Barriers to Political Entry: Experimental Evidence from Local Government Elections in Pakistan

Saad Gulzar[*]   Muhammad Yasir Khan[†]
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Abstract

We use a randomized control trial to study three barriers to political entry: cost of running for office, lack of information on electability and lack of information on benefits from office. We find that cost of running for office is the main barrier preventing political entry of citizens. The lack of information on electability and benefits from office are not binding constraints on average. We find heterogeneous effects of all treatments based on prior beliefs: citizens with high priors about their chance of winning and social benefits from office are more likely to formally enter the race for political office if provided with information and subsidy.

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[*]Assistant Professor, Stanford University. Email: gulzar@stanford.edu
[†]PhD Student, University of California, Berkeley. Email: yasir.khan@berkeley.edu

1 Introduction

In democracies all citizens have equal right to enter politics and run for public office. In such context whoever has preferences aligned with majority of voters (in a majoratarian system) will win election and represent the voters (Besley and Coate 1997). However, in reality the elected politicians are hardly representative of the majority.Their identities, such as caste and gender, matter for policy making (Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) and Pande (2003)). A sizable proportion of politicians belong to political dynasties not representing the majority of citizens (Dal Bo et al. 2007). This begs the question, if everyone has a right to enter political life and most of the politicians are not representative of the majority of voters, why don't more citizens enter politics? In this paper we explore the barriers that prevent citizens from political entry.

We study the decision to enter politics in rural Pakistan that serves as a unique setting where formal politicians do not exist. We vary the decision equation of a sample of citizens by randomly providing either subsidy to run for office or information that can affect their decision. The subsidy is provided in the form of a lawyer that reduces the cost of officially declaring candidacy. We provide information on eletability of a citizen if he were to run for office. We also inform the citizens about personal and social benefits from public office. Design of this study rests on two main hypothesis. First the decision to enter politics entails certain costs and benefits to the citizens. Second there is an uncertainty about the net benefit/cost stemming from the uncertainty about election of the citizen.

To study if cost is the main barrier, we provide a subsidy in the form of services of a lawyer. The lawyer can be used free of charge by citizens who wish to run for office. This leads to a substantial reduction in costs for the citizens. Ideally we would have liked to vary benefits from office too, however in real election setting this is not possible. So instead we focus on information about the existing benefits from office. We randomly provide citizens information about non monetary benefits that can be accrued to a politician. In this we vary whether the benefits are of personal nature (such as respect) or social nature (such as benefits from serving the community). We implement this experiment in rural Pakistan before the first ever elections for the village councils. We focus on 2039 citizens from 192 village and assign them to different treatment groups.

Using data from surveys and administrative records we reach a number of conclusions on the barriers faced by citizens. First, cost of running for office is a significant barrier that prevents citizens from entering public life. Subsiding the candidacy process through provision of a lawyer increases the probability of a citizen to run for office.

The result on subsidizing the cost is robust to the use of intention to treat design and

instrumental variable approach. Even though the treatment assignment is random, the use of lawyer could be driven by other unobservables. The IV approach uses treatment assignment to instrument for the actual use of a lawyer and then studies its effect on filing the papers. We find that both approaches provide consistent results.

Information on chance of winning the election (electability) and the benefits from office do not appear to be the main barriers. They do not appear to be taken into account when citizens decide to run for office. However there is evidence that for certain populations electability and benefits matter. We collect prior beliefs of citizens about their chances to win an election and the benefits they can get from office. Using priors to study the heterogeneous response of citizens, we find two main results. First, citizens who are confident of their electability take into consideration all three factors. Second, prior beliefs on personal benefits do not drive the decisions but beliefs about social benefits are important. Probability of filing papers is higher for citizens with high prior on social benefits if they are provided either the lawyer or the electability information. Interestingly, the social benefits treatment does not affect their decision, suggesting that it is not reinforcing of their priors that is driving the behavior instead new information about electability and cost reduction relaxes the constraints.

This paper relates to a strand of literature that studies the candidacy process. The role of costs and benefits in political entry decision have been extensively studied in theoretical literature and interesting implications have been derived. Caselli and Morelli (2004) study the decision of citizens to enter politics by focusing on the quality of the candidates and draws an implication that under certain conditions only low quality individuals will run for office and subsequently manipulate incentives such that the polity reaches an equilibrium of low quality politicians. Similarly Messner and Polborn (2004) reach the same conclusion by using the idea of free riding.

A related literature has studied the candidacy and incentives of politicians that includes intrinsic motivation (Benabou and Tirole (2003)), financial gains (Ferraz and Finnan Ferraz and Finnan) and term limits (Dal Bo and Rossi 2011). However, there is a dearth of literature that studies the decision equation of citizens who have the option to become first time politicians. In that sense the paper makes a contribution to existing literature by studying the behavior of citizens who go on to become politicians. The closest paper to our study is Dal Bó et al. (2015) that uses administrative data on population of Sweden to understand the characteristics of citizens who decide to enter politics.

This study makes three main contributions to the literature. First, to our knowledge it is the first study to experimentally study the decision process of citizens to become politicians. Second, the paper has been able to identify the role of cost as barrier to politically entry and

provides conclusive evidence. Third, it makes use of prior beliefs to identify how different types of citizens respond differently to the three types of barriers preventing entry into politics.

In rest of the paper, we first provide a brief description of the candidacy decision, then describe the experiment and sampling methodology. We explain the characteristics of our sample and the data collection during the study. We then lay out the main and heterogeneous results. We also discuss alternative explanation and provide a short assessment of the election results.

2 Candidacy Decision

The decision to run for public office requires a weighing of costs and benefits by the individual making this decision [1]. This cost benefit analysis has been nicely captured in the class of models that have come to be known as citizen-candidate models Besley and Coate (1997). In the spirit of this class of models, we imagine a citizen deciding whether to run for office. That citizen has to take a few things into account. First, he will consider the benefits accruing from public office. These benefits could be of two types, one personal benefit such as respect (Ellingsen and Johannesson 2007) and second intrinsic benefit from helping others (Benabou and Tirole 2003). Irrespective of what types of benefits the person cares about, if there is no information about such benefit available with the citizen he will not consider it in the decision. Here we are abstracting from monetary benefits but one can easily consider it part of personal benefit.

Second factor that a potential politician will consider how much does it cost to enter politics. Such costs can be numerous, including any formal fee associated with filing papers, cost of campaigning or the fees required to get on party ticket. These costs and benefits may appear to be straightforward and common knowledge, however there two types of uncertainties that makes them interesting. First, the uncertainty of winning the election. In a democratic setting the citizen may not be sure of his chances to win if there is competition. This makes the decision equation uncertain. Second there is uncertainty in whether this information is even available with the citizens or not.

Thus a citizen faces constraints in the form of cost and lack of information. The cost is associated with running for public office whereas the lack of information is about the benefits and the chances of citizen getting elected. We design an experiment that tests which of these

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[1] Politics being a social vocation, the decision to run is not solely an individual decision most of the time. Things like social image, vote blocks and party policies can also play a role. We study the social aspect of candidacy in another paper Gulzar and Khan (Gulzar and Khan)

constraints are binding and how do citizens' responses to these constraints vary.

3   Experiment

We conduct an experiment in 192 villages spread across Haripur and Abbotabad districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. In each village we conduct a survey to identify citizens who are on the boundary of deciding whether to run for office or not. We then randomly assign these individuals to three sets of treatments including subsidy through provision of a lawyer to file candidacy papers, information on their electability and information on non monetary benefits from office.

3.1   Context

Before 2015, the lowest tier of elected government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Pakistan was the provincial legislature. A previous law introduced in 2000 that formed the elected government structure below the provincial assembly had been suspended in 2008. The old law stipulated the lowest elected tier of the government to be the Union Council (UC). A UC is a collection of several villages or urban wards with an average population around 25000. KP has 986 union councils. This reform introduced Village Councils (VCs) as a new tier of local governments and reinstated District and Town councils that were in suspension since 2008. As a result of reform the 986 union councils are replaced by 3493 village and neighborhood councils. First elections under the new law took place in May 2015 on non party basis for the VCs.

Each Village Council comprises seven to ten elected members depending on the population of the village. Out of these up to seven council seats are open to everyone in the village, called the general seats. Where as the rest are reserved for youth, peasant and women representatives. The elections take place on the basis of single ward system for each seat category, where the village serves as the ward. Candidate winning the most number of votes in the general category is declared Nazim (head) of the council while the one securing second most number of votes is declared Naib Nazim (deputy head) of the council.

A village council is responsible for governing the village as an administrative unit. Each council is responsible for monitoring of public services being provided in the village, registration of births and deaths and setting up alternative dispute resolution mechanism. Each year a village council is allocated funds that are used for development of the village through an Annual Development Plan prepared by the council.

In the new system, the UC serve as electoral districts for District and Town/Tehsil

Councils. Whereas the establishment of the Village Councils creates an opportunity for emergence of a new crop of politicians from the citizens who had not been formally part of governance in the village. We use this unique setting to study the decision of the citizens to become politicians by formally declaring candidacy in the elections.

In order to study the candidacy process we conducted two experiments. The main experiment reported in Gulzar and Khan (Gulzar and Khan) focuses on social dimensions of candidacy. We provided information on personal and social benefits from office to citizens in selected villages. We varied whether this information was provided in private and/or in public setting. In the second experiment, focus of this paper, we studied the person specific factors driving the decision to become a politician by subsiding services of a lawyer to help file papers, information on electability and information on benefits from office.

3.2 Sample Selection

We randomly select 240 villages from the population of villages in the two districts to form experimental sample. We divide these into 196 treatment and 44 pure control villages. Table 1 provides a picture of our sample villages. Most of the villages have good connectivity in terms of cell reception and have higher than national literacy rate. The Village councils have an average size of 9.8 and an average 6500 registered voters. The elections in 2015 were hotly contested, for an average of 6 general seats there were 9 candidates. Voter turn out was also on the higher side, nearly 76% of voters turned out to vote in 2015 compared to 55% in 2013 national elections.

Table 1: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Num Settlements	2.23	1.58	1	11	191
Cell Reception	0.91	0.29	0	1	191
Distance to main road	8.14	16.98	0.5	100	191
Distance to District HQ	26.76	19.52	2	165	191
Distance to County HQ	22.92	17.61	1	110	191
Literacy Rate	50.41	12.29	17.6	74.10	175
Council size	9.81	1.27	7	14	191
Average # of candidates on general seat	9.02	2.57	5	23	191
Average # of general seats	6.08	0.96	5	10	191
Total Votes	6552.73	3060.1	1385	17345	191
Polled Votes	5486.92	2494.9	902	14498	185
Rejected Votes	398.81	320.97	0	1675	185
Voter turnout	0.76	0.11	0.46	0.99	185

In each treatment village we randomly select a sample of fifty citizens using sampling

method from Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) (Henderson and Sundaresan 1982) and administer a short survey. At the end of the survey, respondents are asked to identify up to three individuals from the village who they think should run for office but they may not. After identifying such individuals, we sort them alphabetically according to their last names and transfer the sorted list to a preprinted randomization sheet. The randomization sheet decides the treatment to be administered to each citizen. An example of this sheet is shown in the figure 3 in appendix. This sheet is filled in the field due to logistical constraints however treatment assignments for each row were decided before the start of the field work. Once the assignment is complete, the survey team approaches the individuals and administers the treatment conditions.

Table 2: **Treatment Allocation**

		Neutral Message	Personal Message	Social Message
No Electability	No Lawyer	259	136	118
	Lawyer	262	126	122
Electability	No Lawyer	256	125	121
	Lawyer	253	121	131

Notes: Each cell represents the number of citizens in a treatment.

Table 2 reports the sample size in each treatment combination. Since all the treatments were cross randomized we have 8 treatment combinations. In the table columns represent types of benefit messages delivered and rows represent a combination of whether electability information was provided and within a given electability information whether services of a lawyer were provided or not. During the analysis we combine the social and personal benefits to created the benefits pooled sample. Each cell in the table represents the number of citizens in a treatment condition. The very first cell is a combination of neutral message, no lawyer and no electability information. It represents the control condition in this experiment.

3.3 Treatments

We primarily administer three treatments: subsidy in the form of services of a lawyer, information on electability and information on benefits from office. After introducing themselves to the citizens our enumerator asks them a few simple questions as part of the survey that collects basic information and priors of the citizen on affordability of election and their chances to get elected if they were to run for office. After the completion of the short survey, the enumerator reads out a script about the election. This script is read to everyone in the

sample, including the control individuals.

"You might be aware that for the first time the elections on May 30th, will elect a council at the village level comprising 10 to 15 members. People who are above the age of 21 can contest these elections. There isnt even an education requirement to contest. All you have to do is collect papers from the district office of election commission with two references".

In the **Lawyer treatment** group we provide the citizens services of a lawyer who helps them in filing candidacy papers. Filing for candidacy is a non trivial cost associated with becoming politician. The interested citizens are required to collect candidacy papers from the office Returning Officers usually situated in District and Tehsil Courts. These papers are filled and submitted within three days. The prospective candidates have to submit certain certificates along with the papers that certify their non tax defaulter and non criminal status. These papers cannot be prepared without the services of a lawyer. In this treatment we inform the subjects that our lawyer can help them prepare candidacy papers for free if they wish to run for office. Following is the precise script of the message.

If you would like to contest the village council elections, we can help you with the process of filing papers by providing a lawyer. This lawyer, available in the local courts, will help our listed candidates in filing their papers and provide advice on related legal matters. If you would like to utilize this facility, then you can contact the lawyer at this number: . We will forward your name to him by tomorrow.

The **benefits treatment** is further split in two types of messages. The personal benefit message focuses on personal benefits a politician can have. The script of this message focuses on non-monetary benefits that can accrue to a politician.

People who are elected to the village election will be provided with a golden opportunity to move forward in politics, as well as improve their respect and influence in the area. Members of the village council will be able to build connections with tehsil and district level politicians, which will open avenues for progression in politics. Besides this, council members will be also improve their influence. They will be known as leaders in their neighborhoods, that will increase their recognition. Their children will also be able to build a network in the area, which will make their entry into politics easier.

The **social benefits** message focuses on social benefits like serving one's community and the poor.

People who are elected to the village election will be provided a golden opportunity to do their part for the development of their area. Members of the village council will play an important role in improving the quality of government services in the village. They will work towards welfare and securing the rights of the poor. Working together with the district governments, they will improve the villages school and health facilities. An elected councillor

will have a unique opportunity to address the problems of his neighborhood, which will make him the standard bearer of social development for the village.

We identify the sample for this experiment by asking a random representative set of citizens about who would they like to see run for office. In the **Electability** treatment group we inform a subset of our sample that we have collected this information from citizens who would like to nominate them to run for office.

We have talked to a lot people in the village, and in the survey, many people have nominated you for the village council elections. Based on the opinions of people in this survey you should really consider contesting the elections because there are good chances of your success.

3.4 Data

We use three sources of data in this experiment, a short survey pre treatment, administrative records and a long survey post treatment. First we administer short survey to our sample of 2039 citizens before administration of treatment. This survey includes basic information about them and collects prior beliefs of the respondents about affordability of elections, chances to win office and the benefits from public office. The second source of data is administrative records of election commission of Pakistan. We collect data on all candidates who run for office in our sample villages. We then match administrative lists to our sample. The third source of data is a long survey that we administer after declaration of candidacy. This survey collects detailed information on factors that went into the decision, the political experience of the subjects and their future political plans. We also collect information on psychometric and behavioral variables that we adopt from citeCallen2013 and Ashraf et al. (2014).

The main outcome of interest in this study is whether citizens declare candidacy and enter politics. This outcome is based on matched administrative records from Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). We record this variable as "filer". It takes the value 1 if citizen official files candidacy papers and zero otherwise. A secondary outcome is whether someone wins election or not. This information is also collected from administrative data of ECP.

4 Analysis and Results

4.1 Estimation

Our main results use the estimation based on following linear probability equation:

$$y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 * t_{li} + \alpha_2 * t_{ei} + \alpha_3 * t_{bi} + \psi_v + \epsilon \tag{1}$$

We administer treatments at the individual level and study the effects on outcome that is represented by y_i in equation 1 which takes a value of one if citizen files papers and zero otherwise. We compare the means of three treatment groups with control condition where individuals receive no treatment information. t_{li} in 1 stands for the lawyer treatment, it takes value of 1 if a lawyer was provided and zero otherwise. t_{ei} represents the electability treatment information to individual i, similarly t_{bi} represents the benefits treatment group. Here we have pooled the two types of benefits. We undertake the same estimation for the case when benefits are disaggregated as represented by equation 2.

$$y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 * t_{li} + \alpha_2 * t_{ei} + \alpha_3 * t_{pi} + \alpha_4 * t_{si} + \psi + \epsilon \qquad (2)$$

In equation 2 t_{pi} stands for the personal benefits treatment and t_{si} stands for social benefits treatment provided to individual i.

In the above estimations we include village fixed effects by including a village dummies psi_v for each village v. It is important to include the village fixed effects in the estimation as the randomization and treatment is at the individual level within a village but there may be certain unobservable characteristics of the village that can drive results in one direction or the other. Further since this experiment shares the village sample with another village level experiment including village fixed effects will control for any spillovers that may affect the outcome. Such spillovers will be common for both treatment and control types of individuals within a village, so including village dummies should effectively remove the effects of other experiment from our estimation.

Lastly, the provision of lawyer in equations 1 and 2 estimate an intention to treat effect which assumes all those offered lawyers end up using them. However that is not the case since the usage of a lawyer may be driven by some unobservable characteristic that may also be driving the decision to enter politics. In order to assess the effect of lawyer used on the decision to file candidacy we use the treatment assignment as instrumental variable for lawyer use. Since treatment assignment was done randomly it fulfills the exclusion restriction that the only effect it has on filing of papers is through the use of lawyer's services. We use a Two stage least square estimation reported in equations 3 and 4:

$$t_{ui} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * t_{li} \qquad (3)$$

$$y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 * \hat{t_{ui}} + \alpha_2 * t_{ei} + \alpha_3 * t_{bi} + \psi_v + \epsilon \qquad (4)$$

Where t_{ui} represents if person i used the services of a lawyer offered to him, this is instrumented with t_{li}. And $\hat{t_{ui}}$ is the predicted value of lawyer use based on the instrumental variable.

4.2 Balance Test

Table 3 reports the balance across treatment groups. We report results from joint orthognolity test of the null hypothesis that treatments predict characteristics of citizens. Income, years of schooling and committee experience were collected post treatment. However the nature of these variables is such that we can rule out that they will be affected by the treatment in such a short time. The priors were collected before the treatment during the short survey we conduct as part of the sample selection. The table shows we are balanced on all variables.

Table 3: **Balance Table**

	Income	Schooling	Committee Exp	Cost Prior	Electability Prior	Personal Benefits Prior	Social Benefits Prior
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Lawyer	421.042	0.380	-0.004	-0.087	-0.020	0.047	0.030
	(678.030)	(0.170)	(0.008)	(0.044)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.045)
Electability	228.714	0.119	0.002	0.013	0.036	-0.026	-0.063
	(692.977)	(0.156)	(0.007)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.040)	(0.038)
Social Benefits	-587.534	-0.120	0.005	-0.046	-0.024	0.029	-0.005
	(785.096)	(0.199)	(0.009)	(0.062)	(0.064)	(0.053)	(0.056)
Personal Benefits	-496.910	-0.091	0.007	-0.097	0.063	0.090	-0.004
	(1046.343)	(0.206)	(0.009)	(0.053)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.057)
Control	-89.330	0.201	0.013	-0.134	-0.077	0.041	-0.075
	(1167.066)	(0.295)	(0.014)	(0.078)	(0.084)	(0.077)	(0.077)
# Villages	192	192	192	192	192	192	192
# Observations	1991	2027	2045	2045	2045	2045	2045
Joint orthogonality p-value	0.838	0.193	0.727	0.282	0.355	0.389	0.448

Notes: $*p < 0.1$, $**p < 0.05$, $***p < 0.01$.

4.3 Main Results

Our main outcome of interest is whether a citizen decided to enter politics by officially declaring candidacy to run for office. We collect this information from administrative data of Election Commission of Pakistan. It is recorded as one if the citizen has declared candidacy and zero other wise. We call this variable "Filer". We present our analysis using this outcome from administrative records.

Figure 1 reports the raw means of whether someone decided to file candidacy in the three treatment and the control groups. The means in the treatment groups reported here do not control for cross randomization. First thing to note is that the mean proportion of citizens running for office quiet high. In our sample 713 individuals ran for office that constitutes 35% of the total sample. Second the proportion of filers is also high in the control group, roughly 30 percent. From the raw means, it appears the lawyer treatment group has

maximum proportion of people running for office. The rest of the treatment groups appear mostly to be similar to each other. This suggests that cost of running is the main barrier to political entry of the citizens.
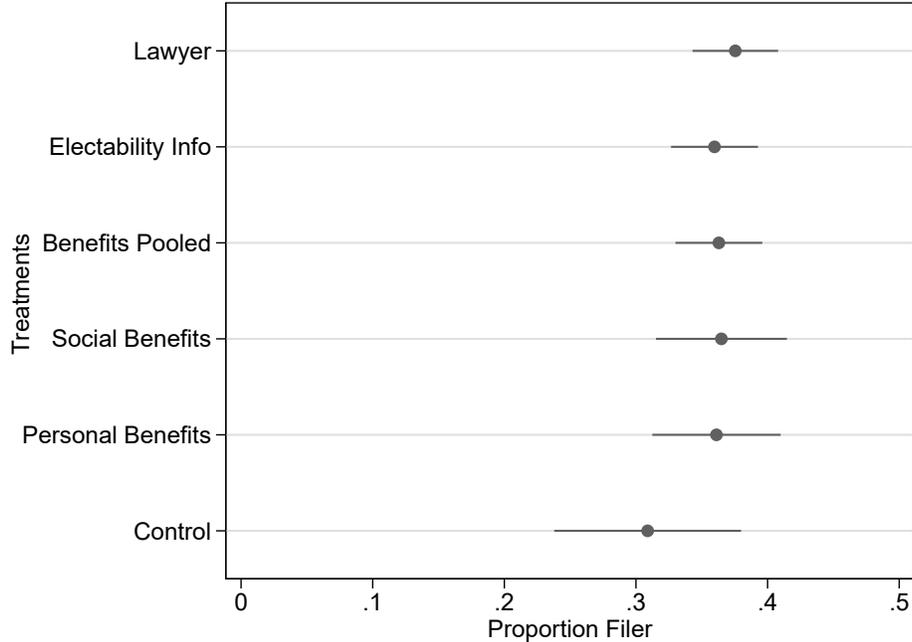

Figure 1: Mean "Filer" Treatment and Control Groups

We report the results of our main analysis in table 4. In this table we run regressions that do not control for cross randomization but controls for all treatments. Since treatment assignment was done within the village we may be concerned that some villages are more politically active than other or some may be more poor than others. Such differences particularly those that make some barriers more salient in some villages may affect our results. In order to control for such village level forces beyond our control we include village fixed effects in each regression in the main analysis.

Column 1 in Table 4 presents our main findings. Here we have pooled the benefits treatments into one group and focus on whether it is the cost of running, lack of information on the chances of a person to get elected or the lack of information on benefits from office that serve as a barrier to political entry. We find that the cost of running for office is the only barrier that matters for the citizen, at least in our experimental setting. The point estimate on lawyer treatment is 0.048, which means that subsidising the cost through a lawyer leads to a 4.8 percentage point increase in the probability of running for office. In control group the probability of running for office is 30.7% so subsidizing the cost results in an increase of

15% in the probability of running for office.

Table 4: **Main Results**

| | Dependent Variable: Filer | | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3) IV	(4) IV
Lawyer	0.048**	0.048**	0.065***	0.065***
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Electability	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011
	(0.562)	(0.558)	(0.531)	(0.527)
Benefits	0.029		0.029	
	(0.137)		(0.113)	
Social Benefits		0.019		0.019
		(0.488)		(0.456)
Personal Benefits		0.038		0.039
		(0.165)		(0.141)
Constant	0.307***	0.307***	0.367**	0.362**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.010)	(0.011)
F-Stat			4979	4974
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust		

Notes: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. All regressions include village fixed effects. column (1) and (2) use an intention to treat design with respect to the provision of lawyer, whereas column (3) and (4) use the provision of lawyer as an instrumental variable for the use of lawyer, which is then used to estimate the effect of lawyer on filing papers.

Further one can argue that the benefits treatment group may have opposing effects for personal and social benefits. Since the cost to run for office has to be borne by person it is likely that the citizens may not be interested if the benefits from office are also accrued to the person only, whereas the social benefits would make the public office less appealing. So pooling the two types in one group may lead to a canceling of effects. In order to investigate if that is indeed the case, column (2) reports the result when we disaggregate the benefits into social and personal groups. First thing to note is that both types of benefits do not appear to play much role in the decision to enter politics. This indicates we can't say that the lack of knowledge about benefits from public office is preventing citizens from entering politics. Second the point estimates though insignificant are in the same direction. Third the lawyer treatment stays significant in this specification too.

Columns (1) and (2) attest to the importance of cost in th decision to enter politics. However the analysis in these columns use an intention to treat design for studying the effect of lawyer. Here we are assuming that everyone assigned to the lawyer treatment actually used the services of the lawyer and then filed the papers. However in our analysis we find that it is not the case. We provide services of lawyers to 1025 citizens from our sample. Out of these 764 individuals end up using the services to prepare candidacy papers. However not all 764 officially file the papers to run for office. Instead of the people who used

the lawyer, only 278 end up filling the paper and official declare candidacy.

The decision to use the lawyer may not be random and correlated with some unobservables that may also be driving the decision to file candidacy. Therefore to get a cleaner decision to use lawyer we instrument the use of lawyer with treatment assignment. The effect of lawyer use on filing papers is reported in column (3) and (4) Table 4. In this analysis we first use treatment assignment to the "lawyer" group as instrumental variable for whether the citizen used the lawyer or not. Column (3) reports the results from a specification that pools the benefits and column (4) uses disaggregated benefits treatments. The first stage of the analysis is very strong with an F-stat of 4979. The instrumented lawyer treatment comes out to be significant too, strengthening our earlier finding that cost is the main barrier to political entry. The point estimate is 0.065 which is larger than the point estimate in columns (1) and (2). If citizens use services of the lawyer they are more likely to enter politics.

Next we turn our attention to study if combination of different factors could be influencing the decision to run for office. Our design allows us to study different combination of treatment groups. We use our design to study the pure effect of each treatment group and report the results in appendix Table 11. However we do not find any evidence on any of the treatment combinations. This is because we lose significant power by cutting the sample with 12 different groups which leads to the standard errors becoming larger.

The above discussion establishes the importance of cost associated with running for office as the main barrier to political entry. We do not find information on electability or benefits from office to drive candidacy. This suggests it is not the information constraints that restrict citizens from entering the race for political office but the entry costs. In our experiment one of the mains costs associated with the decision to enter politics is finding a suitable lawyer and paying them a fee to help citizen submit the candidacy papers. However this can be generalized to other settings where cost of entering politics includes making an effort to get on a party ticket or incurring monetary costs associated with campaigning. In this sense we feel our results are generalizable to other settings.

4.3.1 Robustness to Standard Errors

As discussed earlier our sample is also part of another experiment where the villages are treated to receive messages about benefits from office in public or in private. This may have lead to the emergence of village level unobservable factors that could be driving our results. We include village fixed effects in each regression to control for such unobservables. However, there may still be some factors that may cause the standard errors to be correlated.

In order to address this concern, we reanalyze our data with a new specification that

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clusters standard error at the village level. We report the findings from this analysis in appendix Table 10. The first two columns report the intention to treat effect of the provision of a lawyer whereas the last two columns use treatment assignment as instrumental variable for the use of lawyer. The results in this table prove that our conclusions are robust to the type of standard errors we use. We are confident that the village level experiment (**?**) does not affect our results from this experiment in any meaningful way.

4.4   Heterogeneous Effects on Priors

In this section we study if our treatments have heterogeneous effects based on certain characteristics of the sample. We use prior beliefs of citizens collected at the time of the short survey before the treatment was administered to study the heterogeneous effects. We had collected prior beliefs along four dimensions: chances of winning , affordability of election, social benefits from office and personal benefits from office. The priors used in analysis are standardized as z score for ease of interpretation.

4.4.1   Electability

We ask the respondents report their chances of winning an election if they were to run for public office. Their responses were recorded on Likert scale from one to five, with one standing for very low chance and five for very high chance. Their responses were standardized as z-score for ease of interpretation. Table 5 reports results of the main treatment when they are interacted with the prior on affordability. Each column reports interaction between the prior belief and one of the treatment variable.

As reported in the Table 5 prior belief of citizen about electability is an important characteristic that affects the way citizen responds to the treatment. A person with high prior on his electability responds to all three types of treatment. Another note worthy result is that provision of electability information does not affect the decision of a person with average belief about his own electability.

Column (1) reports that a citizen with average prior belief about electability responds positively to the provision of a lawyer. The response remains positive and significant as the belief of the citizen about his electability goes up. Column (2) reports that the decision of a citizen with average belief about his electability is not affected with the provision of information about his electability. The provision of information only works if it confirms the prior of the citizen that he has a high possibility of getting elected. Column (3) reports that the citizens with high prior also respond to benefit treatment but those with an average value of prior do not.

Table 5: **Prior on Electability**

	Dependent Variable: Filer		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lawyer	0.049***	0.052***	0.050***
	(0.009)	(0.006)	(0.009)
Electability	0.012	0.010	0.012
	(0.517)	(0.603)	(0.539)
Benefits	0.030	0.031	0.030
	(0.117)	(0.103)	(0.125)
Prior x Lawyer	0.041***		
	(0.008)		
Prior x Electability		0.052***	
		(0.000)	
Prior x Benefits Pooled			0.042***
			(0.007)
Constant	0.306***	0.304***	0.306***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on electability has been standardized. It represents the priors of candidates from very least likely to win election to very much likely.

4.4.2 Benefits from Office

Now we turn attention to beliefs about benefits from office. In this section we focus on the two types of non monetary benefits separately. In order to record their prior beliefs we read out eight statements to the citizens and ask them to inform us how much do they agree with the statements on a Likert scale of one to five, one for they absolutely disagree and five for absolute agreement. Four statements describe personal benefits that one can have from a public office while the remaining four statements are about social benefits.

We combine the reported answer for each category, i.e. personal and social benefits, into an index using methods described by Anderson (2008). This index weighs the contribution by each component by using variance covariance matrix such that the components that contribute more information to the summary measure receive higher weights.

Thinking in terms of the cost benefit analysis of a citizen while deciding to run for office, one expects that citizens who have a high prior belief about benefits from office will be more likely to enter politics if their cost to run for office is mitigated. However Table ?? column 1 reports that is not the case. An increase in prior belief about benefits does not result in a higher probability that the citizen will declare candidacy if the a subsidy in the form of a lawyer is provided. The prior on personal benefits also does not differentially affect the response to information about electability of a person. Importantly, it appears the prior belief on personal benefits does not interact in significant way with the personal and social

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Table 6: **Prior on Personal Benefits from Office**

	Dependent Variable: Filer			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.048**	0.048**	0.049**	0.048**
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Electability	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011
	(0.564)	(0.552)	(0.552)	(0.548)
Social Benefits	0.017	0.018	0.018	0.019
	(0.520)	(0.500)	(0.496)	(0.488)
Personal Benefits	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.036
	(0.164)	(0.168)	(0.165)	(0.186)
Prior x Lawyer	0.025			
	(0.130)			
Prior x Electability		0.008		
		(0.614)		
Prior x Social Benefits			-0.013	
			(0.600)	
Prior x Personal Benefits				0.025
				(0.251)
Constant	0.308***	0.307***	0.307***	0.307***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses.
All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on personal benefits has been
standardized.

benefit treatment either.

Next we turn to prior belief about social benefits from office. As reported earlier, we construct this index based on response to four statements on social benefits from office. Like before the index is standardized for ease of interpretation. Table 7 reports results from this analysis.

Most important finding reported in table 7 is that treatments have differential effect based on the social benefits prior of the citizens. People with high prior on social benefits from office are more likely to file candidacy when provided with the services of a lawyer or given information about their electability. Interestingly they are also more likely to enter politics if informed about personal benefits from office but do not have any effect of the social benefits treatment.

4.5 Alternate Explanation

So far we have argued that cost is the main barrier facing citizens when they consider the decision of political entry. One concern that can be raised about this interpretation is that the cost results that we see can be driven by the fact that citizens file papers because lawyer is free, irrespective of their concern about the cost of elections. Alternatively, citizens who

Table 7: **Prior on Social Benefits from Office**

	Dependent Variable: Filer			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.047**	0.047**	0.048**	0.049***
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Electability	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012
	(0.535)	(0.538)	(0.545)	(0.512)
Social Benefits	0.020	0.018	0.019	0.019
	(0.468)	(0.494)	(0.480)	(0.489)
Personal Benefits	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.037
	(0.154)	(0.158)	(0.165)	(0.178)
Prior x Lawyer	0.043**			
	(0.012)			
Prior x Electability		0.028*		
		(0.083)		
Prior x Social Benefits			0.025	
			(0.267)	
Prior x Personal Benefits				0.058**
				(0.014)
Constant	0.306***	0.308***	0.307***	0.306***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: $*p < 0.1$, $**p < 0.05$, $***p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses.
All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on personal benefits has been
standardized.

consider election to be an affordable endeavor should not care about the cost associated with elections. It should not matter for their political decision whether we subsidize them with the provision of a lawyer or not. If we cannot say with certainty that it does not matter to people who can afford our interpretation may not be correct. Since we have found that cost is the main barrier facing the citizens, in order to strengthen out conclusions we need to assess how does this barrier work.

As indicated earlier we collected information the prior beliefs of the citizens including the belief about affordability of election for them. They are asked to rank on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 the affordability of election for them. One was considered to be least affordable whereas five was considered to be most affordable. They were asked this question before administration of treatment conditions. We standardized the responses into z score for ease of interpretation.

Table 8 reports the analysis on prior belief regarding affordability of elections. Each column presents the result of interaction of prior on affordability with one treatment group. The first column presents findings from analyzing the effect of lawyer interacted with the belief about affordability. Column (2) reports the effect of electability information interacted with prior belief about affordability and column (3) reports the interaction with benefits treatment.

Table 8: **Prior on Affordability of Election**

	Dependent Variable: Filer		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lawyer	0.048**	0.048**	0.048**
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Electability	0.011	0.011	0.011
	(0.550)	(0.558)	(0.569)
Benefits	0.029	0.029	0.029
	(0.134)	(0.140)	(0.135)
Prior x Lawyer	-0.011		
	(0.474)		
Prior x Electability		-0.004	
		(0.781)	
Prior x Benefits Pooled			-0.009
			(0.559)
Constant	0.307***	0.307***	0.307***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on affordability has been standardized. It represents the priors of candidates from election being not affordable at all to very much affordable.

In column (1) of Table 8 we study the effects of provision of lawyer and its interaction with the prior belief about the affordability of elections. The results strengthen our interpretation that cost is the main barrier to political entry. Results in column (1) suggest that provision of lawyer matters for the decision at the average of the prior about affordability. However assuringly as the prior belief affordability increases, i.e. citizens who consider elections to be affordable for them, the provision of lawyer has no effect. If the alternative explanation that it is free so people are using it without consideration of cost were true, we would not have seen no effect on citizens who consider running in elections to be affordable for them. Thus we can confidently conclude again that cost is indeed a barrier to political entry of citizens.

Columns (2) and (3) report interactions with the remaining two treatments. We find no evidence that beliefs about affordability affect the way citizens respond to information about their electability or information about the benefits one can have from a political office.

4.6 Election

The main focus of this paper is candidacy decision and the factors that constitute barriers to political entry. However once citizens decide to enter politics by running for public office it is natural ask how do they fare in elections. In this section we explore the electoral performance of the candidates who end up running for office in our sample. It is important to note that running for office is necessary but not sufficient condition to win an election, as it electoral

victory depends on a number of factors, most importantly on who voters decide to support.

Table 9 reports the effect of our treatments on winning election. We do not have much to work with in terms of results. At the candidacy stage lawyer treatment appeared to consistently result in higher probability to run for office. However that probability to run for office has not translated in probability to win elections. The extra candidates that are running for office as a result of our treatments do not appear to be winning elections. The only treatment that appears to have a significant effect is the benefits treatment but in the absence of any effect at the candidacy state, it is hard to interpret what this means.

Table 9: **Election**

	Dependent Variable: Election	
	(1)	(2)
Lawyer	0.010	0.025
	(0.552)	(0.415)
Electability	0.003	0.002
	(0.870)	(0.958)
Benefits	0.035**	0.023
	(0.035)	(0.473)
Lawyer+Electability		-0.035
		(0.437)
Lawyer+Benefit		-0.013
		(0.766)
Electability+Benefit		0.020
		(0.661)
Lawyer+Electability+Benefit		0.033
		(0.614)
Constant	0.164***	0.165***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	2045	2045
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust

Notes: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. Regressions include village fixed effects.

4.6.1   Comparison of Sample to Pure Control Politicians

The citizens who end up running for office as a result of our intervention are not better at getting elected. This may raise a concern that we identify citizens that are very different from how the voters view politicians. It is also possible the random citizens had identified this sample based on their own preferences of how the politicians should look like. In order to see that we have identified a sample that is largely similar to candidates running for office in status quo, we compare our sample with politicians from the 44 pure control villages that are not part of this experiment.

Figure 2 reports comparison of our sample, labeled as "nominated politicians" with politicians from pure control villages on four measures. The opportunity cost is an index based on

reported income and employment. The Political Connections variable is an index based on self reported political experience of the subjects as well as their connections to other politicians. We use years of schooling as a proxy for their capacity to govern. The traditional elite index is based on field team's assessment of whether the respondent is part of traditional elite and whether the respondent has a traditional separate enclosure to entertain guests called *Hujra* or *Dera*. The indices have been constructed using Anderson (2008) for all the subjects in our experiment.

Our sample and politicians from pure control are largely similar on these measures. One big exception for the traditional elite index. The control politician are more likely to be from traditional elite class compared to our sample. This was expected since local government are prone to elite capture (Bardhan 2002) whereas in our case we tried to broaden the pool politicians which is bound to have a smaller proportion of traditional elite. Surprisingly on political connections and experience index our sample reports to be more connected and have more experience of running in any type of election.

In summary, our sample is not very different from the group of politicians who run for office in status quo where no mobilization or activity was done to encourage citizens. This suggests there maybe something else about politicians who win elections that is preferred by citizens.

5   Conclusion

Equal right to political participation is one of the bedrock principles of democratic societies. It is then important note to understand what prevents citizens from participating in politics by running for public office. This paper sheds light on the decision equation of citizens to enter politics by focusing on three types of barriers: Cost of running for office, Information about electability and information about benefits that holding a public office provides.

Cost of running for office is the main barrier preventing citizens from entering politics. Subsiding the cost through provision of services of a lawyer who helps file papers significantly increases the probability that a citizen will enter politics. In the absence of any support, the probability of a citizen running for office in our sample is 30%. The provision of lawyer increases this probability by nearly four percentage points which is an improvement of 15% over the baseline.

The lack of information about electability and benefits from office are not driving the citizens' decisions. Providing the citizens this information does not effect their probability to run for office. However this result is for the average effect. Breaking down the anaylsis
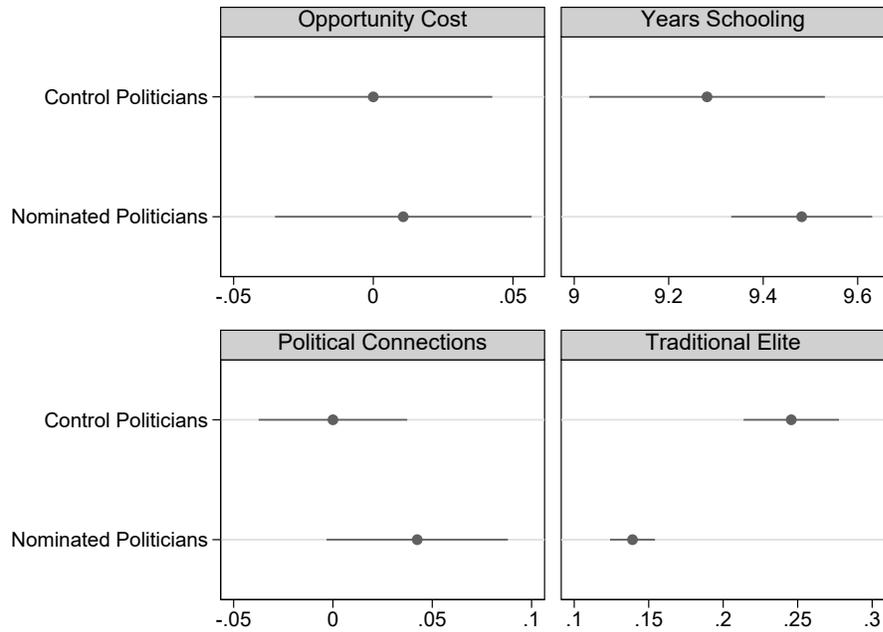
Figure 2: Comparison of Sample with Pure Control Politicians

by prior beliefs of population result in a more nuanced analysis. Probability of running for office as a result of treatments increase for citizens who have a high prior belief on their chances to win. Similarly, individuals with high prior belief about social benefits from office respond to the electability and information on benefits. However, they do not respond to social benefits treatment information. This suggests the effect is due to new information rather than reinforcement of existing beliefs.

Finally, to strengthen the result about cost being the main barrier we analyze response of citizens based on their prior belief about affordability of election. We find that citizens who perceive elections to be affordable do not respond to the lawyer treatment thus strengthening our results.

Appendix

Table 10: **Main Results-Clustered SE**

	Dependent Variable: Filer			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.049**	0.049**	0.065**	0.065**
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Electability	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017
	(0.379)	(0.381)	(0.376)	(0.378)
Benefits	0.023		0.024	
	(0.213)		(0.198)	
Social Benefits		0.024		0.026
		(0.363)		(0.325)
Personal Benefits		0.022		0.022
		(0.437)		(0.451)
Constant	0.307***	0.307***	0.306***	0.307***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
F-Stat			554	555
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Clustered	Clustered		

Notes: $*p < 0.1$, $**p < 0.05$, $***p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered at village level.

Table 11: **Effects Controlling for all Treatment Groups**

	Dependent Variable: Filer	
	(1)	(2)
Lawyer	0.045	0.046
	(0.218)	(0.217)
Electability	0.005	0.005
	(0.896)	(0.894)
Benefits	0.016	
	(0.672)	
Social Benefits		0.030
		(0.507)
Personal Benefits		0.003
		(0.949)
Lawyer+Electability	-0.004	-0.004
	(0.938)	(0.936)
Lawyer+Personal Benefits		0.021
		(0.746)
Electability + Personal Benefits		0.082
		(0.209)
Lawyer + Electability + Personal Benefits		-0.063
		(0.510)
Electability + Social Benefits		-0.053
		(0.409)
Lawyer + Electability + Social Benefits		0.065
		(0.489)
Lawyer+Social Benefits		-0.003
		(0.959)
Constant	0.313***	0.313***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
N	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust

Notes: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. All regressions include village fixed effects.

Table 12: **Effects Controlling for all Treatment Groups - Clustered SE**

	Dependent Variable: Filer	
	(1)	(2)
Lawyer	0.049**	0.047
	(0.028)	(0.250)
Electability	0.017	0.015
	(0.381)	(0.698)
Social Benefits	0.024	0.036
	(0.363)	(0.500)
Personal Benefits	0.022	0.002
	(0.437)	(0.963)
Lawyer+Electability		-0.003
		(0.963)
Lawyer+Personal Benefits		0.014
		(0.822)
Electability + Personal Benefits		0.056
		(0.412)
Lawyer + Electability + Personal Benefits		-0.059
		(0.506)
Electability + Social Benefits		-0.048
		(0.481)
Lawyer + Electability + Social Benefits		0.061
		(0.563)
Lawyer+Social Benefits		-0.005
		(0.942)
Constant	0.307***	0.309***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
# Village	192	192
N	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Clustered	Clustered

Notes: $^*p < 0.1$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$. p-values are reported in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered at the village level.

NOMINATED PERSON	MESSAGE?	NOMINATE?	LAWYER?
	neutral msg	nominate info	no lawyer
	neutral msg	no info	lawyer
	neutral msg	no info	no lawyer
	personal msg	nominate info	lawyer
	personal msg	nominate info	no lawyer
	personal msg	no info	lawyer
	personal msg	no info	no lawyer

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