

Urban Voting and Party Choices in Delhi

Matching Electoral Data with Property Category

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In most parts of the world there is a direct relation between economic and social well-being and political participation. India, though, is among the exceptions to this tendency. The poor in India vote more than the rich. This paper, using the case of Delhi, shows that neighbourhoods have a significant influence in voting patterns. The rich in poor neighbourhoods vote more than the rich in affluent neighbourhoods and the poor in rich neighbourhoods vote less than the poor in underprivileged neighbourhoods. This paper uses property tax and property categories to arrive at Delhi's wealth parameters and then tries to match them with voting patterns.

1 Introduction

The influence of wealth on electoral participation has been of interest both at theoretical and empirical levels for researchers across many electoral democracies in the world. India remains an exception to the established narrative on a direct relation between economic and social well-being and political participation. The poor in India vote more than the rich, that is, there is an inverse relationship between political participation and economic and social well-being. Using aggregated constituency level data and survey techniques, scholars have identified several intriguing patterns in the Indian electoral behaviours, particularly in urban settings. This paper adds nuance to these discussions based on insights gained from matching data sets on property tax and voting in Delhi. Our research, using the Delhi case, shows that neighbourhoods have a significant influence on voting behaviours of both the rich and the poor in urban areas. Specifically, the rich in poor neighbourhoods vote more than the rich in rich neighbourhoods and conversely, the poor in rich neighbourhoods vote less than the poor in poor neighbourhoods.

Since, to our knowledge this is the first attempt to use property tax category as proxy for wealth to gain new insights in urban politics, we dwell at some length in the paper on the challenges of preparing and cleaning the data sets. One of the premises of the paper is that poor data sets have been thwarting effective policymaking and research in Indian cities and creative use of available data sets can lead to significant leaps in policy imagination. We argue that methodologically using urban property tax as proxy for wealth opens up new dimensions—particularly, the significant influence that neighbourhoods exert on electoral behaviour of both rich and the poor.

The turnout in urban constituencies is less than in rural constituencies. Even though there is no official categorisation of constituencies as urban or rural in India, scholars have time and again used methodologies to classify constituencies along the rural–urban axis (Weiner and Field 1976; Jaffrelot 2008). While there is some disagreement over the time period when urban electorate turnouts began to decline, particularly for the national elections (Weiner puts it as 1977, Jaffrelot 1991), it is an accepted fact that the urban electorate in India votes less than the rural (Falcao 2009). The difference in voting between rural and urban electorates is more prominent in the local self-government bodies created by the 74th constitutional amendment (CA), where the turnouts in urban local bodies have been

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consistently lower than the turnouts in the rural local bodies (Joshi 2014).

Secondly, the lower turnout in the urban areas is often attributed to the turnout variation within different “classes” that make up the urban electorate. As Jaffrelot notes, “the cities of India vote less because the urban middle class votes less” (2008).

This apathy of the urban voters has been widely reported in the media. But until now there is little nuanced evidence on who within the cities, or amongst its residents, vote less. Most studies use aggregate assembly constituency (ACs) level turnouts, which mask a number of colonies within the same constituency that might have residents with different wealth/income status.

In absence of data on income or wealth, scholars trying to answer this question have relied on survey data or have created their own databases (Sridharan 2014; Jaffrelot 2008; Harriss 2005) in order to come up with an explanation that could provide insights in the voting pattern by income or wealth. Hariss did a survey in Delhi National Capital Region in 2003 using a sample of 1,401 citizens to suggest that the poorest were the most likely to vote. The survey was conducted in various parts of Delhi and added evidence to the urban “voter apathy” narrative. Similarly, the National Election Studies (NES) conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) has been often used by political scientists to draw attention to the difference between the rural–urban and the rich–poor (Falcao 2009).

Using Delhi as a case, this paper aims to provide an alternate conceptual and practical framework to categorising a city on wealth parameters. These wealth parameters are then matched with the electoral data provided by the State Election Commission (SEC). Using this matched database, we aim at providing some commentary on the relationship, if any, between wealth and political participation of Delhi’s voters.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. We start by discussing the data sets used for this paper. Next, we provide a framework of using property categories as proxy of wealth followed by a methodological note on matching the electoral data with property category data. In the last section, we provide the results and analyse them. We conclude by providing some broad trends and possible future questions and the use of this data set.

2 Understanding the Databases

National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) or Delhi is the national capital and also the most urbanised state of India. According to the Registrar General of India, 97.5% of Delhi’s population is in urban areas, and 2.5% stays in rural areas. Delhi has three municipal corporations, one municipal council and one cantonment board. The three Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs) with 272 wards came into being in 2011, when the erstwhile MCD was trifurcated creating the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC). Post trifurcation, NDMC and SDMC have 104 wards while EDMC

has 64 wards. The elections for all these corporations were last held in 2012. The SEC was in charge of conducting these elections. For this paper, we make use of the electoral rolls as well as the result of the elections as put out by the SEC in the public domain. The elections had a 55% turnout with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning all three corporations. It took place in a relatively “less-charged” political environment; the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which stormed into power in 2013 and again in 2015, was not present on the electoral scene and the campaign for the 2014 national elections had still not built up. The 2012 elections was selected for analysis because of the relatively neutral political climate.

Electoral Data

For this study, we are using two databases from the 2012 MCD elections. The first data set is the electoral roll data (ER data), extracted from the electoral rolls prepared by the SEC. Besides the “serial number of polling stations” and “total electors” in each polling station in a ward, it also contains information of the “locality,” the “building” and the “area.” While the “locality” usually corresponds to the name of the most popular area in a polling station or the colloquial name for the entire area, the “building” is usually the name of the school, library or a community centre where voters cast their vote. The “area” is a detailed list of all the colonies that are located within a particular polling station. This information is particularly crucial in this exercise as it helps to match polling station with the property tax category.

The second data set is the result of the MCD elections at the polling station level. This data is provided under Form 17 of the SEC list of data sets. This data set contains the name and the serial number of the polling station, which is the same as in the electoral data. Additionally, Form 17 provides us with a break of votes polled for every candidate by name and political party (or independent) and the total votes polled in each polling station.

Property Category Data

All the three municipal corporations in Delhi levy and collect property taxes for all covered and uncovered lands in their territory.¹ However, the framework for taxation is created by the Municipal Valuation Committee (MVC) set up by the Government of Delhi.² The MVC, a statutory body set up once every three years, uses a variety of parameters to come up with a property category of the colony.

The first MVC (MVC-I) was created in 2004 and the third and the last one (MVC-III) was created in 2009 and submitted its report in 2010.³ The MVC-III adopted a “matrix classification” as developed by the MVC-I instead of going for a de novo classification of colonies in Delhi. In the committee’s view, while the need for increasing base values was justified, it believed that “the proportion of the revenue to be derived from enhancement of efficiency and collection is likely to be much higher.” It stated: “It is more important at the present time to strengthen the data base system, improve the efficiency of collection rather than enhancing the base value.” Hence, it decided not to make any changes to the matrix as developed by the MVC-I.⁴

The matrix classification is an exhaustive set of parameters that the MVC took into account before designating a certain category to the colony. This matrix classification is based on 10 parameters and every colony is assigned a grade of A, B, or C in each of these parameters. A has maximum of 10 points, B has six points and C has two points.⁵ The total points of a colony from these 10 parameters is used to assign a final property category from A to H.⁶ The points as allocated, category and a few examples of the colonies in this category are listed in Table 1. Our analysis is premised on the idea that property tax categorisation ranging from category A to H with category A being the highest and category H the lowest, is a proxy of wealth and not income or class. The classification, along with few colonies in the category, are listed in Table 1.

As discussed earlier, the MVC is statutorily responsible for giving a property category to a colony in Delhi and submits its report to the MCD. The MCD, in turn, has the power to update (upgrade or downgrade) a colony, as it deems fit, through a notification. These updates of a property category for a colony are visible in two other publicly available data maintained by the MCD. These are the MCD colony lists prepared by MapmyIndia for MCD⁷ (hereafter MCD GIS data) and Property Tax Department of MCD⁸ (hereafter MCD Property Tax data). These two property category databases are regularly updated and are different from the MVC at two levels—one, variation in names and numbers of colonies and two, variation in categories allotted as colonies are upgraded or downgraded. The MVC list is static, but the MCD GIS and MCD Property Tax list is continuously updated by adding, deleting or upgrading, downgrading the colonies. While all the three databases are for the same city, we had to understand the relationships and gauge the convergence and divergence between the three databases in order to match the electoral data with the property category data.

The total number of unique colonies in these databases differ. The total number of colonies in the MVC data, MCD GIS

data, and MCD Property Tax data are 2,450, 2,309 and 2,498 respectively.⁹ Table 2 compares the colonies of the three databases on the basis of their names. A total of 2,295 colonies matched between MVC data and MCD GIS data, that is, 94% of the former and 99% of the latter. Similarly, 2,340 colonies match between MVC data and Property Tax, and 2,271 colonies matched between MCD GIS and Property Tax data. Except for some colonies from Property Tax data, these three databases largely match with each other.

Table 2: Matching of Colony Name from the Three Databases

	MVC	MCDGIS	PropertyTax
MVC		2,295	2,340
MCDGIS	2,295		2,271
Property Tax	2,340	2,271	
Total unique colony	2,450	2,309	2,498

The property tax categorisation of the matched colonies between these three databases is shown in Table 3(a) to 3(c) (p 67). Each one of the tables compares the category of colonies between two databases. The highlighted diagonal cells in each table show the proportion of colonies that are classified in the same property category in both data. All the remaining colonies show difference in property tax category between the two databases. Table 3(a) compares the colonies between MVC data (in row) and MCD GIS data (in column), and it shows that these two databases mostly match with each other. Of the total 2,271 colonies, 97% are classified in the same category in both data and the remaining 3% are classified differently. However, the proportion of colonies classified differently for property category between the MVC data and the other two data is significant and in all such cases, the MVC category has been downgraded in the other two data. The proportion of colonies classified differently is 16% between MVC and MCD GIS and 18% between MVC and MCD Property Tax database.

For this paper, we use two of the three available databases on property categories in Delhi. We make use of the MVC database, since it is the statutory basis of categorising colonies in Delhi and remains the basis for property categorisation of the

Table 1: Classification of Colonies into Different Category

Weighted Points	Category	Social Class*	Example(s) of Colonies
80–100	A	Very rich	SDMC: Maharani Bagh, Vasant Vihar, Sunder Nagar
70–80	B	Rich	NDMC: Rouse Avenue; SDMC: Defence Colony, Greater Kailash, Lodhi Colony, Hauz Khas, RK Puram, Nizamuddin East
60–70	C	Upper middle	NDMC: Punjabi Bagh, Civil Lines, East Patel Nagar, Shalimar Bagh, Jhandewalan SDMC: East of Kailash, Kalkaji, Lajpat Nagar, Vasant Kunj, CR Park, Saket, Alaknanda, Nizamuddin West
0–60	D	Middle	NDMC: Paschim Vihar, New Rajinder Nagar, West Patel Nagar, Kirti Nagar, Rajinder Nagar, Model Town SDMC: Dwarka, Gautam Nagar, Janakpuri, Sarita Vihar, Vikas Puri, Rajouri Garden, Sewa Nagar, Jangpura Extn. EDMC: Vasundhara Enclave, Mayur Vihar, Preet Vihar, IP Extension, Anand Vihar, Park End
40–50	E	Lower middle	NDMC: Rohini, Paharganj, Jama Masjid, Inderpuri, Kashmiri Gate, Chandni Chowk, Pandav Nagar SDMC: Adchini, Hari Nagar, Ber Sarai, Bhogal, Aliganj, Munirka Village, Zamrudpur, Katwaria Sarai EDMC: Krishna Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Yamuna Vihar
30–40	F	Middle poor	NDMC: Pratap Nagar, Bada Hindu Rao, Baljeet Nagar, Ganesh Pura, Shastri Nagar, Karam Pura, Nehru Vihar SDMC: Mehrauli, Govind Puri, Khirki, Subhash Nagar, Mahipalpur, Lado Sarai, Gujranwala EDMC: Geeta Colony, Nand Nagri, Mandawali Uncheper, Seema Puri, Gamri,, GTB, Welcome
20–30	G	Poor	NDMC: Inder Enclave, Wazirabad, Nihal Vihar, Mongolpuri, Jahangirpuri, Nathupura, Narela, Azadpur SDMC: Dakshinpuri, Palam, Sangam Vihar, Harkesh Nagar, Badarpur, Jasola, Madanpur Khadar EDMC: Seelampur, Babarpur, Kondli, Shahdra, Trilokpuri, New Ashok Nagar, Kalyanpuri, Sonia Vihar
Below 20	H	Very poor	NDMC: Mubarakpur Dabas, Hilambi Kalan, Mundka Village, Kirari Suleiman, Bawana, Burari, Mukundpur SDMC: Tigri Vill, Deoli Vill, Aali Vill, Chattarpur, Rajokri, Kapashera Village EDMC: Karawal Nagar, Khajuri Khas, Gokulpur Village

* Classified by the authors.

All unauthorised colonies are G and all rural villages as H. The urban villages are either E, F or G.

next MVC. Of the other two databases, we pick MCD GIS data over MCD Property Tax data for the following reason. While the property category classification in MCD GIS and MCD Property Tax data are mostly similar with an error of about 4%, the MCD GIS gives a map of all colonies along with property category, which is useful in matching the colonies from the electoral database with the colonies of the property database.

The use of property category as devised by MVC-III as a proxy of wealth has been done for two reasons; first, the property categorisation from A to H is based on a composite matrix which makes use of a range of parameters including physical and social infrastructure, market access and value of land, making it one of the most comprehensive methodologies that categorise colonies in Delhi according to their wealth. Second, since the same methodology is applied across each colony in Delhi, it maintains uniformity of data across a city that is characterised by multiple levels and intersections of governments as well as a variety of settlement types.

3 Matching the Databases

As discussed earlier, the ER data provided us with the area of the polling station containing names of colonies corresponding to the polling station. The ER data had 11,525 polling

stations of which EDMC had 2,671, NDMC had 4,466 and SDMC had 4,388. The two property category data set—MVC and MCD GIS—had 2,450 and 2,309 colonies. After combining ER data with the Form 17 data we found that the turnout of 48 polling stations was over 100%, which is theoretically impossible. These observations were excluded from the analysis as it seems there was an error in at least one of the databases. Similarly, another 77 polling stations were excluded as either information on total electors or total votes polled was missing (entered as 0). After removing these 125 polling stations, the final database had 11,400 observations. As discussed earlier, the ER data provided us with the area of the polling station containing names of colonies corresponding to the polling station.

A schematic diagram of the “variables” used from the three databases for this paper is given in Figure 1 (p 68). From the ER database, we used four variables—“ward number,” “serial number of polling station within each ward,” “area of polling station” and “total voters.” We used the “ward number,” “serial number of polling station within each ward,” “total votes polled” and “votes polled for each candidate” variables from the Form 17 database. From the property category database, we picked the “ward number,” “name of the colony” and “category of the colony” as variables. Using these variables our objective was to provide a property category to every polling station and to create colony-wise database from these polling station database.

Table 3: Comparison of Property Tax Category between the Three Data

(3A): Property Tax (Row) and MCD GIS (Column) (%)

Category	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total
A	1								1
B		2							2
C			3						3
D				11					11
E					11				11
F						1	20		21
G						1	1	39	42
H								9	9
Total	1	2	3	11	12	21	40	9	100 (2,271)

(3B): MVC (Row) and MCD GIS (Column)

A	1	1							2
B		1	1			1			4
C			2	5					7
D				6	2				8
E					9	1			10
F						19	4		23
G							35		36
H								10	10
Total	1	2	3	11	12	21	39	10	100 (2,295)

(3C): MVC (Row) and Property Tax (Column)

A	1	1							2
B		1	1				1		4
C			1	5	1				7
D				6	2				8
E					8	1	1		10
F						19	4		23
G							36		37
H								9	9
Total	1	2	2	11	11	20	43	9	100 (2,340)

Matching Variables

The ER data is available separately for all polling stations, which was aggregated into one single database. Using the “serial number of polling station within each ward” variable, which is same for the ER and Form 17 data, we created the first database. We now had the ward number, area of polling station, total voters and turnout and the votes polled to each candidate in the same datasheet.

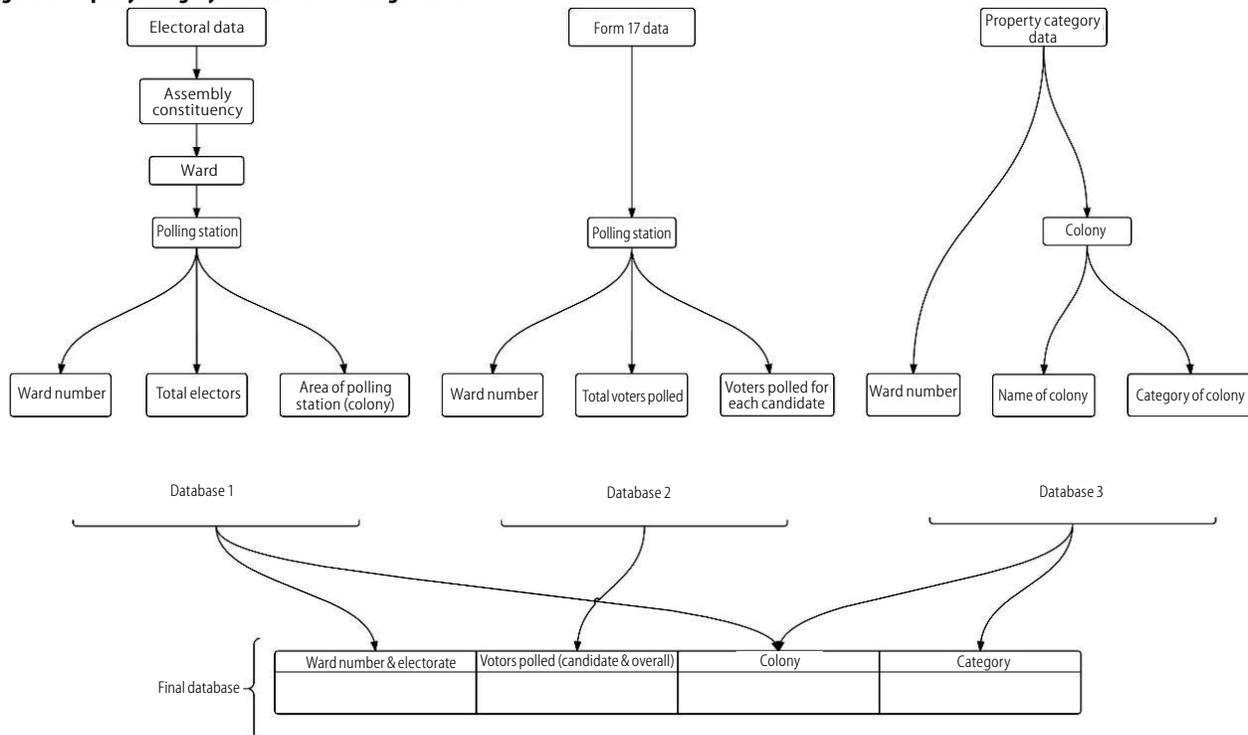
The next step was to match the “colony name” and “category” variables of the property category data with that of the “area of the polling station” variable of the ER data. Since this was a significantly large database, we used both automated as well manual cleaning techniques to prepare the final data set.¹⁰

Final Database

The final database had the following variables—serial number of polling station and name, total voters, total votes polled per polling station and for each candidate and colony and its category. This database had 11,400 polling stations of which we could match 64% of the colonies (1,469 colonies out of the 2,309 colonies) from the property category database. Of these 1,469 matched colonies, EDMC matched 313 out of total 466; NDMC 555 out of total 903 and SDMC matched 601 of total 940 colonies.

There are two reasons for low matching of the colonies. First, there were many polling stations that had multiple colonies, of which we picked one colony from the polling station area if the category was the same or did not pick any colony

Figure 1: Property Category in Relation to Polling Station



if the categories were different. While this omission did not prevent the omitted colonies from being picked up in some other polling station where it was unique, it certainly did result in many colonies not being picked up in our final matching. Second, there were colonies in the MCD GIS or MVC database that could not be located in the polling station of the ER data.¹¹ Of the two, the first contributes to 28% of the mismatched colonies and the remaining 72% from the second. Table 4 gives the distribution of electors across different category.

Table 4: Distribution of Total Electors across Different Property Category (%)

Municipal Corporations	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Un-Matched	Total
East				6	3	51	34	4	2	100
North		0.1	1	17	24	10	34	11	3	100
South	1	4	5	11	7	15	43	9	5	100
Total	0.4	2	2	12	12	22	37	8	4	100

4 Results

Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor?

The turnout in the three MCD elections in 2012 was an average of 55%, the highest in the last 15 years.¹² The EDMC’s turnout was the highest with 56%, followed by NDMC with 55% and SDMC with 53%. Moving from the aggregate figures, we find that at all three municipal corporations together, the turnout (Figure 2) shows a progressive increase from the highest property tax category (A) to the lowest property tax category (H) implying that the very rich in Delhi vote less than the very poor. There is a 20% difference in turnouts between the very rich and the very poor which implies an average increase of 2.8 percentage points in turnout as we

go from one class to another. This increase in turnout is the highest from upper middle (category C) to middle (category D) and the lowest increase is from middle poor (category F) to poor (category G).

The rich categories (A, B and C) show an incremental increase in turnout as we go from very rich to upper middle while in case of the poor categories (F, G, H) it is fuzzy, that is, we see less variation in turnouts. From rich category to middle (category B to D), the increase in turnout is 14% compared to just 2% increase from middle poor to very poor (category F to H). This might be because the rich colonies are most likely to have a homogeneous electorate and more unified “type” of electorate, whereas poor colonies are more heterogeneous with a variety of electorate “types” by class that vote differently.

While the progressive increase from very rich to very poor (A to H) holds true for all the three corporations, there are a few disaggregations which should be pointed out. For

Figure 2: Voter Turnout Rate by Different Property Category (%)

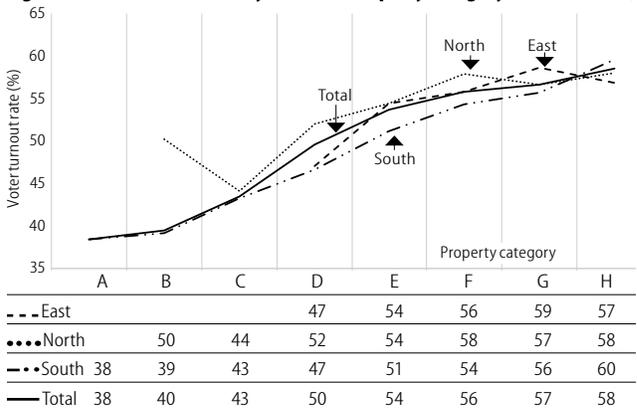
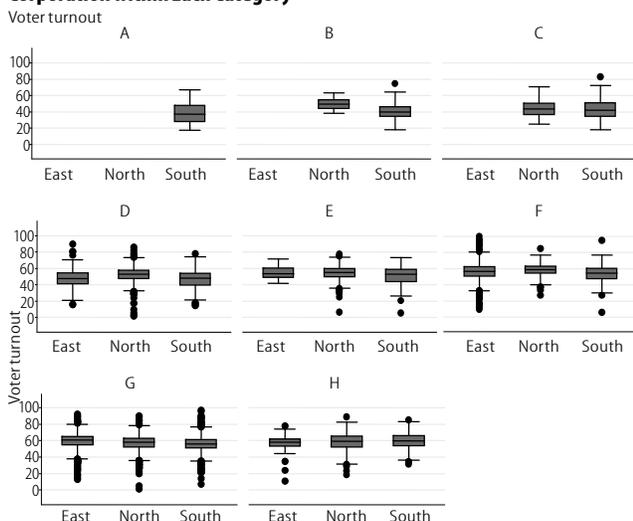


Figure 3: Distribution of Polling Station Turnout Rate by Municipal Corporation within Each Category



instance, in the SDMC, we see a clear increasing pattern from very rich to very poor colonies but in EDMC and NDMC this increasing pattern does not come out clearly in the poorer colonies. The turnout from poor to very poor colonies (G&H) in EDMC shows a decline while the middle poor to poor colonies (F&G) in NDMC shows a slight decrease which rises again for very poor colonies.

The polling station level turnout variation of one particular property category across the three municipal corporations is shown in Figure 3. At an overall scale, the variation in turnout in the middle and lower categories (D, E, F and G) is greater than their rich and very poor counterparts.

Turnout Differ in ‘Mixed Neighbourhoods’

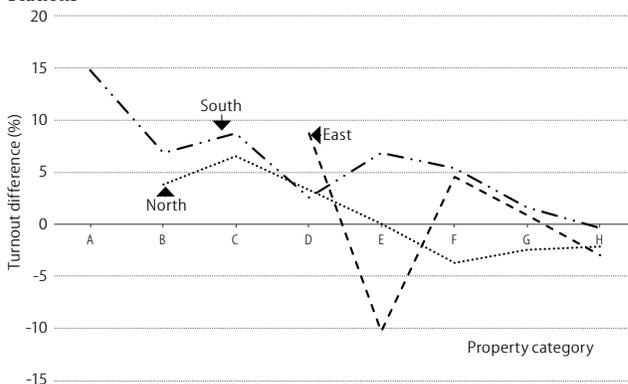
Electoral turnout analysis at the property category level risks masking inter- and intra-neighbourhood heterogeneity within a colony. For instance, not all of a “rich colony” has rich neighbourhoods; it could also house some not so wealthy and at times poor people. Hence the questions arise: Within a colony, do rich neighbourhoods vote similarly or differently than the poor neighbourhoods? Conversely, do poor neighbourhoods vote differently in rich and lower middle or middle poor neighbourhoods?

In order to investigate this question, we would need detailed household level data, which might bring out the variations within a colony. In the absence of such a database, we approached this question by segregating polling stations into “poor” and “non-poor” by using the following four keywords: “jhuggi and jhopri,” “slum,” “camp” and “temporary huts (t-huts).” A few caveats apply: first, our categorisation is not a clean filtering of the settlements in Delhi, which has eight types of settlements—seven of which are unplanned. However, the groups are used interchangeably to address the term “unplanned” and the status of the group changes over the varied legal space of Delhi. Second, most of the poor of the city stay in underserved colonies like jhuggi, slums, camps and temporary huts, hence substantiating a case for considering them as proxy for the very poor colonies.

Using the variable “area of polling station,” in the ER data, we filtered polling stations that had at least one of these four kinds of colonies. These colonies appeared in different formats, jhuggi and jhopri might appear as “jhuggi” or “JJ” or “J&J” etc. Similarly, the temporary hut could appear as “t-huts” or “t-hut” or “temp hut.” We used a variety of combinations to separate the polling station with these four types of colonies resulting in polling stations which had one of these four colonies mentioned in the “area of the polling station” variable. As a result we got polling stations within a property category which have one of the four types of poor colonies that would then be compared with other polling stations in the same category but do not have any of these four types of categories.

At all-Delhi level, Figure 4 gives you the difference in turnouts between the poor polling stations and others (not having any of these four colonies) across categories. The analysis shows that the poor polling stations vote more than rich in wealthier neighbourhoods. In the SDMC, the wealthier categories have significantly high turnout for the poor than the others. Similarly, category D in East and wealthier categories in North (B, C, and D) have difference in turnouts of the poor and others.

Figure 4: Turnout Rate Difference between Poor and Non-poor Polling Stations

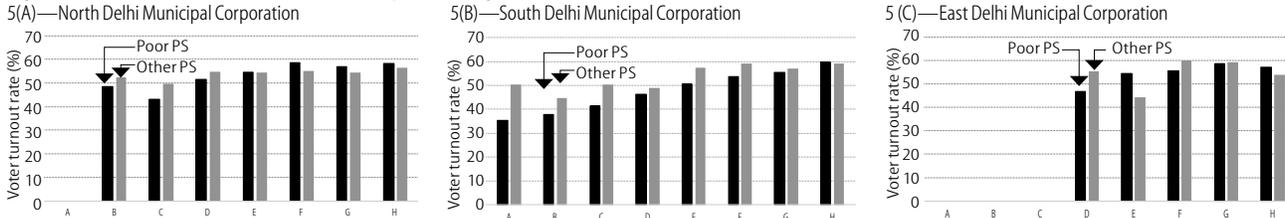


Interestingly, the turnout of poor in wealthier categories (A, B and C) is less than their counterpart in the less wealthy categories (F, G, and H) (Figure 5 (a) to 5(c), p 70). In SDMC, the poor in wealthy category vote about 10% less than the turnout of the poor in the less wealthy colonies. This difference is visible in NDMC but is not very clear in EDMC where turnout in category D is same as H. So, while the poor in wealthy neighbourhoods vote more than the rich, they vote less compared to the poor in less wealthy neighbourhoods.

Counter to this, the rich (the middle or higher wealthy people) in less wealthy colonies vote more than the rich in the wealthy categories. The turnout of middle or higher wealth people in less wealthy categories in SDMC is more than the rich in wealthy categories. The same trend is observed in NDMC where there is a 10 percentage point difference in the turnout of the rich in wealthy categories and the rich (middle or higher wealth) people in less wealthy colonies.

Lastly, the rich in non-wealthier colonies vote less or equal to the poor. Categories G and H in SDMC, category E and G in NDMC and categories G in EDMC all point towards this.

Figure 5: Turnout Rate between Poor and Non-poor Polling Stations



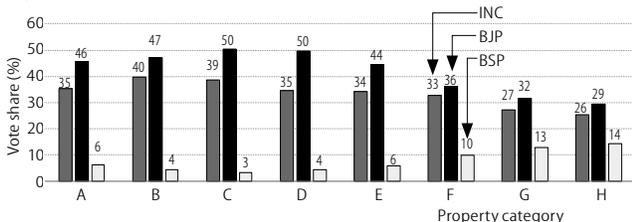
Do Political Preferences Change across Wealth or Income?

Political science literature on India establishes linkages between political preferences and caste. Deshpande (2000) has suggested caste affects electoral politics at every level, which also redefines caste and Kothari (1995) has suggested that, “It is not politics that gets caste-ridden, it is caste that gets politicised.” Given such strong linkages between caste and politics, can we use our data set to see any linkages between wealth and its associated political preferences? While caste and wealth (or arguably class) could blur in cities (Kumar 2013), as a rule upper castes do remain the most prosperous and hence are the wealthiest while the lower castes usually live and work in the poorer colonies of the city.

As already discussed, the 2012 Delhi election was a more “neutral” election since the AAP, which was elected in 2013 and then again in 2015 to Delhi’s state assembly, was not present in the 2012 elections. Similarly, the year 2012 was much before the massive “Modi wave” of 2014, where all the seven parliamentary constituencies of Delhi went to the BJP. 2012 was the election of the traditional parties in Delhi. The BJP, Congress (also referred to as INC) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) represent the traditional vote base understanding of Delhi. The BJP stronghold lies in the rich, upper and middle class; the Congress, being a centrist party, appealed to the poor as well as the rich and the BSP stuck to its traditional Dalit voter base in Delhi.

Figure 6 gives the break-up of vote share of major political parties. As can be seen, the BJP’s vote share reduces from very rich to very poor (A to H) whereas the vote share of the BSP rises from very rich to very poor. Although the Congress is similar to the BJP, the declining trend across property category is not as sharp.

Figure 6: Vote Share of INC, BJP and BSP



Vote share of “Others” is not shown here.

The vote distribution across the three political parties reinforces the existing scholarship on the political base of these parties. BJP, in political scholarship, has been considered as a party of the rich or the upper caste—traditionally the Brahmins and the Baniyas. This voter base resides in the wealthier colonies of Delhi and there is a clear support for the BJP in

these categories. The Congress, understood to be a centrist party, derives its vote base from the rich, the middle class and the poor. The vote share for the Congress is more or less evenly distributed across the property categories than the BJP. The BSP, headed by a Dalit, is an ethnic party that represents itself as a champion of the Dalit (or the untouchables) and its politics is central to the cause of the oppressed castes in India. There is a clear relationship between the BSP and the vote share across categories in Delhi.

The difference of the vote share between Congress and BJP is the most in the middle class (C and D category) (Table 5) and the difference is less in the lower middle and poor categories (F, G and H), which shows a certain preference for the BJP in the wealthier wards. This preference for BJP decreases across categories in case we add the vote share for BSP and INC.

Table 5: Distribution of Votes between INC, BJP and BSP (%)

Property Category	BSP (%)	BJP (%)	INC (%)	Difference between BJP and INC (%)	Difference between INC+BSP (%)
A	6	46	35	10	4
B	4	47	40	7	3
C	3	50	39	12	9
D	4	50	35	15	11
E	6	44	34	10	4
F	10	36	33	3	-7
G	13	32	27	4	-8
H	14	29	26	4	-10

Variation in the political preferences across corporations is shown in Figure 7(A) to 7(C) (P 71). The difference in the votes polled for BJP, INC and BSP has the maximum difference in the SDMC while this difference between the INC and BJP tapers in NDMC and EDMC. Poor colonies in East (G and E) and in North (H and F) have little difference in the voting preferences. This tapering in North and East might be because of poorer colonies in North and East of Delhi. The BSP sees a consistent increase in the vote share in East MCD while it is incremental, yet mixed for North MCD.

Four conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. One, all three corporations show variation in terms of political outcomes. While the South MCD is most clear in terms of political preferences, East and North are more mixed in political preferences. Two, there is a BJP bias in the rich wards, and though INC also does well in one rich category (B category in North), there is a significant difference in the votes polled for the two parties across categories. Three, Congress seems to distribute itself well across categories and does well in some wealthy and not so wealthy wards; in other words—it has a firm but not a constant voter base. Fourth, electoral victory of the BSP is clearly linked to the poorer property categories. The BSP’s votes polled increased across corporations as we went from rich to poorer categories.

Figure 7: Vote Share of INC, BJP and BSP by Municipal Corporation

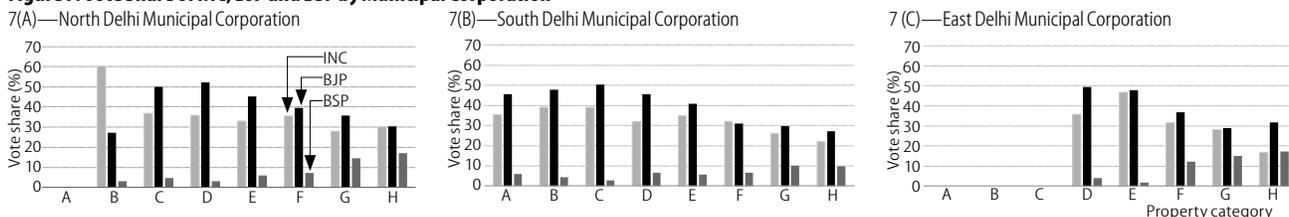
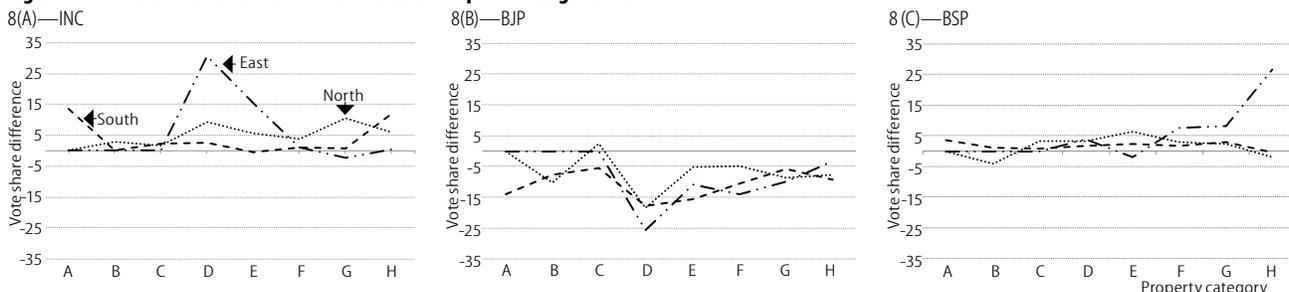


Figure 8: Vote Share Difference between Poor and Non-poor Polling Stations



The political party preference at property category level would mask intra-neighbourhood heterogeneity. The underlying question is to observe any changes in the political preferences of the rich and the poor polling stations in a property category. In order to do this, we used our approach as discussed before to divide the polling stations into poor and non-poor polling stations using the four types of words: “jhuggi and jhopri,” “slum,” “camp” and “temporary huts (t-huts).”

The result of this, in Figure 8(A) to 8(C) shows the difference in the vote share of a particular political party between the poor polling station and the others (non-poor polling station). While the poor across property categories vote more for INC and BSP than non-poor, no particular trend is observed across different property category. On the other hand, poor across property categories vote less for BJP and the vote share gap between poor and others decreases in the lower end of property category.

Making any concrete conclusion from the result is not possible since in many categories, the number of voters in poor polling stations is small compared to the non-poor polling stations. Data can be misread as this is a small sample. Even then, the graphs clearly show a political preference at a broad level wherein the poor, irrespective of the property category they live in, prefer to vote for the INC or the BSP over the BJP. This observation reinforces the narrative that the BJP vote base lies amongst the middle and the rich, whereas, the BSP and the INC are the preferred political parties of the poor, whether they reside in a rich or in a poor colony.

5 Conclusions

Using property tax category as a proxy of wealth, this paper uses the election of the Municipal Corporations of Delhi, 2012 to validate the hypothesis that poor electors vote more than the rich. Similarly, it examines the voters’ preference for major political parties. We found that on an average, the turnout increases as we move from higher property category to lower category, implying that poor vote more than the rich. This trend holds true for the three municipal corporations except in

the lower property category of EDMC and NDMC, where the turnout rate is either decreased from the previous higher property category or increased marginally. The result from this paper corroborates existing literature on voter turnout.

By classifying polling stations within in a particular property tax category as poor and non-poor, by using keywords from the area of polling stations, we see that the poor vote more than rich in wealthier neighbourhoods but the turnout difference decreases as we move from higher property category to lower one. We also note that the turnout rate of the poor in a wealthier property category area is less than their counterparts in the less wealthy categories (F, G, and H).

Regarding the preference of voters among major political parties, this paper finds that while the BJP gets its support from the rich and the better-off, the BSP has a clear support of the poorer section and its vote share rises dramatically from rich to poor categories. On the other hand the Congress vote base is distributed more or less equally amongst all the property categories than the BJP.

Though this paper is limited to two basic questions on voting behaviour, the research demonstrates that it is possible to use property tax category as a proxy of wealth to answer several questions related to electoral behaviour that can be studied both at a macro as well as micro level. Similar studies can be extended beyond Delhi to research voting behaviour in other cities in India.

NOTES

- 1 For a detailed discussion on Delhi’s governance structure, read: “The Intersections of Governments in Delhi, Policy Brief, Cities of Delhi Project,” Centre for Policy Research.
- 2 MVC is set up under Sections 116, 116A, 116B, and 116C of the Delhi Municipal Act (DMC Act, 1967).
- 3 Delhi shifted to Unit Area Method (UAM) for taxation in 2004. In order to propose the method and taxation for UAM, an “Expert Committee on Property Tax Reforms” was formed on 9 July 2002. This committee while giving its report, apart from proposing amendments to the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1967 in order to incorporate UAM, it also suggested the setting up of the MVC every three years. Subsequently, MVC-I was formed in 2004 and its property category recommendations were implemented on 1 April 2004. The MVC-I categorisation primarily considered the report of the Expert Committee on Property Tax Reforms and adopted the classification

- of colonies and various factors and criteria developed by it. This was revised by MVC-II, formed in 2006, and whose report was rejected by the Standing Committee of the MCD. On 24 September 2009, MVC-III was formed.
- 4 Draft Report of the Third Municipal Valuation Committee as submitted to the Standing Committee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (pp 8–12).
 - 5 (1) Capital value of land: Rs 10,000 and above per sq m is regarded as “A”, Rs 5,000 to Rs 9,999 per sq m as “B” and less than Rs 5,000 sq m is “C”. (2) Rental value: Greater than Rs 15 per sq ft is “A”, Rs 10–Rs 15 per sq ft is “B” and less than Rs 10 sq ft is “C”. (3) Age of colony: All approved colonies that came up after 2000 are accorded the highest 10 marks in the matrix. Unauthorised colonies after 2000 are also too awarded higher marks and not considered the same as the old unauthorised colonies. (4) Road: Road on which colonies are located -100 ft and above as “A”, 80–100 ft. as “B”, less than 80 ft. as “C”. (5) Physical infrastructure: Basic amenities like water/sewer system, water drains, street lights, conservancy, and sanitation- “A” is good, “B” is average, “C” and below is poor or no availability. (6) Infrastructure: Social and other services like parking, school, vocational institutional training centre, community, health centre, health club, bank, post office, petrol pump, cinema, bus terminal, metro station, and playground- “A” is good, “B” is average, “C” and below is poor or no availability. (7) Type of colony: “A” is for approved colony. “B” is for regularised colony and “C” and below is for unauthorised colonies. (8) Proximity of commercial market: “A” is for a major consumer market, “B” is wholesale consumer market and “C” for local shopping centre. (9) Location of colony: If in South then “A”, Central or West then “B” and North or East then “C”. (10) Economic status of residents.
 - 6 The final category is A if the total points is 80 or more and a separate category for every 10

- points thereafter (B for 70–80, C for 60–70, etc) with the lowest category is “H” for total points of 20 or less. Similarly all unauthorised colonies are categorised as G and all rural villages as H. The urban villages are categorised as either E, F or G.
- 7 This GIS application is available on the websites of all the three municipal corporations. The GIS map has been prepared by mapmyindia.com and provides a list of colonies along with their property categories and ward numbers. The list as well as the map can be accessed on <http://app.mapmyindia.com/mcdApp/colonyList.jsp>.
- 8 The MCD has created an exclusive portal for online submission of property taxes in Delhi. This portal has, amongst other, property categorisation for all colonies in Delhi. This list can be accessed on <http://www.mcdpropertytax.in/>.
- 9 The actual number of colonies listed in the data sets are larger (MVC data: 2,502, MCD GIS data: 2,311 and MCD Property Tax data: 2,623). Some colonies, which spread across different wards, are listed multiple times. This is observed most in the MCD Property Tax data where 54 sub-colonies are given for Paschim Vihar colony with same property category. Also, the MCD GIS data has more industrial area colonies than the other two databases and only the MCD Property Tax data has some colonies exclusively defined as “market areas.” Similarly, some villages in MCD Property Tax data are separated as “residential area” and “non-residential area,” with the category of “non-residential area” being higher than the “residential area.” In this exercise, we have considered the residential area only and ignored the market area since the residential areas would be inhabited by voters, while the market areas essentially include commercial properties.
- 10 For a detailed discussion on matching procedure, refer to Joshi et al (2015) “Urban Voting and Party Choices in Delhi: Matching Electoral

Data with Property Category,” Working Paper, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

- 11 Most of these colonies were found to be “sub-colonies” within colony but their exact location or category could not be ascertained.
- 12 In 1997, the polling percentage was 41%, 51% in 2002 and 42.78% in 2007. <http://www.firstpost.com/delhi/mcd-polls-delhi-sees-highest-ever-voter-turnout-in-15-yrs-277560.html>.

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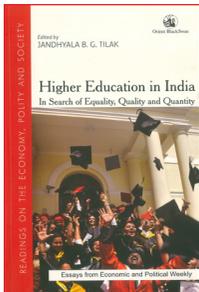
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