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Can Party Elites Shape the Rank-and-File? Evidence from a Recruitment Campaign in India

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Abstract

Recruiting a large number of ground workers is crucial for running effective modern election campaigns. It is unclear if party leaders can influence the quality and quantity of the unpaid rank-and-file workforce as they can with prized nominations for candidates. We analyze a field experiment conducted by an Indian party that randomized recruitment messages reaching 1% of a 13-million-person electorate to join its rank-and-file. Contrary to concerns that parties can only attract a few poor-quality volunteers, we show that elite efforts can shape the rank-and-file. In fact, specific strategies can increase the size, enhance the gender and ethnic diversity, *and* broaden the education and political skills of recruits. Strategies that signal gender inclusiveness have a lasting impact on some dimensions up to three years later. Taken together, this paper provides the first causal evidence that rank-and-file recruitment is an opportunity for elites to influence long-term party development.

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1 Introduction

The “rank-and-file,” or the “armies of volunteers on the ground” (Auerbach et al. 2021: p. 8) are key to effective ground campaigns in modern elections (Goyal 2023; Brierley and Nathan 2022), a pipeline for party leadership (McKenna and Han 2014; Weghorst 2022), and, therefore, instrumental in shaping party development in the long-run (Aldrich 2011; Thachil 2014).¹ Despite the crucial role of these personnel in representative democracy, there is a dearth of evidence on how party leaders confront the large human resource management work of recruiting the rank-and-file before campaigns can actually be run. While political scientists have demonstrated that party leaders exercise a high degree of control in the selection of candidates (Cohen et al. 2009; Dancygier et al. 2015; Gulzar 2021), relatively little is known about whether similar leverage can extend to recruiting the rank-and-file.

Perhaps one reason for this gap in the literature is the theoretical expectation that without financial incentives, or the prize of a party nomination, leaders have little ability to recruit a high number of quality rank-and-file. They must, instead, be content with whoever puts themselves forward (McKenna and Han 2014; Enos and Hersh 2015; Neuenschwander and Foos 2021; Chewning et al. 2024; Hannah, Reuning and Whitesell 2023). However, this reasoning is in contrast with modern campaigns around the world that run as highly sophisticated organizations targeting individual voters (Thachil 2014; Jha 2017; Enos and Hersh 2015; Cheema et al. 2023; Kalla and Broockman 2018), suggesting that elites are perhaps already finding high-quality people to deliver those campaigns.²

This paper attempts to fill the gap between practice and research on the recruitment of the rank-and-file by examining if party leaders indeed possess limited ability in recruiting them in the absence of prized incentives. Doing so is not straightforward. First, party elites in the

¹We define the rank-and-file in comparative perspective in the following section.

²Indeed, scholars write of cases like India’s Aam Aadmi Party (Singh 2019), which we analyze in this paper, and the Democratic Party in the US (McKenna and Han 2014; Enos and Hersh 2015), that mobilize a large volunteer base around elections.

status quo may already respond to a constrained supply of interested recruits. Examining how their actions shape the rank-and-file is therefore difficult without exogenous variation in effort exerted towards recruitment. Second, the problem of observing these efforts is compounded by a lack of researcher access to internal processes driving the modern party bureaucracy (Wantchekon 2003; Gulzar, Hai and Paudel 2021; Cantoni and Pons 2021).³ As a result, scholars note that extant research on ground campaigns examines the *effects* of direct voter outreach in great detail (Gerber and Green 2000) (for example, get-out-the-vote campaigns), but the study of *strategy* behind campaigns is thin (Enos and Hersh 2015). That is, to our knowledge, there exists no prior research that provides quantitative *causal* evidence on real-world rank-and-file recruitment efforts by political parties.

We present evidence from a recruitment experiment carried out by a political party in India at scale. We ask if party elites can effectively exercise levers at their disposal to shape the rank-and-file, or if their hands are tied by whoever puts themselves forward as a volunteer.⁴ The results provide robust evidence that not only can party elites shape the quantity and quality of the rank-and-file, but they can do so with non-monetary incentives at hand.

We overcome the empirical and theoretical challenges identified above in several ways. Collaborating with a political party allows us to closely examine how party elites recruit ground activists at scale in the status quo. In anticipation of state elections in Jharkhand, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) set out to enlist an army of party workers by distributing pamphlets among nearly 150,000 of the state’s 13 million voters, reaching about 1% of the electorate. We uncover the internal workings of party organizations by using survey data on these recruits and

³For instance, parties “are typically unwilling to delegate to researchers (and chance) the decision of which citizens to address and how” (Cantoni and Pons 2021:p. 381).

⁴More broadly, even with monetary incentives, principal-agent issues remain where senior politicians need to monitor the work of the rank-and-file (Brierley and Nathan 2022). See <https://www.tiktok.com/@occupydemocratsofficial/video/7105256205886573866>. “Why shaping the rank-and-file is difficult” provides further discussion.

information on Jharkhand demographics to describe status-quo recruitment. Ours is perhaps the largest survey of party rank-and-file in any developing democracy to date.

We make progress on the problem of causally evaluating the efficacy of party leader efforts in shaping the rank-and-file by studying a field experiment that the party built into the recruitment exercise. A key problem political parties face in the developing world is the recruitment and retention of women (Goyal 2023; Goyal and Sells 2023).⁵ In addition to pamphlets recruiting party workers under the status quo where the stories of existing male party workers are highlighted, in select areas party leaders randomly distributed pamphlets which, instead, emphasized the stories of its women workers. This allows us to study how signaling the *inclusiveness* of the party impacts who decides to join. In addition to this first dimension of messaging, the party also cross-randomized that portrayal of *benefits* that can accrue to a prospective recruit from joining the party. These treatment pamphlets randomly emphasized four benefits of joining: the party’s ideology around its anti-corruption brand, the chance of becoming a candidate, the policy influence that party workers can have, or gathering political work experience.

We begin the analysis with the key theoretical puzzle of whether efforts by party leaders can shape the rank-and-file at all, or if their efforts will be moot in the absence of high-powered incentives. During mobilization, prospective recruits were asked to call back later at a number if they were interested in joining the party, our main outcome. On receiving the call, the party administered a brief survey allowing us to characterize the diversity and skills of the recruited pool. Three years later, party leaders carried out a follow-up call enabling the measurement of treatment effects over the long run. We establish a null hypothesis that diverging from the status-quo way of recruiting the rank-and-file will not yield party members in different quantities or compositions. We test this by comparing the joint significance of all treatments

⁵In South Asia, it is atypical to find (m)any women among party personnel (Yadav 2019). In such settings, the party faces a chicken-and-egg situation; they need workers from under-represented communities to be able to recruit more of them.

implemented by AAP against status-quo recruitment.

We find that party elite efforts at recruitment yield not only a statistically and substantively different *size* of the recruit pool, but one that differs in its *composition* as measured through abilities and diversity. We also find that these actions continued to matter three years after the recruitment campaign. Taken together, this is compelling evidence that under real-world conditions where the party cannot offer financial incentives, party elites' efforts can still shape the rank-and-file in meaningful ways.

While our primary question stressed in general whether party leaders have the ability to move the needle on who is in the rank-and-file, we also examine secondary questions of whether elites can shape the recruitment—that is, can they pull levers at their disposal to yield individuals who have specific backgrounds or abilities? To answer this, we compare treatment and status-quo pamphlets across two dimensions: signaling features of the party organization such as gender inclusiveness, and emphasizing the benefits of joining.

In a context where politics is the domain of men, seeing that a party is inclusive can encourage women and other marginalized communities to join by increasing their perceived sense of political efficacy, likelihood of being appointed to a position of influence, or chances of having a harassment-free work environment. The impacts on the skills of the recruited pool are ambiguous: on the one hand, broadening politics can create space for high-caliber people from marginalized backgrounds, but, on the other hand, the traditional fear is that people from these groups possess few skills.

We first find that pamphlets emphasizing gender inclusiveness of the party were successful, first, at recruiting more rank-and-file. Second, the treatment was effective at recruiting people from excluded groups, including marginalized castes and tribes *and* women. The latter is particularly significant because moving the needle on bringing more women into political parties is seen as a particularly difficult problem. Third, we find that, contrary to concerns that broadening access will reduce quality, the skills profile of recruits also improves. Fourth, examining long-term impacts, we find that the treatment was remarkably successful at recruit-

ing people who continued to be available for the party up to three years later. However, while these long-term effects arise particularly among marginalized castes and tribes, which is significant for broadening politics in the long run, we, nonetheless, observe that the positive effects on the recruitment of women attenuate completely. We conclude that signaling inclusiveness can be effective at making progress on the immediate, seemingly intractable, recruitment of women, but the party must continue to exert effort at maintaining the pipeline.

Besides the impacts of signaling inclusiveness, we also study how varying the salience of potential benefits to prospective recruits affects whether they join the party. The general prediction here is that these efforts will not produce much change because no monetary benefits are being offered and recruits must bear significant costs to work for the party.⁶ Any minimal movement we might observe will be from low-skilled people.

In contrast to these predictions, we find that relative to the status-quo pamphlet, party leaders are able to increase the number of new recruits—particularly those that belong to excluded groups and those who possess political skills—if they signal the ideological and potential candidacy returns from joining the party. Signaling policy priorities of the party, however, reduced the recruited pool on all dimensions. A potential interpretation of these effects is that ideological and candidacy benefits accrue regardless of electoral performance, but that policy returns were not credible since the party had a minimal chance of forming government. Finally, unlike the female pamphlet, we observe no evidence that these effects persist in the long run.

While our analysis focuses on recruitment by the Aam Aadmi Party in India, the results carry lessons for a broad set of cases. First, it is worth noting that the recruitment campaign we study is part of AAP’s party-building process across India. On April 11, 2023, the Election Commission recognized AAP as a national-level party by reserving its election symbol for races

⁶In “Highlighting benefits from joining the party” we elaborate on specific predictions in light of the literature.

across the country.⁷ AAP’s party-building work is typical of India’s dynamic party system where even the nationally-ruling party does not have a presence in all constituencies and where parties are constantly battling over new turf and poaching politicians from each other. Second, within India, all parties employ a similar pamphlet distribution method for recruitment (see Appendix A.2 for examples from BJP), and leverage the rank-and-file in competing door-to-door campaigns before election day (Yadav 2019; Sahu 2019; Auerbach et al. 2021). Third, experts of Indian politics also note that the composition of AAP’s membership is remarkably similar to other, more established Indian parties.⁸ Finally, recruitment is not only an Indian phenomenon, as we describe more in the following section. Just as the Indian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), long branded as an upper-caste, elite party, managed to incorporate and promote historically marginalized groups within its ranks (Thachil 2014), the Argentinian Justicialista (Peronist) Party’s leadership was successful in weakening its union links and recruiting workers from low-income communities (Levitsky 2001). Strategic recruitment of rank-and-file party workers remains an important tool for parties to credibly promote new policies and mobilize new electorates as economies transform, demographics shift, and windows of discourse expand.

This paper makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature on political campaigns (Aldrich 2011; Stokes 1999; Hirschman 1970; Kalla and Broockman 2018; Ichino and Nathan 2012; Auerbach and Thachil 2018; Chewning et al. 2024; Hannah, Reuning and Whitesell 2023; Goyal 2023). First, there is relatively limited work on ground campaigns, particularly from low- and middle-income contexts (Cheema et al. 2023; Thachil 2014; Palmer-Rubin, Garay and Poertner 2021). We theoretically clarify arguments for why leaders’ ability to affect change in the rank-and-file can be limited, and how this expectation contrasts with other domains like candidate selection where party leaders are supposed to exert great influence. We test this claim empirically and present at-scale evidence against it.⁹

⁷See <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/ec-revokes-national-party-status-of-tmc-ncp-cpi-grants-status-to-aap-8549118/>, accessed April 11, 2023.

⁸Authors’ interview with a senior researcher at a Delhi policy institute, 11 January 2020.

⁹Our work is closest to Neuenschwander and Foos (2021), who show experimentally in

Second, studies on political campaigns focus on the *impacts* of ground campaigns on voters rather than the *strategies* behind them as Enos and Hersh (2015) note. In at least two ways, our work departs from this by examining *strategies* of running campaigns. First, we propose and provide evidence that even lacking financial resources, party leader efforts can matter. Second, we speak to the problem that as elite organizations, the personnel of parties are less diverse than the electorate, potentially limiting their ability to reach new groups (Rokkan and Valen 1962). Our results indicate that one campaign strategy could be to diversify the party through signaling inclusiveness.¹⁰ This could have downstream benefits; recent evidence from India shows that the identity of campaigners in parties matters for persuading and mobilizing people (Goyal 2023), though evidence from other contexts suggests that this might not always be the case (Broockman and Kalla 2016; Broockman et al. 2023).

Third, beyond political campaigns, political scientists have long examined how political parties are organized and the consequences of that for democratic performance (Aldrich 2011). Recently, scholars have turned their attention towards party personnel, focusing, for instance, on the selection of political candidates (see, for instance, Ichino and Nathan 2012; Auerbach and Thachil 2018; Gulzar 2021; Goyal 2023), and also elite preferences and behavior (Broockman and Skovron 2018; Gulzar, Hai and Paudel 2021; Pereira 2021) during the candidate nomination and policy-making process. Without a deeper understanding of how parties recruit from the ground up, how they build and motivate these people, and how these people rise through the party’s ranks, it is not possible to fully characterize the core functions and evolution of political parties. Our paper presents, to our knowledge, the first quantitative causal

Switzerland that encouraging *existing* party members to volunteer for campaigns does not work. However, Palmer-Rubin, Garay and Poertner (2021) show that varying messages on pamphlets can shift people’s willingness to join interest organizations.

¹⁰Our results are particularly promising on the seemingly intractable problem of recruiting women as party workers, but also suggest the need for a sustained effort at maintaining the pipeline (Thomsen and King 2020).

study of the initial stage of political selection: the recruitment and motivation of front-line rank-and-file.

Finally, we also contribute to the study of political parties in India, and South Asia more broadly. Challenging the notion that political parties in the region can be boxed into characterizations of “clientelism” and “weak parties,” scholars have issued a call to unpack the foundations of party-building in South Asia (Auerbach et al. 2021; Mufti, Shafqat and Siddiqui 2020; Chhibber and Verma 2018). Among other directions, they argue that more work is needed to examine recruitment strategies related to “selective material incentives, ethnicity, ideology, or leadership charisma,” and whether they attract committed and capable party workers (Auerbach et al. 2021: p. 10).¹¹ This paper directly answers this call to action.

2 Recruitment to Party Rank-and-File

2.1 The party rank-and-file and the Aam Aadmi Party

Who are the party rank-and-file? We differentiate three tiers in political parties: the *national leadership*, whose responsibilities include candidate nominations, national campaigns, communication, and policy research (Katz and Mair 1993); the heterogeneous *mid-level members*,¹² who work at regional levels to organize rallies, mobilize supporters on election day, and make government benefits accessible to voters; and the *rank-and-file* party activists who campaign door-to-door, attend rallies, work phone banks, and check polling stations on election day

¹¹McKenna and Han (2014) also argue that the 2008 Obama campaigns’ success can be attributed to the strategy that “embraced the gritty but necessary work of recruiting local volunteers... well in advance of the election” (p. 42).

¹²At least some of these mid-level members are referred to as party *brokers* or local *influencers* in the literature (Stokes, Dunning and Nazareno 2013; Auerbach and Thachil 2018; Brierley and Nathan 2021; Gingerich 2020).

(Enos and Hersh 2015; Auerbach et al. 2021).¹³ The recruitment of thousands of these rank-and-file members is a relatively new phenomenon in political campaigns, gaining traction over the last decade and a half.

The rank-and-file also play a crucial role in electoral campaigns for the Aam Aadmi Party, literally the “Common Man’s Party.” AAP formed from the India Against Corruption social movement in 2013 and continues to expand across India. Like most medium-sized parties, AAP has a complex bureaucratic structure to govern its affairs. Figure 1 displays the party’s national and state-level organizational structure.

AAP staffed its Jharkhand campaign, the focus of our study, with leaders—called “assembly-in-charges”—that managed overall affairs within the 60 of 81 state constituencies where AAP built its party organization. 523 vice presidents (which we refer to as the “middle-level members”), reported directly to these assembly-in-charges, with multiple vice presidents per assembly. These vice presidents manage workers and party outreach within approximately five village clusters (*gram panchayats*) each, and are responsible for implementing pamphlet-based recruitment campaigns like the one we study.

At the bottom are the rank-and-file. These individuals operate in teams, coordinating activities under the supervision of their superiors. Before elections, each rank-and-file member canvasses 20-50 households from electoral rolls, identifying supporters. Citizens have a rare “opportunity to rate the performance of the powerful” (Banerjee 2017:p. 42) as millions of party workers in India, and across the world, funnel this feedback upwards. With all of this information, the party and rank-and-file members ensure platforms respond to voters’ preferences and supporters turn out on election day.¹⁴ According to AAP leaders, rank-and-file members’ “main job on [election] day is to help voters find the right polling booth. They have

¹³Some rank-and-file members may also be referred to as brokers, but in general, we hold the rank-and-file to be a much larger set of party volunteers, involving thousands who engage typically within the span of one campaign

¹⁴Authors’ focus group discussion with AAP workers, 20 November, 2018.

to manage breakfast and lunch for the party. They have to monitor all the booths whether something is going wrong. [...] AAP has focused on breaking down [illegal] distribution of liquor and money and party workers [have to] remain observant.”¹⁵ After elections, some party workers continue their work as liaisons between elites, elected officials, and voters. They provide a crucial democratic “feedback loop,” allowing one elected representative we spoke with to be immediately clued into the issues facing voters in his constituency.¹⁶

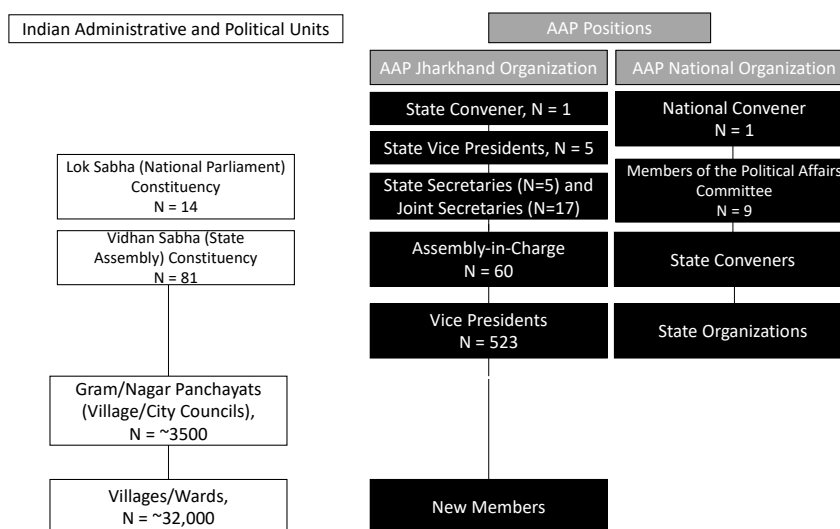


Figure 1: Political Units in India and Concurrent AAP Positions

2.2 The calculus of joining the rank-and-file

How do people decide to join the rank-and-file? One way to conceptualize this decision problem is to assume that individuals want to maximize the utility from how they spend their time. They would therefore weigh the benefits and costs of joining the rank-and-file against other uses of their time and effort.¹⁷ The first consideration for prospective recruits relates to the

¹⁵Authors’ focus group interview in Delhi, 20 November, 2018.

¹⁶Authors’ interview with Uttar Pradesh MP, 2 August, 2018.

¹⁷Our conceptual framework for joining the rank-and-file is similar to the candidacy decision reviewed in Gulzar (2021).

benefits they expect to receive from joining the rank-and-file. Typically, benefits from any job are thought of in terms of financial compensation. As the party rank-and-file are nonsalaried volunteers, our study focuses on non-pecuniary returns that we detail in a coming section. Individuals also consider the costs of participating. Time costs relate to work done prior to and on election day, and non-election periods. Recruits for AAP, as other Indian parties, typically bear their own monetary costs associated with travel and food without expectation of compensation. As one veteran worker put it, “The [Biju Janata Dal party] takes care of my needs and has been with me through thick and thin. But I don’t depend on it for a living” (Sahu 2019). Individuals weigh the relative benefits and costs against alternative uses of their time and energy: the opportunity costs. As shown in related literature on candidate selection, individuals with high opportunity costs are considered more “competent,” having higher outside income and more education. Conversely, individuals with limited alternative uses of their time may be less “qualified” and effective at the job of being a party volunteer, yet more likely to sign up.

2.3 Why shaping the rank-and-file is difficult

At its core, the problem from the party leaders’ perspective is that they need to recruit thousands of competent rank-and-file members before elections. Hannah, Reuning and Whitesell (2023) write that “all local parties face constraints on limited resources, and the ability to recruit and train new volunteers may be a function of organizational capacity” (p. 931). Weir and Ganz (2017) highlight a campaign training document in Ohio which says: “We cannot achieve the sheer volume of what we need in order to win without [volunteers’] help” (p.8).

On the benefits side, parties cannot afford to pay the large number of people they need to recruit and must rely on volunteerism.¹⁸ This presents party leaders with a challenge in attracting high-quality workers. Scholars studying the U.S. noted this challenge even before

¹⁸Note that party leaders can pay certain individuals recruited in a more managerial capacity, but we focus on the volunteer rank-and-file.

the mass mobilization of Obama’s 2008 campaign. McKenna and Han (2014), describing campaigns around 2002, write that “most voter contact operations were contingent on the amount of paid staff a campaign could hire” (p. 33). The authors quote Weir and Ganz (2017) to note that this meant campaigns had a hard time absorbing “ordinary people into party-run field efforts” (p. 211) who could mobilize many others in the lead-up to and on election day.

On the costs side, too, party leaders face challenges. People with high opportunity costs have greater skills and education, limiting the pool of high-quality recruits. In addition, the work is challenging — recruits toil day in and day out, knocking on doors, staffing rallies, and fulfilling unplanned tasks that inevitably arise. McKenna and Han (2014) write that “it’s hard, grueling... work to build a truly grassroots national organization—and that is why so few campaigns choose to do it” (p. ix). AAP party leaders echoed similar concerns in interviews, saying they delicately balance their demands of volunteers to not overwhelm the rank-and-file’s finite economic and temporal resources.

Given the limited ability of leaders to pay and these high costs incurred, it is reasonable that few would want this job, and that those who do have limited experience or education. We see this in less institutionalized settings where candidates’ own family and social networks staff elections. But to contest elections institutionally at scale, parties must resolve this recruitment challenge. This motivates our core question: can elites strategically manipulate the size and composition of the rank-and-file, and if so, how?

2.4 How parties can recruit in the absence of pecuniary benefits

In the face of a limited ability to offer high-powered incentives, we ask if signals from party elites of potential non-pecuniary benefits from joining the party can shape who decides to join. As parties institutionalize, leaders can engage in strategic mobilization of the citizenry to develop a robust bureaucratic base for electoral mobilization (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). To do so, parties use door-to-door canvassing to easily relay information about how to join

(Whiteley and Seyd 1992). Other common modes of outreach include membership forms on websites or at local offices, or mailing lists in high-income contexts (Neuenschwander and Foos 2021).

Previous work discusses whether the content of mobilization materials can impact how many and which people respond to messaging (Preece and Stoddard 2015; Broockman 2014; Broockman and Kalla 2016; Broockman et al. 2023; Palmer-Rubin, Garay and Poertner 2021). Most, however, focus on the recruitment of political candidates (Broockman 2014) or middle management (Brierley and Nathan 2021), instead of the rank-and-file, perhaps because the large-scale recruitment of the rank-and-file is a recent phenomenon, as McKenna and Han (2014), Enos and Hersh (2015), and others document regarding the Obama campaign. While the appeals parties make to prospective recruits can take many forms, our focus in this paper is on two dimensions. The first is a signal about the features of the party organization—here, a salient dimension is its gender-inclusiveness. The second is a signal about the benefits that accrue to the recruit. We also consider the interaction between these two dimensions: they can reinforce each other, or substitute the perceived returns if seen to be in conflict.

2.4.1 Highlighting inclusiveness of the party

Political parties are disproportionately staffed by men and a large gender gap in party membership persists in many parts of the world – for instance, Figure 1 in Goyal and Sells (2023) shows that parties in Brazil have about a third more men than women as activists, while Table 1 in Goyal (2023) shows that women report 18 percent less contact by activists than men in India, and this gap arises with male-only activist teams.¹⁹ This is perhaps because political party elites have not prioritized the recruitment of women as a key feature of their party organization, a limitation elites are increasingly sensitive to.

¹⁹Women have had fewer resources, less freedom to articulate their own political preferences, limited agency to move outside of the home, and fewer political networks to mobilize politically (Khan 2021; Adam-Rahman and Thompson 2022; Prillaman 2023).

From the party’s perspective, recruiting women is beneficial in the long run because it potentially builds a bench of candidates that better represent the interests of voters. This is especially true in places like India where the gender gap in voting is shrinking. On the more immediate level, parties care about recruiting a more gender-balanced rank-and-file because of how they might mobilize voters differently. In a context most similar to ours, Goyal (2023) shows that women staffing ground campaigns can be an important determinant of the campaign’s efficacy at reaching women voters. Qualitative accounts from India also suggest that women workers might be important agents in mobilizing women. In *Outlook’s* profiles of the rank-and-file, a leader of West Bengal’s All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) praised a young female worker for playing “a major role in bringing women in villages ... into the Trinamool fold.” Her goal was “To ensure every woman in our polling booth casts her vote on [election day]” (Pramanik 2019). Evidence from other contexts, however, is more mixed and signals the need for more research. For instance, Broockman and Kalla (2016) show that, in the United States, transgender and nontransgender canvassers were both equally effective at reducing transphobia.²⁰

From the recruits’ perspective, there are reasons to believe that gender-inclusive recruitment by a party can be successful at attracting women volunteers. First, it could boost the chances that women are recruited at all (Fox and Lawless 2010). Second, it could increase women’s perceived intrinsic returns from joining, for example, by raising their ambition to participate in politics (Bonneau and Kanthak 2020) and increasing their sense of political efficacy (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006). Third, women recruits might also anticipate greater instrumental returns from joining—for instance, by increasing the perception that women are likely to be influential in setting the party’s policy (Clayton and Zetterberg 2018) or being effective if nominated to positions of leadership (Beaman et al. 2009). Finally, inclusive recruitment can also lower the costs of joining the party, for example, by improving the perception of on-the-job conditions such as harassment (Håkansson 2021) and enabling bargaining with

²⁰See also Broockman et al. (2023).

gatekeepers, such as parents or husbands (Cheema et al. 2023).

Beyond women, our conceptualization of “excluded groups” encapsulates gender, caste, and religious groups, all of whom remain underrepresented in the ranks of political parties in India. While the historical reasons for these groups’ exclusion from political and economic spheres differ, the below predictions assume that similar processes occur among diverse individuals when parties signal positive incentives to them.²¹

Highlighting gender inclusivity can, therefore, signal a welcoming party for broader set of marginalized groups. Adida, Davenport and McClendon (2016) show that African Americans in the United States respond positively to co-minority (Latino) political cues, while Brulé and Toth (2022) show that political quotas along two identity dimensions are more likely to build ethnic and gender solidarity in India. Thus, AAP’s gender-inclusive recruitment material may also attract other marginalized groups through similar channels of change.

That leaves the status-quo, likely male, recruits who would join more if they value inclusiveness of parties. However, it is possible that they become less likely to join if they perceive that the party is no longer speaking in their interests. Taken together, we hypothesize that the overall effect of gender-inclusive recruitment is dependent on how strong this backlash is from non-excluded groups compared to the increase in membership from women, excluded castes, and excluded religions.

What remains unclear is how this recruitment would affect the skill composition of the pool vis-a-vis status-quo recruitment. The logic for this is not straightforward because the predictions depend on the average level of skills in the status quo, as well as the skills of the marginal recruit. There are two possibilities. On the one hand, inducting more marginalized recruits, who are typically also excluded from educational opportunities (Jenselius 2015), can lower the average skills of the rank-and-file. On the other hand, if the status quo is biased

²¹Data on women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Muslims show that their labor force participation and wages remain low (*see, e.g.*, the Periodic Labour Force Survey and Oxfam’s India Discrimination Report, accessed on January 15, 2024.)

towards recruiting men, even if their quality is low (or “mediocre” per Besley et al. (2017)), it is possible that including excluded groups in the rank-and-file could actually boost the average quality of the recruits.²²

2.4.2 Highlighting benefits from joining the party

While the first dimension of recruitment aims to signal the party’s inclusiveness, recruitment materials also allow citizens to directly visualize the personal gains of membership. We now examine how such non-pecuniary returns could tip the threshold for individuals to engage in costly participation. We draw four examples of benefits from a long literature on party organizations: ideology, candidacy, policy, and career. As described above, citizens will weigh these perceived returns against the cost of joining the party to make their decision to join.

To start, parties can signal the broad *ideological* basis of their brand to recruits. These are typically valence issues that have broad appeal. The literature agrees that some “benefit-seekers” derive value from a party’s ideas (see Stokes 1999:p.249 for a review), or join organizations due to psychological attachments or affect (Costa 2021). Belonging to what Putnam (2000) calls “bridging (or inclusive)” networks, like those from a political party offering broad ideas of a community, may appeal in particular to those from excluded groups who lack representation in other political networks. Past work indicates that ideological appeals may be more attractive to people with lower opportunity costs (Shayo 2009), suggesting that ideological signals can result in low-skilled recruits.

Party work also allows individuals to demonstrate their skills and loyalty for the purpose of *candidacy*. Party leaders exercise considerable power in deciding party nominations (Cohen et al. 2009; Gulzar, Hai and Paudel 2021). Potential future perks of elected office—power, prestige, and personal rents—are attractive to new recruits (Gulzar and Khan 2024; Truex 2014). Even long-shot candidates can glean intrinsic benefits, such as being known as leaders, just from running (Weghorst 2022). As parties do not typically advertise candidacy prospects

²²We note how this logic also applies to the benefits treatments.

broadly, highlighting this benefit can also induce people from politically non-traditional backgrounds to join the party, both women and excluded ethnic groups who do not typically see themselves reflected in parties' nominees. But, as was the case above, it is not clear if recruits will possess key skills. On the one hand, high-skilled people from politically excluded groups could join, while, on the other hand, low-skilled people with low opportunity costs could also be induced to show up.

Perhaps the most obvious reason to join a political party is the benefit of actualizing one's *policy* preferences (Lupu 2013). This benefit can accrue from joining a party with an aligned platform and working to improve its chances of forming the “winner's coalition” (Aldrich 2011). Though the potential to affect policy change may be alluring, highlighting specific priorities can also alienate prospective recruits for two reasons. First, those with divergent preferences on specific policies (versus a more generic “ideology” appeal) might be turned off; and second, highlighting policy preferences without specifying a path to implementation (such as winning sufficient seats to be a part of the governing coalition) can make the appeal seem disingenuous. Nevertheless, as policy agendas are typically framed as pro-poor, it is conceivable they can attract economically marginalized populations. In our case, the policy priorities highlighted by AAP of improved schools, healthcare, and environmental protection were likely to appeal to women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. The skills of the recruited pool can increase if competent individuals from excluded groups displace the status-quo recruits. It may also decrease if the reverse happens.

Parties may also signal rank-and-file work as a first step toward a political career. As parties become more bureaucratized, professional staff are increasingly critical to their long-term development. But becoming a party worker even before elections allows individuals to immediately gather experience relevant to subsequent jobs, including political ones. We label these types of benefits *career* incentives. People who take advantage of these opportunities may be referred to as machine-type “professionals” by Wilson (1962). Career benefits can appeal to a wide range of individuals—as the experience they gain is not necessarily contingent on

the party winning—but may appeal most to those with low opportunity costs like excluded groups. This is because those who are already quite skilled may have a high opportunity cost of time, such as by already being fully employed.

2.4.3 How the two dimensions interact

While the focus of this paper is on the marginal effects of each dimension, it is possible that the effects of highlighting specific features of the party’s organization (the first dimension) together with the benefits that recruits can gain from joining (the second dimension) could interact in conflicting or reinforcing ways.

First, the two signals could complement each other’s effects. For instance, research on recruiting women for candidacy suggests that a party that signals gender-inclusiveness and highlights the potential for candidacy may receive more sign-ups than it would if it only signaled one of those dimensions (Preece, Stoddard and Fisher 2016).

In addition, it is also conceivable that signals on one dimension negate the other’s efficacy. For instance, consider the same example as above. First, the salience of gender inclusiveness (especially in contexts like South Asia) could dominate prospective recruits’ attention, rendering additional information a distraction (Taylor and Fiske 1978). Second, it could be that the two dimensions are interpreted to be in conflict with one another, resulting in a backlash effect (Rudman and Fairchild 2004). Highlighting women can dissuade status-quo (male) recruits from joining if they do not support broadening the rank-and-file, as other studies in India have indicated may be the case for women’s increased political rights and leadership (Beaman et al. 2009; Brulé 2020).

2.5 Summary of empirical predictions

Our null hypothesis from the discussion in “Why shaping the rank-and-file is difficult” is that party leader effort is not likely to change the size and composition of the rank-and-file. Nevertheless, we discussed that if party elites choose to mobilize non-pecuniary levers at their

disposal, the literature can offer us some predictions on the likely direction of these effects. We summarize these in Table 1. Overall, highlighting benefits should not decrease the total number of new recruits, and the key tradeoff party leaders may face is that diversifying the party may decrease the average skill of recruits.

Table 1: **Potential Direction of Effects According to the Literature**

Treatments	# of Recruits	# Excluded Group	Skill of Recruits
<i>Highlighting Inclusiveness of the Party</i>			
Gender-Inclusive	↑ or ↓	↑	↑ or ↓
<i>Highlighting Benefits of Joining the Party</i>			
Ideology	↯	↑	↓
Candidacy	↯	↑	↑ or ↓
Policy	↑ or ↓	↑	↑ or ↓
Career	↯	↑	↓

3 AAP’s Status-quo Recruitment in Jharkhand

We examine the Aam Aadmi Party’s recruitment campaign run in early 2018 in anticipation of Jharkhand’s state and national elections in 2019 and 2020. As their first foray into Jharkhand politics, their aim was to build a cadre of local-level recruits in the state.

AAP leadership proceeded in their usual manner of recruiting local party workers by distributing pamphlets and discussing the points on the pamphlet when doing so. Their status-quo campaign closely resembled those of other parties across India, where recruitment is characterized by the mass, face-to-face dissemination of printed materials plastered with the faces of prominent party (male) leaders, and personal conversations (see Appendix A.2).

Pamphlets were double-sided and A4 sized, and appear in Figure 2 and in Appendix A.1. One side displayed the party president, highlighting the party’s achievements in its national stronghold of Delhi and its brand (a broom icon serves as its official election symbol and represents its anti-corruption stance). On the other side, the pamphlet offered a current party

Figure 2: Front and Back of Baseline Pamphlet



member’s photo and a short biography above a broad description of what becoming a party member could look like. Pamphlets made little attempt to signal the party’s inclusion to women or non-Brahmins, as all photos depicted relatively light-skinned men of ambiguous-to-high Hindu caste. Below was a phone number that a prospective recruit could call and hang up to signal interest (locally this is referred to as giving a “missed call”). AAP, like other parties in India that maintain contact with members via phones, would then use the list of phone numbers to ask interested individuals to complete a survey as their first party task.

The photographs in Figure 3 show scenes of face-to-face pamphlet distribution and the accompanying conversations about the points in the pamphlets as they occurred in people’s homes and in public areas from the summer and fall of 2018. In total, the party distributed about 150,000 pamphlets.²³ AAP Jharkhand mid-level members (vice presidents) who handed

²³As we describe below, AAP conducted an experiment varying messages on these pamphlets. This section only focuses on the status-quo (baseline) pamphlet.

out pamphlets in their assigned areas on the ground were mostly men. Given social norms, it is likely that most conversations these mid-level members had were with men, too.



Figure 3: Pamphlet distribution on the ground in Jharkhand

Partnering directly with a political party allows us to descriptively characterize this status-quo recruitment drive with multiple waves of surveys. In subsequent sections, we describe whether the party can strategically manipulate this pool of people. Appendix B provides an extended discussion on ethics.

3.1 Data

For the main outcomes, we combine data from a *Dataset on Pamphlet Distribution* and a *Phone Number Database* compiled during the experiment. The first records the number of pamphlets that each mid-level member (vice president) handed out. AAP confirmed through weekly phone calls the number of pamphlets each mid-level member handed out, and all pamphlets received were distributed in the field. To study the efficacy of each pamphlet handed out, we match pamphlets distributed to phone calls received from new members. This was possible because each treatment arm had a unique phone number associated with it.

To begin onboarding those who expressed interest, AAP set up a call center in Delhi to administer a survey that would be party recruits' first task. This *Onboarding Survey* collects information on new members' demographics, policy preferences, and previous political engagement for usage by party leaders. Senior party leaders told researchers that members

recruited in this 2018 drive led door-to-door campaigning and election-day mobilization in the 2019 elections, and remained at the disposal of the party. AAP also conducted a *Long-term Retention Survey* at the three-year mark (2021–22) to those reached in the first wave to assess their utility in serving across electoral cycles. See Appendix C for further details.

3.2 Outcomes

We examine three categories of outcomes. First, we analyze whether or not a pamphlet yielded a “new recruit” (measuring the “*size*” of the pool). The primary measure of size is a binary outcome that indicates whether or not we can assign an individual who completed the onboarding task to a pamphlet. This behavioral outcome reflects multiple stages of costly actions to join a political party, from talking to a party member during pamphlet distribution, providing a missed call after the fact, and completing their first party task (a detailed intake survey that provided AAP leaders with local knowledge).²⁴

Second, we analyze the diversity of recruits (their “*type*”), again using their phone survey responses. The new member “type” variable is a measure of whether the new member is a woman, a member of a politically and socially excluded caste group (a member of Scheduled Castes and Tribes or the Other Backward Classes), or a member of a politically excluded religious group (Muslim, Christian, Sarna, Sikh). If the pamphlet is assigned to a new member who has any of these characteristics, we code the pamphlet as having recruited a member from an “excluded group.” We also disaggregate by gender, caste, and religious exclusion.

Third, we study the political experience of recruits (their “*skills*”). The “skills” variable is a summary measure of new members’ prior history of employment, education, and political participation history (voting at elections and volunteering for parties). If we can assign a pamphlet to a new member with any of these characteristics, we code the pamphlet as having recruited a “skilled” member. We also study each outcome independently.

Importantly, all of our outcomes are defined as binary indicators equaling one if a pamphlet

²⁴Table F.6 shows robustness of our results to two additional measures of size.

can be assigned to an individual with a particular characteristic, and zero otherwise. We avoid the problem of post-treatment bias by not conditioning on having recruited a new member, a standard approach in the literature. For ease of interpretation, we multiply all outcomes by 1,000 so that they can be interpreted as the number of new members recruited per 1,000 pamphlets distributed.

Table 2: **Summary Statistics on the Group Recruited by Baseline Pamphlet**

Variable	Rate / 1,000	SD	Pamphlets
Dimension A: Size of Recruits			
# of New Members (Onboarding Survey)	7.528	86.438	13, 550
# of New Members (Long-term Retention Survey)	1.624	40.263	13, 550
Dimension B: Type of Recruits			
<i>Excluded group</i>	5.756	75.655	13, 550
Female	0.443	21.039	13, 550
<i>Excluded caste/tribe</i>	4.945	70.147	13, 550
SC	1.255	35.400	13, 550
ST	0.369	19.207	13, 550
OBC	3.395	58.168	13, 550
<i>Excluded religion</i>	1.476	38.392	13, 550
Muslim	1.107	33.255	13, 550
Christian	0.000	0.000	13, 550
Other	0.369	19.207	13, 550
Hindu	5.830	76.136	13, 550
Dimension C: Skill of Recruits			
<i>Skilled Member</i>	7.380	85.593	13, 550
Any employment	3.100	55.590	13, 550
High education	3.321	57.535	13, 550
Prior vote	5.092	71.181	13, 550
Prior volunteer	3.542	59.415	13, 550

Note: The table shows, for each variable, the mean value, standard deviation, and number of non-missing observations in the status-quo recruitment group along the dimensions of Size, Type, and Skill. Each variable has been multiplied by 1,000 so that each reflects the number of individuals recruited per 1,000 pamphlets. Italics denote an index.

3.3 Descriptive Patterns in Status-quo Recruitment

Table 2 presents the results of the recruitment drive with further details in Appendix Figure A.3. First, we analyze the *size* of the recruit pool achieved using AAP’s typical strategy. Under status-quo recruitment, AAP received 7.5 new members who completed the onboarding survey task for every 1,000 pamphlets distributed, which tracks rates for similar campaigns. Three years later, across two elections, 1.6 members per 1,000 pamphlets distributed remain eager AAP workers. This figure represents a high bar on continued interest in the party given changing mobile phone numbers and that these individuals considered themselves active members who were still ready to volunteer.

Second, looking at the *types* of recruits the baseline pamphlet attracted, only 3.5% of new recruits were women, while 68% of them were members of groups traditionally excluded from politics in India and 34.6% of them were members of politically marginalized religions. These recruits broadly reflect the demographics of the AAP Jharkhand mid-level members who recruited them in terms of Scheduled Caste, Christian, Hindu, and Sikh identities. However, Scheduled Tribes are under-represented, while Muslims are over-represented, relative to both the Jharkhand average and the mid-level members. Finally, more women were recruited than existed at the middle party tier.

Examining *skills* of recruits, we find that for every 1,000 pamphlets distributed, about 7.4 “skilled” members join. In addition, 45.9% of AAP’s status-quo recruits are employed and 43.7% have at least a high school education. While the majority of these status-quo recruits had voted prior to joining AAP (67.1%), only 40.7% had volunteered at another political campaign. Finally, recruits and mid-level members are both more likely to have received education than the average Jharkhandi.

Our overall takeaway is that this status-quo strategy has mixed efficacy vis-a-vis recruiting individuals who display high competence and diversity. The key challenge for party leaders is to *expand* the pool of recruits joining via status-quo methods while not compromising—and even potentially improving—who ends up in the pool.

4 Experimentally shaping the rank-and-file

AAP leaders embedded an experiment and multiple surveys into status-quo recruitment procedures. These allow us to make progress on the theoretical question of whether specific actions by party leaders affect recruitment.

4.1 Description of treatment pamphlet design

AAP created ten pamphlets cross-randomizing two sets of recruitment treatments. The first dimension of the treatment varies inclusiveness along gender lines within AAP’s ranks by randomizing whether a female or male party member’s face and story is featured on the pamphlet. We refer to this in shorthand as the “female” treatment in the analysis below. The second dimension varies perceptions of four benefits of joining the party. The “candidacy” message primes on the possibility of becoming a political candidate, the “career” message on advancing one’s career and skills through party work, the “ideology” on broad appeals to AAP’s “new kind of politics” that relates to anti-corruption, and the “policy” on Jharkhand-specific development priorities.²⁵ Combined with the status-quo pamphlet discussed in the previous section, there were five types of pamphlets under this second dimension of treatments. Cross-randomizing the two dimensions yields 10 treatment conditions that we show in English in Figure 4, and in the original text in Appendix A.1.

4.2 Randomization

Table 3 presents the randomization schedule. Out of 60 assembly constituencies that AAP decided to mobilize in, 29 were assigned to the female treatment. The randomization of the second dimension of treatment, the benefits messaging treatment, occurred at the lower level of mid-level members (vice presidents). This procedure is described in Appendix A.5. Appendix B discusses that some of the authors worked as unpaid consultants during the campaign,

²⁵Senior party leaders provided researchers with their priority policies for Jharkhand.

Figure 4: Translations of Treatment Pamphlets

 <p>Alok Prasad Ranchi, Jharkhand</p> <p>I joined the Aam Aadmi Party in 2014. You should also join the party and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet people at a high level • Participate in the party's activities • Be a part of the party 	<p>Baseline</p>  <p>Srimati Amita Ranchi, Jharkhand</p> <p>I joined the Aam Aadmi Party in 2014. You should also join the party and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet people at a high level • Participate in the party's activities • Be a part of the party
<p>To join the party, give a missed call to-</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Candidacy</p>  <p>Praveen Kumar Vidhayak, Jangpura, Delhi</p> <p>I started working for the Aam Aadmi Party as a worker in Delhi in 2012. During the 2015 Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections, the party not only gave an ordinary worker like me the ticket but also made me win. You should also join the party, take on a leadership role in Jharkhand, and get the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the party's election candidate at various levels of government • Lead an election campaign • Get support from the party for your campaign 	<p style="text-align: center;">To join the party, give a missed call to-</p>  <p>Sarita Kumari Vidhayak, Rohtas Nagar, Delhi</p> <p>I started working for the Aam Aadmi Party as a worker in Delhi in 2012. During the 2015 Delhi Legislative Assembly Elections, the party not only gave an ordinary worker like me the ticket but also made me win. You should also join the party, take on a leadership role in Jharkhand, and get the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the party's election candidate at various levels of government • Lead an election campaign • Get support from the party for your campaign
<p>To get a chance to be a candidate, give a missed call to-</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Career</p>  <p>Prem Kumar Pradesh Karyakarini Sadasya Saha Sangathan Sachiv, D/o, Singhbhums, Jharkhand</p> <p>I joined the Aam Aadmi Party as an ordinary worker in 2012. Within four years, the party gave me the opportunity to take on a high-level leadership role in Jharkhand. You should also join the party and -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become an active party worker • Build your career in an honest political party • Learn organizational and teamwork skills 	<p style="text-align: center;">To get a chance to be a candidate, give a missed call to-</p>  <p>Yasmin Laal Pradesh Karyakarini Sadasya Ranchi Jharkhand</p> <p>I joined the Aam Aadmi Party as an ordinary worker in 2014. Within three years, the party gave me the opportunity to take on a high-level leadership role by making me a member of the party's Jharkhand State Executive. You should also join the party and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become an active party worker • Build your career in an honest political party • Learn organizational and teamwork skills
<p>To build a career in honest politics, give a missed call to-</p>	
<p>Ideology</p>	
 <p>Sri Ram Narayan Lohardaga, Jharkhand</p> <p>I joined the Aam Aadmi Party in 2014 because I firmly and fully believed in the party's mission of creating a new and righteous kind of politics. Since then, I have been working non-stop for the party. You should also join the party and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new kind of politics • Fight against corruption • Strengthen the Aam Aadmi Party 	 <p>Srimati Miru Dumka, Jharkhand</p> <p>I joined the Aam Aadmi Party in 2014 because I firmly and fully believed in the party's mission of creating a new and righteous kind of politics. Since then, I have been working non-stop for the party. You should also join the party and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new kind of politics • Fight against corruption • Strengthen the Aam Aadmi Party
<p>To strengthen the Aam Aadmi Party, give a missed call to -</p>	
<p>Policy</p>	
 <p>Upendra Kumar Delhi</p> <p>I started working for the Aam Aadmi Party as a worker in Delhi in 2012 because I wanted every child from every section of society to have a better education and for everybody to have better health facilities. Since 2015, I've been working on the mission to make Delhi's Government schools world-class. You can also be a part of this transformation in Jharkhand and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build world-class government schools and hospitals • Provide water and cheap 24-hour-electricity to every household • Stop the looting of water-forest-land-mines 	 <p>Atishi Purva Salahkar, Delhi Sarkar</p> <p>I started working for the Aam Aadmi Party as a worker in Delhi in 2012 because I wanted every child from every section of society to have a better education and for everybody to have better health facilities. Since 2015, I've been working on the mission to make Delhi's Government schools world-class. You can also be a part of this transformation in Jharkhand and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build world-class government schools and hospitals • Provide water and cheap 24-hour-electricity to every household • Stop the looting of water-forest-land-mines
<p>To save Jharkhand and help develop it, give a missed call to-</p>	

Table 3: Number of Units In Each Treatment Condition

	Male	Female	
Assemblies (T1)	31	29	
Vice Presidents (T1)	289	234	
	Baseline	53	48
	Candidacy	54	45
Vice Presidents (T2)	Career	52	44
	Policy	67	54
	Ideology	63	43

Note: We show in the 60 assembly constituencies with AAP operations the number of mid-level members (vice presidents) assigned to each treatment condition.

ensuring that randomization was consistent with academic best practices. Appendix E.1 presents evidence of balance in pamphlet distribution across the treatment conditions.

4.3 Estimation for recruitment experiment

We create a dataset where each distributed pamphlet is an observation. This allows us to study, for instance, the probability of recruiting new members by creating an outcome variable that equals one if a pamphlet yielded a member, and zero otherwise. We can also study characteristics of the new members, say gender, by defining a variable that equals one if the member who completes the onboarding survey task is a woman, and zero otherwise (including if the individual who received the pamphlet did not ever give a missed call *or* did not participate in the survey).

We estimate two types of regressions:

$$Y_{i,a} = \hat{\gamma}_1 Female_{i,a} + \epsilon_{i,a} \tag{1}$$

$$Y_{i,v} = \alpha_a + \hat{\delta}_1 Candidacy_{i,v} + \hat{\delta}_2 Career_{i,v} + \hat{\delta}_3 Ideology_{i,v} + \hat{\delta}_4 Policy_{i,v} + \epsilon_{i,v} \tag{2}$$

where each observation is a pamphlet i belonging to vice president area v or constituency assembly a . Y_i is a binary outcome for whether pamphlet i yielded a new member who completed the onboarding survey task. γ_1 measures the aggregate impact of the female pamphlet treatment $Female_{i,a}$ randomized at the assembly constituency level. δ_j identifies the treat-

ment effect of a *Pamphlet Type* $_{i,v}$ randomized at the vice president area level. The hats on treatment coefficients signify that we focus on local average treatment effects throughout the paper where we instrument the actual treatment received by the treatment assigned, though very high compliance ensures that the two effects are similar.²⁶ α_a are assembly constituency fixed effects that serve as blocks for the randomization of the four benefits.

We cluster standard errors according to treatment assignment: assembly constituency in specification (1) and mid-level member (vice president) for specification (2). The clustering strategy, however, is slightly more involved. While AAP put different phone numbers for each pamphlet type (that is, candidacy-female, candidacy-male, career-female, and so on), it did not do so for each specific vice president (assembly) area within each treatment arm. This means that while we are able to match new members to the correct treatment arm (by linking them to the number they called), we are not able to place all new members in a specific vice-president (assembly) area v .²⁷ To resolve this, we assume that the probability that a particular call from a new member who was recruited by a particular vice president varies in proportion to the number of pamphlets distributed by vice president v (or in assembly constituency a), within treatment arms. We then bootstrap this assignment process to calculate the standard errors as explained in Appendix D.²⁸

4.4 Pre-analysis plan

Prior to receiving the data from this experiment, we specified our plan for the analysis. We follow our pre-analysis plan in the construction of outcomes and indices, and in the estimation

²⁶Appendix E.3 shows compliance to treatment assignment was high among both treatment dimensions. Intention-to-treat effects are therefore nearly identical in magnitude.

²⁷Note, that this does not affect the calculation of the treatment effect δ_j in any way.

²⁸73% of mid-level members received either 100, 200, or 500 pamphlets depending on day-of-training pamphlet availability. Treatment arms were balanced in the number of pamphlets received. All collected pamphlets were distributed in the field.

of standard errors. Only at a few points did we depart from this analysis plan, which we summarize in Appendix Tables F.5-F.6. Our most important detour is to include constituency fixed effects in our analysis of campaign messages’ impact. We do so because the recruitment message treatment was block-randomized at this level. Given that our estimates are already quite precise, we do not need to include further controls.

5 Experimental Results

5.1 Can party leaders shape the rank-and-file?

Table 4: Do Party Leader Efforts Affect the Rank and File?

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Onboarding Survey			Long-term Retention Survey		
	# of New Members	# of Excluded Group Members	# of Skilled Members	# of New Members	# of Excluded Group Members	# of Skilled Members
Panel A: Group Means						
Baseline (Male)	7.534	5.756	7.386	1.631	1.185	1.556
Ideology (Male)	9.780	8.222	9.295	0.748	0.694	0.748
Candidacy (Male)	14.280	11.448	13.275	1.752	1.446	1.674
Policy (Male)	2.845	2.389	2.796	0.463	0.466	0.463
Career (Male)	6.992	5.789	6.842	0.977	0.827	0.977
Baseline (Female)	10.145	8.556	9.861	1.875	1.610	1.782
Ideology (Female)	10.668	9.417	10.158	1.278	1.280	1.294
Candidacy (Female)	8.472	6.882	8.133	1.292	0.935	1.296
Policy (Female)	10.610	9.222	10.289	2.203	1.927	2.133
Career (Female)	7.629	5.672	7.106	0.927	0.874	0.940
Panel B: Testing for the Effect of Overall Party Effort						
Joint Orthogonality F statistic	27.913	21.408	25.629	4.442	3.316	4.136
p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000
Observations	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975

Note: This table shows the mean value of the outcome (multiplied by 1000) for each treatment arm. The bottom panel reports F-statistics and p-values for a test of the joint orthogonality of the treatments against Baseline (Male) condition. Standard errors are clustered at the vice president (mid-level member) level. Tables ??-?? show joint orthogonality tests for the components of Excluded Group and Skilled Members.

We first consider the primary question for this paper: Can party elites shape the rank-and-file? We set up a null hypothesis that any effort exerted by party elites towards shaping the party member pool will not yield a quantity or composition that differs from status-quo

recruitment. We test this null hypothesis by comparing the joint significance of all treatments implemented by AAP against status-quo recruitment, such that, $H_0 : \delta_i = \delta_j = 0 \forall i, j$. The alternative hypothesis is that at least one of the treatments has an effect on the number and types of volunteers recruited.

Table 4 presents the results on the number of new members recruited, the number of new members who belong to excluded groups that were recruited, and the number of skilled new members recruited. We present results from the onboarding survey in columns (1)-(3), and the long-term retention survey in columns (4)-(6). In all cases, with large F-statistics (and $p < 0.01$), we reject the null hypotheses that *none* of the treatments recruited a different number of rank-and-file than the status-quo strategy.²⁹

Taken together, against concerns that political elites have little power in influencing who takes on the laborious task of party work, these results provide compelling evidence that elites' interventions can directly influence the number and types of people who join parties and that their efforts can have impacts in the long term.

5.2 Does varying the portrayal of the rank-and-file affect recruits?

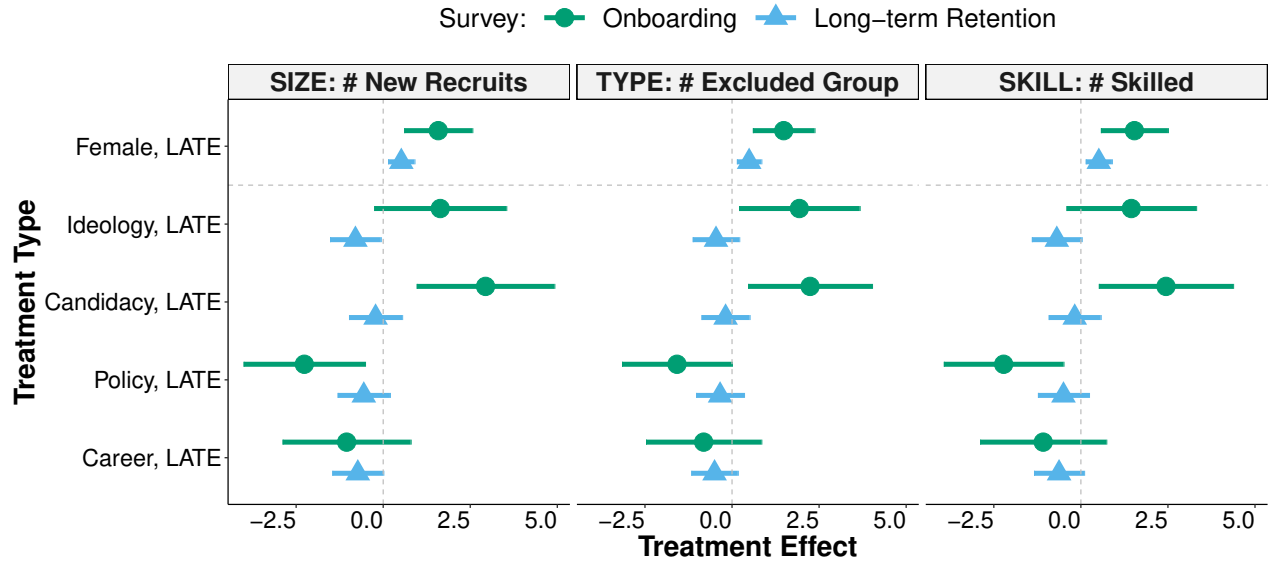
Next, we move to the secondary research question of how the specific levers at the hands of party elites shape the composition of the rank-and-file. We compare each type of pamphlet against the baseline recruitment strategy.

5.2.1 Impacts on Recruitment at Onboarding

Size of the recruit pool Beginning with the onboarding survey, we first present results for the size of the recruit pool, meaning the number of individuals who expressed initial interest by giving a missed call *and* who completed the first party member task of an intake survey used to aid AAP's understanding of local electoral dynamics. We show in the top of the left

²⁹Appendix Tables G.7 and G.8 report results on the sub-components of the excluded groups and skilled members separately.

Figure 5: Impact of Different Treatment Conditions on Main Outcomes



Note: The figure represents coefficients with 95% confidence intervals for each treatment condition in the onboarding and long-term retention surveys. The coefficients can be interpreted as the change in the number of new recruits by type (e.g. all new rank-and-file recruits; a member of an excluded group; or a skilled recruit) generated for every 1,000 pamphlets distributed. Results for this figure at onboarding are reported in Tables G.9, 5, and G.12, respectively, as well as G.14 for the long term.

panel of Figure 5 that highlighting AAP’s female party workers on recruitment pamphlets, instead of the status-quo men, increases the number of new members who completed the onboarding survey task before the state elections by 19% ($p < 0.01$).

Second, we examine how portraying benefits from joining the party impacts the total number of new members. We find that the rate of new members at onboarding increases by about 18% ($p < 0.10$) and 33% ($p < 0.01$) when the party highlights ideology and candidacy respectively, but that it decreases by about 26% when the pamphlet displays policy plans ($p < 0.05$). Offering career benefits does not seem to move the needle on recruitment.

Diversity of the recruit pool Next, we focus on whether different messages can shape the *types* of new recruits. The middle panel in Figure 5 shows effects on an overall index of recruiting politically excluded groups—women, excluded castes and tribes, and excluded religions. We find that when women’s stories are highlighted on the pamphlet, recruits from

Table 5: Unpacking Impacts on Excluded Groups

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Excluded Group	Female	Excluded Caste/Tribe	Excluded Religion
Panel A: Highlighting Inclusiveness of Party				
Female, LATE	1.484*** (0.452)	0.153* (0.084)	1.596*** (0.417)	0.431 (0.296)
Control Mean	6.473	0.167	5.319	2.871
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	60	60	60
Panel B: Highlighting Benefits of Joining				
Ideology, LATE	1.932** (0.884)	-0.174 (0.158)	1.395* (0.810)	0.691 (0.585)
Candidacy, LATE	2.241** (0.908)	-0.073 (0.161)	1.720** (0.819)	1.292** (0.613)
Policy, LATE	-1.581* (0.805)	-0.075 (0.165)	-0.996 (0.745)	-1.592*** (0.509)
Career, LATE	-0.815 (0.845)	-0.061 (0.174)	-0.464 (0.784)	0.076 (0.560)
Control Mean	7.108	0.304	5.967	3.041
Constituency Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	523	523	523	523

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is at the pamphlet level. In Column 1, the dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not a missed call from a rank-and-file recruit who belongs to a politically excluded group has been matched to a pamphlet. Excluded group is coded 1 if the respondent is either a woman, belongs to an excluded caste or tribe (ST, SC, OBC), or to an excluded religion (non-Hindu). The other columns show results for each component. Robust standard errors reported in parentheses are clustered at the assembly-level in Panel A and at the mid-level-member level in Panel B. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of a pamphlet to different mid-level members 5000 times.

politically excluded groups increase by 22%. In Table 5 we decompose this index into its component parts. We observe that the effects are first driven by a 91% increase in women joining, though we note that number of women joining with the status-quo male pamphlet was very low. In addition, we also find a 30% increase in signups by people belonging to excluded castes and tribes.

Regarding the impact of messages highlighting different returns from joining, we find, as with the total number of new recruits who completed the onboarding survey task, the ideology

and candidacy messages increase the rate of politically-excluded new recruits by about 27 and 31%, respectively, and the policy treatment reduces enrollment from this group by 23% at onboarding. Interestingly, most of these effects emerge among excluded castes and religions, but we do not detect a statistically significant change in women recruits (see Table 5).

Skills of the recruit pool Finally, we test the extent to which different campaign messages attract individuals with *skills* that could be important for organizing political campaigns. While status-quo recruits on average tend to be employed, most of them have less than a high school education and have no experience with political volunteering. Figure 5 shows results for the skilled recruitment index in the right panel. We see that signaling gender inclusiveness increased the number of onboarded skilled individuals by 20%. We present tabular results in Table G.12. These politically experienced volunteers can be crucial for a party when it is building a new, nimble political organization.

Now, examining the impact of different benefits messaging, we find that skilled recruits at onboarding are persuaded when candidacy is salient. The salience of policy benefits proved to dissuade skilled recruits initially. We show positive effects of ideology and candidacy for the component parts of this skill index in Section G.4 at onboarding.

5.2.2 Impacts on long-term retention

In addition to recruitment in the current electoral cycle, our data also allow us to see how treatment effects persist. Figure 5 also presents effects from the long-term retention survey on these individuals who remain reachable by and willing to dedicate their time to the party three years later.

In general, we find that the effects are attenuated at the three-year mark which is expected in these types of persuasion treatments. However, examining the two groups of treatments, we find striking evidence that the gender inclusiveness treatment continues to exhibit effects even at the three-year mark—we observe a higher number of recruits in this condition relative to the male pamphlet. There are also more excluded and skilled recruits. When we decom-

pose the excluded groups results, we note two further patterns. First, the long-term effects primarily arise among the excluded castes and tribes category, where the latter is the primary marginalized group in our setting, suggesting that signaling inclusiveness can be particularly effective in recruiting individuals from marginalized backgrounds. However, second, we note that the initial positive results on recruiting women are completely attenuated (see Appendix Table G.15). This second result is particularly important. On the one hand, our results demonstrate that parties are indeed able to recruit more women, but on the other hand, they suggest that party leadership might need to continuously put effort into retaining the women they have recruited to prevent a leaky pipeline (Thomsen and King 2020).

In addition to diversifying the pool of volunteers, the gender-inclusive pamphlet also recruited individuals who were 50% more likely to stay involved in the party three years later. These politically experienced volunteers are important for a party seeking to both recruit and retain skilled workers across multiple electoral cycles.

5.2.3 Joint impacts of signaling inclusiveness and highlighting benefits

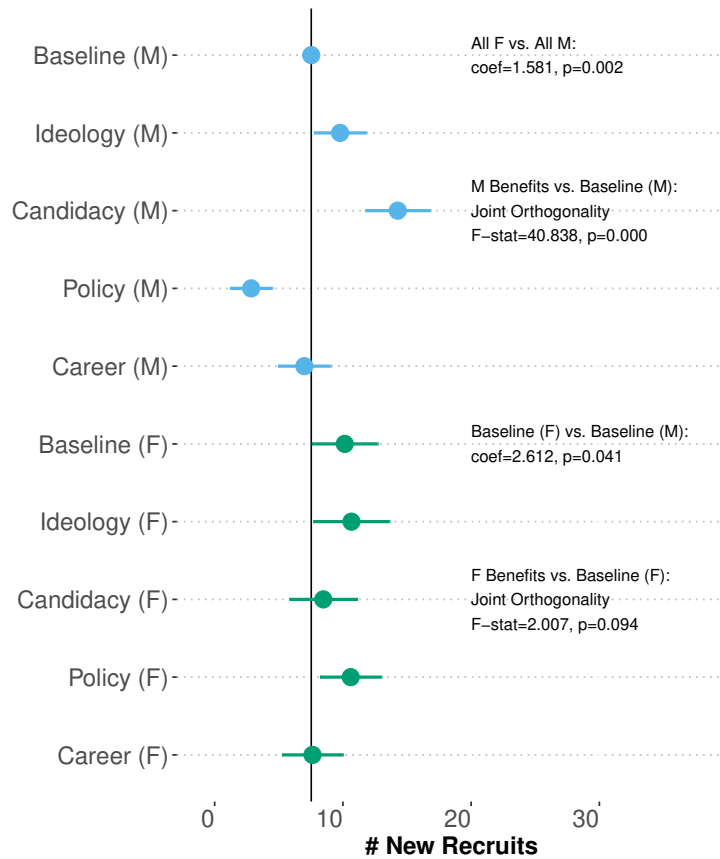
Next, we examine if recruitment messages across the two dimensions (inclusiveness and benefits) interact to produce effects. Figure 6 shows the average number of new recruits per 1,000 pamphlets distributed for each treatment condition.³⁰ We find two key results.

First, with a baseline message, emphasizing women’s stories on the pamphlets yields a higher number of recruits than the status-quo male pamphlets ($p=0.041$). This effect also carries over to all male versus female pamphlets ($p=0.002$). Averaging across all messages emphasizing benefits, female pamphlets recruit more rank-and-file than male pamphlets, suggesting that a backlash channel does not dominate.

Second, examining the interaction of the two dimensions specifically, we find that, within

³⁰Beyond examining effects on the number of total recruits, we find similar patterns in the data for the number recruited from excluded groups and the number of skilled rank-and-file recruited (see Figure G.9).

Figure 6: **The Impact of Decomposed Treatments on Number of Recruits**



Note: The figure shows the number of new recruits per 1,000 pamphlets distributed for each treatment condition. “M” and “F” on the labels indicate whether the pamphlet shows male or female photos, the gender-inclusive treatment dimension. All coefficients report local average treatment effects with 95% confidence intervals. Coefficients for testing the effectiveness of all female treatments against all baseline male treatments are reported in Table G.9. All other results are reported in Table G.10.

male pamphlets, emphasizing benefits versus the status-quo baseline message changes the rate of callbacks, but there is little evidence of a similar effect within female pamphlets—the joint orthogonality F-statistic is large and significant at the 5 percent level for the first but not for the second test.³¹ This suggests that once a woman’s story is highlighted, the marginal returns to emphasizing further benefits are limited, which is consistent with the salience story we detailed in the section “How the two dimensions interact.”

³¹The F-statistic for the first test is 40.8 ($p < 0.000$), while the F-statistic for the second is 2.007 ($p = 0.094$).

5.3 Discussion

Overall, three high-level takeaways from the Aam Aadmi Party’s recruitment experiment challenge conventional beliefs. First, against concerns that the high opportunity costs will completely inhibit any participation, non-monetary incentives convinced more and higher-quality recruits to join the party. Second, against concerns that these forms of persuasion have limited effects on behavior, particularly in the long term, these effects persisted into a subsequent election cycle. This indicates the party leaders’ ability both to assemble an immediate workforce and also guide the long-term development of the party. Third, our results demonstrate that messages by themselves, rather than the identity of the worker who handed them out, can be powerful in increasing the diversity of the rank-and-file, suggesting a scalable strategy for parties wishing to broaden their existing appeal.³²

A key concern from the literature, as reflected in Table 1, is that broadening the political pipeline will diminish the competence of the rank-and-file, a concern shared by leaders of AAP. Yet, as we discover via the experiment, the messages that are most effective at reaching politically marginalized groups also mobilize high-skilled workers, suggesting that the perceived conflict between skill and diversity may be overinflated. In fact, we further decompose our results on included groups and low-skilled workers and do not find any consistent effects on those populations, further suggesting that treatments are most effective on the specific populations we have identified (See Appendix Tables G.11 and G.13).

Beyond these overall patterns, one of our most important and robust findings is on signaling gender-inclusiveness. This treatment first increased total recruitment over the long run, which as we noted, in the section on “Highlighting benefits from joining the party,” was not ex-ante obvious, because status-quo male recruits could have chosen to exit. In fact, if we look at general caste men, we do not find evidence that this treatment impacted their behavior (see Appendix Table G.11). Second, while the positive effects on the total number of recruits

³²This is consistent with the findings in Broockman and Kalla (2016); Broockman et al. (2023).

and those from excluded castes and tribes are apparent three years later, AAP struggled to retain female recruits, a problem faced by many parties (Thomsen and King 2020; Gulzar 2021). This is a bittersweet result. It suggests that signaling inclusiveness has real potential at resolving initial barriers to entry, yet may not solve pipeline issues completely. Finally, the positive impacts on skills also allay concerns related to the recruitment of poor-quality workers.

The findings on highlighting the benefits of joining the party were more short-term in nature, but nevertheless carry important lessons. First, highlighting that future recruits could win the party's nomination for candidacy proved to be highly attractive. This result is perhaps the least surprising given the literature discussed in our theory section—receiving the party's nomination is a big prize. Because AAP did not have a realistic chance of winning many seats, an interpretation of this result is that the prospect of a party nomination carries status rewards beyond the specific chances of winning elected office, as we discussed.

Highlighting the policy agenda of the party tells the opposite story of the candidacy benefit. Emphasizing policies reduced the number of recruits. How might we interpret this negative finding? Beyond the simplest explanation that the policies chosen were not the preferred policies of the prospective recruits, another potential interpretation is that recruits saw AAP's policy promises as lacking credibility, given that the party would at best only be part of the winning coalition with minimal policy influence. The results, therefore, suggest that parties aiming to recruit on programmatic grounds could face a bind if the ambition of their policy goals is out of sync with their current capabilities. This is in line with the idea that politicians prefer to make vague instead of specific promises (Shepsle 1972).

5.4 Alternative Explanation: Party Effort

Besides appealing differently to potential recruits, the treatment effects we have identified could additionally emerge through differential efforts by party personnel in charge of running the campaign, that is, state/assembly-level and mid-level party workers. We test for this

through several pieces of evidence, which appear in Appendix E.

We begin by examining the efforts that senior party leaders put into the recruitment campaign and report two results. First, we observe that *all* pamphlets that were assigned to be distributed were in fact distributed and that the number of pamphlets distributed is balanced across treatment arms (see Appendix Table E.2). Second, we examine how senior party leaders assigned work to subordinate mid-level members. We find that the number of locations assigned to each mid-level member to canvass for recruitment does not differ by treatment arm (see Appendix Figure E.5). These results suggest that senior party personnel did not direct the campaign in a way that put more attention toward specific treatment areas, thereby producing the treatment effects we report.

Next, we examine the efforts of mid-level party members (vice presidents) and report three results. First, we already discussed above that compliance—that the pamphlet given out to vice presidents is the one assigned via randomization—is very high (see Appendix Table E.3). Second, we observe that these compliance rates do not differ by the treatment assigned (see also Appendix Table E.3).³³ Third, we find that non-compliance among local party leaders does not seem to follow a pattern that indicates that they prefer specific pamphlet types (see Appendix Table E.4). Taken together, these pieces of evidence show that treatment effects were unlikely to emerge because of differential efforts by those who were directly recruiting.

Another remaining explanation could pertain to the actual in-person interaction between mid-level members and prospective recruits. It could be the case that, when the primarily male local cadre is assigned the female pamphlet to distribute, they distribute fewer pamphlets. With some data, we make a case that there are minimal chances of this happening. First, we previously showed that all pamphlets were distributed and that this number is balanced across treatments. Second, the party conducted periodic check-ins with canvassers to assess

³³Note that the causal interpretation of the local average treatment effects we estimate above is not affected even if we were to find that compliance differed by treatment status (Green and Gerber 2012).

their progress. Information on the dates of these check-ins and how many pamphlets were distributed at those points allows us to trace the amount of work done by mid-level members across the campaign period. We show in Appendix Figures E.6–E.7 that the distribution effort is balanced across treatment arms.

Finally, what remains is an explanation where personnel distribute the same number of pamphlets but exert differential effort in discussing the gender-inclusive pamphlet with prospective recruits or target different groups with different types of pamphlets. Given the scale of the experiment, this is an element that is not directly quantitatively observed by us so we cannot rule out this completely. In Appendix E we take a simulation approach to discuss the conditions under the heterogeneous treatment effects would be completely explained by such a story.

6 Conclusion

The first step in many ordinary citizens’ engagement with political organizations is to help staff campaigns. If elites can shape these rank-and-file members, then parties can be more agile and responsive to changing electoral preferences both through the selection channel—where the identity of party members themselves changes over time—and the preferences channel—where party members remain the same, but their preferences change over time. Demonstrating the possibility of elite intervention is therefore an important complement to research stressing historical processes as the key source of variation in who comprises party members.

We discuss how it is expected that, lacking financial incentives, party leaders must throw in the towel and recruit few and perhaps extreme volunteers. Consequently, party elites should have limited control over recruiting the rank-and-file for ground campaigns, potentially carrying important consequences for electoral outcomes and party development. But, as parties increasingly need to employ sophisticated ground campaigns in modern democracies, what tools can elites deploy to move this equilibrium? Will their efforts bear fruit? To date, the evidence on these questions has remained scant perhaps because of the difficulty of

collaborating with parties to study these questions.

In this paper, we have assembled evidence from a real political recruitment drive implemented at a large scale to study these questions. We collaborated with the Aam Aadmi Party in India at a key moment when it sought to build up its party infrastructure, in competition with other parties doing the same. An at-scale recruitment drive, with an embedded experiment, distributed promotional pamphlets to 1% of Jharkhand's 13 million registered voters. We analyze this unique data source and find that party elites are not necessarily constrained by whoever puts themselves forward for the party; pulling different messaging levers on these recruitment pamphlets allows them to change both the size and the composition of the sign-up pool in statistically and substantively meaningful ways. The long-term evidence suggests that these efforts can matter for party development.

We also find that certain messages work better than others for yielding more recruits, appealing to diverse individuals, and overcoming the high opportunity costs of skilled volunteers. Specifically, our results suggest that, at least in the case of South Asia and AAP, signaling a willingness to include women is particularly powerful in recruiting diverse and capable individuals. This is the only treatment that also has sustained long-term effects. In the shorter run, promising candidacy or appealing to a broad party ideology was more effective than mentioning specific policies or highlighting a career with the party. Given the rise of large on-the-ground campaigns around the world and an increasing push to recruit previously excluded groups into politics, we present fresh evidence on how party elites can use existing levers to incorporate these new voices and helping hands.

The authors declare the human subjects research in this article was reviewed and approved by Stanford University under Protocol # 51207. The authors affirm that this article adheres to the APSA's Principles and Guidance on Human Subject Research (see Appendix B for further discussion). Research documentation and/or data that support the findings of this study are openly available in the APSR Dataverse at doi:10.7910/DVN/UW9NBY.

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Can Party Elites Shape the Rank-and-File? Evidence from a Recruitment Campaign in India

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FOR ONLINE PUBLICATION: APPENDIX

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A.2 Pamphlets by the Bharatiya Janata Party



Figure A.2: BJP Volunteer Recruitment

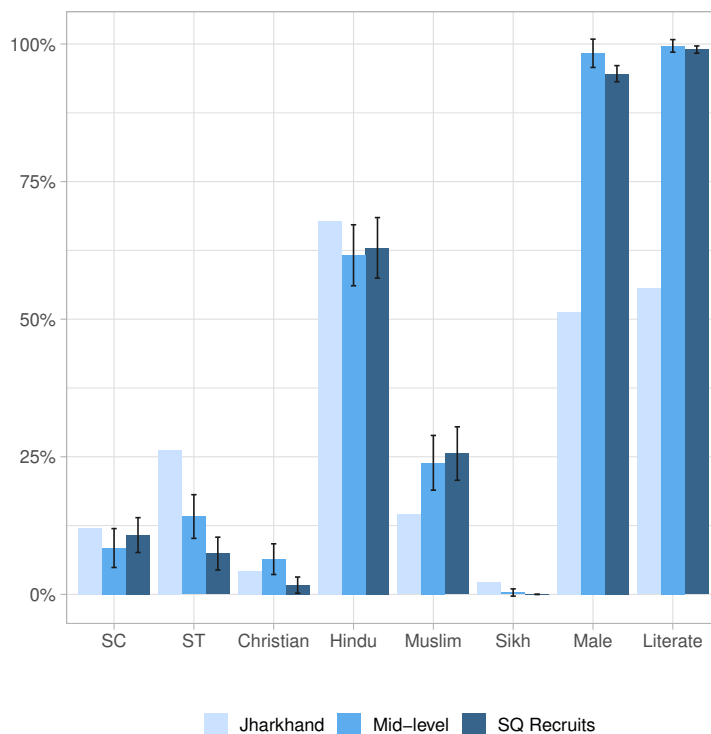
A.3 Context

Figure A.3 compares status-quo recruits and AAP's middle management to the overall Jharkhand population.

A.4 Timeline

- June 14, 2018 to June 19, 2018: Pilot sessions to refine the pamphlet distribution procedure, and teaching the procedure to master trainers
- August 1, 2018 to August 25, 2018: Distribution of pamphlets and Mid-Level Party Member Surveys to vice presidents in assembly-level meetings
- August 1, 2018 to September 1, 2018: Mid-level members distribute the pamphlets in their gram panchayats, as AAP begins missed call campaign
- September 1, 2018 to November 2018: Additional Mid-Level Party Member Surveys conducted in person and over the phone with vice presidents, and completion of pamphlet distribution
- November 12, 2018: New party member survey begins over the phone, for those who gave a missed call

Figure A.3: **Demographics of Jharkhand, Mid-Level Members, and Status-Quo Recruits**



Note: The figure shows means and 95% confidence intervals for three sets of groups: entire population of Jharkhand, mid-level members, and status-quo rank-and-file recruits. Source for Jharkhand population data: *Census 2011, Government of India*.

- November 15, 2018: End of recruitment drive
- February 22, 2019: AAP sends text message reminder for new party members survey
- March 2, 2019: New party member survey concludes
- November 2021 - January 2022: AAP conducts follow-up phone survey

A.5 Randomization Procedure

Initially, AAP planned to launch its recruitment drive in all 81 of Jharkhand’s constituencies. Therefore, the gender treatment, T1, was assigned at the assembly level for all 81 constituencies. However, the party was only able to bring in reliable assembly-in-charges—senior people who would direct the party’s efforts in their areas—from 60 constituencies. We kept the initially assigned treatment status for these 60 constituencies and proceeded to randomly assign T2 within these assemblies. The treatment assignment was unknown to individuals involved in the assembly-in-charge recruitment.

To randomize treatments for T2, master trainers—organizational secretaries or members of AAP’s state committee—organized meetings for mid-level members (vice presidents) and

recorded information about them on the randomization sheets. Once vice presidents entered their details, master trainers handed out pamphlets corresponding to the randomly assigned treatment indicator. The sheet also included information on the vice president’s name, his or her assigned panchayats, and phone number (see Figure A.4 right panel for an example).

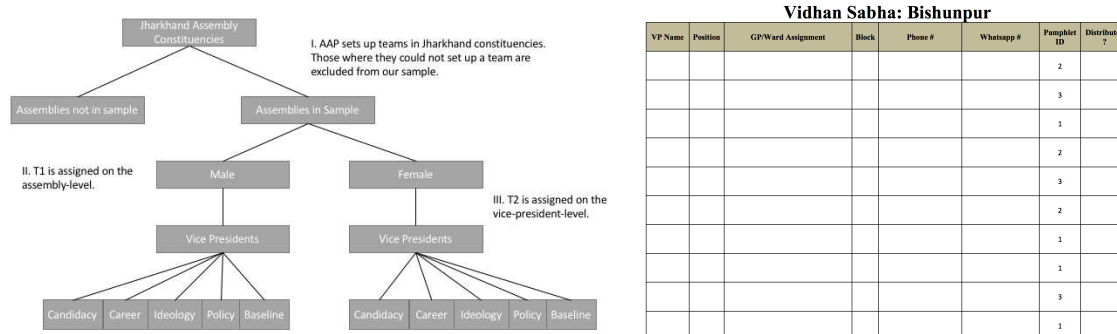


Figure A.4: Sequence of Randomization (left) and Randomization Sheet (right)

AAP conducted pilots in Jharkhand in July 2018 to teach existing party members how to properly allocate pamphlets to mid-level members (vice presidents). During pilots held on July 17-18, 2018, senior AAP state committee members monitored the distribution of pamphlets by master trainers, persons responsible for conducting meetings within each assembly for AAP members and new members, and revised and simplified procedures. After the piloting phase, the entire team of AAP master trainers in Jharkhand had a meeting to introduce them to the protocol for distributing pamphlets, recording information about new vice presidents, and administering surveys to session attendees.

Following the meeting of master trainers, AAP assigned each master trainer to 10-12 assembly constituencies to conduct meetings for newly-recruited AAP members. The purpose of these meetings was to record and verify information about each mid-level member (vice president), and to distribute pamphlets to them. When master trainers arrived to a session, they took attendance and recorded contact details of each vice president. Next, they handed out surveys to vice presidents. When they collected the completed surveys from vice presidents, master trainers gave out pamphlets to each vice president according to the random number on the randomization sheet. Master trainers also recorded the number corresponding to the treatment condition and the amount of pamphlets that a vice president received on the survey sheet. Once the meeting concluded, master trainers took photos of the randomization sheet with the vice presidents’ information on it and sent them to the party’s central team in Delhi. From September to November 2018, AAP conducted the same surveys over the phone as new vice presidents joined.

B Ethical Considerations

Human subjects research undertaken for this project has been approved by Stanford’s Institutional Review Board (Protocol # 51207). This section discusses our research in light of the American Political Science Association’s “Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research” (ratified by the APSA council in April 2020).

Principle 1: “Political science researchers should respect autonomy, consider the wellbeing of participants and other people affected by their research, and be open about the ethical issues they face and the decisions they make when conducting their research.” The researchers on this project worked together with the Aam Aadmi Party throughout the recruitment drive in an unpaid consultant capacity. Our role was to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches AAP took to recruit volunteers. AAP’s recruitment drive would have gone ahead without the participation of researchers, since the party needed to build an infrastructure for the upcoming elections in Jharkhand. Furthermore, the party’s goal was not only to increase their numbers in Jharkhand, but also to mobilize segments of the population who are often excluded from mainstream political parties, such as women, members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and Muslims. We considered diversification of political institutions an important policy-question and thought AAP’s campaign could provide an important blueprint for other organizations to mobilize often-excluded groups. Working directly with AAP also allowed us to generate causal insights about party processes that impact electoral outcomes in democratic countries.

As consultants, we have been involved primarily in ensuring that different campaign messages during the recruitment drive were randomized in a way that allow for an evaluation of their efficacy. Furthermore, we were involved in designing the surveys that the party undertook to make sure that they included measurements for the various outcomes of the recruitment drive about which the party was interested in learning: number, demographic characteristics, and skills of new recruits; and policy preferences of existing party members.

We took several steps to ensure that the scientific evaluation process did not disrupt the political work of the party and the party consented to changes or modifications that we have made. First of all, one of the co-authors is a senior member in AAP, which ensured seamless communication between researchers and the political machinery. Second, two members of the research team have participated in extensive fieldwork and a week-long workshop of campaign materials and procedures with the party. The workshop ensured the participation of a variety of stakeholders in the study design: central leadership from Delhi as well as local senior and mid-level party members.

The main component of the recruitment campaign that we examine in this paper is the campaign pamphlet that was given out by canvassers. Those who participated in this activity have previously signed up to canvass for the party. Canvassing is a time-honored tradition of Indian political campaigns. Hence, it did not pose risks to participants different from those involved in regular political work. We consulted with party members to make sure that they would be comfortable handing out the campaign posters that the party designed. These designs were also extensively workshopped with party members to allow for a wide range of input. Similarly, party surveys were workshopped with the party: any questions that were deemed too sensitive or irrelevant were removed and several questions were simplified to make them more accessible to the general population in the area. In this way, all steps of the research were led and owned by the party.

Principle 2: “Political science researchers have an individual responsibility to consider the ethics of their research related activities and cannot outsource ethical reflection to review boards, other institutional bodies, or regulatory agencies.” The study received approval by IRB at our University to analyze the secondary data that

the party provided. At the same time, we made sure that our involvement with a political campaign did not pose any ethical problems. One of the co-authors on this project is a senior member in the Aam Aadmi Party so that decisions taken for the experiment like pamphlet design and randomization were all made in consultation with the party to make sure that the evaluation was in line with the party's regular business. In addition, we have hired a field research assistant who regularly checked in with the party and monitored that the party abided by data collection protocols.

Principle 5: “Political science researchers should generally seek informed consent from individuals who are directly engaged by the research process, especially if research involves more than minimal risk of harm or if it is plausible to expect that engaged individuals would withhold consent if consent were sought.” In terms of the evaluation protocols, all decisions were vetted by local senior- and mid-level members of the party who were the main participants in the recruitment campaign. Researchers were not involved in the collection of survey data as these data were collected through the party's call center whose staffing and management is dealt with by party personnel. When the party collected information about existing and new members, they did not document consent, but 1) individuals had already given party workers their numbers by giving a missed call to party pamphlets and 2) no penalties (or explicit benefits) existed for party members not taking the survey. In addition the new rank-and-file were also not required to take the party surveys, they were told that they could still participate in the party regardless of whether they responded to the survey or specific questions. Survey participants have also had distinct decision points to refuse participation: they could decide not to contact the party in the first place; once the party re-contacted them after they received a missed call, they could decide not to engage with the party; if they decided to take the survey, they were given the option not to answer questions.

Principle 6: “Political science researchers should carefully consider any use of deception and the ways in which deception can conflict with participant autonomy.” No deception was used during this research process.

Principle 9: “Political science researchers should generally keep the identities of research participants confidential; when circumstances require, researchers should adopt the higher standard of ensuring anonymity.” The survey responses were recorded by a phone center run by the party and individual responses were kept confidential and not shared with other individual party members. Survey responses were aggregated by the research team and shared only in an aggregate form with the party personnel, although, the party always had the option to recontact their members and new volunteers for their campaign activities directly.

Principle 10: “Political science researchers conducting studies on political processes should consider the broader social impacts of the research process as well as the impact on the experience of individuals directly engaged by the research. In general, political science researchers should not compromise the integrity of political processes for research purposes without the consent of individuals that are directly engaged by the research process.” Our collaboration with a political party

affords us to learn important lessons about creating more diverse and inclusive political institutions and study the ways in which party organizations are built. These are important theoretical insights on their own and are difficult to study without collaborating directly with political parties. However, we were also cautious not to disrupt the political process in which AAP was participating. We did not think that our involvement compromised the integrity of the political process for several reasons. First, AAP would have gone ahead with the recruitment of new volunteers using their already existing recruitment materials without the participation of researchers. Second, we did not modify any canvassing procedures, we only collaborated to put in place procedures to evaluate the results of the recruitment drive. For example, we provided insights on how to distribute the pamphlet with the assigned treatment condition, but otherwise party members distributed pamphlets according to the decisions that the local party unit took. Third, the evaluation of the recruitment strategies that the research team undertook are increasingly common in India where many large political parties employ consultants to evaluate and advise on sophisticated get-out-the-vote and other campaign strategies.

Principle 11: “Political science researchers should be aware of relevant laws and regulations governing their research related activities.” The research abides by all relevant laws on conducting research. In addition, working with a political party also required adherence to relevant campaign and electoral regulations.

C Further Details on Data Sources and Surveys

C.1 Description of Datasets

Dataset on Pamphlet Distribution During the recruitment drive the party created distribution sheets that also recorded randomly generated treatment assignments. Master trainers then distributed pamphlets to mid-level members (vice presidents) accordingly. Master trainers sent photos of the distribution sheets to the party’s central office in Delhi, which digitized them. Later, the central office followed up with vice presidents to check if they had the correct pamphlet and how many pamphlets they had distributed to date. The party recorded at each check-in how many pamphlets vice presidents had distributed, which gives us time series data on the rate of distribution.

Phone Number Database Those interested in joining the party during the recruitment campaign gave AAP a missed call. AAP therefore has the phone numbers and time of calling for all interested individuals. Sometimes AAP received multiple calls from the same number. In the analysis, we drop duplicates and keep the earliest call made, but still note the number of calls they made to AAP. Similarly, some people called phone numbers associated with two or more different treatments. In this situation, we keep only the earliest call made, but note the other treatment phone lines dialed. If AAP cannot reach an individual for the survey, we do not count them as having called since these individuals cannot become party workers if the party cannot contact them.

Mid-Level Party Member Survey (MS) Vice presidents took the mid-level party member survey at the sessions where they received the pamphlets, as well as via phone once assembly meetings ended. This survey measures policy opinions and demographics of vice presidents and new party members. The survey consists of four main sections: demographics, policy opinions, issues of party management, and the conjoint experiment. It was originally written in English, and then translated to Hindi. AAP piloted the survey with two focus groups: one with party workers in Delhi, and another with master trainers in Jharkhand. AAP incorporated their feedback to clarify questions and shorten the survey.

This survey gathers information on a host of demographic characteristics as well as attitudes on political issues and the management of the party. The demographics section records information on religion, caste, education level, profession, age, and gender. The political ideology section consists of a series of statements about policies and social practices and asks participants to rate their agreement on a scale of one to seven, where one is “strongly disagree” and seven is “strongly agree.”

Surveys were introduced and distributed at assembly meetings by master trainers, who gave a brief explanation of each part of the survey. The survey is then self-administered. To help respondents with lower literacy skills, master trainers read out the survey and each option to respondents. Master trainers answered any clarifying questions on the text that arose, but were instructed not to explain questions any further to respondents or to lead them to any particular response. They were also instructed to prevent answer sharing.

At pilot sessions, AAP told master trainers to administer surveys at assembly meetings when they handed out pamphlets to vice presidents. However, this protocol was not fully followed in the initial phase of the campaign. In early September 2018, only some surveys had been completed. AAP’s Political Affairs Committee instructed master trainers to organize a second round of motivational meetings to give this survey to vice presidents. Additionally, workers in AAP’s Delhi headquarters surveyed vice presidents in 12 constituencies over the phone.

Onboarding Survey of New Members AAP piloted a computer-assisted telephone survey and trained enumerators in October and November 2018. The party compiled all phone numbers from the missed call campaign in a randomly generated order and gave phone numbers in this order to phone enumerators for call back. AAP then administered the survey to each new potential member from November 2018 to March 2019. On February 22, 2019, after enumerators had called each potential new recruit numerous times, AAP sent out a short text message to those who had still not completed the survey asking them to call a number if they still wanted to join. If they did call back, AAP surveyed them.

The survey collects information on the new members’ demographics, policy preferences, career goals, and previous political engagement. The demographic section includes questions about age, gender, education level, caste, religion, and employment. The political engagement section asks questions on topics including voting history, prior party registration, and knowledge of local politics. For policy preferences and political attitudes, the survey features many of the same questions as the one administered to mid-level members.

In 10 questions concerning socio-economic policies and party organization, respondents say whether they “agree,” “disagree,” or are indifferent about the statements read to them. AAP created five versions of the survey that randomly made some of the prompts negative

(e.g. “There should not be reservations for women” instead of “There should be reservations for women”) because pilots suggested some respondents tended to agree with all survey prompts. Enumerators switched between these survey versions. Additionally, questions where respondents rank their reasons for joining AAP appear in randomly assigned order in different versions of the survey. In pilot surveys, AAP found that asking these questions simultaneously made respondents frustrated and less likely to complete the survey.

Long-Term Retention Survey on New Members Three years after the New Member Survey, AAP conducted another survey wave on those who had indicated their interest in joining the party in 2018 using its call center again. AAP could link the earlier survey responses to the later responses via phone number. Additionally, AAP collected information on the volunteering activities of these individuals since their onboarding.

D Uncertainty and SE Estimation

In our pre-analysis plan we noted that we will cluster our standard errors at the vice president-level. Once we received the dataset, it was very difficult to link survey respondents to a particular vice president, even though we knew the particular treatment that the respondent received based on the number she called. Therefore, we had to make certain assumptions to construct our standard errors. Note that this procedure has no bearing on the calculation of treatment effects.

We take into account two sources of uncertainty. First, if we wanted to allocate new recruits to vice presidents, there is uncertainty about the ratio of the respondents we allocate to a particular vice president. For example, we could allocate 100 percent of respondents to vice president *A* and none to the others or we could assign 50 percent of respondents to vice president *A* and 50 percent to vice president *B* and none to the others. To simplify this complex process, we make a realistic assumption for our main analysis: the ratio of new recruits a vice president gets assigned is the ratio of pamphlets they distributed to the total number of pamphlets. It is important to note that 73% of vice presidents received either a pack of 100, 200, or 500 pamphlets which depended on the availability of printed pamphlets to the party on the day of a vice president’s training session. AAP has monitored pamphlet distribution through regular calls with vice presidents and they confirmed that all pamphlets received by the vice presidents were distributed in the field. The second source of uncertainty is which vice president to assign each call. For this, we randomly assign every pamphlet within a particular treatment arm among the vice presidents associated with this arm. The probability that a particular vice president gets a pamphlet assigned is proportional to the number of pamphlets he or she distributed.

For the main analysis, analogous to a bootstrap procedure, we generate 5,000 cluster-assignment vectors. We estimate the standard errors using these cluster-assignment vectors, and use the mean as our estimated standard error. We also conduct the same exercise to obtain standard errors when clustering for constituency assemblies.

As a robustness check, we probe both assumptions above with the following procedure. We begin with probing the second assumption (that the rate of callbacks is proportional to the rate of pamphlet distribution) by taking the largest cluster in terms of callbacks within a

treatment arm and setting the bootstrap probability that that cluster receives 100%, 200%, 400%, or 800% more pamphlets than the baseline procedure. We proportionately decrease the probability for other clusters in the same treatment arm and set as floor a probability of zero. This is because this procedure can yield negative probabilities in some cases since we are increasing the size of the largest cluster by many factors. We always make sure to adjust the total probability to be equal to one. In addition to this procedure, we also take a more straightforward approach where we assign pamphlets with equal probabilities across the vice presidents. To probe the first assumption, we randomly selected the number of treatment arms to which the above procedure should be applied. Together, this procedure should yield a more conservative standard error because we are increasing the skew of callbacks many-fold within treatment arms and also how many treatment arms are affected.

We bootstrap this procedure 10,000 times and compare the updated p-values with those from our main analysis. In Table D.1 we report the results from this exercise and find that the p-values are remarkably stable, perhaps because the main source of uncertainty is accounted for in our case (as we can perfectly match callbacks to treatment arms).

Table D.1: **Sensitivity Analysis for Inference**

	Table G.9		1x		2x		4x		8x		Equal	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Female, LATE	0.002		0.001		0.001		0.001		0.000		0.002	
Ideology, LATE		0.090		0.090		0.089		0.086		0.075		0.091
Candidacy, LATE		0.004		0.004		0.004		0.004		0.007		0.003
Policy, LATE		0.011		0.011		0.011		0.011		0.013		0.011
Career, LATE		0.263		0.263		0.263		0.264		0.266		0.263

Note: Numbers are p-values in columns (3)-(12) that are estimated using 10,000 bootstrap samples. Columns (1) and (2) p-values correspond to the main treatment effect estimates on the rate of callbacks reported in Table G.9. Columns (3)-(10) show sensitivity to increasing the size of the largest cluster within a treatment arm by various factors, while columns (11)-(12) probe robustness to setting callbacks equal across clusters within a treatment arm. See the text above for details of this sensitivity analysis procedure.

E Alternative Explanation: Differential Party Effort

E.1 Elites: Evidence on Balance of Pamphlet Distribution by Arm

Table E.2: Balance Table for Treatment Groups

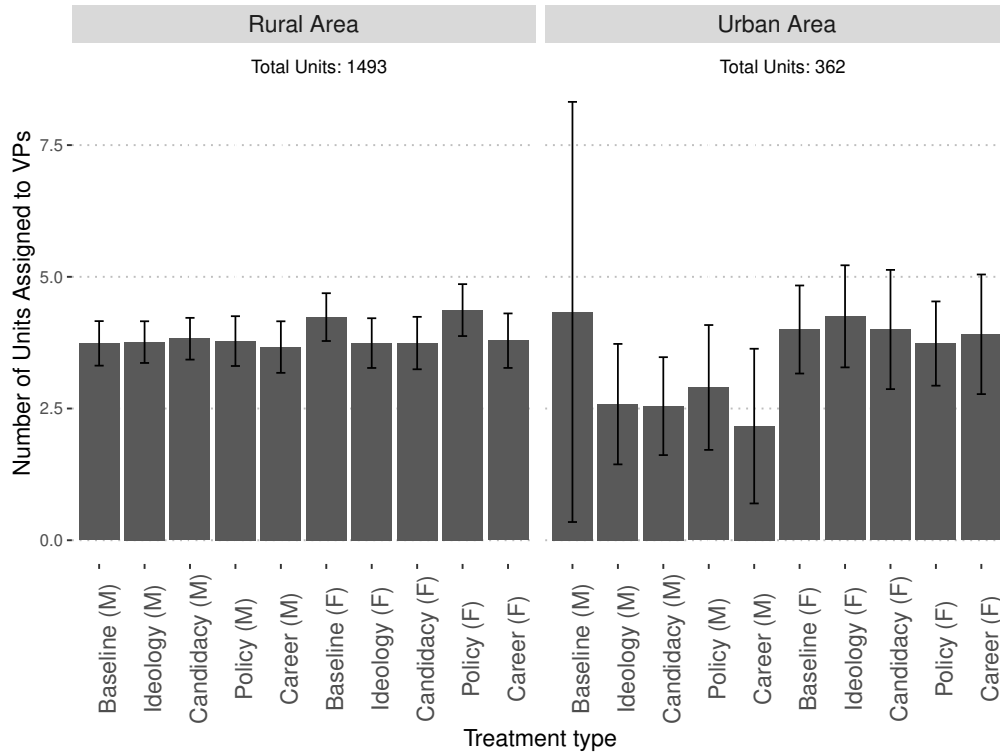
<i>Dependent Variable:</i>	OLS		Neg. Binom
	Count	Log(Count)	Count
Panel A: Gender Inclusive Treatment			
Male	2516.613 (329.672)	7.557 (0.145)	7.831 (0.135)
Female	2308.966 (356.349)	7.399 (0.171)	7.745 (0.140)
Hypothesis tests p-values			
Joint orthogonality p-value	0.670	0.482	0.658
Observations	60	60	60
Panel B: Benefits Treatment			
Baseline	496.011 (17.835)	6.175 (0.076)	6.207 (0.315)
Ideology	511.290 (12.424)	6.252 (0.046)	6.232 (0.312)
Candidacy	498.257 (17.390)	6.190 (0.072)	6.204 (0.315)
Policy	507.222 (19.112)	6.209 (0.073)	6.230 (0.315)
Career	488.710 (12.424)	6.177 (0.046)	6.198 (0.312)
Hypothesis tests p-values			
Joint orthogonality p-value	0.741	0.858	0.975
Base - Ideology = 0	0.401	0.324	0.699
Base - Candidacy = 0	0.902	0.848	0.959
Base - Policy = 0	0.533	0.663	0.716
Base - Career = 0	0.692	0.980	0.887
Observations	523	523	523

Note: This table shows balance on the number of pamphlets by treatment arm. The unit of analysis is at the vice president level. The dependent variable in Columns 1 and 3 is the number of pamphlets distributed, in Column 2 it is the log of the number of pamphlets distributed. For Columns 1 and 2, we estimate the coefficient using an OLS regression. For Column 3, we use a negative binomial model. The bottom part reports p-values comparing indicated coefficients. The joint orthogonality test checks if all coefficients are equal. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

E.2 Elites: Evidence on Mid-Level Members’ Responsibilities

Figure E.5 shows that mid-level members had a similar number of geographic areas that they were responsible for, across the ten conditions.

Figure E.5: Number of Rural and Urban Units Assigned to Mid-Level Members



Note: The figure shows the average number of urban and rural areas that have been assigned to mid-level members (vice presidents) for pamphlet distribution. Urban areas include nagar panchayat wards, colonies, and sectors, rural areas refer to gram panchayats.

E.3 Mid-Level Members: Compliance with Assignment

As Table E.3 demonstrates, compliance to treatment assignment was very high in terms of both the recruitment message assigned and female treatment assigned. This means that AAP Jharkhand mid-level members (vice presidents) by and large received and distributed the type of pamphlet that was assigned to them based on the randomization sheet. We present local average treatment effects, but intention-to-treat effects are very similar in magnitude as compliance is very high. These ITT results are available upon request.

E.4 Mid-Level Members: Pamphlet Distribution Over Time

Similarly, Figures E.6 and E.7 suggest no discernible pattern in how quickly mid-level members distributed their pamphlets, a potential proxy for effort.

Table E.3: Compliance by Female Treatment and Message Types

Male/Female Pamphlets	Compliance	Message Type	Compliance	Message Types	Compliance
Baseline	1.000 (0.000)	Baseline	0.921 (0.036)	Baseline (M)	0.962 (0.038)
Female Treatment	0.974 (0.025)	Ideology	0.887 (0.049)	Ideology (M)	0.968 (0.022)
		Candidacy	0.889 (0.055)	Candidacy (M)	0.981 (0.019)
		Policy	0.926 (0.036)	Policy (M)	0.940 (0.047)
		Career	0.917 (0.043)	Career (M)	1.000 (0.000)
				Baseline (F)	0.875 (0.058)
				Ideology (F)	0.767 (0.101)
				Candidacy (F)	0.756 (0.118)
				Policy (F)	0.907 (0.055)
				Career (F)	0.818 (0.081)

Linear Hypothesis	p-values	Linear Hypothesis	p-values	Linear Hypothesis	p-values
Baseline - Female Treatment = 0	0.306	Ideology - Baseline = 0	0.446	Baseline (M) - Baseline (F) = 0	0.209
		Ideology - Candidacy = 0	0.939	Baseline (M) - Candidacy (M) = 0	0.645
		Ideology - Policy = 0	0.315	Baseline (M) - Career (M) = 0	0.323
		Ideology - Career = 0	0.533	Baseline (M) - Policy (M) = 0	0.240
		Candidacy - Baseline = 0	0.540	Baseline (M) - Ideology (M) = 0	0.816
		Candidacy - Policy = 0	0.443	Baseline (F) - Candidacy (F) = 0	0.297
		Candidacy - Career = 0	0.614	Baseline (F) - Career (F) = 0	0.516
		Policy - Baseline = 0	0.824	Baseline (F) - Ideology (F) = 0	0.271
		Policy - Career = 0	0.849	Baseline (F) - Policy (F) = 0	0.412
		Career - Baseline = 0	0.929		

Note: The upper panel in the table shows the average compliance for each pamphlet type, with standard errors in parentheses. The lower panel shows whether compliance rates differ across pamphlet types.

Table E.4: Patterns in Non-Compliance

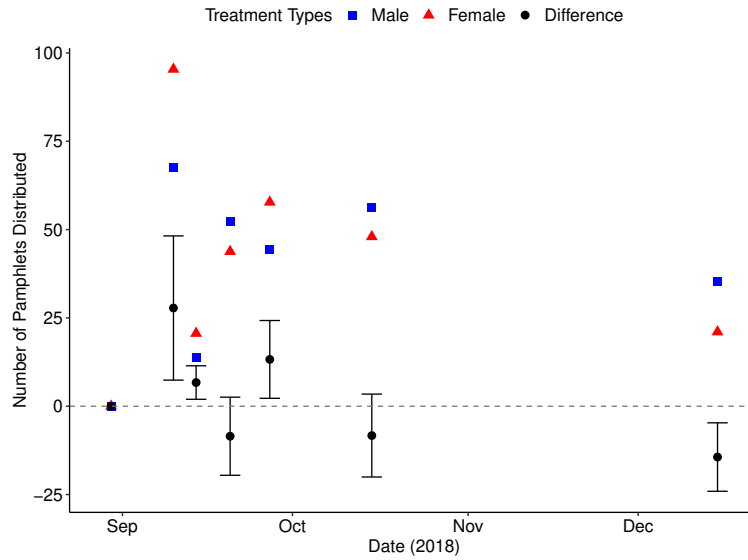
	Treatment Taken Up									
	Candidacy (M)	Career (M)	Ideology (M)	Policy (M)	Candidacy (F)	Career (F)	Ideology (F)	Policy (F)	Baseline (F)	Sum
Candidacy (M)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ideology (M)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Policy (M)	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Baseline (M)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Original treatment	Candidacy (F)	1	2	0	0	4	1	2	1	11
	Career (F)	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	8
	Ideology (F)	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	2	10
	Policy (F)	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	5
	Baseline (F)	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	6
Sum	2	11	1	1	2	10	4	9	9	

Note: This table breaks down the few cases of non-compliance among mid-level members, comparing original pamphlet assignments to the pamphlets they actually distributed.

E.5 Mid-Level Members: Proportionate Group Targeting

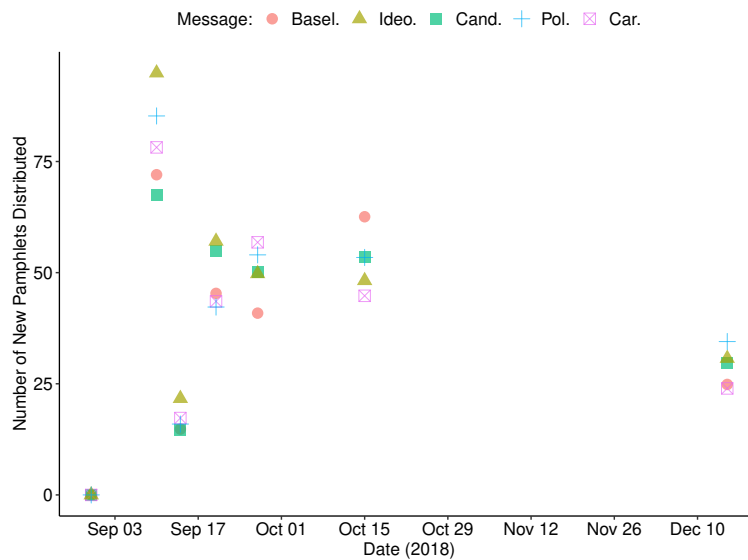
In Figure E.8 we assume that more men are approached than women under the standard, male-faced pamphlet, and test variations in this baseline gender skew from less extreme (40% of pamphlets reach women) to more extreme (10% of pamphlets reach women). Under each condition, we then simulate how recruiters targeting up to 50% more women under the female pamphlet would impact treatment effects. The simulation shows that approaching more women under the female pamphlet does indeed attenuate the effect on women. However, the attenuation is relatively small; the coefficient on women recruited approaches zero only when recruiters approach over 50 percent more women under the female pamphlet. Yet, we also note that concurrently the effect on men (likely from excluded groups) increases, which was our more robust finding over the longer run followup. While we cannot explicitly rule out

Figure E.6: **Timeline of Distribution for Male and Female Pamphlets**



Note: The figure shows what percentage of the total pamphlets have been distributed in each treatment condition since the last check-in by the party.

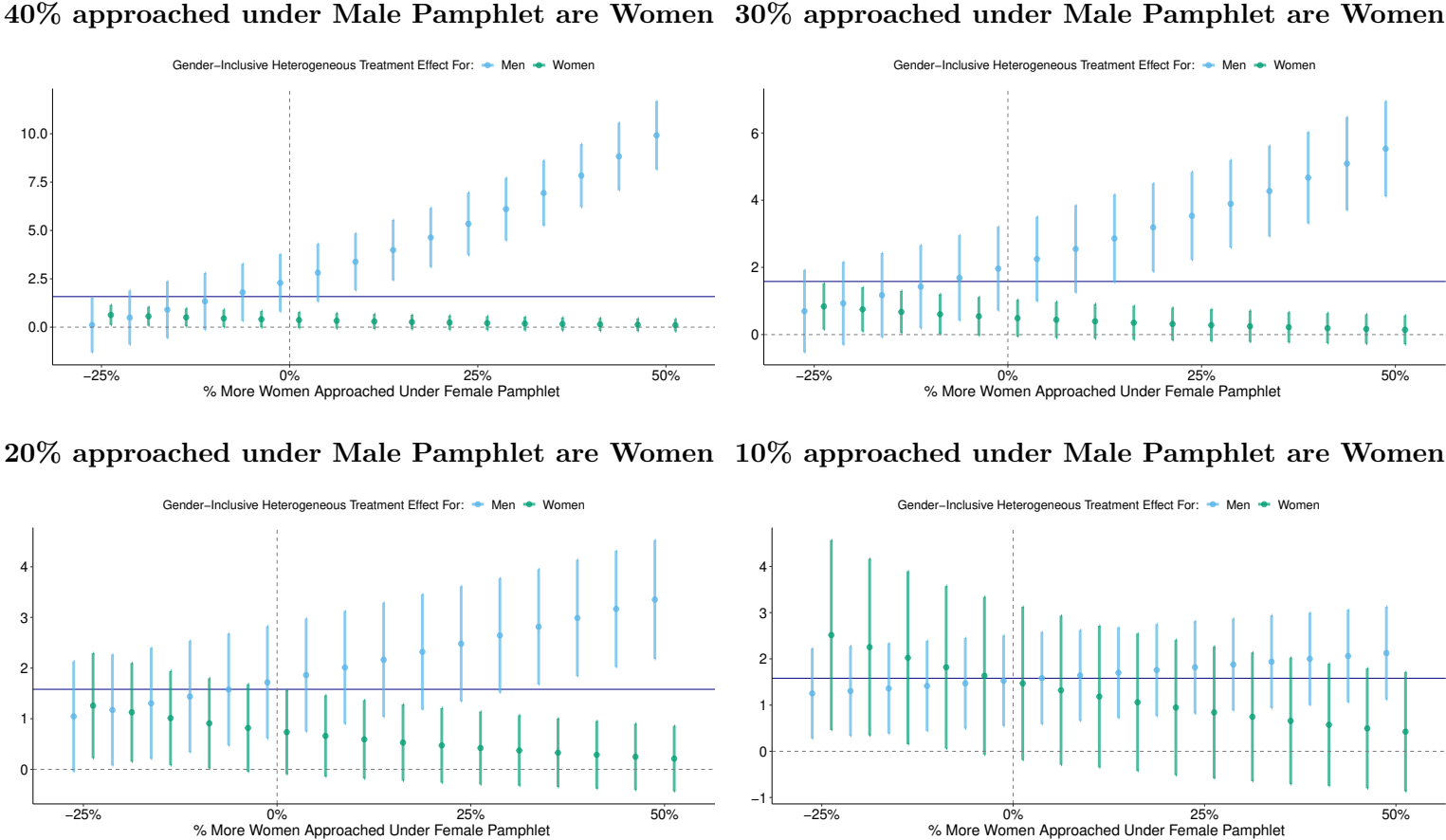
Figure E.7: **Timeline of Distribution for Male and Female Pamphlets**



Note: The figure shows what percentage of the total pamphlets have been distributed in each treatment condition since the last check-in by the party.

the story of the party’s preferential targeting with our data—and given that we observe no effect on preferential targeting in a host of tests—we conclude that this story of heterogeneous treatment effects is possible, but perhaps not plausible.

Figure E.8: Simulated Heterogeneous Effect of Signaling Gender Inclusiveness



Note: These plots simulate heterogeneous treatment effects of the gender-inclusive treatment by varying two mediators. Across plots we simulate what percentage of those approached under the male pamphlet were women. Within each plot, across the x-axis, we simulate what percentage of more women were approached under the female pamphlet versus the male pamphlet. The solid horizontal line represents the overall treatment effect of female vs male pamphlets. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

F Deviations from the Pre-Analysis Plan

Table F.5: Differences in Estimation of Main Results from PAP

Panel A: Modifications of the Pre-Analysis Plan	
Paper Results	Difference from PAP
Number of New Members	
Table 4 and G.9	
Outcomes	We originally specified three outcomes to measure effects on the size of the recruited pool: any missed call for a pamphlet, a missed call that we can match to a geographic area, a missed call that was matched to an area and the caller completed the volunteer section of the survey. We already report the first outcome as our main analysis, but because we faced difficulties matching new recruits to geographic locations, we drop the remaining two outcomes from the main analysis. Nevertheless, we show that results are similar with these two outcomes in Table F.6 for the sample we were able to match.
Estimation	In our pre-analysis plan, we did not specify that we will estimate our regressions with constituency fixed effects. Nevertheless we include them because treatment is assigned within constituency. Therefore these FEs serve as block fixed effects (constituency) including which is the standard way of running these analyses.
Controls	In our PAP, we specified a procedure for including controls. As before, the inability to match calls precisely to geographic controls creates issues with matching covariates of locations to specific calls as well. Consequently, and since controls should only improve precision in a randomized experiment, we do not include controls in our analyses.
Diversity and Skills of New Party Members	
Table 4-5, G.12, G.4	
Outcomes	We exclude a “political experience index” variable from the analysis. This was a composite of the prior volunteering and voting variables. For ease of presentation and interpretability, we present a skilled member outcome instead which includes the components of the ‘political experience index’. We also present the results for each component of the index in Table G.12 and find that the results are quite consistent across the sub-components.
Estimation	See comments for Table G.9 on adding constituency fixed effects
Controls	See comments for Table G.9 on not including controls.
Long-term Retention Survey	
	We did not detail in our PAP that a follow-up survey similar to the original would be conducted. Nevertheless, we include this new data in and perform similar tests to the main analyses to show the longevity of the treatment effects.
Panel B: Pre-registered Analysis That is Excluded from the Paper	
PAP Specification	Reason for Excluding
Motivation for joining the party and preferences	We planned to include an index of different possible motivations for joining the party as well as policy preferences. However, we have changed the theoretical focus of the paper to emphasize incentives given by the party instead of motivations and preferences of potential recruits which are not randomized.
VP characteristics	Since we could not match calls to specific VP, we were unable to exploit heterogeneity in vice president characteristics to test if it impacts treatment efficacy.
Conjoint	We had pre-registered conducting a conjoint experiment with party leaders on their recruitment preferences. We omit this from this paper as we have not been able to obtain a correct sample.

Table F.6: Campaign Messages and Callbacks from Located Members and Motivated Members

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Located Member	Motivated Member	Located Member	Motivated Member
Female, LATE	1.796*** (0.474)	1.551*** (0.445)		
Ideology, LATE			0.798 (0.910)	1.399 (0.864)
Candidacy, LATE			2.100** (0.951)	1.953** (0.884)
Policy, LATE			-2.299*** (0.841)	-1.921** (0.790)
Career, LATE			-1.160 (0.894)	-0.436 (0.843)
Control Mean	6.845	6.131	8.058	7.001
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144856	144975	144856
N Clusters	60	60	523	523

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is the pamphlet. The dependent variable in Columns 1 and 3 is a binary indicator of whether or not a pamphlet was matched to a caller who indicated his or her geographic location. The dependent variable in Columns 2 and 4 is a binary indicator of whether or not a pamphlet was matched to someone who volunteered for AAP full or part-time. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly (Columns 1-2) and mid-level-member level (Columns 3-4) are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

G Supplementary Results

G.1 Joint Hypothesis Tests Tables

Table G.7: Treatment Means and Joint Orthogonality Tests

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Excluded Group	Female	Excluded Caste/Tribe	Excluded Religion
Baseline (Male)	5.756	0.447	4.941	1.461
Ideology (Male)	8.222	0.162	6.121	4.087
Candidacy (Male)	11.448	0.231	9.445	5.336
Policy (Male)	2.389	-0.002	2.030	1.007
Career (Male)	5.789	0.075	5.263	2.857
Baseline (Female)	8.556	0.132	6.915	5.085
Ideology (Female)	9.417	0.065	8.719	3.088
Candidacy (Female)	6.882	0.301	5.371	3.545
Policy (Female)	9.222	0.571	8.499	2.237
Career (Female)	5.672	0.428	4.914	2.640
Joint Orthogonality Hypothesis Test				
Joint F statistic	21.408	4.211	17.696	9.616
Joint p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No
Observations	144975	144975	144975	144975

Note: This table shows the mean value of the outcome for each treatment arm. The bottom part reports F statistics and p-values for a test of the joint orthogonality of the treatments against the Baseline (Male) condition. Standard errors are clustered at the mid-level-member level. Excluded caste and tribe covers Scheduled Castes and Tribes and Other Backward Classes. Excluded religion covers non-Hindus.

Table G.8: **Treatment Means and Joint Orthogonality Tests**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Skilled?	Employed	High Education	Prior Vote	Prior Volunteer
Baseline (Male)	7.386	3.095	3.320	5.093	3.545
Ideology (Male)	9.295	5.811	4.409	6.171	4.245
Candidacy (Male)	13.275	5.699	6.950	9.376	4.774
Policy (Male)	2.796	1.311	1.050	2.303	1.213
Career (Male)	6.842	3.534	3.383	5.038	3.308
Baseline (Female)	9.861	4.934	4.265	6.827	3.464
Ideology (Female)	10.158	5.698	5.781	6.197	5.196
Candidacy (Female)	8.133	4.063	4.797	5.641	3.355
Policy (Female)	10.289	6.014	5.138	7.506	3.601
Career (Female)	7.106	4.217	3.274	5.180	3.265
Joint Orthogonality Hypothesis Test					
Joint F statistic	25.629	14.589	20.746	14.101	9.817
Joint p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Constituency FE	No	No	No	No	No
Observations	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975

Note: This table shows the mean value of the outcome for each treatment arm. The bottom part reports F statistics and p-values for a test of the joint orthogonality of the treatments against the Baseline (Male) condition. Skilled is an index of employed, high education, prior vote, and prior volunteer. Standard errors are clustered at the mid-level-member level.

G.2 Effects on Number of New Recruits (LATE)

Table G.9: **Campaign Messages and the Number of New Recruits**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	New Member	New Member
Female, LATE	1.581*** (0.499)	
Ideology, LATE		1.638* (0.968)
Candidacy, LATE		2.939*** (1.008)
Policy, LATE		-2.265** (0.889)
Career, LATE		-1.050 (0.938)
Control Mean	7.947	8.780
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	523

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is the pamphlet. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of if a missed call has been matched to a pamphlet. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Column 1) and mid-level-member level (Column 2) are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

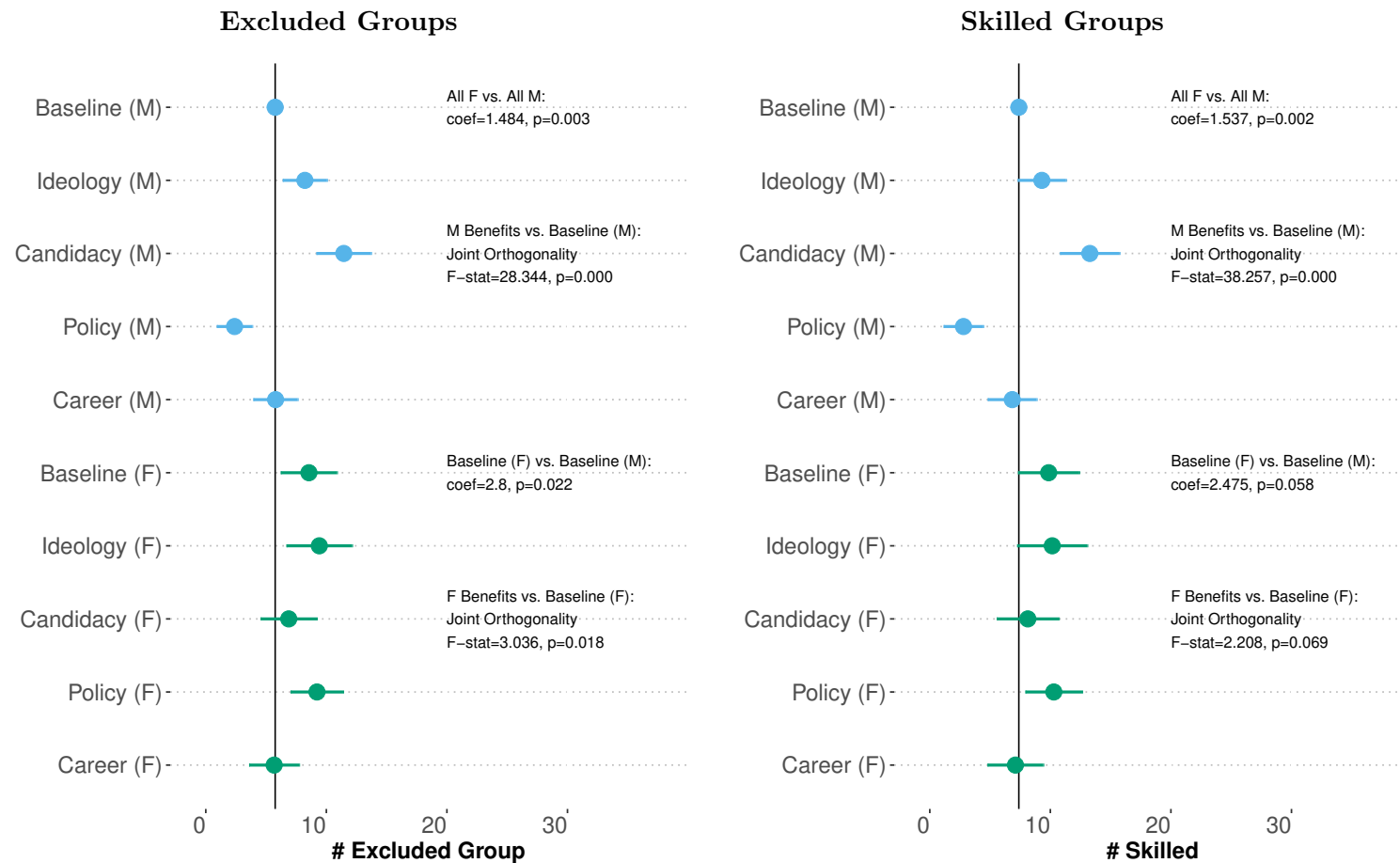
G.3 Effects on Excluded Recruitment

Table G.10: **Effect of Recruitment Messages Together with Female Encouragement Treatment**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	New Member	Excluded Group	Skilled
Ideology (M), LATE	2.247** (1.037)	2.466*** (0.937)	1.909* (1.021)
Candidacy (M), LATE	6.747*** (1.294)	5.692*** (1.157)	5.889*** (1.259)
Policy (M), LATE	-4.689*** (0.845)	-3.367*** (0.751)	-4.590*** (0.838)
Career (M), LATE	-0.541 (1.046)	0.033 (0.939)	-0.544 (1.036)
Baseline (F), LATE	2.612** (1.311)	2.800** (1.190)	2.475* (1.295)
Ideology (F), LATE	3.134** (1.514)	3.661*** (1.389)	2.772* (1.485)
Candidacy (F), LATE	0.938 (1.343)	1.126 (1.188)	0.747 (1.312)
Policy (F), LATE	3.077** (1.219)	3.466*** (1.110)	2.903** (1.202)
Career (F), LATE	0.096 (1.207)	-0.084 (1.059)	-0.280 (1.180)
Control Mean	7.528	5.756	7.380
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	No
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	523	523	523
p-values & F-statistics			
All F vs. All M p-value	0.002	0.001	0.002
M Benefits vs Baseline (M) F-stat	40.838	28.344	38.257
M Benefits vs Baseline (M) p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000
Baseline (F) vs Baseline (M) p-value	0.041	0.022	0.058
F Benefits vs Baseline (F) F-stat	2.007	3.036	2.208
F Benefits vs Baseline (F) p-value	0.094	0.018	0.069

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is at the pamphlet level. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not a missed call has been matched to a pamphlet (Column 1), whether a missed call from an excluded group has been matched to a pamphlet (Column 2), whether a missed call from a skilled volunteers has been matched to a pamphlet (Column 3). Robust standard errors clustered at the mid-level worker-level are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

Figure G.9: Impact of Message Types on Recruitment of...



Note: The subfigures show the number of recruits belonging to excluded groups (left; meaning women, ST/SC/OBCs, and non-Hindus) and skilled groups (right; meaning those with a high school education) per 1,000 pamphlets distributed for each treatment condition. “M” and “F” on the labels indicate whether the pamphlet shows male or female photos, the gender-inclusive treatment dimension. All coefficients report local average treatment effects with 95% confidence intervals. Coefficients for testing the effectiveness of all female treatments against all male treatments are reported in Column 1 of Table 5 for excluded groups, and Column 1 of Table G.12 for skilled groups. All other results are reported in Table G.10.

Table G.11: **Gender Inclusiveness, Benefits, and the Recruitment of Included Groups**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Included Group	Included Group
Female, LATE	0.098 (0.214)	
Ideology, LATE		-0.294 (0.406)
Candidacy, LATE		0.697 (0.438)
Policy, LATE		-0.684* (0.383)
Career, LATE		-0.235 (0.419)
Control Mean	1.474	1.672
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	523

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is at the pamphlet level. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not a missed call from the member of a politically-included group (general caste men) has been matched to a pamphlet. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Column 1) and mid-level-member level (Column 2) are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

G.4 Effects on Skills of Recruits (LATE)

Table G.12: Female Encouragement Treatment and the Recruitment of Skilled Volunteers

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Skilled?	Employed?	High Education?	Prior Vote	Prior Volunteer
Panel A: Highlighting Inclusiveness of Party					
Female, LATE	1.537*** (0.491)	1.199*** (0.358)	0.966*** (0.344)	0.984** (0.409)	0.412 (0.326)
Control Mean	7.601	3.820	3.640	5.371	3.307
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No	No
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	60	60	60	60
Panel B: Highlighting Benefits of Joining					
Ideology, LATE	1.449 (0.950)	2.003*** (0.702)	1.216* (0.666)	0.583 (0.785)	1.473** (0.641)
Candidacy, LATE	2.444** (0.984)	0.915 (0.679)	2.238*** (0.683)	1.808** (0.818)	0.751 (0.614)
Policy, LATE	-2.217** (0.877)	-0.630 (0.630)	-1.083* (0.602)	-1.106 (0.744)	-1.050* (0.561)
Career, LATE	-1.082 (0.924)	0.095 (0.664)	-0.396 (0.628)	-0.379 (0.772)	-0.082 (0.613)
Control Mean	8.552	4.029	3.839	5.891	3.573
Constituency Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	523	523	523	523	523

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is at the pamphlet level. In Column 1, the dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not a caller who is skilled (employed, high education, has prior voting or volunteering experience) has been matched to a pamphlet. The rest of the columns present results for each component. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Panel A) and mid-level-member level (Panel B) are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of a pamphlet to different assemblies or mid-level members 5000 times.

Table G.13: **The Impact of Gender Inclusiveness and Benefits on Recruitment of Low Skilled Volunteers**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Low Skilled	Low Skilled
Female, LATE	0.044 (0.104)	
Ideology, LATE		0.190 (0.192)
Candidacy, LATE		0.495** (0.210)
Policy, LATE		-0.048 (0.152)
Career, LATE		0.032 (0.167)
Control Mean	0.346	0.228
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	523

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is at the pamphlet level. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether or not a missed call from a low skilled (no high school education, no employment, no prior voting or volunteer experience) volunteer has been matched to a pamphlet. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Column 1) or mid-level worker-level (Column 2) are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

G.5 Long-term Retention Survey

Table G.14: Gender Inclusiveness, Benefits of Joining, and the Retention of Rank-and-File

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	New Member (2021)	Excluded Group (2021)	Skilled? (2021)
Panel A: Highlighting Inclusiveness of Party			
Female, LATE	0.520** (0.194)	0.491*** (0.179)	0.515*** (0.192)
Control Mean	1.038	0.872	1.013
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	No
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	60	60
Panel B: Highlighting Benefits of Joining			
Ideology, LATE	-0.798** (0.372)	-0.460 (0.341)	-0.691* (0.365)
Candidacy, LATE	-0.219 (0.389)	-0.185 (0.352)	-0.177 (0.381)
Policy, LATE	-0.557 (0.383)	-0.343 (0.351)	-0.500 (0.374)
Career, LATE	-0.729** (0.374)	-0.502 (0.341)	-0.627* (0.367)
Control Mean	1.710	1.368	1.634
No. Clusters	523	523	523
Constituency Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	144975	144975	144975

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is the pamphlet. The DV in Column 1 is a binary indicator of whether a person who the party could recontact in 2021 was matched to the pamphlet. Column 2's DV indicates if the pamphlet is matched to someone from an excluded group who consented to the survey. Column 3's DV indicates if the pamphlet was matched to a skilled recruit who consented to the survey. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Panel A) and mid-level-member level (Panel B) are in parentheses. Standard errors are from bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

Table G.15: Gender Inclusiveness, Benefits of Joining, and the Retention of Excluded Groups

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Excluded Group (2021)	Woman (2021)	Excluded Caste/Tribe (2021)	Excluded Religion (2021)
Panel A: Highlighting Inclusiveness of Party				
Female, LATE	0.491*** (0.183)	-0.011 (0.024)	0.392** (0.168)	0.119 (0.120)
Control Mean	0.872	0.026	0.743	0.423
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	60	60	60
Panel B: Highlighting Benefits of Joining				
Ideology, LATE	-0.460 (0.341)	-0.002 (0.066)	-0.263 (0.306)	-0.506** (0.217)
Candidacy, LATE	-0.185 (0.352)	-0.003 (0.049)	-0.099 (0.318)	0.142 (0.262)
Policy, LATE	-0.343 (0.351)	-0.032 (0.049)	0.001 (0.319)	-0.547*** (0.215)
Career, LATE	-0.502 (0.341)	-0.019 (0.046)	-0.259 (0.306)	-0.218 (0.240)
Control Mean	1.368	0.038	1.064	0.646
No. Clusters	523	523	523	523
Constituency Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	144975	144975	144975	144975

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The DV in Column 1 is a binary indicator of whether or not the pamphlet is matched to someone from an excluded group (woman, excluded caste/tribe, excluded religion) who consented to the survey. In Columns 2-4, the DV indicates the different components of this index. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Panel A) and mid-level-member level (Panel B) are in parentheses. Standard errors are from bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.

Table G.16: Gender Inclusiveness, Benefits of Joining, and the Retention of Skilled Recruits

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Skilled (2021)	Employed (2021)	High Educ. (2021)	Prior Vote (2021)	Prior Volunteer (2021)
Panel A: Highlighting Inclusiveness of Party					
Female, LATE	0.515*** (0.194)	0.569*** (0.146)	0.408*** (0.133)	0.312** (0.170)	0.101 (0.128)
Control Mean	1.013	0.423	0.385	0.820	0.500
Constituency Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No	No
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	60	60	60	60	60
Panel B: Highlighting Benefits of Joining					
Ideology, LATE	-0.691* (0.365)	-0.219 (0.266)	-0.212 (0.215)	-0.572* (0.322)	-0.234 (0.238)
Candidacy, LATE	-0.177 (0.381)	-0.179 (0.264)	0.274 (0.252)	-0.464 (0.319)	-0.190 (0.237)
Policy, LATE	-0.500 (0.374)	-0.139 (0.274)	-0.166 (0.236)	-0.426 (0.333)	-0.148 (0.255)
Career, LATE	-0.627* (0.367)	-0.165 (0.265)	0.234 (0.251)	-0.479 (0.330)	-0.274 (0.246)
Control Mean	1.634	0.798	0.532	1.292	0.722
Constituency Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Num. obs.	144975	144975	144975	144975	144975
N Clusters	523	523	523	523	523

Note: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The unit of observation is the pamphlet. The dependent variable in Column 1 is a binary indicator of whether or not the pamphlet is matched to someone who is skilled (employed, having at least high school education, having experience with voting or volunteering). The dependent variables in Columns 2-5 are different components of this index. Robust standard errors clustered at the assembly-level (Panel A) and mid-level-member level (Panel B) are included in parentheses. Standard errors are obtained by bootstrapping potential assignment of pamphlets 5000 times.