

WOMEN IN POLITICS: THE CASE OF INDIA

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TWO BIG QUESTIONS

- Women lag behind men on many metrics across the world (survival, education, wages), including political representation.
 - Women comprise only 21.4% of national parliaments (world average)
 - 11% of India's national parliament (Lok Sabha); 18% of U.S. Congress (House and Senate); 22% of British MPs (House of Commons).
- 1. Does electing women to political office make any difference?
- 2. How can women's representation in political office be increased?
- I will review some of my work based on data from India on both of these questions.
- Results likely to be relevant both for other countries and for other disadvantaged groups.

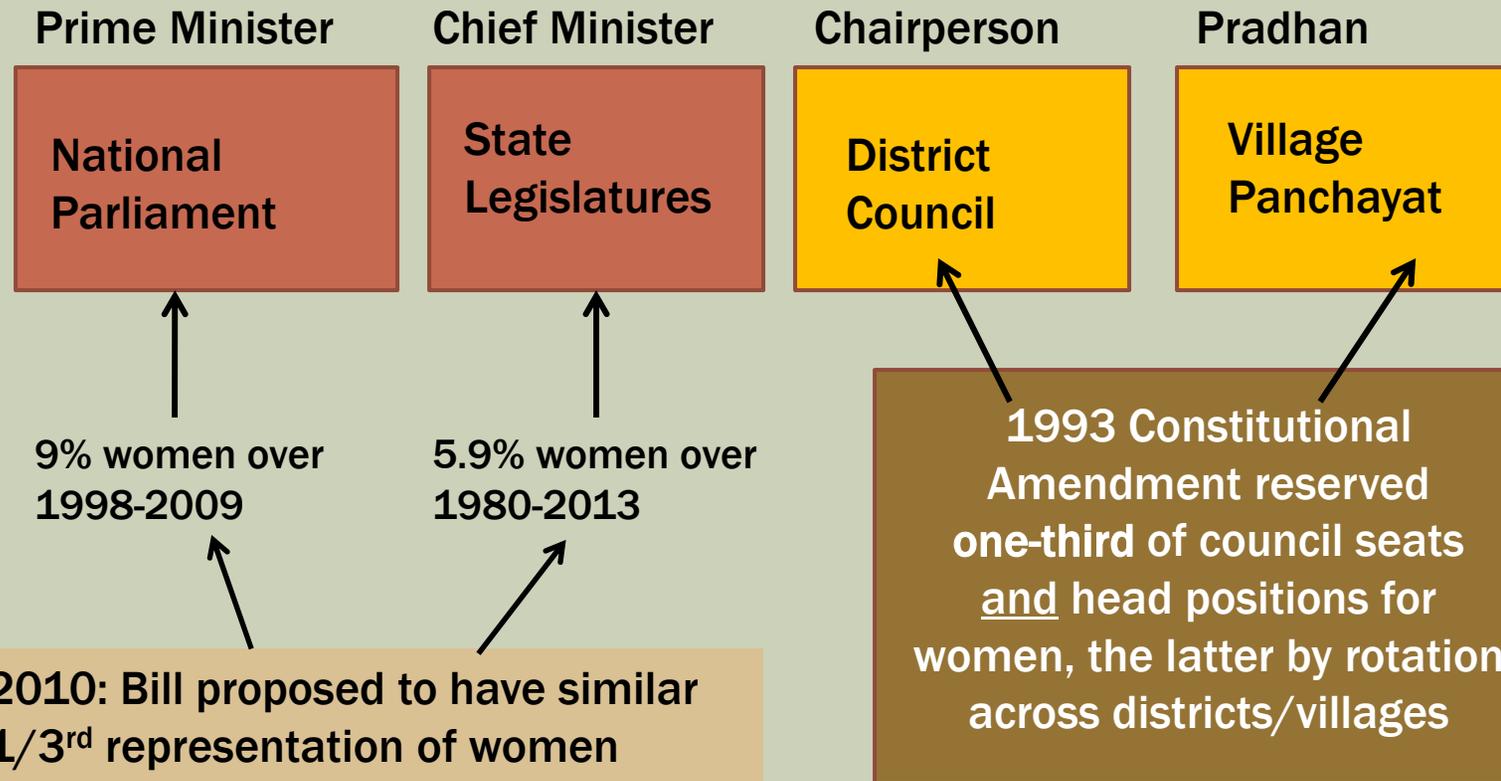
Q1: WOMEN IN POLITICAL OFFICE

- Does electing women to political office make any difference?
 - YES, on a range of policy choices and development outcomes
 - Spending choices and policies preferred by women (Chattopadhyay & Duflo 2004; Washington 2008)
 - Infant mortality, education (Bhalotra & Clots-Figueras 2011; Clots-Figueras 2012; Brollo & Troiano 2012)
- Highlighted study: impact on crimes against women (Iyer, Mishra, Mani and Topalova 2012)
 - Use state-level variation in the implementation of a one-third quota for women in local (village, district) councils in India.

GENDER QUOTAS IN INDIA AND CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

- Overall status of women is poor
 - “Missing women”: 940 women per 1000 men (Census 2011)
 - Only 65% of women were literate, compared to 82% of men
- Crimes against women increasingly a matter of public concern
 - But: India reported 1.56 rapes per 100,000 people in 1999 (US=32.7) and 3.75 murders (US=4.28).
- India’s *Panchayati Raj*: all states required to comply with a 1993 constitutional amendment
 - 1/3rd of all local (district/village) councils to consist of women
 - Village councils have almost no direct jurisdiction over police
- *Panchayati Raj* elections in India held at different dates by different states → Can assess the effect by comparing states before and after women gain such representation.

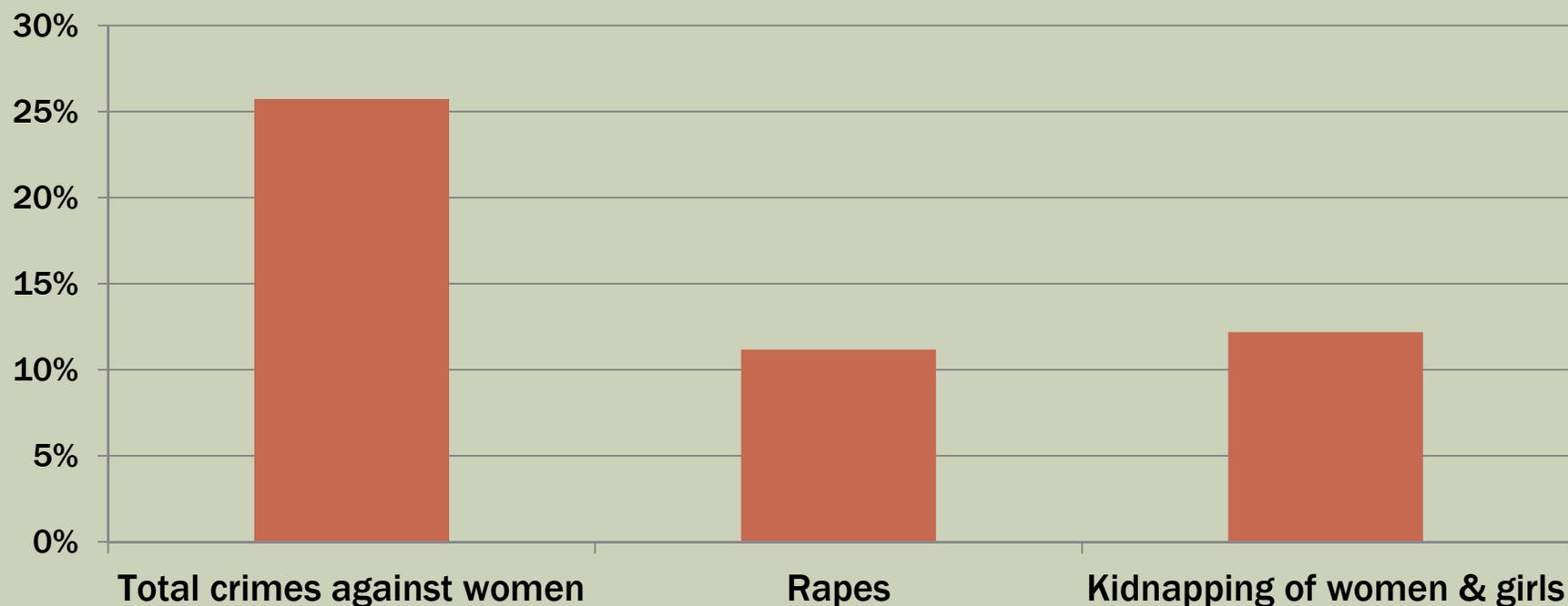
POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA



For our state level analysis, we exploit exogenous variation in the timing of implementation across states

GENDER QUOTAS AND REPORTED CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

% Change after Panchayati Raj Implementation



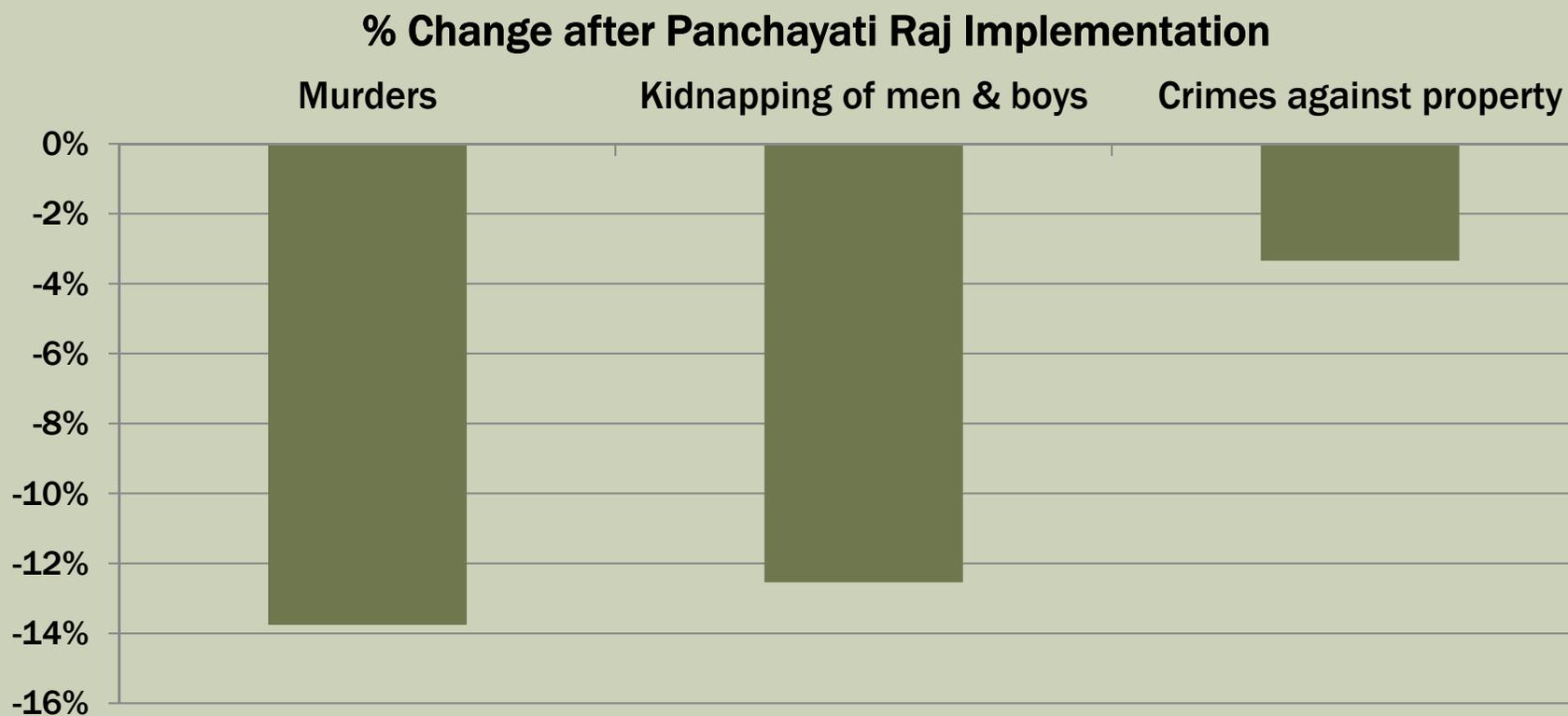
Source: Iyer et al (2012).

Crime data obtained from National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi.

Crime variables are number of crimes per 1000 population (gender-specific population for gender-specific crimes).

Results control for demographic characteristics, real per capita state GDP, policy strength per capita, state and year fixed effects and state-specific time trends.

GENDER QUOTAS AND OTHER CRIMES



Source: Iyer et al (2012).

Crime data obtained from National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi.

Crime variables are number of crimes per 1000 population (gender-specific population for gender-specific crimes).

Results control for demographic characteristics, real per capita state GDP, policy strength per capita, state and year fixed effects and state-specific time trends.

HOW DOES WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION MATTER?

- Survey evidence from Rajasthan shows that women are not more likely to be victims of crime in places with female village heads
- But they express a greater willingness to report crimes to the police.
- Nationwide survey data shows that women who do go to the police are treated better in places with female village heads.
- And arrests for crimes against women increases by 30% after the implementation of Panchayati Raj.
- Our results therefore point to increased **reporting** by victims and increased **recording** of crimes by police as the important mechanisms.

KEY POLICY CONCLUSIONS

- Political representation of disadvantaged groups increases their access to the criminal justice system.
 - We see a very similar result for “identity” crimes committed against other disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes (specifically, violations of civil rights).
- We see this effect despite the fact that the newly elected women have no official jurisdiction over the police.
 - Change in views of other women (the “role model” effect) → does this encourage them to enter politics?
 - Change in behavior of police → informal norms or personal identities on the ground are an important determinant of development outcomes.

Q2: GETTING WOMEN INTO POLITICAL OFFICE

- How can women's representation in political office be increased?
- Quotas being increasingly used in many countries
 - More than 100 countries have some form of quotas in their electoral systems.
 - Quotas implemented for local government positions in India, and being considered for state and national legislatures
- Are there alternatives to an explicit women's quota in parliament? I will present evidence on three mechanisms:
 - A "demonstration" effect of women winning in competitive elections
 - Quotas at lower levels of government
 - Quotas for party organizational positions

“DEMONSTRATION” EFFECTS

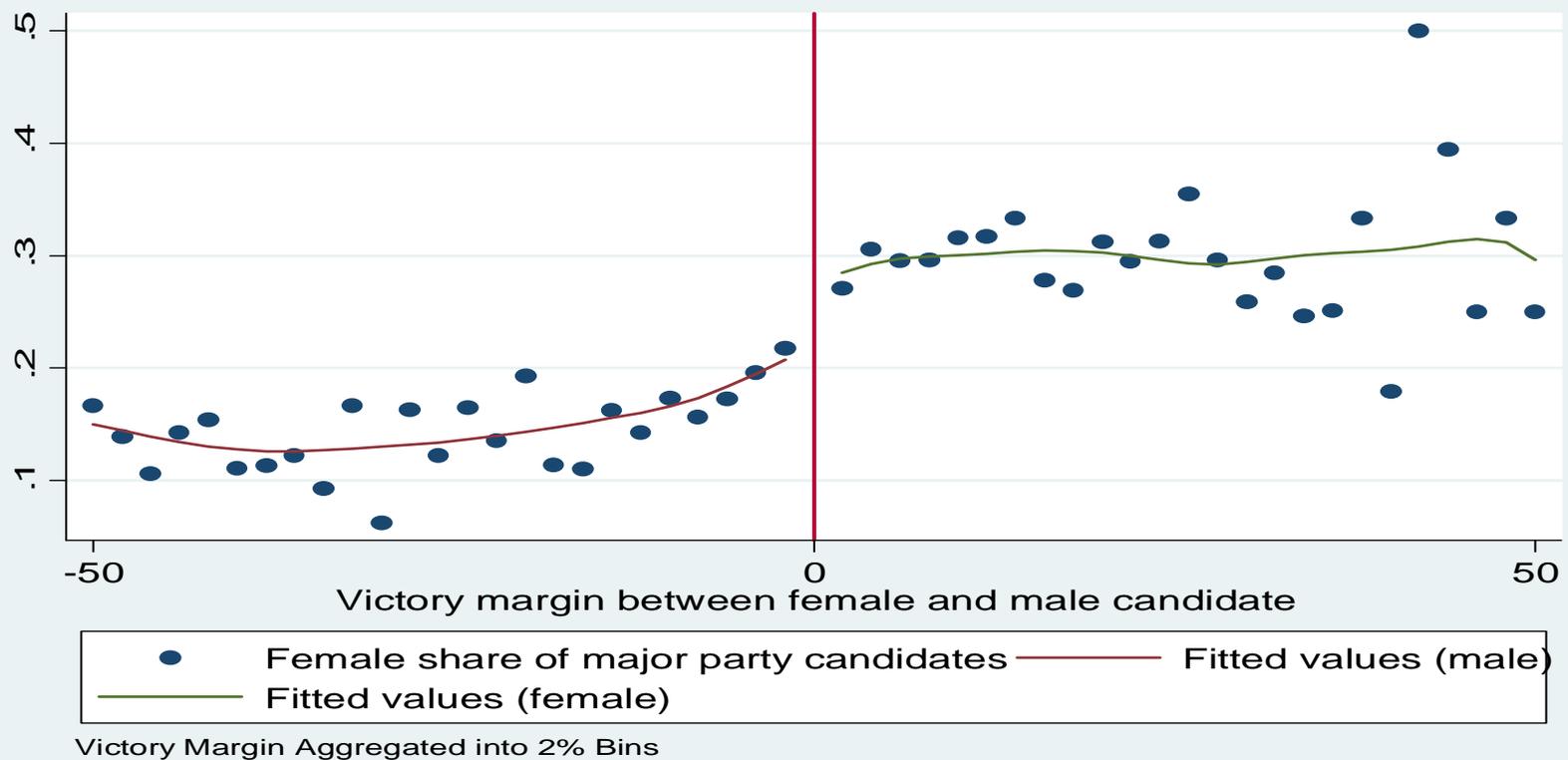
- Over 1980-2013, only 5.9% of India’s state legislators were women.
- But only 4.7% of election candidates were women!
- Candidate selection by political parties is an un-transparent process in India.
 - We conducted interviews with politicians from several political parties to understand the candidate selection process.
 - No clear criteria beyond “winnability”, for which name recognition, party service, financial resources, caste identity and internal party support are all considered relevant.
- Is there a “demonstration” effect provided by a woman winning a competitive election against a man?
- We consider three key mechanisms which might change after observing a woman’s electoral victory: party bias, voter bias and the supply of potential women candidates.

EMPIRICAL STRATEGY

- Constituency level data on state elections during 1980-2007
- Period chosen because there was no redistricting over this period
- Only 2-3 candidates out of average 10 belong to a “major” party
- We want to compare women’s participation (as candidates or voters) before and after a woman wins an election.
- But the incidence of women winning is not random but likely correlated with other characteristics of the area or of local politics.
- So we use the sample of elections where a man and a woman were in the top 2, and compare constituencies where a woman “just won” with those where a woman “just lost” using a regression discontinuity framework.
- The underlying assumption is that the gender of the winner in a close election is quasi-random, and so this strategy eliminates unobservable differences across places where women won and women did not win.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL CANDIDACY AFTER A WOMAN NARROWLY WINS

We find a (statistically significant) increase of 9.2% in the share of major party female candidates following an electoral victory for a woman.



WOMEN'S POLITICAL CANDIDACY: WHERE IS THE DEMONSTRATION EFFECT?

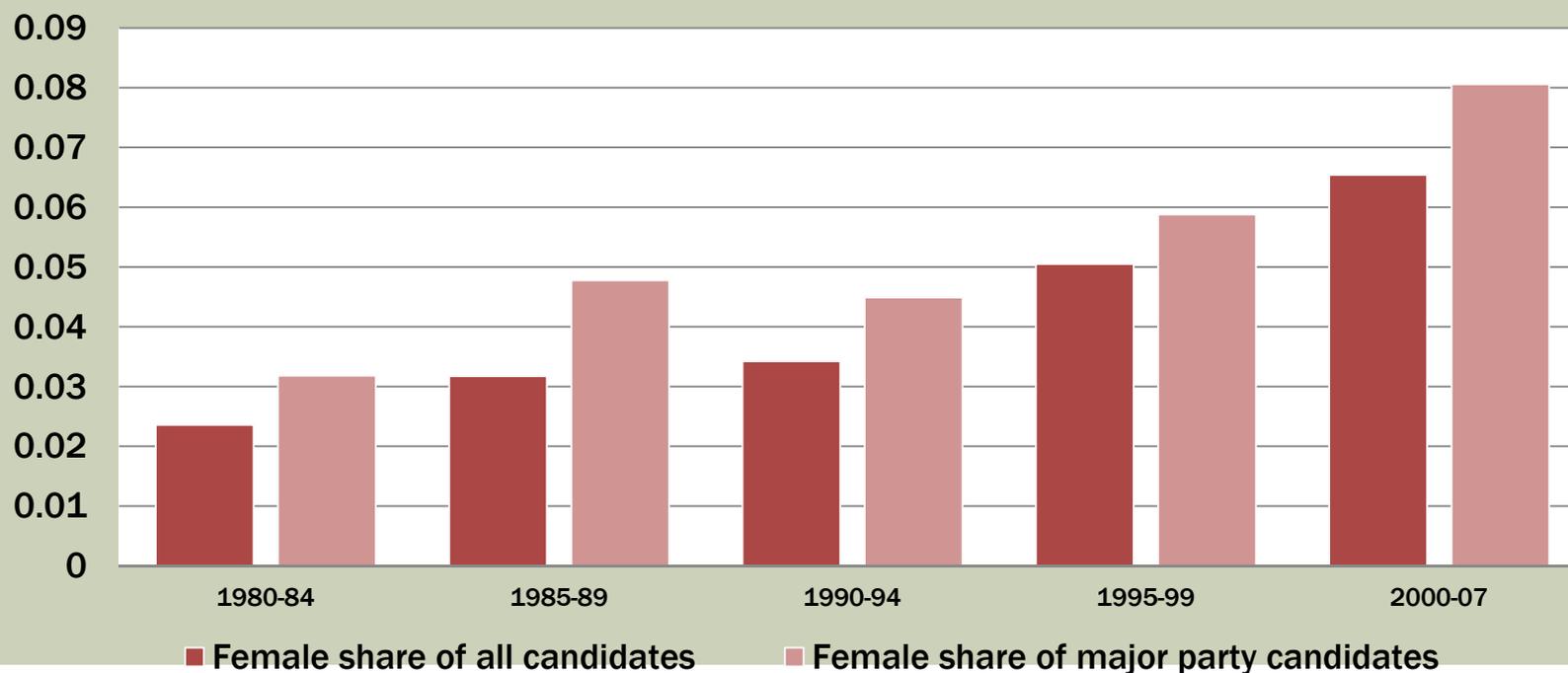
- A decline in voter bias does not appear to be main channel
 - We find no significant increase in voter turnout of women or men.
 - The increase in female candidacy is limited to the party from which the woman wins, not other parties.
 - And there is no increase in the probability that a woman will **win** the next election.
- An increase in the supply of potential candidates is also not the main reason.
 - We do not find any significant increase in the presence of new female candidates i.e. those who did not contest the previous election.
 - There are no geographic “spillover effects” to nearby areas.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL CANDIDACY: WHERE IS THE DEMONSTRATION EFFECT?

- A decline in within-party bias appears to be the most plausible mechanism.
- Women winners are much more likely to contest the next election **from the same party**, compared to men who win in mixed-gender elections.
 - We interpret this as supportive evidence that within-party environment for women has improved following electoral victory.
- Implications for future research:
 - Bringing new women into politics is important to increase representation over time: a woman winning does not accomplish it. Will local government quotas stimulate this?
 - Internal mechanisms of political parties are important: does an intra-party quota encourage greater female candidacy?

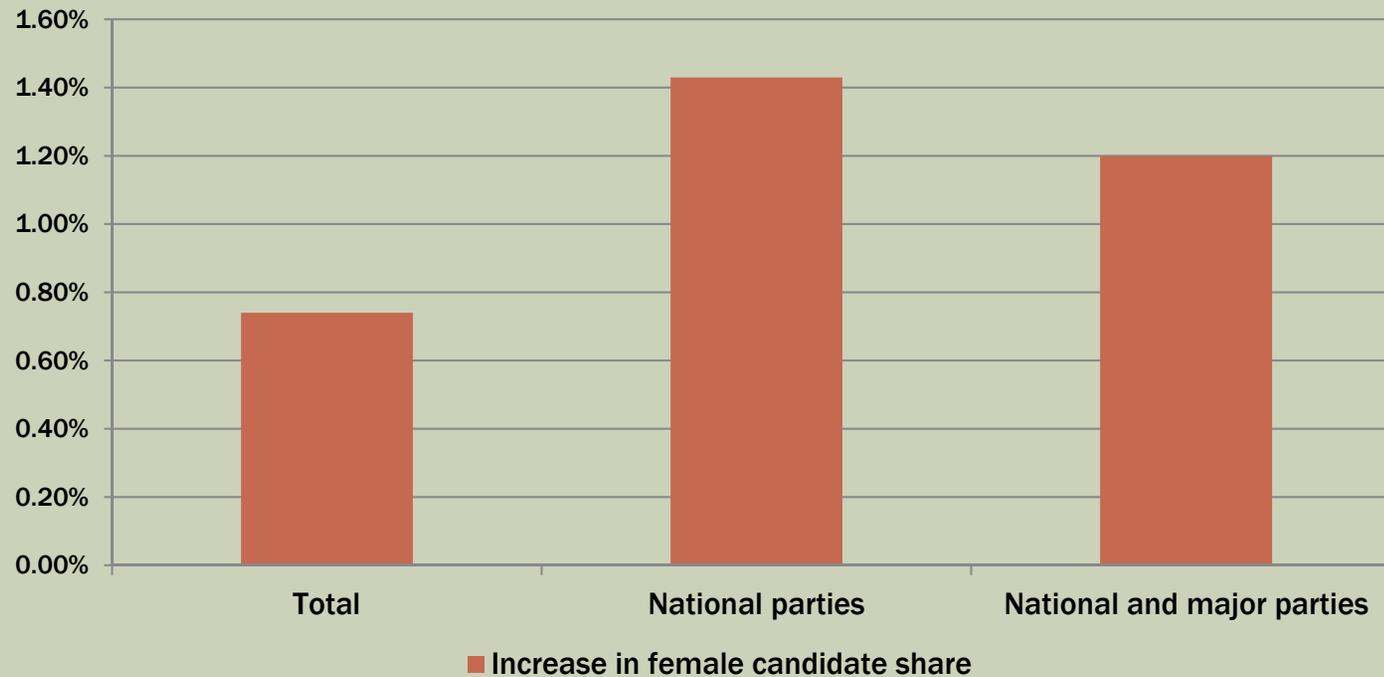
LOCAL GOVERNMENT QUOTAS

- Similar to the crime analysis, we can examine whether female candidacy goes up after the implementation of Panchayati Raj local government quotas.
- There is a general rise in women's candidacy over time, so we control for state-specific time trends.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT QUOTAS AND STATE LEVEL WOMEN CANDIDATES

% change after Panchayati Raj Implementation

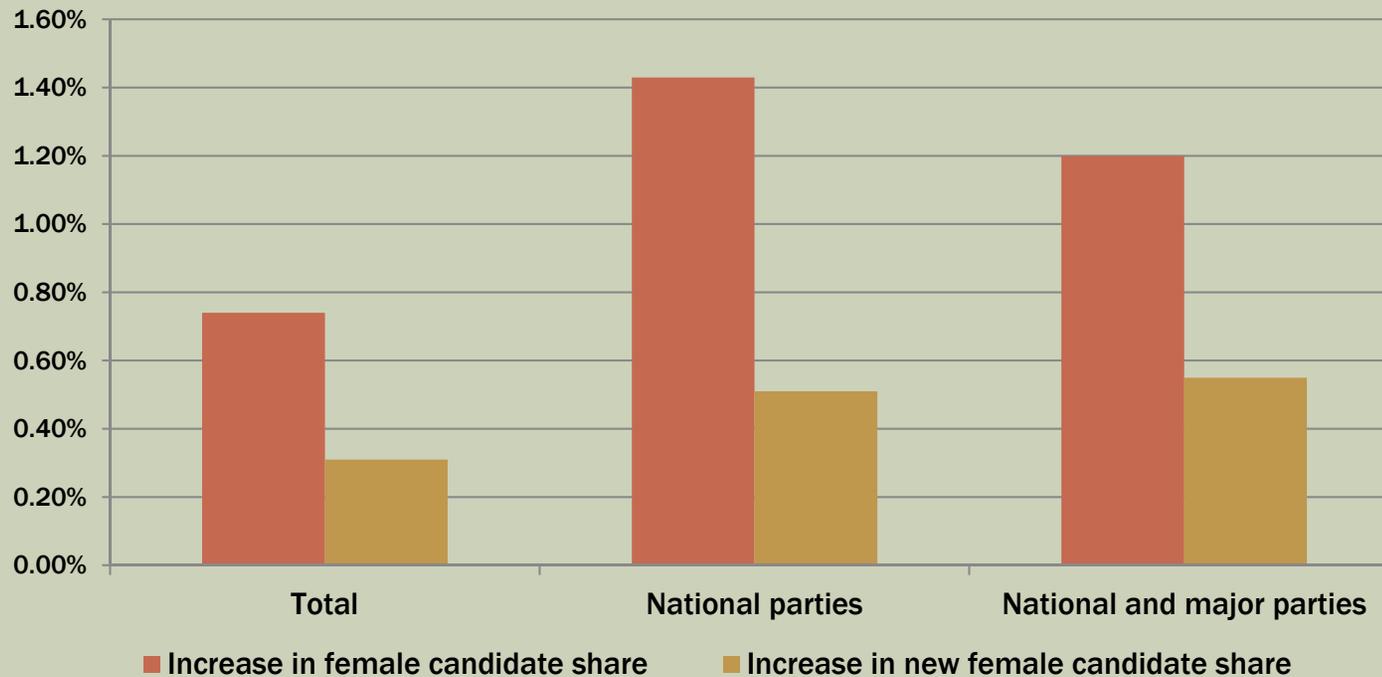


Source: Author computations.

Results control for state and year fixed effects and state-specific time trends.

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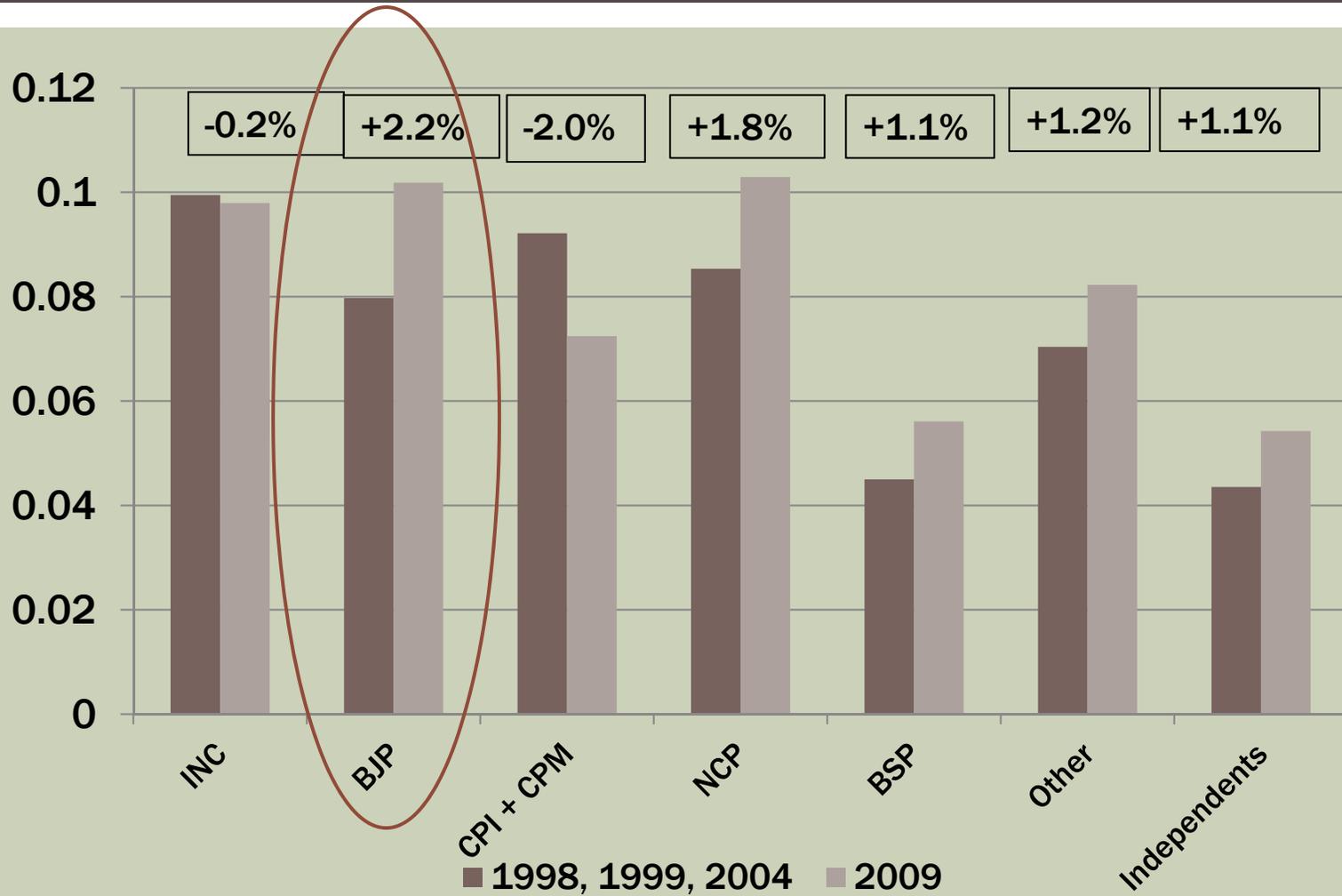
INTRA-PARTY QUOTAS

- In January 2008, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) amended the party constitution to provide for a one-third quota for women in party executive positions.
 - Applies to all levels, from local committees to national executive.
 - “BJP was concerned that the Congress might be successful in mobilising a large section of women’s vote.”
 - “The BJP wants to send out a strong political message that it is serious about empowering women politically.”
 - Voluntarily adopted by the party, in contrast to mandated party list quotas in Spain and France, which parties try to undermine in different ways.
- Will this translate into greater female candidacy?
 - Is 5 years too soon to expect an impact?
 - Maybe women are given only token positions
 - There may be a “glass ceiling” preventing women from rising to the highest levels including political candidacy.
- I examine trends in female candidacy before and after this policy is implemented, for BJP versus other parties.

REPRESENTATION IN NON-QUOTA POSTS

- These rules appear to be implemented as specified:
 - 25 out of 79 members of National Executive are women, and 13 out of 40 office-bearers
 - 9 out of 25 members of Gujarat State Executive
- But female representation is still very low in positions where the quotas do not apply
 - Only 2 women in 19-member Central Election Committee, including one ex-officio as head of women's wing.
 - Only 1 out of 26 State Presidents
 - 0 of 41 District Presidents in Gujarat

WOMEN CANDIDATES IN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS



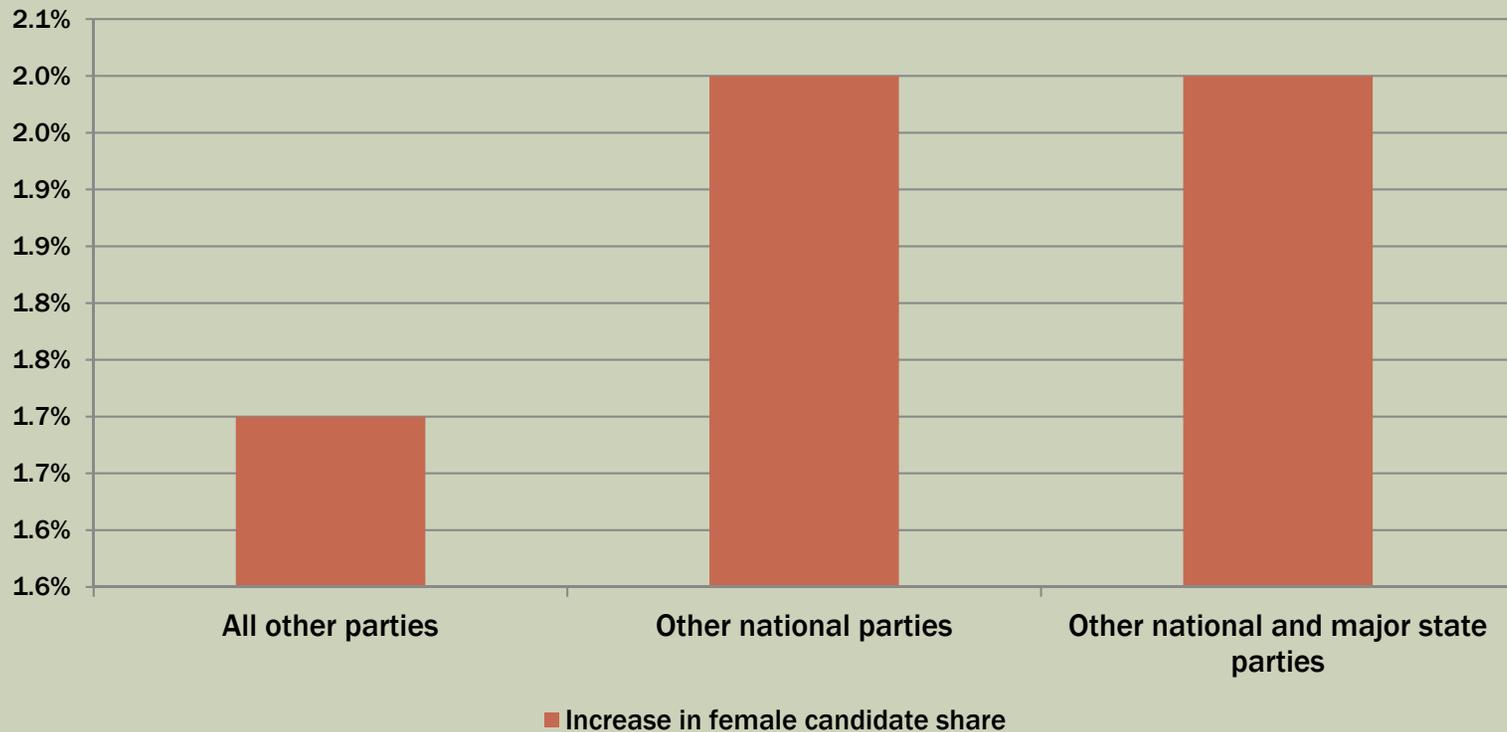
WOMEN IN STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: 1990-2013

	Fraction of female candidates		
	1990-2007	2008-2013	Difference
BJP	5.5%	9.1%	3.6%
BSP	5.5%	6.4%	0.9%
CPI	3.0%	2.5%	-0.5%
CPM	4.4%	7.5%	3.1%
INC	7.7%	9.5%	1.8%
NCP	4.2%	5.3%	1.1%
Major regional parties	4.6%	6.7%	2.1%
Minor parties	5.6%	8.4%	2.8%
Independents	4.4%	6.2%	1.8%

We can do a more rigorous estimate by comparing the increase in the BJP's share of women candidates (before and after 2008) to the increase in other parties' share.

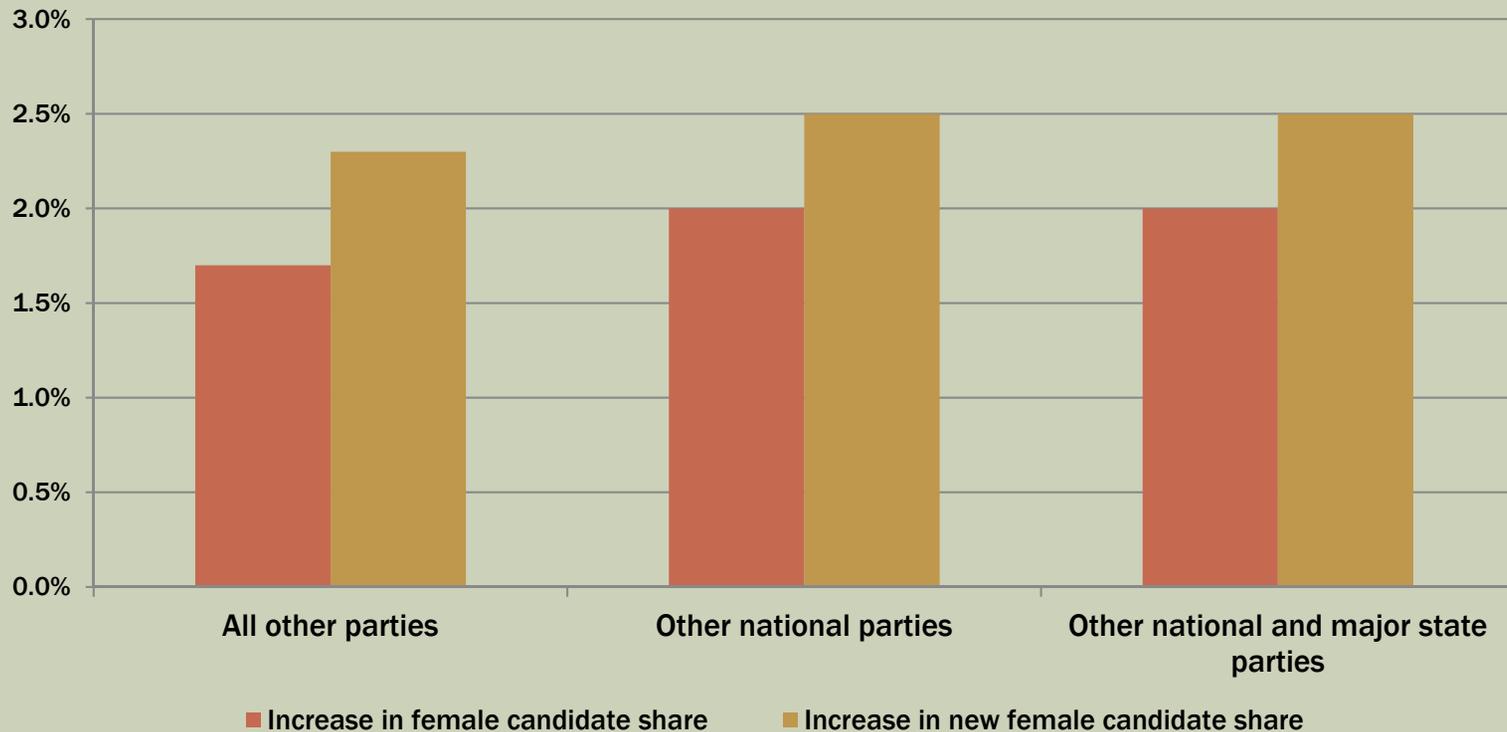
DOES THE BJP'S INTRA-PARTY QUOTA LEAD TO GREATER FEMALE CANDIDACY?

Increase in BJP relative to others



BJP'S INTRA-PARTY QUOTA AND THE ENTRY OF NEW FEMALE CANDIDATES

Increase in BJP relative to others



POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

- Having more women in political office changes things, in many cases for the better.
 - Also consistent with principles of representative democracy.
 - Are there ways to make women politicians more effective?
 - Can we achieve the same goals (“substantive representation”) even if women are not elected?

- The road to greater political candidacy by women needs explicit intervention.
 - Demonstrated success by women can change intra-party environment for women already in the field, but does not spur entry by new candidates.
 - Quotas at pipeline stages are effective in increasing female candidacy.

- How can parties find new women candidates?
- How can a political career be made more attractive/welcoming to women?

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