

Can the Experience of Political Power by a Member of a Stigmatized Group Change the Nature of Day-to-day Interpersonal Relations? Evidence from Rural India¹

Abstract: In a context marked by high levels of prejudice, discrimination and even violence, how does the first experience of political power by a member of a stigmatized group affect the way members of socially dominant groups interact with *other* members of this newly “empowered” group? Can this breakthrough prompt negative reactions and unleash a backlash, as suggested by several theories of intergroup conflict, or will it on the contrary, and as is just as often presumed, alter negative stereotypes, increase intergroup contact or change social norms of interaction between groups in a way that would generate more positive forms of interaction? To provide elements of answer to this question, this project focuses on recent efforts to further include members of the *scheduled castes* (a collection of caste groups formerly known as *untouchables*) through the use of “reservation policies” for key executive positions (village council leaders) in India’s village political institutions. Using data from an original audio self-administered survey based on a regression discontinuity design, I find that the “behavioral intentions” of villagers that have experienced a village council leader from the Scheduled Castes (SC) are significantly more positive on a number of dimensions. To explain this variation, I suggest and test for a number of mechanisms, and find that these changes do not derive from changes in long-held stereotypes or prejudiced attitudes, but rather from the development of new forms of contact and norms of interactions with SC villagers.

¹ Major thanks go to Mmshankare Gowda and Shivam Vij for invaluable assistance organizing and implementing the survey, as well as for helping me develop some of the insights presented here. This project was funded thanks to a NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant (Grant number 819533).

"In certain historical conditions, what it means to be a member of a particular social group includes some form of second-class citizenship. [...]. In these conditions, the ascriptive character of one's membership in that group carries the historically embedded meaning, "Persons with these characteristics do not rule," with the possible implication, "Persons with these characteristics are not able to (fit to) rule." Whenever this is the case, the presence or absence in the ruling assembly (and other ruling bodies, such as the executive and judiciary) of a proportional number of individuals carrying the group's ascriptive characteristics shapes the social meaning of those characteristics in a way that affects most bearers of those characteristics in the polity."

"Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent Yes", Jane Mansbridge (1999).

"Now that my nephew is the sarpanch [Village Council Head], it's like we all started smelling of Jasmine! Upper-caste villagers greet us warmly in the street, and even stop by to talk to us. [...] We get more respect."

Bairwa (SC) Villager from Phagi Panchayat Samiti (Jaipur district), Feb. 2009 ².

1/ Introduction and Outline

Whether representative democracies are able to provide effective channels through which socially and economically disadvantaged groups can access some form of redress remains empirically debated. Accordingly, over the last decade, an impressive body of literature has been devoted to determining whether social groups that have been historically excluded from access to political office actually derive substantive benefits once a small number of their members finally gains access to political representation. This literature highlights a surprising number of ways in which members from such groups can benefit from having "one of their own" in public office: public budgets and public good provision may better reflect their needs (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2003, 2004; Sass and Mehay 2003³) or be enhanced (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2003, 2004, a finding discussed by Bardhan et al 2010); the likelihood that group members receive private benefits from public offices may be increased (Pande 2003, Pande, Rao and Besley 2004); political participation may be boosted (Gay 2001); trust in political institutions may be increased (Gay 2002, Marschall and Shah 2007); Pride and self-respect may be enhanced (Marschall and Ruhil 2007, Tate 2003, Fenno 2003); and discrimination against future cohorts of political candidates from that group may be lessened (Hajnal 2001, Bhavnani 2009, Beaman et al 2009).

This study explores additional consequences of the access to political representation by a few members of such groups. Focusing on members of politically and socially better-off groups, I study the impact that this long-delayed access to political power has on interactions with

² From a private interview with the author.

³ A finding somewhat nuanced by Swain (1993).

members of the previously excluded group *at large*. While other studies have highlighted the impact of exposure to a politician from such group on a range of intrinsically political behaviors (Beaman et al 2009, Hajnal 2001, Bhavnani 2009), I place the emphasis on its impact on a range of behaviors relevant to day-to-day interpersonal relations between members of the different groups. In a context marked by high levels of prejudice, discrimination and even violence, how does the experience of political power by a member of a historically disadvantaged group affect the way members of socially dominant groups interact with *other* members of this newly “empowered” group?

To bring elements of answer to this question, I focus on recent efforts to further include members of the scheduled castes (a collection of caste groups formerly known as “untouchables”, and sometimes referred to as *dalits*) through the use of “reservation policies” for key executive positions (*sarpanchs*, or village council leader) in India’s village political institutions (*gram panchayats*). These radical types of political quotas, in place since the mid-1990’s, abruptly allowed members of the Scheduled Castes (hereafter SC⁴) to be elected as heads of village councils, in a bold move disregarding centuries-old caste-based power structures. Did this recent effort for political inclusion prompt negative reactions and unleash a “backlash” or did it on the contrary, alter negative stereotypes, increase intergroup contact or change social norms of interaction between groups in a way that generated more positive forms of interaction?

Political Inclusion and Ethnic Relations: The Theoretical Puzzle

Widely different intuitions as to the relationship between first time access to political power and the quality of day-to-day interpersonal relations between members of different ethnic groups constitutive of a society exist across the social sciences.

⁴ **An important note on terminology:** in the rest of the paper, I freely use the abbreviation SC both as a noun (ex: *this villager is a SC*, as to mean “a member of the scheduled castes”) and as an adjective (*this is an SC-dominated village*). When referring to multiple members of the Scheduled Castes, I sometimes use the abbreviation SCs. This abbreviation allows me to save characters, and is not inconsistent with the way many of my interlocutors in rural Rajasthan referred to the scheduled castes (many of them not knowing what these initials in English actually stood for). I found that “SC” was used as an adjective and as a noun by many Hindi and Rajasthani speakers; I follow this practice here. Before settling on this abbreviation, I chose the term scheduled castes rather than the direct alternatives for two reasons: 1/ it is the most commonly used term, and 2/ it is the most neutral and legalistic term possible to design that group of persons, most of the other alternatives being connoted as patronizing (*harijans, untouchables...*). Only the term *dalit* (a political term historically used by political activists from the Scheduled Castes, and meaning downtrodden, oppressed, or broken) may have been used as a possible alternative. However, most villagers I interacted with in Rajasthan had never heard of the term, unlike in other areas of India.

Both “realistic” theories of conflict (*Bobo, 1988; Coser, 1956; LeVine and Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966* are classic examples) and emotion-based theories (Horowitz 1985, Petersen 2002) suggest that the access to political power of a new group could have negative consequences, in the form of what these authors frequently call a “backlash”. In this view, antagonistic behaviors and attitudes are not the consequence of deep prejudices and racial animus (Allport 1954), but rather the product of concerns about social status and about the maintenance of the existing hierarchy of groups. Periods of transition in which an established group might have a lot to lose given the assertiveness of another group may generate antagonism and violence⁵. According to this hypothesis, we should thus expect periods of enhanced political competition between groups to generate more antagonism between groups, and maybe more violence, since “threatened” established groups would be likely to abort any change perceived as having any negative consequence on their future welfare⁶.

On the other hand are a series of literatures suggesting that this effort towards further political inclusion could, on the contrary, positively affect the psychology of members of the different ethnic groups, which could in turn improve a number of behaviors. The first one of these literatures is a normative and theoretical literature debating the costs and advantages of implementing “descriptive representation” (Mansbridge 1999, Young 2000, Dovi 2002, Phillips 1995, Philips 1998, Williams 1998). In evaluating the normative needs for “descriptive representation” or for a “politics of presence”, some of these authors hypothesize that deviations (such as political quotas or minority-majority districts) from the typical system of representation may be justified by the potentially important “symbolic” benefits that this type of policies generate. Second are various works carried over the last three decades by an array of scholars using various methodologies and measurement strategies, that have suggested that prejudiced attitudes are in fact more malleable than what was previously thought. According to these scholars, prejudice could evolve as a function of changes in people’s internal states (e.g., thoughts, feelings, and motivations; Chaiken & Yates, 1985; Forgas, 1992; Petty, Schumann, Richman, & Strathman, 1993; Schwarz & Clore, 1983; Wilson & Hodges, 1992) and in their social environment (e.g., salience of social norms, who is present in the situation, who is asking

⁵ Interestingly, this view seems strongly supported by several episodes in the historical record of American racial relations⁵. Most famously, Southern Whites responded to the expansion of black political power during the reconstruction era with massive resistance, unprecedented violence and a clear worsening of racial relations (Parker 1990, Foner 1984, Holt 1979). Similarly, other works have demonstrated the existence of similar mechanisms during the civil rights era (Stenner 1995), or in more recent patterns of hate crimes (Green, Strolovitch and Wong 1998).

⁶ Note in addition that this hypothesis appears compatible with micro-psychological theories of conflict that suggest that grievances (Gurr 1970, Spillerman 1971) and/or certain emotions (Petersen 2002, Horowitz 2001) are the operating mechanisms in ethnic conflict.

the question; Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Hatchett & Schuman, 1975). In addition, certain patterns of “intergroup contact” (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew 1998; Miller et al 2004; Tropp and Pettigrew 2004), or “exposure to counter stereotypical individuals” (Dasgupta and Asgari 2004, Dasgupta and Rivera 2008; Wittenbrink et al 2001) could have a beneficial effect on several measures indicative of attitudes towards “outgroups”. While the findings from this literature do not directly suggest hypotheses about the way the experience of political power by a member of a disadvantaged group should impact on interpersonal and intergroup relations, it suggests that shocks and changes in one’s cognitive environment are potentially conducive to a revision of long-held beliefs, such as stereotypes and prejudices. A recent field-based literature (Bhavnani 2009 and Beaman et al 2009) focusing on the impact of political quotas for women on future political discrimination towards women candidates gives credit to this hypothesis, by suggesting that the experience of gender-based quotas has the potential to alter traditional discrimination against women in politics.

Based on these intuitions, this study has two objectives. Given these widely contradictory intuitions, the first one is to provide elements as to the *direction* of the impact of access to political power by a disadvantaged group. Does the experience of political power by a member of a stigmatized group improve or worsen day-to-day interpersonal interactions between members of the different groups? Second, in keeping with the psychological reasoning on which these intuitions are based, which psychological traits may explain these behavioral changes?

A Different Approach

In answering these questions, this study departs in several important ways from the few existing works with a closely related substantive focus (Beck and Tolnay 1990, Jacobs and Woods 1999, Olzak 1990, Olzak 1992, Tolnay and Beck 1995, Hajnal 2001, Hajnal 2005). First, whereas most of these studies focus on the link between a “minority” group’s⁷ access to political power and aggregate data on the occurrence of violence (in the form of riots, pogroms, or lynching) against members of that group, this study focuses on individual-level reactions. This strategy allows me to explore variations in *psychological* reactions less extreme - and more common - than violence, and to explore the causal mechanisms linking access to political power to these reactions. Second, the context in which this study takes place – the context of persistent “untouchability” in contemporary rural Rajasthan - allows me to measure the impact of access to political power by individuals and groups that remain until now almost entirely deprived from

⁷ These studies are mostly focused on the south of the US.

access to political power⁸, and continue to be the victims of various forms of discrimination and violence. If access to political representation by such group really mattered – one way or another - it is likely that this rather “dramatic” context would provide me with an opportunity to capture these reactions. In that sense, this study complements the only quantitative study on a comparable topic, Hajnal’s study on whites’ reactions to African-American Mayoralty, set in the 1990’s US (Hajnal 2005). Third and most importantly, my empirical strategy – relying on a natural experiment that is detailed below - allows me to better identify the effect of access to political power. Because of the specificities of the rules governing “reservation” policies in Rajasthan’s local institutions, I am able to identify two sets of villages comparable on all relevant characteristics *but* their assignment to “reservation for the scheduled castes” in 2005⁹. This in turn allows me to provide presumably unbiased causal estimates of the effect of exposure to village council heads from the SCs, and hence to shed light on the impact of policies of political inclusion on intergroup relations.

Practically, I proceed in two steps in order to provide empirical evidence relevant to this question. I first explore respondents’ answers to a series of attitudinal questions (*behavioral intentions*) indicative of their behaviors towards members of the newly included group this study focuses on. In a second time, I explore various causal mechanisms potentially linking access to political representation to the variations I detect on these variables. In both cases, I use data from an original survey (total N = 768, in 64 *gram panchayats*) run in the Northern Indian state of Rajasthan during the fall of 2009. To address some of the usual limitations of survey methodology, and adapt it to the needs of rural India, non-SC villagers were interviewed using an innovative “MP3-player/ASAQ” methodology in which they were asked to use earphones and react privately to pre-recorded statements made by “villagers like [them]”. I use the data from these surveys to compare the *untouchability*-related attitudes of villagers who have experienced political power by a member of the SC to the attitudes of villagers who have *not* experienced it.

Results and Contribution

Looking first at a series of “behavioral intentions” items, my data suggests that villagers that have experienced a SC *sarpanch* are significantly more likely to behave in a *less* hostile and

⁸ While members of the Scheduled Castes have accessed a number of prominent political and administrative positions at the national level and in other states, this is less true in the areas of Rajasthan in which this research took place, where the Dalit party (BSP) was not a relevant political force, and where most villagers cannot name an important political leader from the Scheduled Castes that would be from Rajasthan.

⁹ The empirical strategy is fully detailed below.

discriminatory manner in a number of common situations. Exploring, in a second time, the impact of exposure to a SC *sarpanch* on a number of other survey items, I suggest that these results derive less from an evolution of personal beliefs and attitudes towards members of the Scheduled Castes than from an array of other and less obvious factors. In other words, even though exposure to a SC *sarpanch* cannot alter long-held stereotypes or prejudiced attitudes, it may have a positive but subtle effect on the way villagers from non-SC castes consider, address and interact with SC villagers.

This research and these results contribute to a number of literatures across the social sciences. It first and foremost complements the rich empirical literature on the consequences of African-American representation. It provides a comparative counterpoint to a series of important findings on the question (Hajnal 2001, 2005; see also the sociological literature on the reconstruction era), and shows that the interpersonal benefits of the access to political power of a member of a stigmatized group may be important, if different from what this literature had envisioned. Second, I contribute to the normative literature debating the justifications for “descriptive representation” (Mansbridge 1999, Young 2000, Dovi 2002, Phillips 1995, Philips 1998, Williams 1998) by providing a rare empirical test of the argument according to which such measures towards the political inclusion of members of disadvantaged groups are justifiable by their positive externalities in terms of intergroup relations. I show empirically that these intuitions may have been somewhat optimistic but that political inclusion generates benefits that these authors had not envisioned. Third, I test the common argument according to which we should expect periods of enhanced political competition between groups to generate more antagonism. My results imply that theories based on this assumption may be missing part of the story. Fourth, by testing whether exposure to relatively unimportant local officials from a stigmatized group can affect the quality of a number of daily intergroup interactions, I contribute to what currently stands as one of the central debates among scholars of intergroup relations; are attitudes and beliefs stable, as suggested by several classic and contemporary theories, or are they potentially malleable? My results provide mixed evidence as to the ability of exposure to a political leader from a stigmatized group to affect prejudice and stereotypes, but shows that behavioral changes may nonetheless derive from this experience.

Finally, this research contributes to the specialized scholarship developed by both political economists and political scientists over the effects of greater political inclusion for disadvantaged groups in *India*. As evidenced by Jeffrey et al (2008), the transformative potential of the new generation of *dalit* politicians in North India has become a major topic of inquiry for political scientists focusing on the region (Pai 2000, Pai 2002, Weiner 2001, Kohli 2001,

Varshney 2000, Jaffrelot 2003, Krishna 2004, Jeffrey et al 2008). This literature, often focused on the state of Uttar Pradesh, has investigated the extent to which the rise of the BSP (the “Dalit Party”), the different tenures of Mayawati (the head of the BSP and current chief minister of Uttar Pradesh), as well as various instances of local political inclusion through reservation have been able to change the situation of members of the SCs on the ground. Relying on ethnographic or archival methods, these scholars have pointed to a series of potential gains, albeit non-material ones, for members of the SCs. In spite of important nuances in wording, most authors seem to converge to argue that access to political power has generated some non-material benefits, in the forms of increased “cultural respect”, “self-dignity” or “symbolic social change” in the relations between dalits and others. In addition, Krishna (2004) suggests that the arrival of a new generation of dalit politicians has provided the community with new and important resources in terms of linkage and ability to have its voice heard by higher authorities, which would in turn have increased its ability to contest discrimination on legal grounds. Interestingly, these conclusions remain somewhat estranged from the conclusions that a second stream of more clearly quantitative works carried by political economists has inspired. Seeking to measure the effect of local-level reservation policies for various types of disadvantaged populations, including women, in various parts of the country (that is, not only in Uttar Pradesh), these works have generally supported the idea that access to political power leads to at least *some* material redistribution or to better access to public goods (Pande, Rao and Besley 2004; Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2003, 2004). More recently, scholars in this line of work have extended their methodological approach to the question of the non-material benefits of these policies. Bhavnani (2009) and Beaman et al (2009) for instance suggested that gender-based political quotas had the potential to alter traditional discrimination against women in politics. This research borrows from both these lines of works on India and provides quantitative evidence for some of some of the *non-material* and *non-political* consequences of the political inclusion of the SCs¹⁰, namely attitudinal and interpersonal benefits¹¹.

¹⁰ As Beaman et al (2009), I measure whether political reservation for a given identity category impacts individual *attitudes* towards members of that identity category. As Beaman et al and Bhavnani (2009), I also focus on measuring the effect on behaviors that can be seen to derive from these attitudes. However, contrary to them, I do not focus on electoral behaviors. My interest lying rather in the day-to-day consequences that political inclusion has on intergroup relations, measuring the influence of these changes in the identity of local officials on subsequent voting patterns would not be entirely satisfying.

¹¹ Insofar as I do not restrain myself to redistributive and monetary effects of political inclusion, I also address the literature focusing on the ability of democratic institutions to develop the “capabilities” of disadvantaged groups, and in reducing inequalities through both monetary and non-monetary mechanisms (see for instance Dreze and Sen 2002; see also an array of field-based studies on the impact of Panchayat Raj Institutions). By studying whether the political inclusion of a few members of a disadvantaged group could change the way members of other groups address and treat members of a newly included group (here,

The rest of the paper is structured as such. In the second section, I describe the context of this study and motivate its choice. Section 3 explains the “natural Experiment” on which this study is based and presents the original body of data used in the rest of the study. Section 4 presents basic results. Section 5 explores possible mechanisms behind these results. Section 7 summarizes these findings, discusses them and concludes.

2/ Untouchability and Political Quotas in Rural India

The social context: the persistence of untouchability practices in rural India

The social context of this research is the persistence of untouchability practices in rural India, and more particularly in rural Rajasthan, the northern state on which this research focuses. Untouchability refers to the system of social domination and stigmatization through which a number of castes (the “untouchable” castes, nowadays more likely denominated as dalits, Harijans or the scheduled castes), considered as falling below the four principal caste groups (the four *varnas*), are discriminated and/or excluded from a number of occupational and social activities. Even though untouchability has been constitutionally banned since independence, and the scheduled castes (SCs hereafter) have been granted numerous government benefits through reservation policies and various targeted schemes, recent empirical studies have shown that on a daily basis, a number of pervasive attitudes and behaviors still prevalent in village India contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of this system (Narula 1999, Mendelsohn and Viciency 1998, Deliege 1999, Shah et al 2006). As reported by a recent national village-level study (Shah et al 2006), members of the SCs remain discriminated against in most of their social and economic interactions with others. A few examples from this project are telling; members of the scheduled castes are barred from entry into non-Dalit houses and places of worship in more than 50% of the surveyed villages. They are denied access to water facilities and barber services in more than 45% of the villages, and denied seating among other villagers in yet another 30% of the villages.

While reliable quantitative indicators taking into account the subtlety of the situation on the ground do not exist, all experts I consulted indeed agreed that Rajasthan was no exception to this appalling national record, with most of them informally placing the state as worse off than average in terms of relations between members of the Scheduled Castes and members of locally

the scheduled castes), I am exploring one specific mechanism through which members of disadvantaged groups can be “empowered” by political inclusion.

dominant castes. Comparable in size and population to Italy, the state ranks amongst the least literate states in the Union. Most importantly, it has not encountered the type of radical political emancipation of the lower and scheduled castes that some Northern states have seen happen over the last decades, and social relations remains somewhat “traditional” or even “feudal”, as many of my interlocutors characterized them. In spite of important internal variations – the political and social emancipation of the SCs being more visible in some eastern districts of the state -, and while these comparative assertions may be difficult to back in the absence of hard data, two facts seem to suggest that they are at least credible. First, politics in Rajasthan remains dominated by the two national parties and their local clientelistic networks, at the expense of the BSP (the “dalit” party); second, a steady stream of stories of discrimination and violence against local SC communities continues to appear in both the local and national press. In this sense, Rajasthan may neither be considered as a progressive state nor as a complete outlier in terms of the “intensity” of untouchability. This characteristic, along with the intense socio-economic and geographic diversity of the diverse districts probably made it a good case for this study.

Political and administrative context: “reservation” policies in local institutions

While the members of the SCs - about 20% of the Indian population¹² - continue to be the victims of various forms of discrimination, some of their most well-off members have over the past few decades accessed a number of prominent administrative and political positions across India through a variety of mechanisms (cooptation by government parties, reservation policies at various levels of the state, creation of ethnic or multi-ethnic parties such as the BSP). It is in this general context that the authors of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, re-organizing India’s local governance institutions (*Panchayati Raj Institutions*), added as a provision of the law that a share of the posts of council heads of *gram panchayats*, an elected council typically in charge of the administration of several villages, would be “reserved” for members of the SCs.

In Rajasthan, the modalities of the application of reservation for these seats are radical; before each election, district authorities announce the *gram panchayats* (hereafter referred to as GP or GPs) to be reserved. In GPs where the post of *sarpanch* (or “village council head”) is reserved for members of the SCs, only SC individuals are allowed to stand for election. While candidates backed by different groups of villagers typically fight to be elected, this always results in the mechanical election of a member of the SCs where a seat has been reserved. This form of

¹² The proportion is roughly the same in Rajasthan, where the empirics of this study are based.

electoral process has allowed members of the SCs, once entirely excluded from local political processes, to head villages with the encouragement of state authorities.

These dramatic power transitions in rural areas – 70% of the Indian population – provide a prime opportunity to examine the aforementioned questions. The reasons for this are manifold. First, the political positions now occupied by SCs in these institutions are directly meaningful to most citizens¹³. While Members of Parliament and state legislators can be distant from the population, an overwhelming majority of villagers are aware of the identity of village officials and of the actual power allocated to these officials.

Second, their status of village leader provides them with a great deal of both formal and informal power. On the formal side of things, the constitutional amendment creating local institutions gave these officials power in requiring funds from higher level state actors and in allocating these public funds, which made their role central in every village (Kumar 2005, Lodha et al 2001). *Gram panchayats* thus perform at least two important policy tasks in the state. The first is beneficiary selection for central and state welfare schemes. GPs provide beneficiary households with funds to acquire household public goods such as housing, private electricity or water supply. The second task is related to the construction and maintenance of village public goods such as streetlights, roads and drains. But *sarpanchs*, as heads of the GPs, also play an informal role. As I was able to observe during preparatory ethnographic work, *sarpanchs* are often asked to mediate private conflicts between villagers, as well as conflicts between villagers and local authorities. They receive individuals - from all castes - in their courtyard to hear their complaints, and occasionally summon conflicting villagers to come explain themselves¹⁴. In addition, as several respondents pointed out to me, *sarpanchs* derive a lot of prestige and benefits – both material and immaterial - from the address book and the connections their function allows them to build. Many villagers for instance noted that their *sarpanch* had in his cell phone the number of such or such important local figure, and enviously hinted at the fact that he could now be received at their residences and drink tea with them. Many villagers also pointed at the fact that these new connections, along with the *sarpanch*'s practical role in disbursing funds, placed him at the center of many scams and opened the door to personal embezzlement, and ultimately

¹³ In an informal pre-test realized in February of 2009 in 10 villages of Jaipur district, Rajasthan (N=135), I found that 96,3% of interviewed villagers knew the caste of their Sarpanch, 92,6% knew his or her name, and 90,4% claimed to know where his or her house was.

¹⁴ This would typically be the case when resolving issues related to land encroachment between neighbors. As I was able to observe in one village of the Phagi *Panchayat Samiti* area (Jaipur district, Rajasthan), a *sarpanch* may serve as an ad hoc “judge of the Peace” in such situations. After having consulted the village elders and the local “caste associations” (referred to as “castes panchayats”), the *sarpanch* decided of the ownership status of a small parcel of land, a decision that was subsequently respected by villagers.

to social mobility for him and his extended family. While this is difficult to verify, both the commonality of the assertion and my personal observations of the acquisitions made by a number of *sarpanchs* (houses, jeeps, etc...) and their families during their tenure nonetheless suggest that this is likely to be true¹⁵.

A third advantage of focusing on these *sarpanchs* is simply practical: by focusing on a lower level of representation - the village level -, I am more easily able to collect and analyze data on a large number of observations.

Fourth, even if *sarpanchs* benefit from power, status, and recognition, there are reasons to think that focusing on them allows me to present *conservative* estimates. Low levels of government allow me to focus on the effect of exposure to *common* politicians, and not only those extraordinary individuals that manage to go through party hurdles and long campaigns to get elected at a more prestigious level of government. While they often were community leaders prior to run for this position, an overwhelming majority of the elected *sarpanchs* this study focuses on had until then no proper political connection or experience, and continued to work as farmers.

As a consequence, focusing on local level institutions presents a number of practical, theoretical, and methodological advantages for this study.

Why Focus on Access to Political Office through Political Quotas?

While focusing on the impact of this form of “reservation” policies – as opposed to more typical forms of access to political representation - may limit the external validity of my findings, both substantive and methodological reasons can justify this choice.

A focus on political quotas makes sense substantively, precisely because these political quotas are often defended on the basis that they constitute an efficient political engineering tool able to change social outlooks towards some disadvantaged group. According to their proponents (quoted above), quotas can set examples, generate “role models” that would not exist otherwise, and signal to society that members of such group are now to be considered a full part of the social body. In spite of the prevalence of this presumption, in spite of the popularity of political quotas across the world (in more than 100 countries according to Bhavnani 2009), and in spite of the existence of contradictory hypotheses (namely, that quotas could trigger a “backlash”), little

¹⁵ My interlocutors however rarely used the language of disapproval and condemnation to describe this almost mechanical ability of elected *sarpanchs* to become rich. More often than not, this was described enviously as a chance for the *sarpanch*'s extended family.

evidence points to the fact that this presumption is valid. This study shall partly fill this gap and allow for more informed choices over the impact of such quotas on intergroup relations. This imperative translates to the specific Indian context, in which we have no clear picture of the *overall* impact widespread reservation policies have on the welfare of members of the groups targeted by these policies.

The second reason why focusing on these quotas makes sense has to do with methodology. Focusing on these quotas allows me to circumvent two key issues. The first of them is reverse causality. Generally speaking, under a regular regime of open political competition, members of a stigmatized group are more likely to get elected where prejudice against their group is lower and where they are more assertive. Accordingly, estimates of the effect of exposure to representatives from these groups are likely to be biased, a fact that is sometimes overlooked in works focusing on African-American Representatives in the US¹⁶. Because the villages designated for “reservation” are in this study *not* chosen based on their inhabitants’ level of prejudice or assertiveness, this study is better able to circumvent this issue, as the third part of this paper shows. The second (interrelated) methodological issue that focusing on political quotas allows me to circumvent is the issue of “selection effects”; under regular electoral competition, members of disadvantaged groups only tend to get elected in districts and cities in which the group’s share of the population is relatively high. It results that comparable findings on the impact of “minority representation” may only apply to a very specific set of cities. Would changes in attitudes for instance be similar in cities and districts with smaller African-American populations? Because of the specific causal processes allowing “minority representation” to occur under regular electoral competition, it seems difficult – and maybe impossible – for a study to alleviate criticisms on both of these fronts. In this sense, we may stand to learn more about the effect of exposure to a politician from a disadvantaged group – whether this occurs through a quota system or through political competition - from a study whose design better circumvents those two issues. This study hopefully does, as the next section explains.

3/ Data and Empirical Strategy

In order to explore how prejudiced attitudes were affected by the experience of political power by a member of the SCs, I designed a large-N survey based on a natural experiment. To do

¹⁶ Hajnal 2001 and Hajnal 2005 use time series data, which allows the author to circumvent this limitation and show the evolution over time of whites’ racial attitudes as a function of exposure to an African-American official. Most other works quoted above are based on cross-sectional surveys and hence seem subject to this criticism.

this, I ran a survey in 64 *gram panchayats* of Rajasthan, concentrating on whether exposure to SC *sarpanchs* at the village level over the past five years had an impact on a number of *untouchability*-related attitudes and behaviors. Using the specificities of the set of rules governing the implementation of reservation for the position of *sarpanch*, I was able to constitute pairs of proximate villages arguably similar in all theoretically relevant characteristics *except for* the identity of their main official over the last five years (i.e. the *sarpanch*). This pair-matched design, whose details are developed below, allowed me to compare the attitudes of comparable sets of villagers and thus obtain “as-unbiased-as-possible” causal estimates of the effect of exposure to SC officials. In the rest of this section, I first detail the natural experiment on which my village sampling is based and how I practically chose the villages to be surveyed. Second, I explain how the villagers to be surveyed were chosen within each targeted village. Third, I present the MP3/ASAQ survey mode that was originally designed for this survey. Fourth, I present the questionnaire and the measures on which my key findings are based.

Sampling Villages: A Regression-Discontinuity Design

Reservation for SCs for the position of *sarpanch* at the GP level follows a complicated - but explicit and well-implemented - rule based on the total SC population in the *panchayat samiti* level (an administrative subdivision of Indian districts typically containing about 30 GPs). Prior to each election, a number of GPs are reserved for SCs in each *panchayat samiti*, meaning that only SCs can contest in these GPs. In the state of Rajasthan, the total number of GPs reserved within each *panchayat samiti* is proportional to the general proportion of the SC population in the *panchayat samiti* area (according to the 1991 version of the Census of India). Within the *panchayat samiti* area, GPs with the highest SC population are reserved in priority. Things are however slightly more complex than this; Since the reservation system is coupled with a rotation system ensuring that the reserved GPs are not the same at all electoral periods, electoral officers in each district of the state ranked GPs according to their share of SC population at the onset of the *Panchayati Raj* system in 1994, and have since then been going down the list, selecting for reservation for the 1995 elections the GPs with the highest share of SC population within each *panchayat samiti*, for the 2000 elections the following GPs going down on the list etc... . Following this rule, GPs that have been reserved for each of the three successive elections since the first election in 1995 (1995, 2000, 2005) systematically differ from one another in terms of the size of their SC populations, and differ to an even greater extent from GPs that have *never* been reserved until now. I was able to check that this rule was implemented state-wise by

collecting data on which GPs had been reserved in 1995, 2000, and 2005 in each of the district in which I planed to run either a pilot study or the survey. Matching the reservation data with demographics from the 1991 census of India data (the census data used by electoral officers¹⁷), I realized that assignment to reservation had been implemented according to the rules, except for minor deviations in a handful of cases within each district¹⁸ (less than 2% of the cases)¹⁹. In addition, various interviews I conducted with low-level officials in charge of the “reservation process” confirmed that this rule was implemented²⁰.

Given the aforementioned set of rules, if I randomly sampled *gram panchayats* within Rajasthan, I would not be able to detect whether the variation in my outcome variables was due to political reservation for members of the scheduled castes or simply to a higher share of SC population within those reserved GPs. However, because the assignment to reservation depends on this unique demographic principle, this system provides me with a solution to generate a well-identified natural experiment on a subset of the data.

Namely, I focus on comparisons between two sets of GPs: GPs that were reserved in 2005 (and *following reservation rules*, had been left unreserved in both 1995 and 2000), and *comparable* GPs that were not reserved AND had never been reserved before. To do this, I use a design describable as a “pair-matched regression discontinuity design”. This design relies on the unit-level pair-matching often used in randomized field experiments in which the treatment is

¹⁷ The fact that assignment to reservation is based on data collected 5 years prior to the implementation of the *Panchayati Raj* system in addition guarantees that village demographics were not manipulated so as to influence the outcome of the reservation assignment process.

¹⁸ Take the example of Loonkaransar *panchayat samiti* in Bikaner district. While reserved GPs in 1995 had an average of 35.2% of SCs, those reserved in 2000 only had 26.7%, those reserved in 2005 20.1%, and those reserved in 2010 18.6%.

¹⁹ Note also that the fact that the demographic data used to determine reservation status is from the 1991 census (that is, prior to the existence of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions) seems to guarantee that village demographics are not endogenous to the reservation process.

²⁰ While many of my interlocutors recognized that local pressures to divert authorities from this rule existed prior to each round of assignments, they gave me at least three arguments for why communities trying to coax authorities into *not* reserving their GP could not conceivably get their way; the first one has to do with the simple fact that a diversity of actors, at various levels of local and state governments on one hand, and within the central administration on the other, would have to coordinate to trick these rules, which seems implausible given the diversity of backgrounds and incentives of these actors. It is particularly unlikely that *district collectors*, the highest administrative officials in each district (and the officials ultimately sanctioning the list of GPs to be reserved), would take the risk of bending the rules and expose themselves to public complaints to accommodate the demands of a series of relatively insignificant, and often distant, villages. Second, because there is some knowledge of the demographics of each GP (both through data from the census of India often available in Panchayat Samiti offices, and through informal counts carried by political actors), it is very unlikely that local activists and NGOs would leave a major fraud unnoticed. Finally, most of my interlocutors in district collectorates’ electoral offices remarked that while local caste leaders occasionally visited their office to exert pressure, they were readily discouraged once they better understood the *rotation* component of the system; why bribe and exert pressure on local officials if the GP is to be reserved during the next electoral period anyways?

delivered at the village level; namely, I use village matches – I match two villages on observable variables potentially impacting my outcome variables – between a “treated” village and an “untreated” village within the same block (treatment here being “assignment to reservation in 2005”, and a block here being a *panchayat samiti*).

Practically, I proceeded in five steps:

1/ I started by selecting 4 districts of Rajasthan²¹. Importantly, these districts were not selected randomly, but rather to ensure that a diversity of contexts in terms of natural environment, levels of wealth, levels of education, intercaste relations and caste make-up across Rajasthan was represented.

2/ I then *randomly* selected 4 *panchayat samitis* within each of these 4 districts, which gave me a total of 16 *panchayat samitis*.

3/ Within *each* of these 16 *panchayat samitis*, I subsequently selected a series of GPs. To do this, I first discarded all GPs that had been reserved in either 1995 or 2000, and focused on those GPs that were either reserved for SCs since 2005 or had never been reserved.

4/ Within this already select group of GPs, I only retained in each *panchayat samiti* the four “reserved” GPs with the *smallest* proportion of SCs and the four “unreserved” GPs with the *highest* proportion of SCs.

5/ Selecting from this even more restrained group of GPs, I formed 8 matched pairs of GPs in each district - each of which contained one GP currently reserved (since 2005) and another one that had never been reserved -, for a total of 32 pairs and 64 GPs across 16 *panchayat samitis* and 4 districts. Within each of the 64 GPs the survey targeted the largest village, which we made sure was also, in each case, the village the *sarpanch* resided in²². Once this was checked, these “GP headquarter villages” were paired with proximate and comparable villages from the shortlist obtained in step 4. In 29 pairs out of 32, the villages are matched within the very same *panchayat samiti*; in the 3 remaining pairs, the villages are matched with villages from directly adjacent *panchayat samiti* (the biggest distance between 2 villages in the same pair being less than 30 km). In creating these village-pairs, I made sure that villages were as closely matched as possible on a number of observable variables potentially impacting my outcome variables²³; these include the

²¹ Rajasthan counts 33 districts.

²² Gram Panchayats often count more than one village. In some cases the Sarpanch comes from a smaller village within the GP. This was not the case in our sample, which we were able to check prior to the survey. Note that if it had been the case, it may have been problematic in terms of comparing the effect of exposure to a Dalit Sarpanch, since we may reasonably expect this effect to be stronger when villagers live in the same village and engage in daily interactions with the Sarpanch.

²³ Matching was realized without the help of a statistical program. All pairs are extremely closely matched on all dimensions mentioned above, as can be seen from Appendix 1.

relative size of the SC population before 2005 (that is, the variable that determined assignment to the “reservation treatment”), as well as a number of village-level “pre-treatment” characteristics²⁴. In addition to being matched on SC population, selected pairs of villages were indeed also matched on their *size* (measured as total population, using Census of India 2001 data), on their relative *distance to a city* as well as on caste data collected by the author on two key variables: *ethnic make-up of the village* (a dichotomous variable indicating whether the non-SC population of the village is composed of several different groups or is composed of a *majority* from one main subcaste group – in which case the village was matched with another village with a similar ethnic make up and the *same* majority group²⁵), *dominant SC subcaste* (indicating the most numerous SC subcaste in the village)²⁶. While villages were explicitly matched *only* on these few variables, note that the combination of matching on these few variables with the extreme proximity of villages within each pair implies that these villages are almost “naturally” paired on important background characteristics, such as their average level of education (measured using literacy rate data from the census), the type of cultures, or the proportion of agricultural workers within each village (as table 1 below shows). In addition, because each selected *panchayat samiti* contains a high number of villages and because a high proportion of villages have a SC population located around what was in each case the 2005 threshold for reservation, I am able to create closely matched pairs of villages, and hence to isolate the effect of reservation for SCs for that subset of villages²⁷.

While I am confident that this pair-matching design allows me to select villages that were extremely similar prior to reservation for SCs in 2005, one caveat typical of this methodology is

²⁴ To determine the sizes of caste group populations, two different village officials were interviewed (on the phone) in each village. Using a directory of Rajasthan villages containing the cell phone numbers of a number of village-level officials and notables in each village, a research assistant contacted two persons in each village and asked for estimates of the size of major caste groups. When estimates differed, additional officials were contacted until a consensus was reached among village officials.

²⁵ This was the case for four of my pairs.

²⁶ Matching villages on their distance to a city allows for some very crude form of matching on level of socio-economic development and avoids matching educated villagers potentially engaged in modern urban professions with shepherds from isolated villages. Matching villages on their ethnic make-up may be important, since the intercaste power equation may differ when comparing villages that count a large number of small groups from villages and villages that count one homogenous dominant caste group. Finally, matching villages on the identity of the numerically most important SC subcaste (*jati*) appears important insofar as different SC subcastes are treated and discriminated with different levels of intensity.

²⁷ A detailed table on each of the 32 matches is available in appendix 1. While potentially important unobserved or unmeasured variables (in particular variables related to the history of caste relations in the villages) were not taken into account in *constituting* these matches prior to the survey, note that I have no reason to believe that they would affect my results in any *systematical* way. In addition, during the survey, the research team collected data on the history of group relations in the village. If I had found that a given village within a pair was marked by unusual events in the history of caste relations (riots, murders, or an unusual pattern of political mobilization of the scheduled castes), I could have excluded such pair from my statistical analysis in order to test the robustness of my results. This was however not the case.

that I am able to find such pair-matches only among a subset of GPs within each *panchayat samiti*, namely those GPs whose SC populations were around – some slightly above, some slightly below - the local threshold for reservation in 2005. While this may suggest that the validity of my results only applies to a very small subset of GPs, two important characteristics of my sample limit this concern. First, because I am sampling across 16 different Panchayat Samitis across Rajasthan, each with a different proportion of SC population (going from 11.2% to 27.1%), my sample includes village-pairs with fairly different levels of SC population, which results into different “thresholds” for reservations in 2005. Hence, even if I cannot disentangle the effect of “SC population size at the *panchayat samiti* level” from the fixed effects of each of the 16 *panchayat samitis*, I am able to sample villages with diverse levels of SC population. In addition, it is important to note that within each selected *panchayat samiti*, the threshold for reservation in 2005 was more or less around the modal value in terms of share of SCs at the GP level, while those GPs that were reserved earlier (especially in 1995) could easily be considered as outliers due to the important size of their SC population. As a consequence, while my analyses are undeniably based on a *subset* of villages, it is nonetheless important to note that these are far from being typical villages within their *panchayat samitis*.

Table 1 quantitatively assesses the claim of as-if random assignment that is key to my empirical strategy. It presents a randomization or balance check, comparing reserved and unreserved villages on measured pre-treatment covariates (all data is from the 2001 census). As the table shows, reserved and unreserved villages are statistically indistinguishable on these covariates, which is a necessary condition for a valid natural experiment (Dunning 2008, Dunning 2009). In particular, reserved and unreserved villages are balanced with respect to population, as well as all other pre-treatment variables readily available from the census of India, such as the mean proportion of literates, the mean proportion of workers, the mean proportion of marginal workers, or the average distance to a city. Reserved and unreserved villages are also tightly balanced on the “assignment covariate” (SC proportion at the GP level) used to construct the regression discontinuity, reflecting their location near the threshold for reservation.

Table 1: Difference of means between reserved and unreserved villages

	Reserved Villages (group 1)	Unreserved Villages (group 2)	Difference of Means (Group 1-Group 2)	P-value (two-sided)
Mean Population (<i>st. error</i>)	2334.09 (178.43)	2566.625 (202.61)	-232.53 (269.98)	.39
Mean SC population (<i>st. error</i>)	440.40 (38.80)	451.75 (35.59)	-11.34 (52.66)	.84
Mean SC proportion (village) (<i>st. error</i>)	19.34 (1.06)	18.69 (.92)	-.65 (1.41)	.64
Mean proportion of literates (<i>st. error</i>)	42.77 (2.21)	44.38 (1.98)	-1.61 (2.97)	.59
Mean proportion of workers (<i>st. error</i>)	44.31 (1.39)	43.89 (1.47)	.42 (2.02)	.83
Mean % of Marginal Workers (<i>st. error</i>)	13.07 (1.30)	13.46 (1.37)	-.38 (1.89)	.83
Mean distance to a city (in kms) (<i>st. error</i>)	28.53 (3.92)	30.31 (4.38)	-1.78 (5.88)	.76
Assignment Covariate:				
Mean SC proportion (GP level) (<i>st. error</i>)	18.80 (.48)	18.08 (.52)	.71 (.71)	.32
N	32	32	64	

NOTE: The unit of analysis is the village, except for the assignment covariate, which is at the Gram Panchayat level. All data are from the 2001 census. P-values give the probability of observing a t-statistic as large in absolute value as the observed value, if reserved and unreserved villages have equal means. Other covariates that also passed randomization tests include the number of households, total female population, male population aged 0-6, female population aged 0-6, Scheduled Tribes population, proportion of Scheduled Tribes population, literate population and working populations.

Sampling Individuals

In each of the 64 villages visited, 12 respondents were interviewed, for a total N of 768 respondents. The surveys were administered to villagers from all middle and upper castes²⁸ during the fall of 2009. The sampling of individuals within these villages followed a form of stratification process adapted to the constraints of the situation. Because selected caste groups were our target population, sampling individuals randomly from electoral lists (the usual sampling frame used by leading election surveys in India) would have been complex and time-

²⁸ In other words, only members of subcastes that fall under the OBC and general categories were interviewed. Muslims and members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes were not interviewed in the context of this very study. However, while the survey team members in charge of interviewing respondents whose responses are studied here were present in each village, interviewers working on an interrelated project were conducting interviews with members of the Scheduled Castes.

consuming. Respondent sampling however followed an as-random-as-possible procedure detailed in Appendix 2. This sampling procedure ensured that different caste and age groups that were part of our sampling frame were surveyed in each village. Note in addition that I was able to check that respondents were on average statistically indistinguishable in terms of caste, level of education, household size, profession, and socio-economic status (measured here as “number of rooms in the house”) in the reserved and unreserved villages we targeted.

Eliciting More Honest Answers: The Interview Process

Asking sensitive questions about untouchability in rural India clearly represents a challenge for the researcher (see Chauchard 2010). In order to address this issue, my approach differed from a number of other approaches commonly used by researchers eager to limit “social desirability concerns”. In order to generate high quality AND *individual*-level data that would more easily allow me to disentangle causal mechanisms, I distanced myself from using both “survey-experiments” and implicit attitude tests. In the spirit of a number of surveys measuring drug or sexuality-related behaviors, I instead chose to openly ask sensitive questions while insisting on enhancing both the *privacy* and the *confidentiality* of the survey process.

Towards this objective, I designed what stands as the first MP3 player-based “audio self-administered questionnaire (ASAQ)”. This methodology required respondents to use earphones to react privately - and confidentially – to a number of statements made by “villagers like [them] in earlier conversations with the research team”. Concretely, after listening to a brief introduction, respondents listened to a succession of pre-recorded first-person statements, each of which was followed by the instructions from a “second voice” helping respondents self-mark the extent to which they agreed with each of these statements. To enter their responses, they marked a special paper form using extremely simple shapes and logos. The “second voice” in the audio instrument provided instructions on how and where to answer after every statement. The design of this pre-recorded questionnaire followed an elaborate process detailed in Appendix 3 and the interview process is detailed in Appendix 4.

An example of the self-response process should clarify these explanations; after respondents had been explained the procedure, suppose they heard that “a fellow villager made the following statement during an earlier interview with members of the research team”: “People from the Scheduled Castes cannot do a good job as *sarpanch*”. After having heard that enacted statement, the second voice in the recording asks them: “how much do you agree or disagree with what this villager

said? Please answer in front of the *ring* [or *kettle*] symbol”. What respondents usually then saw on their answer sheet was something like this:



Or, in some cases, something like this:



Because both instructions delivered by the interviewer at the onset of the interview process and various instructions delivered throughout the survey via the earphones had made clear what each sign on the answer sheet meant²⁹, respondents typically had no difficulty in choosing a response (the research team checked this was the case by reinterviewing about 70% of the respondents, 96,2 % of which had no problem in identifying the meaning of the four thumbs).

In addition, and as evidenced by a large pretest (Chauchard 2010), this methodology significantly boosted the number of “socially *undesirable*” responses reported by villagers. This administration mode presented other nontrivial advantages. First of all, it allowed us to have greater control on interviewers, prevent excessive reinterpretation of the questions, and ensure a uniform delivery of the survey; Second, the audio nature of the survey allowed us to provide respondents with intelligible, culturally grounded questions, presented in their own daily language through the reflections of “fellow villagers”. While pretests produced no clear statistic on the impact of this type of instrument on respondents’ comprehension, interviewers (as well as the vast majority of the 70% of respondents we had the chance to debrief after their interview) reported that the audio instrument was “more engaging” and was “a more natural way to ask questions than a formal questionnaire”. Third, a non-negligible advantage of this methodology had to do with participation and compliance; somewhat surprisingly, a number of villagers were pleased at the possibility of taking part in a survey involving some kind of technological device, while they usually appeared jaded at the idea of having to participate in yet another survey^{30 31}.

²⁹ Clearly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, clearly agree in the first case, Yes or No in the second.

³⁰ In a pretest, participation rate was comparable for targeted respondents that were asked to participate to the MP3 survey and respondents that were asked to take part in the face to face interview; namely, 78% and

Measuring “Behavioral Intentions”

My main dependant variables are constituted by a series of responses to “behavioral intention” questions indicative of a series of common, day-to-day *untouchability*-related behaviors. To generate these measures, the audio survey simply asked respondents to project themselves and to indicate “whether they would *act* like [the villager just heard] if they were in the same situation today”, after the latter described a situation he was recently confronted to and what his behavioral response was. For these items, response choices were binary (Yes or No).

I measure three different dimensions of relations with members of the SCs. *Hostility* measures the propensity of respondents to engage in verbally aggressive behaviors towards SCs. *Cooperative Behavior* measures the propensity of respondents to cooperate with a fellow SC villager needing help. *Social distance* measures the propensity of villagers to enforce the physical segregation between SCs and non-SCs that derives from the “ritual pollution” concerns characteristic of “*untouchability*”. While these items cannot exhaustively cover all inter-caste situations in daily village life – especially as the number of items I could insert in the audio instrument had to remain small -, they encompass a diversity of common daily situations villagers may be confronted to. As mentioned in Appendix 3, all stem from conversations my research assistants and I had with a set of villagers during preparatory work for the survey. These items are the following:

To measure *hostility* towards SCs, the survey used interviewees’ responses to the two following statements:

“I saw [SC³²] villagers seating in the middle of other villagers on plastic chairs at village meetings. It made me really angry and I told them they should leave the chairs for others to sit”.
“Some [SCs] were protesting that they weren’t allowed to enter the temple; I threatened them that if they continued to protest villagers would organize and give them a lesson”.

To measure *Cooperative Behavior with members of the SCs*, the survey used interviewees’

75%. While field interviewers reported that respondents above 50 were more hesitant to participate to the MP3 survey and required additional explanations prior to survey administration, they were not more likely to refuse taking part altogether, hence the aforementioned participation rate statistics.

³¹ Although this was not used here, it is notable that MP3 players could be easily used in a priming experiment or in another type of survey-based experiment. The shuffle button could for instance be used to randomize the ordering of survey items, so as to make it credible that survey administrators do not know what are the questions being asked during the self-administration process.

³² The term SC remains bracketed for the following reason; while this is the term that was used so far in this paper, other terms may be more generally understood by respondents. the term *Harijan* may be even more generally understood, and hence preferable for our purpose; however, because the term *Harijan* also commonly denominates the *banghi* subcaste in Rajasthan, it is likely to be confusing (respondents would not know whether they are asked about the scheduled castes as a group or about a specific subcaste within the SCs). The best possible solution may be to replace “SC” by the name of the dominant jati (subcaste) within the scheduled castes in each pair of villages.

responses to the following statements:

“One day I was at the police station, and I saw that officers were refusing to file an FIR [a complaint] for a village SC that I knew for a fact had been badly cheated by some merchant from the city; I came forward to plead the man’s case and help him get his FIR recorded”

“Some village SC needed to borrow money in order to buy new machines for his farm; I happened to have some savings at that time so I lent him what I could”

To measure *social distance* towards SCs, the survey used interviewees’ responses to the following statement:

“A SC villager invited me in his house to thank me for my help. I went there and drank tea with him”

“Children from my family were playing in the street with SC children; when they came back home I told them that they should rather play with children from their own caste”.

In each case, respondents were asked whether they would act the same way than the villager they heard or whether they would behave differently. As explained above, they entered their responses by checking either a “thumbs up” or a “thumbs down” symbol on a paper answer sheet.

4. Results

Does the experience of political power by a member of the SCs prompt negative reactions and unleash a “backlash” in the form of more discriminatory or hostile behaviors, as suggested by several theories of intergroup conflict, or does it, on the contrary, alter forms of interaction between groups in a positive way?

To answer this question, I used the binary responses to the aforementioned behavioral intentions items to run several types of statistical analyses. I first looked at the bivariate relationship between reservation status (and through reservation, to *exposure to a sarpanch from the SCs*) and respondents’ behavioral intentions. Second, I used a nested statistical model to estimate the effect of reservation status on villagers’ behavioral intentions, using dummy variables for the blocks (here: either district or *panchayat samitis*, in different models³³) within which the natural experiment occurred (*Si1...Si4*), as well as village and individual characteristics (*Zi1.....ZiK*) obtained during the background questionnaire that directly followed the ASAQ interview. Village-level characteristics that I included in the models were the following: Total population of the village, SC share of the population (village-level), distance to a city, share of the village population that was literate, and share of the population that was classified as “marginal workers”. Individual-level characteristics that I included in the multivariate regressions were the following: *religious practice* (a five-point scale indicative of the frequency of the

³³ Models including both types of clustering were run. I also ran multilevel mixed effects logistic regression. There was little variation in significance level across these different models.

respondent's religious practice), *political party affiliation* (a binary variable coded one when the respondent described himself as a BJP supporter³⁴, 0 otherwise), *level of education* (measures in years), *level of education of father* (in years), *age* (in years), *socio-economic status* (measured as either “number of rooms in the house” or an index of household belongings), *caste group* (a binary variable coded 1 when the respondent's subcaste was from the OBCs, or Other Backward Castes, 0 when he was from upper Castes), *subcaste* (a series of dummy variables indicating whether the respondent was a Brahmin, a Rajput, a Jat, or from another subcaste) and *profession* (a series of dummy variables indicating whether the respondent was a farmer, a shopkeeper/trader, or exercising another profession).

Accordingly, this model was as follows:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta X_i + \gamma_1 S_{i1} + \gamma_2 S_{i2} + \gamma_3 S_{i3} + \gamma_4 S_{i4} + \sigma_{i1} Z_{i1} + \dots + \sigma_{iK} Z_{iK} + u_i,$$

where the dependent variable for individual i is Y_i ; the “treatment” (reservation or not) is X_i ; the error term is u_i . Importantly, including the covariates helped improve the precision with which the treatment's effect is estimated but did not crucially change the results. STATA's (Version 11) robust cluster option accounted for the fact that errors are dependent within each cluster (villages). This adjustment generated errors that were slightly larger than conventional standard errors, without however changing the significance status of any of the coefficient presented below.

Table 2 below presents results from both types of analyses, run on each of the 6 behavioral intentions items, in a summarized form. In the first column, I indicate the average number of respondents that marked that they would behave *similarly* to the villager heard in the ASAQ questionnaire in *reserved* villages; in the second column, I indicate the average number of respondents that entered that they would behave similarly to the villager heard in the ASAQ questionnaire in *unreserved* villages; in the third column, I indicate the probability that the difference in means between the two groups of villagers is equal to 0, as calculated by a simple t-test *not* taking village clustering into account.; the coefficient reported in the fourth column reports the least statistically significant odds ratio on the *treatment* variable obtained across a series of nested multivariate logistic regressions using different clustering options, as described above.

³⁴ The BJP is with the Congress (INC) one of the two parties that regularly pull more than 90% of the votes. The BJP's platform is often described as “pro-Hindu”, and its leadership is often seen as belonging to upper-castes.

Table 2: the effect of Exposure of a SC Sarpanch on a series of Behavioral Intentions towards members of the SCs.

	Percentage of “Yes” Responses in <i>Reserved</i> Villages (N=384)	Percentage of “Yes” Responses in <i>Unreserved</i> Villages (N=384)	Probability that difference != 0 (two- sample t test)	Odds Ratios from Nested Multivariate Logistic Regressions (with clustered standard errors)
“Village Meeting” Statement	19.34%	26.66%	.00	.540*** (.087)
“Temple Entry” Statement	40.45%	45.74%	.06	.651* (.127)
“Police Station” Statement	79.89%	78.42%	.61	1.02 (.182)
“Loan” Statement	87.19%	82.99%	.02	1.96** (.440)
“Tea at SC house” Statement	61.55%	52.79%	.02	1.59** (.210)
“Children Playing” Statement	24.12%	27.14%	.22	.823 (.153)

Going back to the intuitions reviewed above, these results suggest two conclusions:

1/ Based on these survey responses, there is no “backlash” in the long term. Importantly, none of the 6 items used here as dependent variables provide evidence of the fact that “reservation for a member of the SC” has made non-SC villagers more hostile, less cooperative or more distant towards SCs (in clear, the average response is never more negative in villages that have been reserved). This result is in itself important, in the sense that it goes against theories according to which increased political competition or periods of political transition between ethnic/caste groups would generate a surge in negative behaviors against the group threatening the “status quo”. In the Indian context, this also seems to provide evidence of the fact that reservation policies do not necessarily generate additional tensions between groups, as is frequently implied by opponents to these policies. This result however does not exclude the possibility that villagers would have reacted negatively to the experience of political power by a member of the SCs if they had been surveyed at another point in time. In fact, in another dissertation-related paper (Chauchard 2010b), I show that the *prospect* – as opposed to the *experience* - of a SC *sarpanch* triggers a numbers of “threats” about in-group status and activates

in the short-term a number of prejudiced attitudes towards members of the SCs³⁵.

2/ On the other hand, strikingly, in a series of multivariate models accounting for village clustering, I detect positive significant effects of exposure to a SC *sarpanch* on a number of these behavioral intentions measures. Specifically, respondents in “reserved” villages are much *less* likely to report that they would engage in verbal violence or verbal threats against members of the SCs that transgress traditional norms of interaction; responses to the “*village meeting*” item and to the “*temple entry*” item suggest that respondents are significantly less likely to ask that SC villagers do not seat among other villagers at village meetings, and that they are equally less likely to say that they would abuse a SC villager that would have transgressed traditional norms of interaction and entered the village temple. They are also *more* likely to report that they would accept a tea from a member of the SCs, and to a lesser extent that they would accept to lend money for the organization of a marriage to a SC fellow villager.

While the effect sizes remain small, these results nonetheless suggest that the way villagers behave with SCs has evolved towards less unbound discrimination and less open hostility in a number of common day-to-day village situations. The next section seeks to untangle why this may be the case.

5. Mechanisms

What happens in *reserved* villages that could explain these variations? To answer this question, I suggest a series of causal paths that can be credibly assumed to lead to changes in these behavioral intentions, and design tests allowing me to measure the effect that exposure to a SC *sarpanch* has on each of these presumably intermediary variables.

³⁵ In order to measure “short-term/uninformed reactions” *prior* to SC leadership, I engage in a “question context” experiment among a random pool of respondents in a series of villages that have *not* been exposed to SC leadership, but whose demographic characteristics (i.e. the proportion of SCs in the Gram Panchayat they are part of) give them a good chance of being exposed to it starting in January of 2010. In this experiment to be run in November of 2009, using the same methodology than for the large-N survey (but fewer questions), I measure respondents’ attitudes towards SCs as a function of exposure to a subtle and credible mention of the fact that the “village will probably be headed by an SC from next year on”. Are the antagonistic attitudes of non-SCs enhanced when they are primed on the fact that members of the scheduled castes stand to play a more important role in politics? If so, why? In the spirit of survey-experiments by Sniderman et al (1993, 1998), the “treatment” is operationalized as a survey context manipulation: in the “treatment” group, respondents are asked to provide their opinion about the fact that “the village may be headed by a member of the scheduled castes from next year on” immediately before they are asked to answer a number of attitudinal and behavioral questions about SCs.

Possible Causal Paths

The experience of a SC *sarpanch* in reserved villages has the potential to generate a number of psychological and behavioral changes among villagers. In this section, I draw from my ethnographic observations and from the series of long and open-ended interviews I conducted with villagers from all caste groups prior to the survey³⁶. Based on this material, I outline a number of variables that can credibly be assumed to connect exposure to a SC *sarpanch* to the aforementioned variations in behavioral intentions. While the mechanisms suggested here are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, they cover a variety of plausible causal paths.

The most obvious way in which discriminatory and hostile behaviors towards members of the SCs may be reduced is probably through what social psychologists refer to as *cognitive* changes. In clear, living under a SC *sarpanch* may bring new information to the knowledge of villagers or generate an update of their beliefs about members of the SCs in a way that is likely to modify their behaviors towards members of the SCs at large. Based on my observations, I argue that this could be the case in at least two ways.

A first possible cognitive mechanism is what I'll call the "*social status mechanism*". According to this hypothesis, villagers' behaviors would be improved because they have reevaluated the social standing of members of the SC group after one of its member accessed power. In clear, the experience of a SC *sarpanch* would prompt a change in respondents' personal beliefs about the social standing of the SC group relative to their own group or within the general hierarchy of groups, which would subsequently lead them to modify their behaviors towards individual members of that group. When my research assistant and I candidly questioned villagers about "who the powerful groups were in their village" and "in which order they ranked", this hypothesis appeared very clearly through two types of declarations. First were a number of hesitations that upper-caste villagers in the SC *reserved* villages we visited had about placing the main SC castes (and especially the one of the *sarpanch*): while placing SC castes seemed to be straightforward elsewhere, the existence of a SC *sarpanch* clearly made that exercise more complicated ("*It depends what we are talking about! In general or now?*", one villager even said). Second, and maybe more importantly, were a number of declarations made by SC villagers that often belonged to the entourage of the SC *sarpanchs* we observed. Many of these actors proudly suggested the existence of such a causal path to us, emphasizing the link between access

³⁶ This first part of the fieldwork took place months prior to the survey and in two districts of Rajasthan that were not subsequently sampled (Jaipur, Bikaner). A research assistant and I extensively visited 4 SC-led and 4 non-SC-led villages. Note that these intuitions are more extensively developed in a separate chapter of my dissertation.

to political power and gains in “status” (“*they see now we are not necessarily the lowest of the lowest and speak to us accordingly*”), and further along the causal path gains in “respect” and/or “friendliness”.

A second possible cognitive mechanism may be what I’ll call a “*counter-stereotypical individual mechanism*”. In this case, villagers’ behavioral intentions would have been improved because the experience of a SC had impacted their beliefs about a number of stereotypical characteristics of all members of the SCs, possibly through an update of their beliefs about the *ability* of members of the scheduled castes to play a role in politics. In other words, the example of a member of the SC at work as a village leader could have upgraded a number of prevalent negative stereotypes about the ability, the willingness or the talent of other members of the SCs to perform a variety of tasks, in politics and elsewhere. Beyond the aforementioned references in social psychology pointing in that direction, several field-based observations also seem to substantiate this hypothesis. Even though upper-caste villagers frequently started by dismissing their SC *sarpanch* on the basis that “he [is] not educated” or that he did not have the natural clout to impose his decisions, many of them concurrently and paradoxically admitted that he was progressively getting better at it. Past the defiant declarations that opened many conversations, it also appeared that many interviewees indeed held contrasted views over their *sarpanch*. When the discussion focused on a question of *taste*, their responses were rather unequivocal: “*we don’t like him*” or “*we don’t want a SC to be sarpanch, that’s not a good thing*”. However, in the instances when we managed to extend these conversations long enough to focus on questions of *ability* or *competence*, these stark negative attitudes faded much faster than what one would have expected from these initial conversations. Villagers were instead relatively quick to admit that the SC *sarpanch*’ credentials and actions (since elected) were fairly comparable to the ones of the previous *sarpanch*, an information they would never have guessed they could one day admit to prior to the start of this experience. Judging on their achievements over the past four years, many villagers were simply faced with the reality that these were not inferior to the ones of the previous *sarpanch*. The second part of this hypothesis – that changes in beliefs about the ability of this one individual could impact stereotypical beliefs about *other* SC individuals – was more difficult to observe, or to infer from conversations with upper-caste villagers. During our stay in SC-led villages, the young, educated and usually proud members of the *sarpanch*’s community however frequently served it to us. During impassioned discussions over the meaning of this first-time access to political power, these individuals often claimed that the way upper-caste villagers were looking at them was changing, that they did not assume anymore that “[*they*] cannot think or do anything just because they are SC”, or that they “*looked less surprised that [they are] going to*

school and want to do something good with [their life]”.

Interestingly, while cognitive changes may appear to be the most obvious links between exposure to SC leadership and an improvement of behaviors towards SCs, a number of other possible mechanisms do exist.

A third possible mechanism – that I’ll call the “*social norms mechanism*” - derives from the rich theoretical tradition on prejudice, conformity, and social consensus suggesting that both prescriptive and descriptive social norms powerfully predict behavior (Allport, 1954; Asch, 1958; Cialdini et al., 1991; Crandall & Stangor, 2005; Sherif, 1936). According to works in this literature, individuals may value knowledge of a social norm more than their own personal beliefs (Kuran, 1995; Miller et al., 2000; Stangor, Sechrist, & Jost, 2001; Van Boven, 2000) in engaging in social behaviors. Following this intuition, then, a possible mechanism behind the link between exposure to SC leadership and an improvement of behaviors towards SCs would lie in villagers’ changing perceptions that the social norms of their community in addressing, interacting and treating SCs are changing, and that their personal behaviors need to follow. According to this argument, SC leadership would accelerate these perceptions. Based on my observations, I argue that this could be the case because the consequences of reservation for a member of the SCs *de facto* shift social norms in interacting with at least one member of the SC. As I could observe in all four SC-led villages these preliminary interviews took place in, the SC *sarpanch* enters a number of houses within the village, receives the visit of villagers looking for the *sarpanch*’s help, and by his function builds relationships with a number of non-SC villagers. These important and visible changes may develop the perception that norms in interacting with SCs are changing, which may eliminate a number of discriminatory behaviors stemming from a will to conform to village-level social norms of discrimination.

The fourth mechanism explaining why behaviors towards members of the SCs may be less hostile and less discriminatory when the *sarpanch* is a member of the SCs derives less from causal processes of prejudice reduction than from the fear of punishment (I call this last mechanism the *punishment mechanism*). Simply put, when the *sarpanch* is a SC, villagers may perceive that hostile and discriminatory behaviors towards members of the SC community are more likely to put them in trouble. Given the political connections and the linkage SC Sarpanchs build through their function, villagers may indeed perceive that the SC communities are better defended against attacks, that degrading insults are more likely to be considered as *atrocities* under the Indian law (which strongly punishes such offense), and that local policemen and local officials are more likely to pay serious attention to an incident against a member of one of the village’s SC caste. This hypothesis appeared very clearly at two distinct moments of our

preliminary interactions with non-SC villagers. During those early discussions during which we simply sought to “take the temperature” of caste relations in the villages visited, it quickly transpired that the ideal relations all were mechanically describing at least partly resulted from a panic fear of seeing a complaint being filed against a member of their community on the basis of these “atrocities laws”. Later on, we realized that the presence in office of a SC individual, with an ability to make calls and be received at higher levels of the administrative pyramid that governs rural India, multiplied these fears; in three of the SC-led villages we visited at that stage, the connection was directly established by the villagers we chatted with *prior* to our suggestion of its existence. Regardless of the actual ability of SC *sarpanchs* to intervene in case of trouble – which one can doubt of – the perception that it made a difference was present. This hypothesis resurfaced later on during on in our pre-survey investigations, as we engaged in cognitive pre-testing of our behavioral intentions items. When confronted to a number of contradictions in their argument and prompted to explain why they chose the least hostile behavior, most respondents logically justified their choice by a fear of punishment. Interestingly however, when we subsequently asked them to detail the channels through which this “punishment” might have occurred, only villagers in SC-led villages brought about the potential role of the *sarpanch*.

The fifth mechanism – “the *contact mechanism*” - relates to one of the most famous theories of prejudice, the “intergroup contact theory”. As hypothesized by hundreds of laboratory studies since Allport’s original intuition (Allport 1954; see Pettigrew 1998 & Paluck and Green 2010 for various reviews of this literature), increased interactions between members of two groups could under certain conditions be the main mechanism leading to either reduced stereotypes or more positive emotions towards outgroups, especially through the development of *affective ties* (Miller et al 2004; Tropp and Pettigrew 2004). Even though the stringent conditions originally enounced in Allport (1954) are unlikely to be respected in the context of Indian villages, one cannot exclude that this mechanism be at work in the context of this study. As we were able to observe, reservation for a SC undeniably increased the level of contact between SCs and non-SCs. Visits of non-SCs in the SC hamlet appeared more frequent, as were opportunities for multi-castes events (such as village meetings, that now gathered members of all communities). As mentioned above, at least one member of the scheduled castes (but often many others, revolving around the *sarpanch*) appeared to generate a number of new social ties, with potentially positive consequences on relations between groups.

Mechanisms: Data and Results

In order to test for each of these mechanisms, I used survey items from both the audio survey and the background survey that directly followed it. These items are detailed in Appendix 5. I used this data to run several types of statistical analyses. As above, I first looked at the bivariate relationship between reservation status (and through reservation, to *exposure to a Sarpanch from the SCs*) and each of these attitudes. Because of the ordinal (and non-generally distributed) nature of my data, I used a non-parametric test (a Wilcoxon-Mann Whitney test). Second, as in the above analyses, I used a nested statistical model to estimate, using dummy variables for the blocks (here: either district or *panchayat samitis*, in different models³⁷) within which the natural experiment occurred (*Si1...Si4*), as well as controlling for the various village and individual characteristics (*Zi1.....ZiK*) described above. This model was as follows:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta X_i + \gamma_1 S_{i1} + \gamma_2 S_{i2} + \gamma_3 S_{i3} + \gamma_4 S_{i4} + \sigma_{i1} Z_{i1} + \dots + \sigma_{iK} Z_{iK} + u_i,$$

where the dependent variable for individual *i* is *Yi*; the “treatment” (reservation or not) is *Xi*; the error term is *ui*. As in the above analyses, the covariates helped improve the precision with which the treatment’s effect is estimated but did not crucially change the results. Robust cluster option accounted for the fact that errors are dependent within each cluster (a village). In contrast to the above analyses, ordered probit models were however run, due to the ordinal nature (4 points-scales) of the data collected on each of these attitudes.

Table 3 below presents results from these analyses in a summarized form. In the first column, I indicate the mean response to each item in *reserved* villages; in the second column, I indicate the mean response to each item in *unreserved* villages (*Except for the contact mechanism*, whose items were based on different response choices, the response *Strongly disagree* was coded 1 while *Strongly agree* was coded 4); in the third column, I indicate the probability that the difference in means between the two groups of villagers is not different from 0, as calculated by a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test taking village clustering into account³⁸; the coefficient reported in the fourth column reports the least statistically significant odds ratio³⁹ on the *treatment* variable obtained across a series of nested multivariate logistic regressions using

³⁷ Models including both types of clustering were run. There was little variation in significance level across these different models.

³⁸ These were calculated using the “somersd” function in Stata v.11, which allows for village clustering to be taken into account when running a *ranksum* test.

³⁹ The size of the effect varied very little across models.

different clustering options, as described above. As evidenced by the results presented in table 3, I find support for 3 of the 5 described mechanisms.

Table 3: the effect of Exposure of a SC Sarpanch on beliefs and attitudes towards members of the SCs. (1=Strongly Disagree,, 4=Strongly Agree, except for the “Contact mechanism” items)

	Average Response in Reserved Villages (N=384)	Average Response in Un-reserved Villages (N=384)	Prob. that difference is not significantly diff. from 0 (Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test)	“Treatment” Variable Coefficient from Nested Multivariate Ordered Probits	Clustered (village) Standard Errors
Social Status Mechanism “SCs are not like other social groups in the village, they are completely different and should not get the same respect”	2.14	2.43	.00***	-.244**	.071
“SCs stand much lower than others in the hierarchy of groups”.	2.15	2.42	.00**	-.266**	.076
Counterstereotypical Individual Mechanism “SCs are usually unable to do a good job as sarpanch. They do not have the skills for that”.	2.26	2.37	.15	-.126	.068
“SCs are able to serve as politicians such as MLAs or MPs”	2.62	2.61	.99	.021	.085
“SCs do not have ideas on how the village should be run”.	2.34	2.32	.72	.009	.071
“SCs cannot think for themselves; they usually prefer being dominated by members of higher castes”.	2.24	2.41	.12	-.132	.090
“SCs usually have low confidence”	2.54	2.49	.70	.071	.084
“Members of the scheduled castes are just as intelligent as other villagers”	2.29	2.23	.50	.070	.098
“Members of the scheduled are just as hard-working as other villagers”	2.92	3.02	.28	-.129	.090
Social Norms Mechanism “In this village, if a member of the upper castes says positive things about SCs, then other men from the upper castes would speak about him badly”	2.29	2.61	.00***	-.317**	.094
“In this village, if a member of the upper castes invites SCs to his marriage, then other members of the upper caste would be mad at him”.	2.32	2.50	.05*	-.286**	.119
Punishment Mechanism “If a member of the upper castes gets into a dispute with a SC villager, then he will be into a lot of trouble with the police”	3.33	2.85	.00***	.498***	.071
“If a member of the upper castes opposes SC castes during the village meeting, then he will be in trouble”.	3.34	2.90	.00***	.443***	.091

Contact Mechanism (from Background Survey)					
1. In general, how often would you say you enter the SC colony of the village? (scale from 1 to 5, 5 being least often)	2.35	2.59	.08*	-.191*	.094
2. In general, how often would you say you go inside a house in that colony? (scale 1 to 5, 5 being least often)	2.88	3.12	.10	-.202**	.094
3. How often do you stop by in the street to have a discussion with a SC villager? (scale from 1 to 5, 5 being least often)	2.79	2.99	.15	-.147	.087
4. In general, would you say you have overall more, much more, same amount, less, much less interactions with SC villagers compared to five years ago? (scale from 1 to 5, 5 being least often)	2.40	2.48	.40	-.071	.076
5. In general would you say you have more, much more, same amount, less, much less SC acquaintances than 5 years ago? (scale from 1 to 5, 5 being least often)	2.46	2.54	.45	-.046	.077
6. Over the last two years, did you invite a SC villager into your home? (0=Y/1=N), probit instead of ordered probit)	.25	.33	.08	-.208*	.107

*** = significant at the .01 level, ** = significant at the .05 level, * = significant at the .1 level.

Reminder: all multivariate models included controls. At the village level: *Total population of the village, SC share of the population (village-level), distance to a city, share of the village population that was literate, and share of the population that was classified as "marginal workers"*. At the individual level: *religious practice, political party affiliation, level of education, level of education of father, age, socio-economic status, caste group, subcaste and profession*. See above (p 24) for further description of these variables.

Namely, my results suggest that the experience of a SC *sarpanch* during five years significantly improved respondents' perceptions of the social status of members of the SCs (*social status mechanism*), somewhat shifted social norms in interacting with members of the SCs (*social norms mechanism*), and increased the perception that boundless discrimination and hostility towards members of the SCs could be punished (*punishment mechanism*).

On the other hand, and contrary to much speculation in the recent social-psychological literature on exposure to "counterstereotypical individuals", I find no evidence that the experience of a SC *sarpanch* has changed personal beliefs villagers hold about what members of the SCs are. Villagers' views remain as stereotypical – and often as negatively so - in reserved villages. In other words, the SC *sarpanch* does not serve as a "role model" with a potential to decisively alter negative stereotypical views. Interestingly, exposure to a SC *sarpanch* does not even appear to change stereotypical views about the role SCs should or can play *in politics*. This interestingly contrasts with what Bhavnani (2009) and Beaman et al (2009) suggest about the positive role political quotas (in their case, gender-based reservation) can play in decreasing "statistical

discrimination” in politics. In my sample, villagers that have been exposed to SC leadership are *not* more likely to declare that SC candidates are able to play a positive role in politics.

While many of the insights I developed in the field prior to the survey suggested that reservation almost mechanically generated increased and more positive interactions between members of the SCs and other villagers, the inconsistent results obtained on the six “contact mechanisms” items may suggest another conclusion. This effect appears to be positive (towards *more* contact⁴⁰) as predicted but the effect size remains small, and only significant in 3 out of the 6 items. Two points nonetheless seem to nuance this conclusion and to suggest that contact between communities indeed increased. First, two of the questions that did not yield a significant coefficient can be seen as slightly too complex for respondents, and hence likely to have generated erroneous or uninformed responses. This is the case of the questions 4 and 5 in this section, whose comparative and chronological nature reportedly puzzled many respondents. Most importantly, the responses that SC respondents gave in the mirror survey that completes this project (Chauchard 2010c) to a number of comparable questions about their patterns of contact with non-SC villagers unequivocally suggest that contact – and the quality of contact – increased⁴¹.

Together, these results suggest that patterns of interpersonal relations may improve less because of an evolution of personal beliefs and attitudes towards members of the SCs than because of an array of other and less obvious factors. Even though exposure to a SC *sarpanch* cannot alter long-held stereotypes or prejudiced attitudes, it may have a positive but subtle effect on the way villagers from non-SC castes consider, address and interact with SC villagers. Because reservation *de facto* changes patterns of interaction and contact with at least one eminent member of the SCs (the *sarpanch*), it may more generally contribute to the creation of new social norms of interaction between villagers. In that sense, the fact that villagers are forced to interact with a member of the SCs in ways they have rarely experienced before – by paying visits to his house or engaging with him publicly into necessary conversations about the village – may be the first of a series of an entirely new range of “socially acceptable” behaviors. Entering the SC hamlet may not be as badly seen once the *sarpanch* lives in it, and when villagers now routinely visit his house. The “reputation costs” of sharing a cigarette or drinking a cup of tea with a member of the SCs may not be as high once many villagers have already engaged in this

⁴⁰ The regression coefficients in table 3 are negative, given that these items were coded reversely (with increased contact down the scale).

⁴¹ Effect sizes are even slightly larger than the ones reported here, except for those items that implied a chronological comparison (questions starting with “Compared to five years ago...”), for which the magnitude is much smaller.

type of activity with the *sarpanch* or his entourage. Interestingly, this idea that the perception of changing social norms plays an important role in my results seems compatible and coherent with both my finding that villagers in reserved villages have on average more contact with SC villagers, and the finding that they view them as a slightly more reputable group (*social status mechanism*). While it is difficult to disentangle between changes on all these dimensions and suggest which one precedes the other, or which was the causal path linking change on these different variables, the fact that they do not diverge is remarkable enough. Equally remarkable is the fact that they do not rely on one or several specific groups of villagers and rather derive from general change among the population: when running various models including interaction effects between demographic characteristics (age groups, caste groups, education) and assignment to reservation (not reported here, but available from the author), no coefficients on these interactions were significant. In other words, the changes detected by these results were equally shared among villagers, based on what we could presume to be chief predictors of these attitudes.

These results also suggest that reservation diffuses the perception that villagers cannot discriminate, insult, or abuse members of the SCs as overtly as they usually did⁴². Whether these perceptions are grounded in real facts – that is, in an increased ability of SC *sarpanchs* to actually defend members of their community and reach out to higher authorities in case of conflict – is also difficult to ascertain from this survey data alone. However, regardless of the answer to this question, these results outline a potentially important externality of policies of political inclusion such as reservation: they appear to send a signal that stigmatized populations such as the SCs are to receive protection and support from the state, and in some cases, that there will be favoritism towards members of these populations. From a psychological standpoint, even if these actual powers do not exist as such, it is likely that the occurrence of reservation in a village will contribute to make these perceptions livelier, as these results suggest.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

While institutions such as reservation are often thought to contribute to the consolidation of entrenched ethnic divisions (Horowitz 1985), this research has shown that they can subtly play a positive role in improving interpersonal interactions between members of different groups. In that sense, the short answer to the question that initially prompted this research is yes: when access to political power is redistributed towards members of groups that used to be strictly excluded from it, day-to-day social interactions based on traditional structures of domination also change.

⁴² A change that is, here again, shared by respondents with different demographics.

Using an innovative survey technique based on a regression discontinuity design, this paper has shown that villagers that have been exposed for a single electoral period (4 and ½ years) to a village council leader from the Scheduled Castes are more likely to say that they would *not* engage in potentially hostile or discriminatory behaviors. Exploring the rationale for these effects, I have suggested that they most likely stem from a combination of increased contact, changing perceptions of social norms in interacting with Dalits, and changing perceived costs of engaging in some types of prejudiced behaviors. In other words, while long-held stereotypes and ethnic favoritism remain prevalent, exposure to the SC Sarpanch may have managed to spread the perception among villagers that society is changing, and that villagers need to adapt.

While the geographical scope of the survey was relatively restricted, there are no obvious reasons to believe that these results stem from one or several idiosyncratic characteristics of rural Rajasthan. Villages in which the study was run were extremely diverse, and the sample included villages that resembled many other villages in other states of India in the way reservation was implemented, in their hierarchical caste-based social structure and in their level of development. Accordingly, while similar findings from other districts or states could give us more confidence in these effects, a more promising area of investigation may lie instead in the timing of these effects: would they last once reservation is over? Once political competition goes back to normal, will gains in the quality of interpersonal relations remain? This research unfortunately cannot answer these crucial questions. Another important limitation lies in the fact that it cannot differentiate between the effect of “good and efficient” SC *sarpanchs* and the effect of “bad and corrupt” ones. Because objective estimators of *sarpanchs*’ performances were not collected – and appears intrinsically difficult to collect – this is an outstanding issue for future research⁴³.

In spite of these limitations, and in spite of the moderation researchers should maintain when drawing conclusions from *any* kind of attitudinal survey, there is however in my opinion no serious alternative explanation accounting for these results. One possible explanation for these results could be that villagers’ behaviors and perceptions in reserved GPs did not change, but that they instead felt more pressured than villagers in non-reserved GPs to profess “positive” attitudes. This could have been the case if they had been more likely to think that they would be blamed for their opinions, either by fellow villagers or by their interviewer. This hypothesis appears unlikely for a number of reasons. As explained above, survey teams went at length to distance themselves from intimidating institutional figures, and to ensure that both the confidentiality and the privacy

⁴³As some in social psychology have intuitively pointed out (DasGupta and Asgari 2004), only positive and “counterstereotypical” figures from stigmatized groups have the power to change stereotypes, hence we might even observe change in villagers’ beliefs about SCs in that subset of the data.

of respondents was ensured at all time. It is thus very unlikely that any respondent would have felt *strongly* pressured by their interviewer or by a third party, or that this pressure would have been starkly and consistently different in reserved and non-reserved villages. In addition, if this hypothesis was correct, it is likely that respondents in reserved villages would have *also* provided more positive responses to the items concerning their “personal beliefs about members of the SCs”; however, they clearly did not.

A second and more intricate alternative explanation nonetheless subsists. I have until now assumed that the attitudes of villagers from non-reserved GPs corresponded to a “baseline” level in these attitudes. This however remains an assumption, and in the absence of an actual known “baseline” level of prejudice prior to polling villagers, these results may be turned around and interpreted to mean that the attitudes of villagers that did *not* experience a SC *sarpanch* worsened, and not that the attitudes of villagers that did experience it improved. This could especially be the case if villagers that anticipated that their village would be “reserved” for a SC became defiant towards SCs in the running towards this transition. This however seems equally unlikely; even if the rotation principle that accompanies the reservation process means that all 32 surveyed villages that were not reserved at the time of the survey would become reserved a few months after its completion (for the winter 2010 elections), villagers simply did not know that. Villagers had little idea of the complicated set of rules that governs the reservation process. No villager had access to the kind of spreadsheet compiling the SC populations of the diverse villages and GPs that I built when designing this regression discontinuity design. Hence no villager could have confidently assumed that his village was about to be reserved.

As a result, two conclusions emerge. While the survey included many different items usually taken into account in creating fairly diverse measures of prejudice, it is remarkable that responses to none of these items suggested that such hypothesis was correct. This tends to disprove the idea that conflict would be a mechanical consequence of such power transition between groups. Reservation policies allowing for SC Sarpanchs do not necessarily worsen general attitudes towards members of the Scheduled Castes. More importantly, these survey responses suggest that the experience of a political official from a disadvantaged group has additional consequences than the ones already extensively outlined by the literature on minority representation in the US and India. A modest exposure to relatively powerless, inexperienced, and in some cases easily influenced village leaders from the SCs sizably changes a number of perceptions. Although the type of data collected by this project may not provide us with definitive evidence, these results strongly suggest that behavioral changes in a number of common interpersonal settings may occur in the wake of this experience. Whether these slow and uncertain

gains are sufficient to erase all of the other potentially negative effects of a much-decried system of caste-based reservation will remain debated. Regardless of this debate, this insight appears particularly valuable in sight of the fact that social scientists still know of incredibly few ways to reduce prejudice and discrimination (Paluck and Green 2009).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aboud, F.E., and Amato, M. (2001). "Developmental and socialization influences on intergroup bias". In R. Brown and S. Gaertner (Vol. eds.), *Blackwell handbook in social psychology: Vol 4. Intergroup Processes* (pp 65-85). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley
- Banaji, M. R. (2001). Ordinary prejudice. *Psychological Science Agenda: American Psychological Association*, 14(Jan–Feb), 8-11
- Batson, C. D., Polycarpou, M. P., Harmon-Jones, E., & Imhoff, H. J. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve feelings toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72, 105–118.
- Beaman, Lori Raghavendra Chattopadhyay, Esther Duflo, Rohini Pande and Petia Topalova. "Powerful Women: Female Leadership and Gender Bias", with July 2008, NBER Working Paper W14198
- Beck, E. M. and Stewart E. Tolnay. 1987. "When Race Didn't Matter: Black and White Mob Violence against Their Own Color." Pp. 132-154 in *Under Sentence of Death: Essays on Lynching in the South*, edited by Fitzhugh Brundage. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Beck, E. M. and Stewart E. Tolnay. 1990. "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: The Market for Cotton and the Lynching of Blacks, 1882-1930." *American Sociological Review* 55:526-539.
- Beck, E. M., James L. Massey and Stewart E. Tolnay. 1989. "The Gallows, the Mob, the Vote: Lethal Sanctioning of Blacks in North Carolina and Georgia, 1882 to 1930. *Law and Society Review* 23:317-31.
- Besley, Tim, Rohini Pande and Vijayendra Rao (2004). "The Politics of Public Good Provision: Evidence from Indian Local Governments," *Journal of the European Economics Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 2 (2-3): 416-426.
- Besley, Tim, Rohini Pande and Vijayendra Rao (2005). "Participatory Democracy in Action: Survey Evidence from India," *Journal of the European Economics Association Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 3 (2-3): 648-657.
- Bhavnani, R. (2009). *Can Governments Remedy Political Inequality? Evidence from Randomized Quotas in India*. mimeo, Stanford.
- Blumer, H. (1958). "Race Prejudice as a sense of Group Position", *Pacific Sociological Review*. 1:3-7
- Bobo, Lawrence. (1983). "Whites' Opposition to Busing: Symbolic Racism or Realistic Group Conflict?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 45: 1196-1210.
- Bobo, Lawrence. (1988). "Group Conflict, Prejudice, and the Paradox of Contemporary Racial Attitudes." In *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy*, ed. Phyllis Katz and Dalmis Taylor. New York: Plenum Press.
- Bobo, Lawrence, and Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. (1990). "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *American Political Science Review* 84 (2): 377–93.
- Bobo L, Kluegel JR, Smith R. (1997). "Laissez-faire racism: the crystalization of a kinder, gentler, antiblack ideology", In *Racial Attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and Change*, ed. SA Tuch, JK Martin, pp. 15–42. Westport, CT: Praeger

- Brass, Paul (1985). *Caste, Faction and Party in Indian Politics*. Vol. I, *Faction and Party*. New Delhi: Chanakya Publications.
- Brass, Paul R.(1997). *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Study of Collective Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brass, Paul R. (2003). *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
- Brown, R., & Hewstone, M. (2005). An integrative theory of intergroup contact. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 37, 255–343.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik and Luc Girardin (2007). “Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies” *American Political Science Review*, Volume 101, Issue 01.
- Chaiken, S., & Yates, S. (1985). Affective-cognitive consistency and thought-induced attitude polarization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 1470–1481.
- Chandra, Kanchan (2004). *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chauchard, Simon (2010). “Asking Questions in an Indian Village: the Impact of an Original Audio Self-Administered Methodology on Misreporting”, working paper, NYU dept of Politics.
- Chauchard, Simon (2010b). “Do Political Reservations Generate Inter-Caste Tensions? Evidence from Survey-Experiments in Rural India”, working paper, NYU dept of Politics.
- Chauchard, Simon (2010c). “The Psychic Benefits from Political Power by a Co-ethnic: What are They? Do they Exist? Can They Affect Behaviors? Evidence from Rural India”, working paper, NYU dept of Politics.
- Coser, L. (1956). *The functions of social conflict*. New York: Free Press.
- Deliege, Robert (1999). *The Untouchables of India*, UK: Berg Publishers.
- Dasgupta, N. and S. Asgari (2004). Seeing is believing: Exposure to counterstereotypic women leaders and its effect on the malleability of automatic gender stereotyping. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 40, 642–658.
- Dasgupta, N., & Rivera, L. M. (2008). When social context matters: The influence of long-term contact and short-term exposure to admired outgroup members on implicit attitudes and behavioral intentions. *Social Cognition*, 26, 54-66.
- Devine, Patricia G. (1989). “Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56 (1): 5–18.
- Dovi S. (2002). Preferable descriptive representatives: or will just any woman, black, or Latino do? *APSR*. 96:745–54
- Duflo, Esther and Raghavendra Chattopadhyay (2003). “The Impact of Reservation in the Panchayati Raj: Evidence from a Nationwide Randomized Experiment,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 39.
- Duflo, E. (2005). Why Political Reservations. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3 (2-3), 668–678.
- Duflo, E. and P. Topalova (2004). *Unappreciated Service: Performance, Perceptions, and Women Leaders in india*. Mimeo .

- Dreze, J. and Sen, Amartya (1995). *India, Development and Participation*. OUP.
- Dunning, Thad (2008). "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Field Experiments". *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 282-293.
- Dunning, Thad (2009). "The Salience of Ethnic Categories: Field and Natural Experimental Evidence from Indian Village Council", working paper, Department of Political Science, Yale U.
- Eisinger, Peter K. (1982). "Black Employment in Municipal Jobs: The Impact of Black Political Power." *American Political Science Review* 76(June):380-92.
- Emig, Arthur G., Michael B. Hesse, and Samuel H. Fisher III. (1996). "Black-White Differences in Political Efficacy, Trust and Sociopolitical Participation: A Critique of the Empowerment Hypothesis." *Urban Affairs Review* 32.
- Fearon James, David Laitin and Kimuli Kasara (2007). "Ethnic Minority Rule and Civil War Onset". *American Political Science Review* 101, 1.
- Feldman, J. M., & Lynch, J. G. (1988). Self-generated validity and other effects of measurement on belief, attitude, intention, and behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73, 421-435. *Social Psychology*, 81, 842-855.
- Fenno, Richard (2003). *Going Home: Black Representatives and their Constituents*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fiske, Susan T. (1998). "Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination." In *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. Susan T. Fiske, Daniel Gilbert, and Gardner Lindzey. Boston: McGraw-Hill. Pp. 357- 411.
- Forgas, J. P. (1992). Affect in social judgments and decisions: A multi-process model. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 227-275). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Fossett, Mark A., and K. Jill Kiecolt. (1989). "The Relative Size of Minority Populations and White Racial Attitudes." *Social Science Quarterly* 70:820-835.
- Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (1986). The aversive form of racism. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 61-89). New York, NY: Academic Press. Martin, L. L. (1986).
- Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2000). *Reducing intergroup bias: The common ingroup identity model*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press.
- Gay, Claudine (2001). "The Effect of Black Congressional Representation on Political Participation." *American Political Science Review*. 95 (3).
- Gay, Claudine (2002). "Spirals of Trust: The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and their Government," *American Journal of Political Science*. 46.
- Gay, Claudine. 2004. "Putting Race in Context: Identifying the Environmental Determinants of Black Racial Attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 98 (November): 547-62.
- Gibson, James L., and Amanda Gouws. 2003. *Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Gilens, Martin, Paul M. Sniderman, and James H. Kuklinski. (1998). "Affirmative Action and the Politics of Realignment." *British Journal of Political Science* 28: 159-183.
- Giles, Micheal, and Arthur Evans. (1986). "The Power Approach to Intergroup Hostility." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 30:469-485.
- Giles, Micheal, and Kaenan Hertz. (1994). "Racial Threat and Partisan Identification." *American Political Science Review* 88:317-326.
- Glaser, James. (1994). "Back to the Black Belt: Racial Environment and White Racial Attitudes in the South." *Journal of Politics* 56:21-41.
- Green, Donald and Rachel Seher (2003). "What role does prejudice play in Ethnic conflict?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2003.
- Green, Donald, Dara Z. Strolovitch, and Janelle S. Wong (1998). "Defended neighborhoods, integration and racially motivated crime." *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 104 Number 2: 372-403.
- Green, Donald P., Jack Glaser, and Andrew Rich (1998) "From Lynching to Gay Bashing: The Elusive Connection Between Economic Conditions and Hate Crime." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 75:1 (1998) 82-92.
- Groves et al (2004). *Survey Methodology*. NY: John Wiley and sons.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. (1970). *Why men rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hajnal, Zoltan (2001). "White Residents, Black Incumbents, and a Declining Racial Divide," *American Political Science Review*. 95(3):603-617.
- Hajnal, Zoltan (2005). *Changing White Attitudes Toward Black Political Leadership*. Harvard: Cambridge University Press.
- Habyarimana James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner and Jeremy M. Weinstein, (2007). "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review* 101, 4.
- Hoff, Karla and Prienka Pandey (2004). "Beliefs Systems and Durable Inequalities. An experimental Investigation of Indian Caste." *World Bank Research Working Paper* 3351.
- Horowitz, Donald L. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Horowitz, Donald L. (2001). *The Deadly Ethnic Riots*. Berkeley University Press, California.
- Hovland, C. I., & Sears, R. R. (1940). "Minor studies of aggression: Correlations of economic indices with lynchings." *Journal of Psychology*, 9, 301-310.
- Howell, Susan E., and Deborah Fagan. (1988). "Race and Trust in Government: Testing the Political Reality Model." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52(3):343-50.
- Hughes, D., Smith, E.P., Steven, H.C., Rodriquez, J., Johnson, D.J., & Spicer, P. (2006). "Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study." *Developmental Psychology*
- Hughes, Diane; Deborah Johnson Correlates in Children's Experiences of Parents' Racial Socialization Behaviors *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 63, No. 4. (Nov., 2001), pp. 981-995.

Jacobs, David and Katherine Woods (1999). "Interracial Conflict and Interracial Homicide: Do Political and Economic Rivalries Explain White Killings of Blacks or Black Killings of Whites?", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 105, No. 1

Jaffrelot, Christophe (2003). *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low Castes in North Indian Politics*. Delhi: Permanent Black.

Kinder D, Sanders L.(1996). *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press

Kinder D, Sears D. (1981). "Prejudice and politics: symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life". *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 40:414–31.

Kluegel, James R. and Lawrence Bobo. (2001). "Perceived Group Discrimination and Policy Attitudes: The Sources and Consequences of the Race and Gender Gaps." in *Urban Inequality: Evidence from Four Cities*, edited by. A. O'Connor, C. Tilly, and L. D. Bobo. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kohli, Atul, ed (2001). *The Success of India's Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kishna, Anirudh (2003). "What Is Happening to Caste? A View from Some North Indian Villages." *Journal of Asian Studies* 62 (4): 1171–93.

Kishna, Anirudh (2004). *Active Social Capital: Tracing the Roots of Development and Democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Krysan, Maria. (1998). "Privacy and the Expression of White Racial Attitudes: A Comparison Across Three Contexts." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62: 506-544.

Kuklinski, James H., Michael D. Cobb and Martin Gilens. (1997). "Racial Attitudes and the 'New South'" *Journal of Politics* 59: 323-349.

Kuklinski, James H., Paul M. Sniderman, Kathleen Knight, Thomas Piazza, Philip E. Tetlock, Gordon R. Lawrence, and Barbara Mellers. (1997). "Racial Prejudice and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 41.

Kumar, Narender and Manoj Rai (2005). *Dalit Leadership in Panchayats. A Comparative Study of Four States*. New Dehli: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies.

LeVine, R. A., & Campbell, D. T. (1972). *Ethnocentrism: Theories of conflict, ethnic attitudes, and group behavior*. New York: John Wiley.

Mansbridge, Jane (1999) ; Should women represent women and Blacks represent Blacks? A contingent Yes.

Marschall, Melissa and Paru Shah. 2007. "The Attitudinal Effects of Minority Incorporation: Examining the Racial Dimensions of Trust in Urban America." *Urban Affairs Review* 42 (May): 629-658.

Marschall, Melissa and Anirudh Ruhil. 2007. "Substantive Symbols: The Attitudinal Dimension of Black Political Incorporation in Local Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1)

Mendelberg, Tali (2005). *The Race Card*. Princeton University Press

Mendelsohn, Oliver and Marika Vicziany (1998). *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, D. A., Smith, E. R., & Mackie, D. M. (2004). Effects of intergroup contact and political

- predispositions on prejudice: The role of intergroup emotions. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 7, 221–237. (1)
- Narula, Smita (1999). *Broken People: Caste Violence Against Untouchables*. Human Rights Watch, New York.
- Nosek, B.A., Greenwald, A.G., & Banaji, M.R. (2005). “Understanding and using the Implicit Association Test: II. Method Variables and Construct Validity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31.
- Oliver, Eric and Tali Mendelberg (2000). “Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of White Racial Attitudes,” *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 44, No. 3.
- Olzak, Susan (1990). “The Political Context of Competition: Lynching and Urban Racial Violence, 1882-1914”, *Social Forces*, Vol. 69, No. 2.
- Olzak, Susan. 1992. *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Pai, Sudha (2000). “New Social and Political Movements of Dalits: A Study of Meerut District.” *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 34 (2): 189–220.
- Pai, Sudha (2002). *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Pande, Rohini (2003). “Can Mandated Political Representation Provide Disadvantaged Minorities Policy Influence? Theory and Evidence from India,” *American Economic Review*, 93.
- Petersen, Roger, (2002). *Understanding Ethnic Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pettigrew, T.F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65–85.
- Pettigrew, T. F., Christ, O., Wagner, U., & Stellmacher, J. (2007). Direct and indirect intergroup contact effects on prejudice: A normative interpretation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31, 411–425.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 751–783.
- Petty, R. E., Schumann, D. W., Richman, S. A., & Strathman, A. J. (1993). Positive mood and persuasion: Different roles for affect under high- and low-elaboration conditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64, 5–20.
- Phillips A. 1995. *The Politics of Presence*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press
- Phillips A. 1998. Democracy and representation: or, why should it matter who our representatives are? In *Feminism and Politics*, ed. A Phillips, pp. 224–40. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ.
- Posner Daniel N. (2004). “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi,” *American Political Science Review* 98, 4 (November).
- Rao, Vijayendra and Michael Walton. (2004). “Culture and Public Action: An Introduction.” In *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford University Press, V. Rao and M. Walton.
- Rudman, L. and K. Fairchild (2004). Reactions to Counterstereotypic Behavior: The Role of Backlash in Cultural Stereotype Maintenance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87 (2), 157–176.

- Rudman, L. and S. Kilianski (2000). Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Toward Female Authority. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26 (11), 1315–1328.
- Sass, Tim R., and Stephen L. Mehay. (2003.) “Minority Representation, Election Method, and Policy Influence.” *Economics and Politics* 15(3):323–39.
- Sears David O. (1988). “Symbolic racism”, In *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy*, ed. PA Katz, DZ Taylor, pp. 53–84. New York: Plenum
- Sears, David O., James Sidanius, and Lawrence Bobo (eds.) (2000). *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sears, D. O., & Henry, P. J. (2005). Over thirty years later: A contemporary Look at symbolic racism and its critics. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 37, 95–150.
- Shah, Ghanshyam, Harsh Mander, S.K.Thorat, Satish Deshpande, and Amita Baviskar (2006). *Untouchability in Rural India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Sidanius J, Devereux E, Pratto F. (1992). “A comparison of symbolic racism theory and social dominance theory as explanations for racial policy attitudes”. *J. Soc. Psychol.* 132:377–95
- Sniderman, P.M., P. Tetlock, and E. Carmines (1993). “Prejudice, Politics, and the American Dilemma”. Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press.
- Sniderman, Paul M., and Douglas B. Grob. (1996). “Innovations in Experimental Design in Attitude Surveys.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 22: 377-399.
- Sniderman P, Carmines EG. (1997). *Reaching Beyond Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Spilerman, Seymour. 1970. “The Causes of Racial Disturbances: A Comparison of Alternative Explanations.” *American Sociological Review* 35 (August): 627–49.
- Stangor, C., Sullivan, L. A., & Ford, T. E. (1991). Affective and cognitive determinants of prejudice. *Social Cognition*, 9, 359-380.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (1985). Intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Social Issues*, 41, 157–175.
- Stephan, W. G., Stephan, C. W., & Gudykunst, W. B. (1999). Anxiety in intergroup relations: A comparison of anxiety/uncertainty management theory and integrated threat theory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23, 613–628.
- Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (2000). An integrated threat theory of prejudice. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 23-46). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Stephan, W. G., Boniecki, K. A., Ybarra, O., Bettencourt, A., Ervin, K. S., Jackson, L. A., & et al. (2002). The role of threats in the racial attitudes of Blacks and Whites. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28, 1242–1254.
- Swain Carol (1993). *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African-Americans in Congress*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tajfel, Henri (1981). *Human Groups and Social Categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. (1979). “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour.” In *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

- Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. C. (1987). The social identity theory of inter-group behavior. In S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall
- Tate, Katherine. (2003). *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Taylor, Marylee. (1998). "Local Racial/Ethnic Proportions and White Attitudes: Numbers Count." *American Sociological Review* 63:56–78.
- Tolnay, Stewart E. and E. M. Beck (1995). *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Tropp, L. R., & Pettigrew, T. F. (2004). Intergroup contact and the central role of affect in intergroup prejudice. In Tiedens, & C. W. Leach (Eds.), *The social life of emotion: Studies in emotion and social interaction* (pp. 246–269). New York: Cambridge University Press. 2004. (1)
- Tropp, L. R., & Pettigrew, T. F. (2005a). Differential relationships between intergroup contact and affective and cognitive dimensions of prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 1145–1158.
- Varshney Ashutosh (2002). *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Walker, Iain (1999), *Effects of Personal and Group Relative Deprivation on Personal and Collective Self-Esteem Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 365-380 (1999)
- Weber, R., & Crocker, J. (1983). Cognitive processes in the revision of stereotypic beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 961-977.
- Wilkinson, Steven I. (2004). *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams MS. 1998. *Voice, Trust, and Memory: Marginalized Groups and the Failings of Liberal Representation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press
- Wilson, T. D., & Hodges, S. D. (1992). Attitudes as temporary constructions. In L. L. Martin & A. Tesser (Eds.), *The construction of social judgments* (pp. 37–65). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Wittenbrink, B., Judd, C.M., and Park, B. (2001). "Spontaneous Prejudice in context: Variability in automatically activated attitudes". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 81. No. 5., 815-827.
- Wood, Elizabeth (2003). *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.
- Young IM. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press

Appendix 1: The village matches

District	Pair number	Treatment	Distance city	Population	SC percent GP	caste make-up	Non-SC caste	main SC caste
Jhunjhunu	1	1	14	3092	11.55	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	1	0	8	2671	11.54	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	2	1	13	3972	13.72	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	2	0	12	3226	13.37	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	3	1	12	1057	15.25	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	3	0	10	1198	16.36	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	4	1	10	2998	18.21	0	jat	meghwal
Jhunjhunu	4	0	18	2592	17.03	0	jat	meghwal
Jhunjhunu	5	1	15	1621	17.03	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	5	0	18	3535	15.5	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	6	1	22	1989	22.39	0	rajput	meghwal
Jhunjhunu	6	0	10	1347	17.86	0	rajput	meghwal
Jhunjhunu	7	1	35	2855	16.21	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	7	0	15	3958	13.99	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	8	1	17	1663	22.08	1		meghwal
Jhunjhunu	8	0	10	1095	19.83	1		meghwal
Bikaner	9	1	100	1297	21.09	1		meghwal
Bikaner	9	0	45	1203	19.16	1		meghwal
Bikaner	10	1	104	2533	20.07	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	10	0	109	2820	20.03	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	11	1	35	4023	19.44	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	11	0	90	2586	18.71	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	12	1	45	4014	19.99	1		meghwal
Bikaner	12	0	30	3640	16.32	1		meghwal
Bikaner	13	1	36	4039	18.67	1		meghwal
Bikaner	13	0	30	4131	16.45	1		meghwal
Bikaner	14	1	14	2655	23.53	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	14	0	24	2033	20.26	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	15	1	40	3044	19.4	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	15	0	30	4947	18.33	0	jat	meghwal
Bikaner	16	1	30	2368	21.68	1		nayak
Bikaner	16	0	95	3022	19.46	1		nayak
Tonk	17	1	22	913	15.13	1		bairwa
Tonk	17	0	24	853	14.27	1		bairwa
Tonk	18	1	12	1146	18.22	0	jhakad	bairwa
Tonk	18	0	21	1092	14.08	0	jhakad	bairwa
Tonk	19	1	25	1145	21.59	1		bairwa
Tonk	19	0	30	3911	21.32	1		bairwa
Tonk	20	1	30	2192	20.04	1		bairwa
Tonk	20	0	19	3570	18.21	1		bairwa
Tonk	21	1	9	1196	19.28	1		bairwa
Tonk	21	0	28	1095	18.7	1		bairwa

Tonk	22	1	48	1801	16.58	1		regar
Tonk	22	0	35	3068	15.24	1		regar
Tonk	23	1	22	1113	20.20	0	gujjar	bairwa
Tonk	23	0	17	1936	19.77	0	gujjar	bairwa
Tonk	24	1	13	1790	24.17	1		bairwa
Tonk	24	0	10	1032	22.93	1		bairwa
Jalore	25	1	17	1364	22.31	1		meghwal
Jalore	25	0	29	1188	20.23	1		meghwal
Jalore	26	1	36	1597	19.74	1		meghwal
Jalore	26	0	38	2583	17.3	1		meghwal
Jalore	27	1	29	2415	23.43	1		meghwal
Jalore	27	0	50	4499	17.00	1		meghwal
Jalore	28	1	15	3476	21.59	1		meghwal
Jalore	28	0	17	1671	18.38	1		meghwal
Jalore	29	1	25	3417	20.15	1		meghwal
Jalore	29	0	25	2681	19.64	1		meghwal
Jalore	30	1	14	3720	18.38	1		meghwal
Jalore	30	0	15	3249	16.11	1		meghwal
Jalore	31	1	14	1666	17.35	1		meghwal
Jalore	31	0	13	2966	17.26	1		meghwal
Jalore	32	1	40	2520	21.65	1		meghwal
Jalore	32	0	45	2734	15.06	1		meghwal

Treatment: if 1, village is reserved.

Distance to City is expressed in kms.

Caste Make-up is coded 1 if the village does not count a single caste group over 60% of the population of the village. If coded 0, it does, in which case this caste group is mentioned in the next column.

Appendix 2: Sampling Villagers

Since Indian villages tend to be divided into a series of caste-homogenous streets (in most cases caste-homogenous *blocks* or *hamlets*), these caste-homogenous village sub-units were used as sampling frames for the survey. Practically, survey supervisors (each supervisor was in charge of a village and heading a team of four interviewers) gathered information on patterns of settlement in each village⁴⁴. Based on this information, he dispatched the interviewers under his control to different subunits of the village, making sure that the main caste groups' settlements were covered and that there was no overlap in each interviewer's defined "territory". In order to maximize the representativeness of the survey in terms of caste groups, each of the four interviewers was usually assigned to surveying members of a specific caste group; when more than 50% of the villagers appeared to belong to one caste group, the supervisor in charge however assigned two or more interviewers to surveying members from that group, although assigning different "territories" for each interviewer within the village⁴⁵. If a given village counted more than four different caste groups belonging to either middle or upper castes, we either ignored groups other than the four biggest groups or assigned one or two interviewers to surveying several numerically small groups. Importantly, upon being assigned to a specific group, interviewers were "placed" by supervisors in front of a house at one end of their sections, and started by attempting to survey that household. They were instructed to subsequently walk towards the other end of their zone and to interview a member of every n^{th} house (the n number depended on village and caste settlement size) on their way, which was controlled by supervisors both on the day of the survey itself and during a subsequent check at the end of each day. Within each house, interviewers surveyed the "first available male" (in the absence of available female interviewers, no female was interviewed). If no male was available, interviewers were instructed to come back to each house twice before they were allowed to target another respondent. This sampling procedure ensured that different caste and age groups that were part of our sampling frame were surveyed in each village. Note in addition that I was able to check that respondents were on average statistically indistinguishable in terms of caste, level of education, household size, profession, and socio-economic status (measured as "number of rooms in the house") in the reserved and unreserved villages we targeted.

⁴⁴ Estimates of the caste make-up of each village had been previously collected through elite interviews. This ensured that supervisors arrived in each village knowing already which caste groups were to be interviewed and to which of these groups the four interviewers was going to be assigned to.

⁴⁵ An example may be useful here: Suppose *Jats* represented 50% of the population. In this case, two interviewers were put in charge of surveying Jat villagers. One of them was in charge of Jat households east of the main village square, while the other one was in charge of Jat households west of it.

Appendix 3: Preparing the audio instrument(s)

To prepare the audio instrument these results are based on, I first used a series of semi-directed focus groups on the general topic of “the evolution of social relations in this village” led by my local collaborators to record and classify a number of statements villagers frequently made about Caste relations. These statements made by villagers during long and repeated interviews during which my collaborator and I had time to build a certain amount of trust with respondents are central to this methodology. A number of relevant statements heard during these preparatory interviews and focus groups were then translated to me, following which we selected a limited number of theoretically relevant items for inclusion on the final questionnaire. Based on this material, I wrote an English version of the audio questionnaire including the “statement-based” questions as well as a number of instructions. Different professional translators translated and back-translated this questionnaire from Hindi to English. Speakers of the various Rajasthani dialects in which we subsequently recorded the survey used this final Hindi version as the basis for the various recordings in four different Rajasthani dialects. In order to enhance the realism of the recording and guarantee that all respondents would understand the statements, villagers from each different district of rural Rajasthan that we surveyed recorded the instructions and “acted” the statements in a culturally relevant way, all of which was done under the supervision of a Rajasthani theatre director that was fluent in all of these dialects and was in charge to ensure that the meaning remained the same from one dialect to another. Remarkably, the recording of this audio instrument did not require the purchase of any sophisticated material. An internet-phone microphone, a basic music software – Apple’s *GarageBand* -, and a simple laptop were used to produce, edit and mix recordings.

Appendix 4: The Interview Process

Because the audio self-administered methodology that was at the core of the survey relied on simple MP3 players, respondents were contacted and interviewed at their homes (that is, according to our survey rules: past the gate of their house, but often outdoors). When contacted, they were asked to participate to a survey about “social changes in village life”. If they were willing to participate, they were given an exam pad containing an answer sheet as well as a locked ballot box in which they were asked to place their completed answer sheet at the end of the audio interview. They were then trained by the interviewer on how to provide responses to the questions heard in the earphones. Upon making sure that the respondent understood the methodology⁴⁶ – which was done by asking each respondent to answer a few easy and non-controversial questions on a mock answer-sheet -, interviewers asked the respondent to isolate himself, played the recording and sat as far away as possible from the respondent. At this point, the interview started and respondents were asked to self-enter their responses on the answer sheet provided by the interviewer at the onset of the interview. The answer sheet counted as many lines as there were questions in the audio component of the survey, and each line presented respondents with different response choices to the question they simultaneously heard in the earphones.

The recording was organized as a succession of “songs” (each of which was a statement and the relevant set of instructions) intertwined with 5-seconds long silences, designed to leave respondents sufficient time to answer. Accordingly, the listening of the recording did not require any intervention from the field investigators, a feature that was key in enhancing the total privacy of the interview process. After convincing respondents to participate and after having explained them the methodology, field investigators simply pushed the “play” button, used the “lock” function of the MP3-player and waited at some distance (in another room if there was one, but most frequently outside the house) for the length of the audio instrument. When the audio instrument was completed, respondents folded their anonymous answer sheets and placed it, as instructed, in a locked ballot box. At the end of the audio interview, the “second voice” said: “your audio interview is now over. Please ask the field investigator to come back into the room. If you have missed any question, please ask him to replay them for you”. In less than 5% of the cases, respondents asked interviewers to replay a question for them, a task which was however done in no time thanks to the MP3-player “skip forward” function.

⁴⁶ Note that the methodology was nonetheless explained in details for the second time in the recording.

To provide responses, respondents were asked to mark an X on one of the cells present on each line. If they did not know what to answer or did not want to answer, they were instructed to skip the item without marking any cell. In order for illiterate (or partially literate) respondents to be able to self-enter the degree to which they agreed with statements heard in the earphones, I associated each “statement-based question” with a symbol that the “second voice” mentioned after each statement. Once the audio-survey was over, respondents detached their answer sheet from the exam pad and placed it in the sealed ballot box, at which point the interviewer came back and a 15-minutes-long face-to-face background questionnaire was administered. Finally, in the minutes or hours following the interview, a supervisor met *each* respondent to double check that the response methodology had been correctly understood before he “validated” the questionnaire.

Crucially, in this process, neither respondents nor interviewers (during training) were told that they were responding to a survey about attitudes towards SCs. The survey, presented by the interviewer as a survey about “social changes in village life”, contains sections about different topics such as gender relations, intergenerational relations, the development of the village, attitudes towards politicians and technological changes in villagers’ lives.

Appendix 5: Mechanisms Questions

In order to test the “social status mechanism”, I use reactions to the following two first-person audio statements:

- “SCs are not like other social groups in the village, they are completely different and should not get the same respect”, and
- “SCs stand much lower than others in the hierarchy of groups”.

As with most questions analyzed in this section, respondents are asked to use the four-point (or rather “four-thumbs”) scale described above to privately and confidentially record their reactions. Using responses to these statements, I test whether – everything else held constant in the type of model detailed below – responses to this statement differs in “reserved” and “unreserved” villages.

In order to test the “*counterstereotypical individual mechanism*”, I use reactions to two series of first-person statements. Given that the first step in this cognitive mechanism is an update of beliefs about the ability of SCs to serve in political office, I first measure reactions to three statements that tap into these beliefs:

- “SCs are usually unable to do a good job as sarpanch. They do not have the skills for that”,
- “SCs are able to serve as politicians such as MLAs or MPs”, and
- “SCs do not have ideas on how the village should be run”.

To determine whether these beliefs in turn affect a number of interrelated views about stereotypical characteristics of SCs, I focus on reactions to four other statements:

- “SCs cannot think for themselves; they usually prefer being dominated by members of higher castes”,
 - “SCs usually have low confidence”,
 - “Members of the scheduled castes are just as intelligent as other villagers”, and
 - “Members of the scheduled are just as hard-working as other villagers”.
- I similarly use responses to these statements to test whether beliefs differed in “reserved” and “unreserved” villages.

In order to test the “*social norms mechanism*”, I use reactions to the following two first-person statements:

- “In this village, if a member of the upper castes says positive things about SCs, then other men from the upper castes would speak about him badly”, and
- “In this village, if a member of the upper castes invites SCs to his marriage, then other members of the upper caste would be mad at him”.

In order to test the “*punishment mechanism*”, I use reactions to the following two first-person statements:

- “If a member of the upper castes gets into a dispute with a SC villager, then he will be into a lot of trouble

with the police”, and

-“If a member of the upper castes opposes SC castes during the village meeting, then he will be in trouble”.

Finally, in order to test the “contact mechanism”, I use responses to a series of questions included in the background face-to-face questionnaire and taping respondents’ contact with members of the SCs in the village:

-In general, how often would you say you enter the SC colony of the village? (scale from 1 to 5)

-In general, how often would you say you go inside a house in that colony? (scale from 1 to 5)

-How often do you stop by in the street to have a discussion with a SC villager? (scale from 1 to 5)

-In general, would you say you have overall more, much more, same amount, less, much less interactions/discussions with SC villagers compared to five years ago?

-In general would you say you have more, much more, same amount, less, much less SC acquaintances than 5 years ago?

-Over the last two years, did you invite a SC villager into your home? (Y/N)