Elite Responses to Ethnic Diversity and Interethnic Contact

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How do political elites' views of ethnic outgroups change in response to increased elite ethnic diversity and interethnic contact? Political elites serve critical roles as elected representatives and public figures, but we do not know whether existing work on the effects of ethnic diversity and contact among citizens can be extended to include elites. I argue that political elites work in a competitive environment wherein increased ethnic diversity can promote ethnic animosity and worsen outgroup views. Shared interests in maximizing resource distribution leads to positive interethnic contact, improving outgroup views. I test these arguments with original data from municipal government committee members in India. I show that increased committee diversity does not negatively impact elites' views of the outgroup, while interethnic contact generally improves outgroup views. Increased ethnic diversity is, therefore, a promising avenue for improving elite outgroup views if leaders can encourage elites to engage in interethnic contact.

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How do political elites' outgroup views change in response to ethnic diversity and interethnic contact? To some extent, ethnic diversity seems to take a back seat to political calculations. Sitting around a conference table in Delhi Secretariat, state cabinet ministers and bureaucrats arguing over who to blame for local pollution problems all agreed that the answer was to do anything to shift responsibility to other states, choosing to unify across ethnic differences in the hope that all would electorally benefit. As a prominent scholar of Indian ethnicity told me, "although the ritually symbolic hierarchies [of ethnicity] might be maintained — the ethnic minority elected official might sit on the floor — but sharing the money will be the same."[1] Does having similar political aspirations act to promote meaningful changes to elites' views of ethnic outgroups?

Scholars have long studied the ways in which ethnic diversity and interethnic contact may influence views of ethnic outgroups. In this work, citizens are the unit-of-analysis and the effects of diversity and contact on outgroup views are mixed (Pettigrew et al., 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). Political elites are critical actors whose responses to intra-elite ethnic diversity and contact have not previously been studied. Elite interactions provide a real-world substantive test of the contact hypothesis in a highly salient setting where resulting outgroup views can have major impacts on a large number of citizens (Paluck and Green, 2009).

Many international organizations and public policy practitioners make policy recommendations based on the assumption that political elites react to intra-elite diversity and outgroup contact by improving views of the outgroup. Indeed, promoting ethnic representation as a way to improve citizen views of the outgroup works only if elites respond favorably to increased ethnic diversity and opportunities for contact among their ranks (Sisk, 1996). Wilkinson (2000) shows that this is not always the case: in India during the times where elites operated in a consociational coalition, ethnic violence increased (see also Adeney and Swenden, 2019; Lustick, 1997). This push for ethnic representation is not only limited to

[1]Respondent 7. 2020. Interviewed by Author. Chennai.

national-level elites. Ethnic diversity and contact also impact the provision of basic services in towns and municipalities (Ejdemyr, Kramon and Robinson, 2018; Nathan, 2016).

Previous research has examined the conditions that lead to increased ethnic diversity among elites (e.g., Arriola and Johnson, 2014; Francois, Rainer and Trebbi, 2015) and whether elite ethnic diversity succeeds in preventing the outbreak of large scale civil conflict (e.g., Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003). Instead of focusing on the process or citizen impacts of elite diversity, I study the effects of elite diversity and contact on elite outgroup opinions and behavior. In societies where ethnicity is a salient cleavage, political elites' views of ethnic outgroups factor into their decision-making, resulting in either increased ethnic inclusion and minority-friendly public policies or animosity and exclusionary policies (Habyarimana et al., 2007; Lee, 2018; White, Nathan and Faller, 2015).

Understanding how elites react to ethnic diversity and contact is critical for promoting widespread ethnic tolerance. Parry (1969, 13) defines elites as those who "play an exceptionally influential part in political and social affairs." Elites may react to ethnic diversity and contact differently from citizens because elites have different political preferences (e.g., Luna and Zechmeister, 2005). Elites are calculating political actors who are willing to cooperate with political rivals if doing so can help them achieve their goals (Gilens and Page, 2014). Yet, elites also have stable preferences that mean that they are less likely to be influenced by ethnic diversity (Jennings, 1992).

Apart from simply thinking about political issues differently, elites' relationships and the impact of ethnic diversity and contact on their views of outgroups can influence substantive policy changes, impacting thousands of constituents. If elites worsen their views of outgroups as a result of increased ethnic diversity, grave consequences can follow. Vitriolic elite rhetoric about outgroups can incite unrest and ethnic animosity among citizens (Kaufman, 1996). Citizen support for multi-ethnic parties, minority welfare programs, and collective action are all deeply influenced by how elites act (Chandra, 2000; Perez, 2015). Hence, diversity and contact among elites must be theorized and tested on its own.

I focus on political elites in legislative committees and study how ethnic diversity among elites and contact between them influence elites' views of ethnic outgroups. While I argue that the level of ethnic diversity — both the number of ethnically diverse elites and whether elites' attention is drawn to committee ethnic diversity — still exacerbates differences between ethnic groups, elite relationships in legislative committees are structured so that contact is likely to improve views of the outgroup. To test these hypotheses, I conduct a survey experiment and an observational study with municipal legislative committee members in India, the world's largest democracy. The Indian case allows me to sample from a large population of elite politicians with varying levels of diversity present in the committees to which they belong. I focus on how ethnic diversity and contact impact outgroup views as measured by affect toward the committee, perceptions of the committee, and outgroup attitudes. I find that committee diversity does not have the widespread negative effects on elite outgroup views that many have feared. Increased interethnic contact does improve elite outgroup attitudes, but worsens intra-elite committee relationships. Hence, promoting interethnic contact among elites can be an effective way to include diverse ethnic groups in government while reducing the impact on views of the outgroup.

Theory

"The belief in [ethnic] power-sharing as a miracle formula is not rare" (Mehler, 2009, 454). International organizations have long highlighted the important role that ethnic diversity may play in turning ethnic tensions into positive outgroup relationships (Binningsbo, 2013). Practitioners have advocated for increasing elite ethnic diversity in all types of multi-ethnic democracies (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003; Rothchild, 1997; Sisk, 1996). For example, the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) proclaims that "States should strive for adequate representation of the diverse groups in their society ... in all relevant structures of public administration" in order to provide "a sense of shared belonging"

(OSCE, 2012, 18, 46). In essence, the OSCE is calling for increased elite ethnic diversity in order to promote ethnic inclusion (Andeweg, 2000; Lemarchand, 2007).

A countervailing literature calls into question the effectiveness of ethnically diverse elites in multi-ethnic societies. Scholars have noted the short-lived nature of many multi-ethnic governing bodies (Spears, 2000) and the potentially perverse incentive structures that they promote (Tull and Mehler, 2005). Even in cases where elite ethnic diversity appears to be successful, there are troubling signs that minority groups are still disadvantaged within government (Lemarchand, 2007).

This lack of theoretical clarity calls for a more systematic investigation of the effects of ethnic diversity and contact on views of ethnic outgroups among elites. Drawing on an extensive literature investigating dynamics of diversity and contact among citizens (e.g., Laurence, 2014; Laurence, Schmid and Hewstone, 2018), I argue that elite ethnic diversity alone is not sufficient to promote positive outgroup views. Ethnic diversity instead worsens outgroup views by bringing together ethnic groups whose members believe that they have little in common with one another, reinforcing between group differences and failing to improve outgroup relationships. However, elites have political incentives to engage in cooperative interethnic contact which promotes positive outgroup views because of shared political goals (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000).

I conceptualize elite ethnic diversity as the equitable distribution of political positions across ethnic groups. In particular, I look at how power is shared among ethnic groups in legislative committees. This emphasizes the results of elite ethnic diversity, instead of studying written agreements that may or may not be adhered to (see Lustick, 1997). Political positions are the currency of ethnic power-sharing: failure to prioritize including minority groups in these positions fundamentally calls into question whether politicians value ethnic diversity (Spears, 2013). I assume that ethnic distinctions in contexts where ethnic diversity is being changed are at least moderately salient, otherwise the act of sharing power is politically irrelevant.

Elite Responses to Diversity

Though never focused specifically on elite behavior, a long literature has theorized about how diversity may influence views of the outgroup (e.g., van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). The vast majority of existing scholarship has argued that increasing diversity — absent interethnic contact — worsens outgroup views. There is substantial debate about this finding, with ethnic diversity producing positive effects in some specific contexts (Gundelach, 2014) and many authors arguing that theoretical and methodological (Hooghe et al., 2009) nuance is required to interpret the litany of results.

Elites form a relatively small group in society. Dinesen and Sønderskov (2015) argue that this means that ethnic diversity is particularly likely to worsen outgroup views because the number of group members is small. Absent contact, elites operate independently or in co-ethnic groups. Indeed, elite ethnic factionalization is a major concern because resource distribution often occurs through ethnic groups (Chandra, 2004). So while I claim later that elites often have incentives to engage in contact, ethnic diversity without contact is common.

I argue that elite ethnic diversity worsens outgroup views through two complimentary mechanisms: lack of familiarity with non-coethnics (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2002) and incompatability between ethnic groups (Bobo, 1988). Lack of familiarity with non-coethnics causes individuals to prioritize and promote ingroup identities, essentially turning individuals toward their ingroup when they are exposed to diversity (Putnam, 2007; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Incompatibility of interests means that individuals from different ethnic groups view themselves as distinct (Brief et al., 2005; Koopmans and Veit, 2014; Stolle, Soroka and Johnston, 2008) and see the need to compete for finite resources (Bobo, 1988). Both of these mechanisms exacerbate differences between ethnic groups, and these differences are what breeds negative outgroup views. The result is a lack of cooperation among elites and worsened views of outgroups (Mehler, 2009; Schneckener, 2002).

Elites experience ethnic diversity both through the number of ethnically diverse elites and

whether elites draw attention to elite ethnic diversity. Numerical diversity is straightforward: increasing the number of ethnically diverse elites increases perceptions of outgroup differences that lead to negative views of the outgroup.

However, perceptions of outgroup differences can also increase when elites' attention is drawn to ethnic diversity by mentioning it explicitly. These ethnic diversity cues occur for myriad reasons and are initiated by different actors. Elites themselves mention ethnic diversity in order to argue for additional resources for their ethnic group (Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002). Similarly, citizens often advocate for increased resources or representation for their ethnic group (Francois, Rainer and Trebbi, 2015). In essence, elites frequently receive ethnic cues from various sources that encourage them to think about elite ethnic diversity. Mentioning ethnic diversity increases the salience of ethnicity (Anderson et al., 2020; Domke et al., 2000) and serves to distinguish ethnic groups from one another (Brader, Valentino and Suhay, 2008; Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Using the same mechanisms as above, I expect that drawing attention to elite ethnic diversity worsens outgroup views.[2]

Hypothesis 1a: As the number of ethnically diverse elites increases, elite views of the outgroup will become less favorable.

Hypothesis 1b: When elites receive a cue about elite ethnic diversity, elite views of the outgroup will become less favorable.

Interethnic Contact

Is there a way for leaders to promote ethnic diversity in order to be inclusive to minority ethnic groups while not suffering from intra-elite animosity? Putnam (2007, 164) suggests that interethnic contact can achieve this type of positive between group interaction. Contact

[2]Elite cooperation may be explicitly referenced, but without such qualifiers, mentioning ethnicity should distinguish the in and outgroup.

theory originated with the observation that, under certain conditions, interactions between individuals of different ethnicities leads to improved attitudes about outgroup members (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969). Hundreds of studies have assessed the impact of contact on citizens' attitudes toward outgroup members since the development of the original theory (see Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2011).

Findings among citizens are decidedly mixed (e.g., Brown and Hewstone, 2005; Hayward et al., 2017). Additionally, we gain little clarity by assuming that political elites act in ways similar to citizens in workplace groups (e.g., Laurence, Schmid and Hewstone, 2018; Kokkonen, Esaiasson and Gilljam, 2014). Hence, it is an open question whether contact among political elites belonging to legislative committees improves or worsens views of outgroups.

Elite Committees Fostering Positive Contact

Allport (1954) famously established four criteria — equal status, cooperative interdependence, common goals, and supportive norms — that help to promote positive citizen interethnic interactions. On the face of it, these criteria seem to be plausibly met among elites working in legislative committees. Each committee member wields some political power (e.g., Strom, 1998), committee members need others' support to approve policies, each committee member wants to win re-election, and committees have norms of behavior (Hasson, 2010; Helmke and Levitsky, 2004).

While committee structure can help shape elite behavior and promote positive interethnic contact, I argue that the political nature of elites makes this result all the more likely. Elites' primary goal is to win re-election, and the main way they do this is by obtaining and distributing resources to their constituents (Stokes et al., 2013). Intra-elite interactions are framed with this goal in mind. While elites may have short-term incentives to fight over resources among themselves, I argue that there are longer-term incentives for elites to cooperate that result in them overlooking outgroup differences in order to maximize resource distribution.

Elites needing short-term political gains to help their re-election chances may be tempted to see committee resources as finite and to compete with other committee members for them. Injecting political patronage into a close re-election race can be an effective strategy (Driscoll, 2018; Kopecký, 2011) and serve to satisfy local power brokers (Baldwin, 2013). However, by viewing committee resources as zero sum and singularly focusing on the short-term, elites reduce the potential for intra-elite collaboration to maximize long-term resource procurement.

Elites can more effectively distribute resources to their constituents if they work together. Indeed, a long line of work in many institutional settings shows that elites who are *more* concerned with re-election increase intra-elite cooperation (Slater and Simmons, 2012; see also Gottlieb, 2015; Lupu and Riedl, 2013). This is because strategic elites know that short-term resource delivery only sometimes works to increase political support (Remmer, 2007; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012). Elected terms last several years, and politicians and political parties are frequently re-elected. Focusing on short-term, zero sum resource delivery ignores this history both because politicians alienate other elites by taking resources for themselves and because politicians waste the opportunity to work together throughout their term in office.

A more effective method is to establish a stable system of resource delivery in collaboration with other elites. That is, elites can find positive sum opportunities to cooperate over the long-term. Such a system leverages economies of scale to increase elites' collective ability to distribute resources to constituents. When committee members work together, their reputation improves (Crisp, Kanthak and Leijonhufvud, 2004; Olivella, Kanthak and Crisp, 2017) and productivity increases (Battaglini, Sciabolazza and Patacchini, 2020). Resource distribution is, therefore, no longer zero sum (Wonka and Haunss, 2020). For example, elites who collaborate can more effectively determine how to distribute resources that benefit multiple constituencies. A road project in one constituency can leverage labor from a key business in another constituency in order to benefit multiple elites.

To cooperate in this way, elites must have contact with one another. Elite contact differs

from citizen contact because it is structured by political motivations to maximize resource distribution. The political nature of contact implies that elites are more willing to set aside differences because doing so helps them achieve political goals (Micozzi, 2014; Muraoka, 2019). By limiting themselves to only working with and having contact with co-ethnics, elites artificially reduce their ability to distribute resources. Even when an ethnic group dominates committee membership, elites collectively profit from politically colluding with minority committee members (Bormann, 2019; Beiser-McGrath and Metternich, 2020) and by maintaining some minimum level of interethnic contact (Ringe, Victor and Gross, 2013). Therefore, elites' primary goal of ensuring re-election structures intra-elite interactions by providing resource maximizing incentives for elites to cooperate with one another that extend across ethnic lines. While ethnicity remains a salient political cleavage, elites are better off engaging in interethnic cooperation and contact because cooperation improves elites' welfare more than is possible when working alone or in co-ethnic groups.

As a final step, the political nature of contact means that elite outgroup views are likely to improve. By cooperating with one another, elites recognize that they all share the common goals of re-election and resource maximization. These shared interests form the basis of a common identity, which improves outgroup views by helping elites perceive each other as more alike (Butler and Tavits, 2020; Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000). In essence, intra-elite cooperation shows elites that they are all politicians at heart, providing a common bond that improves outgroup views.

Hypothesis 2: When elite interethnic contact is high, elite views of the outgroup will be more favorable than when elite interethnic contact is low.

Case Selection

I study elite diversity and interethnic contact in municipal legislative committees in India, the world's largest democracy. Ethnicity in India is multi-faceted, comprising of caste, religion, region, and language, among other identities. I focus on ethnicity as the combination of caste and religious categories. Both caste (e.g., Parikh, 1997; Sankaran, Sekerdej and von Hecker, 2017) and communal (religious) (e.g., Brass, 2011) conflicts and animosity are common across India. Thus, when different caste and religious groups gain political power, these cleavages are visible to elites.[3]

Second, India has a federal structure where small groups of elites are constituted in similar ways at different levels of government. Since elite ethnic diversity cannot be experimentally manipulated, I must rely on existing variation in the ethnic diversity of committees. Much previous work has studied Panchayats — rural local government (e.g., Heller, Harilal and Chaudhuri, 2007). I focus instead on India's urban municipal government, as municipal governments are significantly more powerful than Panchayats, urban areas often contain more caste and religious diversity, and politicians elected in municipal governments represent many more constituents than than do Panchayat members (Aijaz, 2008; John, 2007). By doing sub-national research, I am able to control for many contextual factors that are problematic in cross-national research while still achieving significant variation in elite committee diversity.

Specifically, I study Indian municipal corporations (MCs). Municipal governance in India is determined by municipality size. All cities with more than 100,000 people are governed by a municipal corporation; there are roughly 200 MCs in India. MCs can be as large as states. Mumbai, the largest MC, has a population of 14 million, making it larger than twelve Indian states. By using MCs, I capture variation across the amount and salience of ethnic diversity in different committees without needing to move to cross-national data where ethnic categorizations between countries differ significantly.

[3]I define the ethnic majority as forward caste members, whereas non-forward castes and members of other religions are ethnic minority groups.

Municipal corporations are tasked with many of the same responsibilities as are state governments, though their structure is slightly different (Berenschot, 2010). Corporations are run by both appointed bureaucrats and elected political elites. The municipal commissioner is the chief bureaucrat in the corporation and is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) civil servant. Municipal commissioners oversee the executive branch of government. Citizens elect a mayor as the head of the executive branch, but this role is largely ceremonial.

Citizens also elect the legislature of the corporation, which serves as corporation's main decision-making body. To provide elected elites (called corporators or councillors) with further control over day-to-day operations in the MC, corporators constitute three types of committees. First, most corporations have ward committees with corporators representing adjacent geographic areas. Second, corporators elect some of their own to the corporation standing committee.[4] The standing committee is the chief elected body in the corporation, and it is in charge of overseeing all corporation decisions and controlling high level budget and planning functions (Rosenthal, 1970). Third, other committees are often constituted that report to the standing committee (Aijaz, 2008; Datta, 1995). These other committees have specified corporation-wide duties. For example, many corporations have public works committees, garden committees, and solid waste committees. The standing committee gives these other committees authority to make decisions and to manage corporation affairs within the purview of the committee.

Though the exact mechanism differs across corporations and states, both standing committees and other committees are elected by the corporators themselves. Political party leaders coordinate their candidates for membership on various committees and negotiate with other parties to create electoral coalitions (FinancialExpress, 2020). Just like corporation elections, committee elections are hotly contested. As such, it is important to emphasize that the composition of corporation committees is a result of strategic political negotiations among both political parties and corporators. It is not the case that committees simply

[4]This committee is sometimes called the executive committee.

reflect the level of diversity or tolerance among citizens in the corporation. Indeed, the mean range of committee diversity (on a 0 to 1 scale) within corporations surveyed in this study is 0.35.

What does contact among committee members look like? Shared committee membership facilitates at least three types of contact. Most obviously, committee members have opportunities for contact during committee meetings, which occur at least once per month (Oldenburg, 1976).[5] Apart from the somewhat more formal structure of committee meetings, committee members meet and work with each other on committee related business.[6] Third, shared committee membership may foster contact for reasons outside of the business of the committee.[7] For example, committee members who work closely together on a project related to the committee may discover that they have other shared political interests and, therefore, continue to have contact to discuss these issues.[8]

In these three settings, contact among committee members at least partially fulfills Allport (1954)'s conditions that I argue are the key reason that elite contact improves views of the outgroup. Committee members treat each other as political equals, regardless of their social standing.[9] There is also cooperative interdependence because committee members often control bureaucratic or civil society organizations whose approval is required for municipal projects to be enacted.[10] The common goal of all corporators is re-election and potentially amassing additional political power.[11] Finally, while the local political environment can hardly be called supportive, there are norms of collaboration and collusion to help one another stay in power over the relatively long five year terms.[12] To summarize, committee members are elected representatives who chiefly interact and have contact along political lines with common goals and relatively wide ranging impact. For these reasons, interac-

[5]Respondents 2 and 3. 2019. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.
[6]Respondent 15. 2020. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.
[7]Respondent 5. 2019. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.
[8]Respondent 14. 2020. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.
[9]Respondent 7. 2020. Interviewed by Author. Chennai.
[10]Respondent 6. 2019. Interviewed by Author. Chennai.
[11]Respondent 15. 2020. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.
[12]Respondent 12. 2020. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.

tions among committee members are likely to be cooperative, setting up the opportunity for contact to improve outgroup views.

I selected five Indian states in which to conduct experimental and observational work on municipal corporation committee members: Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The 55 municipal corporations in these five states represent more than a quarter of municipal corporations in India and over a third of the population of the country ($\approx$ 500 million). These states also vary significantly in the powers given to municipal corporators, the salience of caste and its important cleavages, and geography. Finally — though this study is the first to collect data on municipal corporation committees — state municipalities acts suggest that these five states contain the most committee members.[13]

Research Design

To test my hypotheses about the implications of elite diversity and interethnic contact, I collect data on and field a survey experiment among Indian MCs.[14] The first task was to collect new data on Indian municipal corporator committee membership in the five selected states.[15] No centralized information on municipal corporators exists at either the national or state level. This data collection effort resulted in complete contact information for all committee members in 25 municipal corporations, amounting to 872 corporators on 146 committees and representing 55 million constituents. SI.2 (p. 5) discusses the data collection process in detail.

[13]Number of committees multiplied by members per committee.

[14]In addition to my own fieldwork, Morsel Research and Development undertook the data collection and fielded the survey experiment between November 2019 and June 2020.

[15]The full data collection and experimental protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board #201910066 and was registered with EGAP. See Supplemental Information (SI) 1 (p. 1) for question wording.

Numerical Committee Diversity

I hypothesize about two different measures of committee diversity: the number of ethnically diverse elites (*Number Diversity*) and the attention drawn to committee diversity (*Attention Diversity*). I use corporator committee membership to construct my main measure of numerical committee diversity. This is an observational measure, and corporator committee membership is not randomly assigned. Yet, given the important role that political parties play in whipping votes for committee elections and the fact that committee diversity within corporations varies significantly, it is not the case that a diverse citizenry living in a corporation necessarily produces diverse committees. Political competition also subsumes any desire to intentionally prioritize selecting committee members who are the most likely to work well together; maximizing political power is corporators' overriding concern. I employ corporation fixed effects to capture citizen-level numeric diversity in the corporation. I also include a robustness check controlling for crimes against minority groups at the corporation level to capture the overall state of outgroup views in the corporation.[16]

Conceptualizing and measuring numerical ethnic diversity in India is challenging. I categorize ethnic diversity into the most salient distinctions: Brahmin, Other Forward (OF), Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Caste (OBC), and Other Religion.[17] This categorization is used on the largest social survey in India (Desai and Vanneman, 2015).

To identify membership in a particular ethnic category, I use a hybrid archival and surname based classification approach. Though I do ask survey respondents to self-identify their ethnic category, I need to categorize all committee members, not just survey respondents. Further, ethnic self-identification is frequently quite different from how ethnicity is perceived socially. Social perceptions are what matter most for determining how people interact with each other. The hybrid approach uses government data on caste reserved seats, surname clas-

[16] See SI.5 (p. 18).

[17] In keeping with colloquial usage, I refer to varnas as castes.

sification, full name classification, and archival analysis. All corporators in reserved seats are coded first, followed by surnames and full names clearly discernible to an expert coder (Jayaraman, 2005) and archival investigation that involved contacting local experts who interviewed journalists and collected other local information about ethnic categorization. SI.5 (p. 8) contains additional details about this categorization procedure. I define committee ethnic *Diversity* using the Herfindhal-Hirschman index, with each of the six categories listed above (Lancee and Dronkers, 2011; Robinson, 2017).[18]

There are 146 committees across the 25 municipal corporations. Corporators serve on an average of 1.18 committees and a maximum of 5 committees. Mean committee size is 7.08 members, with twenty committees having two or fewer members and the Siliguri Borrow committee having 32 members.[19] Jamnagar had the most committees (16), followed by Bangalore (14). Ten corporations had only one committee. Standing committees were most common (16), followed by planning (11), and health committees (10).

Respondents were surveyed about 108 of these committees. On a 0 to 1 scale, the mean level of committee *Number Diversity* was 0.56, with Kanpur's Standing committee as the most diverse (0.79) and three committees in Bangalore (Education, Social, and Tax) with 0 diversity.

Survey Description

I conducted a phone survey experiment with 406 corporators.[20] Phone is the most common method used to reach corporators (Gaikwad and Nellis, 2020), who typically give out their phone numbers to constituents to call in case they have grievances or need assistance. Since I am interested in contact occurring within committee settings, I asked each corporator about

[18]The formula is $1-\sum_{i=1}^{6} p^2$ where p is the proportion of the committee controlled by a given group (Jensenius and Suryanarayan, 2015).

[19]Some committees do actually have only a single member. Committees with only one or two members were excluded.

[20]The experiment has sufficient power to detect small effect sizes.

their membership in a single committee.[21] I created a call sheet that was block randomized on corporation and caste reserved seat. This ensured that those corporators responding to the survey were representative of the corporation and reservation status diversity of the 872 corporators.

Enumerators went to great lengths to reach all corporators on the call sheet to preserve the quality of the sample. The survey completion rate was 90%, extremely high for an elite survey (Bussell, 2018). Enumerators were native to the state being surveyed, and the survey text was translated and back-translated into Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, and Kannada.[22]

Interethnic Contact

The survey began by measuring self-reported contact with other committee members. Most existing work on interethnic contact has used surveys to develop measures of self-reported contact similar to those employed here (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). One alternative is to observe the actual amount of contact taking place. Since this study examines elite contact, this would mean shadowing elites and recording their interactions with one another (Berenschot, 2010; Bussell, 2020). Both methods can suffer from social desirability bias: respondents are likely to self-report more frequent contact and elites being shadowed are likely to act differently than if no one was shadowing them. According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2006)'s meta-analysis, self-reported contact has a significantly smaller effect on outgroup views than does observed contact. Hence, using self-reported contact should bias against finding an effect of interethnic contact on outgroup views.

As mentioned earlier, corporators can have contact with each other in many different settings. I asked about the frequency of contact among committee members without specifying the exact setting where contact occurs. Each corporation committee operates differently.

[21] Corporators belonging to more than one committee were asked about a single committee (see SI.2, p. 5).

[22] The survey text was prepared in English and translated by a Hindi Professor who identified problematic words, phrases, and concepts. Translation discrepancies were rectified so that questionnaires had the same meaning across languages.

Some committees meet formally with few opportunities for contact outside of the committee meeting. Other committees rely on informal contact to get things done. For this reason, I did not want to restrict contact to that just occurring in the formal committee setting. Additionally, it is quite difficult to delineate between political and social contact in Indian MCs. Many activities that seem like social contact — party or dinner invitations for example — are highly choreographed political events.[23] By asking about the frequency of contact with other committee members, I can encompass the diverse settings in which politically motivated contact occurs.

Enumerators started measuring self-reported contact by telling respondents that we were interested in their experiences on the committee that I pre-selected. I then chose four members of the committee, block randomized by caste reservation, to ask respondents "how frequently you talk to [name of committee member]?" (Lowe, 2020). Respondents answered on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 meant never talking to that person and 5 meant talking every day. Much existing research asks about contact with a specifically named outgroup. By asking about contact with individual committee members in a random order, I reduce social desirability cues. Given time constraints and survey fatigue, it was impractical to ask about the frequency of contact with every committee member.

Using these responses, I constructed a measure of outgroup contact by adding up the reported frequency of contact with outgroup members and dividing by the maximum level of contact.[24] For example, if the respondent was Brahmin and the committee members asked about were Brahmin (4), OBC (3), SC (2), and SC (5), then the index used the contact frequency for the latter three corporators or $\frac{3+2+5}{5\times4}$ (see SI.5, p. 8). Outgroup *Contact* ranges from 0 to 1 where 0 means no contact with outgroups and 1 means daily contact with outgroups.[25]

[23]Respondent 5. 2019. Interviewed by Author. Delhi.

[24]I am interested in the absolute amount of contact with outgroup elites, not the relative comparison between in and outgroup elite contact because my argument is about the total amount of outgroup elite contact.

[25]Only survey respondents who were asked about their contact with at least one outgroup corporator were included in the analysis.

The mean level of outgroup *Contact* at the committee level was 0.62 with a maximum of 0.85 in the Bangalore Architecture and Jamnagar Education committees, whereas the Jamnagar Sanitation, Works, and Slums committees had the lowest levels of contact (under 0.25). Four corporators reported having daily contact with all outgroup members asked about in the survey.

It is worth noting that 82% of respondents reported having cooperative as opposed to conflictual or neutral contact. This provides some credence to my argument that corporation committees are places where the conditions that promote positive interethnic contact occur.

Attention Diversity

After these questions about outgroup contact, I proceeded to measure elites' responses to drawing attention to the level of diversity on the committee. Though the measure of *Number Diversity* is inherently observational, I can experimentally manipulate *Attention Diversity* to reflect cues mentioning the diversity of the committee as a way to increase the salience of ethnic diversity.

Respondents were assigned to either a treatment or control condition block randomized based on whether the respondent held a general or reserved legislative seat. Respondents in the treatment condition were primed to think about the ethnic composition of the committee when answering subsequent questions about outgroup views. The purpose of this prime was to draw attention to the ethnic diversity on the committee. Because I am interested in elites' responses to the prime, not to a specific sender, I kept the sender ambiguous. By referencing caste and religious diversity by name, the prime emphasizes distinctions between ethnic groups. Hence, the prime should distinguish in and outgroups and result in worsened outgroup views. The only difference between the two conditions is that the treatment condition primed respondents directly on "caste and religious differences" while the control condition did not identify the source of said differences (Koopmans and Veit,

2014).[26]

Control: "As you know, committees often contain different types of members. Committee members often have very different viewpoints and policy priorities."

Treatment: "As you know, committees often contain members belonging to different caste and religious groups. Because of caste and religious differences, committee members often have very different viewpoints and policy priorities."

Outgroup Views

Following the administration of a prime, respondents were asked about their views toward the outgroup. I conceptualized outgroup views in three ways: affect toward the committee, perceptions of the committee, and outgroup attitudes.

The amount of interethnic contact and committee diversity may alter respondents' affect toward working with others on the committee. Affect refers to emotional responses that occur in reaction to an event (Gubler and Karpowitz, 2019). Despite affect's nature as an emotional response, affect plays a critical role in decision-making (e.g., Marcus, 2000). I define four potential affective responses: pleasant, unpleasant, mixed (high pleasant and unpleasant affect), and weak (low pleasant and unpleasant affect).[27] Affect is a key building block of outgroup attitudes (Esses and Dovidio, 2002), as attitudes change through an inextricably linked mix of emotions and cognition (McDermott, 2004; Mercer, 2010). Hence, affective reactions to being on a committee contribute to elites' overall evaluation of the members of the committee and their ethnic affiliations (McDermott, Fowler and Smirnov, 2008). I asked four questions about respondents' affect toward the committee: their *Enthusiasm*, *Anger*, *Hopefulness*, and *Resentfulness*. Using these four emotion questions, I classified respondents into having *Pleasant*, *Unpleasant*, *Mixed*, or *Weak* affect toward the committee (Gubler and

[26]SI.3 (p. 6) contains randomization and balance checks.
[27]Affect occupies a bivariate rather than a bipolar scale (Thornton, 2011; Yoo, 2010).

Karpowitz, 2019).[28]

Perceptions of the committee refers to a set of scenario-based questions asking respondents about their opinion of other members of the committee. Ethnicity is not mentioned in these questions to reduce the social desirability bias inherent in directly asking about one's views of others (Oberg, Oskarsson and Svensson, 2011; Stolle, Soroka and Johnston, 2008). I developed three questions: one about the likelihood of a committee member *Spending Money Wisely*, one about being willing to take committee members' *Opinions* into account, and one about taking concerns from a committee member "with a different background and experiences from you" into account (*Valid Concerns*). These questions tap into attitudes about committee member trust (Robinson, 2017) and equality (McIntosh et al., 1995). Finally, I asked if respondents felt that the committee was a collection of individuals or *One Group*.

I then asked questions about ethnic group membership. First, I asked about the degree to which the respondent trusts committee members from different ethnic groups (*Trust*). I then asked questions about general outgroup attitudes including willingness to live next to an outgroup *Neighbor* and to *Talk* to an outgroup member (Doebler, McAreavey and Shortall, 2018). The latter two questions were not restricted to the committee context in order to see if committee diversity and contact improve overall outgroup attitudes.

Finally, I included a behavioral measure of policy preferences. The question (*Donation*) asked if respondents wanted to donate an honorarium to a charity that helps lower caste betterment instead of to a charity that helps with disaster aid (Charnysh, Lucas and Singh, 2015; Mironova and Whitt, 2014).

At the end of the survey, I asked several demographic questions including age, education, caste identification, and previous employment. I also included a question about social media use because social media could increase the salience of ethnicity, decreasing interethnic contact and tolerance.

[28] See SI.4 (p. 6).

Empirical Strategy

First, I focus on the relationship between numerical committee diversity and contact and views of the outgroup. Following Hypothesis 1a, I expect that when a respondent belongs to a more numerically diverse committee, outgroup views will worsen compared to respondents in less diverse committees (Koopmans and Veit, 2014). I then assess a dichotomous treatment indicator to evaluate the effect of attention diversity on outgroup views. In Hypothesis 1b, I argue that receiving the treatment will worsen outgroup views. After establishing the relationship between committee diversity and views of the outgroup, I examine the correlation between contact and outgroup views, arguing in Hypothesis 2 that increased interethnic contact will improve said views.

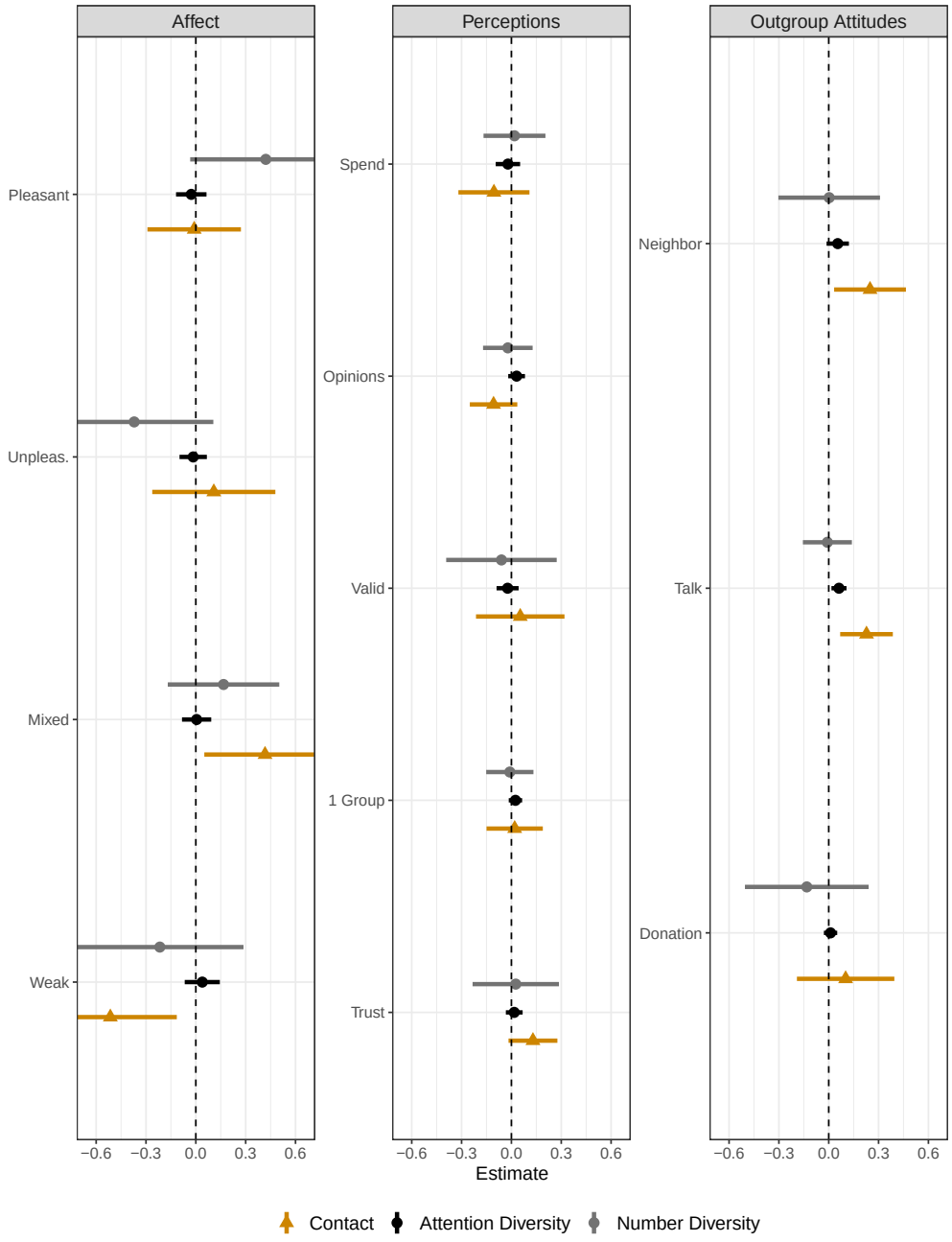
In the main text, I discuss results from linear regression models with fixed effects by corporation and cluster robust standard errors with dependent variables normalized to be between 0 and 1. SI.6 (p. 12) contains full regression results and robustness checks with logistic and ordered multilevel models, conceptualizing numerical diversity as just forward and backward caste membership, using self-reported numerical diversity, employing state instead of corporation fixed effects, including a measure of crimes against minority groups, and discussing heterogeneous treatment and interaction effects. All results are consistent with those presented here.

Results

I start by examining the relationship between ethnic diversity and outgroup views. Figure 1 displays coefficients from regression models on the dependent variables listed. Dependent variables are grouped into affect about the committee, perceptions of the committee, and outgroup attitudes. Both committee diversity (number and attention) and contact are included.

Number Diversity largely does not correlate with views of the outgroup including affect,

Figure 1: Diversity and Contact



Coefficient estimates from linear regression models with dependent variables normalized between 0 and 1, corporation fixed effects, and cluster robust standard errors.

cabinet perceptions, and outgroup attitudes. Respondents in committees that are more numerically diverse tend to display more pleasant and less unpleasant affect. However, these results are the opposite of my expectations in Hypothesis 1a: high levels of *Number Diversity* are not associated with negative outgroup views. If anything, numeric committee diversity correlates with higher pleasant affect.

Turning to *Attention Diversity*, I examine the effect of receiving the treatment on outgroup views. Hypothesis 1b expects that when elites receive the treatment drawing their attention to committee diversity, outgroup views will worsen. Here again, Figure 1 shows that this is not the case. In all measures of outgroup views, drawing attention to elite ethnic diversity had either null or *positive* effects on outgroup views. Respondents' willingness to *Talk* to members of the ethnic outgroup increased when they received the prime.

Moving to Hypothesis 2 and affect toward the committee, increased *Contact* is associated with increased *Mixed* affect and decreased *Weak* affect. *Pleasant* and *Unpleasant* affect are unchanged. This result indicates that respondents who had more frequent contact with their committee members developed relationships with them such that weak affect turned into mixed affect, i.e., they developed stronger preferences about members of the committee. Not only is this finding intuitive, but it suggests that the contact measure is indeed capturing the relationships between committee members.

In terms of perceptions of the committee, respondents who had more contact with other committee members were less likely to believe that committee members would *Spend* money wisely and were less likely to listen to the *Opinions* of other committee members. More frequent *Contact* is associated with committee members relying at least somewhat more on their own judgment and not valuing those with different perspectives.

However, turning to outgroup attitudes, individuals who had more contact with outgroup members were more willing to have these individuals as *Neighbors* and to *Talk* with them.[29] The size of these effects are large: 0.25 on a 0 to 1 scale. This indicates that if *Contact* is

[29]Recall that these models use corporation fixed effects to control for the overall level of ethnic diversity in the corporation.

1 instead of 0, then willingness to have an outgroup *Neighbor* or to *Talk* to an outgroup member will be more than 1 point higher on a 1 to 5 scale. On balance, Hypothesis 2 is mostly supported: increased contact worsens perceptions of members of the committee, but is also associated with improved outgroup attitudes.

Discussion

The survey and experimental results presented above suggest that contact improves outgroup attitudes while at the same time worsening opinions about other committee members. How can we think about these two results? Though I propose a theoretical mechanism where respondents who experience increased outgroup contact think of the committee as one group, the results suggest this does not occur. One potential reason for this non-finding is that the scenario-based questions about other committee members were *political* questions based on performance in the committee, whereas outgroup attitudes were *social*. Contact in this case promotes improved social attitudes while slightly worsening political attitudes. The political attitude aspect of this study is unique because previous work has not considered how contact may impact elites. At the citizen level, the ultimate goal of contact is improving outgroup attitudes. For elected representatives, the outgroup attitudes benefits of contact are important for how corporators conduct themselves in public, but these results underline that politicians are skilled at separating political and social attitudes. Committee members can develop improved social attitudes, but still treat outgroup corporators suspiciously within the confines of committee work.

Committee members may distinguish between political and social contact because the norms of collaboration in committees are not strong enough to overcome electoral motivations. For example, committee members may know that long-term collaboration will help their re-election chances and maximize the goods that they can distribute, but an upcoming election may cause them to abandon this norm and to focus on short-term electoral and

resource gains.

It is important to note that the paper thus far has argued that diversity and contact will impact views of outgroups in general, not a particular outgroup. This essentially means that a Brahmin who has frequent contact with an Other Forward committee member is treated the same as an Other Forward who has frequent contact with a Scheduled Tribe committee member. Caste is a hierarchical system wherein these two relationships, all else equal, may mean different things. In the former case, contact between two forward castes is not surprising, whereas contact between forward and backward castes may be more likely to go against social norms.

The specific caste structure and norms of interaction differ dramatically by state, corporation, committee, and committee member. Essentially, every citizen thinks about caste and caste relationships slightly differently, meaning that the two relationships described above should be treated as equal in some situations and different in other situations. To address this issue, I conduct the analysis by grouping ethnic categories together into forward (Brahmin and OF) and backward (SC, ST, OBC, and other religion) and looking at committee diversity and contact between these two groups. Individuals belonging to forward castes are clearly different than those belonging to backward castes, so outgroup contact is more meaningful in these cases. Results in SI.6 (p. 15) are consistent with those presented here.

Conclusion

Interethnic contact improves elites' views toward the outgroup, while committee diversity in and of itself does not have the negative impacts that many have feared. Yet, this study underlines the fact that increasing elite diversity and contact are not universal ways to improve outgroup views. First, although neither number nor attention-based committee diversity produced much backlash, they were largely not associated with improved outgroup views either. Descriptive representation has long been proposed as a way to improve ethnic

relations. While these benefits may exist for citizens looking at the ethnic composition of the committee, elites themselves do not alter outgroup views on account of simply changing committee diversity.

Of course, changing committee diversity is a much more tangible policy than is increasing elite interethnic contact. Party leaders and municipal corporators will have a more difficult time figuring out how to encourage frequent interethnic contact among committee members. One suggestion that is within the control of these leaders is committee meeting frequency. Though most committees are assigned to meet monthly and to be renewed yearly, evidence from corporator question-asking in Delhi suggests that several committees meet with less regular frequency or hold pro-forma meetings where few members attend. Holding corporators accountable for frequent committee meetings may help encourage both a collaborative working environment and one where opportunities for contact increase.

Municipal corporators remain largely understudied in India, but local government is critical to improving public services and to fostering community engagement. Efforts by nonprofit organizations are underway to better equip and train municipal corporators so that they can improve their job performance and be held publicly accountable for their actions. In this environment, corporators are under pressure to work together to provide solutions to crippling public service inequalities. Though interethnic contact is by no means the solution to these problems, contact does provide benefits that help improve elites' understanding of outgroups.

Future work would do well to expand these results to other government contexts. Unlike citizen contact, which can be randomized after some degree of difficulty, elite contact is essentially observational and self-reported. The types of contact most likely to be helpful in improving views of the outgroup are long-lasting relationships, not telling a politician that their governing body is diverse or facilitating short-term interactions between political leaders. Local government offers an ideal setting for studying contact because of the mix of important governing responsibilities and a relatively large number of such bodies in any given

country, thereby maximizing committee diversity and opportunities for contact. The fact that contact works in this particular case without the expected backlash effect is promising for considering future interventions encouraging contact among elites.

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Supplemental Information

The supplemental information for this paper can be found by clicking here.