

# Who Supports an Anti-Corruption Party? Theory with Evidence from India

Simon Weschle\*

Carlos III–Juan March Institute  
`simon.weschle@duke.edu`

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## Abstract

While voters frequently lament the effect of corruption on politics, corrupt politicians get reelected with regularity. Existing work focuses on identifying *situations* in which the electorate as a whole punishes offending incumbents. In this article, I complement the literature by focusing on differences *within* the electorate: Who are the voters who cast their ballot for politicians they know to be corrupt, and who supports an anti-corruption alternative? I provide an answer to these questions by developing a simple cost-benefit model of corruption and vote choice. The empirical implications of the model are tested using novel fine-grained survey and election result data from the successful debut of India's anti-corruption party. I discuss the structural-demographic factors that foster or depress corruption voting.

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# 1 Introduction

In a speech in Mumbai in August 2014, the governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Raghuram Rajan, wondered: “[A]n important issue in the recent election was whether we had substituted the crony socialism of the past with crony capitalism (...) By killing transparency and competition, crony capitalism is harmful to free enterprise, opportunity, and economic growth. And by substituting special interests for the public interest, it is harmful to democratic expression. If there is some truth to these perceptions of crony capitalism, a natural question is why people tolerate it. Why do they vote for the venal politician who perpetuates it? (...) [E]very so often we see the emergence of a group (...) who want to clean up politics. But when these ‘good’ people stand for election, they tend to lose their deposits. Does the electorate really not want squeaky clean government?”<sup>1</sup> Because of the importance attributed to corruption in undermining democratic representation and as an impediment to economic development (e.g. Rose-Ackerman, 1999), a large number of studies evaluate how much corruption there is in different countries (for overviews see Treisman, 2000, 2007; Golden and Mahdavi, 2015) and how effective various anti-corruption policies are (e.g. Kaufmann, 1998; Rothstein, 2011; Persson, Rothstein and Teorell, 2013). But we know comparatively less about corruption and political behavior: Who are the voters that vote for politicians they know to be corrupt? And who are the voters that support an anti-corruption alternative?

In this article, I add to the literature trying to answer these questions by providing an explicit cost-benefit model of corruption and vote choice. I present a simple formal exposition of electoral competition between a number of status quo parties and an anti-corruption party. The parties put forward two competing visions of how citizens obtain transfers and benefits from the state. In the status quo, citizens have to pay bribes to receive benefits, but also receive clientelistic handouts. The anti-corruption party puts forward an alternative vision in which government transfers do not depend upon bribery and there is no clientelism. I

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<sup>1</sup>[http://rbi.org.in/scripts/BS\\_SpeechesView.aspx?Id=908](http://rbi.org.in/scripts/BS_SpeechesView.aspx?Id=908) (accessed August 21, 2015).

decompose voters' decision calculus into three components. A political entrepreneur promising limitations on the role of money in politics has support among citizens unable to benefit from corrupt exchanges (push factors). In particular, this means the young and the poor are a natural support base for anti-corruption politicians. Second, however, voters are less likely to support an anti-corruption party if they receive clientelistic benefits from the established parties (pull factors). Since the poor are the prime beneficiaries of clientelism, this means they are exposed to countervailing forces. Because the wealthy are able to afford bribes that give them access to government services and do not derive much utility from clientelistic handouts, they are likely to support status quo parties. Because of the more rigid social hierarchies that foster clientelistic relations, voters in rural areas are also pulled towards the status quo. Finally, anti-corruption candidates are less likely to receive support from voters who place emphasis on other factors in casting their vote, for example descriptive representation in terms of religion or ethnicity (salience factors).

The empirical implications of the model are then tested using novel data from India. In December 2013, the *Aam Aadmi Party*, which grew out of the *India Against Corruption* protest movement, made a stunning electoral debut in the assembly elections of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Running almost exclusively on an anti-corruption platform, it became the second-strongest party, receiving almost 30 percent of the vote, and even forming a minority government. This makes the 2013 Delhi election a unique occasion. Corruption was at the center of attention in a major election, and one party clearly and credibly stood for anti-corruption politics, competing against established parties that have relied on corruption and clientelism for decades. This provides a window of opportunity to delve deeper into studying the support basis of an anti-corruption party than has previously been the case. First, I look at *vote intentions* by analyzing three rounds of pre-election surveys with a total of almost 40,000 respondents. Second, I analyze the *election outcome* at the polling-booth level, using demographic information derived from the electoral rolls and from GIS data. Both data sources confirm the insights of the formal model. The anti-corruption

party had high levels of support among the poor and uneducated. However, this support was muted among the very poor as well as in rural areas of Delhi, where the clientelistic machine politics of the status quo parties is more effective. Support for AAP is also lower among the wealthy, who have the resources to benefit from corrupt exchanges. AAP did well among the young and members of disadvantaged castes. Finally, it did particularly poorly among Muslims, whose vote decision is crucially influenced by concerns about their status as a religious minority.

By developing a general model of corruption voting as a cost-benefit analysis, and testing its empirical implications using the specific example of a successful anti-corruption party, this article takes three steps towards advancing the growing literature on the impact of corruption on political behavior (cf. Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014). Existing studies conceptualize “corruption voting” in the same way scholars think about economic voting: Corruption is seen as a valence issue, so voters prefer less corruption to more corruption. Corrupt politicians should therefore be punished at the ballot box at the expense of non-corrupt one’s. There is evidence that overall, this holds true (Krause and Méndez, 2009). In addition, higher levels of corruption also lead to an erosion of trust in the political system (Seligson, 2002; Anderson and Tverdova, 2003) and lower turnout (Slomczynski and Shabad, 2012; Chong et al., 2015). However, corruption does not always affect elections in the expected way, as voters frequently reelect candidates they know to be corrupt (Golden, 2010; Golden and Mahdavi, 2015). Consequently, the literature focuses on specifying the conditions that enhance or attenuate the salience of corruption in elections, such as information (Ferraz and Finan, 2008; Chang, Golden and Hill, 2010; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2013; Chong et al., 2015), the state of the economy (McCann and Domínguez, 1998; Klašnja and Tucker, 2013; Zechmeister and Zizumbo-Colunga, 2013), pre-existing partisanship (Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Anduiza, Gallego and Muñoz, 2013; Eggers, 2014), clarity of responsibility (Tavits, 2007), and the level at which corruption is experienced (Gingerich, 2009; Klašnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014).

The literature therefore focuses largely on the macro-conditions under which corruption voting is present. But even if these conditions are met (there is clear evidence of incumbent corruption, a “clean” alternative is available, etc.), some voters will be more likely to vote against the corrupt status quo than others. The first contribution of this article is to complement existing research by providing an explicit theoretical account of *which* voters engage in corruption voting. By adopting a cost-benefit approach, it becomes clear which voters *prefer* state-society relations that are based on corrupt exchanges to a “squeaky clean” government. This highlights an important difference to economic voting, since almost nobody prefers low to high economic growth. A number of recent contributions also find that the parallel between corruption voting and economic voting only goes so far. Klačnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause (2014) find no evidence that corruption is an undifferentiated valence issue. Muñoz, Anduiza and Gallego (2012) argue that voters are willing to support corrupt incumbents if they perceive them to be successful otherwise (see also Rundquist, Strom and Peters, 1977). Even more pointedly, Manzetti and Wilson (2007) as well as Fernández-Vázquez, Barberá and Rivero (2015) show that voters do not punish corrupt incumbents when they receive side benefits from the illegal exchange.

The second main contribution of the article is empirical. One of the major challenges for the literature on corruption voting have been data constraints (cf. Klačnja, Tucker and Deegan-Krause, 2014). And even if there is data, it is difficult to isolate the effect of corruption on vote choice, especially because in most cases there is not a credible anti-corruption option. The 2013 elections in the National Capital Territory of Delhi that I study in this article are a best-case scenario for the study of corruption voting: The topic was at the center of attention in a major election, with an incumbent government riddled with corruption scandals, and one party clearly and credibly standing for “clean” politics. Not only is this an optimal situation to study, I am able to do so using highly disaggregated data. For vote intentions, I use a sample of almost 40,000 survey respondents. The election results are available at the polling-booth level, which on average contain less than 1050 voters. The

2013 Delhi election thus presents a unique opportunity to isolate corruption voting in a way that is usually not possible.

Finally, combining the theoretical and empirical insights, I am able to take a step towards answering the larger question of when voters punish corrupt politicians. The existing literature does a good job of identifying *situations* in which the electorate as a whole does so. By determining which groups of voters are more or less likely to vote for a “clean” alternative, I am able to say something about how the *structural* makeup of a country’s population affects its propensity to engage in corruption voting. For example, I show theoretically and empirically that urban voters are much more likely to vote against the status quo parties. While care must be taken when extrapolating from this finding and the usual disclaimers apply, it is not unreasonable to suggest that a county’s level of urbanization affects the prospects for anti-corruption politicians.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows: In the next section, I lay out a simple formal model of probabilistic corruption voting. I disaggregate the voters’ decision calculus to vote for an anti-corruption party into push, pull, and salience factors. I then provide some background on the *Aam Aadmi Party* and the 2013 Delhi elections, before deriving explicit hypotheses from the model. These are tested in two ways: Using survey data of vote intention, and using the election results at the polling booth level. I conclude with a discussion of the study’s implications for anti-corruption politics.

## **2 Who Supports Anti-Corruption Efforts? A Theoretical Framework**

Historically, political entrepreneurs with an anti-corruption platform entering the electoral arena have been among the most important agents of change in the quest for “clean” politics (Glaeser and Goldin, 2006). For example, political entrepreneurs associated with the Progressive movement had a major impact on anti-corruption reforms in the early 20th century

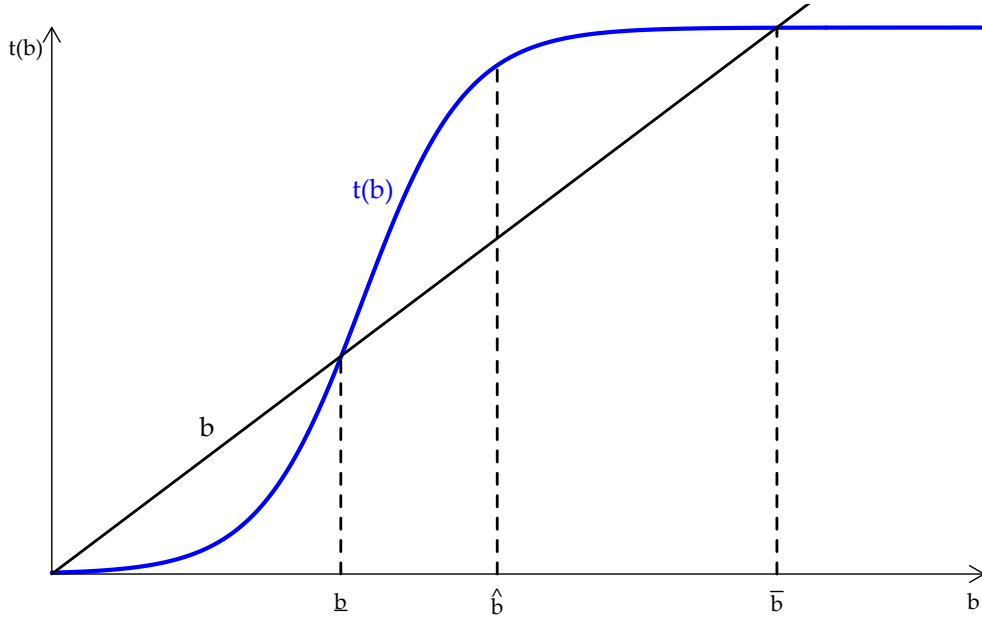
in the United States (Glaeser and Goldin, 2006; Teachout, 2014). But frustration with the influence of special interest money on politics is rife in countries throughout history and all over the world. And yet, voters return established parties to power more often than not, and anti-corruption parties or candidates are not paid much attention most of the time. Who supports anti-corruption efforts, and when are they likely to succeed? In this section, I consider a simple formal model that provides insights into this question.

## 2.1 Model Setup

Consider a voter  $i$ , who makes a decision between  $J$  political parties. The parties put forward two competing visions of how citizens obtain transfers and benefits from the state.  $J - 1$  parties represent the status quo, in which state benefits depend on the amount of bribes a citizen pays. The other competitor is an anti-corruption party, which puts forward an alternative vision of society in which government transfers do not depend upon bribery. In addition, the parties differ in their ability to deliver clientelistic benefits as well as on other policy issues. I proceed in two steps. First, I analyze the benefits a voter derives in the two versions of citizen-state relationships. In a second step, I incorporate this into a probabilistic model of vote choice.

Consider a citizen  $i$  with wealth  $w_i$  in the status quo condition, in which the benefits she receives from the government are conditional upon the size of the bribe she pays. Denote the bribe with  $b_i$  and the government transfer received in return with  $t(b_i)$ . It holds that  $t(0) = 0$ ,  $t'(b_i) > 0$ ,  $\lim_{b_i \rightarrow \infty} t(b_i) = k_1$  where  $k_1 > 0$ , and  $t''(b_i) > 0$  for  $0 \leq b < k_2$  and  $t''(b_i) < 0$  for  $k_2 < b$  where  $k_2 > 0$ . These conditions result in an S-shaped relation between bribes and benefits, as displayed in Figure 1. This functional form captures a number of important features of corrupt exchanges. If no bribes are paid, the voter gets nothing in return. Transfers are increasing in the amount of the bribe. The marginal effect of a bribe is highest at intermediate levels, so increasing it at very low and very high levels provides only a small return. Finally, there is a finite limit to the transfer as the bribe increases. This

formalization captures both “petty corruption,” such as having to pay a bribe to obtain a birth certificate or a driver’s license, as well as “grand corruption,” where very wealthy individuals or groups pay politicians for policy favors.



**Figure 1:** Transfer  $t(b)$  as a function of bribe  $b$ .

What is the optimally chosen bribe? Figure 1 shows that a bribe  $b$  only yields positive net returns if  $\underline{b} < b < \bar{b}$  and that the optimal bribe is  $\hat{b}$ , which maximizes the distance between  $t(b)$  and  $b$ . However, not every person is in a position to offer  $\hat{b}$  or even  $\underline{b}$ . Being able to pay a bribe requires disposable money. The maximal bribe a person  $i$  can pay is  $b_i^{max} = f(w_i)w_i$  where  $f(0) = 0$ ,  $f'(w) > 0$ , and  $\lim_{w \rightarrow \infty} f(w) = 1$ . This means that the share of wealth that a voter can spend on a bribe is increasing in her wealth. Poor people require most of their money for subsistence and can only use a small share, if any, to pay bribes. Wealthy people,



on the other hand, can devote a large portion of their wealth to bribes if it benefits them. It is straightforward to incorporate this constraint into the equilibrium bribe:

$$b_i^* = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \underline{b} > f(w_i)w_i \\ f(w_i)w_i & \text{if } \underline{b} \leq f(w_i)w_i < \widehat{b} \\ \widehat{b} & \text{if } \widehat{b} \leq f(w_i)w_i \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

A voter is not able to pay a bribe if her disposable income is less than  $\underline{b}$ . This prevents poor members of society from access to government services. If a voter's disposable income is larger than  $\underline{b}$ , she will either spend her entire disposable income or  $\widehat{b}$ , whichever is smaller.

In the society promised by the anti-corruption party, state transfers do not depend on bribes and are instead distributed to each citizen on an equal basis. That is, everyone can get legal documents for free, public goods replace the targeted benefits handed out on the basis of bribes, and so on. I model this as a lump-sum transfer  $\bar{x}$  that is equal for all citizens.

The decision of voter  $i$  who to vote for depends not only on the expected net benefits received from the state under the two visions advocated by the parties, but also on other characteristics. The first of these are clientelistic benefits. Many parties try to secure votes through short-term handouts such as cash, alcohol, or other gifts. Denote the clientelistic handout that voter  $i$  receives from party  $j$  by  $c_{ij}$ . Her utility is  $g(c_{ij})$ , where  $g(0) = 0$ ,  $\frac{\partial g(\cdot)}{\partial c_i} > 0$ , and  $\frac{\partial g(\cdot)}{\partial w_i} < 0$ , so a fixed handout gives higher utility to a poorer voter. The clientelistic benefits do not necessarily have to be material, they could also include avoiding the negative effects of not voting for a certain party. For example, a voter might want to avoid being ostracized in peer networks or being the target of physical violence. Voters also evaluate how well the parties represent them programatically and descriptively. I denote the summary assessment of this factor by  $Z_{ij}$ . Finally, there is a random component  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  in  $i$ 's

evaluation of  $j$ . If  $j = 1$  is the anti-corruption party, the utilities of  $i$  for voting for each party then are:

$$\begin{aligned} u_i(1) &= \bar{x} + g(c_{i1}) + Z_{i1} + \varepsilon_{i1} \\ u_i(j) &= t(b_i^*) - b_i^* + g(c_{ij}) + Z_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad \forall \quad j > 1 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

Special interest money and clientelistic campaign spending often go hand in hand (Hicken, 2011). There is a strong cross-national correlation between corruption and clientelism, and there is evidence that it is driven by the fact that politicians raise illegal funds through corruption, which are then distributed by political machines (Singer, 2014). An anti-corruption party that wants to diminish the role of money in politics will not offer such handouts, so  $c_{i1} = 0$ . For example, in the lead-up to the 2013 Delhi elections, the *Aam Aadmi Party* distributed pamphlets asking voters “not to sell their vote for liquor for the sake of the future of their children.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, I normalize  $Z_{i1} = 0$ . Assuming that  $\varepsilon_{ij}$  are independent and identically distributed draws from a Gumbel distribution (also known as the Type-I extreme-value distribution), the utilities in Equation (2) can be translated into a probabilistic voting framework (Schofield and Sened, 2006). The probability that voter  $i$  votes for the anti-corruption party is:

$$p_i(1) = \frac{\exp(\bar{x})}{\exp(\bar{x}) + \exp(t(b_i^*) - b_i^*) \sum_{j=2}^J \exp(g(c_{ij}) + Z_{ij})} \tag{3}$$

where  $b_i^*$  is given in Equation (1). For  $j > 1$ , the probability is:

$$p_i(j) = \frac{\exp(t(b_i^*) - b_i^* + g(c_{ij}) + Z_{ij})}{\exp(\bar{x}) + \exp(t(b_i^*) - b_i^*) \sum_{j=2}^J \exp(g(c_{ij}) + Z_{ij})} \tag{4}$$

In the next sections, I use these probabilities to break down the voters’ decision calculus into three components: factors that *pull* them to voting for a status quo party, factors

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<sup>2</sup>[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-12-03/news/44710593\\_1\\_aap-arvind-kejriwal-led-party-liquor](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-12-03/news/44710593_1_aap-arvind-kejriwal-led-party-liquor) (accessed August 21, 2015).

that *push* them to vote for the anti-corruption party, and factors that lower the *salience* or importance of the corruption issue for their vote.

## 2.2 Push Factors

A push factor leads voters to cast their ballot for the anti-corruption party. In Equation (3), it holds that  $\frac{\partial p_i(1)}{\partial (t(b_i^*) - b_i^*)} < 0$ . That is, the probability of voting for the anti-corruption party decreases in  $i$ 's net benefit from the service-for-bribe exchange. As derived in Equation (1), this is related to wealth. A poor voter does not have disposable income to be able to afford a sufficiently large bribe, which prevents him or her from receiving government services. For them, receiving the lump-sum payment  $\bar{x}$  is clearly preferable. Poor voters are thus a natural constituency for an anti-corruption party.

The same is true for young people, who also often do not have the necessary means to buy their way into government transfers and services either. An anti-corruption party should therefore receive disproportionate support from them. On the flip side, those who are sufficiently well off to be able to afford paying bribes derive positive net transfers from the government. They are the beneficiaries of the status quo and have an incentive to try to preserve it by voting for parties other than the anti-corruption one.

## 2.3 Pull Factors

A pull factor keeps voters from casting their ballot for the anti-corruption party, even if there might be factors pushing them to vote for it. In the simple model, this is captured by the clientelistic benefits, where it is straightforward to show that  $\frac{\partial p_i(1)}{\partial g(c_{ij})} < 0 \forall j > 1$ . That is, the probability of voting for the anti-corruption party decreases in the clientelistic benefits offered by other parties. As detailed above, such benefits could be cash or liquor handouts. They could also be the avoidance of harm inflicted for not voting for a certain party. For example, village elders or other local leaders may ostracize voters suspected of not voting the “correct” way, and they may even suffer from physical violence.

Who is particularly susceptible to pull factors? Since  $\frac{\partial g(\cdot)}{\partial w_i} < 0$ , poor voters derive more utility from a given clientelistic benefit than wealthy one's. This makes them less inclined to vote for an anti-corruption party. Of course, this is the exact opposite of the push factors, which identify the poor as benefiting the most from making access to government transfers and benefits free of bribes. Their voting behavior is thus dominated by the balance of these two effects. If the pull factors are strong enough for the very poor, we should see support for the anti-corruption party to roughly follow an inverted U: It is relatively low for the very poor, for whom clientelistic efforts have a large impact. Support then should rise with income as the push factors remain large but the effect of clientelism diminishes, before falling again for the wealthy, as they benefit from the status quo arrangement. In many contexts, especially developing countries, there should also be a clear difference in the intensity of pull factors between rural and urban areas. In the former, traditional societal hierarchies tend to be more pronounced than is the case in the city. Things should be more up for grabs for an anti-corruption party with urban voters.

## 2.4 Salience Factors

Finally, a salience factor causes voters to have priorities other than corruption when deciding who to cast their ballot for. From Equation (3), it follows readily that  $\frac{\partial p_i(1)}{\partial Z_{ij}} < 0 \forall j > 1$ . The higher a voter values a party  $j > 1$  on other issues, the less likely he or she is to vote for the anti-corruption party. For example, voters could be drawn to a party because it represents their religious or ethnic community. Political entrepreneurs running on an anti-corruption platform almost by definition do not represent other societal issues, or if they do not as much emphasis is placed on them.

### 3 Empirical Context and Hypotheses

In the previous section, I have disaggregated the decision whether to vote for an anti-corruption party into push, pull, and salience factors. In the remainder of the article, I test this model using the successful election campaign of the *Aam Aadmi Party* in the Delhi assembly elections in 2013. I first provide some background about the party and its campaign. Then, I translate the insights from the model into testable hypotheses.

#### 3.1 Background

India currently ranks 94<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries in Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, and it is widely acknowledged that the influence of special interests has increased greatly since the start of liberalization in the early 1990s (Jalan, 2007; Gowda and Sridharan, 2012; Debroy and Bhandari, 2012). Many politicians are presumed to accept illegal payments in return for legislative favors or the provision of services, and national as well as state politics have been marred by corruption scandals (Gowda and Sridharan, 2012; Bussell, 2012; Fisman, Schulz and Vig, 2014). In the words of the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Bimal Jalan: “It is no secret that politics is generally regarded as the most lucrative business in the country” (Jalan, 2007, 60).

In 2010, this led to the emergence of the *India Against Corruption* (IAC) movement. Hundreds of thousands of Indians took to the streets in protest and demanded an independent anti-corruption agency. At the end of 2012, the leadership of IAC split into two groups, centered around two of its leaders. On the one hand were those who wanted to continue the struggle against corruption from outside politics. They were lead by the face of IAC, the Gandhian activist Anna Hazare. On the other hand were those who thought it best to try to reform politics from within. They were lead by the former tax inspector Arvind Kejriwal and founded the *Aam Aadmi Party* (Common Man’s Party) on November 26, 2012. The IAC

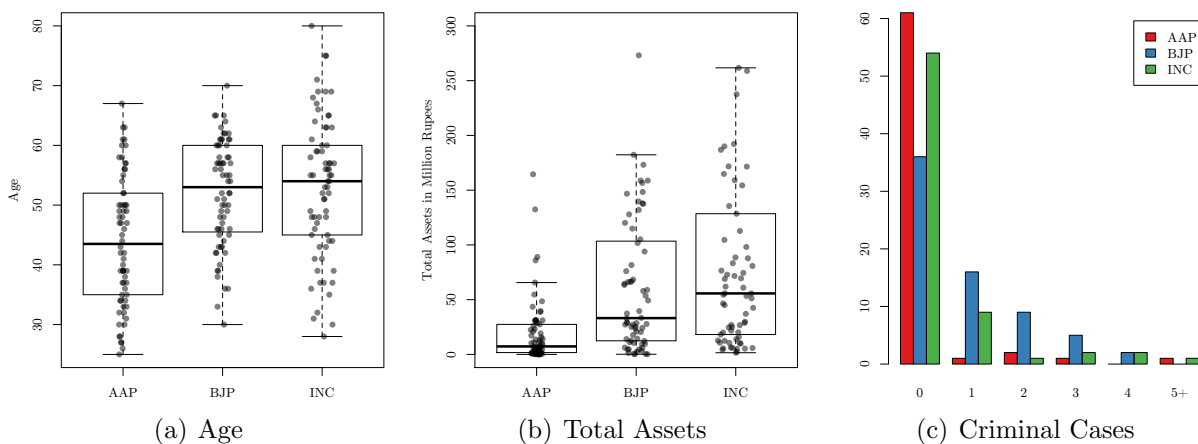
movement had the strongest support in the capital city of Delhi, so the new party quickly decided that the Delhi assembly elections due in late 2013 would be its electoral debut.

The party began reaching out to the roughly 13 million voters of the National Capital Territory in the Summer of 2013. What the party lacked in finances it tried to make up in enthusiasm. One of its major strengths was the large number of mostly young volunteers it attracted from across India and even from all over the world. Wearing easily identifiable “Gandhi caps,” popularized by Mahatma Gandhi during the Indian independence movement, they went door-to-door in Delhi’s neighborhoods, asking residents about their complaints and grievances, helping them to obtain a voter card if they did not have one, and advocating for the party’s anti-corruption policies.

These policies fall under the ideology of “Swaraj” (self-rule), which traces its origins to Mahatma Gandhi. The central pillars of “Swaraj” are a strong and independent anti-corruption ombudsman (*Jan Lokpal*) and the devolution of power to lower levels, where decisions are taken by so-called *Gram Sabhas* (Kejriwal, 2012). But the main promise of AAP was that it would run a “clean” government and stop the ubiquitous corruption in politics. In its campaign, the party took the two major players of Indian and Delhi politics, the *Indian National Congress* (INC) and the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP), head on. The INC-led governments at the national and state level provided ample room for attack. The national government under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was caught up in a number of corruption scandals. Coal blocks were allocated in an inefficient manner, creating losses which the auditor general of India estimated to be at least \$30 billion. 2G cellphone spectrum licenses were allocated in a non-transparent way at throwaway prices, leading to the arrest of telecommunications minister A. Raja, who is accused of pocketing bribes in excess of \$500 million. The Congress-led state government of Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit was an easy target as well. For example, it had overseen the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, where there were many irregularities in the allocation of contracts. Construction was severely

delayed and often of poor quality, culminating in the collapse of a pedestrian bridge near the main stadium just days before the opening ceremony.

AAP, on the other hand, promised to run a corruption-free administration. It extensively screened its candidates to try to ensure they were not engaged in dishonest or illegal activities. It mostly nominated political outsiders who had never run for office before. Figure 3 shows how the AAP candidates compare to those of BJP and INC.<sup>3</sup> AAP candidates stand out in that they are younger, have lower total assets, and fewer criminal cases registered against them.



**Figure 2:** Characteristics of the candidates for the 2013 Delhi elections of AAP, BJP, and INC.

In the summer of 2013, observers saw AAP mostly as a noisy upstart that had good intentions but would not be able to compete with the well-oiled clientelistic machines of INC and BJP. This was compounded by a number of seeming strategic blunders by AAP. In particular, the decision to have Arvind Kejriwal, by far its most prominent member, compete in the same district as Sheila Dikshit, the incumbent Chief Minister of 15 years, was seen as a grave error by many. Even though her government was involved in a number of corruption scandals, Dikshit remained popular with the population. She also contested from

<sup>3</sup>The data stem from mandatory asset and crime disclosure affidavits submitted to the *Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi* before the elections. The affidavits were digitized by an NGO called *Association for Democratic Reforms* and are available at <http://myneta.info/delhi2013/> (accessed August 21, 2015).

the New Delhi constituency, home to India's parliament, many bureaucracies, and thousands of government employees.

However, the closer the election, the more did AAP pick up support. Some opinion polls started to project that the party would be able to win a handful of seats, and then the media covered it as a three-way race. In the last weeks before the election, which took place in December 2013, BJP and INC also recognized AAP as a contender and started to actively campaign against it, which arguably put somewhat of a dent into the popularity of AAP. And of course, the clientelistic machine politics came into action in the days before the election.

Despite these late obstacles, the *Aam Aadmi Party* enjoyed a historic electoral debut. It received 2,322,330 votes, which came to a share of around 29.5 percent and resulted in 28 of the 70 seats in the state assembly. This put AAP in second place behind the BJP (33.1 percent and 31 seats) and in front of INC (24.6 percent and 8 seats). Even the gamble to pit Kejriwal directly against Sheila Dikshit in what was considered a safe constituency for her paid off: The AAP leader was given a resounding victory, receiving 44,269 votes compared to only 18,405 for the sitting Chief Minister. In the weeks following the election, the *Aam Aadmi Party* formed a minority government with the support of INC. However, the tenure of Arvind Kejriwal as Chief Minister only lasted a tumultuous 49 days, after which he abruptly resigned when the anti-corruption *Jan Lokpal* bill failed to receive a majority in the assembly.

While AAP won a historic 67 out of 70 seats when elections were held again in early 2015, the party by then seemed to have moved away from its anti-corruption ideals. Critics alleged that it fielded candidates with a reputation for corruption, clientelism, and voter intimidation. Founding members opposed to this new course were expelled from the party. Critics allege that the anti-corruption platform has been replaced by a personality cult centered around Kejriwal.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-06-07/news/50404717\\_1\\_yogendra-yadav-manish-sisodia-personality-cult](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-06-07/news/50404717_1_yogendra-yadav-manish-sisodia-personality-cult) (accessed August 21, 2015).



This makes the 2013 Delhi election a unique occasion. Corruption was at the center of attention in a major election, and one party clearly and credibly stood for anti-corruption politics, competing against two established parties that have relied on corruption and clientelism for decades. This provides a window of opportunity to delve deeper into studying the support basis of an anti-corruption party than has previously been the case. In the model in Section 2, I have broken down voters’ decision calculus into its components: factors that push them to vote for the anti-corruption party, factors that pull them to voting for the status quo, and factors that lower the relative importance of the corruption issue for their vote. In the next section, I derive explicit predictions for what groups of voters are most likely to support the *Aam Aadmi Party* in the 2013 Delhi assembly elections.

### 3.2 Hypotheses

To translate the push, pull, and salience factors that determine support for an anti-corruption party into testable predictions, I focus on a number of factors that are relevant in the Indian context. The social structure of the community that a voter is embedded in plays an important role for their vote choice, and in particular for the effectiveness of clientelistic machine politics. Such politics works with a sticks and carrots approach. Voters are enticed to vote for status quo parties by being offered money and liquor as well as social services (e.g. Wilkinson, 2007; Vaishnav, 2011; Thachil, 2014). But voters are also often exposed to pressures to vote in a certain way (Aidt, Golden and Tiwari, 2015). These pressures may be social, but can also include the threat of physical violence. This is more likely to work effectively in traditional, hierarchical communities. In the Indian context, there is a clear divide between urban and rural areas in this respect (Krishna, 2007). The outer belt in the north, west, and south of the National Capital Territory consists of rural villages with a very traditional, hierarchical societal structure. This is in contrast with the rest of the city, which is urban. While many migrants from India’s rural areas live in the city of Delhi, the social structure of their community is less rigorous. The village elders who traditionally

impose hierarchy in the villages are less present in the city, and neither are the quasi-feudal property arrangements of many village farmers. This implies that the anti-corruption AAP should have more support in Delhi's urban core than in its rural outer belt.

A person's income plays an important role on their propensity to vote for an anti-corruption party. On the one hand, poorer people who cannot afford bribes have more to gain from an arrangement in which access to government benefits is free for everyone. On the other hand, clientelistic benefits are most likely to have an effect on them, keeping them with status quo parties. This has the clear empirical implication that the wealthy will not support AAP to a high degree, as they benefit from the current arrangement. For the poor, push and pull factors work in opposite directions. If the pull effect is sufficiently strong, however, they should also be less likely to support AAP as the short-term benefits of clientelism outweigh the long-term benefits of a corruption-free government. Voters with medium income are most likely to support AAP: They are too well-off to derive much utility from clientelistic handouts, but at the same time do not have sufficient means to gain full access to corrupt politicians and government officials. The hypothesis is thus that AAP support follows an inverted U-shape.

But it is not only income and the rural/urban distinction that determines to what degree a voter is affected by push and pull factors. Another factor in India is caste. In some parts of the country, political competition is dominated by it, as many parties specialize in representing a particular one. In these places, caste is an important salience factor that should make it hard for an anti-corruption party to gain a foothold. However, in Delhi the importance of caste has receded significantly in recent years and is only a minor direct factor in political competition (Kumar, 2013). But caste is still an important socioeconomic determinant. Members of the "lower" castes are less well off than members of "higher" castes, even holding constant factors such as education. Accordingly, members of "lower" castes should be more inclined to support the *Aam Aadmi Party*. The same holds true for

age: Young voters are more likely to be pulled towards an anti-corruption party as they usually do not have the means or connections to pull strings in government.

**Table 1:** Predicted effect of variable on the probability to vote for the anti-corruption *Aam Aadmi Party*.

Variable	Predicted Effect
Rural (more)	negative
Income (higher)	positive, then negative
Caste (higher)	negative
Age (higher)	negative
Religion (Muslim)	negative

Finally, while caste is not much of a salience factor in Delhi, religion is. Hindus make up more than 80 percent of the population and Muslims about 11 percent. The latter traditionally support the Congress party heavily. Of the major parties, it stands for an agenda of secularism in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The BJP, on the other hand, defines itself explicitly as a Hindu-nationalist party. It has close ties to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS), a right-wing “hindutva” volunteer organization with paramilitary elements. For minority Muslims (as well as Sikhs, Jains, and Christians), religion plays an important role in their political choice. This should lower the relevance of concerns about corruption when deciding how to cast their vote, leading to lower support for the *Aam Aadmi Party*. Table 1 conveniently summarizes the hypotheses.

## 4 Vote Intention

The first way in which I investigate support for the *Aam Aadmi Party* in the 2013 Delhi elections is by analyzing stated vote intentions in three rounds of pre-election surveys. The big advantage of this data is that it allows for an analysis at the individual level. The major disadvantages are that the surveys were conducted before the election and that a vote intention is not the same as an actual vote. This is particularly relevant with respect to pull

factors such as clientelistic handouts or social pressure, which may not take effect until right before election day.

## 4.1 Data

I analyze three rounds of pre-election surveys. The first round was conducted in August 2013, about four months before the election, and interviewed 3372 respondents. The second round interviewed 34,427 voters in September and early October 2013. Finally, the last round was conducted a couple of weeks before the election at the end of November 2013 and had 4125 respondents. The surveys were commissioned by the *Aam Aadmi Party* to inform the strategic targeting of its campaign resources, but were conducted by the independent polling company *Cicero Associates*. The surveys followed a multi-stage stratified random sample design. From each assembly constituency, a number of polling booths were sampled. Then, 20 respondents from that booth were randomly selected by contacting every  $n^{\text{th}}$  house on the right hand, where  $n$  is the number of households in the booth divided by 20. Within each household, a Kish Grid that controlled for age group and gender was used. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using a standard-structured questionnaire. The first two rounds were publicly released by the *Aam Aadmi Party*, while the third wave was made available to me for research purposes by senior party officials.<sup>5</sup>

Given that the surveys were commissioned by the object to be studied, it is natural to ask whether they were conducted in an unbiased fashion. First, it is important to stress that respondents were not aware that AAP commissioned the surveys. Interviewers stated that they were conducting a poll for *Cicero Associates* and questions were worded in a neutral manner designed to elicit truthful responses. Importantly for my purpose, respondents indicated their intended vote choice using a dummy ballot that looks similar to the electronic voting machines used in the election. The ballot was filled out behind a screen and put

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<sup>5</sup>The designation of first, second, and third round refers to the surveys that are available to me. AAP commissioned two additional surveys, one in the spring of 2013 and one just a few days before the election. Thus, what I call the first round is actually the second round and so on.

into a sealed box. The respondent's answer was thus unknown to the interviewers and only later matched to the rest of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the vote intention question was asked at the beginning of the interview. Even if respondents were able to infer the AAP connection from later questions that asked specifically about the party, they could not have been aware of it when answering who they intend to vote for.

A second piece of evidence that speaks for the accuracy of the surveys is their estimated support level for the *Aam Aadmi Party*. While all *Cicero* polls saw AAP as a major contender, other surveys saw it gaining only a handful of the 70 seats in the assembly. The *Cicero* polls were closer to estimating the true vote shares than many other surveys released before the election. The unweighted vote share totals for AAP in the three rounds were 27 percent (first) and 36 percent (second and third). The actual percentage in the election was with 29.5 percent somewhat lower than the latter two. However, it is likely that AAP lost ground in the last couple of weeks of the campaign (see above). Either way, the *Cicero* polls compare favorably to those conducted by *ABP News-AC Nielsen*, *India TV-CVoter-Times Now*, and *Hindustan Times-C Fore*, which estimated the AAP vote share to be between 15 and 20 percent.<sup>6</sup> They are roughly on par with polls done by *India TV-CVoter* and *CNN-IBN*, *The Week* and *CSDS*, which predicted 24 and 28 percent, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

Since my focus is not on the dynamics of the campaign, I aggregate all three waves together, resulting in a sample of 37,764 respondents with complete data. The dependent variable is vote intention, which I recode into four categories: the incumbent INC, the Hindu-nationalist mainstream BJP, the anti-corruption AAP, and all other parties.

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<sup>6</sup><http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Delhi-assembly-polls-Surveys-predict-a-hung-House/articleshow/22351904.cms>, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/specials/coverage/myindia-myvote/chunk-ht-ui-myindiamyvote-delhi/aap-to-spoil-the-party-for-cong-bjp-surveys/sp-article10-1158040.aspx>, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/delhi-prepoll-survey-congress-to-retain-power-as-aap-sweeps-up-bjp-votes/423066-37-64.html> (all accessed August 21, 2015).

<sup>7</sup><http://www.indiatvnews.com/politics/national/bjp-rajasthan-polls-hung-assembly-delhi-india-tv-cvoter-survey-12590.html>, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/prepoll-survey-hung-assembly-in-delhi-as-aap-hits-bjp-congress-hard/431438-3-244.html> (both accessed August 21, 2015).

## 4.2 Variables

Section 3.2 identified the financial situation of a voter as an important determinant of the push and pull factors that determine support for AAP. To minimize measurement error, I divide the monthly income variable into ten deciles, which enter the regression as a set of dummies. Caste is measured in three categories: Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (SC/ST), other backward class (OBC), and Other. The first are the former “untouchables,” the historically most disadvantaged groups in India that receive special protection to ensure their representation (see Jensenius, 2015). The second are also castes which are educationally and socially disadvantaged, but do not receive the same degree of protection as scheduled castes and tribes. I also include a variable of the respondents’ age in years. Religion is divided into three categories: Hindu, Muslim, and Other.

As additional controls, I include education in nine categories,<sup>8</sup> gender, the number of adults and the number of children in the respondents’ households, and a set of survey wave dummies to control for common time effects. I am unable to include whether the respondent lives in a rural or urban community, as location information was withheld for privacy reasons. A table with summary statistics for all variables is provided in the Online Appendix.

## 4.3 Statistical Model

Because the response is a categorical variable with four categories, I estimate a multinomial logistic regression model where the probabilities that respondent  $i$  intends to vote for party  $j$  is modeled as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} P(Y_i = 1) &= \frac{1}{1 + \sum_{j=2}^J \exp(X_i \beta_j)} \\ P(Y_i = j) &= \frac{\exp(X_i \beta_j)}{1 + \sum_{j=2}^J \exp(X_i \beta_j)} \quad \forall \quad j > 1 \end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

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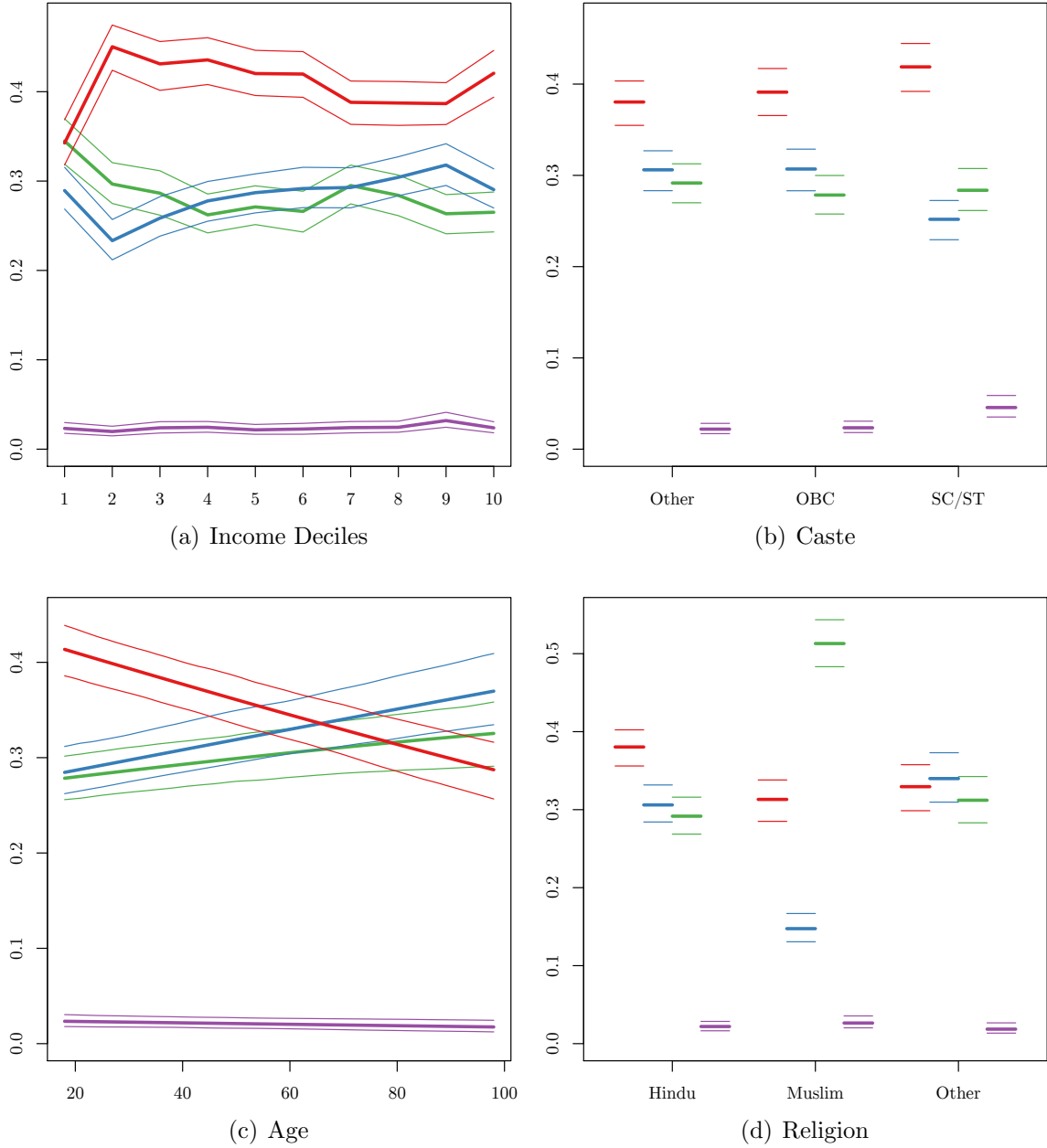
<sup>8</sup>Non-literate, below primary, passed primary but not middle school, passed middle school but not matriculation (high school degree), passed matriculation, went to college or did intermediate education but did not finish, graduated from college, post-graduate education, and professional degree or higher research.

where INC serves as the baseline category  $j = 1$ . The vector  $X_i$  includes all variables discussed above. The multinomial model estimates three sets of coefficients for each variable that have to be interpreted relative to the baseline category. Since the table of coefficients is therefore not easily interpretable, I relegate it to the Online Appendix. Instead, I discuss the results in the form of predicted probabilities.

## 4.4 Results

**Income:** The probability of voting for the *Aam Aadmi Party* is predicted to be highest at intermediate levels of income. Very poor voters are pulled towards established parties through clientelistic politics, while very wealthy voters can afford to pay bribes that provide them access to any government services they may need. The first panel of Figure 3 plots the predicted probabilities of voting for the different parties as a function of income deciles. All other variables are held at their mean or mode, respectively. The probabilities for AAP are in red. All else equal, respondents in the lowest decile are less likely to vote for the anti-corruption party than the ones in any other decile. This is consistent with the argument that clientelism is most effective for the poor. The predicted probability of intending to vote for AAP then increases for the second decile, before it starts to fall again, especially after the fourth decile. There is a slight uptick for the highest decile. Overall, the findings support the hypothesis that a combination of push and pull factors make those with low and high incomes less likely to vote for an anti-corruption party.

The relation between income and support for the other parties is as expected. The Congress Party has the highest expected vote share among the three lowest deciles, with support declining almost linearly in income. For the BJP, support is low among the poor and increasing in income, consistent with its traditional standing as a middle-class party. However, note that it enjoys relatively high support in the lowest income decile, again suggesting the importance of clientelistic handouts for the very poor (see also Thachil, 2014).



**Figure 3:** Effect of income, caste, age, and religion on vote intention for AAP (red), BJP (blue), INC (green) and other candidates (purple). Predicted probabilities with all other variables held at their mean or mode, with 95 percent confidence intervals.

The Online Appendix shows a very similar pattern for all parties looking at education, which is obviously correlated with income.

**Caste:** For caste, the hypothesis was that members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) as well as of Other Backward Castes (OBC) are more likely to vote for



AAP. The second panel of Figure 3 shows the predicted probabilities. While AAP enjoys high support in all three categories, it is lowest for voters who are not members of a disadvantaged caste. Support rises a few percentage points for those belonging to one of the OBCs. As predicted, support for AAP is highest in the most disadvantaged castes, where the predicted probability of a vote for it is more than 40 percent. Support for INC and BJP exhibits the opposite pattern and decreases for the disadvantaged castes. Other parties play a role only among SC/ST members, where the BSP has some support.

**Age:** Young people often do not have the means to buy their way into government transfers and services, so they are a natural constituency for an anti-corruption party. As the third panel shows, AAP does indeed draw a lot of support from young voters. Age has a clear negative effect, with the probability of intending to vote for AAP going from around 40 percent at age 18 to less than 30 percent for those aged 80 or older. The opposite is true for the two established status quo parties, where support rises with age.

**Religion:** Finally, an anti-corruption party should have difficulty gaining ground among voters who care deeply about other issues that are represented by a status quo party. In India, religion is one of those issues, especially among minority Muslims. I hypothesized that their traditionally heavy support for the secular INC would make it difficult for AAP to gain a foothold. The fourth panel of Figure 3 shows the predicted probabilities. AAP enjoys high support among Hindus, with the BJP and the INC roughly on par behind. Minority Muslims, however, overwhelmingly support the INC. All else equal, the predicted probability of voting for Congress is more than 50 percent, while the BJP only achieves about 15 percent. The fact that religion plays such an important role in vote choice among Muslims in Delhi affects the anti-corruption AAP: Despite concerted efforts to court Muslim voters, their predicted probability of voting for it is only about 30 percent. For members of other religious groups (mainly Sikhs, Jains, and Christians), the three parties have roughly equal support, although AAP also does worse among them compared to Hindus.

## 5 Election Results

The micro-level study of vote intentions has shown that likely AAP voters are poor but not very poor, member of disadvantaged castes, young, and non-Muslim. But the polls were conducted before the election, and both AAP and INC received fewer votes on election day than one might predict based on the surveys. In particular, the sticks and carrots of clientelism only go into full force in the days or even hours before the election takes place. In this section, I analyze the election results at the fine-grained polling booth level.

### 5.1 Data

There were 11,753 polling booths for the Delhi elections, each serving an average of 1046 voters.<sup>9</sup> Figure 4 plots the results for AAP, INC, BJP, and other parties, with booths in the same location aggregated together. Green indicates a high percentage and red a low percentage. In some booths, AAP gained more than 75 percent of the votes, while it barely reached 10 percent in others. The vote shares for the other parties also show heterogeneity. Can this variation be explained by push, pull, and salience factors? After excluding cases with incomplete information and extreme outliers, I have a sample of 10,848 polling booths to analyze.

Data for the independent variables comes from three sources. Information about the demographic composition of the polling booths is taken from the official electoral roll published by the *Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi*.<sup>10</sup> They consist of a document for each booth, listing the names of all registered voters as well as their address, age, and gender. The geographical location of each booth is taken from Susewind (2014) based on data provided by the *Election Commission of India*.<sup>11</sup> Finally, additional assembly constituency information is taken from official publications of the *Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi*.<sup>12</sup>

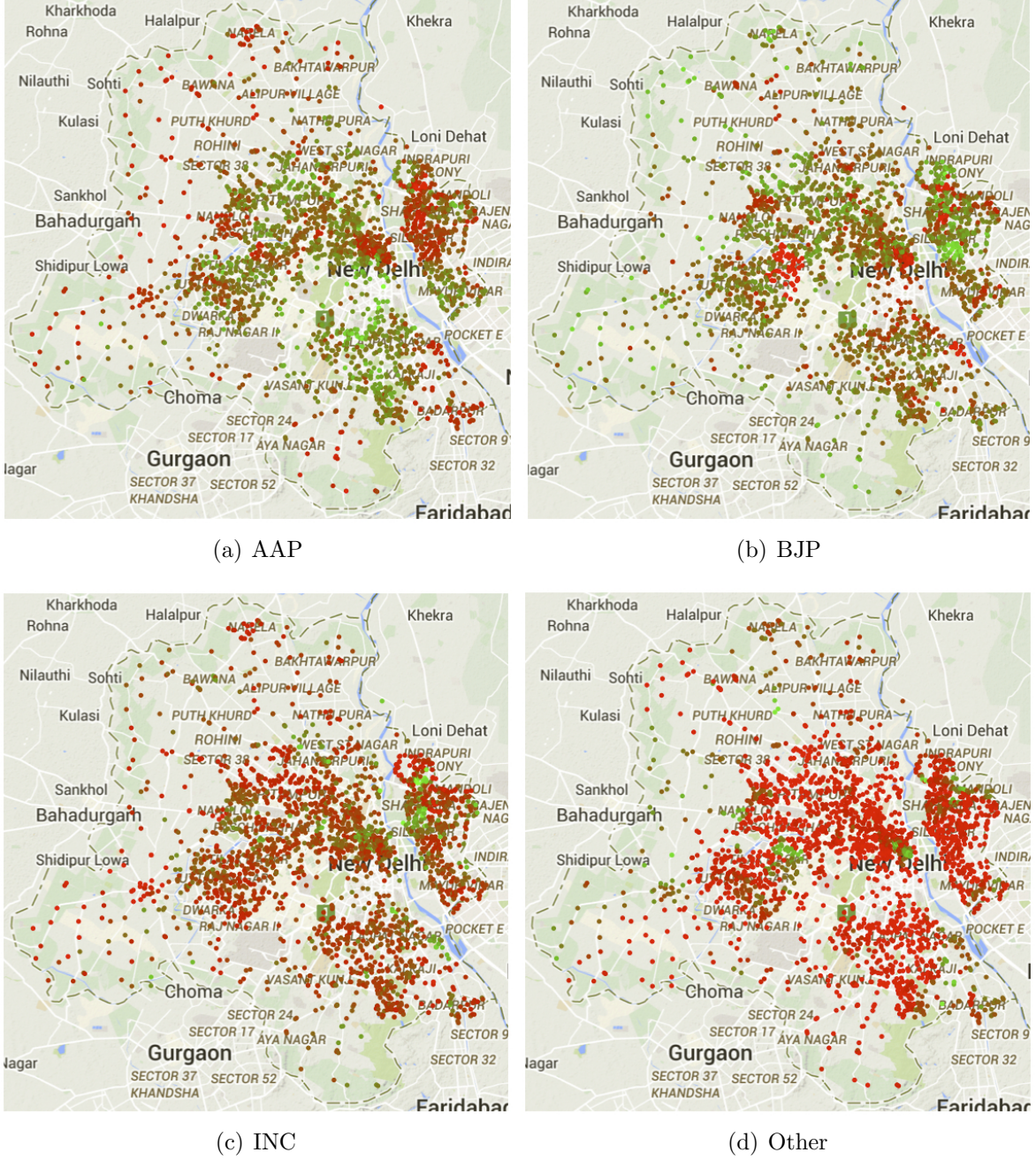
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<sup>9</sup>Booth-wise results are published by the *Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi*, see <http://ceodelhi.gov.in/Content/pastelection.aspx> (accessed August 21, 2015).

<sup>10</sup><http://ceodelhi.gov.in/Content/Erolls.aspx> (accessed August 21, 2015).

<sup>11</sup><http://psleci.nic.in> (accessed August 21, 2015).

<sup>12</sup><http://ceodelhi.gov.in/Content/Nomi.aspx> (accessed August 21, 2015).



**Figure 4:** Booth-wise election results for AAP, BJP, INC, and other parties, Delhi 2013 elections. Green=high percentage, red=low percentage.

## 5.2 Variables

It is important to keep in mind that even though the booth-level gives results at a low level of aggregation, the ecological inference problem still persists. Associations at an aggregate

level do not always allow us to infer the behavior of individuals (Robinson, 1950; King, 1997). However, if the results from this section point in the same direction as the findings of the pre-election surveys, we can be more certain about the determinants of support for an anti-corruption party.

I analyze the election results in a two-step process. First, I focus on the effect of locality (urban/rural), which I was not able to do with the survey due to data limitations. The outer belt in the north, west, and south of Delhi consists of rural villages with a very traditional, hierarchical societal structure. This is in contrast with the rest of the city, which is urban. As I show in the Online Appendix, the distance from Delhi's center (Connaught Place) is a good proxy for how rural a community is. It will become clear that AAP was unable to gain any foothold in the rural parts of Delhi and did not win a single seat.

In a second step, I therefore restrict the analyses after that to the urban constituencies. For the independent variables that measure pull, push, and salience factors, I use a number of demographic indicators of the voters in the polling station. Because Census data is not available at the fine-grained polling station level, I use GIS data as well as information contained in the official electoral roll in innovative ways to derive estimates of the sociodemographic characteristics of the polling stations.

The best proxy for wealth in the urban Delhi context is population density. In the wealthier areas of Delhi, a few families share an apartment building or even live in their own house.<sup>13</sup> These are sometimes surrounded by a private garden, or at the very least there are a number of well-manicured parks. In slums, thousands of people live together in small huts, with narrow lanes between them, and no amenities such as green spaces to speak of. Because the polling stations are located in close proximity to the voters they serve, their density in turn provides information about population density. Using their longitude and latitude, I compute the average distance of a polling booth to the five nearest stations. The

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<sup>13</sup>There are almost no high-rise buildings in Delhi, especially not of residential nature. This is an important condition for using population density as a proxy of wealth.

bigger this distance, the less densely populated and wealthier the area. Because the effect is predicted to be an inverted U, I also include the squared distance.

The pre-election surveys have shown that Muslims gravitated overwhelmingly towards the secular INC. Religion plays an important role in their decision who to vote for, trumping concerns about corruption they may have. I use the voter roll to derive an estimate of the prevalence of Muslim voters in a polling station. First, I take a list of common Muslim first names in India from the website [www.indiachildnames.com](http://www.indiachildnames.com). Then, I compute the similarity between the first name of each voter and the about 4380 common Muslim names and record the highest match. I use a similarity measure based on the Levenshtein distance, which is a string metric for quantifying the difference between two sequences. Intuitively, it is the minimum number of insertions, deletions or substitutions that are required to change one sequence into the other. To make them comparable, I use the following similarity measure:

$$1 - \frac{d(s1, s2)}{\max(A, B)} \quad (6)$$

where  $d$  is the Levenshtein distance function,  $s1$  and  $s2$  are the two strings, and  $A$  and  $B$  are their lengths.<sup>14</sup> A value of unity indicates a perfect match. A value of zero means that to turn the first name into the second the number of insertions, deletions or substitutions is equal to the number of characters of the longer name. For each polling station, I create a variable with the average highest similarity score.

The other two variables capturing push and pull factors in Table 1 were age and caste. Information on the age composition of the voters in the polling station is available from the official electoral rolls. I create a variable measuring the percentage of voters aged 25 or younger, and a variable measuring the percentage aged 50 or older. As a control, I also measure the gender composition as the percentage of voters who are female. However, both of these variables are more likely to be subject to the ecological inference problem than the

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<sup>14</sup>Computation was done using the `levenshteinDist` function in the **R** package `RecordLinkage` (Sariyar and Borg, 2010).

other one's. People of similar wealth and religion tend to cluster in space, and the same is of course true for rural/urban. But within localities, people of different gender and age live in the same household, so booth-level aggregations are unlikely to be informative.

I also include a control indicator whether the assembly constituency is reserved for candidates that are members of the scheduled castes and tribes. It is important to note that a reserved constituency does not necessarily have more SC/ST voters than those who are not reserved. This variable should thus not be interpreted as evidence for caste voting behavior. A table with summary statistics for all variables is provided in the Online Appendix.

### 5.3 Statistical Model

The dependent variable is the quadruple of the vote shares of INC, BJP, AAP, and all other parties at the polling booth level. To analyze such compositional data, I estimate a Dirichlet regression model. We model  $Y_i \sim D(\mu_i, \phi)$ , where  $i \in \{1, \dots, 4\}$  are the vote shares for the four parties with  $i = 1$  being INC,  $\mu_i$  is the party-specific mean and  $\phi$  is the precision. These two parameters are modeled as

$$\begin{aligned} g_\mu(\mu_i) &= X\beta_i \\ g_\phi(\phi) &= Z\gamma \end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

where  $g_\mu(\cdot)$  and  $g_\phi(\cdot)$  are the two link functions. The standard approach is to choose the logit function for  $g_\mu(\cdot)$  and the log for  $g_\phi(\cdot)$ . To make the model identifiable, we set  $\beta_1 = 0$ . The precision parameter is simply modeled by an intercept. The expected values are

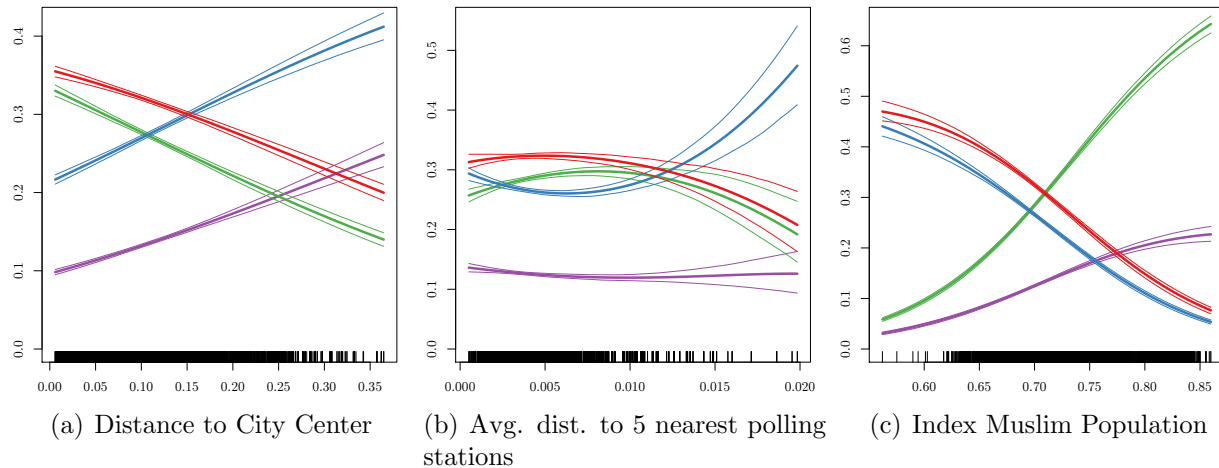
$$\begin{aligned} \mu_1 &= \frac{1}{1 + \sum_{j=2}^4 \exp(X\beta_j)} \\ \mu_i &= \frac{\exp(X\beta_i)}{1 + \sum_{j=2}^4 \exp(X\beta_j)} \quad \forall \quad i \in \{2, 3, 4\} \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

For ease of interpretation, I again discuss the impact of the different variables using predicted probabilities.

## 5.4 Results

**Urban and Rural Constituencies:** In pre-election polls, factors pulling voters away from voting for an anti-corruption party are not in full effect: clientelistic handouts as well as threats for a “wrong” vote are only made in the last days before the election. I have stressed that voters embedded in a more traditional rural environment should attribute more weight to the pull factors and thus be likely to support one of the status quo parties.

A visual inspection of the AAP vote shares shown in Figure 4 already suggests the overwhelming power of pull factors in rural areas, as the dots are red almost throughout. Even though the outskirts of Delhi are mostly inhabited by impoverished farmers that could benefit from a reduction of corruption in government, the *Aam Aadmi Party* was unable to get a foothold there. The first panel of Figure 5 plots the expected vote share as a function of distance to the city center (Connaught Place) in radian degrees.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 5:** Effect of 3 variables on polling station vote share for AAP (red), BJP (blue), INC (green) and other candidates (purple). Predicted vote shares with all other variables held at their mean or mode, with 95 percent confidence intervals.

It shows that AAP performs best in the center of the city and that its vote share decreases the further the polling station is located away from it. All else equal, the expected vote share decreases from 35 percent in the urban center to only about 20 percent in the rural outskirts.

<sup>15</sup>The table with the results of the regression can be found in the Online Appendix.

The INC also did best in urban localities. The BJP, however, exhibits the exact opposite pattern. As Panel (b) in Figure 4 shows, its strongholds were the rural outskirts of the city, where it was able to rely on a well-functioning clientelistic machine. Accordingly, the predicted vote share of the BJP is only around 20 percent in polling stations at the city center, but over 40 percent in the distant rural booths.<sup>16</sup>

In the rural areas, the results were largely determined by pull factors that left the *Aam Aadmi Party* unable to win a seat in any of the constituencies. All of its 28 seats were won in urban constituencies, where the organization of communities is less hierarchical. But Figure 4 shows that there still is considerable variance in the performance of AAP in these areas. For example, it did very well in South Delhi, but not well at all in the north-east of the city. To analyze the factors determining the results, I henceforth restrict the sample to 9,106 urban polling stations.<sup>17</sup>

**Population Density:** The second panel of Figure 5 shows the predicted vote share as a function of population density, measured by the average distance to the five nearest polling stations. The smaller the distance, the higher the density, and the lower the level of wealth of the voters in that polling station. The effect of on AAP performance roughly follows an inverted U-shape, similar to the effect income had at the individual level (although less pronounced). Support for the anti-corruption party is high in somewhat dense areas, lower for very dense areas, and much lower in urban places where polling stations are located far away from each other. Conversely, support for the BJP is high in areas of low density, consistent with its image as a middle-class party, and in areas of very high density, consistent with the idea that its strong clientelistic machine is able to deliver the votes of the very poor. Again, this mirrors the findings of the pre-election surveys. Together with the finding that the BJP won almost the entire rural countryside, this supports the theoretical notion that vote choice between the status quo and an anti-corruption party is determined by the interplay of push and pull factors.

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<sup>16</sup>These findings hold when including a full set of control variables, see the Online Appendix.

<sup>17</sup>For a map of urban and rural polling stations, see the Online Appendix.



**Religion:** Finally, the third panel of Figure 5 shows the effect of the presence of a large Muslim population. The proxy for this is the average highest similarity score between the names of the voters registered at the polling station and a list of common Muslim first names. The finding of the surveys are confirmed. All else equal, moving from the smallest to the largest average highest similarity score increases the vote share for the secular INC by around 60 percent. The same move decreases the expected vote share of the Hindu-nationalist BJP and the anti-corruption AAP by around 40 percent each. This confirms that besides pull and push factors, the salience effect is also important. Voters who place emphasis on factors such as religious affinities are less inclined to support an anti-corruption party.

## 6 Discussion

This article has started out by quoting Raghuram Rajan, who wondered whether voters do not want a “squeaky clean” government. By analyzing the prominent example of the *Aam Aadmi Party*, I have provided some answers to this question. Using pre-election surveys as well as the polling station-wise election results, I have shown that support for an anti-corruption party is determined by a combination of push, pull, and salience factors. In the 2013 Delhi elections, the *Aam Aadmi Party* did best among voters with intermediate income levels and the young, who suffer the most from the status quo as they cannot afford to bribe their way into government services and benefits. This pushes them to vote for an anti-corruption alternative. The reason why “squeaky clean” politicians often fare poorly can be explained by push factors being outweighed by pull and salience factors. AAP did not gain much ground among the wealthy, who have the resources to benefit from the current arrangement. They also did less well among the very poor and with rural voters, which is the effect of pull factors: For them, the utility of clientelistic benefits is highest and they are most susceptible to social pressures, so they can be “bought off” or intimidated into supporting status quo parties. Finally, voters who care deeply about other issues and therefore attribute

lower salience to corruption are less inclined to support a party running on an anti-corruption platform. In Delhi, this shows among Muslims, a religious minority which overwhelmingly supports the party that stands for a secular India.

The existing literature focuses on *situations* in which corruption is likely to play an important role in voters' decision calculus. In this article, I was able to identify *which* voters are more or less likely to vote for a "clean" alternative. This allows for a better understanding of the conditions under which anti-corruption parties can be successful. A first condition for the success of political entrepreneurs with an anti-corruption platform is that a big enough segment of the population is negatively affected by the bribes-for-services arrangement. According to a recent survey by *Transparency International*, a large share of the population in many countries think that their government is largely controlled by special interests. Countries where more than 50 percent think so include Israel, Italy, Spain, the United States, Mexico, and India.

A second condition, however, is that status quo parties are unable to sway a large enough share of voters through clientelistic means. First and foremost, this means an urbanized environment. In rural areas where society is organized in a traditional, hierarchical manner, status quo parties have an easier time to mobilize their vote banks through handouts of cash and goods, but also through fear and intimidation. In cities, these traditional structures are less ingrained. This does not bode well for the chances of an India-wide anti-corruption party. Only 32 percent of India's population currently lives in an urban setting, placing the country 176<sup>th</sup> out of 211 countries listed in the *World Bank* data, well below the average of about 59 percent.<sup>18</sup> And indeed, after its success in the 2013 Delhi elections, the AAP engaged in an aggressive expansion course for the national elections in 2014. It contested for 432 seats, but ended up winning only four of them. In 414 constituencies, AAP candidates lost their deposits for failing to secure at least one sixth of the votes. Chances for anti-corruption parties to make a national impact are better in more urbanized countries such

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<sup>18</sup><http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS> (accessed August 21, 2015).

as Brazil (85 percent), Mexico (79 percent), or South Africa (64 percent). While the AAP had much support in urban areas, it did less well among the very poor and the wealthy. This suggests that another condition that fosters the success of anti-corruption parties is a sufficiently large middle class.

Finally, anti-corruption parties can only succeed when enough voters are open to basing their vote choice at least partly on the corruption issue. That is, if political competition is dominated by long-standing concerns about e.g. descriptive representation in terms of religion or ethnicity, status quo parties will have an easier time retaining voters even in the face of dissatisfaction with widespread corruption (e.g. South Africa).

Going forward, I see two immediately important areas for further study. First, it is necessary to apply the general theoretical framework developed in this article to other empirical settings. While a clear anti-corruption alternative like the AAP in 2013 may not be present elsewhere, many countries have seen large-scale protest movements. Can these protesters be described by the model I presented in this article? Second, I have emphasized that most existing contributions study situations that make the electorate as a whole more likely to focus on corruption. A central contribution of this article is that it focuses instead on differences between voters in how likely they are to vote against corruption. Of course, I do so in a situation in which corruption is highly salient and was in fact the most important topic in the campaign. Future research should attempt to connect these two lines of inquiry: Given different levels of overall salience, which groups of voters are most likely to vote against corrupt incumbents? Which groups drive the aggregate salience level? Finding answers to these questions will make it possible to combine individual-level and aggregate-level evidence, taking a step towards a unified theory of corruption voting.

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