

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

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Abstract

Local governments are said to be susceptible to elite capture in the developing world. Reforms that aim to improve political competition may help reduce elite capture. We run a randomized control trial prior to elections for village councils in rural Pakistan to study three barriers to political entry: cost of running for office, lack of information on electability of candidates and lack of information on benefits from office. We find that the cost of running for office is the main barrier preventing political entry of citizens, while lack of information on electability and benefits from office are not binding constraints on average. We find they do matter for certain populations: citizens who have higher prior beliefs of winning the elections respond to provision of information with increased probability of running for office.

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..poor should not enter politics...only those, who have been blessed with everything by Allah, should enter politics..

— Imran Khan, Head of a Political Party

What kind of election is this, where people who don't have food to eat are becoming councillors?

— A Citizen

1 Introduction

Elite capture of institutions, especially decentralized institutions, is well established (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2000*b*). Elected offices that are meant to serve the interests of voters are routinely contested by candidates who belong to elite families (Broockman 2014) and political dynasties (Dal Bó, Dal Bó and Snyder (2009), Cheema, Javid and Naseer (2013)). In contrast, the non-elites are often missing from politics. In this paper, we propose three possible reasons that may deter potential candidates from entering politics. We design and implement a randomized control trial that investigates the reasons behind a lack of non-elite participation in local government elections.

Decentralization of the elected institutions has been one of the central themes of reform across the developing world. Two related beliefs have primarily driven the reform process. One, bringing government closer to the people will make it more responsive to the needs of local public goods by being able to aggregate their preferences better (Oates 1999); and second, citizens will be able to hold their leaders accountable (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2000*b*). This second belief rides on the underlying assumption that the elected officials in a distant government come from more powerful backgrounds and hence the populace cannot hold them accountable. In contrast, politicians at a closer level, elected to decentralized offices, are easy to monitor and will thus be more accountable to the citizens. Rich literature from the last three decades compellingly shows that decentralization has failed to deliver (Wibbels 2006) mainly because of elite capture of local institutions (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2000*a*; Mattingly 2016; Fritzen 2006). This begs the question: why do non-elites not enter politics to ensure a better distribution of public goods?

There are a number of potential reasons that may constrain an individual from entering politics¹. The cost-benefit analysis of a potential candidate is affected by the cost of making the entry, and the expected benefit one can have from office. This analysis requires information about the possibility of winning elections and also the knowledge of the expected

¹The decision of citizens to run or not for public office is important because it can have implications for policy (Besley 2005; Ashworth 2012) and provision of public services (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004)

benefits from office. Existing research suggests that people often lack information that can shape their political behavior (Casey 2015). Thus providing information can potentially induce citizens to enter politics. Prospective candidates may not join politics if the decision is net costly for them, either because of a high cost of entry or limited financial benefit from it (Messner and Polborn 2004*b*). Empirical evidence on the financial benefits has found that selection into the public sector is sensitive to the incentives associated with it (Dal Bó, Finan and Rossi 2012). Such financial rewards also motivate politicians once in office (Ferraz and Finan (2009), Gagliarducci and Nannicini (2013)). There is, to our knowledge, no study on the cost side of the equation that affects the decision to run for office.

We design and implement an experiment before the first ever Village Council elections held in rural Pakistan in 2015. We divide 240 villages in 196 treatment and 44 pure control villages. In each of the treatment villages, we survey about 48 individuals selected at random and ask them to nominate potential candidates who are suitable for public office but may not run for it. We get on average ten nominated politicians per village with whom we run an experiment to unpack the constraints that restrict political entry. We seek out those citizens who are on the margins of politics but may not enter the race for office and provide them one of the three treatments. The first treatment tests whether the cost of declaring candidacy is the primary barrier; the second examines if information about the chances of winning the election affects entry; and the third treatment focuses on information about benefits from office.

To study if cost is a barrier, we provide a subsidy to selected individuals in the form of services of a lawyer. Free services of a lawyer substantially reduces the cost of formally declaring candidacy for the citizen. The lawyer prepares official declaration papers for the candidate and presents them for scrutiny to the Returning Officer with judicial power to approve the application. The Returning Officer cross-examines the potential candidates, assisted by the lawyer, to ensure they meet the minimum eligibility requirements.

To examine if information frictions are also restricting entry in politics we run two information campaigns. In the first, we inform the potential candidates that they have been nominated to run for office by others in the village. We interpret this treatment as information about electability. In the second information treatment, we inform nominees about the benefits they can have from office. The benefits information is further divided into social and personal benefits as explained below. Table 1 shows the sample size and cross randomization of each treatment.

We conduct this experiment before the elections for Village Councils in 2015 in two districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. After the elections, we acquire administrative records from the Election Commission of Pakistan that includes lists of candidates

on the ballot and the number of votes they received in the election. We match this list with our sample of potential candidates to identify individuals who formally ran for office and also those who won the elections.

Using the matched survey and administrative data we reach two conclusions on what prevents citizens from entering politics. First, the cost of running for office is a significant barrier that prevents citizens from entering public life. Subsidizing the candidacy process through the provision of a lawyer increases the probability of a citizen to run for office. This result is robust to the use of intention to treat design and an instrumental variable approach.

Second, information on the chance of winning the election (electability) and the benefits from office do not appear to be restricting non-elite candidacy. They do not seem to be taken into account when citizens decide to run for office. However there is evidence that for certain populations electability and benefits matter. We collect prior beliefs of citizens about their chances to win an election and the benefits they can get from office. Using prior beliefs to study the heterogeneous response of citizens, we find two results. First, citizens who are confident of their electability respond to all three interventions, the probability that they run for office is higher if they get the lawyer, or find out about benefits or even just get their beliefs reinforced by the provision of electability information. Second, the prior beliefs about social benefits play a role in the decision calculus of the candidates. A mere reinforcement of the beliefs does not work but material subsidy through lawyer or information about personal benefits help them decide in entering politics.

The role of costs and benefits in the political entry decision have been studied extensively in the theoretical literature (Caselli and Morelli (2004), Messner and Polborn (2004*a*)). There appears to be a trade-off between the competence of elected leaders and their representativeness (Besley and Coate 1997). However empirical research suggests that financial incentives attract and retain competent politicians (Ferraz and Finan (2011)). But financial incentives do not tell the full story. Keeping the financial incentives constant, special interest groups' information and mobilization efforts shape the set of people who consider entering politics (Broockman (2014), Preece, Olga and Rachel (2016)). This results in a situation where underrepresented groups do not believe the information coming from "party establishments" (Butler and Preece 2016) and in the absence of another source, information may become a hard barrier preventing them from entering politics. In this paper, we overcome these barriers by undertaking a non-partisan drive and rely on randomly selected individuals to identify potential candidates instead of relying on party establishments.

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

provides conclusive evidence that, keeping financial incentives constant, equally competent candidates may sit out the elections due to costs associated with it. Third, it makes use of prior beliefs to identify how different types of citizens respond to the three types of barriers. Potential non-elite candidates, who are confident of their chances, may need a little nudge to encourage political entry. Fourth, it validates a methodology of identifying candidates that are equally competent and more representative of the general population. This method may be adopted by democracy promotion programs in weak and new democracies.

The main contribution of this paper is to take a holistic view of the decision equation of the potential politicians. There is a dearth of literature that studies the decision equation of citizens who have the option to become first-time politicians. In that sense, the paper contributes to existing literature by examining the behavior of citizens who go on to become politicians. Our work is closest to a working paper by Cruz and Davidson (2017) in terms of the methodology identifying potential candidates². Their interest is limited to increasing competition, through identification and conveying the electability information. We take a more holistic look at the calculus of potential individuals regarding political entry. Additionally, they focus on village level competition whereas we are focused on individual decisions to run for office. Hence we are better suited to identify the factors that constrain political participation and may contribute to the continued capture of local institutions by elites.

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

2 Framework of Candidacy Decision

The decision to run for public office requires an individual to consider costs and benefits associated with it³. This cost-benefit-analysis nature of the problem has been captured in the class of models that have come to be known as citizen-candidate models (Besley and Coate 1997). In the spirit of this class of models, we imagine each citizen i in a given polity make individual decisions whether to run for office or not. They differ in their ability a_i and mission (pro-social or personally driven). The mission of an individual determines how

²Another paper that is closer in taste to this study is Ravanilla (2016). However, the focus of that work is on training good quality politicians whereas we are focused on alleviating barriers to entry

³Politics being a social vocation; the decision to run is not solely an individual decision most of the time. Things like social image, vote blocks and party policies can also play a role. We study the social aspect of candidacy in another paper Gulzar and Khan (2017)

much weight i puts on the social and personal benefit from office. These weights are given by $(c_i, s_i) \in (0, 1)$, where c_i is the weight on personal benefits and s_i is the weight this individual puts on social benefits that can be secured from public office.

Each individual has prior beliefs about benefits from office. First, she will consider the benefits accruing from public office. These benefits could be of two types: one personal benefit such as respect (Ellingsen and Johannesson 2007) and second, social benefit from helping others (Benabou and Tirole 2003). Their experiences of political system shape the beliefs about these benefits. For example, one may believe the office is only for the rich and hence the only benefits that accrue from it are conditional on being rich. We denote these beliefs about personal and social benefits from office by \hat{C} and \hat{S} respectively. The utility is linearly separable between these perceived private and prosocial benefits. It depends on effort (e_i), ability (a_i), prosocial benefits s_i , career benefits c_i , and mission type. To reflect uncertainty in the probability of getting elected, benefits are weighted by the probability of the agent getting elected, p . However, the ex-ante utility for non-elite comprises a *perceived* probability of getting elected, which is downward biased, such that $\hat{p}_i = p_i + \varepsilon_i$, where ε is the amount of bias and is negative. Finally, individuals incur a cost of running for political office that is given by θ . Such costs can be numerous, including any fee associated with filing papers, cost of campaigning or the fees required to get a nomination from a political party.

$$U_{ij} = \hat{p}_i \left[c_i \hat{C}_j (1 + a_i \sqrt{1 - e_i}) + s_i \hat{S}_j (1 + a_i \sqrt{e_i}) \right] - \theta_i$$

A citizen faces constraints in the form of a high cost associated with elections and lack of information about the chance of getting elected and the degree to which public office provides any benefits. This simple set-up gives us two broad ways to encourage more non-elites in joining politics. The first way is to reduce information frictions and second to reduce material cost associated with elections. We reduce the information frictions by providing of the potential candidates two sets of messages. We try to perturb their expectation of probability to win by informing them about citizens willing to vote for them, with this we try to increase \hat{p}_i through reduction of bias ε_i . We also inform them about the benefits that can be gained from office thus affecting \hat{C} and \hat{S} . Finally, we can subsidize the cost of running for office by reducing θ .

3 Experiment

We conduct an experiment in 240 villages spread across Haripur and Abbotabad districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. In each village, we conduct a survey citizens to iden-

tify potential candidates that are on the boundary of deciding whether to run for office or not. These individuals are randomly assigned to three sets of treatments including subsidy through provision of a lawyer to file candidacy papers, information on their electability and information on non-monetary benefits from office.

3.1 Context

Before 2015, the lowest tier of elected government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Pakistan was the provincial legislature. A previous law introduced in 2000 that formed the elected government structure below the provincial assembly had been suspended in 2008. The old law stipulated the lowest elected tier of the government to be the Union Council (UC).⁴In 2015, the Government introduced Village Councils (VCs) as a new tier of local governments for the very first time and reinstated District and Town councils that were in suspension since 2008. As a result of reform the 986 union councils are replaced by 3493 village and neighborhood councils, increasing the number of representatives in the province to around forty thousand from a few hundred. First elections under the new law took place in May 2015 on a non-party basis for the VCs.

Each Village Council comprises seven to 15 elected members depending on the population of the village. Out of these, up to seven council seats are open to everyone in the village, called the general seats. Whereas the remaining seats are reserved for youth, peasant, and women representatives. The elections take place on the basis of a single ward system for each category, where the village serves as the ward. A candidate winning the most number of votes in the general category is declared Nazim (head) of the council while the one securing the second most number of votes is declared Naib Nazim (deputy head) of the council.

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

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

To study the candidacy process we conducted two experiments. The main experiment reported in Gulzar and Khan (2017) focuses on social dimensions of candidacy. We provided

⁴A UC is a collection of several villages or urban wards with an average population around 25000. KP has 986 union councils.

information on personal and social benefits from office to citizens in selected villages. We vary whether this information was provided in private and/or in public setting. In the second experiment, the focus of this paper, we study the person-specific factors driving the decision to become a politician by subsidizing services of a lawyer to help file papers, information on electability and information on benefits from office.

3.2 Sample Selection

We randomly select 240 VCs from the population of villages in the two districts and divide them into 196 treatment and 44 pure control villages. Table 9 in Appendix provides summary statistics of the villages and individuals in our sample. Most of the villages have good mobile phone connectivity and have literacy rates that are higher than the national average. The Village Councils have an average size of 9.8 members and an average of 6500 registered voters. The elections in 2015 were hotly contested, for an average of 6 general seats, there were 9 candidates. Voter turn out was also on the higher side, nearly 76% of voters turned out to vote in 2015 compared to the national average of 55% in 2013 parliamentary elections.

In each treatment village, we survey randomly selected fifty households. In the absence of housing lists, we use the sampling method employed by Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) (Henderson and Sundaresan 1982). Our survey teams seek out respondents to administer a short survey. At the end of the survey, respondents are asked to identify up to three individuals from the village who should run for office but may not end up entering politics. There were two reasons to use this method. First, it will help us get at increasing participation from non-elites who have a shot at winning the elections since actual voters nominate them. Second, it enables us to work with individuals on the border of becoming a politician. These include people who have the time and inclination to join politics if there was no elite capture of institutions. After identifying the experimental sample, we sort them alphabetically according to their last names and transfer the sorted list to a pre-printed randomization sheet. The randomization sheet decides the treatment to be administered to each nominated person. An example of this sheet is shown in the figure 2 in the appendix. This sheet is filled in the field due to time and logistical constraints however treatment assignments for each row were decided before the start of the fieldwork. In Table 2 we show this randomization was reasonably balanced on a number of individual characteristics. The sampled individuals have, on average, nine years of schooling. Very few of the sampled individuals have previous experiences of being on committees formed informally in the village. Once the assignment is complete, the survey team approaches the individuals and administers the treatment conditions.

Table 1: **Treatment Allocation**

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

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

Table 1 reports the sample size in each treatment combination. Since all the treatments were cross randomized, we have eight treatment combinations. In the table, columns represent types of benefit messages delivered and rows represent a combination of whether electability information was provided and within given electability information whether services of a lawyer were provided or not. During the analysis, we combine the social and personal benefits to create a pooled sample of benefits. Each cell in the table represents the number of citizens in a treatment condition. The very first cell is a combination of neutral message, no lawyer, and no electability information. It represents the control condition in this experiment.

Table 2: **Balance Table**

	Income	Schooling	Committee Exp	Cost Prior	Electability Prior	Personal Benefits Prior	Social Benefits Prior
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Lawyer	416.356 (682.491)	0.376 (0.167)	-0.003 (0.008)	-0.079 (0.045)	-0.028 (0.043)	0.046 (0.043)	0.039 (0.043)
Electability	164.652 (671.143)	0.093 (0.164)	0.002 (0.008)	0.016 (0.045)	0.034 (0.044)	-0.014 (0.042)	-0.062 (0.042)
Social Benefits	-1050.849 (862.351)	-0.198 (0.221)	0.014 (0.009)	-0.053 (0.061)	-0.031 (0.061)	0.101 (0.057)	-0.025 (0.059)
Personal Benefits	-616.069 (988.046)	-0.032 (0.224)	-0.000 (0.010)	-0.093 (0.058)	0.048 (0.057)	0.056 (0.059)	0.034 (0.059)
Control	-170.983 (1186.171)	0.191 (0.296)	0.015 (0.014)	-0.102 (0.081)	-0.079 (0.079)	0.058 (0.075)	-0.066 (0.080)
Mean of Variable	23760.30	9.48	0.02	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.00
# Observations	1985	2021	2039	2039	2039	2039	2039
Joint orthogonality p-value	0.61	0.20	0.40	0.33	0.37	0.45	0.29

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Each column is a regression with the independent variable mentioned in column name, which is regressed on treatment dummies. The regressions include village fixed effects. The joint orthogonality tests the null hypothesis that treatments predict characteristics of the sampled individual.

Table 2 reports the balance across treatment groups. We report results from joint orthogonality test of the null hypothesis that treatments predict characteristics of the potential candidates. Information on prior beliefs was collected before the treatment during the short

survey we conduct as part of the sample selection. We ask the respondents to tell us, on a scale of one to five, how likely are they to win the election if they run for office. Similarly, we ask how affordable is running for office, one being least affordable and five being very affordable. After the administration of treatments, we return to administer a long survey with the respondents in which we collect information on family income, years of schooling and prior political experience. We use prior political experience and self-reported connections with politicians and bureaucrats to construct an index of political eliteness. We also construct a second measure of eliteness which we call the traditional elite. We use enumerator observation about whether a person can be regarded as elite in the village and if they own separate quarters to entertain guests. Even though all this information was collected post-treatment, the nature of these variables is such that it is unlikely our treatment could affect them in a short time.

3.3 Comparison with Control Politicians

We now discuss how our sample compares to politicians in status-quo. Ideally, we would like to see who runs for office from the village population in the absence of our intervention. To do this comparison, we collect information on candidates from pure control villages where we do not take out any activity. This gives us a comparison sample of what the candidates may have looked like in the absence of our experiment. In Table 3 we show that our selected sample is different from traditional politicians who would run for office in status-quo. The results are reported in Table 3. Our sample appears to be similar to status-quo politicians on the number of years of schooling (column 2), pro-social motivation index (column 3) almost similar on family income (column 1). However the nominated politicians have a higher personal motivation, and they score lower on measures of eliteness.

This comparison reveals a few points that need to be emphasized. First, if we take years of schooling and family income as proxies for competence of individuals (in the absence of more reliable and direct measures), our sampled individuals are as competent as the status-quo politicians. This indicates that our sample is not very unique in terms of how voters may see their competence. Second, our sample is indeed less elite. This was expected since local government are prone to elite capture (Bardhan 2002) whereas in our case we tried to broaden the pool of politicians which is bound to have a smaller proportion of traditional elite. Identifying a less elite sample means there are potential politicians who can join the elected offices but they may not be able to do so due to barriers to entry that we try to examine in this paper.

Table 3: Comparison with Pure Control Politicians

	Family Income (1)	Schooling (2)	Pro-Social Index (3)	Personal Index (4)	Political Elite Index (5)	Trad. Elite Elite (6)
Nominee Politicians (A)	23765.545 (358.256)	9.481 (0.077)	3.601 (0.006)	3.270 (0.009)	0.087 (0.004)	0.139 (0.008)
Pure Control Politicians (B)	24830.824 (552.543)	9.447 (0.119)	3.616 (0.009)	3.230 (0.013)	0.138 (0.006)	0.254 (0.013)
Difference (A-B)	-1065.279	0.034	-0.015	0.040	-0.052	-0.114
p-Value	0.106	0.809	0.169	0.013	0.000	0.000
# Observations	2828	2861	2854	2866	2866	2867

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. This table reports the means of politician characteristics in pure control groups and the sampled potential candidates. The characteristic of interest is mentioned in the column. Difference between the means of the two groups is reported as “Difference A-B” and p-values tests if the two groups are similar.

3.4 Treatments

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

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

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

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

forward your name to him by tomorrow.”

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

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

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

“People who are elected to the village election will be provided a golden opportunity to do their part for the development of their area. Members of the village council will play an important role in improving the quality of government services in the village. They will work towards welfare and securing the rights of the poor. Working together with the district governments, they will improve the villages school and health facilities. An elected councillor will have a unique opportunity to address the problems of his neighborhood, which will make him the standard bearer of social development for the village.”

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

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

3.5 Data

We use three sources of data in this experiment, a short pre-treatment survey, administrative records from Election Commission of Pakistan and a long survey post treatment. First we administer the short survey to our sample of 2039 citizens before administration of treatment. This survey includes basic information about them and collects prior beliefs of the respondents about affordability of elections, chances to win office and the benefits from

public office. The second source of data is administrative records of Election Commission of Pakistan. We collect data on all candidates who run for office in our sample villages. We then match administrative lists to our sample. The third source of data is a long survey that we administer after declaration of candidacy. This survey collects detailed information on factors that went into the decision, the political experience of the subjects and their future political plans. We also collect information on psychometric and behavioral variables that we adopt from Callen et al. (2016) and Ashraf, Bandiera and Jack (2014).

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

4 Analysis and Results

4.1 Estimation

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

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

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

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

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

In the above estimations we include village fixed effects by including dummies ψ_v for each village v . It is important to include the village fixed effects in the estimation as the

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

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

$$t_{ui} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * t_{li} \tag{3}$$

$$y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 * \hat{t}_{ui} + \alpha_2 * t_{ei} + \alpha_3 * t_{bi} + \psi_v + \epsilon \tag{4}$$

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

4.2 Main Results

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

Figure 1 reports the raw means of whether someone decided to file candidacy in the treatment and the control groups. First thing to note is that the mean proportion of citizens running for office is fairly high. In our sample 713 individuals ran for office that constitutes 35% of the total sample. This is a high rate of candidacy, however it is unsurprising since the sample is unique and not representative of the citizens. While identifying the sample, we had asked citizens to identify persons who *may* not run for office. The intention was to get at people who really are at the verge of becoming politicians but may not do so due to the cost

or information frictions. From the raw means, it appears the lawyer treatment group has maximum proportion of people running for office. The rest of the treatment groups appear mostly to be similar to each other. This suggests that cost of running is the main barrier to political entry of the citizens.

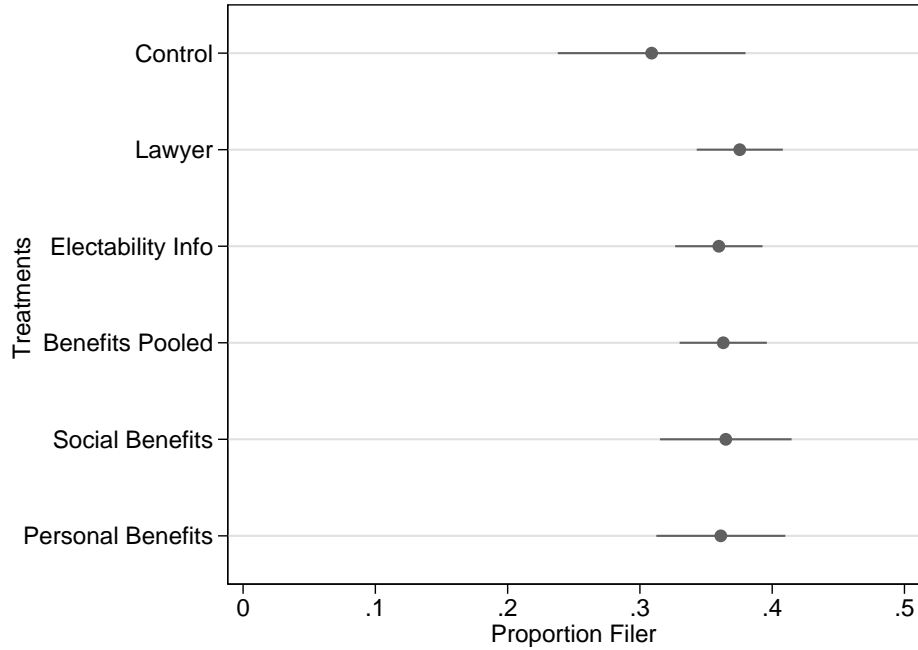


Figure 1: Mean "Filer" Treatment and Control Groups

We report the results of our main analysis in table 4. In this table we run regressions that do not control for cross randomization but controls for all treatments. Since treatment assignment was done within the village we may be concerned that some villages are more politically active than others or some may be poorer than others. Such differences, particularly those that make some barriers more salient in some villages may affect our results. In order to control this variation which is explained by the village characteristics we include village fixed effects in the regressions.

Column 1 in Table 4 presents our main findings. Here we have pooled the benefits treatments into one group and focus on the three main treatments. "Filer" is the dependent variable in each regression. It takes a value of 1 if the citizen appeared on ballot paper and zero otherwise. We find that the cost of running for office is the only barrier that matters for the citizens. The point estimate on lawyer treatment is 0.048, which means that subsidizing the cost through a lawyer leads to a 4.8 percentage point increase in the probability of running for office. In control group the probability of running for office is 30.7% so subsidizing the

cost results in an increase of 15% in the probability of running for office.

Table 4: **Main Results**

Panel A Dependent Variable: Filer				
	(1)	(2)	(3) IV	(4) IV
Lawyer	0.048** (0.019)	0.048** (0.019)	0.065*** (0.024)	0.065*** (0.024)
Electability	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.018)	0.011 (0.018)
Benefits	0.029 (0.019)		0.029 (0.018)	
Social Benefits		0.019 (0.027)		0.019 (0.026)
Personal Benefits		0.038 (0.028)		0.039 (0.026)
Constant	0.307*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)	0.367** (0.143)	0.362** (0.143)
F-Stat			141	147
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust
Panel B Dependent Variable: Elected				
	(1)	(2)	(3) IV	(4) IV
Lawyer	0.007 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)	0.009 (0.020)	0.009 (0.020)
Electability	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.015)	0.001 (0.015)
Benefits	0.035** (0.016)		0.035** (0.016)	
Social Benefits		0.026 (0.023)		0.026 (0.022)
Personal Benefits		0.043* (0.023)		0.043** (0.022)
Constant	0.163*** (0.016)	0.163*** (0.016)	0.147 (0.108)	0.143 (0.108)
F-Stat			3	3
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors are reported in parenthesis. All regressions include village fixed effects. column (1) and (2) use an intention to treat design with respect to the provision of lawyer, whereas column (3) and (4) use the provision of lawyer as an instrumental variable for the use of lawyer, which is then used to estimate the local average treatment effect of lawyer on filing papers. The dependent variable is "filer" in Panel A and "elect" in Panel B.

Electability information and highlighting benefits from office does not have a statistically significant effect. However, the coefficients are positive which indicates they may also be increasing candidacy but we can not make that claim statistically.

Further one can argue that the benefits treatment group may have opposing effects for personal and social benefits. Since the cost to run for office has to be borne by person it is likely that the citizens may only be interested if the benefits from office are also accrued to the person only, whereas the social benefits would make the public office less appealing. If

that is the case then pooling the benefits treatment together may cancel the opposing effects. To investigate if that is indeed the case, column (2) reports the result when we disaggregate the benefits into social and personal groups. First thing to note is that both coefficients are in the positive direction, suggesting that highlighting personal and social benefits may not have opposing reaction. Second, they do not appear to play much role in the decision to enter politics. This indicates we can't say that the lack of knowledge about benefits from public office is preventing citizens from entering politics.

Columns (1) and (2) attest to the importance of cost in the decision to enter politics. This suggests that non-elite candidates, who may be as competent as elite candidates, are not entering politics due to the cost associated with running for office. This may lead to the elite capture of local governments. However the analysis in these columns use an intention to treat design for studying the effect of lawyer. Here, we are assuming that everyone assigned to the lawyer treatment actually used their services and filed the papers. However, in our analysis we find that it is not the case. We provide services of lawyers to 1025 citizens from the sample. Out of these, 764 individuals end up using the services to prepare candidacy papers. However not all 764 officially file the papers to run for office, since they have a choice to withdraw at any stage of the process. Many do exercise this choice and only 278 formally appear on the ballot paper by officially declaring candidacy.

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

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

The above discussion establishes the importance of cost associated with running for office as the main barrier to political entry. We do not find information on electability or benefits from office to drive candidacy. This suggests it is not the information constraints that restrict citizens from entering the race for political office but the entry costs. In our experiment one of the main costs associated with the decision to enter politics is finding a suitable lawyer and paying them a fee to help citizen submit the candidacy papers. However this can be generalized to other settings where cost of entering politics includes making an effort to get on a party ticket or incurring monetary costs associated with campaigning. In this sense we feel our results are generalizable to other settings. At the very least, our results speak to the importance of making political entry less costly for citizens in poor and developing countries. Many new democracies adopt devolution of power to give power to the people in an effort to improve public service delivery. However, such efforts may bore little fruit if the elected officials are representative of the elite. Our main finding suggests that such initiatives must take into account the cost of officially declaring candidacy.

The main focus of this paper is candidacy decision and the factors that constitute barriers to political entry. However, once citizens decide to enter politics, by running for public office, it is natural to ask how do they fare in elections. In this section we explore the electoral performance of the candidates who appear on the ballot paper. Panel B of Table 4 report the unconditional analysis on results of election. In this panel the dependent variable is called *elected*. It takes the value one if the person wins the election and zero otherwise. First thing to note is that subsidizing the cost to let more people run for office does not translate into higher election rate. This was expected since running for office is necessary but not sufficient condition to win an election. Electoral success requires running an effective campaign that revolves around forming a winning coalition or appealing to largest group of voters. Since we induce first time and non-elite politicians to run for office, they may still be lacking knowledge to run a campaign that wins elections.

Second notable result from the table is that the probability to win an election is 16% in the control group which is fairly high. Thus it is not that our experimental sample cannot win elections but rather the extra candidates induced due to treatments could not win more seats. Finally, we find that the group receiving information about benefits from office do get elected more often. There is a possibility that the information motivates them to exert extra effort in running a campaign that can win an office. We do not have information on the campaigns so we cannot test if that is indeed the case. But if we breakdown the sample on the kind of benefits that were mentioned during the treatment, we can see that it is the personal benefits that is driving the result as reported in column 2 and 4 of Table 4. This suggests that information on personal benefits may drive up the motivation of candidates.

4.2.1 Robustness to Standard Errors

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

In order to address this concern, we reanalyze our data with a new specification that clusters standard error at the village level. We report the findings from this analysis in appendix Table 11. The first two columns report the intention to treat effect of the provision of a lawyer whereas the last two columns use treatment assignment as instrumental variable for the use of lawyer. The results in this table prove that our conclusions are robust to the type of standard errors we use. We are confident that the village level experiment (Gulzar and Khan 2017) does not affect our results, reported in this paper, in any meaningful way.

4.3 Heterogeneous Effects

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

4.3.1 Electability

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

As reported in the Table 5 prior belief of citizen about electability is an important characteristic that affects the way citizen responds to the treatment. In the table high priors stand for a one standard deviation increase in the beliefs of the citizens. A person with high belief about his chances to win responds to all three types of treatment. Another note

worthy result is that provision of electability information does not affect the decision of a person with average belief about his own electability.

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

Panel B of Table 5 reports heterogeneous effects of beliefs on winning the elections. The results show that those with a strong belief about their chances of winning an election were more likely to win irrespective of the treatment provided except the benefits treatment. They are more likely to win irrespective of the prior beliefs if they are given information about the benefits that they can have from office. This again indicates that the prospective politicians may get motivated if they know the benefits and exert higher effort in their campaign to win office.

Discussion in this section highlighted an important caveat about our results so far. While cost of elections restrict supply of non-elites, the potential candidates who have high belief about their chances to win can be induced to run for office with only the information treatments too.

4.3.2 Benefits from Office

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

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

Thinking in terms of the cost benefit analysis of a citizen while deciding to run for office, one expects that citizens who have a high prior belief about benefits from office will be more likely to enter politics if their cost to run for office is mitigated. However Table 6 column 1

Table 5: **Prior on Electability**

Panel A: Dependent Variable: Filer			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lawyer	0.049*** (0.019)	0.052*** (0.019)	0.050*** (0.019)
Electability	0.012 (0.019)	0.010 (0.019)	0.012 (0.019)
Benefits	0.030 (0.019)	0.031 (0.019)	0.030 (0.019)
High Prior x Lawyer	0.041*** (0.015)		
High Prior x Electability		0.052*** (0.015)	
High Prior x Benefits			0.042*** (0.015)
Constant	0.306*** (0.019)	0.304*** (0.019)	0.306*** (0.019)
N	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust
Panel B: Dependent Variable: Elected			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lawyer	0.008 (0.016)	0.009 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)
Electability	0.002 (0.016)	0.000 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)
Benefits	0.036** (0.016)	0.037** (0.016)	0.035** (0.016)
High Prior x Lawyer	0.031** (0.013)		
High Prior x Electability		0.032** (0.013)	
High Prior x Benefits			0.019 (0.013)
Constant	0.162*** (0.016)	0.161*** (0.016)	0.163*** (0.016)
N	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard Errors are reported in parenthesis.. All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on electability has been standardized. It represents the priors of candidates from least likely to win election to very much likely. High priors means a one standard deviation increase in the beliefs.

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

	Dependent Variable: Filer			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.048** (0.019)	0.048** (0.019)	0.049** (0.019)	0.048** (0.019)
Electability	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)
Social Benefits	0.017 (0.027)	0.018 (0.027)	0.018 (0.027)	0.019 (0.027)
Personal Benefits	0.038 (0.028)	0.038 (0.028)	0.038 (0.028)	0.037 (0.028)
High Prior x Lawyer	0.023 (0.016)			
High Prior x Electability		0.006 (0.015)		
High Prior x Social Benefits			-0.010 (0.024)	
High Prior x Personal Benefits				0.021 (0.022)
Constant	0.308*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust

	Dependent Variable: Elected			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.007 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)
Electability	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)
Social Benefits	0.026 (0.023)	0.025 (0.023)	0.026 (0.023)	0.026 (0.023)
Personal Benefits	0.043* (0.023)	0.043* (0.023)	0.043* (0.023)	0.043* (0.023)
High Prior x Lawyer	0.011 (0.013)			
High Prior x Electability		0.013 (0.012)		
High Prior x Social Benefits			0.004 (0.017)	
High Prior x Personal Benefits				0.002 (0.019)
Constant	0.163*** (0.016)	0.164*** (0.016)	0.163*** (0.016)	0.163*** (0.016)
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard Errors are reported in parenthesis.. All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on personal benefits has been standardized. High prior stands for a one standard deviation increase in the prior beliefs.

reports that is not the case. An increase in prior belief about benefits does not result in a higher probability that the citizen will declare candidacy if a subsidy in the form of a lawyer is provided. The prior on personal benefits also does not differentially affect the response to information about electability of a person. Importantly, it appears the prior belief on personal benefits does not interact in significant way with the personal and social benefit treatment either.

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

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

4.4 Alternate Explanation

So far we have argued that cost is the main barrier facing citizens when they consider the decision of political entry. One concern that can be raised about this interpretation is that the cost results can be driven by the fact the lawyer is free so citizens use them irrespective of their own concerns about the cost of elections. Alternatively, citizens who consider election to be an affordable endeavor should not care about the cost associated with elections. It should not matter for their political decision whether they receive a subsidy with the provision of a lawyer or not. If we cannot say with certainty that it does not matter to people who can afford the cost associated with the election, our interpretation of main result may not be correct. Since we have found that cost is the main barrier facing the citizens, in order to strengthen our conclusions we need to assess how does this barrier work.

As indicated earlier we collected prior beliefs of the citizens, including their beliefs about affordability of the elections. They are asked to rank on a Likert scale of one to five affordability of the elections for them. One was considered to be least affordable whereas five was considered to be most affordable. They were asked this question before administration of the treatments. We standardized the responses into z-scores for ease of interpretation.

Table 8 reports the analysis on prior beliefs regarding affordability of the elections. Each column includes interaction of prior belief on affordability with one treatment group. The

Table 7: Prior on Social Benefits from Office

Dependent Variable: Filer				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.047** (0.019)	0.047** (0.019)	0.048** (0.019)	0.049*** (0.019)
Electability	0.012 (0.019)	0.012 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)	0.013 (0.019)
Social Benefits	0.020 (0.027)	0.018 (0.027)	0.019 (0.027)	0.019 (0.027)
Personal Benefits	0.039 (0.028)	0.039 (0.028)	0.038 (0.028)	0.037 (0.027)
High Prior x Lawyer	0.041** (0.017)			
High Prior x Electability		0.026 (0.016)		
High Prior x Social Benefits			0.024 (0.024)	
High Prior x Personal Benefits				0.053** (0.024)
Constant	0.307*** (0.019)	0.308*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)	0.306*** (0.019)
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust
Dependent Variable: Elected				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.006 (0.016)	0.006 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)	0.007 (0.016)
Electability	0.001 (0.016)	0.002 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)
Social Benefits	0.027 (0.023)	0.026 (0.023)	0.026 (0.023)	0.026 (0.023)
Personal Benefits	0.044* (0.023)	0.044* (0.023)	0.043* (0.023)	0.043* (0.023)
High Prior x Lawyer	0.021* (0.012)			
High Prior x Electability		0.029** (0.013)		
High Prior x Social Benefits			0.033* (0.017)	
High Prior x Personal Benefits				0.009 (0.021)
Constant	0.163*** (0.016)	0.164*** (0.016)	0.163*** (0.016)	0.163*** (0.016)
N	2039	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard Errors are reported in parenthesis. All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on personal benefits has been standardized. High prior stands for a one standard deviation increase in the beliefs of citizens.

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

	Dependent Variable: Filer		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lawyer	0.048** (0.019)	0.048** (0.019)	0.048** (0.019)
Electability	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)	0.011 (0.019)
Benefits	0.029 (0.019)	0.029 (0.019)	0.029 (0.019)
High Prior x Lawyer	-0.011 (0.015)		
High Prior x Electability		-0.004 (0.015)	
High Prior x Benefits			-0.009 (0.015)
Constant	0.307*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)	0.307*** (0.019)
N	2039	2039	2039
Standard Errors	Robust	Robust	Robust

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard Errors are reported in parenthesis. All regressions include village fixed effects. The prior on affordability has been standardized. It represents the prior beliefs of citizens about the election being affordable for them. High prior stands for one standard deviation increase in perceived affordability of the elections.

first column presents findings from analyzing the effect of lawyer interacted with the belief about affordability. Column (2) reports the effect of electability information interacted with prior belief about affordability and column (3) reports the interaction with benefits treatment.

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

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

5 Conclusion

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

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

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

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

This study speaks to the possibility of establishing inclusive elected institutions at the local level that are not captured by elites. Every year a significant amount of funds are spent by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies and non profit organizations to promote democracy in fragile countries. This study provides evidence that such programs can be effective if we understand what prevents citizens from participating in democratic institutions.

A Appendix

Table 9: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Village Characteristics					
Num Settlements	2.23	1.58	1	11	191
Cell Reception	0.91	0.29	0	1	191
Distance to main road	8.14	16.98	0.5	100	191
Distance to District HQ	26.76	19.52	2	165	191
Distance to County HQ	22.92	17.61	1	110	191
Literacy Rate	50.41	12.29	17.6	74.10	175
Council size	9.81	1.27	7	14	191
Average # of candidates on general seat	9.02	2.57	5	23	191
Average # of general seats	6.08	0.96	5	10	191
Total Votes	6552.73	3060.1	1385	17345	191
Polled Votes	5486.92	2494.9	902	14498	185
Rejected Votes	398.81	320.97	0	1675	185
Voter turnout	0.76	0.11	0.46	0.99	185
Individual Characteristics					
Family Income (Rs.)	23760.3	14695.86	1000	350000	1985
Years of Schooling	9.48	3.42	0	18	2021
Village Committee Member	0.02	0.15	0	1	2039
Prior on Winning	3.97	0.87	1	5	2039
Prior on Cost to Run	3.23	0.84	1	5	2039

Table 10: **Balance Table for Indices**

	Pro-Social Index (1)	Personal Index (2)	Political Elites (3)	Traditional Elites (4)
Lawyer	0.010 (0.012)	0.021 (0.018)	0.003 (0.007)	0.024 (0.016)
Electability	-0.000 (0.012)	0.018 (0.018)	-0.001 (0.007)	0.029 (0.016)
Social Benefits	-0.025 (0.017)	-0.012 (0.025)	-0.015 (0.010)	-0.014 (0.021)
Personal Benefits	-0.006 (0.016)	-0.020 (0.023)	0.006 (0.009)	0.082 (0.023)
Control	0.006 (0.021)	0.048 (0.032)	-0.004 (0.013)	0.065 (0.030)
Mean of Variable	4	3	0	0
# Observations	2012	2020	2021	2021
Joint orthogonality p-value	0.429	0.215	0.510	0.010

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

Table 11: **Main Results-Clustered SE**

Dependent Variable: Filer				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.049** (0.028)	0.049** (0.028)	0.065** (0.025)	0.065** (0.026)
Electability	0.017 (0.379)	0.017 (0.381)	0.017 (0.376)	0.017 (0.378)
Benefits	0.023 (0.213)		0.024 (0.198)	
Social Benefits		0.024 (0.363)		0.026 (0.325)
Personal Benefits		0.022 (0.437)		0.022 (0.451)
Constant	0.307*** (0.000)	0.307*** (0.000)	0.306*** (0.000)	0.307*** (0.000)
F-Stat			2.447	1.849
N	2039	2039	2039	2039

Dependent Variable: Elect				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyer	0.008 (0.651)	0.008 (0.649)	0.010 (0.650)	0.010 (0.647)
Electability	0.003 (0.867)	0.003 (0.865)	0.003 (0.866)	0.003 (0.864)
Benefits	0.034** (0.021)		0.035** (0.020)	
Social Benefits		0.032 (0.115)		0.032 (0.109)
Personal Benefits		0.037 (0.110)		0.037 (0.108)
Constant	0.162*** (0.000)	0.162*** (0.000)	0.162*** (0.000)	0.162*** (0.000)
F-Stat			1.922	1.446
N	2039	2039	2039	2039

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard Errors are reported in parenthesis and clustered at village level.

Table 12: **Effects Controlling for all Treatment Groups**

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

Notes: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard Errors are reported in parenthesis. All regressions include village fixed effects.

Table 13: **Effects Controlling for all Treatment Groups - Clustered SE**

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

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

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

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