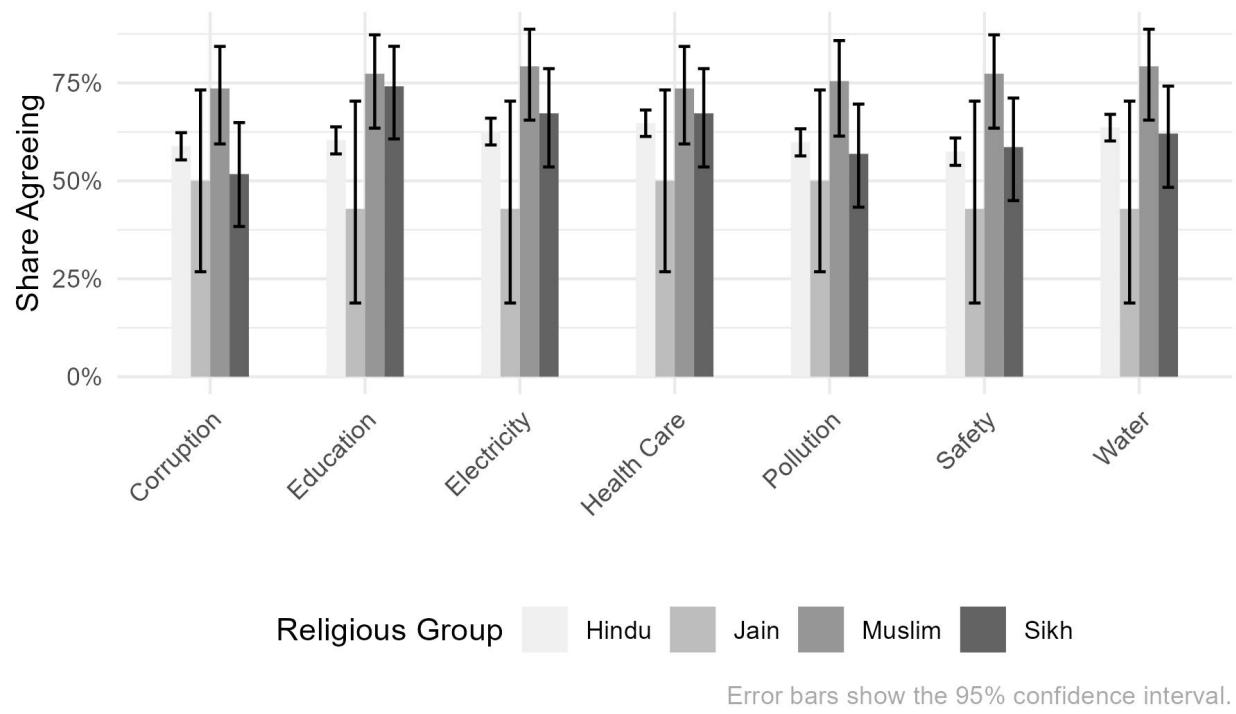


Table A.3: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting, Role of Education

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female (0/1)	0.014 (0.033)	0.013 (0.033)	0.013 (0.033)	0.005 (0.033)
Working (0/1)	0.026 (0.041)	0.029 (0.041)	0.029 (0.041)	0.043 (0.041)
Primary Pass (0/1)	0.132** (0.064)			
10th Pass (0/1)		0.023 (0.047)		
12th Pass (0/1)			0.021 (0.041)	
Tertiary Education (0/1)				-0.093** (0.044)
Pol Knowledge Index (0-1)	-0.162 (0.122)	-0.181 (0.120)	-0.185 (0.120)	-0.167 (0.119)
Age (in yrs)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)
HH FEs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	920	920	920	920
R ²	0.017	0.010	0.010	0.017
Adjusted R ²	-0.613	-0.625	-0.625	-0.613
F Statistic	1.964*	1.105	1.110	1.983*

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses.

Figure A.7: Education and Working Status

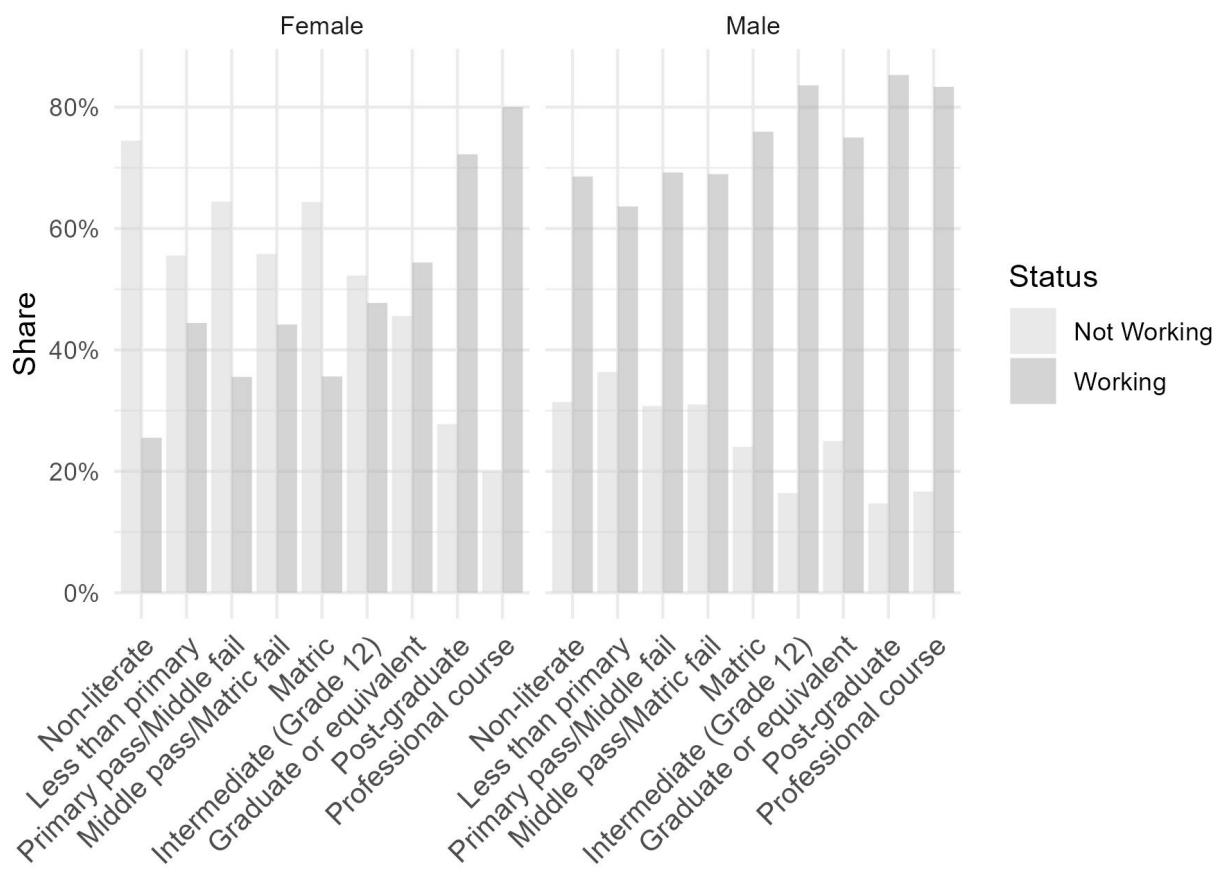


Table A.4: Education and Work Status, by Gender

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Working (0/1)	
	Women	Men
	(1)	(2)
< Primary	0.189 (0.135)	-0.049 (0.145)
4th Pass	0.100 (0.102)	0.007 (0.109)
8th Pass	0.187* (0.103)	0.004 (0.106)
10th Pass	0.101 (0.088)	0.074 (0.085)
12th Pass	0.222*** (0.085)	0.150* (0.080)
Tertiary	0.338*** (0.088)	0.089 (0.078)
Observations	442	478
R ²	0.044	0.016
Adjusted R ²	0.031	0.004
Residual Std. Error	0.489	0.421
F Statistic	3.368***	1.302

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.5: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting and HH Agreement, Female-Female Pairs

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)			
	All	Junior	Senior	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Agree Priorities	-0.100 (0.093)	-0.094 (0.093)	-0.067 (0.095)	-0.096 (0.093)
Junior	-0.062 (0.076)	-0.072 (0.076)		
Agree Priorities X Junior	0.012 (0.132)	0.025 (0.131)		
Working (0/1)		0.108* (0.063)	0.117 (0.091)	0.083 (0.090)
Education Difference		-0.007 (0.007)	-0.010 (0.010)	-0.004 (0.010)
Age Difference		0.002 (0.003)	0.005 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)
Observations	240	240	120	120
R ²	0.012	0.035	0.054	0.018
Adjusted R ²	-0.0004	0.010	0.022	-0.016
Residual Std. Error	0.482	0.479	0.485	0.477
F Statistic	0.969	1.389	1.654	0.534

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.6: Regression Results Preference-Consistent Voting and HH Agreement, Male-Male Pairs

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Preference-Consistent Voting (0/1)			
	All	Junior	Senior	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Agree Priorities	0.013 (0.084)	0.024 (0.085)	-0.001 (0.084)	0.041 (0.086)
Junior	0.023 (0.071)	0.036 (0.072)		
Agree Priorities X Junior	-0.002 (0.119)	-0.017 (0.120)		
Working (0/1)		0.068 (0.068)	0.032 (0.088)	0.114 (0.106)
Education Difference		0.002 (0.006)	-0.0003 (0.008)	0.005 (0.008)
Age Difference		0.0002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.003)
Observations	268	268	134	134
R ²	0.001	0.006	0.011	0.023
Adjusted R ²	-0.011	-0.017	-0.020	-0.007
Residual Std. Error	0.466	0.467	0.464	0.470
F Statistic	0.065	0.251	0.344	0.761

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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