

Time in Office and the Changing Gender Gap in Dishonesty: Evidence from Local Politics in India*

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May 2021

Abstract

Increasing the share of women in politics is often touted as a means of reducing corruption. In this study, we focus on dishonesty among elected male and female representatives, and how this changes with time in office. We combine survey data on attitudes towards corruption with data from incentivized experiments. Our sample consists of 400 inexperienced and experienced local politicians in West Bengal, India. While we find little evidence of a gender gap in the attitudes of inexperienced politicians, experienced female politicians exhibit a stronger distaste for corruption. However, this apparent hardening in attitudes among female politicians also coincides with more dishonest behavior in our experiments. Exploring mechanisms that can explain this difference, we find it to be strongly associated with lower risk aversion and weaker political networks. Our study indicates that gender gaps in politics should be theorized as dynamic and changing, rather than static.

*We gratefully acknowledge funding from the University of Auckland, Monash University, and the Norwegian Research Council (project number 250753). IRB clearance obtained from University of Auckland (Approval number 019938). We thank the field staff at Outline India for conducting the surveys and experiments that we report from. We thank the field staff at Outline India for conducting the surveys and experiments reported. The paper has benefited greatly from comments at several seminars and conferences, although the authors remain responsible for any errors.

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1 Introduction

The under-representation of women in political life has galvanized efforts to ensure that more women stand for and win elections. Arguments in favor of increased political presence of women include ideas of fairness and social justice; that women’s experiences and perspectives are distinct, valuable and deserve to be heard; and that women, as well as other under-represented groups, can serve as role models (Phillips 1995; Wangnerud 2009; Campbell, Childs and Lovenduski 2010).

Increased female representation has been found to shift policy agendas and development outcomes (see Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004; Betz, Fortunato and O’Brien 2021; Clayton and Zetterberg 2018); improve women’s access to the state (Iyer et al. 2012); and raise the quality of politicians (Besley et al. 2017). It is also argued that increasing the share of women in politics may improve governance and reduce corruption, with research indicating that women are more trustworthy (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Schneider and Bos 2014; Barnes and Beaulieu 2019), more averse to risk-taking (Croson and Gneezy 2009; Eckel and Grossman 2002; Roszkowski and Grable 2005; Fletschner, Anderson and Cullen 2010), and lack the political networks required to engage in malfeasance (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Goetz 2007; Bjarnegård 2013; O’Brien 2015).

Cross-country and cross-regional evidence indicates that having a higher share of women in parliament or in the bureaucracy is associated with lower corruption (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Grimes and Wängnerud 2010). Studies using individual-level data have also found women to be more honest and less tolerant of corruption (Friesen and Gangadharan 2012). In India, Duflo and Topalova (2004) report that villagers are less likely to pay bribes if the village headship is reserved for women. Baskaran et al. (2018) find that the annual rate of asset accumulation among female members of state legislative assemblies is 10 percentage points lower than for men. Brollo and Troiano

(2016) report that female mayors in Brazil are less likely to be involved in administrative irregularities.

Other studies, however, find no gender disparity in the propensity to be corrupt or dishonest (Sung 2003; Vijayalakshmi 2008; Debski et al. 2018). Some scholars have tried to reconcile these seemingly contradictory research findings by arguing that the gender gap in dishonesty is more pronounced in democracies with high electoral accountability (Alatas et al. 2009; Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer 2018). Others hold that the observed association between gender and corruption is spurious, as liberal democracies are likely to have less corruption and greater gender equality (Sung 2003).

Less studied is how *time in office* affects politicians' attitudes and behaviors.¹ In this paper, we theorize the nature of the gender gap in dishonesty as changing, or dynamic. As earlier studies have found women to be more pro-social, more risk-averse, and to have weaker political networks than men, women could be expected to be less corrupt than men when they enter office. However, these characteristics may change with the experience of holding political office. Although such change may occur for both men and women, we would expect a greater change for women, as the political culture they enter into is likely to be further from their previous experiences than is the case for men, especially in gender-segregated societies.

Empirically studying corrupt behavior in politicians is challenging, as self-reported responses are prone to self-reporting and social-desirability biases, and elected politicians are not a readily accessible pool of subjects for experimental work. Therefore, studies attempting to capture the intentions and behavior of real-world politicians often employ proxies and indirect measures, such as the quality of program delivery in their constituency or aggregate regional/country-level indicators of corruption. By contrast,

¹An exception is Afridi, Iversen and Sharan (2017), who find more administrative lapses and program leakages in villages with women village council heads compared to councils with men in power, but only during their first year in office.

experimental studies of individual-level behavior typically rely on citizen participants—often university students from industrialized countries. That limits the scope for extrapolating findings to elected politicians, as the observable and unobservable characteristics and attitudes of politicians are likely to differ greatly from those of the general citizenry (Dal Bó et al. 2017; Chaudhuri et al. 2021).

For this study, we collected a comprehensive survey and experimental dataset covering a sample of 400 local male and female politicians in West Bengal, India. To measure propensity towards dishonest behavior, we used questions and vignettes to reveal attitudes towards corruption, as well as a die-tossing experiment in which participants were asked to throw an unbiased die 30 times in private, with payment received based on the number of sixes they report (see Fischbacher and Föllmi-Heusi 2013). There was no monitoring of the actual number of sixes reported, so we cannot know for certain whether an individual cheated. However, we can use the deviation of the actual number of sixes reported from simulated or theoretical distributions of the number of sixes in 30 throws of an unbiased die to obtain a group-wise measure of dishonesty.²

We report two main findings. First, whereas there is little overall difference in *attitudes* towards corruption among male and female politicians in the self-reported survey data, experienced politicians in our sample, particularly women, express markedly lower tolerance of corruption. The experimental data, however, reveal a gender gap in behavior. Among inexperienced politicians, women report fewer sixes than men in the die-tossing task; and among experienced politicians, women report significantly more sixes than men. However, we found no observable difference between experienced and

²While we do not equate corruption with dishonest behavior, we expect those who behave dishonestly in our incentivized die-tossing game to be more prone to corruption behavior when given the opportunity. A large and credible body of evidence now supports the assumption that behavior in the game is a reliable indicator of corruption (see, e.g., Cohn, Marechal and Fehr 2014; Banerjee, Baul and Rosenblat 2015; Hanna and Wang 2017; Kröll and Rustagi 2016; Dai, Galeotti and Villeval 2017).

inexperienced male politicians. These findings indicate a pronounced time-in-office effect on dishonest behavior among female, but not among male, politicians.³

Drawing on the theoretical discussion, we then test four possible mechanisms behind the changing gender gap in dishonest behavior: differences in pro-sociality (altruism and/or trustworthiness), risk aversion, access to political networks, and political aspirations. We use the behavior of participants in a dictator game and a trust game to elicit pro-sociality, an investment game to measure risk aversion, use dynastic links to estimate access to political networks, and examine responses to survey questions to capture differences in political aspirations. We find no support for the hypothesis that greater dishonesty is a result of female politicians becoming less pro-social or because of differences in their political aspirations. However, we do find strong evidence for women being more risk-averse than men when taking office, and for experienced female politicians being significantly less risk-averse than their inexperienced counterparts. We also find that these patterns are driven by the sample of politicians without dynastic links—suggesting that the changes we observe are driven by women who enter politics with weak political networks.

These findings make several contributions to the literature. To the best of our knowledge, our study is the first to measure both self-reported attitudes and experimental behavior on the topic of corruption in a large sample of elected politicians.⁴ Further, by comparing inexperienced and experienced politicians, we present evidence on how behavior may change with time in office, exposure to specific political environments and the differentiated ways in which newly elected female and male representatives experience these environments. Our findings that the behaviors of inexperienced and experienced

³This discrepancy between attitudes and behavior echoes other work comparing survey and experimental data, and serves as a warning against reading too much into self-reported survey data on sensitive topics (see [Chaudhuri 2012](#)).

⁴However, survey experiments using actual legislators have become more common in political science in recent years; see [Naurin and Öhberg \(2019\)](#).

politicians differ and that considerable change emerges after as little as one term in office provide valuable insights into the pace of behavioral change, and may also help reconcile some of the seemingly contradictory conclusions about a gender gap in dishonesty found by other studies.

2 A dynamic gender gap in dishonest behavior

Following the publication of Dollar et al.’s (2001) and Swamy et al.’s (2001) cross-country analyses suggesting that having more women in parliament and other leadership positions reduces corruption, an emphasis on the instrumental value of women in positions of power has spread widely. Reiterated in World Bank reports (e.g., WB 2002) and policy debates around the world, governments have acted swiftly on the idea that women can help clean up politics. In 2003, for example, Mexico’s customs service announced that its new anti-corruption force would be entirely female; and in Uganda, the vast majority of positions as local government treasurers are assigned to women. Women are increasingly being viewed as “political cleaners” (Goetz 2007).

Why is there a gender gap in corrupt or dishonest behavior among new entrants into politics? A first explanation in the literature—which we will refer to as the *pro-social mechanism*—is that women tend to be more altruistic than men. Many observational and experimental studies support this argument. Evidence from dictator games suggests that women are more generous (Eckel and Grossman 1998), while trust games show that men are generally more trusting and women more trustworthy (see Rau 2012). Using data from experiments conducted in Sweden, Dreber and Johannesson (2008) show that women are less likely than men to lie in order to obtain a higher payoff; and D’Attoma, Volintiru and Steinmo (2017, p. 2) find women to be more tax-compliant than men in every country and under every condition studied. Similarly, a meta-analysis of sixty-

three experimental studies finds that women appear to exhibit greater propensities to tell the truth (Rosenbaum, Billinger and Stieglitz 2014). In a comprehensive review of laboratory experimental evidence on gender differences in corruption, Chaudhuri (2012) concludes that either women behave more honest than men, or there are no significant gender differences.

A second explanation, also with ample empirical support, is that women tend to be more risk-averse than men. We refer to this as the *risk-aversion mechanism*. Data from the USA show that, as wealth increases, the proportion of wealth held as risky assets is higher among men than among women (Jianakoplos and Bernasek 1998). Further, in behavioral games with gambling options, men are more likely to choose risky bets (Levin, Snyder and Chapman 1988). In their review of gender differences in economic experiments, Croson and Gneezy (2009) conclude that there are robust differences in male and female risk preferences. A gender gap in risk aversion has also been found in studies of voters' decisions, especially in high-stake political decisions (Verge, Guinjoan and Rodon 2015). Applying these insights to a context of corruption, Schulze and Frank (2003) show that whereas women are as willing as men to accept bribes in a no-risk situation, they are less willing to do so in higher-risk situations.

The empirical expectation from both of these explanations is that, at the time of entering office, female politicians are less likely than men to engage in corruption. However, neither of these explanations points to a static gender gap in attitudes or behavior. To the extent that the differences result from socialization and experience rather than from inherent differences between men and women, we should expect participation in politics to re-socialize politicians.⁵ Newly elected politicians are likely—for better or worse—to become socialized into the local version of the political game. Research from Zambia, for instance, shows that holding office increases politicians' adherence to a reci-

⁵Essentialist versions of these arguments have encountered strong resistance from feminist scholars (see, e.g., Phillips 1995; Goetz 2007).

procuity norm, indicating that with experience comes a greater likelihood of engaging in corrupt behavior (Enemark et al. 2016).⁶ And the more the political environment differs from the context politicians lived in before entering politics, the more change should we expect to see in their behavior—not least as regards female politicians.

A third explanation for why women may engage less in corruption than men holds that they have less opportunity, because of their weaker political networks (Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson 2005; Goetz 2007; Bjarnegård 2013; O’Brien 2015). India is known to be a patronage democracy where much of the non-programmatic delivery of services, and probably also much of the corrupt behavior, occurs through networks of brokers and activists (Chandra 2004; Bussell 2019). Indeed, female politicians have been found to be less effective than men in navigating existing systems of patronage (Bardhan, Mookherjee and Torrado 2005). People are also averse to working with female leaders, particularly in their first term in office (Gangadharan et al. 2016). This *network mechanism* is a dynamic explanation that can help in explaining change over time. Studies find that the people grow more accustomed to women leaders over time (Beaman et al. 2009; Gangadharan et al. 2016) and that women rapidly build political networks once they have a chance to do so (Goyal 2020).

If men and women face a similar political environment, we might expect their behavior to become more similar over time. However, some studies indicate that women may become more prone to corrupt behavior as they gain political experience. First, the literature on women’s experience of politics suggests that women face a more hostile environment than men: they get less credit for the work they do, and experience negative attention, sexual harassment, and violent and other backlashes once in office (Krook 2016; Jensenius 2019; Mayaram 2002; Brulé 2020). This may harden their outlook on

⁶This is consistent with studies of risk perception that find that those who are more familiar with the risks they are exposed to are also less likely to perceive them as frightening (Cutter, Tiefenbacher and Solecki 1992). Risk attitudes are influenced by social learning and environmental conditions and can change rapidly—even within the span of weeks (Booth, Cardona-Sosa and Nolen 2014).

political life. Second, we know that politicians with a shorter time horizon tend to be more opportunistic while in office (Ferraz and Finan 2011). The changes in attitudes and behavior during time in office that we observe may therefore be driven by women becoming less interested in a future political career. We refer to this as the *aspirations mechanism*.

3 Context and data

Our data are from West Bengal, a large state in Eastern India. India is a classic example of a developing country where it is expected that politicians will engage in corrupt behavior, with the media regularly reporting on scams and corruption scandals. According to Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Survey 2018, 56% of Indians reported paying bribes for services in the previous year. Studies of the sworn affidavits that politicians must submit before running for office show that many members of legislative assemblies accumulate sizable wealth during their time in office (Fisman, Schulz and Vig 2014). Bribe-paying may be increasing (Borooah 2016).

The 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, ratified in April 1993, established and codified a three-tiered system of local governance (the *panchayat* system), comprising councils at the village, block (or sub-district), and district levels. Although the *panchayat* system had existed in many Indian states since the 1950s, it was not until the mid-1990s that regular elections were held and village councils started playing more than a limited role. West Bengal was an exception. When the Marxist CPI(M)-led Left Front government came to power in West Bengal in 1977 on a platform of agrarian and political reforms, revitalizing the *panchayat* system became a key priority. The first *panchayat* election took place in 1978, with elections held every five years since then. Thus, the decentralization mandated by the Amendment was already well established in

West Bengal (see, [Bhattacharya 2002](#); [Ghatak and Ghatak 2002](#)). A novel and radical feature of the 1990s *panchayat* reforms was the mandated political reservations for minority groups and women. Regarding women's representation, the minimum share was set at one-third. West Bengal implemented this quota in 1993, increasing it to 50% from the 2013 elections onwards.⁷

The village council (or *gram panchayat*, henceforth GP) is the lowest tier of local governance. In West Bengal, each GP covers between five and fifteen villages, representing a total population of around 10,000 people. Each GP has an elected council headed by a *pradhan*. In West Bengal, candidates for a GP ward seat may be nominated by a political party or stand as an independents. In either case, though, they must be a resident of the village they represent. The GP is responsible for allocating funds to administrative expenses such as salaries, and the provision and maintenance of local public goods, like roads and irrigation canals, village-level sanitation services, and the delivery of important public programs. As GP councilors have considerable local power, corrupt or dishonest behavior can adversely affect the community.

West Bengal is characterized by intense political competition at every tier of government. From 1977 to 2011, the CPI(M) (leading the Left Front, LF) was in power at the state level, as well as being the dominant party in local-level elections. In 2011, the state legislative assembly elections saw a massive political change, with the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) taking over as the ruling party. AITC won large majorities at the GP level across the state in the 2013 local elections, and retained control of most village councils in the 2018 elections as well.

⁷The constitutional amendment also extended the reservation to the disadvantaged groups Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Seats were reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to the population of these groups in the district. Starting from 2013, seats were reserved for Other Backward Castes (OBCs).

Study design

Our study was implemented in September–October 2018, roughly three months after the 2018 *panchayat* elections. The participants were 400 GP-level politicians from thirty randomly selected GPs in eleven blocks (sub-districts) in North 24 Parganas district (see Figure 1). West Bengal has twenty-three districts and a population of approximately 90 million, of which 11 million live in North 24 Parganas district. There are approximately 3,000 GPs in the state, with *panchayat* members typically numbering between twenty and thirty. Between eight and twelve elected politicians were randomly sampled from each selected GP, based on data available from the Election Commission of India.

To enable comparison of experienced and inexperienced politicians in as similar a context as possible, we approached incoming (newly elected and re-elected) and outgoing (those who lost and those who did not stand for re-election) politicians in the sampled locations.⁸ Among the 400 politicians, 239 were incoming (elected to the GP in 2018), with the remaining 161 outgoing. Of the incoming politicians, 44 had served on the GP previously, so we categorize them as ‘experienced’ politicians. Our primary estimating sample thus consists of 195 inexperienced politicians and 205 experienced politicians, elected in the same localities.⁹ Our sample of inexperienced politicians consists of 111 women and 84 men; our sample of experienced politicians consists of 90 women and 115 men.

Study participants were contacted either through the GP’s *pradhan*—the new one if available or the old one if not—or via the Block Development Office, the government body with authority over the workings of the GP. Individual meetings were then arranged

⁸Due to political violence and opposition parties contesting the validity of the polls in some GPs, official election results were not declared until September 2018. Incoming politicians had not, therefore, taken over GP administration at the time of our study. Consequently, the participating politicians elected to office for the first time were completely inexperienced; they had not even attended the orientation sessions that form part of the induction process.

⁹As a robustness check we exclude from our analysis the 44 incoming politicians who had prior political experience. Results are not affected.

with each politician at a time and place of their own choosing. The survey team provided information about the study and obtained written consent from all participants before the survey and experiments were conducted.¹⁰

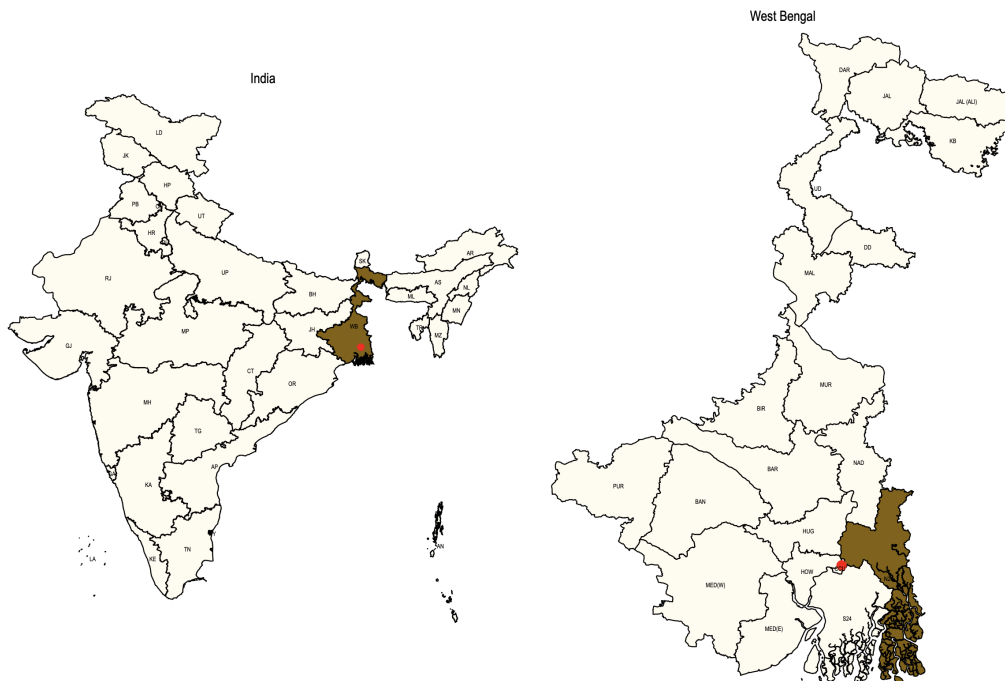
Participants first responded to an extensive survey including questions about their political work and attitudes. The questions we focus on here relate to attitudes toward corrupt behavior (see Section 4.1 for details). Having completed the survey, each respondent participated in a set of incentivized experimental tasks: (1) a dictator game, meant to capture generosity/altruism (Forsythe et al. 1994); (2) an ultimatum game, studying respondents' conception of fairness (Güth, Schmittberger and Schwarze 1982); (3) a trust game, studying the inclination to trust a stranger and behave in a trustworthy manner (Berg, Dickhaut and McCabe 1995); (4) a public-goods game with a punishment option, studying cooperation and norm enforcement (Ledyard 1995; Chaudhuri 2011); (5) an investment-decision game, studying attitudes to risk (Gneezy and Potters 1997); and finally (6) a die-tossing game, designed to test honesty (Fischbacher and Föllmi-Heusi 2013).¹¹

Table 1 presents the means and standard errors of politician characteristics in our four main sub-samples of interest (male and female, inexperienced and experienced). As in other studies in India (e.g., Afridi, Iversen and Sharan 2017), female politicians are younger than their male counterparts, with the average female–male age difference for inexperienced and experienced politicians being seven and nine years, respectively. Regarding education, 56% of experienced males and 37% of experienced females have completed more than ten years of schooling, while among inexperienced politicians the corresponding percentages are 38% and 29%. Regarding land ownership, the households of experienced male politicians own an average number of 52 *kathas* of land, compared

¹⁰The study involved no deception and no physical or psychological harm. The Consent Form and further information about our study design can be found in the Online Appendix.

¹¹Further details and experimental instructions are provided in Online Appendix C.

Figure 1: Location of our study



Notes: Left-hand panel shows the location of West Bengal (darkened). Right-hand panel shows the location of North 24 Parganas, where our study was conducted. The red dot denotes the state capital, Kolkata.

to 14 for experienced females.¹² The corresponding figures for inexperienced males and females are 44 and 15, respectively. The average number of individuals with political leadership experience within the family ranges from 0.27 for experienced males to 0.38 for inexperienced females. This differs notably from higher-level politics in India, where a much greater share of women than men have dynastic ties (Basu 2016). There are some, but mostly minor, differences in caste composition.

Table 1 also presents information about political or other civil society leadership experience, the reservation status of the seat the respondent was elected into, and party affiliation. Unsurprisingly, inexperienced female politicians are more likely to report no

¹²*Katha* is a local measure of land area. In West Bengal, 1 *katha* = 720 square feet.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Observables

| | <u>Female</u> | | | | <u>Male</u> | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------|-------------|--------|---------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | Inexperienced | | Experienced | | Inexperienced | | Experienced | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Years of Schooling ≤ 5 | 0.099 | 0.300 | 0.044 | 0.207 | 0.119 | 0.326 | 0.078 | 0.270 |
| Years of Schooling 6–10 | 0.613 | 0.489 | 0.589 | 0.495 | 0.500 | 0.503 | 0.365 | 0.484 |
| Years of Schooling > 10 | 0.288 | 0.455 | 0.367 | 0.485 | 0.381 | 0.489 | 0.557 | 0.499 |
| Age | 35.838 | 7.963 | 39.544 | 8.583 | 42.393 | 10.166 | 48.661 | 9.807 |
| Hindu General Caste | 0.117 | 0.323 | 0.144 | 0.354 | 0.083 | 0.278 | 0.183 | 0.388 |
| Hindu OBC | 0.117 | 0.323 | 0.078 | 0.269 | 0.071 | 0.259 | 0.130 | 0.338 |
| Hindu ST | 0.018 | 0.134 | 0.022 | 0.148 | 0.024 | 0.153 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Hindu SC | 0.360 | 0.482 | 0.444 | 0.500 | 0.214 | 0.413 | 0.261 | 0.441 |
| Non Hindu | 0.387 | 0.489 | 0.311 | 0.466 | 0.607 | 0.491 | 0.426 | 0.497 |
| Land Owned (Katha) | 15.622 | 37.543 | 14.378 | 29.029 | 44.190 | 83.556 | 52.078 | 70.840 |
| Self-employed Farming | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.022 | 0.148 | 0.226 | 0.421 | 0.365 | 0.484 |
| Self-employed non-Farming | 0.045 | 0.208 | 0.067 | 0.251 | 0.500 | 0.503 | 0.374 | 0.486 |
| Domestic | 0.568 | 0.498 | 0.644 | 0.481 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Leaders in Extended Family | 0.117 | 0.350 | 0.111 | 0.350 | 0.238 | 0.754 | 0.183 | 0.657 |
| No Leadership Experience | 0.955 | 0.208 | 0.378 | 0.488 | 0.905 | 0.295 | 0.261 | 0.441 |
| Reserved | 0.883 | 0.323 | 0.911 | 0.286 | 0.726 | 0.449 | 0.704 | 0.458 |
| Affiliation TMC | 0.937 | 0.244 | 0.711 | 0.456 | 0.917 | 0.278 | 0.704 | 0.458 |
| Affiliation Left Front | 0.009 | 0.095 | 0.222 | 0.418 | 0.024 | 0.153 | 0.191 | 0.395 |
| Sample | 111 | | 90 | | 84 | | 115 | |

Notes: Sample includes inexperienced and experienced politicians. The omitted category for party affiliation is affiliation other parties (including Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party and independent). Standard deviations are presented in parenthesis.

prior civil society leadership experience.¹³ The share of inexperienced politicians reporting affiliation to AITC rather than the Left Front is much larger than for experienced politicians. This reflects the change in the strength of these parties in the district. These differences in the characteristics of inexperienced and experienced politicians are important possible confounders in our analysis, which we control for in our multivariate regression models.

¹³This includes leadership in self-help groups or senior management positions in community-level organizations.

4 Propensity towards corruption

To measure dishonest behavior, we first examine self-reported attitudes towards corrupt behavior, and then the results from the die-tossing game. Although the self-reported attitudes may suffer from self-reporting and social-desirability biases, we report both sets of results to demonstrate the challenges of drawing valid inferences on this topic from survey data. Our main hypothesis—which we test with the results from the die-tossing game—is that we should expect to observe a dynamic gender gap, where inexperienced female politicians are less likely than inexperienced male politicians to be corrupt, but that this gap shrinks or is reversed with time in office.

4.1 Attitudes towards corrupt behavior elicited via surveys

Our survey questions facilitate scrutiny of self-reported attitudes to nepotism and corrupt acts by politicians, civil servants and members of the public. To capture these attitudes, respondents were presented with the following statements:¹⁴

1. It is acceptable for a shopkeeper to offer a politician a small gift to help keep the tax auditor away.
2. It is acceptable for a businessman to give a job in a family firm to a family member even though other applicants are more qualified.
3. It is acceptable for a government employee to give a government job to a family member even though other applicants are more qualified.
4. It is acceptable for a male politician to give a government job to a family member even though other applicants are more qualified.
5. It is acceptable for a female politician to give a government job to a family member even though other applicants are more qualified.

¹⁴This design of vignette-type examples draws on [Truex \(2011\)](#).

6. It is acceptable for a government employee to ask a school teacher for a small gift in exchange for approving his BPL card without proper documentation.
7. It is acceptable for a politician to ask a school teacher for a small gift in exchange for approving his BPL card without proper documentation.

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Table 2 shows the output from linear regression models of the following form for the responses to each of these seven questions:

$$y_{iv} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Experienced} + \beta_2 \text{Female} + \beta_3 \text{Experienced} \times \text{Female} + \gamma \mathbf{X}_{iv} + \varepsilon_{iv} \quad (1)$$

Here y_{iv} is the response to a question from politician i in village council (GP) v . The outcome variables are dummy variables that take the value 1 if the participant *strongly disagrees* or *disagrees* with the statement of interest. “Experienced” denotes a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the politician is experienced. “Female” is a dummy variable that takes the value 1 if the politician is female. \mathbf{X}_{iv} denotes a vector of individual characteristics of each politician. These include age, years of education (reference category: no more than primary schooling), caste/religion (reference category: Muslim), land ownership, primary occupation, total number of political leaders in the family, whether the individual has prior experience in any leadership position, party affiliation, and whether the politician was elected from a reserved seat.

In addition to the difference-in-difference estimate (Experienced \times Female, β_3), we are interested in the difference estimates listed at the bottom of the Table, capturing differences in averages for the various groups, holding the additional controls at their sample means.

The results presented in Table 2 show that experienced politicians, both men and women, express a stronger distaste for corruption than do inexperienced politicians. The

Table 2: Attitudes towards Dishonest Behavior

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Experienced | 0.110** (0.055) | 0.148** (0.057) | 0.169*** (0.054) | 0.122** (0.053) | 0.101* (0.052) | 0.088* (0.051) | 0.121** (0.049) |
| Female | 0.063 (0.063) | 0.015 (0.071) | 0.019 (0.070) | 0.032 (0.061) | 0.072 (0.064) | 0.020 (0.061) | 0.012 (0.057) |
| Experienced × Female | -0.074 (0.062) | -0.080 (0.069) | -0.096 (0.069) | -0.115* (0.061) | -0.014 (0.059) | -0.012 (0.057) | -0.045 (0.053) |
| Constant | 0.407*** (0.152) | 0.511*** (0.161) | 0.603*** (0.154) | 0.526*** (0.142) | 0.620*** (0.155) | 0.686*** (0.124) | 0.735*** (0.118) |
| Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sample Size | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |
| <i>Difference Estimates:</i> | | | | | | | |
| Inexp Female – Inexp Male | 0.0633 (0.0629) | 0.0147 (0.0707) | 0.0195 (0.0699) | 0.0320 (0.0607) | 0.0715 (0.0644) | 0.0201 (0.0605) | 0.0122 (0.0566) |
| Exp Female – Exp Male | -0.0103 (0.0552) | -0.0656 (0.0663) | -0.0767 (0.0610) | -0.0832 (0.0514) | 0.0577 (0.0546) | 0.00765 (0.0529) | -0.0324 (0.0441) |
| Exp Female – Inexp Female | 0.0368 (0.0447) | 0.0676 (0.0506) | 0.0725 (0.0522) | 0.00666 (0.0458) | 0.0868* (0.0478) | 0.0752* (0.0437) | 0.0762** (0.0370) |
| Exp Male – Inexp Male | 0.110** (0.0549) | 0.148** (0.0574) | 0.169*** (0.0545) | 0.122** (0.0533) | 0.101** (0.0521) | 0.0877* (0.0509) | 0.121** (0.0487) |

Notes: Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Regressions control for a set of individual characteristics (age, years of schooling, religion/caste, land owned, political network, primary occupation reservation status and party affiliation). Full set of results presented in Table B1. Outcomes are 1 if the respondents *strongly disagree* or *disagree* with each statement. Statements are as defined on Page 14. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

difference estimates presented in the bottom two rows of the bottom panel of Table 2 are always positive, and are statistically significant, always for men and often for women. The effects are stronger for men, although the difference-in-difference estimates are never statistically significant. There are no significant differences between the attitudes expressed by women and men, whether inexperienced or experienced.¹⁵

4.2 Results from the die-tossing game

We measure dishonest *behavior* with a die-tossing task. There is now ample evidence validating this game (or variants, where participant earnings depend on self-reported

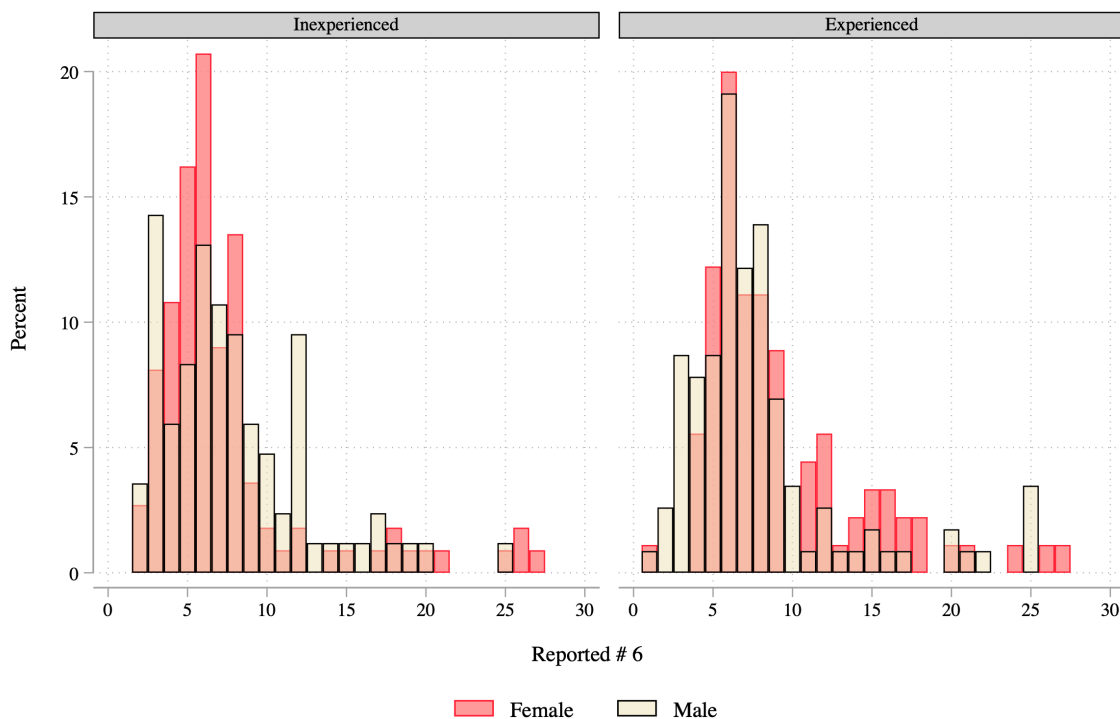
¹⁵In Table A1 in the Online Appendix we present the results without the individual-level controls.

outcomes) as a reliable measure of dishonesty and corruption, at the individual and the aggregate levels. [Banerjee, Baul and Rosenblat \(2015\)](#) report that the degree of untruthful reports is significantly higher among Indian students preparing to enter the country's administrative service, well-known for endemic corruption; [Hanna and Wang \(2017\)](#) find a similar lack of truthfulness among students preparing to enter the Indian civil service and a positive correlation between untruthful reports and absenteeism among public hospital nurses; French passengers who report actual outcomes untruthfully are more likely to evade fares on public transport ([Dai, Galeotti and Villeval 2017](#)); Indian milkmen who are more dishonest in this game engage in greater adulteration, adding water to their milk ([Kröll and Rustagi 2016](#)); [Gächter and Schulz \(2016\)](#) find that participants from countries with a high prevalence of rule violations are more dishonest in the die-tossing game than those from more law-abiding countries; and [Olsen et al. \(2019\)](#) find that country-level measures of corruption are strongly positively correlated with the average rates of cheating in the die-tossing game.

Participants were asked to throw an unbiased die thirty times in private, and then report the number of sixes rolled. Participants were told they would be paid Rs.5 for each reported six. It was made clear that the die tossings would not be monitored. It is impossible to know for certain whether a particular individual was dishonest in the die-tossing game, but knowledge of the statistical distribution of responses allows us to infer how the reported number of sixes differ from a theoretical distribution across our four sub-groups. As participants were throwing an unbiased die, we would expect, on average, participants to report five sixes over 30 throws. In our data, the average number of reported sixes was eight (ranging from one to twenty-seven).

Figure 2 presents the distribution of reported sixes by male and female, experienced and inexperienced politicians. Experienced female politicians are likely to report more sixes than the other three groups: the average number of reported sixes is 7.9, 7.5, 7.9

Figure 2: Distribution of reported sixes in die-tossing game



Notes: Distribution of the reported number of sixes by the different groups of politicians (inexperienced male, inexperienced female, experienced male and experienced female presented.)

and 9.2 for, respectively, male inexperienced, female inexperienced, male experienced, and female experienced. A similar pattern emerges when we estimate multivariate linear models on these data—regression specification given by equation (1)—as reported Table 3, column 1. The difference-in-difference estimate ($\text{Experienced} \times \text{Female}$) is positive and statistically significant.

At the bottom of Table 3, we show pair-wise comparisons of the four groups. Consistent with the expectation that women are less prone to dishonesty when entering political office, women report fewer sixes than men (see column 1). This difference is substantial, though not statistically significant. Experienced female politicians, by contrast, report

Table 3: Behavior in experimental tasks

| | Reported #6 (1) | Dictator Offer (2) | Trust Offer (3) | Trust Response (4) | Risk Preference (5) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Experienced | 1.018 (0.919) | 0.510 (3.843) | -1.389 (4.791) | 0.036 (0.029) | -1.488 (5.274) |
| Female | -0.972 (1.036) | -1.092 (4.161) | -2.807 (6.005) | 0.019 (0.030) | -9.480** (3.712) |
| Experienced × Female | 1.309 (1.026) | -0.846 (4.945) | 2.469 (5.206) | -0.026 (0.034) | 9.160* (4.579) |
| Constant | 11.190*** (2.179) | 58.865*** (8.852) | 67.696*** (9.097) | 0.314*** (0.080) | 75.575*** (11.079) |
| Controls | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Sample Size | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |
| <i>Difference Estimates:</i> | | | | | |
| Inexp Female – Inexp Male | -0.972 (1.036) | -1.092 (4.161) | -2.807 (6.005) | 0.0187 (0.0303) | -9.480** (3.712) |
| Exp Female – Exp Male | 0.337 (0.968) | -1.937 (4.821) | -0.338 (5.001) | -0.00775 (0.0354) | -0.320 (5.026) |
| Exp Female – Inexp Female | 2.326** (0.853) | -0.335 (3.833) | 1.081 (3.605) | 0.00913 (0.0300) | 7.672 (4.997) |
| Exp Male – Inexp Male | 1.018 (0.919) | 0.510 (3.843) | -1.389 (4.791) | 0.0356** (0.0291) | -1.488 (5.274) |

Notes: Sample includes inexperienced incoming politicians and experienced outgoing politicians. Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Regressions control for a set of individual characteristics (age, years of schooling, religion/caste, land owned, political network, primary occupation, reservation status and party affiliation). Full set of results presented in Table B2. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

2.3 more sixes than do inexperienced female politicians, even when controlling for a vector of individual characteristics. This difference—which is consistent with a substantial time-in-office effect—is statistically significant (p -value < 0.05). We find little difference between inexperienced and experienced men, indicating that the behavioral response and learning trajectories of men and women in office differ.

4.3 Testing four mechanisms for change

In Section 2, we discussed changes in pro-sociality, risk aversion, political networks, and aspirations as possible mechanisms that could explain gender differences in dishonesty

and how this gap evolves over time in office. In the previous section, we found that women appear to change more during their time in office than men, becoming more likely to cheat for private gain. Can this difference be attributed to any of the proposed mechanisms?

The pro-social mechanism

To explore the pro-social mechanism, we use two well-known experimental tasks: the dictator game and the trust game. The dictator game is a two-person game with an allocator and a recipient. Each allocator is given an endowment of Rs.100. The allocator must then decide whether to share this—and, if so, how much—with an anonymous recipient. The recipient has no decision to make and does not have an initial endowment. Hence, given an allocation x , the allocator's income is $(100-x)$ and the recipient's income is x . Dictator games have been extensively used by social scientists to measure generosity or altruism on the part of the allocator.

Also the trust game is a two-person game, with one player designated as sender and the other as responder. The sender is given an initial endowment of Rs.100, and asked to decide whether to transfer any part of this endowment to an anonymous responder. The experimenter triples the value of x and gives the amount to the matched responder, who is then asked to decide whether to return any money to the sender, and if so how much. The sender's earning is $(100 - x + R)$, with R being the amount returned by the responder; while the responder's earning is $(3x - R)$. As any positive amount transferred is tripled, the responder states how much they will return for each value of $3x$.

Backward induction suggests that a purely money-maximizing responder has no incentive to send money back. Anticipating this, the sender should not transfer any money in the first instance, implying that both players will end the game with their initial en-

dowments. However, if players are motivated by trust and reciprocity, both can emerge better off.

With regard to dishonesty, the second-mover decision is most relevant. Evidence suggests that by sending money back to the first-mover, second-movers are typically influenced both by altruism (hence the need to control behavior in the dictator game) and reciprocity (Cox 2004; Ashraf, Bohnet and Piankov 2006; Chaudhuri and Gangadharan 2007). For completeness, we present the results for both the first-mover and second-mover decisions in the trust game. The first-mover decision (“trust offer”) is typically used as a measure of trust, whereas the second-mover decision is a measure of the second-mover’s trustworthiness (“trust response”). Taken together, the three decisions—altruism (as measured by the dictator game), trust (as measured by the first-mover decision in the trust game) and trustworthiness (as measured by the second-mover decision in the trust game)—should provide information on a person’s degree of pro-sociality, which may in turn have a bearing on honesty/dishonesty.

Regression results for these tasks are presented in columns 2–4 of Table 3. Again, the regression specification is given by equation (1). In column 2, the outcome variable is the offer made in the dictator game. At the bottom of the Table we show pair-wise comparisons for each of our four groups. Although the difference estimates are not statistically significant, they do point in the direction of male politicians being more altruistic than female politicians, and that time in office makes politicians—male or female—somewhat more altruistic. Thus, we find no evidence of the female politicians in our sample being more pro-social. In columns 3 and 4 in Table 3 we present the results of the trust game. None of the differences are statistically significant. The coefficients for the second part of the task—measuring the trustworthiness of politician participants—are also small and statistically insignificant. These results provide little

evidence of politicians becoming less pro-social and more selfish during their time in office.

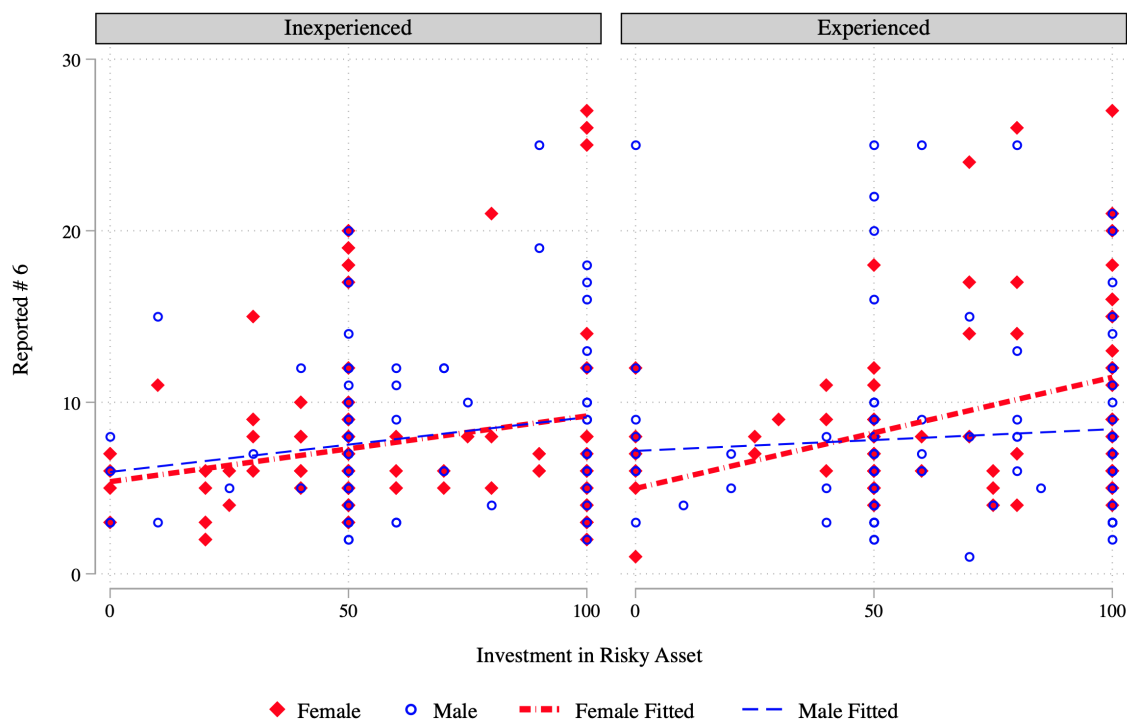
The risk-aversion mechanism

A second explanation for a dynamic gender gap concerns gender differences in preferences for risk. We elicited risk preferences through the investment game. In this task, each player is given the option of investing any part of an initial endowment of Rs.100 in a hypothetical risky project. The project offers a 50% probability of tripling the amount invested, and a 50% probability of losing it. The player may can keep any amount he/she chooses not to invest. The higher the investment in the risky asset, the less risk-averse a person is seen as being.

We present the results from the investment game in column 5 of Table 3. The difference estimates show that inexperienced female politicians invest about 9.5 percentage points less than inexperienced males; this difference is statistically significant. Consistent with our empirical expectations, this suggests that inexperienced female politicians are considerably more risk-averse than inexperienced male politicians. However, this difference disappears over time: experienced female politicians invest 7.6 percentage points more than do inexperienced female politicians, although the difference is not statistically significant at any conventional level. We find little difference in investment between inexperienced and experienced male politicians, indicating that this behavioral difference is confined to female politicians; they enter office more risk-averse than men, but seem to become less so during their time in office.

Our findings indicate that the considerable difference in dishonesty between inexperienced and experienced women in the die-tossing game could be due to differences in risk aversion. This is further corroborated by the fact that behavior in the investment

Figure 3: Correlation between amount invested in risky asset and reported number of sixes in dishonesty task



Notes: Difference in Slope (female – male) = 0.006 (p-value = 0.125, one sided) for inexperienced politicians and 0.059 (p-value = 0.011, one sided) for experienced politicians.

game and in the die-tossing game are positively correlated (Figure 3). This correlation is particularly strong for experienced female politicians.¹⁶

The network mechanism

Measuring political networks is challenging, but we try to do this by examining political connections within the family—as indicating that a politician has access to political networks even before entering political office. This is operationalized by whether or not

¹⁶The difference in slope (female – male) = 0.006 (p-value = 0.125, one sided) for inexperienced politicians and 0.059 (p-value = 0.011, one sided) for experienced politicians.

participants had political leaders in their extended family, elicited in the survey-part of our study.

To examine whether this mechanism can explain patterns of dishonesty behavior among inexperienced and experienced politicians, we estimate our model for die-tossing game separately for politicians with and without dynastic connections. The regression results are presented in columns 1 and 2 of Table 4. As shown in column 1—and consistent with our theoretical expectations—the difference between inexperienced women and men in the full sample is driven entirely by the women from non-dynastic families. Further, the difference between inexperienced and experienced women is much stronger among those without political connections in the family.

These patterns are consistent with the idea that, because of their weaker political networks, most women have fewer opportunities than men to act in a corrupt manner, but that this changes as they gain political experience.

The aspirations mechanism

A fourth possible mechanism for the changing gender gap in dishonesty concerns differences in aspirations for a future role in politics. If women have lower political aspirations, they may be more attracted to extracting short-term gains from office. To examine this mechanism, we asked participants whether they aspired to stand for political office in the future. Figure 4 shows the average proportion who responded “yes” to aspiring to stand for any of the following positions: same as current, *Pradhan*, member of *Panchayat Samiti* (*taluk* or block level), member of *Zila Parishad* (district level), Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA, state level) or Member of Parliament. We find no gender difference in aspirations for future political office among experienced or inexperienced politicians, although both male and female inexperienced politicians report significantly higher aspirations for future political office than do their experienced counterparts.

Table 4: Time in Office and Dishonesty. Political Dynasty and Aspirations

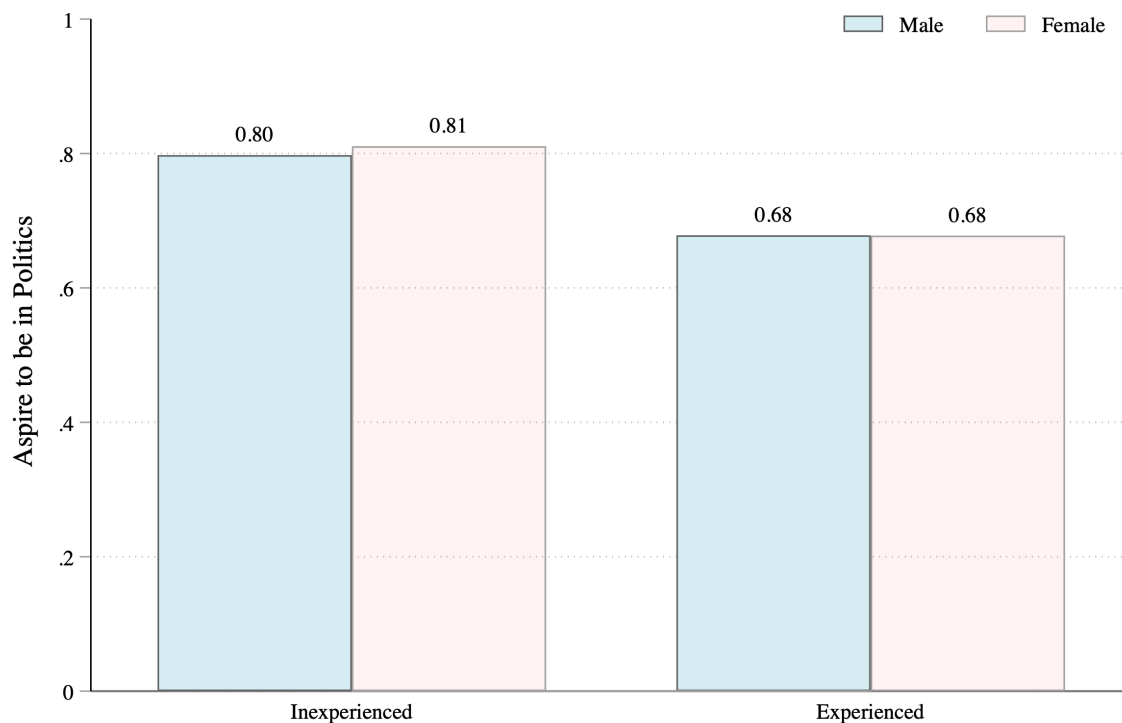
| | Political Dynasty | | Future Political Aspirations | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| | No (1) | Yes (2) | No (3) | Yes (4) |
| Experienced | 0.869 (0.971) | 1.077 (1.726) | 0.995 (1.709) | 1.912* (1.021) |
| Female | -1.416 (0.962) | 0.501 (1.507) | -0.507 (2.511) | -0.782 (0.914) |
| Experienced \times Female | 1.961 (1.273) | 0.135 (1.646) | 0.696 (2.415) | 0.658 (1.205) |
| Constant | 11.204*** (2.361) | 10.360*** (2.460) | 13.058*** (4.381) | 9.775*** (2.169) |
| Sample Size | 302 | 98 | 104 | 296 |
| <i>Difference Estimates:</i> | | | | |
| Inexp Female – Inexp Male | -1.416 (0.962) | 0.501 (1.507) | -0.507 (2.511) | -0.782 (0.914) |
| Exp Female – Exp Male | 0.545 (1.158) | 0.636 (1.484) | 0.189 (1.938) | -0.124 (1.052) |
| Exp Female – Inexp Female | 2.830** (1.113) | 1.211 (1.330) | 1.691 (1.943) | 2.571*** (0.975) |
| Exp Male – Inexp Male | 0.869 (0.971) | 1.077 (1.726) | 0.995 (1.709) | 1.912* (1.021) |

Notes: Dependent variable: Reported # of 6's. OLS regression results presented. Regressions control for a set of individual characteristics (age, years of schooling, religion/caste, land owned, political network, primary occupation and party affiliation). Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

The pattern in Figure 4 suggests that changing aspirations cannot account for the time-in-office effect on women's dishonesty, unless how aspirations and time horizons affect dishonesty are different for women and men. To examine that possibility, we estimate our die-tossing model separately for those with and without further political aspirations.

The results are presented in columns 3 and 4 of Table 4. Although there is clear evidence of a shorter time-horizon being associated with more dishonest behavior (note the sizeable constant term in column 3), and also large differences between inexperienced and experienced politicians, both male and female politicians become more dishonest

Figure 4: Aspiration for political office in the future



Notes: Bars show the average proportion of politicians in the four categories (inexperienced male, inexperienced female, experienced male and experienced female) responding *yes* to aspiring to stand for any of the following positions: same as current, *pradhan*, member of *panchayat samiti*, member of *zila parishad*, MLA, MP.

with time in office. The aspirations mechanism does not seem to explain why women in particular become more dishonest with time in office.

5 Concluding discussion

Increasing the share of women in politics has been promoted as a way of reducing corruption and curtailing dishonest behavior. However, relatively little is known about why and under what circumstances women are more honest and less corrupt than men. Among ordinary members of the public, women have been found to be more altruistic

and honest, at least in industrialized countries. However, it requires a considerable leap of faith to argue that a similar behavioral pattern should be expected among elected women politicians around the world; likewise with the assumption that gender gaps in attitudes and behavior will remain static as newly elected representatives gain experience and become socialized into heterogeneous and localized political cultures.

Our study contributes to the debate on the gender gap in dishonesty by arguing that this gap should be theorized and studied as dynamic rather than static. There are differences between men and women in all societies—but if these differences are due to experiences and socialization, and not inherent traits, they must be recognized as both context-specific and malleable. Women may be less prone to corruption when they enter politics, but exposure to the political game, particularly the normalization of corrupt behavior, is likely to change them. Our study from West Bengal suggests precisely this: that women who enter politics are somewhat less likely to engage in corrupt behavior than men, but that they become more likely to do so with time in office—and this seems to be because of a reduction in risk aversion and stronger political networks.

How generalizable are these results? Our argument implies that gender gaps in corrupt behavior, and also other forms of political activity, result from differences in experiences and socialization. The differences between men and women (or other groups) may not be so great if the lives of men and of women do not differ greatly—or, inversely, in a society with greater gender gaps, greater differences might be expected between men and women entering politics.

Further, the greater the difference in culture inside and outside of politics, the more likely are changes among both men and women as they gain political experience. In this study of village-level politics in India, we expect scant cultural change for men who enter politics, as they are often already embedded in the political discourse in their

villages, whereas entering “the game” at a different level of politics may result in more of a change among men as well.

With greater gender differences within politics—for example, women experiencing more hostility—the trajectories of women and men can be expected to differ. In India, evidence suggests that women’s experiences of politics are worse than those for men. Although our measures of pro-sociality and trust do not capture such changes, they cannot be ruled out. More research is needed to establish whether there is evidence of a shrinking gender gap as men and women become socialized into the same political environment, or whether exposure to the political game makes women more dishonest than their male colleagues. Regardless, our study of real-life politicians lends little support to the idea that women’s entry into political institutions will help clean out corruption or other malfeasance—except, perhaps, briefly.

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Online Appendix

Appendix A: Robustness checks

Table A1: Attitudes towards dishonest behavior. No additional controls included

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Experienced | 0.044 (0.045) | 0.083* (0.050) | 0.126*** (0.047) | 0.070 (0.043) | 0.053 (0.045) | 0.038 (0.041) | 0.076* (0.040) |
| Female | 0.050 (0.045) | 0.043 (0.053) | 0.016 (0.055) | 0.050 (0.045) | 0.014 (0.048) | 0.008 (0.044) | 0.038 (0.044) |
| Experienced × Female | -0.063 (0.061) | -0.070 (0.069) | -0.086 (0.068) | -0.111* (0.061) | -0.002 (0.060) | -0.005 (0.057) | -0.039 (0.053) |
| Constant | 0.869*** (0.037) | 0.821*** (0.042) | 0.821*** (0.042) | 0.869*** (0.037) | 0.869*** (0.037) | 0.893*** (0.034) | 0.881*** (0.036) |
| Sample Size | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |
| <i>Difference Estimates</i> | | | | | | | |
| Inexp Female – Inexp Male | 0.0499 (0.0452) | 0.0434 (0.0532) | 0.0164 (0.0548) | 0.0499 (0.0452) | 0.0138 (0.0481) | 0.00804 (0.0443) | 0.0380 (0.0440) |
| Exp Female – Exp Male | -0.0130 (0.0413) | -0.0266 (0.0443) | -0.0700* (0.0405) | -0.0614 (0.0413) | 0.0116 (0.0365) | 0.00290 (0.0356) | -0.000966 (0.0290) |
| Exp Female – Inexp Female | -0.0189 (0.0411) | 0.0129 (0.0476) | 0.0399 (0.0494) | -0.0411 (0.0434) | 0.0505 (0.0405) | 0.0324 (0.0389) | 0.0366 (0.0340) |
| Exp Male – Inexp Male | 0.0440 (0.0455) | 0.0829* (0.0502) | 0.126*** (0.0469) | 0.0701 (0.0433) | 0.0527 (0.0447) | 0.0376 (0.0415) | 0.0756* (0.0403) |

Notes: OLS estimates presented. Sample includes inexperienced incoming politicians and experienced outgoing politicians. Standard errors clustered at the GP level in parantheses. Outcomes are 1 if the respondents said they *strongly disagree* or *disagree* with the statements as listed on Page 14. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

Table A2: Behavior in experimental tasks. No additional controls included

| | Reported #6 (1) | Dictator Offer (2) | Trust Offer (3) | Trust Response (4) | Risk Preference (5) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Experienced | -0.001 (0.584) | 1.428 (2.724) | -1.153 (3.203) | 0.015 (0.024) | -1.695 (4.691) |
| Female | -0.409 (0.616) | -1.014 (3.150) | 0.598 (3.459) | -0.005 (0.023) | -6.387* (3.165) |
| Experienced × Female | 1.714* (0.882) | -0.136 (5.007) | 3.682 (5.316) | -0.032 (0.034) | 11.177** (4.816) |
| Constant | 7.940*** (0.577) | 60.833*** (2.389) | 59.762*** (2.466) | 0.426*** (0.022) | 62.738*** (2.656) |
| Sample Size | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |
| <i>Difference Estimates:</i> | | | | | |
| Inexp Female – Inexp Male | -0.409 (0.616) | -1.014 (3.150) | 0.598 (3.459) | -0.00532 (0.0233) | -6.387** (3.165) |
| Exp Female – Exp Male | 1.305* (0.725) | -1.150 (3.844) | 4.280 (3.797) | -0.0373 (0.0237) | 4.790 (4.687) |
| Exp Female – Inexp Female | 1.713** (0.726) | 1.291 (4.134) | 2.529 (2.929) | -0.0169 (0.0284) | 9.482** (3.694) |
| Exp Male - Inexp Male | -0.00135 (0.584) | 1.428 (2.724) | -1.153 (3.203) | 0.0151 (0.0245) | -1.695 (4.691) |

Notes: OLS estimates presented. Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

Appendix B: Full sets of results

Table B1: Attitudes towards Dishonest Behavior. Including Controls. Full Set of Results

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Experienced | 0.110** (0.055) | 0.148** (0.057) | 0.169*** (0.054) | 0.122** (0.053) | 0.101* (0.052) | 0.088* (0.051) | 0.121** (0.049) |
| Female | 0.063 (0.063) | 0.015 (0.071) | 0.019 (0.070) | 0.032 (0.061) | 0.072 (0.064) | 0.020 (0.061) | 0.012 (0.057) |
| Experienced × Female | -0.074 (0.062) | -0.080 (0.069) | -0.096 (0.069) | -0.115* (0.061) | -0.014 (0.059) | -0.012 (0.057) | -0.045 (0.053) |
| Years of education (6-10) | 0.120* (0.072) | 0.089 (0.074) | 0.013 (0.065) | 0.084 (0.068) | 0.025 (0.061) | -0.013 (0.052) | 0.014 (0.053) |
| Years of education (≥ 10) | 0.150** (0.072) | 0.094 (0.075) | 0.058 (0.066) | 0.127* (0.067) | 0.073 (0.062) | 0.040 (0.051) | 0.006 (0.055) |
| Age | 0.003* (0.002) | 0.002 (0.002) | 0.002 (0.002) | 0.002 (0.002) | 0.003* (0.002) | 0.002 (0.001) | 0.001 (0.001) |
| Hindu General Category | 0.004 (0.055) | -0.018 (0.061) | 0.027 (0.049) | 0.029 (0.050) | -0.084 (0.055) | -0.008 (0.058) | 0.038 (0.039) |
| Hindu OBC | 0.029 (0.043) | -0.020 (0.057) | -0.092 (0.066) | -0.018 (0.050) | -0.116* (0.060) | -0.028 (0.052) | 0.031 (0.042) |
| Hindu SC/ST | 0.018 (0.038) | 0.014 (0.040) | -0.033 (0.042) | -0.023 (0.036) | -0.037 (0.037) | 0.012 (0.033) | 0.039 (0.033) |
| Land owned (Katha) | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) |
| Self-employed, farming | 0.058 (0.052) | 0.031 (0.057) | 0.082 (0.051) | 0.047 (0.041) | 0.091* (0.049) | 0.070 (0.044) | 0.024 (0.038) |
| Self-employed, non-farming | 0.077 (0.048) | 0.006 (0.055) | 0.050 (0.050) | 0.009 (0.044) | 0.064 (0.048) | 0.043 (0.045) | 0.006 (0.040) |
| Domestic duties | 0.079* (0.045) | 0.097* (0.053) | 0.107* (0.056) | 0.064 (0.046) | 0.048 (0.048) | 0.067 (0.045) | 0.052 (0.038) |
| Leaders in family | 0.028** (0.012) | 0.007 (0.017) | 0.013 (0.016) | 0.023* (0.012) | -0.006 (0.025) | 0.040*** (0.012) | 0.030*** (0.011) |
| Prior Leadership Experience | 0.141*** (0.041) | 0.136*** (0.043) | 0.111*** (0.042) | 0.128*** (0.042) | 0.112*** (0.041) | 0.112*** (0.039) | 0.098*** (0.036) |
| Reserved | -0.002 (0.041) | -0.022 (0.050) | -0.011 (0.045) | 0.048 (0.046) | -0.040 (0.041) | -0.018 (0.046) | -0.013 (0.038) |
| Affiliation TMC | 0.018 (0.040) | -0.003 (0.042) | -0.033 (0.036) | -0.011 (0.036) | -0.025 (0.033) | -0.015 (0.033) | -0.024 (0.025) |
| Constant | 0.407*** (0.152) | 0.511*** (0.161) | 0.603*** (0.154) | 0.526*** (0.142) | 0.620*** (0.155) | 0.686*** (0.124) | 0.735*** (0.118) |
| Sample Size | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |

Notes: OLS Estimates presented. Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Outcomes are 1 if the respondents strongly disagree with each statement listed on Page 14. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

Table B2: Behavior in the other experimental tasks. Full set of results

| | Reported # sixes (1) | Dictator Offer (2) | Trust Offer (3) | Trust Response (4) | Risk Preference (5) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Experienced | 1.018 (0.919) | 0.510 (3.843) | -1.389 (4.791) | 0.036 (0.029) | -1.488 (5.274) |
| Female | -0.972 (1.036) | -1.092 (4.161) | -2.807 (6.005) | 0.019 (0.030) | -9.480** (3.712) |
| Experienced × Female | 1.309 (1.026) | -0.846 (4.945) | 2.469 (5.206) | -0.026 (0.034) | 9.160* (4.579) |
| Years of education (6-10) | -1.712 (1.082) | 2.446 (3.612) | 4.670 (3.308) | -0.037 (0.035) | -2.683 (5.810) |
| Years of education (≥ 10) | -1.197 (1.117) | -0.088 (3.071) | 1.252 (3.925) | -0.028 (0.040) | -0.147 (6.480) |
| Age | -0.077** (0.029) | 0.017 (0.115) | -0.263* (0.142) | 0.002** (0.001) | -0.245 (0.184) |
| Hindu General Category | -0.410 (0.932) | 2.760 (4.475) | 2.850 (4.570) | 0.019 (0.037) | -11.965* (6.191) |
| Hindu OBC | -1.023 (0.877) | -0.732 (5.037) | 1.889 (3.714) | -0.046 (0.027) | -6.326 (4.971) |
| Hindu SC/ST | -0.326 (0.858) | 2.038 (2.402) | 0.302 (2.129) | -0.024 (0.018) | -0.408 (3.123) |
| Land owned (Katha) | -0.005 (0.004) | 0.006 (0.015) | 0.016 (0.021) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.012 (0.026) |
| Self-employed, farming | 1.355 (1.054) | -4.547 (5.012) | -2.028 (5.256) | 0.042 (0.040) | 3.002 (5.161) |
| Self-employed, non-farming | 1.163 (0.905) | 1.811 (4.235) | 1.871 (4.930) | -0.011 (0.033) | 1.521 (4.783) |
| Domestic duties | 1.441* (0.743) | -1.751 (3.286) | 2.283 (3.373) | -0.017 (0.027) | 5.208 (4.408) |
| Leaders in family | -0.878*** (0.273) | -2.875* (1.503) | -1.507 (2.035) | 0.012 (0.011) | -2.159 (1.609) |
| Prior Leadership Experience | 0.730 (0.922) | -2.068 (3.741) | -2.849 (4.147) | 0.063** (0.023) | -3.703 (3.371) |
| Reserved | 0.496 (0.601) | 4.308 (3.218) | 5.166 (4.141) | 0.015 (0.028) | 5.076 (4.409) |
| Affiliation TMC | 0.181 (0.609) | -1.028 (3.049) | -2.044 (2.362) | -0.014 (0.023) | 0.070 (3.153) |
| Constant | 11.190*** (2.179) | 58.865*** (8.852) | 67.696*** (9.097) | 0.314*** (0.080) | 75.575*** (11.079) |
| Sample Size | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |

Notes: OLS estimates presented. Regressions in column 3 control for offer in dictator game and proportion invested in the risky asset in the investment game. Regressions in column 4 control for offer in trust game. Standard errors clustered at the GP level. Significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

Appendix C: Further information about experiments

The experimental tasks were conducted in the same order for all respondents, in a private setting. In each of the paired tasks, subjects played both roles: first- and second-mover. A team of research assistants, all trained to not deviate from the experimental protocol, concurrently collected the data.

All interactions were carried out on a one-on-one basis between enumerator and participant, with each session lasting around ninety minutes. To avoid potential wealth effects in decision-making, participants were not provided any information about how much they had earned from the tasks until all tasks had been completed. Then we decided randomly whether to reward each participant for the first- or second-mover decision. We also randomly matched respondents *ex post* to determine their payoffs, which were handed over to respondents within a stipulated time-frame (typically the next day).

Importantly, a respondent was never matched with another respondent from the same *panchayat*. For each of the paired games, only one of either the first- or second-mover decision was used to determine monetary payoffs, which were paid to the respondents in rupees within a specified time period, typically the next day. On average, participants earned Rs.800 (US\$ 80 using PPP exchange rate) from the experimental tasks. This represents a substantial amount for local politicians, the majority of whom receive a government stipend of Rs.1000 per month.

Appendix C: Instructions for experimental tasks

Instructions

This is a study about market decision making. We are a group of University professors running the study and we are not connected to the government in any way. The results are for research purposes only, and neither government officials nor anyone else will have access to the material that we collect. You can think of the decisions you will be asked to make as a series of games where you are playing against another person. The instructions are simple. If you follow them closely and make appropriate decisions, you may earn a considerable amount of money. These earnings will be paid to you in Rupees at the end of this session.

We will now ask you to make a series of decisions. There are others like you taking part. For most of these decisions, you will be paired with another person. We will call these Players: Player 1 and Player 2. We will not tell you who the person you are playing with is. In most of the games below, we will ask you to play once as Player 1 and once as Player 2. We will explain as we go along.

As you play this game, there is another person in a different location who is also answering the same questions with another researcher. Based on the decisions that both of you have made, we will determine your earnings from the game.

While for each game we will ask you to make a decision once as Player 1 and once as Player 2, in order to calculate your earnings, we will either count your decision as Player 1 or as Player 2. We will decide this by tossing a coin after the experiment is over. If as a result of the coin toss you are Player 1 you will be paid as Player 1 for all the games. Please understand that there is no special advantage to being either Player 1 or Player 2. The money you make depends on your decisions and the decisions made by the other player. Sometimes, Player 1 may make more. At other times, Player 2 may make more.

If you are ready we will now proceed. You can stop me and ask questions at any point in time. You can also discontinue the study at any point in time, without providing an explanation.

Game 1

This game will have two Players: Player 1 and Player 2. We will ask you to make one decision as Player 1 and a second decision as Player 2.

Part 1:

You are **Player 1**. You are paired with Player 2, who you do not know. Player 2 will be in a different location and is answering the same set of questions.

You have Rs. 100.00

You can choose to keep the entire Rs. 100.00. Or, if you wish, then you can split this with Player 2. For example, if you wish to give Rs. 50.00 to Player 2, then Player 2 will get Rs. 50.00 You will get Rs. 50.00.

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

Form for Recording Decisions for Game #1

| Your Choice (Choose only one) | Amount you wish to Keep (in Rs) | Amount you wish to Send to Player 2 (in Rs) | Total Amount (in Rs) |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
| | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| | 10 | 90 | 100 |
| | 20 | 80 | 100 |
| | 30 | 70 | 100 |
| | 40 | 60 | 100 |
| | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| | 60 | 40 | 100 |
| | 70 | 30 | 100 |
| | 80 | 20 | 100 |
| | 90 | 10 | 100 |
| | 100 | 0 | 100 |

Part 2:

You are **Player 2**. You are paired with Player 1, who you do not know. Player 1 will be in a different location and is answering the same set of questions.

Player 1 has Rs. 100.00

Player 1 can keep the entire Rs. 100.00. Or, if he/she wishes, then he/she can split this with you. For example, if Player 1 wished to give you Rs. 40.00, then Player 1 will get Rs. 60.00
You will get Rs. 40.00.

You have no decision to make.

Game 2

This game will have two Players: Player 1 and Player 2. We will ask you to make one decision as Player 1 and a second decision as Player 2.

Part 1:

You are **Player 1**. You are paired with Player 2, who you do not know. Player 2 will be in a different location and is answering the same set of questions.

You have Rs. 100.00

You now have to offer to split this Rs. 100.00 with Player 2. For example, you can say that you wish to give Rs. 40.00 to Player 2.

We will then ask Player 2 whether Player 2 is willing to accept or reject your offer. If player 2 accepts then you get Rs. 60.00 and Player 2 gets Rs. 40.00.

But if player 2 rejects your offer then both of you get Rs. 0.

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

Form for Recording Decisions for Game #2

| Your Choice (Choose only one) | Amount you wish to Keep (in Rs) | Amount you wish to Send to Player 2 (in Rs) | Total Amount (in Rs) |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
| | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| | 10 | 90 | 100 |
| | 20 | 80 | 100 |
| | 30 | 70 | 100 |
| | 40 | 60 | 100 |
| | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| | 60 | 40 | 100 |
| | 70 | 30 | 100 |
| | 80 | 20 | 100 |
| | 90 | 10 | 100 |
| | 100 | 0 | 100 |

Part 2:

You are **Player 2.** You are paired with Player 1, who you do not know.

Player 1 has Rs. 100.00

The form below shows the different amounts Player 1 may give to you. Please tell us which amounts you will accept and which you will reject. Please choose accept or reject for each row.

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

| Player 1's share (in Rs) | Player 2's (Your) share (in Rs) | Accept/Reject (Choose for every option) |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 100 | 0 | |
| 90 | 10 | |
| 80 | 20 | |
| 70 | 30 | |
| 60 | 40 | |
| 50 | 50 | |
| 40 | 60 | |
| 30 | 70 | |
| 20 | 80 | |
| 10 | 90 | |
| 0 | 100 | |

Game 3

This game will have two Players: Player 1 and Player 2. We will ask you to make one decision as Player 1 and a second decision as Player 2.

Part 1:

You are **Player 1**. You are paired with Player 2, who you do not know. Player 2 will be in a different location and is answering the same set of questions.

You have Rs. 100.00. Player 2 has Rs. 0.00.

You are free to keep the entire amount.

Or, you can offer to send some money to Player 2. For example, you can say that you wish to send Rs. 40.00 to Player 2.

However, any amount of money that you offer to Player 2 will be **TRIPLED** by us and given to Player 2. For example, if you offer to give Rs. 40.00 to Player 2, then Player 2 will receive Rs. 120.00.

Player 2, can decide to keep the entire amount offered to him/her. Or Player 2 can, if he/she so wishes send a part or all of that amount back to you. This latter amount will **NOT** be **TRIPLED** anymore.

You will earn (Rs. 100.00) **minus** (any amount you sent to Player 2) **plus** (any amount Player 2 sends back to you).

For example, if you send Rs. 40.00, then Player 2 gets Rs. 120.00. Suppose, Player 2 sends back Rs. 60.00. Then you earn Rs. 100.00 minus Rs. 40.00 plus Rs. 60.00 = Rs. 120.00.

Player 2 earns Rs. 120.00 minus Rs. 60.00 = Rs. 60.00.

Task 1:

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

| Your Choice (Choose only one) | Amount you wish to Keep (in Rs) | Amount you wish to Send to Player 2 (in Rs) | Player 2 will then get (in Rs) |
|--|--|--|---|
| | 0 | 100 | 300 |
| | 10 | 90 | 270 |
| | 20 | 80 | 240 |
| | 30 | 70 | 210 |
| | 40 | 60 | 180 |
| | 50 | 50 | 150 |
| | 60 | 40 | 120 |
| | 70 | 30 | 90 |
| | 80 | 20 | 60 |
| | 90 | 10 | 30 |
| | 100 | 0 | 0 |

Task 2:

If you chose to send any amount to Player 2:

1. Are you expecting to get any money back? ____ YES ____ NO
2. How much money are you expecting to get back from the PLAYER 2? Rs. _____

Keep in mind the amount of money that you sent to Player 2 and the amount Player 2 received as shown above.

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

Part 2:

You are **Player 2**. You are paired with Player 1, who you do not know. Player 1 will be in a different location and is answering the same set of questions.

You have Rs. 0. Player 1 has Rs. 100.00

As Player 2, you may receive an offer from Player 1. Since Player 1 makes offers in Rs. 10.00 increments and the amount offered by Player 1 is tripled, the amounts that you can expect to receive are shown below.

Now as Player 2, you have to decide whether you wish to keep the entire amount given to you, or whether you wish to send some amount back to Player 1. Please make a choice for every row.

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

| If Amount Received is (in Rs) | Then you want to Keep (in Rs) | Amount you wish to send back to Player 1 (in Rs) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 30 | | |
| 60 | | |
| 90 | | |
| 120 | | |
| 150 | | |
| 180 | | |
| 210 | | |
| 240 | | |
| 270 | | |
| 300 | | |

Game 4

This game will have two Players: Player 1 and Player 2. The decisions made by the two players are the same so we will ask you to make only one decision in this game.

Part 1:

You are **Player 1**. You are paired with Player 2, who you do not know. Player 2 will be in a different location and is answering the same set of questions.

You have Rs. 100.00. Player 2 has Rs. 100.00

You are free to keep the entire amount. Or, if you wish, you can put this Rs. 100 into a common pool. Player 2 has the same options: either keep the entire Rs. 100 or put this in a common pool.

Any money put in the common pool is multiplied by 1.5 times and divided equally between Player 1 and Player 2.

There are four outcomes:

1. Neither of you send any money. You will both end up with Rs. 100.
2. Both of you put Rs. 100 in the common pool. The common pool now has Rs. 200. This will be increased to Rs. 300. Divided equally each player gets Rs. 150
3. Player 1 puts Rs. 100 in the common pool but Player 2 does not. Rs. 100 is increased to Rs. 150 and divided equally. Player 1 will end up with Rs. 75, while Player 2 will end up with Rs. 175 (Rs. 100 that he/she kept plus Rs. 75 returned from the common pool.
4. Player 2 puts Rs. 100 in the common pool but Player 1 does not. Player 2 will end up with Rs. 75, while Player 1 will end up with Rs. 175 (Rs. 100 that he/she kept plus Rs. 75 returned from the common pool.)

Incomes in the four scenarios

| Player 1 Choice (Amount put in common pool) | Player 2 Choice (in Rs) (Amount put in common pool) | |
|---|---|------------|
| | Rs. 100 | Rs. 0 |
| | Rs. 100 | (150, 150) |
| Rs. 0 | (175, 75) | (100, 100) |

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

Form for Recording Decisions for Part 1 of Game #4

| Your Choice (Choose one option) | Amount you Wish to Put in Common Pool (in Rs) | Your Income if Player 2 Puts in Rs 0 (in Rs) | Your Income if Player 2 puts in Rs 100 (in Rs) |
|--|--|---|---|
| 0 | 100 | 175 | 150 |
| 100 | 0 | 75 | 100 |

Part 2:

Answer this only if you put Rs. 100 in the common pool.

Suppose Player 2 did not put any money into the common pool. This means that you have Rs. 75 and Player 2 has Rs. 175.

We will give you an additional Rs. 25. You can keep this Rs. 25 so that you will have Rs. 100.

But if you want to you can give up some or all of this Rs. 25. But for every rupee that you give up, we will take away Rs. 3 from Player 2. So, for example, if you give up Rs. 10, then we will take away Rs. 30 from Player 2. If you give up Rs. 25, then we will take away Rs. 75 from Player 2.

Please indicate your choice and I will fill in the form appropriately. You are most welcome to look at the form while I do so. Please correct me if anything is wrongly entered.

Form for Recording Decisions for Part 2 Game #4

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Do you wish to give up money? | YES/NO |
| If Yes, how much are you willing to give up? | |

Game 5

In this study you will be given Rs 100. You have the opportunity to invest a portion of this amount (between Rs 0 and Rs 100).

There is an equal chance that the investment will fail or succeed. If the investment fails, you lose the amount you invested. If the investment succeeds, you receive 3 times the amount invested. You keep whatever you chose not to invest.

We will toss a coin to determine whether the investment fails or succeeds. If the coin comes up heads, the investment succeeds and you win three times the amount you chose to invest. If it comes up tails, the investment fails and you lose the amount invested.

For example, suppose you chose to invest Rs 50. You therefore keep Rs 50. A coin toss will determine whether your investment is successful. Suppose the coin toss results in a head (the project is successful). In this case, your earnings from the investment is Rs 150 and your total earnings from Study 4 is: Rs (50.00 + 150.00) = Rs 200.00

If on the other hand the coin toss results in a tail (the project is not successful). In this case, your earnings from the investment is Rs 0 and your total earning from Study 4 is: Rs (50.00 + 0.00) = Rs 50.00.

Form for Recording Decisions for Game 5

| Total Amount | Rs 100 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Amount you Wish to keep (in Rs) | |
| Amount you Wish to invest (in Rs) | |
| Result of coin toss | Successful () Unsuccessful () |

Game 6

Here is a standard 6 sided-die. Please go to the booth in the corner and roll the die 30 times and tell us the number of times you receive a 6. You will receive Rs 5 for each 6 you receive in the process.

Form for Recording Decisions for Game 6

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Total Number of 6 received | |
| Amount earned (in Rs) | |

Appendix D: Adherence to the *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research*

The participants in our study are elected members of village councils. This is the lowest rank in hierarchy of elected representatives in India. The next level up are members of sub-district and district councils. Above that are the representatives of state legislatures. The highest level consists of Members of Parliament. As these were elected representatives who had been elected under the banner of established national political parties, it is arguable that the study participants had more power than the researchers. In any event, we met the respondents at a location and time of their own choosing, and respondents knew that they could terminate the session at any point, without explanation.

We surveyed 400 members of one of the 23 districts in the state of West Bengal. Once we had selected the district, we chose the villages and village councillors by randomization. We received permission from the District Magistrate, the administrative officer in charge of the district concerned, and the Block Development Officer, who is the administrative office in charge of the villages where this study was conducted out. We also had a personal conversation with the Minister of Rural Development to explain the nature and scope of our study and to stress its non-intrusive character.

We then established contact with the representatives concerned, typically via the Block Development Officer. Individual meetings were arranged with each representative, and the survey conducted at a time and place of their own choosing after obtaining written informed consent. The consent form used in the study is attached. This form was translated into Bengali, the local language, and back-translated to ensure accuracy.

The type of study we undertook, where participants respond to hypothetical questions and take part in incentivized decision-making games with monetary payoffs, in-

volves no physical or psychological trauma. These are not tests; there are no right or wrong answers. Payoffs are private information and participants are asked to keep this information private. Participants in one village were paired with those from another village. No participant ever learns the identity of the other participants. Therefore, the potential for feelings of envy, shame or guilt due to ex post comparisons is unlikely. We did not use deception of any type.

Our data are totally confidential. Once data collection was complete, participants were assigned unique identification numbers. All data were analyzed using this identification number. There is little scope for connecting the identification numbers with actual identities. Of the three authors involved, only the one who undertook the initial randomization of participants is aware of their names. The files with names and those with identification numbers are kept completely separate, stored on a password-protected computer. It is not possible for an outsider to link the identification numbers with the names of the participants.

CONSENT FORM

Introduction and Program Objective: Hello, my name is _____, and I am from a survey firm called [INFORMATION REMOVED FOR REVIEW PURPOSES]. We are conducting a research study along with [INFORMATION REMOVED FOR REVIEW PURPOSES]. I request you to take part in it. The goal of the research is to understand better the role that local elected representatives play in the process of development in India.

We will interview randomly selected Gram Panchayat members, without any regard to your political affiliations, from the outgoing and the incoming Gram Panchayats.

(If the respondent asks more about purpose of the study, then say: We hope that we will learn more about the preferences and everyday experiences of GP level elected representatives in West Bengal and India.

This interview will take around 1 hour 30 minutes of your time. At the end of the survey you will be asked to participate in some economic decision-making problems.

Confidentiality: The data obtained from this study will be kept confidential and will be accessible only to those working on the project. We are not associated with any government agency or entity within India, and are interested in your candid answers for the purpose of academic research only. We will not keep your name or any other identifying information linked to your responses and the information you provide will be stored only by an ID number that cannot be linked to you. Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations, but no individual's responses will be identified. We will not share your identity with anyone.

Risks and benefits: At the end of the survey, you will be asked to take a few decisions. On the basis of your decisions you will earn a certain amount of money. This will be provided in cash within 2 days of the survey. There are no risks involved beyond those associated with daily life.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the survey is voluntary, that is, it is for you to decide whether or not to participate. You can refuse to answer or skip a question at any point. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer to no longer to participate, do let me know.

Questions: Now, you may ask any questions you may have about this study. If you have questions or concerns later, you may contact Outline India at 9810062717.

Do you understand the purpose of this research? Should we explain the process again?

YES NO

Do you have any questions?

YES NO

[CONTACT INFORMATION REMOVED FOR REVIEW PURPOSES]

Consent: Do you agree to participate in this study?

Yes.....1

No.....2