Online APPENDIX for:

Electoral Handouts in Mumbai Elections:

The Cost of Political Competition.

APPENDIX A: Socio-Economic Characteristics of *Savli*.

As is typical for State Assembly constituencies in Mumbai, *Savli* counted as of 2014 over 450,000 inhabitants and over 350,000 voters, divided over eight wards and more than 300 polling booths.

The population of *Savli* is diverse *by Mumbai standards*. Largely established on marshlands that constituted, until the 1980s, the very edge of the city, *Savli* has progressively grown over the past hundred and fifty years with the arrival of each successive wave of migrants. Sizable groups of inhabitants of the area come from the South ("Tamils" essentially, though other states are represented), the North ("UPwallahs" and "Biharis", but also "Punjabis"), the East ("Bengalis") and the West of India ("Gujaratis" and "Sindhis"). Along with a sizable Maharashtrian population – including a major population of *Kolis*, a tribal group often presented in Mumbai politics as being the original inhabitants of Mumbai – these regional categories constitute the repertoire of salient identities around which much of social and political talk revolves in the constituency. *Savli* is equally remarkable in terms of religious diversity, with Muslim, Christian and Sikh settlements dispersed around the constituency.

This intense regional, linguistic and religious diversity overlaps with considerable diversity in terms of class and habitat. While over 40% of the population of the constituency is currently classified as living in slums, *Savli* also counts wealthier enclaves, and in some cases explicitly "exclusive enclaves", in direct proximity to these slums. In between these extremes, the constituency also counts a large number of lower middle-class low-quality buildings erected over the past few decades, many as part of the

various slum redevelopment schemes being implemented in Mumbai. A great deal of diversity also exists among the neighborhoods usually thought of as slums (or *chawls*), depending on the degree of legality of these settlements, on the ability of the inhabitants of these settlements to access basic services, and on the type of construction tolerated by local authorities (mainly the BMC). While some of these slums house extremely poor, vulnerable and unorganized populations – for instance, new migrants to the city – others include important commercial districts and have known patrons among local politicians. As a result of these multiple types of inequalities, the constituency includes populations with widely different needs and widely different modes of interaction with elected representatives.

As many other areas of Greater Mumbai, *Savli* is changing fast under the joint effect of major transportation projects[1], slum rehabilitation projects[2] and new, more

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[1] In addition to the rail tracks, which cut the constituency in two, a metro and an elevated six-lanes highway have recently been built.

[2] In Mumbai, the slum redevelopment schemes of 1991 and 1995 pushed by the INC and the Shiv Sena (respectively) gave an unprecedented role to the private sector in the rehabilitation of these slums, while providing slum dwellers with an opportunity to obtain an apartment at a very low cost. Under the current 1995 agreement, slum dwellers contract private developers to demolish existing slums and provide new on-site housing. To incentivize this association, development Control regulations (DCR) are changed to give added Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)/Floor Space Index (FSI) as incentives to the developers. The extra units constructed are then sold at market price, the profits of which go to the private developers. This in effect generated a subsidy provided by the

accommodating zoning and building regulations, which have in recent years allowed the development of a new species of tall buildings. As a result of these spectacular changes, the area has been growing vertically at an unprecedented pace. Because many of the slums have however remained relatively intact – often right in the middle of these futuristic urban development projects – *Savli* offers an unlikely juxtaposition of sights, and a somewhat dystopian vision of what Mumbai might become.

Since these unprecedented changes require residents to organize and defend their interests against powerful corporate and state actors, housing society associations constitute – along with temple and mosque associations – the main pillar of associational life in *Savli*. These associations play an especially crucial role in slum areas, where they are, under the current schemes, in charge of negotiating and supervising the redevelopment of their area by private developers.[3] But they also play an important role everywhere else, including in newly redeveloped and relatively well-off areas, as

Government and the developer for the slum dwellers who are awarded new apartments at a very low cost in the same location, which in many cases is prime property. An important aspect of this process is that projects validated by the SRA (Slum Redevelopment Authority) can only be initiated only after collecting the consent of 75% of the inhabitants of a given settlement. Once this supermajority consent is obtained, which is nothing straightforward – only a small minority of settlements has so far collecting this consent –, slum dwellers are then awarded a renewable lease of 30 years to their new homes.

[3] In theory, the leadership of these associations is democratically elected. Discussions with political workers however suggest that serious distortions exist.

interaction with local authorities (the BMC) – and if need be elected representatives (Corporators and MLA) – is crucial to ensure the continued delivery of basic services to these areas. In light of the importance of this intermediation, the presidents, vice-presidents, and secretaries of these housing society associations are prominent individuals who play a crucial role in the lives of the inhabitants of their respective societies. Because they are in return presumed to be influential, and to know each household within their area, they often constitute prime targets for campaigning politicians. While some of these associations and some of their presidents have an explicit long-term connection to a political party, most do not. As a result, parties spare no effort when it comes to convincing these influential citizens.

APPENDIX B: Methodological Note on Qualitative Research

In order to make inferences on the motivations and the strategies of handout-distributing candidates in competitive polities, I rely on a combination of ethnographic observations and interviews of low-level party operatives, which took place over a period of 32 months, in a notoriously competitive assembly constituency of greater Mumbai (Savli[4]).

1. Observations During the 2014 and 2017 Campaigns

I first rely on daily observations of several crews of party workers during political campaigns.

I initially followed two groups (one of which was attached to the BJP candidate, while the other was attached to the INC candidate) during the six weeks leading to the 2014 Maharashtra assembly elections. Although these workers frequently visited other wards, both groups mainly operated in the municipal ward in which I spent most this period, which I will refer to as ward ABC.[5]

The group of BJP workers was lead by a young and dynamic BJP ward-*adhyaksh* (president) named *Rikhil* whom I had personally met a few months before the campaign started after having approached his office. The group of INC workers was lead by a

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[4] As mentioned in the manuscript itself, the name of the constituency has been changed. There is no constituency called *Savli* in Maharashtra.

[5] The Savli Assembly constituency counts 8 municipal wards.

former INC corporator named *Ravindran*, whom I was introduced to by my first collaborator on this project, Dinesh Dubey. Dinesh Dubey had worked in Srinivasan's "NGO" – in reality a private business implementing public works – a couple years earlier. This long-standing relationship between them initially made it possible for me to embed myself in the campaign. This crew operated out of the office of Ravindran, who had been denied the INC ticket in spite of his popularity in several wards of *Savli.*[6] In spite of his initial disappointment, and in spite of his opposition to the nominated candidate (the INC incumbent, whom many party workers blamed for his relative apathy), Ravindran put his crew of workers to work during the Assembly campaign.[7] During the weeks leading to the campaign, his *karyakartas* conducted strategy meetings on a daily basis at Ravindran's office, and generally spent most of their time there, unless they were dispatched to a meeting, a rally, or to canvassing. Dinesh Dubey (my collaborator) and I spent most of our time following the life of this office during the weeks leading to the election.

Though forty to fifty workers spent time in Ravindran's office, only a few appear in the article. One of them is Srinivasan, a senior *karyakarta* who served as Ravindran's lieutenant. Although he held a minor position in the party, Srinivasan was well known in ward ABC, both as an indefectible Congress supporter and as the president of his housing society, situated in a newly redeveloped colony (what is sometimes called a "vertical slum" in Mumbai). He also had a more controversial reputation and was the subject of

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[6] Ravindran had lost his corporator seat after it was reserved in 2012.

[7] He had a clear interest in doing so, as he had been promised an alternative position, possibly in the upper chamber, in case of victory.

many rumors: "He is the king-maker in this ward", "He owns FIVE apartments and rents three more out in the slum", "His equipment business is a front", and finally, "You do not want to mess with Srinivasan. He is muscle for Ravindran". While we could never fully confirm any of these claims, and while he rarely spoke publicly, Srinivasan was visibly in charge of organizing the campaign along with Ajay, Ravindran's PA and office manager. Under the leadership of these two men, a number of lower-level *karyakartas* operated in the slums and redeveloped areas that cover most of ward ABC. Among these are Mohammed, Fatima, and Anil, three workers to whom I refer in the article. In addition to spending time at Ravindran's office, we also spent time in the areas in which these low-level workers operated. As part of this process, we met a number of voters and observed the campaigning techniques of the competing candidates. Finally, we also encountered Ali, a direct neighbor of Fatima and self-proclaimed "freelancing karyakarta" in these elections.

Ahead of the 2017 municipal elections, I followed once more the work of Rikhil and Ravindran's crews, accompanied by a new collaborator (Hanmant Wanole[8]). Ravindran was now the candidate in ward ABC, while Rikhil was supervising the campaign of the BJP incumbent in an adjacent ward (also within the boundaries of the Savli Assembly constituency), which I will refer to as ward DEF in this manuscript, with much of the same crew he had assembled during the 2014 campaign. The fact that I knew by 2017 members of these crews for over 2 and 1/2 years, and that these crews and myself mutually trusted each other, provided me with even better access to these

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[8] Hanmant Wanole is a Ph.D student in political science at the University of Mumbai, with whom I have been collaborating since December 2016.

campaigns. Besides, the snowball sampling strategy deployed *between the 2014 and the*

2017 elections in order to interview political workers from all parties (see point 2 below)

allowed me to expand my network in Savli. Accordingly, Hanmant Wanole and I spent

the month leading to the February 2017 municipal election following crews from other

candidates as well, including the crews of Shiv Sena candidates in both wards.

2. Post-election Semi-structured Interviews and Observations

Second, I rely on repeated discussions and interviews with over 80 political

workers in Savli, whom my current collaborators (Kaushik Koli and Hanmant Wanole[9])

and I repeatedly interviewed since October 2014, including during and after the 2017

municipal elections.[10] Though some of these discussions resembled "semi-structured

interviews" after May 2015, they were more spontaneous discussions during the first few

months of research in 2014. Most importantly, these discussions typically took place over

several meetings and a variety of topics were addressed during these discussions. Given

my interest in the motivations of social workers and *karyakartas*, most of these

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[9] Kaushik Koli is a resident of Savli with whom I have collaborated on this project since

January 2015. Hanmant Wanole is a Ph.D student in political science at the University of

Mumbai, with whom I have been collaborating since December 2016.

[10] Though some of these discussions resembled "semi-structured interviews", they were

more spontaneous discussions during the first few months of research. Most importantly,

these discussions typically took place over several meetings and a variety of topics were

addressed during these discussions.

discussions covered biographic information and details of these workers' involvement with their party over time. Because trust is hard to gain, a less patient strategy would have likely failed.

These political workers belong to all parties playing a significant role in the constituency (the BJP, the INC, the SS, the NCP and the MNS), and serve at a variety of levels within their parties or within their parent organizations (youth wing, women unit, regional unit, etc.). While most of them are low-level party workers (whom I generally describe as *karyakartas,* literally "work-doer" in Hindi), serving as presidents or vice-presidents at the booth or ward-level, this sample also includes, for the three main parties (the INC, the BJP and the SS), the party's candidate in a recent election (either the 2014 or the 2009 VS elections), as well as district-level position-holders and members of the candidate's direct entourage.

This diverse sample of party affiliates provides me with a range of point of views on handout-distribution strategies, and with a range of interpretations for behaviors observed during the 2014 campaign. It also provides me with a unique opportunity to discuss cash handouts and their rationale with men and women[11] who have been involved, in various capacities, in cash distribution efforts in recent campaigns, or who have observed these strategies from very close.

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[11] Only 4 of these 80 regular informants are women.

APPENDIX C

The Other Use of Unaccounted Funds: "Work Money" and Hired Crowds

Besides handouts, much of the unaccounted funds spent by candidates were on wages, honorarium and retributions to diverse groups of people. The concept of "work money " simply refers to the wages that political candidates pay during the campaigns.

Since these wages are paid in exchange of a task, they are theoretically different from electoral handouts, insofar as the recipient of the money has in this case provided work in exchange for this payment, and is hence presumably less likely to feel pressured to give away his vote in exchange for the gift. This is presumably why payments to workers and campaign employees are legal as per Election Commission guidelines.

In Savli, candidates' payments to their workers constituted a major expense. According to workers themselves, Savli candidates typically provided large amounts to mid-level workers, who were then in charge of sharing it among their crew. While workers presented this money as compensation for campaign-related expenses (shifts at their "regular jobs" not taken, rounds of tea offered, meals taken out of the house while canvassing, etc.), it is clear that many workers expected to *make* money – and not merely even out – with these compensations. Accordingly, part of the "work money" spent by candidates is also *directly* meant for karyakartas, as salaries. The fact that political work was paid had acquired the nature of a norm among workers. As one of the oldest BJP workers in *Savli* – echoing a concern Ravindran and the BJP candidate himself later voiced – spontaneously told me when I asked him what had changed in the party since his time (the 1970s and 1980s): "You simply cannot run a campaign without paying people

nowadays. This has changed and it is a big problem. We used to give karyakartas only tea and samosas. If you do not pay them nowadays, many won't even come out of their house".[12]

This suggests that a major part of the unaccounted funds illegally spent by candidates goes not towards attempts at buying or unduly influencing votes[13] but towards the functioning of their organization. This may eventually have the same objective than gifts directly doled out to voters: candidates may wish to hire the workers that are best able to convince or influence voters, through a variety of means, including illegitimate ones. In that sense, they may attempt to buy influence on the ground rather than directly attempt to buy votes. This nonetheless remains less directly problematic than the direct provision of gifts to voters.

The normative case however becomes more complicated when the recipient of "work money" wages are not workers but simple citizens who are not affiliated to the candidate or to her party. In Mumbai, as I suspect in most of India, much of what political scientists refer to as "political participation" (participating in processions, attending rallies or meetings, door-to-door canvassing, etc.) is contingent on these sums. While this may not be the case elsewhere, the *norm* for most campaign events in Mumbai

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[12] While this is somewhat beyond the scope of this article, he interestingly attributed this trend to the progressive demise of the Congress post-1980. The narrative goes like this: as the Congress started losing elections, they started paying their workers in order to prevent them from working instead for other parties. Soon other parties had to follow to remain an attractive prospect.

[13] Whether or not these attempts are effective is beyond the purview of this chapter.

is to pay participants. When I argued that this was unconventional, Srinivasan dryly rationalized:

> "*if we didn't, almost no one among the public would show up and it would look really bad for the candidate*."

While these practices are easy to spot during Indian campaigns, excerpts from our field notes detail how this paid political participation unfolded in constituency ABC. As Ravindran's crew met to prepare a big "bike rally" through the constituency five days before the election, the following scenes took place:

> *This morning Ajay called up all the karyakartas of ABC in small groups to the office, presumably by area.[…] After hearing a number of their grievances, Ravindran –with Srinivasan behind him – explained that each karyakarta present could bring up to 15 people to the rally that was scheduled at 2 PM. He asked that they bring good people, willing to work, and that they should not leave until the end of the rally, contrary to what happened the previous week…*

A few hours later, as we attempted to meet Fatima – one of the workers present at the meeting – at her house, we observed the following:

> *Fatima is away somewhere, but we find her older son and a neighbor seated on plastic chairs in the middle of the main path.[…] As we sit down to smoke a*

cigarette with Ali, we observe the scene. They hold an open notepad and are approaching most young men passing by on their bike. The son is also making calls. They carefully explain the job: "You have to be there at 1 so that you can get the flags fixed on your bike", "Then the job is from 2 to 4", and finally "You get 400 rupees for that. Petrol included". When one of them says yes*, they write down his name and phone number. As far as we can tell, they recruit anyone willing to go. Ali, who has himself organized "the public" for the SP candidate, confirms this: "Poor people will go to anything, it does not matter".*

While we do not attend the bike rally that day, we observe the following scene at the end of a procession for the INC candidate two days later:

The rally ends under the bridge. As Ravindran and [the candidate] are still shouting slogans on the jeep (the sound was really bad today), tired participants start to evaporate or gather in little groups in shady areas. At this point we see a tempo vehicle backing up; the trunk is full of individual boxes, which we later learn contain biryani. We approach closer to the spot to see the distribution. Behind one of the pillars of the bridge, a tall Tamil Congress karyakarta we have seen but never saluted is calling up names listed on a piece of paper. Mainly women. He hands a few notes to each of them. (200, maybe 300 rupees). They grab notes and biryani, and go.

Subsequent interviews confirm that such scenes are likely common during electoral campaigns in Mumbai, and political workers in *Savli* made no attempt to conceal this point: the people occupying most, if not all of the seats during meetings were there only *because they were paid*. Evidence that this was the norm may be inferred from the fact that low-level *karyakartas* stubbornly refused to sit during meetings, and often frequently refused to walk during processions, not to be mistaken for members of "the public". When I asked him why he did not want to sit next to me on an unoccupied chair during a particularly tedious meeting, Anil, a karyakarta working two jobs in addition to his "political work", immediately responded: "Chairs are for the public! I'm a *karyakarta* and it would look bad…".[14]

Overall, such "paid political participation" reportedly accounted for an even larger share of the expenses of Savli candidates in 2014: party workers estimated the overall amounts that the various candidates spent on hired crowds to range between 10 and 40% of their overall expenses. This implies that considerable amounts in illegal

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[14] While they do not like to be confused with members of hired crowds, party workers however tend to "take a cut" on the sums disbursed by candidates in order to generate "the public". Ali, the aforementioned neighbor of Fatima, for instance made a comfortable living in that manner during campaigns. A small-time freelance operator for *several* parties – except the BJP, which he pledged never to collaborate with – Ali was well known in ward XYZ for his ability to generate a public in a matter of minutes. In his own words, this was easy money: "I get the party to give me 300 per person and I give each of them only 200. You can easily make thousands during campaigns."

spending were allocated to paying the salaries of poor citizens – often women and youth – occupying chairs at meetings and holding flags during processions.

While it is formally illegal, this "paid political participation" did not appear to me to be as normatively problematic as the gifts that are sometimes doled out to voters during campaigns, or to constitute an urgent threat to the fairness of elections. This is because, as interviews later reveled, party higher-ups mostly do not expect the hundreds of voters whom they pay to wave flags or seat during meetings to support their candidate. In *Savli*, these people were recruited because they were poor and available. This was implied during a discussion I had during a BJP meeting with Rikhil, an influential ward-level president in Savli:

- *SC: so are all these people seating here [at a meeting] BJP supporters?*
- *Rikhil: These? I don't know. I don't think so. I have no idea who they are actually, but they just probably got something to be here…poor people.*
- *SC: So [BJP candidate] is giving this long speech in front of people who are not even likely to vote for him?*
- *Rikhil: No, hopefully they will…but yes, you are right. See, the problem is that poor people around here are still addicted to the Congress and the NCP…so we hope but it is very unlikely.*

Judging from statements of this type, one can hypothesize that the objective of this "paid political participation" was not to influence attendees themselves but to generate as much *tamasha* as possible in order to impress others (onlookers and

bystanders). In that sense, it does not necessarily seem dissimilar or more morally

ambiguous than advertising, which the ECI happens to authorize. While payments of this

type to citizens are decidedly illegal and illegitimate according to the ECI (hence their

inclusion in the above "black money" list), they accordingly may not deserve to be seen

as equally problematic from a normative or moral standpoint. This in my opinion

constitutes further evidence tat much of the funds illegally spent by candidates are not

allocated to activities whose direct objective is to subvert the democratic process.

APPENDIX D

How Were Handouts Distributed?

According to political workers, the way in which *most* handouts were disbursed in *Savli* was through lump payment to influential citizens. By "influential citizens", I mean individuals in the following positions: housing society presidents, temple and mosque association presidents, regional or caste association presidents.

While Björkman (2014) observes such a transaction first-hand, a young political worker called Mohammed inadvertently provided us with a stylized description of these remarkably common events as we met him at the candidate's office on a busy Sunday afternoon during the 2014 campaign:

> *As Mohammad was waiting to be called in the office of the candidate, several groups of men bypassed the line and went for the door. While they were unannounced, they were not pushed back the way other people are. Visibly incensed, at this point, Mohammad started telling Dinesh what was likely going on. According to him, the first group of men was composed of leaders of a big housing society in xxxx. They were visiting the candidate to pledge the votes of members of their society and to get money in exchange. According to his description, this is what happens during elections in Savli. […] In the weeks leading to the elections, society presidents approach candidates to pledge their votes. In some cases, candidates approach presidents. While candidates do not always believe that these presidents actually have these votes – "everybody knows*

you can't control voters today," Mohammad says – they usually come up to an

agreement. A few days later, a discreet visit is organized and someone from the

inner-circle of the candidate, usually accompanied by a karyakarta from that

area, delivers a big amount.

This account converges with most other accounts we collected and a somewhat coherent account of these transactions emerged throughout our fieldwork. It suggests that these transactions take place ahead of elections, though not at the last minute. If not the candidate herself, usually a very close associate of the candidate – often even a family member – arranges for the delivery of the cash. Because the constituency is large, a senior karyakarta often accompanies him, though this is not always the case, and lower-level karyakartas are almost never involved in these high-level transactions. While lower-level workers are usually aware of transactions of this type in their area, these transactions remain discreet and understandably take place away from the public eye.

While we did not observe such a transaction first-hand during the time we spent with Ravindran's crew, these high-level transactions were a constant source of discussion among the karyakartas present in the office. Insofar as at least one other candidate was known to have engaged in such payments in societies of ward XYZ – their very own societies – Ravindran and his workers were worried. While the NCP candidate had no political background, and while the NCP was generally non-existent in *Savli*, this liberal spending led many Congress workers to believe that the NCP might win the vote in XYZ. As the election was approaching, these perceptions grew stronger among low-level workers. Being aware of such transaction in their own area, both Fatima and Mohammad

clearly predicted the NCP candidate's victory during private interactions.[15] While Ravindran himself never said so, his concern was palpable as he organized an emergency meeting two days before the election. In front of a room full of karyakartas, where tensions ran high, Ravindran and a senior karyakarta had the following exchange:

Ravindran: We have to tell people what [the INC incumbent] has achieved during five years. Many people just do not know and…

Senior Karyakarta: Sir, if I may. It is not the problem. [NCP candidate] has been giving money all around and what do we do…?

Ravindran: I know, I know. Listen! This is why you also have to tell them that they do not have to vote for the NCP even if they get money, or if someone tells them they will get money if they vote for the NCP. You have to tell them   loud and clear: "TAKE THEIR MONEY BUT VOTE FOR US."

Contrary to what this dialogue may suggest, it is not clear that the INC incumbent had himself refrained from distributing cash to local leaders of ward XYZ. Several discussions among low-level workers of Ravindran's crew in fact suggested that he had definitely *not* refrained from doing so, and these workers frequently blamed him for

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[15] Afraid that she would lose crucial access and clout in case of defeat, Fatima even discreetly enrolled her two sons in the NCP campaign during the last week of the campaign.

having done so. This was, for instance, a frequent aside of Mohammad and Anil, who both blamed their candidate for his strategy: instead of distributing cash through the party's existing network of karyakartas, he had put his sons in charge. They had followed the same strategy as the NCP candidate, and to make things worse, they had done it poorly. While his opposition was not about morality, Mohammad objected to his candidate's strategy on three counts, which were somewhat contradictory. The first two related to efficiency. He blamed the candidate for having spent too little or for having spent cash in the wrong areas. More importantly, he blamed his candidate for not having understood that society presidents did not really have the power to convince many people in their society, and that they were likely to "keep most of the money for themselves". His last objection, while connected, related to issues of fairness within the party: "Instead of wasting all this money, they should pay us better, since we work days and night to get him elected."

Another, more basic form of "influence money" however existed in *Savli*, as in many other constituencies in India (Vij 2010). In addition to targeted payments to "influential citizens", money from several of the candidates trickled down party networks, which led to gifts and cash handouts being showered on voters in a relatively indiscriminate manner *during the last day and the last night of the campaign*. Contrary to observations carried in other contexts (Lindberg 2003), this type of indiscriminate distribution was restrained to very specific areas within ward XYZ. Namely, the poorest areas and the ones in which voters were the least organized.[16]

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[16] This may suggest that this type of cash distribution takes place when parties are unable to arrange for the lump payments described above.

Because this is the only form of influence that the ECI and police forces can really hope to crack down on, observing such distribution was equally challenging, as the *chawls* were filled with police that night. Discussions with party workers on Election Day however hinted at the fact that the much joked-about "rat meetings" during which such handouts are delivered had occurred at several locations the night prior to the vote.

One place in which this form of distribution was likely to happen was Fatima and Ali's area, an unorganized squatter's camp threatened with eviction, which was notorious for its drug addicts, its population of public sanitation workers, and more generally, for high levels of misery. While Fatima never mentioned having been involved in any of this during our subsequent discussions, Ali, her "freelancer" neighbor readily confirmed that the night had been busy when we met him the morning of Election Day. He had had several meetings and he had received not one but two cash handouts, and was waiting for a third one that had been promised by Srinivasan.[17] When I asked him, rather puzzled by this nocturnal hyperactivity, why candidates had waited the last minute to do this, even though cops were all around, his answer was rather straightforward: "For maximum impact!"

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[17] Including a handout from a small candidate enjoining him to vote "against the BJP". The existence of this type of cash distribution in Fatima's settlement was confirmed later that day by BJP workers, who had observed it and reportedly "tried to alert the police after [they] caught NCP workers red-handed".

APPENDIX E

How did we Estimate the Spending of Candidates?

The time spent shadowing candidates during the 2014 Assembly elections and the 2017 Municipal Elections in *Savli* – the two elections on which I draw in this article – allowed me to develop method to *estimate* the real amounts spent by the main candidates (*real* as opposed to the *official* amounts reported by candidates themselves in their expenditure report they hand in to the Election Commission or the State Election Commission).

Estimating the *amount*s disbursed by candidates with precision is obviously hard, for several reasons. This is, unsurprisingly, because the amount of cash spent by candidates is not readily observable by keeping track of campaign events. While part of the money is certainly spent in a very visible manner, most of it is not. Besides, political workers did their best to prevent my collaborators and I from observing excessive spending first-hand – except in a handful of cases. Observing all transactions would thus have been impossible. Besides, attempting to observe transactions could have later compromised my access to the campaign crews I followed.

This does not mean, however, that it is altogether impossible to *estimate* the spending patterns of candidates. Much to the contrary, rumors about the spending of the various candidates were extremely common topics of discussion among the political workers in *Savli,* and most of our interlocutors had a surprisingly confident opinion of the amount spent by each of the main candidates. Since low-level party workers were in addition rather open to describing the spending patterns of their own candidate – often to

complain about them – as well of other candidates, we quickly chose not to attempt observing and monitoring the spending of candidates first-hand, and rather to relied on post-campaign discussions to estimate the spending of candidates.

I rely on subjective estimates provided by these political workers in what follows. Concretely, in the months following the 2014 elections, I asked 8 to 12 workers of each of the main parties that had competed in the assembly constituency (INC, BJP, Shiv Sena, NCP), over the course of broader and repeated discussions on politics and on their own political experience, to estimate the total spending of their candidate as well as of the other three main candidates. While other methodologies may be equally appropriate, I simply asked these workers to provide me with intervals for each of the candidates. In this section, I present an interval for each candidate that takes into account the estimates of each of these political workers.[18] In follow-up questions on which I draw below, I subsequently questioned them on the kind of expenses that candidates had engaged in to reach the stated amount, which allowed me to get a sense of these workers' perceptions of candidates' budget allocations.

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[18] Altogether, across party lines, my collaborators and I interviewed 51 workers regarding the 2014 elections. The lower bound of the interval I present below is the lowest of the lower bounds I was given across workers, while the higher bound is the highest of the higher bound I was given.

As was often emphasized during these discussions, these amounts do not include the sums that most, if not all, of these candidates would have had to shed in order to be given a party ticket.[19]

Several elements lend relative credibility to these estimates, even though workers may not always be knowledgeable about the details of their candidate's spending, and even less so, of other candidates' spending. First, even though these discussions did not provide me with precise estimates, the intervals provided by these different workers overlapped and frequently converged. Second, workers attached to different parties tended to converge on the ranking of the various candidates in terms of spending. Third, not a single one of my interlocutors pretended that their own candidate had respected the official limits set by the Election Commission of India for an Assembly election. On the contrary, in spite of the fact that they were well aware of these limitations, as well as of the penalty their candidates would incur if they were convicted of violations, *all* admitted that their candidate might have spent *at least* three or four times that amount, and often much more than that.

Overall, the estimates that emerged from discussions with *Savli* political workers regarding the 2014 Assembly Elections suggest the following: the Shiv Sena candidate –

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[19] While money is not the only factor that parties base their ticket distribution on, all of our interlocutors confirmed that it is customary for candidates to pay a large sum of money to their party before or after they have been attributed the ticket. As far as I can tell, this was equally true of all four parties described in this section.

a serious contender in the race[20] – had clearly spent the least of all serious candidates, somewhere between 1 and 2 crore rupees (i.e., somewhere between $153k and $306k, and between 3 to 6 times the legal amount). The BJP and the INC candidates, also serious contenders in the race – had spent far more (estimates vary from 1 to 5 crore for the BJP candidate, and from 2.5 to 6 crores for the INC candidate).[21][22] The NCP candidate, who was *not* a contender at the beginning of the race – the NCP is traditionally very weak in *Savli* – but ended up with a vote share in the high single digits, surpassed all of these candidates, with estimates ranging from 9 to 16 crore rupees (that is, between 27 and 45 times the legal limit).

I subsequently repeated this exercise with my contacts in the weeks and months that followed another election, the February 2017 BMC election in ward ABC of Savli, in which I had already spent much time during and after the 2014 Assembly elections. There were in this ward four serious contenders (one from each of the INC, the Shiv Sena, and the BJP, plus an independent), each of which ended with a vote share above 10%.[23] Estimates I collected for this election were as such: the Shiv Sena candidate had

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[20] I deliberately refrain from providing final vote shares to maintain the anonymity of the study.

[21] So, between 3 to 15 times the legal amount for the BJP candidate, and between 7 and 18 times the legal amount for the INC candidate.

[22] I deliberately refrain from naming the winner of the race here to maintain the anonymity of my interlocutors.

[23] I similarly refrain from naming the winner of the race here to maintain the anonymity of my interlocutors.

reportedly spent the least of all, with estimates ranging from 60 lakhs to 1,1 crore rupees (between 6 and 11 times the legal limit); the independent had reportedly spent between 40 lakhs and 1.5 crore rupees (between 4 and 15 times the legal limit).[24] The INC and the BJP candidates had in all workers' opinions spent the most, each between 2 and 3 crore rupees (that is, between 20 and 30 times the legal amounts).

As was often emphasized during these discussions, these amounts do not include the sums that most, if not all, of these candidates would have had to shed in order to be given a party ticket.[25] These sums however included the legal campaign expenses listed above (car rentals, chairs and stage rental for meeting, printing costs, etc.) as well as various types of illegal expenses that I detail below.

While they are noisy, these estimates suggest three important things. They first suggest, as noted above, that all of the main candidates massively overspend in Savli.[26] In both elections, *all* main candidates spent large amounts compared to legal limits, but also

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[24] Estimates around that candidate were especially noisy because he had reportedly spent enormous amounts in the months that preceded the campaign rather than during the campaign, which led to discrepancies across estimators, who were unsure as to whether these early amounts should be considered.

[25] While money is not the only factor that parties base their ticket distribution on, all of our interlocutors confirmed that it is customary for candidates to pay a large sum of money to their party before or after they have been attributed the ticket. As far as I can tell, this was equally true of all four parties described in this section.

[26] Another frequent observation was that these amounts had increased in comparison to the last Assembly elections in 2009 or to the last Municipal election in 2012.

in some cases, per voter. Second, there were generally speaking important differences *across candidates* (and maybe across parties, though two data points may not be sufficient to be sure of this). Third, there was in *Savli* a challenger (the NCP candidate) who spent far more than any other candidates. This behavior had quickly earned him the derogatory reputation of a "money-based candidate" or "money-power candidate", referring to the fact that he did not have a pre-existing record or reputation as a politician to uphold (he was a wealthy developer by profession), and maybe to the fact that much of this spending was done in an obnoxiously visible manner during the campaign.

Subsequent discussions with party workers suggest that such patterns are not exceptional. As mentioned above, that the main contenders in Mumbai elections spend far more than what ECI rules authorize is not a secret among journalists and officials. It is equally well known among political workers that candidates should not bother seeking a ticket unless they know they can spend large amounts of cash. For one, no party would give a ticket to a candidate who promises to spend around (or less than) the 35 lakhs authorized (for Assembly elections) or the 10 lakhs authorized for municipal elections. Besides, such candidates would not be likely to be able to afford the price tag for a ticket (i.e., the gift to be paid to the party in exchange for the ticket).

Such implicit rules are common knowledge among party workers, all the way down the hierarchy of parties. This is best illustrated by my exchange with Aditya Yadav (AY below), a simple commission-based insurance salesman serving as ward-level vice-president for the BJP. When I inquired after the 2014 elections about what I had heard were his electoral ambitions, the following exchange took place:

"AY: I'm not sure I'll be able to run. There is no point even trying unless you have the money…

SC: Well…do you have a sense of how much you need?

AY: Yes, of course. Everyone knows! You need to have minimum $50k to spend if you want to run for corporator, and minimum $200k for MLA [that is, more than 3 times the legal amount]. We have been told that, also. Not sure I can do that. If [the seat] is reserved for OBCs, maybe I can because then the BJP may have no one better than me. But if it is a general seat, for sure it is not happening…"[27]

The presence in *Savli* of what may be called a super-spender during the 2014 Assembly Elections (what several of my interlocutors called a "money-based candidate") appears equally unexceptional. Similar cases came up frequently in discussions about other constituencies or about corporation elections. In 2014, the case of the NCP candidate *in Savli* was for instance compared to the case of a BJP candidate in an adjacent constituency by most of my interlocutors, including two strong BJP loyalists.[28]

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[27] Emphases are his. He answered directly in dollars, maybe to make it easier for me to understand. His dollar estimates however seem coherent with the amounts in rupees described above, and in other interviews, though they actually look slightly on the low side.

[28] Workers ranted against the fact that both candidates had reportedly gotten their tickets "because of money", even though they knew neither *karyakartas* in their own party nor voters. In both cases, this led to the same narrative. Namely, that the showering of cash

In 2017, many BJP low-level workers had similar complaints, both about their candidate in ward ABC – who was both rich and "dynastic" – and about the party's general preference for rich candidates across the city.

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orchestrated by these candidates was a desperate attempt at compensating for this initial handicap.

Appendix F: How Are Candidates Able to Spend that Much?

Candidates in Indian elections are not free to spend as much as they like on their campaigns. Hence this extravagant spending is not due to an absence of regulations or to regulatory vagueness. The law clearly states that the total election expenditure shall not exceed the maximum limit prescribed under Rule 90 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 (if it did, it would theoretically amount to a corrupt practice under section 123 (6) of the Representation of the People Act [RPA], 1951). These funds can come from three sources: the candidate, the party, or any third-party. While there are neither limitation as to how much of these funds have to come from each of these three sources nor limitations as to how much third-parties (who may be persons, companies, firms or associations) can lend or gift, candidates theoretically have two obligations. First, they have to report from which of these sources their funds come from. Second, their total expenses from these three sources have to remain below the legal limit.

The limit for election expenditure is revised from time to time and varies by state, and, in some cases, by rural/urban status of constituencies. As of 2014, the limits set by the ECI for Mumbai were 70 lakh rupees for parliamentary elections and 35 lakh rupees for assembly elections. In addition, the limit for municipal elections (decided by the State Election Commission of Maharashtra) were 10 lakh rupees[29] per candidate as of 2017.[30]

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[29] In USD as of June 2017, respectively, $107,692, $53846, and $15,384.

[30] Given that parliamentary constituencies include over 5 assembly constituencies on average and that assembly constituencies include over 7 municipal wards on average, these official limits imply that authorities recognize that local elections are much more

While it is difficult to benchmark these amounts, they are small when measured on a per-voter basis. ECI data suggests that parliamentary constituencies possessed an average of 1.5 million eligible voters in 2014, and that Maharashtra assembly constituencies were home to roughly 290,000 eligible voters, on average. This suggests that candidates were legally able to spend 4.6 rupees (7 cents in USD) per voter in Lok Sabha elections and about 12 rupees per voter (18 cents in USD) in Vidhan Sabha (state assembly) elections. Even taking in to account the cost of living in India, these official limits do not allow for extravagant campaigns.

Under section 77 of the RPA, 1951, every candidate participating in a national or state election is required to keep a separate, accurate account of all expenditure incurred or authorized by the candidate or his election agent between the date of nomination and the day results are announced. The ECI has the authority to audit these accounts during the course of the campaign. One the results are declared, every candidate has to produce a report on said account within 30 days. Since 2014, candidates are also required to open a separate bank account dedicated to paying campaign expenses, to facilitate the monitoring efforts of the ECI, and (theoretically, at least) to e-file their expenses. Under section 10A of the RPA, 1951, if the ECI finds that a candidate has failed to lodge an account of election expenses with the time and in the manner required without an adequate justification for the failure, it has the power to disqualify her for a period of

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costly on a per-voter basis than higher-level elections. This is an intuition that the vast majority of my political interlocutors on the ground in *Savli* confirmed.

three years from serving in either house of Parliament or in the state legislative assembly or legislative council.

As detailed in the ECI's latest "Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditures"[31], a sophisticated machinery working around the powerful Returning Officer (RO) has developed over the years in order to monitor the expenditures of candidates. This machinery includes field components, such as Flying Squads (FS) and Static Surveillance Teams (SST), liquor monitoring teams and Video Surveillance Teams (VST), as well as back-office elements, such as the Video Viewing Team (VVT) and an accounting team. On the ground, at the constituency level, all of these actors typically report to assistant expenditure observers (AEOs), who themselves report to expenditure observers (EOs) and ROs–all of whom are members of an "expenditure monitoring cell." In addition to reviewing the accounts of candidates (both during and after the campaign), these actors decide on the rates of various expenses to be recorded by candidates (before the campaign), keep track of the visible spending of candidates (by shadowing candidates, randomly auditing their expenses, and taping events), respond to complaints from the public, and regulate the transport of cash and liquor during elections (leading to numerous and typically heavily publicized seizures). To carry out these functions, they coordinate with various law enforcement agencies. While a discussion of the efficiency

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[31] I refer here to the September 2016 version of these instructions. "Compendium of Instructions on Election Expenditures, Election Commission of India, Document 6 Edition 2, September 2016, http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/E-Book/Compendium_%20EEM_Sept2016/index.html#/0.

(or lack thereof) of this monitoring framework is beyond the purview of this chapter, it is worth noting that a sophisticated monitoring structure exists.

Within this legal framework, what are candidates allowed to spend on? The answer to this question can be found in the instructions provided by the ECI as well as in the official expenditure reports filed by candidates after the elections.[32] These legal expenditures can be divided in six categories (though the sixth is very much a residual category):

1. Expenses related to the cost of public meetings, rallies, processions, etc. These are very diverse and potentially include:

    a. Vehicles for transporting visitors.

    b. Costs related to the erection of stages, or to podiums and stage furniture (this may for instance include red carpets, tables and chairs).

    c. Expenditures on chairs *for the audience*.

    d. Arches and barricades.

    e. Flowers and garlands.

    f. The hiring of loud speakers and microphones, etc.

    g. Posters, pamphlets, banners, cut-outs and hoardings. In recent times, this may also have included erasable tattoos and paper facemasks.

    h. Beverages like tea, water, cold drink, juice, *to be distributed to political workers and speakers.*

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[32] See annexures 15 and 16 of the aforementioned instructions.

i. TVs, screens, projectors, display boards and 3D displays (the latter possibly for the display of holograms).

j. Expenses on celebrities, musicians, artists.

k. Illumination-related items.

l. Expenses on transport of material and guests (other than cars).

m. Power consumption/generator charges.

n. Rent for venues.

o. Guards and security charges.

p. "Boarding and lodging expenses of self, celebrity, party functionary".

q. "Other expenses". This may be where firecrackers and other miscellaneous expenses not already listed here fit.

[Note that special procedures exist to report expenses of events featuring leaders listed as "star campaigners."]

2. Campaign materials other than those used in meetings, rallies or processions. This refers to expenditures used during canvassing (in the presence of the candidate or not) or distributed at the candidate's headquarters or during any other type of legitimate campaign activity that is not a meeting, a rally or a procession, as in (1). Many of the legal expenses included under this category are already listed in (1) above: handbills, pamphlets, posters, banners, amplifiers, and loud speakers.

3. Expenditure on print and electronic media including cable network, bulk SMS or Internet or social media for candidate.

4. Expenditure on campaign vehicles. This may include hiring cost as well as fuel, driver's charges, etc. This may concern both the candidate's vehicles and display vehicles mounted with screens or banners.

5. Expenditure on Campaign workers/agents. This may concern honoraria and salaries for campaign workers, as well as boarding and lodging in some cases. Importantly, the rules do not precisely define who counts as a campaign worker and also use the word "agent." Accordingly, this may be interpreted to refer to a variety of positions: office manager, peons and cooks, personal assistants, personal bodyguard for the candidate, social media "community manager", accountant, treasurer, secretaries, and the many workers or *karyakartas* that work alongside the candidate to spread his message and convince voters.

6. "Any other campaign expense."

While this is already a fairly exhaustive list, it is important to clarify what is absent from it and what other instructions from the ECI explicitly forbid. As seen in the above list, part of a candidate's budget can be allocated to beverages and food *for campaign workers*. But neither food nor beverages (especially alcoholic beverages) can legally be distributed *to voters*.[33] Indeed, any kind of transaction or gift, either in kind or in cash (see below) between political agents and voters is strictly forbidden during the campaign.

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[33] Note that this in practice would require a clear distinction between voters and political workers, which may not be that easy in practice.

Why then are candidates able to spend as much as they do in spite of this presumably impressive administrative machinery to control elections, and to spend on handouts? Candidates and their workers exhibit extraordinary levels of secrecy and paranoia during campaigns, in no small part due to the fact that documented evidence that they overspent or worse, provide handouts, could lead to the invalidation of their election or an inability to run in subsequent elections (the Election commission has the power to enforce these decisions).

They are nonetheless able to spend many times more than the legal limit authorizes because the rules that govern the administration of elections are unenforced, partially enforced, or selectively enforced. This in turn may have to do with a lack of capacity (transactions between candidates' associates and locally influential citizens are especially difficult to track, as they take place away from the public eye and through intricate networks), collusion between administrative and political actors, or to a mix of these two causes.

Evidence for this partial or selective enforcement abound. Official expenditure reports filed by candidates after the election, assuming they were honest representations of candidates' real expenses, would give us a sense of the relative amounts spent on each type of expenditure listed here. While they are rarely posted online, these expenses can typically be obtained through a First Information Report (FIR) request. For what it's worth, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) recently attempted such an analysis of the expenditure reports of newly elected MLAs in the 2017 Punjab elections.[34]

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[34] "Analysis of Election Expenditure Statements of MLAs – Punjab Assembly Elections 2017," Association for Democratic Reforms and Punjab Election Watch, April 28, 2017,

According to their analysis, 42 percent of expenses were incurred on meetings, processions, etc., 20 percent were spent on campaign materials, 4 percent were spent on media, 20 percent were spent on vehicles, 7 percent on campaign workers, and 7 percent on other expenses.

As suggested by ADR, these reports filed by winning candidates (and, hence, candidates who likely ran among the most expensive campaigns in their constituencies) strongly suggest that the monitoring machinery of the ECI fails at controlling the expense of candidates, and that candidates do not feel strongly pressured to provide realistic accounts of their spending. As noted by the report, for instance, 38 percent of winning candidates in Punjab declared that they did not spend *any* amount on meetings or processions, which seems highly improbable (and relatively easy to check). Besides, these newly elected MLAs only declared total expenses that averaged at 55 percent of the legal limit, which is highly suspicious given that this limit is already low. Of course, these suspicions are compounded by two of Indian politics' worst kept secrets, on which I expand in the body of the article: that candidates spend exponentially more than they report, and that some of these additional (and hence illegal) funds are spent on activities explicitly prohibited by the ECI, and potentially on tactics that threaten the overall fairness of the electoral process.[35]

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accessed June 8, 2017, http://adrindia.org/content/analysis-election-expenditure-statements-mlas-punjab-assembly-elections-2017.

[35] It should be noted here that these expense reports have all been validated by the ECI as of June 2017, in spite of these problematic numbers.

APPENDIX G

Low Levels of Loyalty Among Party Workers

Excerpt of fieldnotes from May 9th, 2015:

After having waited for more than 45 minutes for Joseph [a local MNS position-holder] – he appeared to be delayed by "political work"— we insist on the phone to come meet him rather than have to wait for him in the sun. When we arrive at the intersection indicated on the phone, [...], we find him accompanied by three men who are trying to fit a pile of saffron-colored flags in the trunk of a very small car. All are sweaty given the intense heat but the atmosphere is rather joyous, and Joseph is his usual self, wearing a pink and black panther-print shirt and aviators, cracking jokes, teasing me and promising important revelations that will "definitely help [me] with my research". He appears to be high, and we later wonder if he is. He eventually explains the situation, mentioning that they are taking a bunch of decorations down since the xxxx festival is over. Kaushik readily notes that this was a festival organized by the Shiv Sena rather than the MNS, an observation to which Joseph does not object at all, as if there wasn't anything exceptional to his participation [Although tensions are frequent between the MNS and the Sena]. As they come closer, Kaushik and I each recognize one of the three men working with Joseph. Kaushik recognizes a Shiv Sena shaka pramukh (ward-level president) named Ravidas and I recognize a friend of Kareem [a Congress worker whom I had briefly met at a Youth Congress

meeting]. Kareem's friend and I remember each other and we reminisce about the campaign. I end up naively asking if he has left the Youth Congress. He is astonished by this question. He has "obviously not left the Congress", to which he pledges his unending loyalty before handing me his new business card. He appears to have been promoted to a more prestigious position, though we also understand that he is unhappy with the current leadership, and was hoping for a better position. As we all have tea later, we learn that his "brother" (the fourth man) is a Shiv Sena worker, and that they routinely help with each other's "political work". In a not-so-subtle move, I ask Joseph if he also has a "brother" in another party, since the MNS is not doing that well at the moment…he laughs and explains that he often gets help from a Congress corporator in ward DEF. Kareem's friend approves and adds that it is needed for karyakartas to have "as many friends as possible, regardless of party". Nobody in our little circle lifts an eyebrow at any of this.