

# Eliciting and Characterizing Ideology in India

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## Research Questions

### (1) Does ideology matter in developing country contexts? How is it structured?

- Political behavior in developing countries has historically been thought to be driven largely by ethnic identity & clientelism
- Ideology & partisanship have received little attention
- However, recent research suggests a larger contemporary role for ideology
- We focus on **India**, a country at the center of these debates

### (2) Does the preference elicitation method used matter for estimated ideologies?

- Responding to survey questions, individuals may report preferences different from their actual preferences for reasons such as social desirability or inattention

## Theoretical Expectations

**H1** Individuals can be placed on a single ideological dimension based on their views on salient issues relating to Hindu nationalism and the state's role in policy and in addressing historical inequalities

**H2** Considering India's one-party dominant system, feelings toward the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will be a particularly strong predictor of individuals' ideologies, especially in the context of cultural issues that the BJP has sought to establish ownership over

**H3** Individuals will give party-consistent answers when it is cheaper to do so

**H4** BJP policy endorsements will shift public opinion on salient issues

## Broader Project

We are replicating & extending this online experiment using a nationally representative survey experiment & historical polling data – stay tuned!

## Overview

- 20-minute online experiment;  $N = 2,393$
- Two main stages (order randomized) to elicit preferences about salient social and political issues
- Branching designs used in both stages to capture direction & intensity of preferences on 7-point scales

## Elicitation Method I: Stated

- Preference elicitation via **public opinion questions**
- Example statements:
  - *There should be reservations for SCs and STs in schools and universities.*
  - *There should be a ban on the sale and purchase of cattle for slaughter at animal markets.*

## Research Design

## Elicitation Method II: Revealed

- Preference elicitation via a **novel donation method centered on “awareness campaigns”**
- Multi-step activity to indicate how much money subjects wish to donate to or remove from each ad's fund on Google Ads; we run real ads according to these choices
- Example ads:



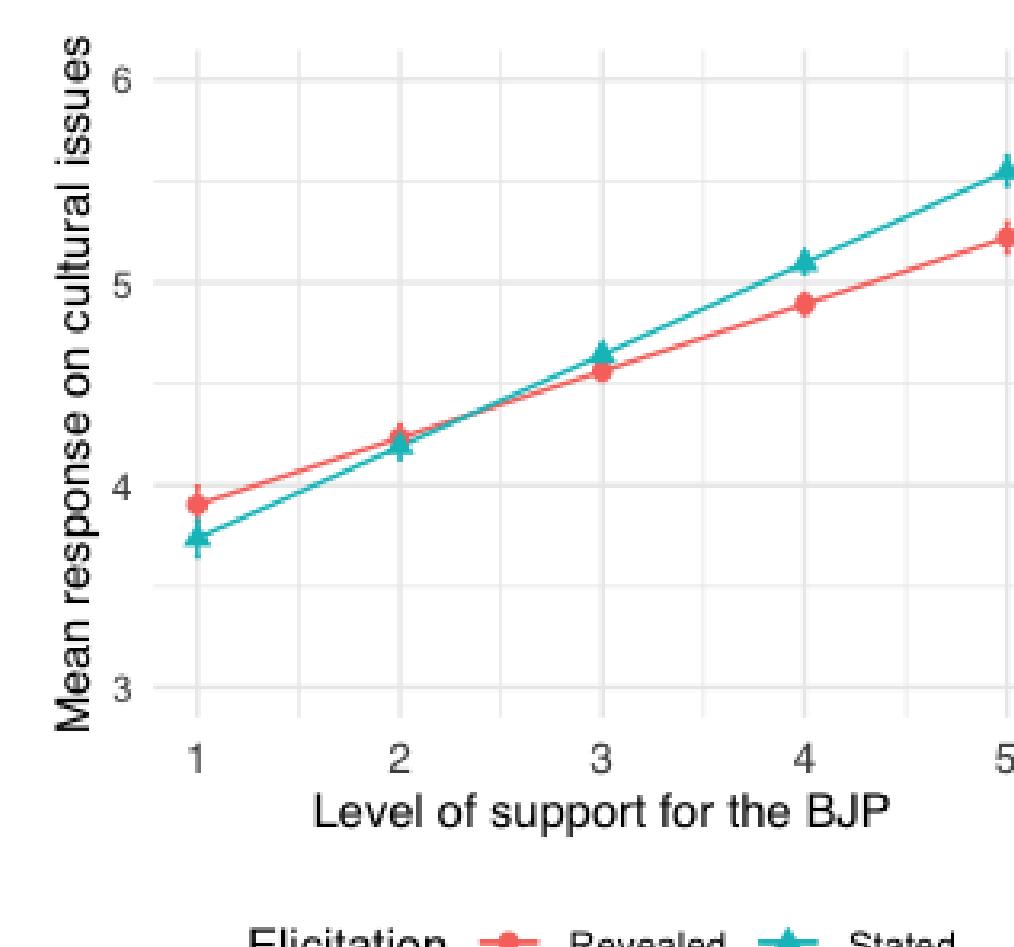
## Endorsement Experiment



- Two issues (one cultural, one economic)
- Three conditions: no endorsement, politician endorsement, BJP endorsement

## Results

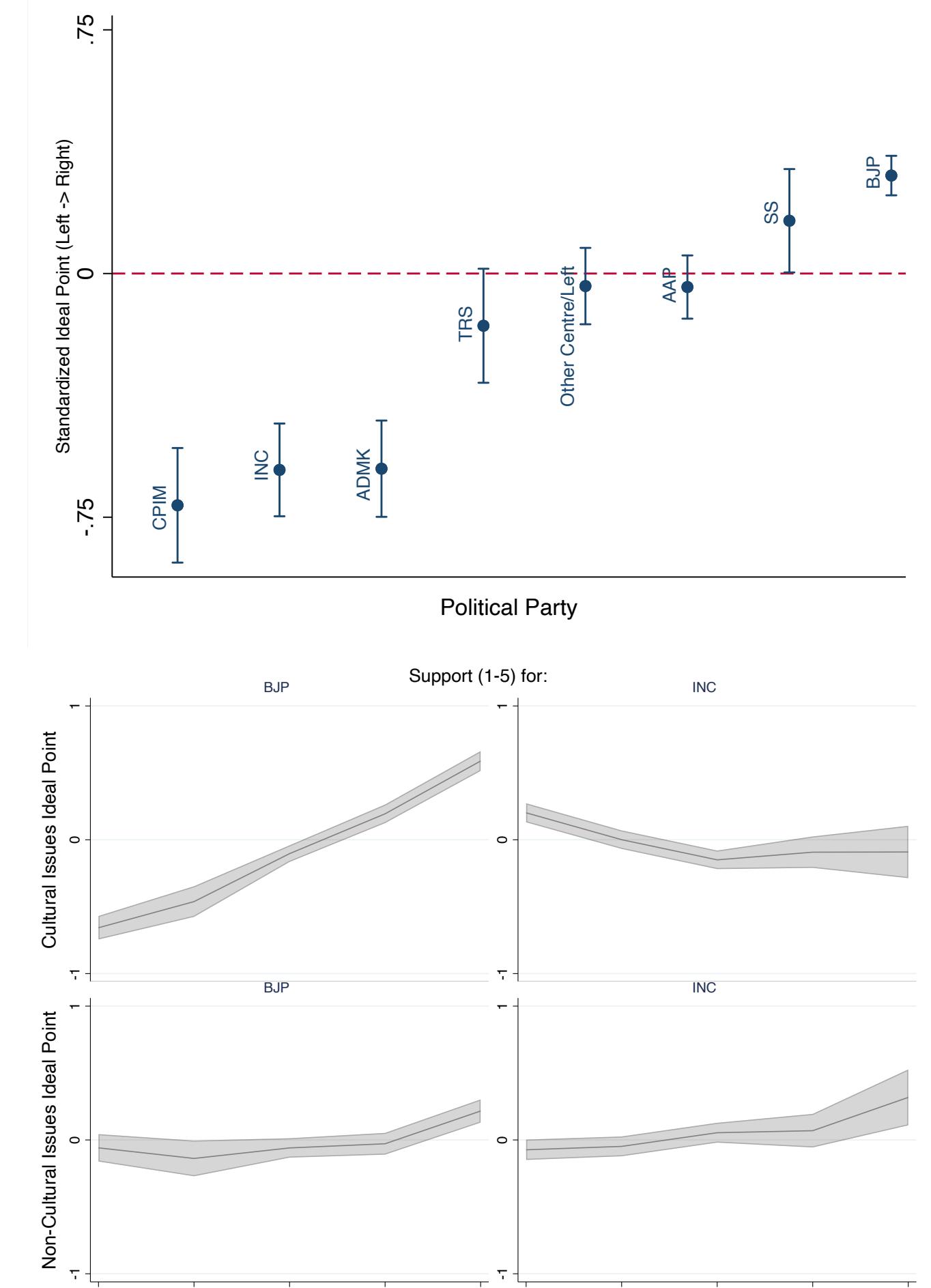
## Testing H1 Comparing Stated & Revealed Preferences



## Testing H4 Using Endorsement Experiment

	Nationalizing education content	Foreign direct investment		
	(1) Politician endorsement	(2) BJP endorsement	(3) Politician endorsement	(4) BJP endorsement
Treatment	-0.572** (0.228)	-0.663*** (0.109)	0.128 (0.223)	-0.212** (0.105)
BJP support	0.318** (0.036)	0.321*** (0.036)	0.148*** (0.035)	0.155*** (0.035)
Treatment × BJP support	0.062 (0.064)	0.120*** (0.031)	-0.103 (0.063)	0.004 (0.030)
Observations	1,835	1,885	1,835	1,885
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Testing H2 and H3 Using Standardized Ideal Points



(Results robust to controlling for views on patronage and ethnic identity;

“classically Western” issues and left-right scale perform poorly)

## Takeaways

- Estimated **ideal points correlate closely with partisan identifications**
- **Strong association between BJP support and ideal points across cultural issues** (but *not* with respect to other issues; no association between INC support and ideal points)
- **Stated preferences are more party-consistent** than costlier revealed preferences are
- **BJP endorsement shifts opinions about a cultural issue** but not an economic issue