The Short- and Long-Run Distributional Consequences of Political Reservation*

Chinmaya Kumar† M.R.Sharan‡

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Abstract

Can political reservations durably change village power structures? We study the reservation of village-council leadership for historically marginalized Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Bihar, India, using individually identified census records covering all 19 million rural households in the state. The census allows us to track who contests, who wins and how household asset ownership is affected; a regression discontinuity design allows us to measure causal effects. Five years after reservations are introduced, SCs narrow asset ownership gaps with others. The elected SC village head and their neighbours see largest gains in assets. The traditional dominant elite sub-castes who would have won elections in the absence of reservations lose out. Over the ten-year reservation cycle (two consecutive terms), SC leaders redirect welfare schemes and public goods towards SCs. When reservation is withdrawn, SCs across a broad set of sub-castes contest elections and are seven times as likely to win elections compared to counterparts in never reserved villages. The traditional village elite sub-castes are displaced by new SC entrants. A primary survey conducted thirteen years after reservation was first introduced shows further catch-up in asset wealth between SCs and the rest. The political equilibrium has durably shifted: our findings suggest that political access and material gains reinforce one another over time.

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†Azim Premji University; email:chinmaya.kumar@apu.edu.in

‡Agricultural and Resource Economics Department, University of Maryland; email:sharan@umd.edu

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1 Introduction

The world has seen a wave of decentralisation in recent decades (Mookherjee, 2015). Scholars have long been concerned about whether decentralisation deepens or curbs the capture of government by powerful local elites (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006). Cognisant of these concerns, governments have implemented affirmative action policies in the form of quotas in local government for members of marginalized groups – "political reservations". Direct control over local government by minorities, it is argued, gives their preferences greater weight in policymaking and improves the targeting of welfare towards them.

While prior research has shown that such policies improve some outcomes in favour of minority groups over relatively short time horizons (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Dunning and Nilekani, 2013), whether reservations fundamentally reshape the political economy equilibrium – as defined by who forms the elite, who controls government, how public goods and welfare are distributed, and whether inequality across groups changes – remains an open question. This matters because there are many reasons the equilibrium may not shift. If the minority leaders who come to power are beholden to majority elites, we should expect no policy change and no change in equilibrium. Even if minority leaders exercise agency and push policy through, the old elites may recapture power once reservations are withdrawn and reverse it. For the equilibrium to shift, then, three things must happen in sequence: minority leaders must capture power; they must use it to narrow the gap with the majority in the short run; and this must, in turn, seed a minority political class able to challenge entrenched elites even after reservation is withdrawn.

In this paper, we study how political reservation in local government – Gram Panchayats (GPs) – in favour of historically marginalized Scheduled Castes (SCs) shapes the political economy equilibrium in villages in Bihar. We characterise economic and political outcomes for SCs and non-SCs, in

the short-run (5-year) and long-run (13-year).[1] Characterising changes in the political economy equilibrium is empirically challenging. It requires a context with exogenous variation in the implementation of reservations and, for both SCs and non-SCs, finely disaggregated data on economic well-being, the targeting of government programmes, and political outcomes over the short- and long-run.

We overcome all these challenges. Identification comes from a discontinuity in the algorithm Bihar uses to assign reservation to GPs. The complete, individually identified household records of the Socioeconomic Caste Census (asset ownership for all 19 million households in Bihar) let us see precisely who gains and who loses in the short run, including households socially and physically proximate to the elected leader; public goods data from the census, together with housing and workfare targeting data, show *how* government control shapes economic outcomes; and data from the state election commission over three electoral cycles let us trace how political outcomes change both during and after reservation. We complement this with a primary survey of 8,748 households that allows us to measure long-run effects on inter-group disparity. We then ask how the political equilibrium varies with (a) the size and (b) the ethnic diversity of the minority group.

Our main results indicate a shift in the political-economy equilibrium. Before reservations, SCs rarely won office, holding fewer than 2% of seats in the state, and owned 0.37 SD fewer assets than non-SCs. This changes durably: thirteen years after reservations are introduced, the asset gap between SCs and non-SCs is substantially reduced, and a new and broad political class of SCs emerges that contests and wins elections even in the absence of reservations. This occurs because, when reservations are in place, SC heads redirect welfare schemes and public goods towards SC households. During this phase, traditional elite groups in villages face material losses and lose office as well.

Bihar has nearly 8400 GPs. GPs are run by an elected representative, the GP head (locally called "Mukhiyas"). A sixth of the GP head posts are reserved

[1] Throughout this paper, we refer to outcomes within the first 5 years i.e. first political term as "short-run" outcomes and outcomes measured after 10 years – i.e. after two terms – as "long-run" outcomes. In doing so, we follow others in the literature. See: (Deininger et al., 2015; Beaman et al., 2009; Björkman Nyqvist et al., 2017).

for SCs and once reserved, a GP stays reserved *for two consecutive terms*[2], a not uncommon occurrence among Indian states.

Our empirical strategy exploits the algorithm Bihar used to reserve GP head posts for SCs. A Gram Panchayat (GP) is a village council, the lowest tier of elected government, covering a group of villages. GPs are divided into wards, each of which elects a ward member. Blocks are the administrative unit above the GP, containing 15.7 GPs on average. The state fixed the number of head posts to be reserved in each block in proportion to the block's SC population. To fill this quota, the algorithm ranked the GPs in a block by SC population and reserved from the top down until the quota was met. The SC population of the last GP reserved therefore forms a block-specific threshold. Imperfect implementation of the rule and cross-cutting quotas mean that crossing the threshold raises the probability of reservation by 80 percentage points rather than to one. We therefore compare GPs on either side of the threshold in a fuzzy regression discontinuity (RD) design, using threshold crossing as an instrument for reservation.

Our first set of results indicates that reservation reduces private asset inequality between SCs and non-SCs. Using SECC data enumerated about four years after GPs are reserved, we find that reservation decreases the asset-score gap between SCs and non-SCs by 0.091 SD ($p = 0.07$). This narrowing is partly driven by an increase in SC asset scores and a decrease in non-SC asset scores, although neither change is statistically significant. Assets set a high bar for measuring economic progress, since they are stocks that accumulate slowly and are often indivisible.[3]

To understand who among SCs benefit, we measure the extent to which each SC quartile catches up with the median non-SC quintile – non-SC households between the 40th and 60th percentiles of their own distribution – in asset scores. Reservation has positive effects across all quartiles, significant only for the 3rd (0.10 SD, $p = 0.069$) and 4th quartiles (0.12 SD, $p = 0.056$). Households in the top decile of the SC distribution fare particularly

[2]Thus, this paper focuses on the short- and long-run impacts of the first reservation cycle, 2006-16.

[3]Scheduled Tribes (STs) are included with non-SCs as they comprise only 1.6% of households; results are robust to their exclusion.

well, improving by 0.18 SD ($p < 0.01$) compared to similar households in unreserved GPs.

But the gains are spread evenly across sub-caste tiers rather than captured by the traditionally advantaged ones. Proxying sub-castes by surnames, we find no differential effects either for the numerically dominant SC sub-castes or for the recognised upper-SCs of Bihar, the non-Mahadalits (Srinivas, 1955; Kumar and Somanathan, 2016).

Instead, gains seem to accrue to those who draw power from office. Tracking the 2006 SC winners in the SECC, we find that by 2011 these households – and their neighbours – were considerably richer than the average SC household. Because this could reflect selection rather than rents, we ask who would have won had unreserved GPs been reserved, proxying for them with the SC heads elected when these GPs were reserved in the following cycle (2016). Matching heads to SECC households, we find significant catch-up for the head's own household (0.18 SD, $p = 0.01$) and households within 20 houses of the head (0.15 SD, $p = 0.05$).[4] Short-run gains nonetheless reach the whole upper half of the SC distribution and survive dropping every household connected to the head. Gains rise steeply with position in the SC distribution, from 0.08 SD at the second quartile to 0.18 SD at the top decile, though the implied widening within SCs is not precisely estimated.

Whom do these new elites displace? Our results point to the traditional elites in the village. On average the dominant non-SC sub-caste's losses are imprecisely estimated but when it is large it clearly loses out: asset scores fall by 0.14 SD, and where it is smaller we find no effect. Larger dominant sub-castes are the ones that held the headship most often, and so had the most patronage to lose when reservation took it away. The same logic points to a sharper test: the sub-castes that would have held the seat had the GP not been reserved. Proxying for them, as before, with those that won these seats in 2016, we find their 2011 wealth scores 0.15 SD lower than those of ruling sub-castes in unreserved GPs ($p = 0.02$), while the top quartile and top decile among all non-SCs are unaffected. The losses thus follow the same pattern as the gains:

[4] This finding aligns with existing evidence of local self-dealing" by elected officials (Besley et al., 2012; Jeong et al., 2021).

the biggest winners are SCs close to the new head, the biggest losers the non-SC sub-castes pushed out of the seat. Reservation leaves mean household asset scores across all households in the GP unchanged.

Two channels lie behind these gains, and we find evidence for both. SC households in reserved GPs are significantly more likely to receive their full 100 days of guaranteed work under NREGA (0.17 SD, $p<0.01$). And Census 2011 data covering over 45,000 villages show a rise in the share of public goods allocated to SC villages in reserved GPs (0.20 SD, $p<0.01$), with no drop in overall GP provision, implying no equity-efficiency tradeoff.

We next show that this shift survives the withdrawal of reservation, as a new class of SC leaders emerges to challenge entrenched non-SC elites. In the 2016 elections, formerly reserved GPs are 11.3 p.p (620%; $p < 0.01$) more likely to elect SC heads than GPs never reserved. These new leaders come from a broad set of sub-castes – candidacies roughly double in every one – and are only marginally wealthier, if at all, than SC candidates in never-reserved GPs. They are also largely new: only two in five share even a sub-caste tie with the 2006 winner. The dominant non-SC sub-caste is displaced politically too: the GP's dominant non-SC sub-caste is 14 p.p less likely to hold the seat, a drop of nearly half from its 32% win rate in never-reserved GPs ($p < 0.01$). And, as in the case of assets, the losses are larger where the dominant caste was larger. All this implies that SCs' interests continue to be served: in the three years following withdrawal, formerly reserved GPs build significantly more houses per SC household under the main housing scheme (0.17 SD, $p<0.01$) and continue providing water and sanitation infrastructure to SC villages at a faster rate (0.15 SD, $p = 0.069$), with no change in overall provision.

How does this translate into the SC–non-SC asset gap in the long run? Our primary survey, fielded thirteen years after GPs were first reserved, shows further catch-up in reserved GPs: the gap in mean asset scores narrows substantially, a result that is significant and robust to a range of bandwidths and estimation strategies, with the lower end of the 99% confidence interval still implying a 0.25 SD improvement in SCs' relative position. Decomposing the narrowing shows it mirrors the short run. Once again, SC gains are higher in the upper deciles: the top quartile of the SC distribution improves by 0.52 SD ($p < 0.01$), while gains below the median are smaller. Non-SC losses, by contrast, are broad and significant across their entire distribution. Reservation

thus lifts SCs across their distribution, most at the top, while eroding non-SC wealth throughout. Given the small samples within the RD bandwidth (43 GPs), we read the magnitudes with caution – especially those that focus on specific cuts of the SC and non-SC distributions.

What conditions foster a shift in the underlying political economy equilibrium? Our 525 block-specific thresholds let us answer this. Reservation is most effective in reducing disparities in economic and political outcomes when the SC population is neither too small nor too large. Additionally, building on literature linking ethnic diversity to reduced public-good provision (Alesina et al., 1999), we show reservation has stronger impacts in GPs where the SC population is more homogeneous.

One complication is that female reservation was assigned by the same algorithm, which leaves GPs just below our threshold much more likely to be reserved for women than those just above. All our regressions control for female reservation, and we present four further checks. Our results are robust to dropping female reserved GPs altogether, and to restricting the sample to blocks where no GP close to the threshold received any female reservation, an exercise that preserves internal validity owing to the pooled nature of our RD.[5] The gender reservation rule itself supplies a second discontinuity, and we use it to show that female reservation makes no difference to our outcomes within SC reserved seats, nor within SC unreserved seats. Throughout the paper, we also show robustness to alternative bandwidths, robust and conventional standard errors, and dropping or adding fixed effects and controls.

This paper makes three contributions to the literature on affirmative action in politics.

First, it is, to our knowledge, among the only papers to show whether and how political reservation durably shifts the political-economy equilibrium in villages — changing who contests and holds office, how welfare and public goods flow, and how wealth is distributed across and within groups. The long run welfare effects of political reservations at the local level are not well understood. While there has been work measuring the longer-term impacts of reservation at higher state legislator levels (Jensenius (2015), Pande (2003), Chin and Prakash (2011)), the literature on impacts at

[5]These blocks are no different from the overall set of blocks.

the local level tends to focus largely on the short-run effects (Besley et al. (2004), Duflo et al. (2005), Das et al. (2023), Dunning and Nilekani (2013)).[6] The exception is Gulzar et al. (2020), who study permanent reservation across all tiers of local government in favour of Scheduled Tribes (STs). They find that reservation improves NREGA outcomes for STs, but at the cost of majority group members. Our paper differs in multiple ways: first, we show impacts on household-level asset outcomes – a downstream outcome from better access to welfare benefits and public goods; second, we delineate impacts *within* broad caste groupings; third, we describe how effects persist even in the absence of reservation, owing to improved political participation.[7]

Second, we provide among the first direct, census-scale estimates of the effect of reservation on inequality — reservation policy's stated goal (Pande, 2003; Duflo, 2005) — both across and within caste groups. Focusing on asset ownership, we estimate effects separately for dominant and weak sub-castes among SCs and non-SCs, and we recover the full ex-post asset distribution for each broad caste grouping; for a sub-sample, we measure effects on levels and gaps over the long run. The closest related papers are Bardhan et al. (2010b) and Bardhan et al. (2010a), which examine joint reservation for SCs and STs at the GP level in the neighbouring state of West Bengal. We differ in measuring effects across castes and sub-castes, over a longer horizon (up to 13 years rather than 7), and at scale.[8]

Third, we characterize the conditions under which the equilibrium shifts, by studying how the impact of quotas varies with the size and homogeneity of the group they benefit. A large literature relates group size and diversity to welfare outcomes (e.g. Alesina et al., 1999; Banerjee and

[6] Bhavnani (2009) shows that the effects of gender reservations causes political entry of women even after reservations are withdrawn: however, they do not focus on outcomes beyond political entry.

[7] Both (Gulzar et al., 2020) and we find that reservation's impacts grow over time. This finding is in line with a small number of papers showing that affirmative action policies are more effective after two terms (Beaman et al. (2009), Deininger et al. (2015), Bardhan et al. (2010a)). A related paper is (Afridi et al., 2017), which shows that women leaders in reserved seats perform initially worse than their male counterparts in implementing the employment guarantee scheme, but eventually catch up. Their work covers only the first term of a leader and focuses on a single scheme: the NREGA.

[8] Our findings confirm several of theirs: caste reservation (a) improves minority access to welfare schemes and public goods, (b) entails no equity-efficiency tradeoff, and (c) has effects that grow over longer horizons.

Pande, 2007), but few papers examine how affirmative action interacts with these characteristics of the minority group (Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2008; Mitra, 2018; Das et al., 2023; Anderson and Francois, 2023). Das et al. (2023) and Anderson and Francois (2023) study the interaction between reservation and group size across GPs, but their samples include larger and more powerful groups such as the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and neither focuses on inequality across groups nor measures dynamic effects.[9]

2 Context

2.1 Historical Roots of Caste

For over two thousand years, Indian society has been deeply divided by the concept of caste. Caste is ascribed from birth, often determined by the father's caste. One defining aspect of caste is its rigid hierarchy: the highest castes historically and currently enjoy significant privileges, while those at the lowest rungs face social and economic discrimination. The foundational laws that shaped India's caste-based structure were outlined in the *Manusmriti* (or the "Laws of Manu") - a text written around the dawn of the common era. The text, *inter alia*, classified society into four broad hierarchical groups[10] that subsumed the thousands of sub-castes that constituted Indian society.

Consequently, the broad caste groupings - Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs) - are not in the least homogeneous. Indeed, the broader classifications are somewhat arbitrary and there is considerable differences within each group. Moreover, individuals in caste society do think of *jati* as naturally being linked to their primary identity in a way that is not true of the broad caste groupings (Kumar and Somanathan (2016), Srinivas (1976)).

[9] Das et al. (2023) argue that reservation works best where OBCs form a large share of the GP; their analysis also concerns a single program, the NREGA. Gulzar et al. (2020) show that ST reservation delivers the largest benefits where STs are an electoral minority, but do not examine diversity within STs.

[10] These four groups, ranked by hierarchy, were the Brahmins (priests), the Kshatriyas (warriors), the Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (workers and farmers).

2.2 *Caste-Barriers in India/Bihar today*

Caste barriers continue to persist in India today, a fact rigorously documented across several social science disciplines, including economics. A mere 11 % of marriages in Bihar, the setting for our study, are inter-caste. On the other hand, 47 % of respondents surveyed say that someone in their household practices untouchability (Desai and Vanneman, 2015). Caste-barriers continue to dictate labor-market outcomes (Deshpande (2011), Singh and Thorat (2014)) and labor-market opportunities, with resume-studies confirming the presence of discrimination, even in urban India (Thorat and Newman, 2007); caste-networks are seen as barriers to rural-urban migration (Munshi and Rosenzweig, 2016). (Lowe, 2018) presents evidence of considerable prejudice among youths towards non-caste matched peers and rigorously documents discrimination against lower-caste members.

2.3 *Bihar's SCs*

Bihar is arguably India's poorest state, with a population of over 130 million. Over 85% of Bihar lives in villages. SCs comprise 17% of Bihar. Historically SCs could not own land, conduct trade or business, receive education, or buy or sell in markets. Though the Indian state abolished untouchability in 1950, SCs lag severely on several socioeconomic indicators even today (Banerjee and Somanathan, 2007). Summarizing the literature from the two-decades leading up to 2012 and looking specifically at material well-being across castes, (Deshpande, 2011) argues that while there exists substantial regional variation, there is no "reversal of traditional caste hierarchies".

Once more, there is considerable variation in the fortunes of different SC sub-castes. Some sub-castes, like Dusadhs, are higher up in the social heirarchy than others like Doms. This is also reflected in their economic fortunes and their ability to access welfare benefits. Drawing from a survey of 9000 households in Bihar, Joshi et al. (2022) find that Dusadhs are much more likely to access NREGA work than Doms. Moreover, some SC sub-castes access more benefits – and have higher consumption expenditures – than some non-SC sub-castes. They note: "[inequality] decompositions using

government caste categories show that the contribution of between broad-caste inequality to total inequality stands at <1%. Decompositions using between-jati inequality are, however, nearly three times higher."

2.4 Local Administrative Structure

Elected Representatives: Bihar's villages are grouped into administrative units called Gram Panchayats (GP). In 2011, there were nearly 8400 GPs in Bihar. Each GP is headed by a *directly* elected representative called the "Mukhiya". Each GP is divided into wards. There are over 114000 wards in Bihar. Each ward is headed by a directly elected elected ward member.

Political Reservations: The year 2006 marked the beginning of political reservations for disadvantaged groups and women. This considerably changed the composition of the new cohort of Mukhiyas. In 2001, when there was no reservation, roughly 1 % of Mukhiyas were SCs (Gupta, 2002). This number went up to nearly 17 % in 2006. Bihar's path to political reservation for SCs across Gram Panchayats was anything but smooth, featuring a series of false dawns and fiery challenges, often playing out in the court of law. In the Appendix section I, we summarize the three attempts made by incumbent state governments to introduce political reservation and the challenges thrown by powerful non-SC caste groups (who stood to lose from reservations for low castes).

Two-Term Reservation Cycle: Bihar implemented a reservation system that spans two electoral terms, a practice not uncommon among Indian states. For instance, several states like Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Odisha, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have all have adopted similar rules since the implementation of the 73rd Amendment.[11] Additionally, other states like West Bengal (Beaman et al., 2009) and Uttar Pradesh introduce two-term reservations through random allocation.

[11] For instance, see Chhattisgarh: The Chhattisgarh Panchayat Raj Adhiniyam, 1993; Odisha: https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/13736/1/orissa_grama_panchayats.pdf.

3 Data Sources

This project brings together multiple secondary data sources and one primary survey.

3.1 Explanatory Variables

From the State Election Commission (SEC) in Bihar, we collected data on reserved and unreserved Panchayats and characteristics of GP heads elected in 2006 (N = 8380, 99.7%). We also procured data on GP populations: total population, number of SCs, number of STs. We use this to create our main running variable. Our main treatment variable is whether a village was reserved for SCs. This data is also obtained from the SEC in Bihar.

Second, we collect data on census village characteristics using Census of India's Village Amenities Surveys of 2011 and 2001. This contains indicators related to size, demographics and geography of these villages. We use this dataset to create additional control variables and balance tests.

3.2 Primary Outcomes

Private Assets (Short Run): We use the Socioeconomic Caste Census (SECC). This survey from 2011-12 covered all rural households - nearly 20 million - of Bihar. The survey allows us to create our main asset and caste indicators. At the within-household level, the survey contains basic information on members of the household including gender, broad caste category, age, type of occupation and education status. At the household level, the dataset contains information on the following: type of dwelling including number of rooms, characteristics of wall and roof; employment and income characteristics including whether household has a member having a government job and main source of household income; asset ownership (vehicle, phone, mechanical agricultural equipment etc); details on land-owned.

Private Assets (Long Run): In 2019-20, we collected primary data on our asset index indicators covered under the SECC across 8748 households across 107 GPs in Bihar. Our main set of GPs come from sampled pairs close to the block RD threshold, one on either side. Of the reserved GPs, we picked the *nth* GP to be reserved (the last reserved GP). Of the unreserved GPs, we sampled

the next GP in the list i.e the *n+1th* GP. This GP would have been reserved in a counterfactual world where *n+1* GPs were to be reserved in the block. We only selected those blocks where (a) the reservation rule was properly implemented (491 of the 534 blocks) and (b) the *nth* GP and the *n+1th* GP both fell within a bandwidth of 50 from the RD threshold. We surveyed 3811 households from 22 blocks with 43 GPs.[12] In addition to these, the data also has an additional set of GP pairs (from these and other blocks), which are sampled from around the 2016 RD threshold. This accounts for the additional 64 GPs.[13] While households were randomly sampled from two villages in every GP, SCs were over-sampled: our final sample comprises 38% SCs (across GPs whose proportion of SCs in 2001 was 18.5%).

3.3 Secondary/Mechanism-based Outcomes

Public Goods (Short Run): The Census Village Amenities list provides us with the availability of various types of public goods in villages in reserved and unreserved GPs. The data is available at the village level. The dataset contains 45,000 villages across 8392 GPs.

Public Goods (Long Run): We collect data on the universe of 98,000 local government-constructed water and sanitation (WAS) projects constructed under a scheme launched in 2016. The main types of projects are (a) piped water to households and (b) lanes and drains. These WAS public goods are described and studied in detail by (Kumar and Sharan, 2023).[14]

Here, we mention a few important features of these goods: first, these WAS projects were supposed to prioritize wards headed by SCs in the GP. Thus, our measure of targeting of public goods in the long-run is the share of SC headed wards that had projects implemented two years after the scheme was launched. Ideally, we would have wanted a measure of the same public goods seen in the short run, but Census 2021 data is being collected still. The advantages of the WAS public goods are that they are specifically meant to be targeted towards SCs in the early years. If SC wards see fewer projects, that is

[12] One GP-pair couldn't be completed.

[13] Of these 64 GPs, we were unable to interview SCs in 7 GPs, so we drop these from our sample.

[14] See also Sharan (2021).

an indication of rule-breaking. Rule-breaking by GP heads is easier when they face lesser opposition to their actions, i.e. when SCs are a smaller share of the population.

Political Participation (Long Run): From the State Election Commission (SEC) we obtain data on candidates and winners in the GP elections of 2016 (N = 7736; 92.1%). We also have data on ward members and ward candidates from the 2016 elections (N = 96754; 84.9%). We have the following details for these candidates: name, father/husband name, age, educational qualification, caste, votes polled and gender.

PMAY Data: We collect GP-caste level aggregate data on houses constructed under the main housing scheme operated via the local government, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). Our housing data comes for the years 2016-2019. We create two outcome variables: (a) the number of houses constructed per SC person in the GP (b) the population-normalized share of SC-houses constructed.

NREGA data: From the government website, we scraped person-days generated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (more commonly known as the NREGA) for Bihar for the years 2014-16. In addition, we obtained from the Bihar government data on NREGA outcomes for the year 2010-11. This was no longer available on the website and hence it needed to be procured from the government's backed-up records. We have two main outcome variables: (a) the population-normalized share of persondays accruing to SC households and (b) the population-normalized share of SC households receiving 100 days of work in a year. The latter is important because households that receive 100 days of work make substantial amounts, often enough to save to purchase assets.

Political Participation (Short Run): From the SEC, we obtain data on GP heads from 2011 (N = 3489; 41.5%). We only have data on the winning candidate. In particular, we know if the winner from 2006 was re-elected or not.

Occupational Patterns: For every household, the SECC reports responses to a question on the main source of household income. There are 7 options: cultivation, manual casual labour, part-time or full-time domestic service, foraging or rag-picking, Non-agricultural own-account enterprise,

Begging/Charity/Alms collection, others. We use this question to measure impact of reservation on occupational patterns in the short run.

Complaints data: We collect data on nearly 550,000 complaints filed by individuals under Bihar's grievance redressal system for the period from 2016-19. Introduced in 2016, the grievance redress system granted citizens the right to have their grievances addressed within a specific timeframe (60 days). Those who lodged complaints were given the right to a hearing, which included the complainant, an assigned grievance redress officer, and the pertinent local bureaucrat responsible for complaint resolution. Our prior research has demonstrated that politically engaged citizens utilize this system to voice concerns against the local administration. Intriguingly, even ward members exploit this system to raise objections about insufficient public goods allocation (Kumar and Sharan (2023), Sharan (2021)).

4 A Simple Framework

We use a simple threshold model to connect temporary reservation, redistribution, and subsequent political entry. We present its core logic here; the formal model and proof appear in Appendix L.

We represent village politics as comprising two political sides: a historically excluded Scheduled Caste (SC) side and a historically dominant non-SC side represented by a patron. Let $b(\mu, \sigma)$ denote the SC side's effective electoral base, increasing in its population share μ and cohesion σ.[15] Conditional on entry, an SC candidate's probability of victory and entry decision are

$$p_t = F(b(\mu, \sigma) + \pi_t - K_t), \qquad p_t V \geq c(W_t), \tag{1}$$

where $F' > 0$, π_t is the SC side's reputation for governing, and K_t is the patron's inherited advantage from brokers, clients, and political organization (Anderson et al., 2015). The value of office is V (Fisman et al., 2014).

[15] We take b to be increasing in cohesion over the range we observe. The block-level sub-caste HHI, on which our heterogeneity analysis splits, has a median of 0.09 and never exceeds 0.35, below even the 0.5 an even split between two sub-castes would produce; fewer than 5% of individual GPs exceed 0.5. The model makes no claim about cohesion levels outside this range.

Resources W_t can be mobilized to finance SC entry, with $c'(W_t) < 0$. Defining $z^*(W_t) = F^{-1}(c(W_t)/V)$, an SC candidate enters when:

$b(\mu, \sigma) + \pi_t - K_t \geq z^*(W_t)$

The head allocates a fixed flow Y of discretionary public resources. Let θ_g be the share reaching SC households when side $g \in \{S, N\}$ governs. We assume $\theta_S > \theta_N$, consistent with evidence on identity-aligned allocation, clientelism, and self-dealing (Besley et al., 2004, 2012; Mookherjee, 2015; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006). Discretionary resources include targeted welfare programmes and local public goods, which together generate material gains in the short- and long-run (Muralidharan et al., 2021; Duflo, 2001). We test for discretionary targeting in Sections 6.3 and 6.4, and for short-run household asset gains in Section 6.2.

SC rather than patron rule therefore generates

$$D = (\theta_S - \theta_N)Y > 0, \qquad G = \lambda D, \tag{2}$$

where $\lambda \in [0, 1]$ is the fraction of these gains that can support future political activity. Thus G relaxes the subsequent entry constraint. Fixed Y is a simplifying assumption: political control changes resource incidence, not aggregate provision.

Reservation produces a period of observed SC rule. After T reserved terms, suppose

$$\pi_1 = \pi_0 + \Delta(T), \qquad K_1 = \delta K_0, \qquad W_1 = W_0 + G, \qquad \Delta(T) > 0, \quad 0 < \delta \leq 1. \tag{3}$$

Observed rule raises the group reputation available to subsequent SC candidates. This is not unlikely: for instance, Beaman et al. argue that quota-induced women's leadership changes perceptions of women's ability to govern. The patron's organizational advantage may weaken outside office.

Temporary reservation produces persistent SC entry when

$$b + \pi_0 - K_0 < z^*(W_0), \qquad b + \pi_0 + \Delta(T) - \delta K_0 \geq z^*(W_0 + G). \tag{4}$$

We test for persistence in entry for section 6.5. Persistence is more likely when the SC electoral base (sections 8.1 and 8.2), reputational gain, or

politically usable resources are larger, and when less of the patron's advantage survives. If $\Delta(T)$ increases with exposure, a longer reservation is more likely to cross the threshold.

Continued SC office can sustain redistribution: if $q_1 > 0$ is the post-reservation probability of SC officeholding, the expected share reaching SC households rises by $q_1(\theta_S - \theta_N)$ (Sections 6.6, and 6.7 and 6.8). Redistribution can also build W and facilitate the next political entry. The reinforcing channel therefore runs from political entry to SC officeholding, from officeholding to SC resources, and from those resources back to political entry.

5 Empirical Strategy

Bihar has 38 districts, which are further divided into 534 blocks and 8400 GPs. Within each block, the number of GPs, say N to be reserved are determined based on (a) the total number of GPs in the block and (b) the share of SCs in that block. Once N is determined, GPs in the block are arranged in descending order of SC population and the top N GPs are reserved. Thus, within each block, the rule for reservation gives rise to an exogenous SC population cut-off below which no GP is reserved.[16]

Above this threshold, not all GPs are reserved for SCs, as some are blocked to be reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBCs). In practice, as Figure 1(b) shows, the first stage results in a near 80 % jump in the probability of reservation[17]. We have a fuzzy RD with a strong first stage.

[16] Chauchard (2014) documents the SC reservation rule for Rajasthan. While the rule for Bihar is very similar, there are two broad ways in which it differs: first, within each block (Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan), GPs are arranged in order of SC population in Bihar, as opposed to SC proportion in Rajasthan. Once arranged, the top X GPs in both contexts are reserved. X is decided based on the proportion of SCs in the block (Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan). Focusing on GP population of SCs as opposed to GP proportion of SCs makes Bihar's algorithm somewhat harder to manipulate (proportions are sometimes subject to rounding errors, as (Chauchard, 2014) notes). A second difference pertains to gender reservation: (Chauchard, 2014) argues that gender reservation in Rajasthan is randomly assigned, whereas in Bihar, SC reserved GPs are ranked in order of SC population and the higher half of GPs in the list are assigned gender reservation.

[17] In addition, the reservation rule was not perfectly implemented – about 1.5 % of the GPs (including 33 SC reserved GPs) are to be reserved as per our reproduction of the algorithm, but are not reserved as per election commission records. We asked election officials serving at the time about this and were told this may have been because of the following reasons: officers calculating the cut-off wrongly; disputes regarding actual SC population figures; manipulation

Our running variable is the difference in SC population of a GP and the mean of the SC Population of the last GP to be reserved and the first GP to not be reserved. Thus, for GP *i* in Block *j*:

$$Running_{ij} = SCPop_{ij} - (\frac{SCPop_{1j} + SCPop_{0j}}{2}) \tag{5}$$

where $SCPop$ refers to SC Population and 0 and 1 subscripts stand for the last GP to be reserved and the first GP to not be reserved, respectively.

Following Calonico et al. (2019), we estimate a fuzzy RD with covariates. Essentially, our primary specification uses a local linear regression within the Calonico-Cattaneo-Titiunik (CCT) triangular bandwidth[18] of the treatment threshold, and controls for the running variable (SC population in the GP) and a small number of covariates, in addition to block fixed effects, on either side of the threshold. Block fixed effects are useful since we have a different threshold for each block. We use the following two-stage instrumental variables specification:

$$\begin{aligned} Reserved_{gb} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 1(SCPop_{gb} > T_b) + \gamma_2(SCPop_{gb} - T_b) + \\ \gamma_3(SCPop_{gb} - T_b) * 1(SCPop_{gb} >= T_b) + \delta * X_g + \psi + \eta_{gb} \end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{gb} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Reserved_{gb} + \beta_2(SCPop_{gb} - T_b) + \\ \beta_3(SCPop_{gb} - T_b) * 1(SCPop_{gb} >= T_b) + \omega * X_g + \alpha + \varepsilon_{gb} \end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

where Y_{gb} is the outcome of interest in GP g and Block b. T_b is the SC population cutoff for GPs in block b, $SCPop_{gb}$ is the SC-GP population, X_g is a vector of GP-level controls and ψ indicates block fixed effects. η_{gb} and ε_{gb} are error terms. GP level controls include total population of GP,

by local officials of the status of reservation of GPs. At least one instance of manipulation was flagged and officials punished. Our results go through irrespective of whether we keep or drop these GPs.

[18] For estimating long-run effects of reservation on private assets, we fix the bandwidth to be 50, because we are working with a sample of GPs that were explicitly chosen from around the RD threshold. See sections 6.8 for an explanation of the sample and the results and section 7 for robustness to alternate bandwidths for this sample.

distance to the nearest town/district head-quarters, whether GP was reserved for women/OBCs, total area of the village and number of villages in the GP.[19] We cluster standard errors at the block-level.

We present estimates for 50% and 150% of the CCT bandwidths for all our outcomes. In addition, for our six key outcome variables, appendix Figure B1 shows robustness to 11 different bandwidths.

Figure 1(a) performs a McCrary test on the running variable and shows there is little evidence to suggest any manipulation. Table 1 presents balance tests for a host of GP level controls.[20]

The main threat to validity of this specification emerges from bandwidth choices and the fact that SC reserved GPs close to the cutoff are much less likely to be female reserved than their non-SC reserved counterparts (Table 1 shows a 36 p.p jump in the likelihood of gender reservation for GPs above the RD threshold). The latter is an artefact of the reservation rule for women. In section 7, we subject our main RD specification to a battery of checks and show that bandwidth choices, choice of controls, definitions of asset indices or our long-run samples do not drive our findings. In section 7.2, we show a variety of results – including (i) restricting to a subsample that is balanced on gender across the threshold and yet preserves internal validity and (ii) dropping gender reserved GPs altogether – that strongly indicate that the imbalance in gender reservation across the threshold does not drive our findings.

6 Results

We map out impacts in chronological order, beginning with impact on entry in 2006, short-run impacts on asset wealth and the gap between SCs and non-SCs (2011). We then turn to how this can be explained by better targeting of welfare (2014-16) and public goods (2011). We then look at political outcomes after reservation is withdrawn (2016), showing that SCs continue to contest in

[19] Table D11 in the appendix shows that all our main results remain unchanged even when we drop all the controls.

[20] There is only one variable, other than gender reservation, that is imbalanced. GPs that were SC reserved in 2006 had significantly fewer phone lines in 2001: our results suggest that this difference was reversed by the time 2011 came around.

previously reserved places at higher rates. Finally, we show long-run catch-up in asset wealth for SCs (2018) and further targeting of welfare (2016-18) and public goods in the long-run (2018).

6.1 Characterising New Entrants (2006)

We draw upon State Election Comission data to assess differences between new leaders in reserved GPs in 2006 and leaders in unreserved GPs in 2016. As Table C2 indicates, SC leaders in reserved seats earn less, attain fewer years of schooling and are younger. Moreover, they are 47 percentage points more likely to report that they belong to the "lower" class (as opposed to "middle" or "upper" income class) on their affidavits. They are, by definition, also more likely to be first-time leaders. In Figure 2(a), we show that they are drawn from all the major SC sub-castes, though the poorer sub-castes are under-represented relative to their share in the population.

6.2 Short-Run Impacts: Private Assets (2011)

We create an asset index from six binary indicators in the SECC, covering ownership of the most common assets in the data: land; a concrete roof and a burnt-brick or concrete wall in the main dwelling room; four or more rooms; a phone; and a vehicle. We combine these into (a) a raw sum of assets and (b) a PCA score, standardize both, and sum them to form our index; Appendix E.1 gives details. Our results are robust to several alternative definitions of the index (Tables D5, D6, D7). Assets are a demanding measure of economic progress. They are stocks accumulated out of income and transfers, and several of ours – land, a vehicle, a concrete roof – are acquired whole or not at all, so they register gains only once those gains have persisted.

The index shows a considerable gap between the groups: SCs own 0.37 SD fewer assets than non-SCs (Figure A4). Variation within groups is also large: the richest sub-caste owns three times as many assets as the poorest, and while a majority of SC sub-castes sit at the bottom of the wealth distribution, a handful do better than many middle castes. There is thus considerable scope for reservation to narrow the gap between SCs and non-SCs, though its effects may be heterogeneous across sub-castes.

6.2.1 Effects on the SC–Non-SC Gap We begin with the gap in asset scores between SCs and non-SCs. Column (2) of Table 2 shows that the mean gap falls by 0.091 SD in reserved GPs (p = 0.07; RD plot in Figure A2(a)). The result is robust to alternative bandwidths (Figure B1 covers 11) and to alternative definitions of the index (Tables D5, D6, D7).

The components that converge most are land ownership, housing quality, and vehicle ownership (Table D2). The rise in land ownership is consistent with a narrowing gap in the share of cultivators between SCs and non-SCs in reserved GPs (Appendix B.2).

Figure 3 explores heterogeneity across subgroups. The first and third estimates show that the narrowing combines a modest rise in SC asset scores with a modest decline in non-SC scores, neither statistically significant. We then measure convergence by comparing each SC quartile and the top decile to the median non-SC asset score ("Q1 SCs" through "Q4 SCs" and "D10 SCs" in Figure 3). The effect is positive in all four quartiles but statistically significant, and substantially larger, only in the top two. It is strongest at the top decile: column (3) of Table 2 shows that the gap between the top SC decile and the median non-SC falls by 0.18 SD.

Where do these quartiles sit relative to the benchmark at baseline? The median SC household owns one of the six assets against the median non-SC household's two. The upper half of the SC distribution falls on either side of the benchmark: in unreserved GPs, 55 percent of SC households own fewer assets than the median non-SC, 23 percent own exactly as many, and 22 percent own more, so the crossover falls between the 55th and the 78th percentile of the SC distribution, depending on how the tied bundles are weighted. The catch-up results therefore admit two interpretations, and both are correct for different parts of the distribution. Catch-up lower in the distribution is convergence in the usual sense: households poorer than the benchmark closing the gap with it. Catch-up in the top quartile, and especially the top decile, is not: these households begin at or above the median non-SC, and their gains carry them past it.

6.2.2 Identifying Who Among SCs Benefits To identify who moves with this upper tail, we study consequences by sub-caste within SCs, particularly for the elite sub-castes. We proxy sub-caste with surnames. The mapping

is imperfect for three reasons: some surnames are common across sub-castes; caste-neutral surnames (like "Kumar") are increasingly adopted; and members of the same sub-caste can carry different surnames.

The link between surnames and sub-castes is stronger in rural Bihar than in much of the country, but these concerns do not disappear. We mitigate them in two ways. First, where the household head's surname is uninformative (caste-neutral surnames, women-headed households), we use the father's surname; the mapping is stronger in earlier generations. Second, we treat two individuals as sharing a sub-caste only if their broad caste groups match: two people with the same surname, one SC and one not, are assigned to different sub-castes.

6.2.3 Impact on Ex-Ante SC Elites The surname data lets us define SC elites in two ways: (i) the numerically dominant sub-caste, the largest among SCs in a GP, proxied by its most common SC surname; and (ii) the sub-castes not classified as *Mahadalit*, a Government of Bihar category of particularly marginalized SC sub-castes.

Reservation does not disproportionately benefit the dominant sub-caste (fourth estimate in Figure 3). Following Kumar and Somanathan (2016), we define non-Mahadalits as the four historically dominant SC sub-castes: Dusadhs, Chamars, Pasis, and Dhobis. Non-Mahadalits, too, see a positive but statistically insignificant improvement in relative wealth (fifth estimate in Figure 3). Reservation, then, does not selectively benefit ex-ante elites within SCs.

6.2.4 Self-Dealing, Clientelism and Own Sub-Caste Favouritism While ex-ante elites do not benefit more, officeholding itself may generate power and rents: the literature has long documented clientelistic behaviour by local leaders. We show that SC GP heads, and those "close" to them, are significantly better off than the average SC household in unreserved GPs. We match elected SC heads in reserved GPs to SECC household records using name, age, gender, occupation, and village, identifying 61% of them.

We compare asset scores of SC households "close" to the head – sharing a surname, living within 20 households, or being the head's own household – with the median non-SC household in the same GP. In unreserved GPs, we compare the average SC household to the same benchmark. Comparing

winners and their circle in reserved GPs with all SCs in unreserved GPs conflates selection into office with its downstream consequences.

As Figure B6 shows, proximity to the head is associated with substantially higher asset scores: 0.36 SD (same surname), 0.90 SD (within 20 households), and 1.60 SD (the head themselves). These estimates are not causal, since the head's identity is post-treatment. A robustness check using self-reported income class at nomination in 2006 shows similar patterns among SC heads from low-income backgrounds (Appendix Figure A5).

To isolate post-selection effects, we build a counterfactual set of likely SC winners in unreserved GPs from GPs that became SC-reserved in the next cycle (2016–2026), assuming the 2016 SC winner would have won in 2006 had the GP been reserved. Two facts support this: the winning head's sub-caste is of similar size across the two periods (around 150 households, Table D19), and the winner's average age is stable at around 39 years.

We trace 61% of the 2016 SC heads in the SECC, using pre-election data, and again compare asset scores for the winner, their sub-caste, and their neighbours (first three estimates in Figure 4). The pattern repeats at smaller magnitudes: 0.15 SD for close neighbours ($p = 0.05$) and 0.18 SD for the winner ($p = 0.01$), with no significant gains for average members of the winner's sub-caste. The large gains in Figure B6 thus mostly reflect ex-ante wealthy households entering office.

In sum, SC heads, their neighbours, and their sub-caste members are significantly better off than other SCs. Much of this reflects selection, with richer households winning elections, but material gains follow office as well: even under conservative assumptions, winners and their neighbours gain 0.15–0.18 SD, comparable to households at the top of the SC wealth distribution. Sub-caste identity alone is insufficient; proximity to the head, geographical and social, is what pays.

Is the SC–non-SC catch-up driven solely by these connected households? Table C17 shows that the short-run catch-up survives dropping GP-head-connected households, indicating broader gains as well.

6.2.5 Which Sub-Castes Among Non-SCs Lose Out? If some groups within SCs gain from reservation, do some groups among non-SCs lose? The

numerically dominant sub-caste[21] – which often comprises the traditional elite of the GP – owns fewer assets in reserved GPs, though the effect (0.07 SD; second estimate in Figure 3) is not statistically significant. The loss is instead concentrated where the dominant sub-caste is mid-sized rather than numerically commanding: in the middle tercile of size it falls by 0.19 SD, with no effect at either extreme (Appendix Table D15). Groups at the extremes either never depended much on office or can absorb its loss; in between, the headship's patronage networks matter, and their depletion shows up in members' holdings.

We also repeat the counterfactual exercise for non-SCs, using the sub-caste of the 2016 non-SC winner to proxy for the sub-caste that would have ruled, compared with the 2006 winner's sub-caste in unreserved GPs. This displaced sub-caste owns 0.15 SD fewer assets ($p = 0.02$; final estimate in Figure 4).[22] These results mirror the SC side: reservation shapes who wins, and who wins shapes who gains and who loses.

In the appendix (Figure B4), we show that, unlike for SCs, reservation produces no clear pattern across the ex-post distribution of non-SC asset scores.

6.2.6 Overall Effects on Asset Scores Reservation also leaves the average private asset score of households in the GP unchanged (Table 2, column (1)).

6.2.7 Inequality Inequality is typically measured using Gini indices computed from metrics of consumption or income. Thus far, we are able to say how reservation moves each part of the distribution, but have not summarised its net effect on inequality in a single number. Standard indices such as the Gini require a cardinal and strictly positive measure of household welfare, and six binary asset indicators are neither. We measure impacts on inequality in two ways: first, Appendix H reports our attempt to impute consumption from assets, together with the resulting Gini and Generalised Entropy decompositions. The indices show no effect of reservation, but we

[21] As before, we define the numerically dominant sub-caste among non-SCs as the one with the most repeated surname in the GP.

[22] This may overestimate the loss. The 2016 non-SC winner, elected after a decade of reservation, may not be who the GP would have elected in 2006 had it been reserved then. As Section 6.5 shows, ten years of reservation shifts the village's political equilibrium.

interpret the result keeping in mind that with only six assets, there is a lot of bunching in imputed consumption across households. Second, we compare specific parts of the asset wealth distribution directly, looking at differences in asset scores between the top and bottom of the distribution, within and across groups.

Figure 3 reports the results. Since asset gains rise with position in the SC wealth distribution, we would expect within-SC inequality to rise. The implied widening is not, however, precisely estimated: neither the gap between the top decile and the median SC (RD plot in Figure A2(c)), nor that between the top decile and the bottom quartile (Figure A2(d)), nor the top quartile's gap with the bottom ("Q4 – Q1 SCs" in Figure 3) changes significantly. Next, turning to non-SCs, we find that reservation has no discernible effect on inequality within them either (Figure 3): neither the gap between the top and bottom quartiles nor that between the top decile and bottom quartile changes significantly. Finally, catch-up between SCs and non-SCs, alongside gains that rise with position inside the SC distribution, makes the impact on overall inequality theoretically ambiguous. We therefore read changes across the full distribution: as the bottom three estimates in Figure 3 show ("Q4 – Q1", "D10 – Q1", "D10 – Median"), reservation has no significant effect on overall inequality either. We thus have two individually suggestive pieces of evidence pointing in the same direction: reservation narrows the gap between SCs and non-SCs without detectably changing inequality within either group or across all households in the GP.

6.2.8 Takeaways Our asset results point to the following: SC gains are broad but graded. They reach the whole upper half of the SC distribution and survive dropping every household connected to the head (Table C17), but they rise with position in the distribution and carry a premium for proximity to office, so the top deciles pull away from the rest. The traditional village elite, the dominant non-SC sub-caste, falls behind where it is large, though not on average. The non-SC sub-castes displaced from the seat fall behind clearly. The gap between SCs and non-SCs falls. We next ask how local government policy shapes this catch-up: in particular, whether public goods and welfare are targeted towards SCs.

6.3 Short-Run Impacts: Public Goods (2011)

From a survey of 50 elected GP heads from 2006-2011, we zero in on 4 main public goods. These were selected after in-depth interviews with GP heads who had served from 2006-11. Our list includes creation of government primary schools, construction of tar roads, running fair-price shops that distribute grains via the Public Distribution System (PDS) and setting up rural child care centres under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

We first measure effects on overall provision of public goods. We create an index of public goods that is the mean of the standardized scores of the 4 public goods in our list. Column (1) of Table 3 presents the results. Reservation does not affect the index, implying that SC leaders are just as efficient in the production of public goods.

We now turn to inequalities in public good access. We calculate the population normalized shares of public goods accruing to the main SC village in the GP.[23]. Column (2) of Table 3 shows that the index increases by 0.2 SD in reserved GPs (RD Plot in Figure A2(b)). This corresponds to an increase in the normalized share by 0.09. Table D10 breaks down the index to its constituents and while all 4 public goods are positively impacted by reservation, the coefficients are large and significant for primary schools and paved roads.

6.4 Short Run Impacts: NREGA (2011/2014-16)

Next, we examine the effects of reservation on NREGA[24] persondays generated within a GP. As a scheme in whose implementation village heads possess sufficient discretion, it serves as a plausible mechanism of welfare-targeting. We have data from two periods: 2010-11 (the final year of the first election cycle) and 2014-16 (the final year of the second electoral cycle).

We look at two outcomes: SC persondays generated per SC individual in the GP (SC Persondays/SC Population) and the proportion of SC households that receive 100 days of work normalized by the SC proportion in the population. We use the latter because Bihar does not stand among the

[23] Appendix E.2 details the construction of our public good measures.

[24] The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act guarantees 100 days of unskilled manual wage employment a year to all rural households in India.

frontrunners in terms of NREGA implementation (Kumar et al. (2021)): In fact, according to our dataset, the median SC household receives approximately 6 persondays of work per year. Given that NREGA offers compensation at the minimum wage level, 6 days of work are unlikely to significantly impact the asset scores of households. On the other hand, a household that achieves the full 100 days of work accrues a substantial amount of money through the scheme over the course of a year.[25] To assess the impact on inequality between SCs and non-SCs, we calculate the ratio of SC households to the total households that receive 100 days of work, normalized by the proportion of SCs in the GP.

Before we proceed to the results, recall that, owing to the two cycle reservation rule, SC leaders have much stronger re-election incentives in the first cycle (at the end of which only other SCs can contest) than in the second cycle (at the end of which anyone can contest). This would imply that SC GP heads in the first electoral cycle may be driven by a need to appeal to a broad base of voters across caste groups as opposed to the second time around. We find opposite results for 2010-11 and 2014-16. In 2010-11, we find negative and insignificant effects on both SC persondays generated and 100 days of work generated by SC households. On the other hand, for the years 2014-2016, encompassing the two years just before the transition in the reservation cycle, we see an increase in the normalized share of SC households getting 100 days of work by 0.17 SD (Column (4) of Table 5).

Thus far, we have established that reservations helps SCs by targeting public goods and welfare and also by reducing asset inequality between SCs and non-SCs. We find evidence of the emergence of an economic elite within SCs, drawn from the upper half of the SC distribution and, within it, disproportionately from households connected to office. Next, we ask: do these material gains seed a new political class as our framework indicates is possible?

[25] Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that two years of consistent 100 days of work would encompass over 40% of the transfers made under the housing scheme for the 2014-16 period.

6.5 Long-Run Impacts: Political Participation (2016)

6.5.1 Impact on GP elections Our framework identifies three channels through which a decade of reservation may increase SC political participation after the reservation is withdrawn: beliefs about SCs' ability to govern may improve; SCs may accumulate wealth as resources are redirected towards them; and the incumbent non-SC patron's network may weaken. The preceding sections provide evidence consistent with the latter two channels. Some SC households experience material gains, resources are better targeted towards SCs, and non-SC elites lose asset wealth. We do not directly observe changes in beliefs about SCs' ability to govern. We now examine whether reservation ultimately increases SC entry after it is withdrawn.

We first estimate the impact of reservation on the caste of the GP head in the next reservation cycle. To do so, we restrict attention to only those GPs that are not reserved in the next cycle. Note that, by law, all GPs reserved between 2006-16 are not reserved again. We end up with 4693 GPs that we have data for and are currently unreserved.

We observe three key points regarding GP head elections in the 2016 unreserved GPs. First, as Panels (a) and (b) in Figure B5 illustrate, these elections are competitive: the median election has 14 candidates, and the winning margin is 126 votes (11%). Second, even among never-reserved GPs, SC candidates are underrepresented—although SCs account for nearly one-sixth of the population, they make up less than 6% of the candidates. Third, only 1.8% of these GPs have an SC GP head.

Table 4 documents the effect of past reservation on SC political entry in GP elections. Starting from a baseline of 1.8%, the presence of reservation increases the likelihood of an SC GP head by 11.3 percentage points (Column (1) of Table 4; see also the RD Plot in Figure A2(e)). Moreover, the number of SC candidates contesting elections increases by 2.5 times—from an average of 0.85 to 2.141 (Column (2)).[26]

[26] In Appendix B.1.2, we rule out the fact that two consecutive terms of reservation provides tenure stability for the SC head elected in 2006 and that is what drives long-term entry: Only 13% of SC heads are re-elected in 2011, about half the rate of their non-SC counterparts in unreserved GPs.

6.5.2 Characterizing the New Political Class Who makes up the new SC political class, and who does it displace? Figure 5 summarizes the impacts of reservation on candidacy and winning in the 2016 elections, separately by sub-caste group, for SCs and non-SCs. Because we are looking at impacts on non-SCs too, we focus on all SC-unreserved GPs, including those reserved for EBCs/STs in 2016. Focusing only on caste unreserved GPs – as in the previous section – leaves results largely unchanged (Figure A6). Across all SC-unreserved seats, reservation roughly doubles SC candidacy, and the probability that an SC wins the seat rises by 7 percentage points off a 1.6 percent base.

Entry into this class is broad on every dimension we can measure. It is broad on wealth: candidates in formerly reserved GPs rank on average 6.1 percentile points higher in the within-SC wealth distribution than candidates in never-reserved GPs (Table C10), a difference that is not statistically significant ($p = 0.11$), and Figure B7 shows candidates drawn from across the distribution. It is broad across sub-castes: dominant and non-dominant sub-castes, Mahadalits and non-Mahadalits all roughly double their candidacies (Panel A, Figure 5), leaving the sub-caste composition of the SC field unchanged, a breadth also visible in the distribution of candidates across individual sub-castes (Figure 2(b)). The poorest sub-castes remain under-represented in levels, as they were among the 2006 winners (Figure 2(b)), even as their candidacies double.

Nor is the new class the old winner's circle. Short-run asset gains went to households close to the 2006 head; these households do not supply the politicians of 2016. Among 2016 SC candidates matched to the SECC, 13 percent belong to the 2006 winner's household, and three of the 22 winners we can track the same way come from it (Table C11). Sub-caste ties are wider, at 37 percent of candidates, yet the class that emerges after reservation ends is drawn mostly from beyond the 2006 winner's household, neighbourhood, and even sub-caste.

Among winners, we see some evidence that the size of the sub-caste in the GP matters: victories concentrate in the GP's dominant SC sub-caste, whose probability of holding the seat rises roughly eightfold, while the corresponding gain for non-dominant sub-castes is not statistically

significant. Moreover, elite castes among SCs are more likely to win: the non-Mahadalit tier gains more than Mahadalits, though both gain significantly (Panel B). However, we cannot reject the null that these winners are richer than their counterparts in unreserved GPs (Table C13). The 2006 winner's own household and neighbourhood rarely return to power, but their sub-caste does: it supplies 41 percent of 2016 SC winners against a 24 percent share of GP SC households, roughly 1.7 times what a proportional draw predicts ($p = 0.01$). Winning, in short, requires a sub-caste size large enough to coordinate.

The newly winning SCs displace traditional non-SC elites. The GP's dominant non-SC sub-caste is 14 percentage points less likely to hold the seat in 2016, a drop of nearly half from its 32% win rate in never-reserved GPs. This is not owing to the fact that they put forward fewer candidates: their candidacies are statistically unchanged. Other non-SC sub-castes – those that are not numerically dominant – see a surge in contesting, add close to five candidacies per GP (Panels C and D of Figure 5).[27]

Taken together, the evidence characterizes both the breadth of the new political class and its limits. Entry is broad: SC candidacies roughly double, the increase is spread evenly across the wealth distribution and across sub-castes, dominant and non-dominant, Mahadalit and non-Mahadalit alike, and the entrants come overwhelmingly from outside the 2006 winner's household, neighbourhood, and sub-caste. Winning is narrower. Victories accrue disproportionately to the GP's dominant SC sub-caste and to the non-Mahadalit tier, a selection that operates through the demography of sub-caste blocs rather than through candidate wealth or ties to the former head. On the other hand, the dominant non-SC sub-caste keeps fielding candidates but is more likely to lose the seat it had long held. The short-run economic returns were largest for households close to power, but extended well beyond them; the political class that persists is not built from those households. On this evidence, reservation empowered SCs as a group, displaced non-SCs from power and left the contest for office tilted towards larger and socially advantaged sub-castes among SCs.

[27] The point estimates underlying Figure 5 are reported in Tables C14, C15, and C12. Companion tables restrict to GPs with no caste quota in 2016: both the surge in candidacies and the displacement of the dominant non-SC winner hold.

6.5.3 Impact on ward elections Wards are a tier of local government below the GP. There are about 13.6 wards for every GP. The advantage of measuring effects at the ward level is that we run our analysis across all available GPs. Here too, we find positive impacts. GPs reserved between 2006-16 see about 30% more SC winners and candidates contesting (Columns (3) and (4) of Table 4) when compared to counterparts in previously unreserved GPs. We report results only for unreserved wards in these GPs. As a placebo check, we show, in Column (5) that there are no additional winners coming from wards that are already reserved for SCs.

In the appendix (section B.1.2), we provide evidence that this new class of empowered SC leaders in formerly reserved GPs continues to engage with the state even when not in office. We show that politically active SC individuals, such as candidates who lost ward and GP head elections, are significantly more likely to file formal complaints under a recently introduced system, suggesting sustained claim-making even in the absence of reservation.

6.6 Long-Run Impacts: Public Goods (2017-18)

To measure long-run improvements in public good provision, we draw on an administrative dataset tracking water and sanitation (WAS) infrastructure. These public goods were to be implemented in every ward over a three-year period (2017–2020). As documented by Kumar and Sharan (2023), (a) wards headed by SCs—typically those with a large SC population—were to be prioritized in the allocation of WAS projects, and (b) while SC-headed wards often experience delays, there is eventual catch-up over time.

Our primary measure of long-run provision focuses on these delays. Specifically, we calculate the SC-proportion normalized share of WAS projects allocated to SC wards by the end of the first year of implementation (March 31, 2018).[28]

Once more, as in the case of long-run private assets, we are comparing GPs that have had 10 years of reservation with GPs that have had, at most, 2 years of reservation.[29] Column (4) of Table 3 presents results: GPs reserved

[28] Proportion normalized share = (Share of projects in SC wards / Share of SCs in the GP)

[29] 35% of GPs that were previously unreserved and lie within the RD bandwidth are now reserved for SCs.

from 2006 - 2016 see a 0.15 SD increase in the SC-proportion normalized share of WAS projects. Appendix Figure B1 shows robustness to 11 different bandwidths. Column (3) shows that the share of wards with a WAS project is unchanged – once more suggesting that, even in the long run, formerly reserved GPs provide public goods as efficiently.

6.7 Long-Run Impacts: Housing (2016-2019)

Housing quality is an important component of our asset index. Responsibility for allocating subsidized housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) lies with the GP head. However, data on housing allocations are only available from 2016 onward—after the change in the reservation cycle. This allows us to examine whether improved targeting of housing schemes may partly explain the long-run improvements in household wealth. Our primary survey was conducted in 2018–19, so we focus on houses built up to March 31, 2019.

As with our analysis of long-run changes in private assets and public goods, we compare GPs that were reserved for a decade but are currently unreserved with those that were first reserved in 2016 and remained reserved through 2021, though our outcomes are measured only up to 2019.

Our first measure is the number of houses built per SC individual in the GP. Column (1) of Table 5 shows an increase of 0.17 SD in this measure. To assess changes in inequality, we normalize the share of houses allocated to SCs by their share in the GP population. This indicator improves by 0.06 SD (Column (2)), though the estimate is imprecise, suggesting a modest narrowing of the gap in housing access between SCs and non-SCs.

6.8 Long-Run Impacts: Private Assets (2019)

Using a household survey of 8748 randomly sampled households across 107 GPs, we recreate the poverty indices we use in the previous section. Two caveats here: while the household sample is large, our comparisons rest on few GPs. Of the 107, 43(/66) lie within a bandwidth of 50(/150) from the cutoff. Our main specification for these regressions uses a bandwidth of 50, which is substantially smaller than the CCT bandwidth, but reflects the survey sampling strategy to focus on GPs very close to the threshold. In essence, the

comparisons in this section are made across a handful of GPs; second, this survey was conducted in 2019-20, 3.5 years *after* the reservation cycle had changed. We are, therefore, not comparing reserved GPs with unreserved GPs. Rather, in our sample, a "treated" GP has 10 years of exposure to a GP head from an SC background (but is currently unreserved) and a "control" GP has at most 3.5 years of exposure. Crucially, however, at the time of the survey, there is no treated GP currently reserved for SCs.

Table C5 presents a conventional balance test across 2006 reserved and unreserved GPs, within the long run sample. Barring female reservation, which is mechanically unbalanced, the other variables are balanced at baseline. Appendix section F provides further evidence that the long-run sample is comparable to the set of GPs used in our main analysis (Table C4) and that they do not show unusually high levels of catch-up in the short-run (Table D14). One difference remains: by construction, the long-run GPs sit closer to the threshold than the GPs that identify our short-run estimates, so the effect we estimate here is, if anything, more local. We therefore read the results in this section with caution, and we report them with that caution in mind.

Our main result is that the catch-up observed in the short term continues to hold in the long-term. We run the same specification as we do with the short run, with differing bandwidths (Table 2, column (3); See RD plot in Figure A2(f)). We find strong evidence of continued catch-up: there is a 1.18 SD reduction in the difference between mean asset scores of SCs and non-SCs. Owing to the low sample size, the confidence intervals are wide, but the minimum end of the 99% interval suggests a 0.25 SD improvement in SCs' relative asset scores.

6.8.1 Long Run Impacts: Level Terms We now turn to somewhat more noisily estimated results i.e., of how SCs and non-SCs fare as a group in the long-run. We present them with the caveat that the small samples of SCs and non-SCs within any GP in our sample make such comparisons fraught. Moreover, estimating gaps between groups within the same GP allows us to account for within-GP variation in a manner that cross-GP comparisons – like we show below – don't. Any cut of the data beyond the SC–non-SC gap thins an already small sample and makes the estimates less stable. We are careful, therefore, not

to over-interpret them, and we report the sensitivity of every estimate in this section to the exclusion of individual GPs.

We find that the catch-up is driven by a noisy increase in SC scores and a larger, more precisely estimated fall in non-SC scores (Columns 2 and 3 of Table 9). In a sense, these reflect a continuation of the short-run findings. The GP as a whole is unaffected when we do not weight observations (Column 4), but when we do weight observations by their share in the population, GP-wide asset scores are noisily negative (Column 5). This result turns, however, on leaving out even one GP.

Overall, we see this section as providing suggestive information that the catch-up is driven in the same manner as in the short-run: SCs gaining and non-SCs losing out. Table D22 shows that the gains to SCs are larger for those in the top quartile of the SC distribution, once again mirroring the short-run results.

7 Robustness

In this section, we subject our main results to a battery of robustness checks. We focus first on the main RD specification and show robustness to varying bandwidths and dropping controls and fixed effects. Subsequently, we run checks to assuage the concern that the gender imbalance across the RD threshold is not a threat to the validity of our results.

7.1 Outcomes, Controls and Specification Checks

Asset Index Definitions: We first show that our main results on asset-inequality are not driven by the choice of our poverty scores. Table D5 shows that our results are robust to defining either a PCA-based asset index or a raw sum of assets individually. Using the SECC data, we create alternate asset indices that include a wider range of uncommon assets, including mechanical agricultural equipment, irrigation equipment and refrigerators. Our results are robust to including these (see columns 4 and 8 of Table D5). We also drop land from our asset index, because land could potentially be seen as very different from the remaining assets. Once again, our index is robust to dropping land.

Finally, we present robustness to two alternate asset measures. Table D6 considers an inverse-weighted index where weights are assigned as the inverse of the share of households owning each asset or service. This measure thus gives greater weight to rarer, and therefore typically costlier, assets. Table D7 considers a latent factor measure that assumes the existence of a latent household "welfare" factor and estimates weights on observed assets that best capture this underlying welfare score (Sahn and Stifel (2000)). In all cases, the similarity in treatment effects suggests strongly that the choice or construction of the index is not driving the results.

Controls and Fixed Effects: Next, we show that our results are not driven by the removal of either control variables (Table D11) or fixed effects (Table D12). This holds for our results on private assets, public goods in the short- and long-run and political positions (Table D13) in the long-run.

Sample Robustness: As mentioned earlier, the reservation algorithm was not perfectly implemented. There was a small number of GPs where the predicted reservation status of GPs from the algorithm did not match the *de facto* reservation status of GPs (N = 78 GPs). Tables D16 and Table D17 show that our results are unchanged when dropping these GPs.

To assuage any sample-related concerns around our long-run asset inequality results, we rule out the possibility that these GPs are unrepresentative of the short-run GPs because they were already showing unusually large effects in the short-run. Table D14 presents the short-term effects for these GPs, revealing minimal catch-up in public goods or private assets. However, in the long run, these GPs demonstrate significant improvements in private asset catch-up, enhanced political participation, and better WAS public goods.

Bandwidth Choice Robustness: Our results are robust to 10 alternate bandwidths. In Appendix Figures B1, we show that our main results are largely invariant to a choice of 0.25x - 2x times to the optimal CCT bandwidth. Moreover, the Imbens-Kalyanaraman (IK) bandwidth always falls within this range. We also show that our results hold even when we use robust standard errors across these 10 bandwidths as opposed to conventional SE (Figure B2).

For our long-run asset inequality results, we show robustness to 10 alternate specifications: in Table D1, we show robustness to 1.5BW. Next, in table D8, we show robustness to combinations of different weights (triangular

vs uniform) and bandwidths (CCT, 100, 45 and 90). In Table D9, we show robustness to trimming the top 5% of observations and also specifying 2nd and 3rd degree polynomials. In column (5), we estimate treatment effects using an alternate RD estimation strategy (honest RD by Armstrong and Kolesár). The treatment effect of 1.51 SD is similar to what we estimate using the CCT approach: the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.13 to 2.9 SD.

7.2 Gender Reservation

A threat to these findings is that the gender of the GP head differs across the threshold: GP heads in reserved GPs are 36 p.p more likely to be women (Table 1). All our regressions control for whether the seat was reserved for women. We run three further checks. We drop female reserved GPs altogether, which is reasonable since gender reservation is also assigned algorithmically. We drop blocks where female reservation is mismatched across the threshold, which preserves internal validity because reservation is assigned block by block. And we exploit a second regression discontinuity, in the gender reservation rule itself, to compare female and non-female reserved GPs while holding SC reservation fixed. Appendix G reports each check in full.

We begin by dropping all female reserved GPs, which leaves 94% of SC reserved GPs close to the threshold and 58% of non-SC reserved GPs below it. This does not affect the balance of the sample (Table C3), and our results remain similar: SC leaders reduce inequality in private assets and public goods in the short run, and in public goods and political outcomes in the long run (Tables C6 and C7). We are not powered to see effects on private assets in the long run, where our main specification has only 43 GPs.

Because the algorithm runs separately for every block, gender reservation is unbalanced on average but balanced in nearly 25% of blocks, for reasons that turn out to be largely arbitrary. Restricting the sample to these blocks, all our coefficients are very similar in both magnitude and direction to our main results (Table 8). Losing 75% of our blocks reduces power, but all five p-values are < 0.25 and three are < 0.01. Here too we are not powered to see long-run effects on private assets, with only 22 GPs in such blocks.

Finally, we exploit the gender reservation rule itself. Within SC reserved seats, the GPs to be reserved for SCs in a block are arranged in descending order of SC population and the top half are reserved for women, which gives a

second regression discontinuity that varies gender reservation while holding SC reservation fixed. Across a range of key outcomes we see no statistically significant differences between gender reserved and non-gender reserved SC seats (Table C8). The only exception is long-run WAS provision, which is higher in gender reserved seats; if anything, this suggests our main results understate how SC reservation affects public goods in the long run. We run the same exercise on the control side, within SC unreserved seats, and find that female reserved GPs do no worse than female unreserved GPs on private assets and public goods, in both the short and the long run (Table C9). The differential share of female reserved seats on either side of the threshold therefore cannot explain the effects of SC reservation we report.

8 Unpacking Reservation's Effectiveness

8.1 SC Population and Effectiveness of Reservation

The effectiveness of reservation may depend on the numerical strength of the beneficiary group. SC population shares vary considerably both across India and within Bihar, and our pooled RD design allows us to examine how this variation shapes the effects of reservation. The design combines 525 block-specific population cutoffs, whose distribution is shown in Figure A8. We divide these cutoffs into terciles; GPs around the cutoffs in the three groups have average SC population shares of 11.1%, 16.2%, and 21.5%, respectively. These differences are electorally meaningful. The median GP-head election is won by 126 votes, whereas the median difference in the number of SC voters between the first and second terciles is approximately 160, and between the second and third terciles approximately 180.

We estimate equations 6 and 7 separately within each tercile and report the principal short- and long-run outcomes in Table 6.[30] In the short run, reservation has its largest effects where SCs are least numerous. In the bottom tercile, it reduces the SC–non-SC asset gap by 0.16 SD, although imprecisely estimated,[31] and increases public goods in the main SC village by 0.40 SD

[30] Appendix Table D21 reports results for a broader set of outcomes.

[31] Pooling the first two terciles produces an estimate of 0.15 SD ($p = 0.02$).

($p < 0.02$); in the top tercile, it has no detectable short-run effects. This pattern reverses after reservation is withdrawn. In the bottom tercile, SC candidates rarely have enough votes to win, limiting their subsequent influence over policies such as WAS implementation.

The most durable effects therefore arise, as our framework suggests, in the middle tercile: SCs are initially too few to shape policy without reservation, but, once reservation is in place, they influence policy and win elections and continue to shape outcomes even after it is withdrawn. Reservation is thus most effective over the long run where SCs are neither large enough to be an electoral force on their own nor too small to survive in the absence of reservation.

8.2 Within-SC Heterogeneity and Effectiveness of Reservation

The effectiveness of reservation may also depend on cohesion within the beneficiary group. A large literature links ethnic diversity to weaker public-good provision, often because diversity impedes collective action (Alesina et al., 1999; Banerjee et al., 2007). In our setting, however, the prediction is ambiguous. Greater sub-caste diversity may lead an SC head to favour their own sub-caste rather than SCs collectively. Alternatively, competition among a larger number of SC sub-castes may strengthen the head's re-election incentives.[32] We therefore examine whether within-SC sub-caste concentration changes the effectiveness of reservation.

We proxy sub-caste with surname and measure concentration using the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI), defined as the sum of the squared population shares of all SC surnames. Higher values indicate a more homogeneous SC population. We divide blocks into terciles of block-level HHI and estimate treatment effects separately within each tercile. The corresponding GP-level HHI averages 0.23 and is strongly correlated with the block-level measure, as Figure B3 shows. Unlike the preceding exercise, which decomposes the pooled RD estimate across different cutoffs, this analysis estimates conventional heterogeneous treatment effects by sub-caste concentration.

[32] GPs remained reserved for two terms, so all candidates in the 2011 election were also SCs.

Reservation is most effective where SCs are most homogeneous (Table 7). In the highest-HHI tercile, it reduces the SC–non-SC private-asset gap by 0.20 SD and increases public-good targeting towards SCs by 0.30 SD in the short run. It also produces the largest long-run increase in SC political representation, raising the likelihood of an SC GP head by 0.17 SD after reservation is withdrawn. This difference operates through electoral success rather than entry: the effect on SC candidacy is similar across terciles, and is, if anything, larger in more heterogeneous GPs, but these additional candidates are less likely to win.[33] The only exception is long-run WAS provision, for which the estimate in homogeneous GPs remains positive but is imprecisely estimated. Across four of the five outcomes, SCs therefore benefit most from reservation where they are relatively homogeneous.

A caveat applies to how far this monotone relationship extends. Our terciles split blocks, and no block comes close to a homogeneous SC population: the block-level HHI has a median of 0.09 and a maximum of 0.35, below even the 0.5 that an even split between two sub-castes would produce. Individual GPs reach higher concentration, but the tail is thin, with fewer than 5% of GPs above 0.5. Greater homogeneity helps throughout the range of cohesion we observe; at levels beyond it, the relationship could differ, and our data cannot speak to that.

8.3 Empirical Evidence Supporting the Framework

Taken together, these results trace the reinforcing dynamic at the heart of the framework in Section 4. Reservation initially improves SC welfare and redirects public goods towards SC communities. Where SCs are sufficiently numerous to influence elections and sufficiently cohesive to coordinate around SC candidates, these gains translate into greater political entry and electoral success after reservation is withdrawn. Continued political representation, in turn, sustains improvements in SC welfare and public-good provision, reinforcing the material foundations of future political participation. Where SCs are too few or too fragmented to win elections, this

[33] See Column (3) of Table D20. All specifications control for the SC population share.

feedback loop breaks down and the gains from reservation dissipate more quickly.

9 Conclusion

This paper shows that reservations can shape the political economy equilibrium of GPs in the long-run. We show that, when reservations are in place, reservations in favour of historically marginalized SC groups causes resources to be redirected towards SCs and a reduction in asset-wealth gaps between SCs and non-SCs. Sustained reservations for ten years results in SCs continuing to contest elections even reservations are withdrawn and further resource targeting towards SCs and asset-wealth catch-up with non-SCs. Overall, we posit that this is evidence of a reinforcement cycle: political power translates to material gains which further fuels political entry and subsequent material gains. We note too that assets are a high bar for economic catch-up, since they are acquired in steps and only once gains persist, so our estimates are likely to understate how much changed for SC households over this period.

The policy implications of this paper are four-fold: first, our results show that political reservation could be an important tool in reducing inter-group inequality in the short- and long-run; second, this paper shows the importance of having political reservation policies run for two terms (Beaman et al. (2009), Gulzar et al. (2020)): while, at the end of the first electoral cycle, SCs' wealth accumulation had improved marginally, in the long-run – owing to political entry – the gap between SCs and non-SCs is further reduced. Indian states display considerable heterogeneity in whether reservation runs for one or two electoral terms: while some like Punjab and Telangana are similar to Bihar and rotate reservation every 10 years, others like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal rotate reservation every 5 years; third, the results suggest that well-implemented affirmative action policies could actually be self-reinforcing: reservation improves resource access which results in more political power; fourth, the paper points to the fact that the gains from reservation are reaped best when the minority group is neither too small or

too large and when it is more homogeneous. This fact could help rationalise reservation policies.[34]

The popular discourse in India on reservations characterizes these as policies that either prove empowering for minorities or inefficient and ineffective, benefiting only an undeserving elite among the targeted group. This paper, in the tradition of empirical works challenging these facile binaries (Chauchard (2017), Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004)), argues that the impacts can be quite complex. The answers depend on types of outcomes evaluated, their time-horizons and the nature of the comparisons being made.

[34]For instance, India's states have varying shares of SCs, spanning from under 1% in Mizoram to 32% in Punjab. This paper suggests that reservation could work best in the states of Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Tripura and Uttarakhand, where the share of SCs is neither too large nor too small.

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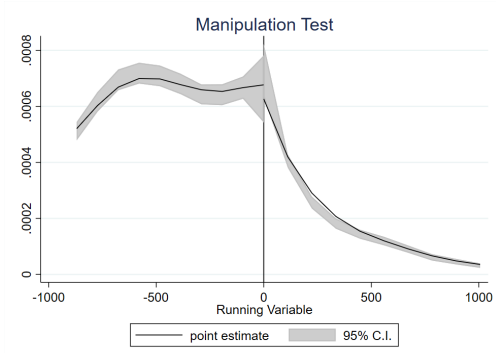
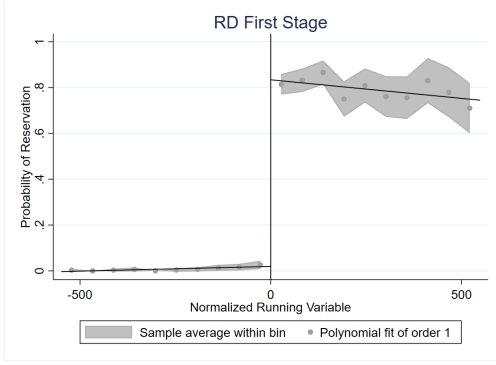
10 Figures

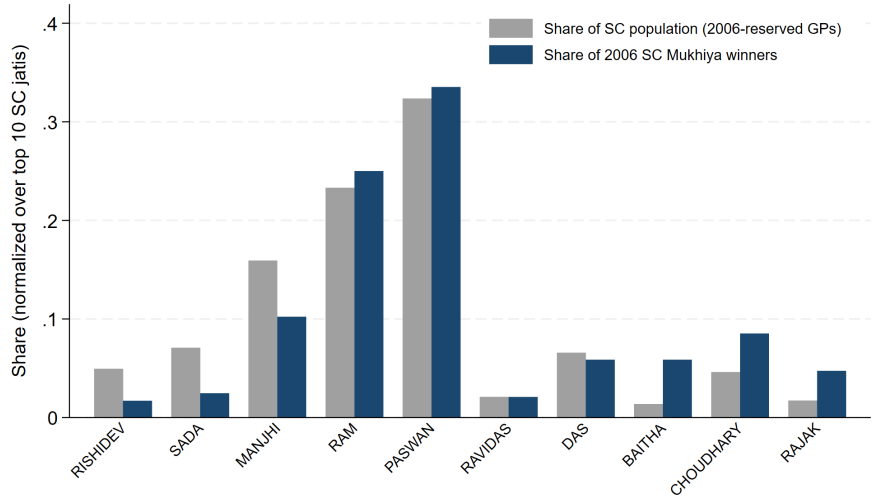


(A) McCrary Test

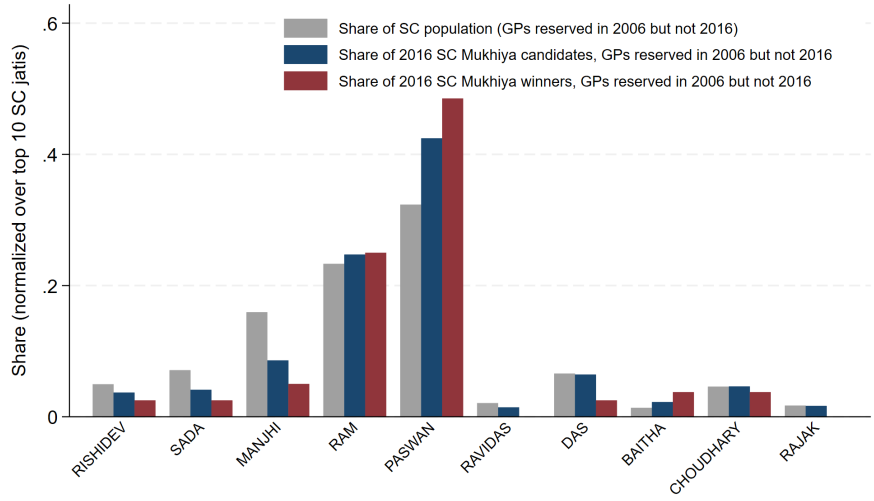


(B) First Stage

FIGURE 1. Part (a) plots the density of the running variable around the RD threshold and displays results from a McCrary test. The results indicate no discontinuity on either side of the RD threshold and allows us to reject the claim that the running variable is manipulated. 95% confidence intervals are also shown in the shaded region. Part (b) plots the likelihood of a GP being reserved on either side of the RD threshold. The probability of being reserved is nearly zero to the left of the threshold and jumps to over 0.8 to the right. 95% confidence intervals are also shown in the shaded region.



(A) Population and 2006 Winners



(B) Population, 2016 Candidates and 2016 Winners

FIGURE 2. Figure plots the sub-caste composition of SC political representation across the ten largest SC sub-castes in Bihar, ordered from poorest to richest by their mean asset score in the SECC. Shares are normalised over these ten sub-castes and the population benchmark is computed within the relevant set of GPs. Sub-caste is proxied by surname. Part (a) covers GPs reserved for SCs in 2006 and plots each sub-caste's share of the SC population against its share of the SC GP heads elected that year. Winners are drawn from every sub-caste and their shares track population shares closely, with a mild tilt away from the poorest sub-castes and towards the richest. Part (b) covers GPs reserved in 2006 but unreserved in 2016 and adds the shares of SC candidates and SC winners in the 2016 election, held after reservation was withdrawn. Candidate shares track population shares more closely than winner shares do.

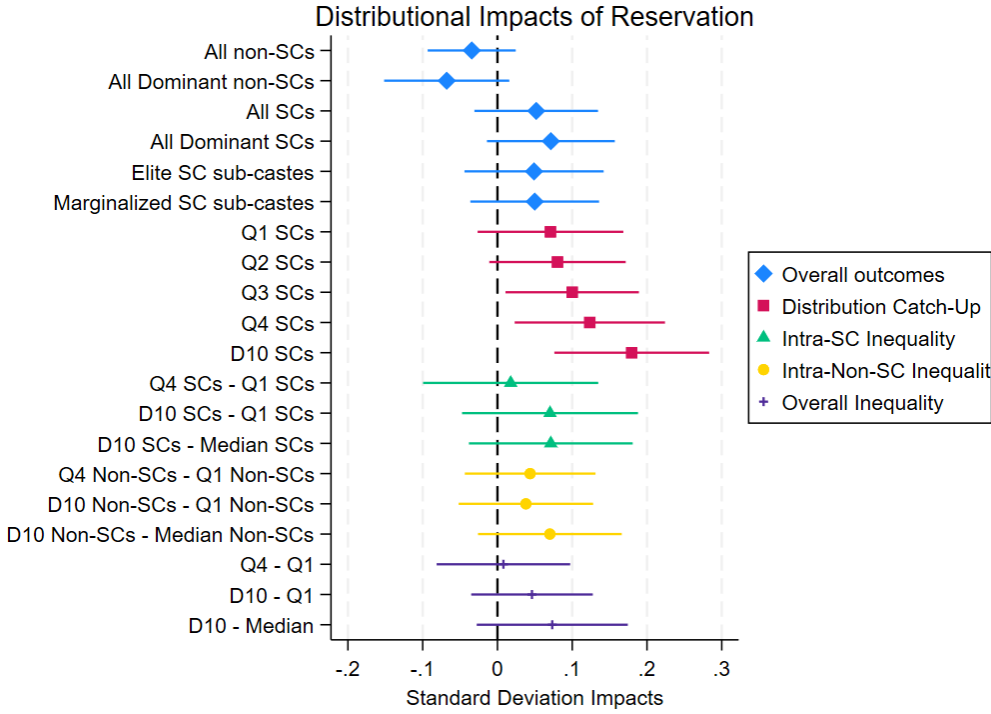


FIGURE 3. Figure shows short-run SD impacts on asset scores using estimates derived from the Socioeconomic Caste Census (SECC 2011-12). Diamond markers pertain to average scores of groups: for instance, "All non-SCs" shows the impact on the average asset score of all non-SC households. The dominant sub-caste on each side is the GP's largest by household count; elite SC sub-castes are the non-Mahadalit castes, the recognized upper tier among SCs in Bihar; marginalized SC sub-castes are the Mahadalits, the sub-castes the Government of Bihar designates as most deprived. Square markers delineate catch-up with the median non-SC quintile, the non-SC households between the 40th and 60th percentiles: for instance, "Q1 SCs" indicates the difference between the average SC household in the bottom quartile of the GP's SC distribution and that benchmark. Triangular markers measure within-SC inequality, the differences between the top and bottom quartiles among SCs and between the top decile (D10) and the bottom quartile or median. Circles report the corresponding estimates for non-SCs, and "+" markers the corresponding estimates across all households in the GP.

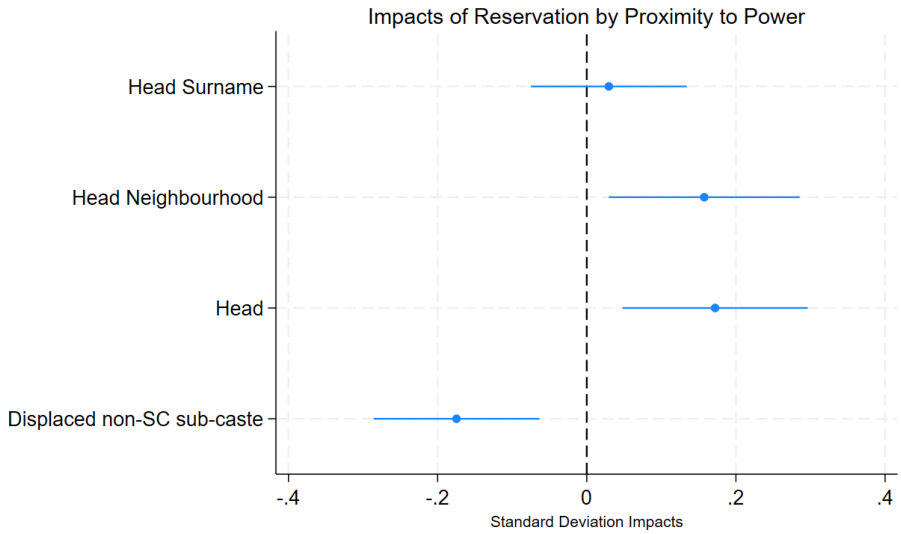
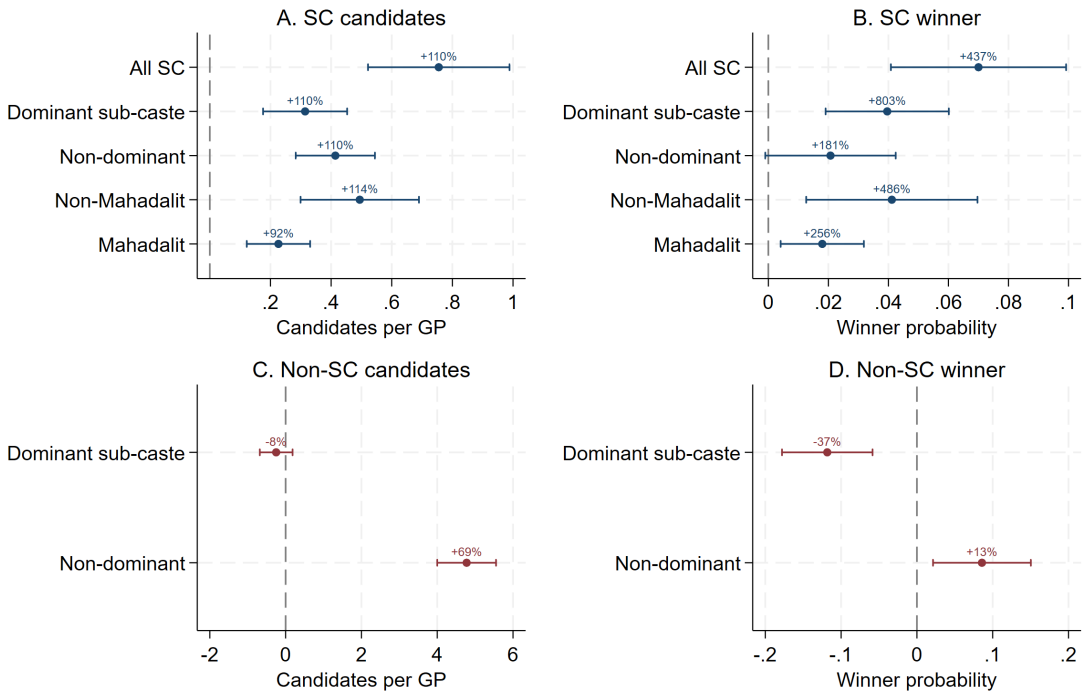


FIGURE 4. Figure plots the effect of SC reservation on the 2011–12 asset scores (SECC) of households connected to GP heads. The first three estimates concern the SC side. They compare households connected to the 2006 SC heads of reserved GPs with households connected to the 2016 SC heads of GPs first reserved in 2016. Because reservation follows the same population rule in both cycles, the 2016 winners proxy for who would have won in 2006 had these GPs been reserved then; they are observed in the SECC before taking office. Head" is the head's own household; head neighbourhood" is every household within 20 households of the head; "head surname" is every SC household sharing the head's surname (our proxy for sub-caste). Each of these three outcomes is measured relative to the median non-SC quintile in the GP. The fourth estimate concerns the non-SC side. It compares the sub-caste of the 2006 non-SC head in unreserved GPs with the sub-caste of the 2016 non-SC head in GPs that were reserved for SCs from 2006 to 2016 and open again in 2016. The 2016 winner's sub-caste proxies for the sub-caste that would have ruled these GPs from 2006 had they not been reserved. Its outcome is the sub-caste's average asset score. All estimates use the same specification as the paper's other tables and figures; bars show 90% confidence intervals.

FIGURE 5. Who Enters and Who Wins: 2016 Candidacies and Victories by Sub-Caste Group



Notes: Each point is a fuzzy RD estimate of the impact of 2006 SC reservation on a GP-level outcome in the 2016 Mukhiya elections, in GPs unreserved for SCs in 2016, with 90% confidence intervals. Panels A and C report numbers of candidates per GP; Panels B and D report the probability that the 2016 winner belongs to the indicated group. Point labels express each estimate as a percentage of the control-side mean within the bandwidth. The dominant sub-caste is the GP's largest SC (Panels A–B) or non-SC (Panels C–D) sub-caste by household count in the Socioeconomic Caste Census; non-Mahadalit sub-castes are Dusadh (Paswan), Chamar (including Ram, Ravidas, Mochi, and Harijan), Pasi, and Dhobi (including Choudhary, Baitha, and Rajak). Candidate sub-castes are surname-based. All estimates use CCT triangular bandwidths and the fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equations 6 and 7), controlling for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects, with standard errors clustered at the Block level. Point estimates and standard errors are reported in Tables C14, C15, and C12.

11 Tables

TABLE 1. Balance Across the RD Sample (GP-level Controls)

Variable	Reserved	Unreserved	Difference	SE
Proportion of SCs (Census 2001)	0.17	0.17	0.00	0.00
Distance to Nearest Statuatory Town (Census 2011)	20.93	20.52	0.41	0.42
Distance to District Headquarters (Census 2011)	32.14	31.64	0.50	0.49
Number of Villages in GP (Census 2011)	5.65	5.57	0.08	0.25
Total GP Area (Census 2011)	1,222.55	1,118.53	104.02	60.94
Total Population of GP (Census 2001)	9,660.70	9,537.61	123.09	278.35
Percentages of SCs in Main SC Village (Census 2011)	0.57	0.56	0.01	0.02
Female Reserved	0.06	0.42	-0.36	0.03
Total Educational Facilities (Census 2001)	3.73	3.70	0.03	0.13
Primary Health Sub Centres (Census 2001)	0.43	0.44	-0.01	0.05
Post Office (Census 2001)	1.04	1.05	-0.01	0.06
Bank Facilities (Census 2001)	0.31	0.34	-0.03	0.05
Power Supply (Census 2001)	1.72	1.82	-0.10	0.12
Paved Road (Census 2001)	1.77	1.86	-0.09	0.12
Mud Road (Census 2001)	4.14	4.25	-0.11	0.20
Child Welfare Centre (Census 2001)	0.04	0.06	-0.02	0.03
Bus facilities (Census 2001)	0.56	0.58	-0.02	0.07
Mean Village Income (Census 2001)	532,981.40	358,290.10	174,691.30	244,820.20
Mean Village Income (Census 2001)	380,700.40	309,809.80	70,890.56	235,398.40
Middle School Facility (Census 2001)	1.20	1.25	-0.05	0.08
Medical Facility (Census 2001)	0.87	0.92	-0.05	0.07
Tap Water (Census 2001)	0.16	0.17	-0.01	0.04
Well (Census 2001)	0.82	0.83	-0.01	0.02
Tank (Census 2001)	0.58	0.57	0.01	0.08
Phone Lines (Census 2001)	0.36	0.57	-0.21	0.06

NOTE: Table presents results from a series of balance tests for GP-level variables across the population-based RD cutoff. We operationalize tests by running a fuzzy RD with bandwidth = 550. Standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE 2. Impact of SC Reservation on Private Assets

	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **D10 SC-Others (Short Run)**	(4) **SC-Others (Long Run)**
SC Reserved	-0.015	0.090	0.180	1.182
	(0.037)	(0.047)	(0.063)	(0.360)
Observations	8170	7952	7952	43
Effective Observations	4428	5196	4097	41
Mean	.003	.045	-.003	0
Bandwidth	571	704	532	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays SD impacts of reservation on private assets in the short- and long-run. Outcomes are: (1) The average private asset score across all households in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) the difference in private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (3) the difference in private asset scores between the top decile (D 10) and non-SCs in a GP in 2011 - 12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (4) The difference in private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2018-19 (Primary Survey). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). Except for column (3), where we fix a bandwidth of 50 and have uniform weights. We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE 3. Impact of SC Reservation on Public Goods in the GP

	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC Village Short Run**	(3) **Overall (Long Run)**	(4) **SC Wards Long Run**
SC Reserved	0.012	0.202	0.040	0.151
	(0.043)	(0.075)	(0.063)	(0.069)
Observations	8171	8044	7781	7758
Effective Observations	3904	4349	3421	3513
Mean	.001	.001	.003	-.002
Bandwidth	495	564	451	466
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays SD impacts of reservation on public goods in the short- and long-run. Outcomes are: (1) Public good index from 4 main public goods in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (2) Normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (3) Share of all wards in the GP with a water and sanitation (WAS) project initiated by 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data; we trim the top 1% of observations) (4) SC Proportion-normalized share of WAS projects provided to SC wards up to 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data; we trim the top 1% of observations). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE 4. Impact of SC Reservation on Long-Run Political Participation of SCs

	GP		Ward		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Winner	**Candidates**	**Winner (Unreserved)**	**Candidate (Unreserved)**	**Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.113	1.297	0.254	0.896	-0.013
	(0.024)	(0.183)	(0.074)	(0.217)	(0.064)
Observations	4663	4700	7369	7369	7369
Mean	.018	.85	.841	3.135	2.194
Bandwidth	675	508	576	510	522
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays impacts of SC reservation on political outcomes in the long-run. Columns (1) and (2) pertain to GP-level outcomes; Columns (3) - (5) pertain to ward level outcomes. Outcome variables are: (1) An indicator of whether an SC won the 2016 GP elections (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016, hence N = 4693) (2) The number of SC candidates contesting elections in a GP in 2016 (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016) (3) The number of SC winners from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (4) The number of SC candidates from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (5) The number of winners from SC-reserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (this is called a 'placebo' because it should remain unchanged trivially). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE 5. Welfare Outcomes

	IAY Housing		NREGA (2010-11)	NREGA (2014-16)	
	(1) Houses Per SC	(2) Normalized SC Houses	(3) Persondays Per SC	(4) Persondays Per SC	(5) Normalized 100 Days Hhds
SC Reserved	0.175	0.064	-0.086	0.085	0.169
	(0.067)	(0.058)	(0.054)	(0.057)	(0.064)
Observations	6064	6061	7295	7856	7837
Effective Observations	2827	2516	3932	3274	3409
Mean	.003	.018	.005	-.004	-.007
Bandwidth	560	504	563	420	440
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	IAY Housing		NREGA (2010-11)	NREGA (2014-16)	
	(1) Houses Per SC	(2) Normalized SC Houses	(3) Persondays Per SC	(4) Persondays Per SC	(5) Normalized 100 Days Hhds
SC Reserved	0.211	0.034	-0.098	0.102	0.202
	(0.098)	(0.082)	(0.078)	(0.068)	(0.087)
Observations	6064	6061	7295	7856	7837
Effective Observations	1368	1366	2141	2310	2311
Mean	-.002	-.002	.002	.001	-.001
Bandwidth	275	275	275	275	275
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	IAY Housing		NREGA (2010-11)	NREGA (2014-16)	
	(1) Houses Per SC	(2) Normalized SC Houses	(3) Persondays Per SC	(4) Persondays Per SC	(5) Normalized 100 Days Hhds
SC Reserved	0.158	0.049	-0.078	0.037	0.119
	(0.058)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.051)
Observations	6064	6061	7295	7856	7837
Effective Observations	3727	3721	4897	5266	5271
Mean	0	0	.001	0	0
Bandwidth	725	725	725	725	725
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on welfare schemes. Outcome variables are (in standardized units): (1) The number of houses constructed for SCs under the PMAY (IAY) scheme per SC individual in a GP (2) the SC proportion normalized share of scheme benefits (houses) received by SCs (3) The persondays generated per SC individual in a GP under the NREGA (4) The SC proportion normalized share of SC households receiving 100 days of work under the NREGA. We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panels (B) and (C) show estimates when bandwidth are halved or increased by a factor of 1.5 respectively.

TABLE 6. Where is Reservation Most Effective? Analysis by SC Population

	PANEL A: 1st Tercile				
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **GP Wins (LR)**	(5) **Ward Wins (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.157	0.396	-0.112	0.069	0.209
	(0.107)	(0.159)	(0.108)	(0.047)	(0.116)
Observations	2585	2623	2502	1728	2354
Mean	.005	-.046	-.005	.024	.678
Bandwidth	556	310	541	444	468
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	PANEL B: 2nd Tercile				
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **GP Wins (LR)**	(5) **Ward Wins (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.151	0.348	0.219	0.201	0.235
	(0.083)	(0.131)	(0.100)	(0.050)	(0.122)
Observations	2608	2648	2571	1674	2460
Mean	-.004	.008	.003	.014	.841
Bandwidth	545	531	592	387	726
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	PANEL C: 3rd Tercile				
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **GP Wins (LR)**	(5) **Ward Wins (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.018	-0.044	0.305	0.152	0.320
	(0.096)	(0.136)	(0.117)	(0.051)	(0.149)
Observations	2759	2774	2685	1554	2555
Mean	-.015	-.011	0	.018	1.041
Bandwidth	517	526	588	469	594
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on main outcomes, broken down by SC population. Outcome variables are (in standardized units where not mentioned otherwise): (1) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) Normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (3) SC Proportion-normalized share of water and sanitation (WAS) public goods provided to SC wards up to 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data; we trim the top 1% of observations). (4) SD improvements in whether an SC won the 2016 GP elections (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016) (5) SD improvements in the number of winners from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panels (A), (B) and (C) show estimates when we restrict sample to the the first, second and third tercile of GPs by SC population.

TABLE 7. Where is Reservation Most Effective? Analysis by SC HHI

	LOW HHI: 1st Tercile				
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **GP Wins (LR)**	(5) **Ward Wins (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.050	0.116	0.181	0.062	0.157
	(0.096)	(0.127)	(0.121)	(0.048)	(0.120)
Observations	2643	2694	2649	1651	2453
Mean	.001	-.008	.001	.023	.873
Bandwidth	552	614	561	475	620
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Medium HHI: 2nd Tercile				
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **GP Wins (LR)**	(5) **Ward Wins (LR)**
SC Reserved	-0.004	0.145	0.137	0.066	0.311
	(0.093)	(0.123)	(0.112)	(0.057)	(0.124)
Observations	2663	2675	2563	1613	2428
Mean	-.015	.001	.023	.014	.878
Bandwidth	490	647	451	295	551
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	High HHI: 3rd Tercile				
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **GP Winner (LR)**	(5) **Ward Winners (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.204	0.304	0.089	0.170	0.321
	(0.080)	(0.113)	(0.096)	(0.051)	(0.126)
Observations	2645	2675	2546	1689	2485
Mean	.044	0	-.005	.019	.766
Bandwidth	694	679	645	543	710
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on main outcomes, broken down by SC heterogeneity. Outcome variables are (in standardized units where not mentioned otherwise): (1) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) Normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (3) SC Proportion-normalized share of water and sanitation (WAS) public goods provided to SC wards up to 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data; we trim the top 1% of observations). (4) SD improvements in whether an SC won the 2016 GP elections (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016) (5) SD improvements in the number of winners from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panels (A), (B) and (C) show estimates when we restrict sample to the the first, second and third tercile of GPs by within-SC heterogeneity in GPs.

TABLE 8. Impacts of SC Reservation (Matched Gender Blocks Only)

	Matched Gender Blocks				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	SC-Others Assets (Short Run)	**SC Village Pub. Goods Short Run**	**SC Village Pub. Goods Long Run**	**SC Winner (GP)**	**SC Winner (Unres. Ward)**
SC Reserved	0.107	0.207	0.420	0.105	0.396
	(0.094)	(0.141)	(0.162)	(0.042)	(0.139)
Observations	1874	1915	1848	1112	1739
Mean	0	0	.008	.019	.914
Bandwidth	550	564	466	675	576
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays impacts of SC reservation on key outcomes (see previous table (C7) for outcome descriptions. Here, we report results for regressions where we blocks where female reservation is not mismatched. Outcome variables are (in standardized units where not mentioned otherwise): (1) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) Normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (3) SC Proportion-normalized share of water and sanitation (WAS) public goods provided to SC wards up to 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data). (4) The share of GPs in whether an SC won the 2016 GP elections (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016) (5) The number of winners from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We use the same bandwidths as in Table 2 and 4 We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Since we are working with a 20% sample, we do not trim outliers for public good outcomes.

TABLE 9. Long-Run Impacts on Private Assets: Gaps, Levels, and Sensitivity to Individual GPs

	Long-Run Impacts on Wealth Scores				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	SC–Non-SC Difference	**ALL SCs**	**ALL Non-SCs**	**Overall (Unweighted)**	**Overall (Pop. Weighted)**
SC Reservation	1.182	0.249	-0.658	-0.043	-0.389
	(0.360)	(0.185)	(0.236)	(0.248)	(0.211)
Observations	43	43	47	47	43
Effective Observations	41	41	43	43	41
Leave-one-out estimate range	[0.89, 1.37]	[0.00, 0.40]	[-0.80, -0.48]	[-0.32, 0.08]	[-0.61, -0.21]
Leave-one-out p-value range	[0.000, 0.031]	[0.009, 0.985]	[0.000, 0.036]	[0.045, 0.998]	[0.000, 0.248]
Mean	0	0	0	0	0
Bandwidth	50	50	50	50	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on long-run private asset scores and their sensitivity to individual GPs. Outcome variables are (in standardized units): (1) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2018-19 (Primary Survey) (2) the average private asset score of SC households (3) the average private asset score of non-SC households (4) the unweighted average private asset score across all surveyed households; because the survey over-sampled SC households, this average over-weights SCs (5) the population-weighted average private asset score, weighting the SC and non-SC group means by their 2011 Census population shares; results are identical to three decimal places using 2016 State Election Commission population weights. The leave-one-out rows report the range of the RD estimate and of its p-value across regressions that each drop one GP within the bandwidth at a time. We fix a bandwidth of 50 with uniform weights, reflecting the survey sampling strategy, and estimate the RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

Appendix

A Additional Figures

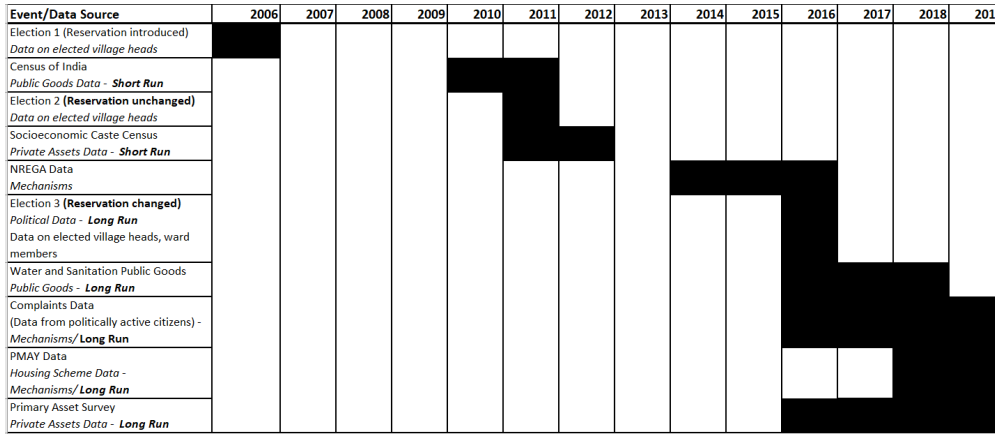
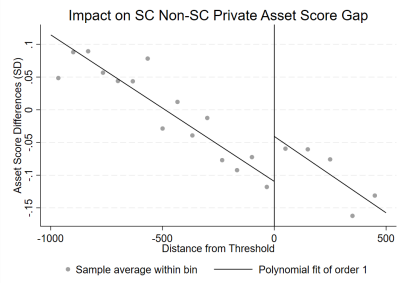
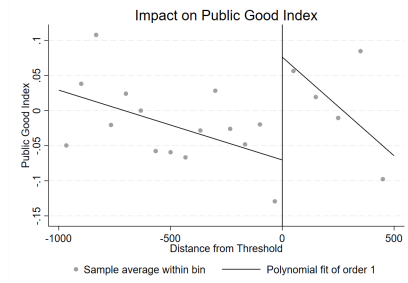


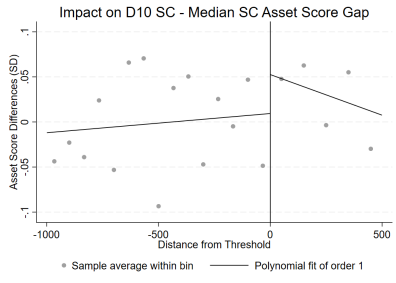
FIGURE A1. This figure presents a timeline for events and data sources used in this paper.



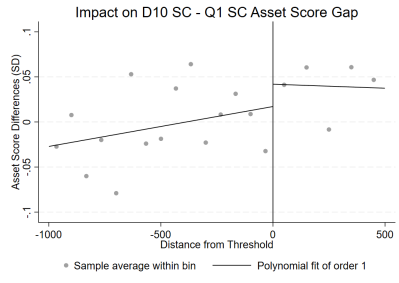
(A) Private Asset Inequality (Short-Run)



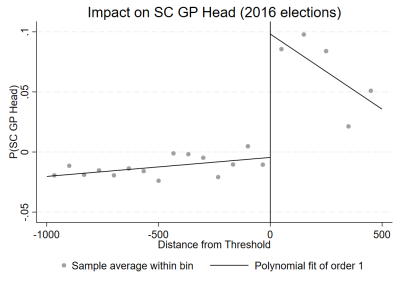
(B) Public Goods Inequality (Short-Run)



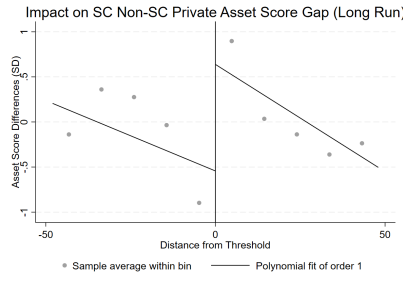
(C) D10 SC - Median SC (Short-Run)



(D) D10 SC- Q1 SC (Short-Run)

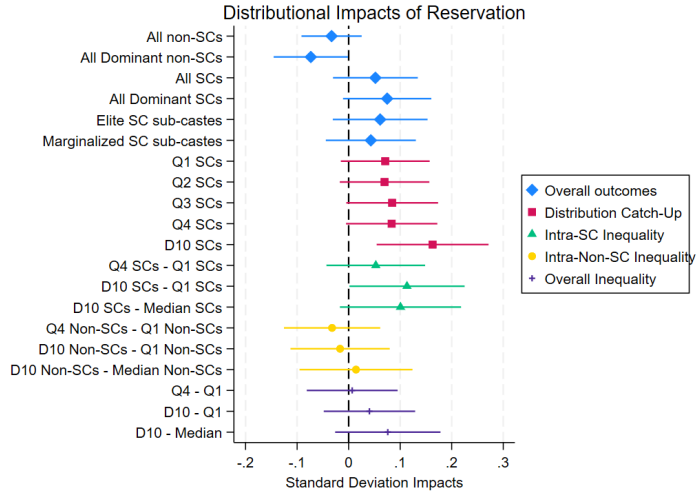


(E) SC GP Head (Long Run)

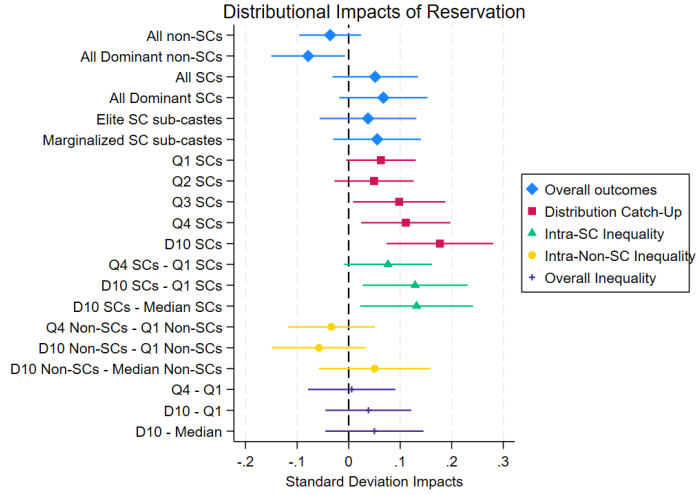


(F) Private Asset Inequality (Long Run)

FIGURE A2. We show RD plots for 6 outcome variables: (a) Difference in mean scores between SCs and non-SCs in the GP (SECC 2011-12) (b) Normalized share of public goods accruing to the main SC village in the GP (Census 2011) (c) Difference in asset scores between the top decile among SCs and the Median SC (d) Difference in asset scores between the top decile among SCs and the bottom quartile of SCs (e) The probability of having an SC GP head in a GP (Electoral Data 2016) (f) Difference in mean asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in the GP (Long Run; Primary Survey 2019) All plots use specifications mentioned in equations 6 and 7.



(A) Short-Run Distributional Impacts: RSOA scores



(B) Short-Run Distributional Impacts: PCA scores

FIGURE A3. Part (a) replicates figure 3, but uses RSOA asset scores instead. Part (b) replicates figure 3 with PCA asset scores

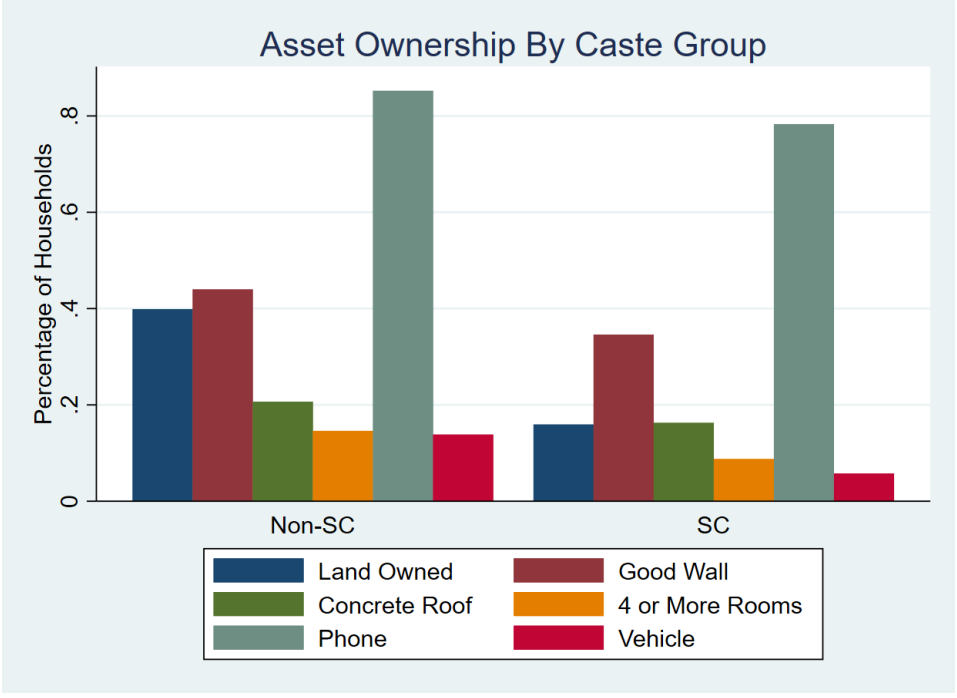


FIGURE A4. This figure shows us the share of households in the SECC data across SCs and non-SCs who own each of the 6 key assets used in the asset index.

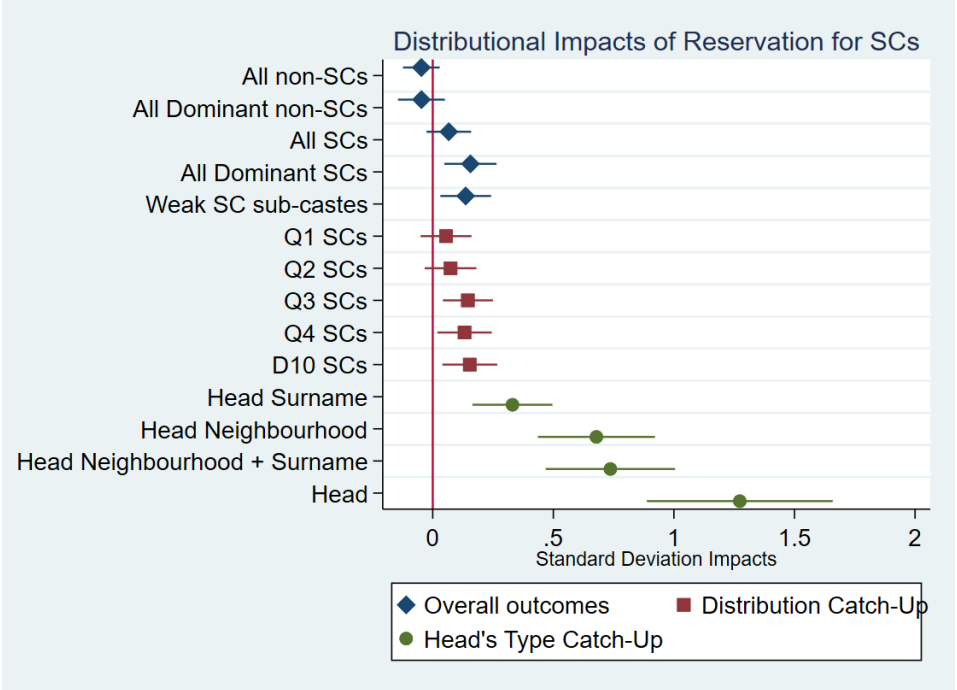
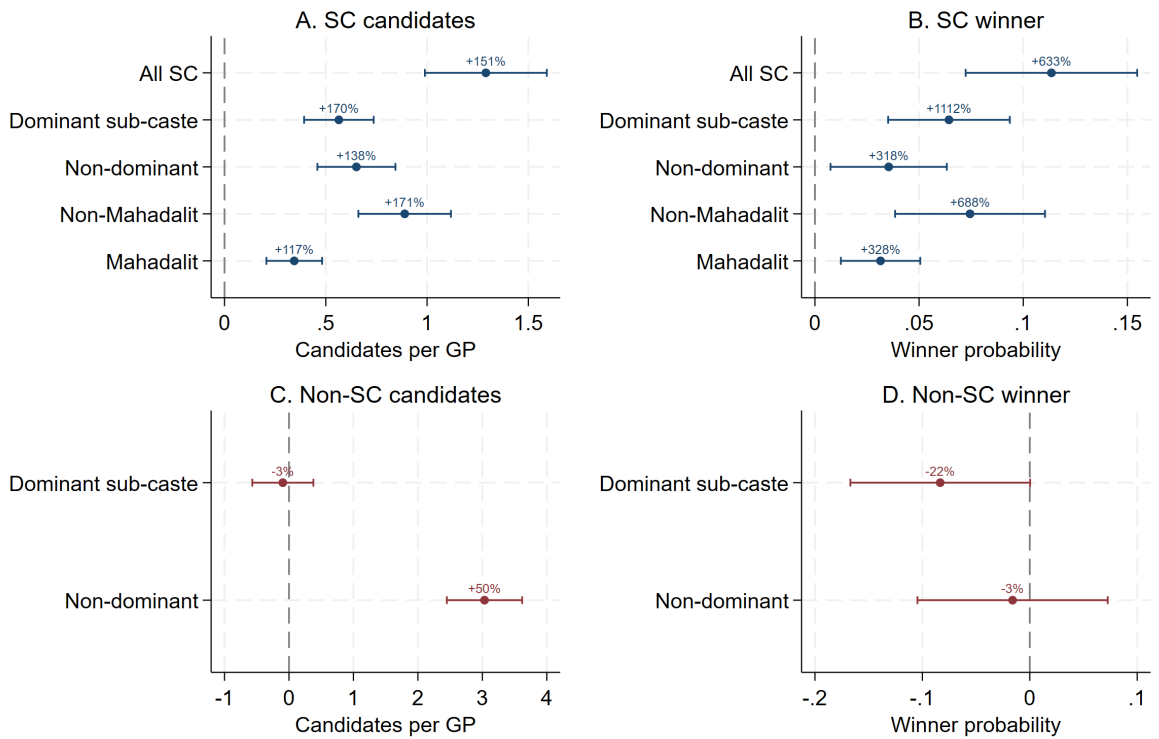


FIGURE A5. Figure shows SD impacts on asset scores across various sub-populations when **we restrict attention to only self-declared low-income class SC GP heads**. The ones with diamond markers pertain to absolute scores: for instance, "all non-SCs" shows impact on the average asset scores of all non-SCs. The ones with a square marker delineate catch-up with the median non-SC quintile. Each marker looks at a different SC quartile. For instance, "Q1 SCs" indicates difference between the average SC in the bottom quartile and the average non-SC in the median quintile. The ones with a circular marker also delineate catch-up with the median non-SC quintile. However, in the reserved group, we only focus on individuals connected with the GP head: "head surname" includes everyone who shares a surname with the head; "head neighbourhood" has everyone who lives within a 20-household distance from the head; "head neighbourhood + surname" has everyone within a 20-household distance from the head AND shares the head's surname; "head" includes only the head's household.

FIGURE A6. Who Enters and Who Wins: Seats Unreserved for Any Caste in 2016



Point labels express the estimate as a percentage of the control-side mean within the bandwidth. Sample restricted to GPs with no caste quota in 2016.

Notes: Identical to Figure 5, restricting the sample to GPs whose 2016 seat carried no caste reservation (no SC, OBC, or ST quota; seats reserved for women are included). Because formerly SC-reserved GPs rotate disproportionately into the OBC quota in 2016, this restriction conditions on a post-treatment variable, and Figure 5 is the preferred specification. Outcome definitions, specification, controls, and clustering are as in Figure 5.

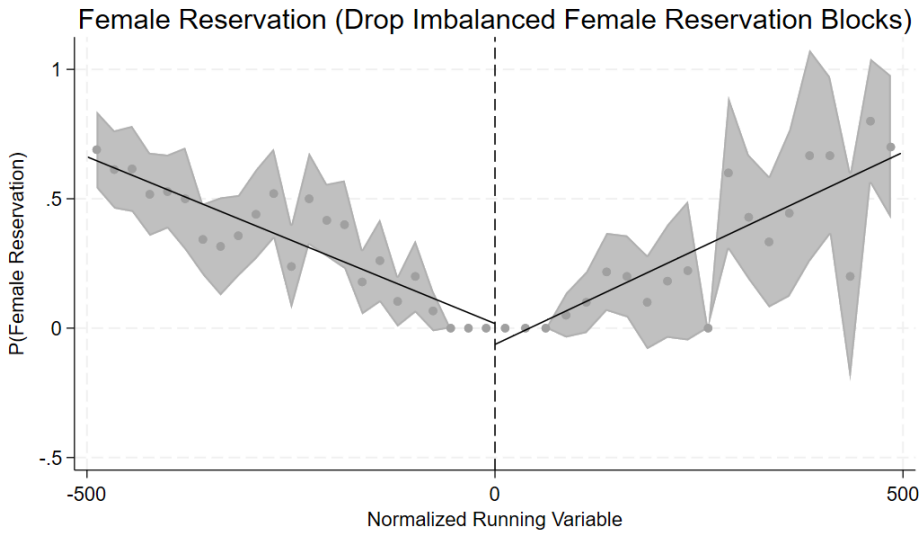


FIGURE A7. This figure shows the share of GPs reserved for women in gender balanced blocks.

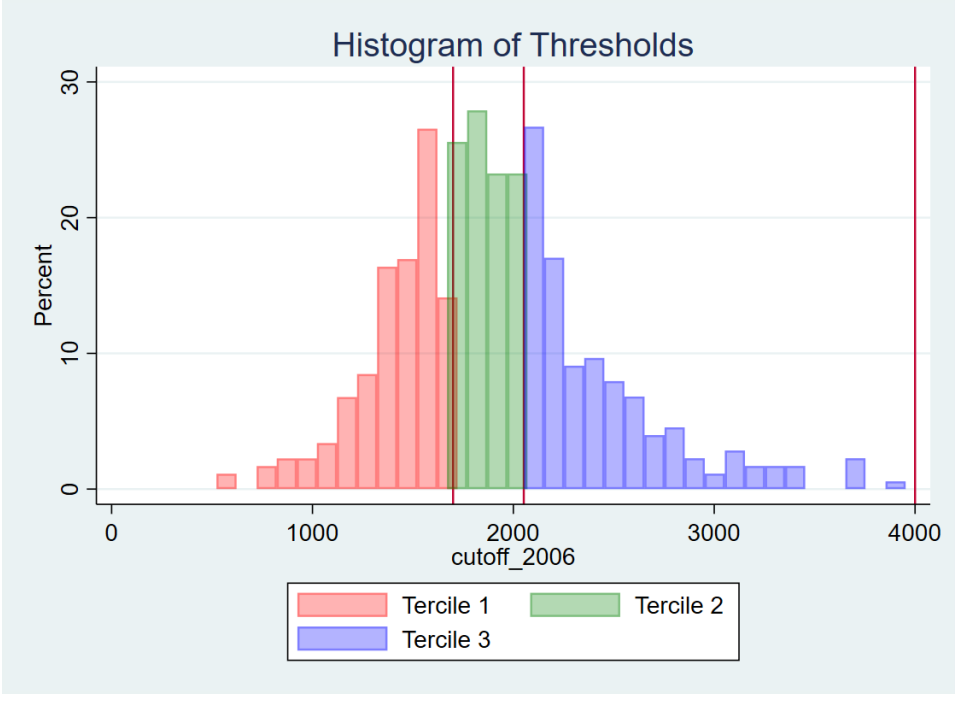


FIGURE A8. Figure shows histogram of SC population cutoffs across 525 blocks. The different shades of colours indicate the GPs that fall under each tercile of thresholds - with the lines displaying where every tercile ends.

B Additional Results

B.1 Other Political Mehchanisms

In this section, we turn to two alternate mechanisms that could explain our results. First, we ask if the two-cycle reservation resulted in greater long-run impacts because SC leaders who won in 2006 had greater stability of tenure. If reservation would have only existed for one cycle, then for many SC leaders, that would act as a *de facto* term limit (Ferraz and Finan, 2011). Second, we test if the new class of SC political leaders emerging in 2016 make claims on the state even when they do not win elections – and this could further propel the reduction in asset inequality between SCs and non-SCs.

B.1.1 Stability of Tenure For 3489 GPs, we have data on whether the leader elected in 2006 won the election again in 2011. Since the reservation status of GPs was unchanged, SC leaders continued to have a restricted set of competitors. Column (1) of Table B1 shows that SC leaders have consistently lower re-election rates than their non-SC counterparts, a finding that suggests that redistribution continued apace *despite* greater political churn in reserved areas.[35]

B.1.2 Long-Run Impacts on Accountability: Complaint-Filing Next, we turn to complaints made by politically active individuals under a formal complaints system (described in (Kumar and Sharan, 2023)). The complaints system was launched in 2016 (a few months after the GP elections of 2016) and we have data on the universe of complaints filed until September 2019. We define politically active citizens as those who have contested and lost the 2016 local elections at the GP head, ward and sarpanch levels. We focus on these for two reasons: first, we have data on the near-universe of such individuals, linked to their caste group; second, we have phone numbers of these individuals

[35] Lower re-election rates for SC GP heads could suggest many things: first, that voters – the majority of whom are non-SC – are less satisfied with the incumbent's ability to serve them (Ferejohn (1986)). On the other hand, in deeply unequal societies with entrenched elites, higher re-election rates could imply an inability to vote out low-performing leaders. In unreserved GPs in particular, the landed elite could capture power, irrespective of how they perform when in power. Thus, both high and low re-election rates could affect how outcomes diverge across different groups.

which we use to merge with the complaints data. We drop all GPs that were reserved in 2016 for SCs: this allows us to compare complaints by politically active citizens across currently unreserved GPs, with the only difference being the treated group saw reservation for ten years while the control group had no reservation.[36]

Column 2 of Table B1 shows that the population normalized share of SC complaints increases by 0.14 SDs. This shows that politically active SC citizens, even while not in government, are substantially more likely to make claims on the state in GPs that have been reserved for ten years. This, therefore, could translate to improvements in relative material well-being for SCs.

TABLE B1. Other Political Mechanisms

	(1) **Re-elected 2011**	(2) **Normalized Complaints**
SC Reserved	-0.134	0.135
	(0.047)	(0.073)
Observations	3360	6243
Effective Observations	1848	3732
Mean	.265	-.008
Bandwidth	547	706
Block FE	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on additional political outcomes. Outcomes are: (1) an indicator for whether a leader was re-elected in the 2011 GP elections. N = 3423 because we do not have data for all districts for the 2011 winners. (1) (in standardized units) the SC proportion normalized share of complaints made by politically active SC citizens. N = 6410 because we drop GPs that were reserved for SCs in the 2016 cycle. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). All standard errors are clustered at the block level.

[36]The main reason we don't want to include SC reserved GPs from 2016 is because complaints by losing SC candidates in those GPs could be politically motivated. By dropping those GPs, we are comparing GPs with relatively identical GP-level administrations.

B.2 Short-Run Changes in Occupation Patterns

One potential way for SCs to accumulate assets is through improved labour market outcomes. While we do not have access to data on wages, we use two other variables from the SECC to approximate changes in occupational patterns and labor market outcomes in the short term. We investigate if households' primary source of income comes from cultivation, as opposed to manual casual labor, which is the overwhelmingly dominant source of income for SCs.[37] We also measure catch-up with non-SCs, as before. From Table D2, we know that land is one of the key assets that drives the catch-up between SCs and non-SCs: does this translate to more SCs turning cultivators?

Table B2 reports the results. We find that more SCs derive their primary income from cultivation (column 1) and there is some evidence of catch-up with non-SCs (column 2), though the coefficients are not always significant for alternate bandwidths (Panels B and C).

We interpret these findings as suggestive evidence that SCs' labor market outcomes and occupational trajectories may have been affected by reservation. These outcomes are hard to move in the short run. Even so, the fact that we see some effects suggests that the wages, arguably easier to move, may have been more strongly affected.

[37] On average, 7% of SCs report that their main source of income comes from cultivation, as opposed to 86% for manual casual labour.

TABLE B2. Occupation & Land Ownership

	(1) **Cultivator Share (SCs)**	(2) **Cultivator (SC-Others)**
SC Reserved	0.084	0.092
	(0.058)	(0.050)
Observations	7973	7945
Mean	-.005	-.005
Bandwidth	523	521
Block FE	YES	YES
	PANEL B: 0.5 BW	
	(1) **Land Owned (SCs)**	(2) **Cultivator Share (SCs)**
SC Reserved	0.077	0.061
	(0.088)	(0.069)
Observations	7973	7945
Mean	0	0
Bandwidth	262	260
Block FE	YES	YES
	PANEL B: 1.5 BW	
	(1) **Land Owned (SCs)**	(2) **Cultivator Share (SCs)**
SC Reserved	0.058	0.065
	(0.048)	(0.042)
Observations	7973	7945
Mean	0	0
Bandwidth	785	781
Block FE	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on land ownership and occupational patterns. Outcome variables are (in standardized units): (1) The share of SC households in a GP that own land (2) the share of SC households in a GP whose main source of income is reported to be derived from cultivation (3) The difference between SCs and non-SC share of households in a GP who own land (4) The difference between SCs and non-SC share of households in a GP who are report their main source of income to be derived from cultivation. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panels (B) and (C) show estimates when bandwidth are halved or increased by a factor of 1.5 respectively.

B.3 Bandwidth Robustness

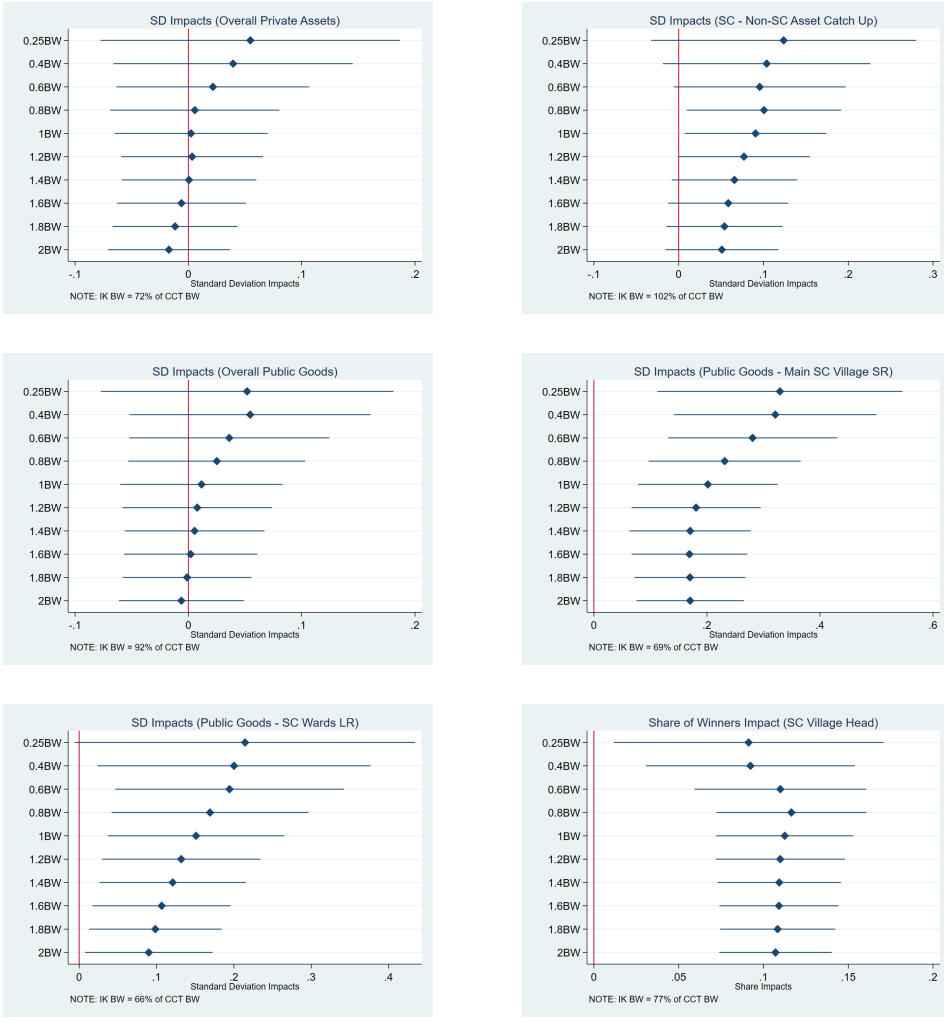
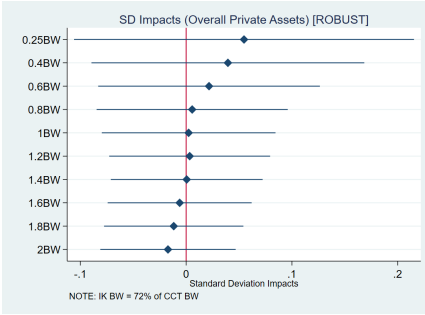
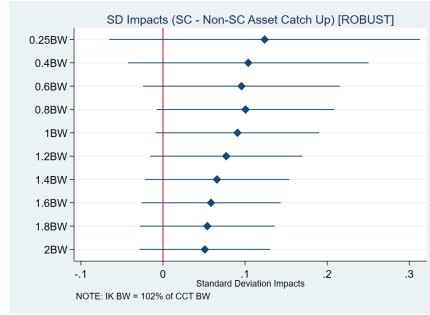
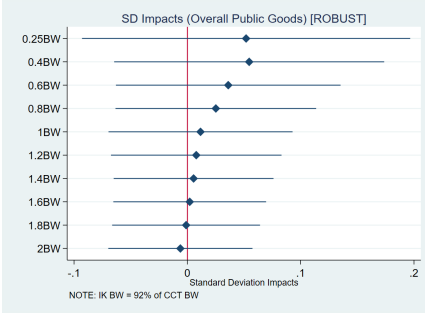
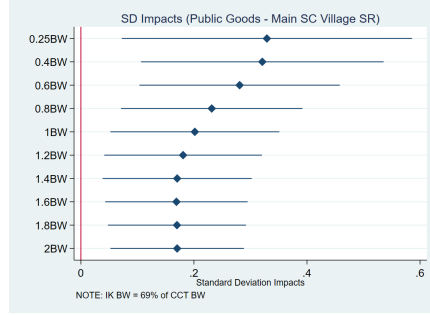


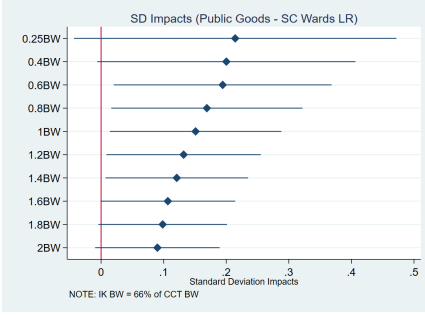
FIGURE B1. These figures show how our RD estimates for our main outcome variables vary as we change the bandwidths. Each estimate represents the CCT bandwidth multiplied by a factor. This factor ranges from 0.25 (top estimate) to 2 (bottom estimate). We also add a note for how these bandwidths compare with the Imbens-Kalyanaraman (IK) BWs. The IK BW is ALWAYS within the range of BWs we show. We show 90% confidence intervals.











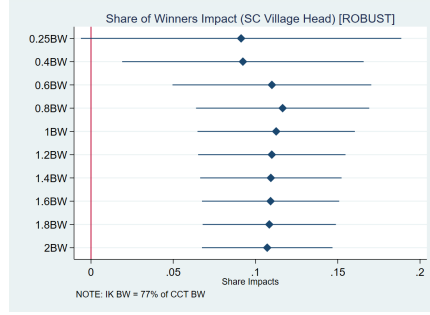


FIGURE B2. These figures show how our RD estimates for our main outcome variables vary as we change the bandwidths. We estimate confidence intervals with ROBUST standard errors. Each estimate represents the CCT bandwidth multiplied by a factor. This factor ranges from 0.25 (top estimate) to 2 (bottom estimate). We also add a note for how these bandwidths compare with the Imbens-Kalyanaraman (IK) BWs. The IK BW is ALWAYS within the range of BWs we show. We show 90% confidence intervals.

B.4 Other Graphs

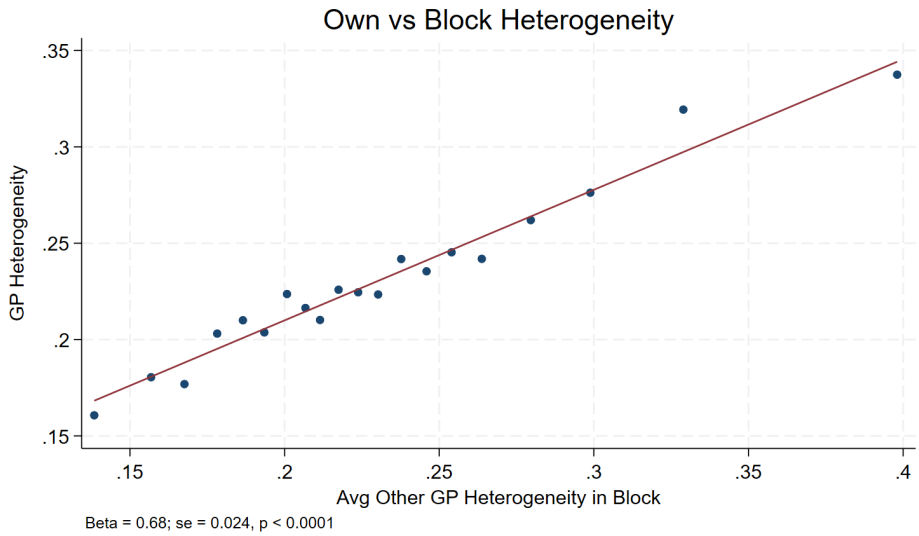


FIGURE B3. Figure shows how own-GP HHI of sub-castes varies with block heterogeneity of sub-castes (leaving own-GP out).

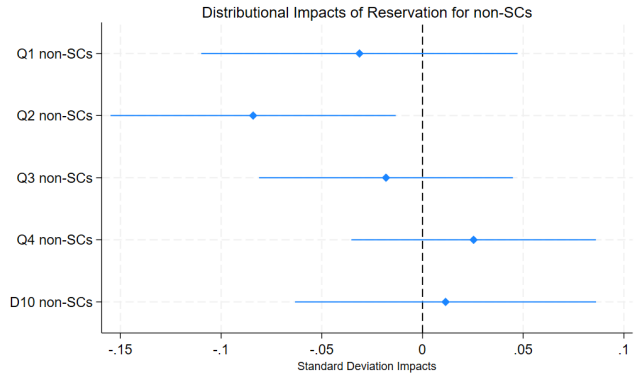


FIGURE B4. Figure plots the standard deviation impacts of SC reservation on non-SCs across the non-SC wealth distribution in the short run.

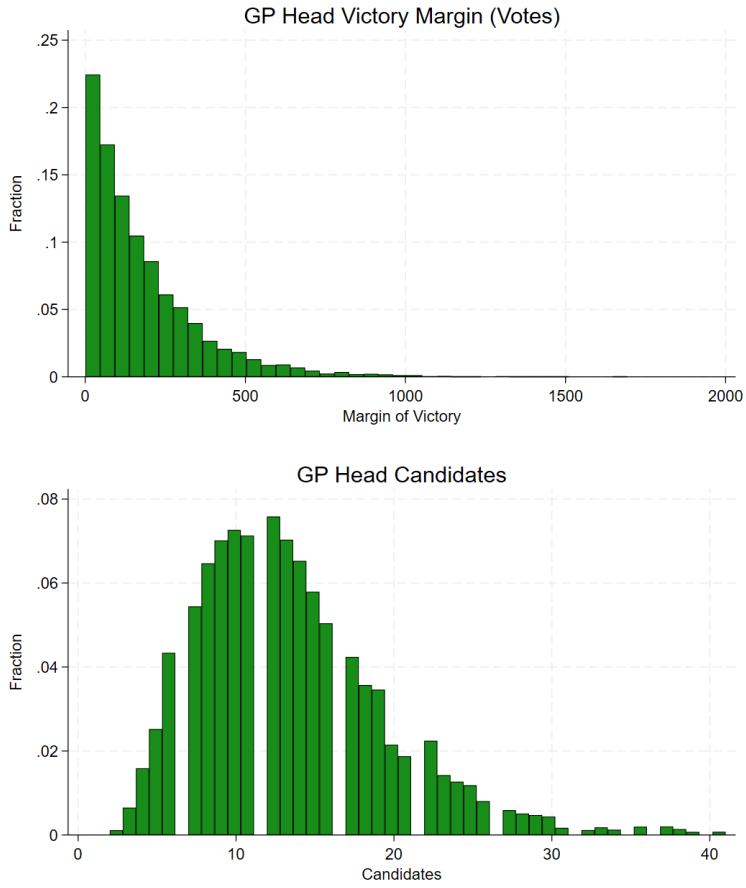


FIGURE B5. Panel (a): histogram plotting the margin of victory of the winner across all unreserved GP head elections in 2016. Panel (b): histogram of the number of candidates contesting in unreserved GP head elections of 2016.

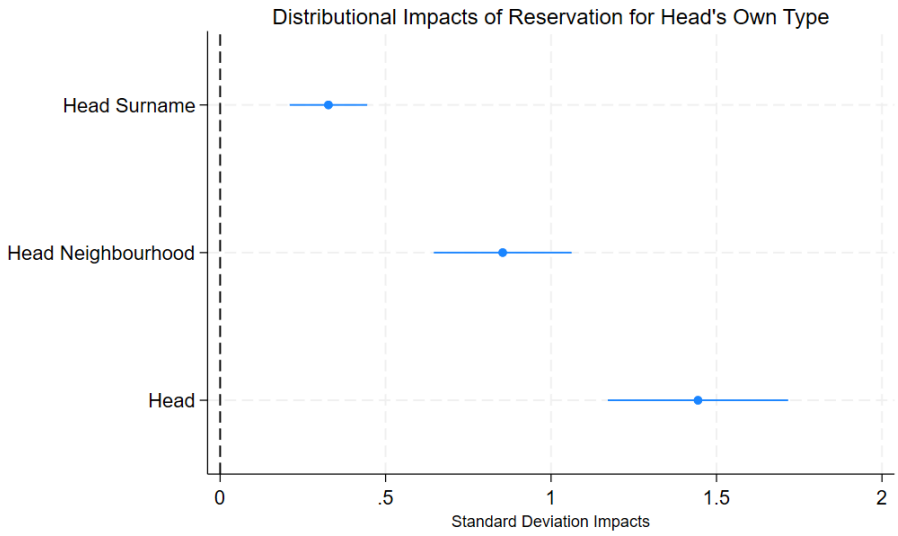


FIGURE B6. Figure delineates catch-up with the median non-SC quintile for various sub-populations within SCs who are close to the GP head (data from SECC 2011-12). "Head surname" includes everyone who shares a surname with the head; "head neighbourhood" has everyone who lives within a 20-household distance from the head; "head" includes only the head's household. 90% confidence intervals are included.

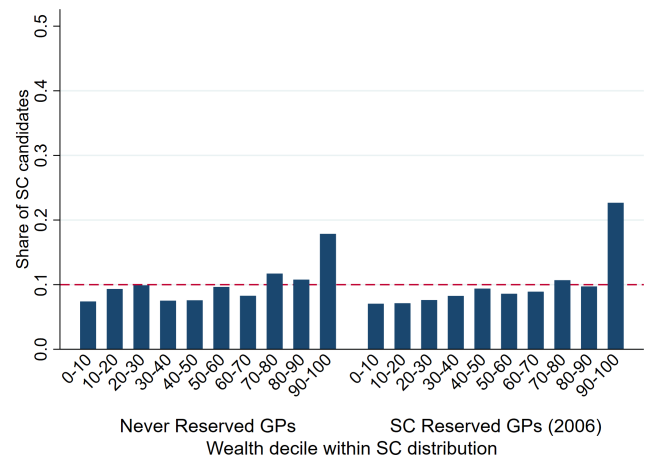


FIGURE B7. Distribution of SC candidates in the 2016 Mukhiya elections by within-SC wealth decile

C Additional Tables

TABLE C1. Summary statistics: GP Level Averages

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Winner Characteristics					
Literate	0.22	0.42	0.00	1.00	7,027
High School	0.68	0.47	0.00	1.00	7,027
Age	38.62	10.51	0.00	98.00	6,965
Annual Income	50110.25	81065.91	0.00	4.0e+06	6,179
GP Variables					
Proportion of SCs (Census 2001)	0.17	0.09	0.00	1.00	8,320
Distance to Nearest Statuatory Town (Census 2011)	20.59	13.21	1.00	150.00	8,320
Distance to District Headquarters (Census 2011)	31.70	18.25	1.00	166.40	8,320
Number of Villages in GP (Census 2011)	5.38	4.35	1.00	60.00	8,392
Total GP Area (Census 2011)	1159.08	971.49	0.00	24137.02	8,392
Total Population of GP (Census 2001)	9530.70	4101.04	0.00	64579.00	8,392
Percentages of SCs in Main SC Village (Census 2011)	0.60	0.25	0.12	1.00	8,281
Female Reservation	0.45	0.50	0.00	1.00	8,262
Overall RSOA Score	2.11	0.55	0.00	6.00	8,326
Overall PCA Score	0.03	0.56	-1.89	4.09	8,326
Outcomes (SR)					
SC RSOA Score	1.65	0.49	0.00	3.87	8,100
SC PCA Score	-0.39	0.49	-1.89	1.97	8,100
Overall Public Goods	3.87	1.98	0.00	18.50	8,392
Share of Public Goods to Main SC Village	0.84	0.67	0.00	29.52	8,266
Outcomes (LR)					
Share of WAS Goods going to SC Wards	0.16	0.30	0.00	1.00	7,986
SC RSOA Score	1.50	0.60	0.49	2.92	100
SC PCA Score	-0.43	0.59	-1.43	1.04	100
Political Outcomes (LR)					
GP Head SC (Unreserved GPs)	0.03	0.18	0.00	1.00	5,056
GP Candidates SC (Unreserved GPs)	0.95	1.57	0.00	22.00	5,093
Ward SC Candidates (Unreserved Wards)	0.89	1.02	0.00	9.00	7,487
Ward Member SC (Unreserved Wards)	3.25	2.97	0.00	27.00	7,487

TABLE C2. Impact of SC Reservation on Characteristics of the GP head

	Reservation Impacts on Politician Characteristics				
	(1) **Barely Literate**	(2) **High School Or Below**	(3) **Age**	(4) **Yearly Income**	(5) **Lower Class**
SC Reserved	0.076	0.160	-3.661	-22826.019	0.478
	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.787)	(5646.693)	(0.030)
Observations	6939	6939	6877	6101	7200
Mean	.202	.65	39.152	52502.29	.088
Bandwidth	546	585	559	529	637
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays impacts of SC reservation on political characteristics of the SC GP Head in the 2006 elections. Column (1) is an indicator for whether the politician is illiterate or literate, but not primary schooling level; Column (2) is an indicator for whether the GP head's educational level is below high school; Column (3) is age; Column (4) is annual income (self-reported); (5) Column 5 is an indicator variable that takes the value of 1 if the politician reported their income class as being "lower" (the other two options were "middle" and "upper"). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE C3. Balance Across the RD Sample (Non-Gender Reserved Seats ONLY)

Variable	Reserved	Unreserved	Difference	SE
Proportion of SCs (Census 2001)	0.19	0.19	-0.00	0.00
Distance to Nearest Statuatory Town (Census 2011)	21.12	20.42	0.70	0.56
Distance to District Headquarters (Census 2011)	32.33	32.02	0.31	0.58
Number of Villages in GP (Census 2011)	5.75	5.72	0.03	0.29
Total GP Area (Census 2011)	1,185.58	1,147.83	37.75	79.75
Total Population of GP (Census 2001)	9,351.65	9,154.40	197.25	325.55
Percentages of SCs in Main SC Village (Census 2011)	0.56	0.55	0.01	0.02
Total Educational Facilities (Census 2001)	3.76	3.80	-0.04	0.16
Primary Health Sub Centres (Census 2001)	0.36	0.43	-0.07	0.06
Post Office (Census 2001)	1.08	1.05	0.03	0.08
Bank Facilities (Census 2001)	0.33	0.30	0.03	0.05
Power Supply (Census 2001)	1.69	1.79	-0.10	0.15
Paved Road (Census 2001)	1.78	1.87	-0.09	0.15
Mud Road (Census 2001)	4.28	4.34	-0.06	0.24
Child Welfare Centre (Census 2001)	0.01	0.06	-0.05	0.04
Bus facilities (Census 2001)	0.51	0.56	-0.05	0.08
Mean Village Income (Census 2001)	708,098.40	400,160.30	307,938.20	296,964.10
Mean Village Income (Census 2001)	569,419.30	339,055.80	230,363.40	304,000.00

NOTE: Table presents results from a series of balance tests for GP-level variables across the population-based RD cutoff, keeping only non-gender reserved seats. We operationalize tests in the following manner: we run a fuzzy RD with bandwidth = 550. Standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE C4. Sample Comparisons Across the Short-Run and Long-Run GPs

Variable	(1) SR Sample	(2) LR Sample	(3) Difference
Proportion of SCs (Census 2001)	0.191	0.190	0.025***
	(0.073)	(0.071)	(0.008)
Distance to Nearest Statuatory Town (Census 2011)	20.561	18.292	0.637
	(12.892)	(12.160)	(0.654)
Distance to District Headquarters (Census 2011)	31.539	32.957	1.516*
	(17.790)	(16.721)	(0.793)
Number of Villages in GP (Census 2011)	5.745	5.150	-0.116
	(4.163)	(3.040)	(0.289)
Total GP Area (Census 2011)	1,168.648	950.394	-53.339
	(902.055)	(402.706)	(50.476)
Total Population of GP (Census 2001)	9,701.423	8,877.100	-1,242.138***
	(3,571.110)	(2,760.375)	(352.814)
Percentages of SCs in Main SC Village (Census 2011)	0.551	0.531	0.001
	(0.239)	(0.222)	(0.024)
Female Reserved	0.392	0.300	-0.117**
	(0.488)	(0.461)	(0.057)
Total Educational Facilities (Census 2001)	3.795	3.870	-0.024
	(2.001)	(1.978)	(0.218)
Primary Health Sub Centres (Census 2001)	0.454	0.550	-0.040
	(0.706)	(0.809)	(0.079)
Post Office (Census 2001)	1.061	0.850	-0.244**
	(0.827)	(0.770)	(0.098)
Bank Facilities (Census 2001)	0.341	0.260	-0.039
	(0.626)	(0.525)	(0.064)
Power Supply (Census 2001)	1.865	1.970	-0.042
	(2.057)	(2.096)	(0.227)
Paved Road (Census 2001)	1.931	1.760	-0.209
	(1.797)	(1.837)	(0.196)
Mud Road (Census 2001)	4.337	4.410	-0.229
	(3.039)	(2.708)	(0.267)
Child Welfare Centre (Census 2001)	0.066	0.020	-0.052
	(0.484)	(0.141)	(0.033)
Bus facilities (Census 2001)	0.596	0.390	-0.120
	(1.005)	(0.909)	(0.104)
Mean Village Income (Census 2001)	342441.812	245207.594	237932.656
	(3.998e+06)	(1.489e+06)	(195869.297)
Mean Village Income (Census 2001)	296698.031	131645.266	110943.797
	(3.644e+06)	(733136.125)	(82,494.594)
Observations	4,211	100	4,311

NOTE: Table presents results from a series of comparisons for GP-level variables across the our Short-Run GPs within the optimal RD bandwidth and our long-run GPs. Standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Block Fixed effects are added in the regressions.

TABLE C5. Balance across Reserved and Unreserved Long Term GPs

Variable	Reserved	Unreserved	Difference	SE
Proportion of SCs (Census 2001)	0.22	0.21	0.01	0.03
Distance to Nearest Statutory Town (Census 2011)	18.60	20.87	-2.27	7.55
Distance to District Headquarters (Census 2011)	34.34	36.06	-1.72	12.10
Number of Villages in GP (Census 2011)	6.58	5.33	1.25	1.77
Total GP Area (Census 2011)	1008.18	875.08	133.10	266.98
Total Population of GP (Census 2001)	10243.65	8994.71	1248.93	1205.88
Percentage of SCs in Main SC Village (Census 2011)	0.56	0.50	0.06	0.14
Female Reservation	-0.04	0.43	-0.47	0.22

NOTE: Table presents results from a series of balance tests for GP-level variables across the population-based RD cutoff. We run a fuzzy RD with bandwidth = 50. Standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

C.1 Tables Showing Robustness to Female Reservation

TABLE C6. Impact of SC Reservation on Overall Provision of Public Goods and Private Assets (only non-gender reserved seats)

	Private Assets		Public Goods		
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **Overall (Short Run)**	(4) **SC Village Short Run**	(5) **SC Village Long Run**
SC Reserved	0.023	0.196	0.046	0.203	0.188
	(0.052)	(0.064)	(0.048)	(0.091)	(0.094)
Observations	4512	4391	4512	4442	4329
Mean	-.016	-.05	0	-.002	.038
Bandwidth	381	384	482	418	344
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays SD impacts of reservation on public goods and private assets in the short- and long-run. Here, we restrict sample to only non-gender reserved seats. Private assets are covered in columns (1) - (3). Columns (3) - (5) pertain to public goods. Outcome variables are (in standardized units): (1) The average private asset score across all households in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (3) Public good index from 4 main public goods in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (4) Normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (5) SC Proportion-normalized share of water and sanitation (WAS) public goods provided to SC wards up to 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data; we trim the top 1% of observations). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE C7. Impact of SC Reservation on Long-Run Political Participation of SCs (only non-gender reserved seats)

	GP		Ward		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Winner	**Candidates**	**Winner (Unreserved)**	**Candidate (Unreserved)**	**Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.077	1.400	0.198	0.746	-0.070
	(0.046)	(0.237)	(0.097)	(0.280)	(0.075)
Observations	2796	2822	4053	4053	4053
Effective Observations	646	838	1623	1681	1987
Mean	.023	.922	.772	2.979	2.348
Bandwidth	249	340	328	343	435
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays impacts of gender reservation on our main set of outcomes. Here, we restrict sample to only SC reserved seats. Columns (1) and (2) pertain to GP-level outcomes; Columns (3) - (5) pertain to ward level outcomes. Outcome variables are: (1) An indicator of whether an SC won the 2016 GP elections (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016, hence N = 4693) (2) The number of SC candidates contesting elections in a GP in 2016 (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016) (3) The number of SC winners from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (4) The number of SC candidates from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (5) The number of winners from SC-reserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (this is called a 'placebo' because it should remain unchanged trivially). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE C8. SC Gender Reserved Seats vs SC Non-Gender Reserved Seats

	PANEL A: Comparable Thresholds				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	SC-Others Assets (Short Run)	**SC Village Pub. Goods Short Run**	**SC Village Pub. Goods Long Run**	**SC Winner (GP)**	**SC Winner (Unres. Ward)**
Female Reserved	-0.123	0.090	0.260	0.271	0.007
	(0.098)	(0.135)	(0.122)	(0.282)	(0.129)
Observations	728	731	726	344	673
Mean	.037	.064	-.044	0	1.079
Bandwidth	164	154	172	7	162
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	PANEL B: Overall				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	SC-Others Assets (Short Run)	**SC Village Pub. Goods Short Run**	**SC Village Pub. Goods Long Run**	**SC Winner (GP)**	**SC Winner (Unres. Ward)**
Female Reserved	-0.113	-0.007	0.155	-0.064	0.035
	(0.075)	(0.098)	(0.093)	(0.051)	(0.101)
Observations	1259	1257	1236	574	1158
Mean	.019	-.029	-.02	.134	1.174
Bandwidth	234	235	226	145	250
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays the difference in impacts of gender reserved vs unreserved seats *within* SC reserved seats. Outcome variables are exactly identical to table (C6). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panel (A) shows effects for the sample of GPs where the gender threshold is "close" to the SC reservation threshold. Panel (B) shows effects for the full sample of SC reserved seats.

TABLE C9. Within Non SC-Reserved seats: Gender Reserved vs Gender Unreserved

	Private Assets		Public Goods		
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **Overall (Short Run)**	(4) **SC Village (Short Run)**	(5) **SC Village (Long Run)**
Female Reserved	0.010	-0.041	0.018	0.035	-0.016
	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.023)	(0.040)	(0.034)
Observations	6645	6447	6646	6543	6381
Mean	-.055	.008	-.091	.008	.008
Bandwidth	1896	1893	1973	2014	2046
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: Outcome variables are (in standardized units): (1) the average private asset score across all households in a GP in 2011–12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census); (2) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011–12; (3) public good index from four main public goods in the GP from Census 2011 (top 1% trimmed); (4) normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (top 1% trimmed); (5) SC-proportion-normalized share of water and sanitation public goods provided to SC wards up to 31 March 2018.

C.2 *Do richer SC-candidates contest after reservations are withdrawn?*

TABLE C10. Do richer SC candidates contest 2016 elections?

	(1) Average Wealth Percentile (SC Cand)	(2) Proportion of SC Cand. in D10 SC
SC Reserved	6.106	0.056
	(3.788)	(0.051)
Observations	1537	1537
Mean	55.495	.193
Bandwidth	473	419
Block FE	YES	YES

Notes: Column (1) tests whether SC candidates in the 2016 Mukhiya elections are disproportionately richer in 2006 reserved GPs. Column (2) tests whether the proportion of SC candidates from the top decile of the SC distribution is larger in 2006 reserved GPs.

C.3 *Performance of 2006 winner-connected households in the 2016 elections*

TABLE C11. Are 2016 SC candidates and winners connected to the 2006 winner?

	SC Candidates 2016		SC Winners 2016	
	(1) N	(2) Share	(3) N	(4) Share
Panel A: Winners and Neighbours				
2006 winner's household	35	0.126	3	0.136
Within 20 households of the 2006 winner	14	0.051	2	0.091
Total matched candidates	277		22	
Number of GPs		361		
Panel B: Winners' Sub-Caste				
2006 winner's sub-caste	343	0.369	20	0.408
Total candidates	930		49	
Number of GPs		339		

Notes: Sample: 361 GPs reserved for SCs in 2006 and unreserved for any caste group in 2016 (seats reserved for women are included), with a 2006 winner matched to the SECC. Columns (1)–(2) cover SC candidates for the Mukhiya post in 2016 in these GPs; columns (3)–(4) cover SC winners. "2006 winner's household" matches the candidate to the winner's SECC household by its 26-digit identifier and so includes other household members. "Within 20 households" places the candidate's household in the same village, enumeration block, and sub-block as the winner's, with an SECC serial number within twenty of the winner's, excluding the winner's own household. "2006 winner's sub-caste" matches the candidate's surname-based sub-caste to the SECC sub-caste of the winner's household. The first two rows are measured among candidates matched to the SECC and their shares are computed over "Total, SECC-matched"; the sub-caste row uses all SC candidates in the election record, with shares over "Total, full candidate record." The categories overlap, so shares do not sum across rows.

C.4 How non-SC dominant sub-caste candidates fare in 2016

TABLE C12. Who Do the New SC Leaders Displace? The Dominant Non-SC Jati in the 2016 Elections

	Dominant Non-SC Sub-Caste		Non-Dominant Non-SC Sub-Castes	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Candidates	**Winner**	**Candidates**	**Winner**
SC Reserved (2006)	-0.330	-0.144	4.857	0.112
	(0.243)	(0.038)	(0.450)	(0.043)
Observations	6009	5684	6009	5684
Mean	2.914	.323	6.843	.646
Bandwidth	595	615	583	573
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays fuzzy RD impacts of 2006 SC reservation on the composition of non-SC candidates and winners in the 2016 Mukhiya elections, in GPs unreserved for SCs in 2016. The dominant non-SC jati is the GP's largest non-SC sub-caste by household count in the Socioeconomic Caste Census (2011-12). Outcomes are: (1) the number of non-SC candidates from the dominant jati; (2) an indicator for the 2016 winner being a non-SC candidate from the dominant jati; (3) the number of non-SC candidates from all other non-SC jatis; (4) an indicator for the 2016 winner being a non-SC candidate from a non-dominant jati. GPs where an SC wins score zero in columns (2) and (4); GPs whose winner's sub-caste cannot be assigned are excluded from these columns. Candidate sub-castes are surname-based. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equations 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level. The Mean row reports the control-side mean within the bandwidth.

TABLE C13. Do richer SC candidates win 2016 elections?

	GP	
	(1)	(2)
	Winner Wealth Percentile (SC)	**Winner in D10 SC**
SC Reserved	16.812	0.025
	(35.597)	(0.410)
Observations	93	93
Mean	55.249	.25
Bandwidth	540	543
Block FE	NO	NO

Notes: Sample is the single winning SC candidate per GP, restricted to GPs unreserved for SCs in 2016. Column (1) tests whether SC winners in the 2016 Mukhiya elections sit higher in the 2006 within-SC wealth distribution in 2006 reserved GPs. Column (2) tests whether the proportion of SC winners from the top decile of the SC distribution is larger in 2006 reserved GPs.

TABLE C14. Do SC Candidacies and Wins Concentrate in the Dominant SC Sub-Caste?

	Dominant SC Sub-Caste		**Non-Dominant SC Sub-Castes**	
	(1) **Candidates**	(2) **Winner**	(3) **Candidates**	(4) **Winner**
SC Reserved (2006)	0.310	0.039	0.416	0.021
	(0.083)	(0.013)	(0.080)	(0.013)
Observations	6009	5999	6009	5999
Mean	.282	.005	.375	.011
Bandwidth	561	615	725	576
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays fuzzy RD impacts of 2006 SC reservation on the composition of SC candidates and winners in the 2016 Mukhiya elections, in GPs unreserved for SCs in 2016. The dominant SC sub-caste is the GP's largest SC sub-caste by household count in the Socioeconomic Caste Census (2011-12). Outcomes are: (1) the number of SC candidates from the dominant SC sub-caste; (2) an indicator for the 2016 winner being an SC candidate from the dominant SC sub-caste; (3) the number of SC candidates from all other SC sub-castes; (4) an indicator for the 2016 winner being an SC candidate from a non-dominant SC sub-caste. GPs where a non-SC wins score zero in columns (2) and (4); GPs whose SC winner's sub-caste cannot be assigned are excluded from these columns. Candidate sub-castes are surname-based. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equations 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level. The Mean row reports the control-side mean within the bandwidth.

TABLE C15. Non-Mahadalit and Mahadalit SC Candidates and Winners in 2016

	Non-Mahadalit Sub-Castes		Mahadalit Sub-Castes	
	(1) **Candidates**	(2) **Winner**	(3) **Candidates**	(4) **Winner**
SC Reserved (2006)	0.494	0.041	0.226	0.018
	(0.119)	(0.017)	(0.064)	(0.008)
Observations	6009	5999	6009	5999
Mean	.435	.008	.247	.007
Bandwidth	515	534	617	345
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays fuzzy RD impacts of 2006 SC reservation on the composition of SC candidates and winners in the 2016 Mukhiya elections, in GPs unreserved for SCs in 2016. Non-Mahadalit sub-castes are Dusadh (Paswan), Chamar (including Ram, Ravidas, Mochi, and Harijan), Pasi, and Dhobi (including Choudhary, Baitha, and Rajak); Mahadalit sub-castes are all other SC sub-castes. Outcomes are: (1) the number of non-Mahadalit SC candidates; (2) an indicator for the 2016 winner being a non-Mahadalit SC candidate; (3) the number of Mahadalit SC candidates; (4) an indicator for the 2016 winner being a Mahadalit SC candidate. GPs where a non-SC wins score zero in columns (2) and (4); GPs whose SC winner's sub-caste cannot be assigned are excluded from these columns. Candidate sub-castes are surname-based. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equations 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level. The Mean row reports the control-side mean within the bandwidth.

TABLE C16. The Dominant Non-SC Jati in 2016: Seats Unreserved for Any Caste

	Dominant Non-SC Sub-Caste		Non-Dominant Non-SC Sub-Castes	
	(1) **Candidates**	(2) **Winner**	(3) **Candidates**	(4) **Winner**
SC Reserved (2006)	-0.305	-0.128	3.057	0.027
	(0.289)	(0.049)	(0.331)	(0.055)
Observations	4700	4434	4700	4434
Mean	3.27	.365	5.975	.602
Bandwidth	515	555	867	501
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table repeats Table C12, restricting the sample to GPs whose 2016 seat carried no caste reservation (no SC, OBC, or ST quota; seats reserved for women are included). Because formerly SC-reserved GPs rotate disproportionately into the OBC quota in 2016, this restriction conditions on a post-treatment variable, and Table C12 is the preferred specification; this table isolates the reallocation that operates through open electoral competition rather than the reservation calendar. Outcome definitions, specification, controls, and clustering are as in Table C12.

C.5 Short-Run estimates without Mukhiya-Connected Households

TABLE C17. Short-run estimates without Mukhiya Connected Households

	(1) **Overall (Sum)**	(2) **SC - Others**	(3) **Overall (Sum)**	(4) **SC - Others**
SC Reserved	0.022	0.112	-0.015	0.083
	(0.037)	(0.051)	(0.037)	(0.047)
Observations	8170	7952	8170	7952
Effective Observations	4454	4636	4438	5212
Mean	.001	.025	.002	.044
Bandwidth	575	617	571	707
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: Outcome variable for all columns is the sum of RSOA and PCA scores. Columns (1) and (2) estimate effects on dropping all households of head's Jati and households who are head's neighbours. Columns (3) and (4) estimate effects on dropping head's neighbours only.

TABLE C18. Estimates without Mukhiya Neighbours: RSOA and PCA

	(1) **PCA**	(2) **SC - Others**	(3) **RSOA**	(4) **SC - Others**
SC Reserved	-0.014	0.085	-0.015	0.086
	(0.037)	(0.048)	(0.036)	(0.048)
Observations	8170	7952	8170	7952
Effective Observations	4405	5074	4444	5052
Mean	.003	.041	.002	.041
Bandwidth	566	684	572	680
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: Outcome variable for columns (1) and (2) is PCA score. Outcome variable for columns (3) and (4) is RSOA score. All estimates are on dropping head's neighbours only.

D More Robustness Tables

TABLE D1. Impact of SC Reservation on Private Assets (Robustness)

	0.5 BW			
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **D10 SC-Others (Short Run)**	
SC Reserved	-0.010	0.097	0.148	
	(0.052)	(0.061)	(0.084)	
Observations	8170	7952	7952	
Effective Observations	2445	2860	2279	
Mean	0	0	0	
Bandwidth	285	352	266	
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	
	1.5 BW			
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **D10 SC-Others (Short Run)**	(4) **SC-Others (Long Run)**
SC Reserved	-0.013	0.071	0.141	1.184
	(0.031)	(0.041)	(0.054)	(0.284)
Observations	8170	7952	7952	100
Effective Observations	6148	6744	5715	53
Mean	0	0	0	-.019
Bandwidth	856	1056	797	75
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table replicates Table 2, but for 0.5BW and 1.5BW. It displays SD impacts of reservation on private assets in the short- and long-run. Outcomes are: (1) The average private asset score across all households in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (3) the difference between private asset scores between the top decile (D 10) and non-SCs in a GP in 2011 - 12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (4) The difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2018-19 (Primary Survey). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). Except for column (3), where we do not report 0.5 BW owing to insufficient sample size and use uniform weights. We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D2. Impact of SC Reservation on Individual Private Asset Differences (Short Run)

	Diff In Asset Ownership					
	(1) **Land (Owned)**	(2) **Good Wall**	(3) **Concrete Roof**	(4) **Many Rooms**	(5) **Phone**	(6) **Vehicle**
SC Reserved	0.083	0.073	0.099	-0.002	0.036	0.119
	(0.058)	(0.051)	(0.060)	(0.047)	(0.069)	(0.060)
Observations	7952	7952	7952	7952	7952	7952
Mean	-.014	-.004	-.012	-.014	-.02	-.002
Bandwidth	488	508	496	505	489	546
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table breaks down the effects of reservation on the components of the asset index. It displays SD impacts of reservation on differences between SCs and non-SCs on: (1) Land owned (2) Concrete/Burnt Brick Wall (3) Concrete Roof (4) 4 or more rooms (5) Ownership of a phone (6) Vehicle ownership. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D3. Impact of SC Reservation on Public Goods in the GP

	0.5 BW			
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC Village Short Run**	(3) **Overall (Long Run)**	(4) **SC Wards Long Run**
SC Reserved	0.045	0.303	0.012	0.203
	(0.058)	(0.097)	(0.079)	(0.093)
Observations	8171	8044	7781	7758
Effective Observations	2182	2355	2269	2278
Mean	0	0	-.001	-.001
Bandwidth	248	275	275	275
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
	1.5 BW			
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC Village Short Run**	(3) **Overall (Long Run)**	(4) **SC Wards Long Run**
SC Reserved	0.004	0.175	0.020	0.108
	(0.036)	(0.067)	(0.051)	(0.055)
Observations	8171	8044	7781	7758
Effective Observations	5551	5381	5182	5185
Mean	0	0	0	0
Bandwidth	743	725	725	725
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table replicates Table 3, but varies bandwidths to 0.5 and 1.5 of the optimal CCT BW. Table displays SD impacts of reservation on public goods in the short- and long-run. Outcomes are: (1) Public good index from 4 main public goods in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (2) Normalized share of public goods to the main SC village in the GP from Census 2011 (we trim the top 1% of observations) (3) SC Proportion-normalized share of water and sanitation (WAS) public goods provided to SC wards up to 31st March 2018 (WAS Admin Data; we trim the top 1% of observations). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D4. Impact of SC Reservation on Long-Run Political Participation of SCs

	0.5 BW				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Winner	**Candidates**	**Winners (Unreserved)**	**Candidates (Unreserved)**	**Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.092	1.275	0.186	0.769	-0.057
	(0.037)	(0.252)	(0.100)	(0.287)	(0.085)
Observations	4663	4700	7369	7369	7369
Effective Observations	971	974	2145	2145	2145
Mean	.019	.94	.778	2.97	2.398
Bandwidth	275	275	275	275	275
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	1.5 BW				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Winner	**Candidates**	**Winners (Unreserved)**	**Candidates (Unreserved)**	**Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.111	1.316	0.244	0.890	-0.016
	(0.024)	(0.157)	(0.068)	(0.182)	(0.058)
Observations	4663	4700	7369	7369	7369
Effective Observations	2767	2781	4896	4896	4896
Mean	.017	.781	.833	3.091	2.036
Bandwidth	725	725	725	725	725
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays impacts of SC reservation on political outcomes in the long-run. Columns (1) and (2) pertain to GP-level outcomes; Columns (3) - (5) pertain to ward level outcomes. Outcome variables are: (1) An indicator of whether an SC won the 2016 GP elections (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016, hence N = 4693) (2) The number of SC candidates contesting elections in a GP in 2016 (sample restricted to only unreserved GPs in 2016) (3) The number of SC winners from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (4) The number of SC candidates from unreserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (5) The number of winners from SC-reserved wards in the 2016 ward elections (this is called a 'placebo' because it should remain unchanged trivially). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D5. Impact of reservation on differences in SC and non-SC asset scores

	Short Run					Long Run				
	(1) **RSOA**	(2) **PCA**	(3) **Mean**	(4) **Extended Assets**	(5) **No Land**	(6) **RSOA**	(7) **PCA**	(8) **Mean**	(9) **Extended Assets**	(10) **No Land**
SC Reserved	0.095	0.102	0.090	0.086	0.096	1.100	1.034	1.087	0.760	0.673
	(0.049)	(0.050)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.051)	(0.255)	(0.260)	(0.261)	(0.299)	(0.232)
Observations	7952	7952	7952	7952	7952	100	100	100	100	100
Mean	-.023	-.005	.045	-.025	-.009	-.178	-.186	-.196	-.101	-.178
Bandwidth	488	521	704	476	509	76	76	77	81	79
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Outcome variables all measure differences in SC and non-SC asset scores within a GP in standardized units. Columns (1) - (4) report results in the short run, using data from the SECC. Our main outcomes are (1) Average raw sum of assets (RSOA) scores (2) Average PCA score of assets (3) The mean of the RSOA and PCA scores (4) Extended PCA asset score including 3 (rarely found) assets: mechanical agricultural equipment, irrigation equipment and refrigerator (5) PCA Asset score, but without land; Columns (6) - (10) calculate the same scores as (1) - (5), but using data from our primary survey. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D6. Impact of SC Reservation on Private Assets: Inverse Weighted Asset Measure

	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **D10 SC-Others (Short Run)**	(4) **SC-Others (Long Run)**
SC Reserved	-0.019	0.111	0.089	1.059
	(0.038)	(0.056)	(0.063)	(0.374)
Observations	8170	7952	7952	43
Effective Observations	4150	3967	4280	41
Mean	-.001	-.009	.006	0
Bandwidth	527	513	560	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays SD impacts of reservation on private assets in the short- and long-run. The measure here is an inverse-weighted index where weights are assigned as the inverse of the share of households owning each asset or service. This measure thus gives greater weight to rarer, and therefore typically costlier, assets. Outcomes are: (1) The average private asset score across all households in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (3) the difference between private asset scores between the top decile (D 10) and non-SCs in a GP in 2011 - 12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (4) The difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2018-19 (Primary Survey). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). Except for column (3), where we fix a bandwidth of 50 and have uniform weights. We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D7. Impact of SC Reservation on Private Assets: Factor Index Asset Measure

	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **D10 SC-Others (Short Run)**	(4) **SC-Others (Long Run)**
SC Reserved	-0.015	0.103	0.148	1.045
	(0.038)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.371)
Observations	8170	7952	7952	43
Effective Observations	4484	3839	4202	41
Mean	.002	-.013	0	0
Bandwidth	579	497	549	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays SD impacts of reservation on private assets in the short- and long-run. The measure here is a latent factor index that assumes the existence of a latent household "welfare" factor and estimates weights on observed assets that best capture this underlying welfare score, following Sahn and Stifel (2000). Outcomes are: (1) The average private asset score across all households in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (2) the difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2011-12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (3) the difference between private asset scores between the top decile (D 10) and non-SCs in a GP in 2011 - 12 (measured via the Socioeconomic Caste Census) (4) The difference between private asset scores between SCs and non-SCs in a GP in 2018-19 (Primary Survey). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). Except for column (3), where we fix a bandwidth of 50 and have uniform weights. We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D8. Impact of Reservation on Long-Run Private Asset Outcomes (Robustness)

	SC - Others (Long Run)			
	(1) **Triangular (BW 100)**	(2) **Triangular (BW CCT)**	(3) **Triangular (BW 90)**	(4) **Uniform (BW 45)**
SC Reserved	1.196	1.323	1.530	1.062
	(0.317)	(0.318)	(0.525)	(0.289)
Observations	100	100	100	100
Mean	0	.017	-.07	-.059
Bandwidth	100	77	85	56
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
BW Selection/Kernel	Fixed 100 (Triangular)	CCT (Triangular)	CCT (Triangular)	CCT (Uniform)

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on our the private asset score under different bandwidths and specifications.

TABLE D9. Impact of Reservation on Long-Run Private Asset Outcomes (MORE Robustness)

	(1) Trim 5%	(2) Trim 5%	(3) Poly. (2)	(4) Poly. (3)	(5) Honest RD
SC Reserved	0.733	0.557	2.155	2.595	1.52
	(0.338)	(0.318)	(0.378)	(0.599)	(0.837)
Observations	95	95	100	100	100
Effective Observations	49	56	50	50	50
Mean	-.072	.012	-.115	-.115	-.6
Bandwidth	50	100	50	50	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on our the private asset score under different specifications and sampling choices: (a) trim top 5% of observations (b) trim top 5% of observations with BW = 100 (c) RD polynomial of deg. 2 (d) RD polynomial of deg. 3 (e) RD "honest" with smoothness parameter m of 0.005.

TABLE D10. Impact of SC Reservation on Individual Public Goods

	Share of Public Goods in the Main SC Village			
	(1) Government (Schools)	(2) PDS	(3) Anganwadi/ ICDS	(4) Paved Road
SC Reserved	0.247	0.049	0.080	0.184
	(0.075)	(0.086)	(0.063)	(0.072)
Observations	7750	6829	8041	7369
Mean	.002	-.005	.01	-.007
Bandwidth	540	514	706	605
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Outcome variables measure the population normalized share of public goods accruing to the main SC village reported in standardized units. All outcomes are calculated from the Census Village Amenities List (2011). The public goods measured are: (1) The total number of government schools in the village (2) An indicator for whether there was a PDS (subsidized ration) shop in the village (3) An indicator for whether a child nutritional center (an Anganwadi Centre/ICDS) exists in the village (4) An indicator for whether there is a paved road in the village. We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level.

TABLE D11. Impact of SC Reservation on Main Outcomes (No Controls)

	Private Assets			Public Goods		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Overall	**SC-Others (Short Run)**	**SC-Others (Long Run)**	**Overall**	**SC Village Short Run**	**SC Village Long Run**
SC Reserved	-0.014	0.066	1.345	0.022	0.195	0.179
	(0.040)	(0.051)	(0.274)	(0.068)	(0.075)	(0.075)
Observations	8177	7965	100	8220	8044	7904
Mean	0	.007	-.01	.001	.001	-.004
Bandwidth	557	570	150	488	566	523
Block FE	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

	GP		Ward		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Winner	**Candidates**	**Winners (Unreserved)**	**Candidates (Unreserved)**	**Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.125	1.381	0.209	0.749	0.002
	(0.025)	(0.184)	(0.073)	(0.211)	(0.064)
Observations	4697	4734	7412	7412	7412
Mean	.019	.854	.84	3.116	2.193
Bandwidth	624	504	591	536	523
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

This table replicates Tables 2 and 4, but drops all controls.

TABLE D12. Impact of SC Reservation on Main Outcomes (No Block Fixed Effects)

	Private Assets			Public Goods		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Overall (Short Run)	**SC-Others (Short Run)**	**SC-Others (Long Run)**	**Overall (Short Run)**	**SC Village Short Run**	**SC Village Long Run**
SC Reserved	-0.015	0.112	1.463	0.044	0.227	0.194
	(0.088)	(0.086)	(0.649)	(0.063)	(0.083)	(0.090)
Observations	8170	7958	43	8171	8044	7758
Mean	-.001	.022	0	.017	.002	.005
Bandwidth	487	614	50	428	557	438
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

This table replicates Tables 2 and 4, but drops Block Fixed Effects.

TABLE D13. Impact of SC Reservation on Political Outcomes (No Block Fixed Effects)

	GP		Ward		
	(1) **Winner**	(2) **Candidates**	(3) **Winner (Unreserved)**	(4) **Candidate (Unreserved)**	(5) **Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.113	1.453	0.246	0.873	-0.097
	(0.026)	(0.218)	(0.089)	(0.269)	(0.109)
Observations	4663	4700	7369	7369	7369
Mean	.017	.855	.837	3.13	2.223
Bandwidth	784	498	522	503	495
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

This table replicates Tables 2 and 4, but drops Block Fixed Effects.

TABLE D14. Impact of SC Reservation on Key Outcomes (Long-Run Sample ONLY)

	Overall Impacts			
	(1) **SC-Others (Private Assets (SR))**	(2) **SC Village Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **WAS Public Goods (LR)**	(4) **Ward Wins (LR)**
SC Reserved	-0.135	-0.161	1.060	1.097
	(0.381)	(0.351)	(0.462)	(0.387)
Observations	44	47	45	40
Mean	0	0	0	0
Bandwidth	50	50	50	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

This table tests to see if reservation had differential effects on short- and long-run outcomes for the set of GPs we collected outcomes for in the long-run.

TABLE D15. When Does the Dominant Non-SC Sub-Caste Lose? Asset Impacts by Size

	By Number of Households			By Share of GP's Non-SCs		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Smallest Third	**Middle Third**	**Largest Third**	**Least Dominant**	**Middle Third**	**Most Dominant**
SC Reserved (2006)	-0.034	-0.194	0.010	0.094	-0.225	-0.035
	(0.073)	(0.077)	(0.064)	(0.081)	(0.089)	(0.076)
Observations	2619	2659	2634	2641	2641	2630
Effective Observations	1701	1322	1598	1230	1202	1253
Mean	-.015	.026	-.034	.016	.033	-.006
Bandwidth	681	473	707	479	420	532
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table displays fuzzy RD impacts of 2006 SC reservation on the mean private asset score of the GP's dominant non-SC sub-caste, split by terciles of that sub-caste's size. Columns (1)–(3) split by its number of households; columns (4)–(6) by its share of the GP's non-SC households. The sample is the main specification: GPs where dominance is well defined (no blank surname group at the household-count maximum, no tied sub-castes, and more than 20 households in the dominant group). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equations 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level. The Mean row reports the control-side mean within the bandwidth.

TABLE D16. Impact of SC Reservation on Public Goods/Private Assets in the GP (Drop Mismatched GPs)

	Private Assets			Public Goods		
	(1) **Overall (Short Run)**	(2) **SC-Others (Short Run)**	(3) **SC-Others (Long Run)**	(4) **Overall (Short Run)**	(5) **SC Village Short Run**	(6) **SC Village Long Run**
SC Reserved	0.001	0.090	1.115	0.025	0.222	0.151
	(0.038)	(0.050)	(0.258)	(0.043)	(0.076)	(0.066)
Observations	8092	7882	42	8093	7968	7685
Mean	0	-.006	0	.014	-.006	.002
Bandwidth	544	521	50	416	475	472
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

This reproduces Table 2 but drops GPs where there is a mismatch between what the algorithm predicts and what the data shows. Table displays SD impacts of reservation on public goods and private assets in the short- and long-run.

TABLE D17. Impact of SC Reservation on Long-Run Political Participation of SCs (Drop Mismatched GPs)

	GP		Ward		
	(1) **Winner**	(2) **Candidates**	(3) **Winner (Unreserved)**	(4) **Candidate (Unreserved)**	(5) **Placebo: Winner Reserved**
SC Reserved	0.087	1.424	0.220	0.794	-0.057
	(0.033)	(0.211)	(0.087)	(0.265)	(0.104)
Observations	4633	4670	7300	7300	7300
Mean	.019	.897	.835	3.112	2.236
Bandwidth	341	373	498	454	476
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table replicates Table 4, but drops GPs where there is a mismatch between what the algorithm predicts and what the data shows. It displays the impacts of SC reservation on political outcomes in the long-run.

TABLE D18. Balance between Gender Balanced and Imbalanced Blocks

Variable	(1) Imbalanced Blocks	(2) Balanced Blocks	(3) Difference
Distance to Nearest	20.994	19.075	-1.919
Statuatory Town (Census	(12.640)	(10.611)	(1.254)
Distance to District	32.479	31.009	-1.470
Headquarters (Census	(18.584)	(16.883)	(1.871)
Number of Villages in GP	5.414	5.573	0.159
(Census 2011)	(3.055)	(2.959)	(0.312)
Total GP Area (Census	1,202.013	1,220.242	18.229
2011)	(685.835)	(548.364)	(67.510)
Total Population of GP	9,522.985	9,822.857	299.872
(Census 2001)	(1,820.183)	(1,779.932)	(186.133)
Total Educational	3.509	3.601	0.091
Facilities (Census 2001)	(1.192)	(1.334)	(0.126)
Primary Health Sub	0.427	0.478	0.051
Centres (Census 2001)	(0.330)	(0.417)	(0.036)
Post Office (Census	1.023	1.012	-0.010
2001)	(0.307)	(0.337)	(0.032)
Bank Facilities (Census	0.337	0.320	-0.016
2001)	(0.201)	(0.249)	(0.022)
Power Supply (Census	1.633	1.905	0.272**
2001)	(1.233)	(1.381)	(0.130)
Paved Road (Census 2001)	1.774	1.897	0.123
	(0.938)	(1.012)	(0.098)
Mud Road (Census 2001)	3.974	4.050	0.076
	(2.064)	(1.952)	(0.210)
Child Welfare Centre	0.057	0.053	-0.004
(Census 2001)	(0.238)	(0.152)	(0.023)
Bus facilities (Census	0.535	0.629	0.094*
2001)	(0.448)	(0.562)	(0.049)
Mean Village Income	548359.750	203876.844	-3.445e+05
(Census 2001)	(3.457e+06)	(897009.562)	(315043.281)
Mean Village Income	538844.688	147685.953	-3.912e+05
(Census 2001)	(3.722e+06)	(626384.375)	(337266.781)
Observations	411	123	534

Table shows a simple balance test between blocks where the gender reservation reservation is balanced across the threshold and blocks where they are not. The variables here are identical to that in 1, but are constructed at the block level (instead of the GP level).

TABLE D19. Winning Sub-Caste size For 2006 and 2016 Reserved GPs

	(1) **Sub-Caste Size**	(2) **Winner Age**
2006 Reserved	12.952	-0.814
	(9.662)	(0.878)
Observations	1487	1475
Effective Observations	1326	1314
Mean	147.233	39.655
Bandwidth	550	550
Block FE	YES	YES

Table plots results testing if the size of the winning candidate's sub-caste varies across the 2006 and 2016 reserved GPs. We use the 2006 running variable: many of those below and close to the threshold in 2006 were reserved in 2016. Thus, going from below to above the 2006 threshold is like going from 2016 reserved GPs to 2006 reserved GPs. Outcome variables are: (a) the size of the winner's sub-caste (b) the age of the winner. We use a fixed BW of 550 (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects.

TABLE D20. Where is Reservation Most Effective? Analysis by SC HHI (Additional Outcomes)

	1st Tercile			
	(1) **Private Assets (SR)**	(2) **Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **GP SC Candidates (LR)**	(4) **Ward SC (Candidtes (LR)**
SC Reserved	-0.068	0.064	1.662	0.157
	(0.066)	(0.072)	(0.328)	(0.120)
Observations	2733	2734	1664	2453
Mean	-.016	0	.768	.873
Bandwidth	510	548	589	620
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
	2nd Tercile			
	(1) **Private Assets (SR)**	(2) **Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **GP SC Candidates (LR)**	(4) **Ward SC (Candidtes (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.026	0.082	1.055	0.311
	(0.059)	(0.073)	(0.326)	(0.124)
Observations	2714	2714	1622	2428
Mean	.002	.004	.92	.878
Bandwidth	513	486	385	551
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
	3rd Tercile			
	(1) **Private Assets (SR)**	(2) **Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **GP SC Candidates (LR)**	(4) **Ward SC (Candidtes (LR)**
SC Reserved	-0.022	-0.068	1.023	0.321
	(0.069)	(0.070)	(0.258)	(0.126)
Observations	2720	2720	1704	2485
Mean	-.013	-.018	.79	.766
Bandwidth	633	628	564	710
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table extends Table 7 to additional outcomes. It shows the impact of SC reservation on scheme and electoral outcomes across terciles of SC population. SR indicates short run and LR indicates Long Run. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panel A, B and C run separate regressions for the first, second and third tercile of SC cutoff populations respectively.

TABLE D21. Where is Reservation Most Effective? Analysis by SC Population (Additional Outcomes)

	1st Tercile			
	(1) **Private Assets (SR)**	(2) **Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **GP SC Candidates (LR)**	(4) **Ward SC (Candidtes (LR)**
SC Reserved	0.079	-0.008	1.090	0.209
	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.261)	(0.116)
Observations	2673	2673	1735	2354
Mean	.032	.002	.658	.678
Bandwidth	308	501	348	468
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
	2nd Tercile			
	(1) **Private Assets (SR)**	(2) **Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **GP SC Candidates (LR)**	(4) **Ward SC (Candidtes (LR)**
SC Reserved	-0.058	0.049	1.239	0.235
	(0.073)	(0.074)	(0.313)	(0.122)
Observations	2687	2688	1691	2460
Mean	-.002	.001	.989	.841
Bandwidth	550	517	363	726
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
	3rd Tercile			
	(1) **Private Assets (SR)**	(2) **Public Goods (SR)**	(3) **GP SC Candidates (LR)**	(4) **Ward SC (Candidtes (LR)**
SC Reserved	-0.101	-0.002	1.562	0.320
	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.483)	(0.149)
Observations	2810	2810	1567	2555
Mean	.003	.024	1.232	1.041
Bandwidth	504	447	623	594
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table extends Table 6 to additional outcomes. It shows the impact of SC reservation on scheme and electoral outcomes across terciles of SC population. SR indicates short run and LR indicates Long Run. All standard errors are clustered at the Block level. Panel A, B and C run separate regressions for the first, second and third tercile of SC GP HHI respectively.

TABLE D22. Long-Run Impacts Across the Within-Group Asset Distribution

	SCs			Non-SCs		
	(1) **Below Median**	(2) **Above Median**	(3) **Top Quartile**	(4) **Below Median**	(5) **Above Median**	(6) **Top Quartile**
SC Reservation	0.082	0.286	0.520	-0.686	-0.730	-0.623
	(0.208)	(0.196)	(0.173)	(0.237)	(0.275)	(0.289)
Observations	41	43	43	47	47	47
Effective Observations	40	41	41	43	43	43
Leave-one-out estimate range	[-0.04, 0.28]	[0.13, 0.45]	[0.38, 0.63]	[-0.87, -0.50]	[-0.88, -0.55]	[-0.74, -0.36]
Leave-one-out p-value range	[0.120, 0.998]	[0.006, 0.542]	[0.000, 0.034]	[0.000, 0.030]	[0.000, 0.043]	[0.005, 0.233]
Mean	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bandwidth	50	50	50	50	50	50
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table shows the impact of SC reservation on long-run private asset scores across the within-GP asset distribution of each caste group, and the sensitivity of each estimate to individual GPs. Outcome variables are (in standardized units) the average private asset scores, from the 2018-19 Primary Survey, of: (1) SC households below the median of the GP's SC asset distribution (2) SC households above that median (3) SC households at or above the 75th percentile of the GP's SC asset distribution (4) non-SC households below the median of the GP's non-SC asset distribution (5) non-SC households above that median (6) non-SC households at or above the 75th percentile of the GP's non-SC asset distribution. The leave-one-out rows report the range of the RD estimate and of its p-value across regressions that each drop one GP within the bandwidth at a time. We fix a bandwidth of 50 with uniform weights, reflecting the survey sampling strategy, and estimate the RD specifications described in the paper (equation 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

E Indices Construction

E.1 Asset Index

We create an asset index based on 6 binary asset indicators found in the SECC dataset. We focus on ownership of the most common assets from the data: land; type of the roof (concrete or not) and wall (whether made of burnt brick or concrete) of the main dwelling room of the house structure; whether the house has 4 or more rooms; whether the household has a phone; whether the household owns a vehicle. Each of these assets is owned by at least 10% of the population (see Figure A4).[38] This threshold ensures that the assets included in the index are sufficiently common to capture meaningful variation in ownership across households. Assets that are owned by very few households may reflect idiosyncratic or luxury consumption patterns, which are less likely to be affected by institutional changes like reservations. In contrast, more commonly owned assets represent more fundamental economic status markers and are therefore more likely to respond to shifts in political representation and the corresponding changes in local economic opportunities.

For each household, we create two types of asset scores: a "raw sum of assets" score, where each indicator gives the household one point; a PCA score of all assets (first component). Our private asset index is simply the standardized sum of the two scores. Table D5 in the appendix shows that the results are robust to working with only the RSOA or PCA scores and to defining the index as the mean of the two standardized scores (instead of the sum).

E.2 Public Good Index

We first identify the main SC village in each GP, defined using Census 2011 data as the village with the largest SC population in that GP.

[38] While we do not have data on savings including gold or bank savings, we expect our index to be positively correlated with broader definition of savings. Ao and Chatterjee (2018) estimate that reservation at the state level results in increased borrowing for minority groups, particularly Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Next, for each public good, we calculate the population-normalized share received by the main SC village—that is, the share of the good it receives relative to its share of the GP's population. Our main outcome variable is the average of these normalized shares across public goods. In an equal society with no hierarchies, this share should be 1: the main SC village should receive public goods proportional to its population share. However, in unreserved GPs near the threshold, the average share is only 0.8, indicating significant bias against the main SC village in the allocation of public goods.

F Long-Run Sample Comparisons

In this section, we provide evidence on the sanctity of our long-run set of GPs. We rule out that (i) the long-run sample was unrepresentative of the set of GPs that we use in our main analysis or (ii) that the same set of GPs was showing unusually large growth in the short-run.

We begin by analysing how the long-run sample of GPs compares with GPs used in our short-run analysis. To do so, we first restrict our short-run set of GPs to only those within the optimal RD bandwidth. Table C4 compares covariates across the two samples. The two samples seem similar across a range of key public goods, village incomes and expenditures, remoteness and village size. The main difference is that the GPs in the long-run sample have smaller populations (15% lower), a marginally lower share of SCs (2.5 p.p lower) and are much less likely to be female reserved (11 p.p lower). All these are a function of the reservation rule: the algorithm ensures that GPs closest to the RD threshold – which form the main part of our long-run sample – are likely to be smaller, have fewer SCs and, on the treated side, less likely to be reserved for women than GPs further away. We control for all of these in our long-run RD specifications. Moreover, the fact that they seem similar across most *other* variables mitigates some of the concerns regarding two samples being vastly different. It is unlikely that sample composition changes could explain away our results entirely.

We also rule out the possibility that these GPs are unrepresentative of the short-run GPs because they were already showing unusually large effects in the short-run. Table D14 displays effects in the short-run for these GPs: there was little catch-up in public goods or private assets.

G Gender Reservation: Additional Detail

This appendix supports Section 7.2. It reports in full the three checks we use to establish that the imbalance in female reservation across the RD threshold does not drive our results.

G.1 Dropping Female Reserved GPs

We drop all female reserved GPs in our sample and re-estimate treatment effects. This leaves 94% of SC reserved GPs close to the threshold and 58% of non-SC reserved GPs below the threshold. Dropping these GPs does not affect the balance of the sample: Table C3 shows that SC reserved and non-reserved GPs remain comparable along a range of dimensions. Tables C6 and C7 report the results.[39]

G.2 Restricting to Blocks Where Gender Reservation Is Balanced

The reservation algorithm runs separately for every block. While gender reservation is unbalanced on average across all blocks, this is not the case in every block: in nearly 25% of blocks it is balanced. This is mostly driven by the fact that GPs below the threshold, and close to it, are also not gender reserved. Appendix Section K describes how this can occur using simple examples, which indicate that the absence of imbalance in female reservation across the RD threshold in certain blocks arises for seemingly arbitrary reasons.

Table D18 shows balance across gender-balanced and gender-imbalanced blocks, and Figure A7 shows that gender reservation is balanced on either side of the threshold within the former. Table 8 reports treatment effects on our main outcomes for this restricted sample.

G.3 Exploiting the Gender Reservation RD within SC Reserved Seats

If gender reserved SC seats show similar outcomes to gender non-reserved SC seats, our treatment effects in the main natural experiment are driven by SC

[39] We cannot run similar tests only for female reserved GPs because there are not enough female reserved GPs that are also SC reserved and close to the threshold to provide meaningful estimates.

reservation rather than by gender reservation. We test this using the gender reservation rule, which is described in detail in Section J.

In brief: within SC reserved seats, a maximum of 50% can be reserved for women. Once the GPs to be reserved for SCs in a block are determined, those GPs are arranged in descending order of SC population; the top 50% are reserved for women and the bottom 50% are not. This lends itself to a regression discontinuity design analogous to the one used in the paper. The running variable and estimating equations are given in Section J.

Table C8 reports the results. Across a range of key outcomes we see no statistically significant differences between gender reserved and non-gender reserved SC reserved GPs, and this holds when we restrict the sample to the set of comparable GPs. The only exception is the long-run outcome for WAS goods in villages, which shows a positive coefficient for gender reserved seats.

G.4 The Same Exercise on the Control Side

We supplement this analysis with a similar exercise for non-SC GPs, which are the GPs on the control side of our threshold. Table C9 tests whether gender reservation has differential impacts within the subset of SC unreserved seats. On measures of both private assets and public goods, through the short run and the long run, female reserved GPs do no worse than female unreserved GPs. This assuages the concern that our treatment effects are an artefact of the disproportionate presence of female GP heads on the control side.

H Inequality Indices

This appendix reports our attempt to summarise the effect of reservation on inequality using standard indices, and explains why our interpretation does not rest on it.

Two features of our asset measures make these indices difficult to apply directly. First, neither the principal component score nor our combined index has strictly positive support, and Gini and Generalised Entropy indices are not defined on distributions that take negative values. Second, both measures are highly discrete. With six binary assets, the raw sum takes seven values and the underlying asset bundle takes at most 64, so a large share of households hold identical scores.

To address the first, we convert assets into a continuous and positive measure. Following Asher et al. (2021), we regress household consumption expenditure on the asset set available in our data using the 2011–12 India Human Development Survey, which was fielded in the same year as the Socioeconomic Caste Census and records both consumption and asset ownership. We then use the estimated coefficients to impute consumption for every household in the Census. The imputed levels are plausible: mean consumption is about Rs. 22,080 per person per year and median consumption about Rs. 17,956.

With imputed consumption in hand, we compute within each GP the Gini index overall and separately for SC and non-SC households, and the Generalised Entropy index, which decomposes additively into within- and between-group components with population weights following Bourguignon (1979). Table H1 reports treatment effects on each. We find no discernible effect on any of them.

We call this suggestive evidence on inequality because of bunching, and the bunching cannot be repaired by a better choice of measure. Imputed consumption and our asset scores are all deterministic functions of the same six binary indicators, and all are bunched to nearly the same degree: among SC households, the most common value of imputed consumption is held by 37 percent of households and the three most common by 61 percent (Figure H1); for our combined asset index the corresponding figures are 38 and 63 percent, and for the raw sum of assets alone, 43 and 80 percent. An inequality index is

computed from the differences between pairs of households, and households holding the same value contribute nothing to it. With most households sharing a value with many others, the index registers only a fraction of the movement in the data.

Our estimates in the main text use the data differently. They are effects on GP-level group means, each an average over several hundred households. A mean is not itself discrete, and it moves whenever households gain or lose an asset, including movements between adjacent values that an index cannot detect. We therefore report the effect of reservation at each part of the distribution and do not summarise it in a single index.

TABLE H1. Impact of Reservation on Short-Run Consumption Inequality

	Gini			Generalized Entropy		
	(1) **Overall Gini**	(2) **SC Gini**	(3) **Non-SC Gini**	(4) **GE(0) Total**	(5) **GE(0) Within**	(6) **GE(0) Between**
SC Reserved	-0.001	0.002	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	-0.000
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Observations	7979	7953	7978	7979	7979	7979
Effective Observations	3890	4237	3966	3952	3822	4130
Mean	.165	.137	.165	.045	.043	.002
Bandwidth	502	553	513	511	494	536
Block FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: Outcomes are inequality indices computed within each GP on household consumption imputed from assets, following Asher et al. (2021). Columns (1) to (3) report Gini indices for all households, SC households, and non-SC households respectively. Columns (4) to (6) report the Generalised Entropy index and its within- and between-group components, which decompose additively with population weights following Bourguignon (1979). We use CCT triangular bandwidths and estimate fuzzy RD specifications described in the paper (equations 6 and 7). We control for GP-level covariates and Block-fixed effects in all regressions. All standard errors are indicated in brackets below the estimates and are clustered at the Block level.

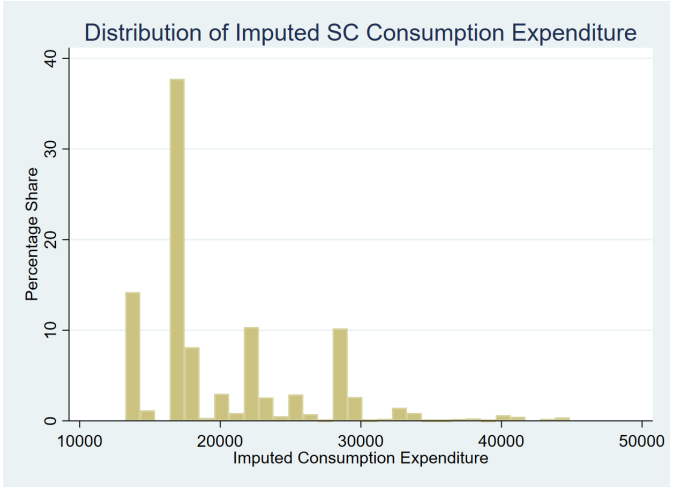


FIGURE H1. Bunching in Imputed Consumption among SC Households

Notes: Distribution of imputed consumption among SC households. Because imputed consumption is a deterministic function of six binary assets, households owning the same bundle receive identical values: 37 percent of SC households share a single value and three values account for 61 percent of them. The same bunching is present in our asset scores, which are functions of the same six indicators.

I Bihar's fraught path towards reservation

This is a brief account of how reservation for SCs in GPs was won in Bihar. For a fuller account, see (Sharan, 2021).

I.1 1987

Bihar first flirted with political reservation for village heads with the Bihar Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Ordinance of 1987. The Ordinance proposed that the the post of the village head would be reserved for SCs and Scheduled Tribes (STs) proportionate to their percentage across districts. The validity of this amendment was challenged in the Bihar High Court by a group of incumbent village heads. The Court agreed with the petitioners and declared that that such an amendment in the background of the then constitutional scheme was not permissible. While holding so, it declared that the post of the village head in the self-contained unit of a Panchayat is a solitary post and such a post cannot be reserved, inasmuch as reservation in excess of 50% is not permissible under any circumstances. In essence, the judgment, drawing from the Gandhian idea of a village as a "self-contained republic" argued that every village, therefore, existed in isolation. Since the total number of village head posts within such republics was one, it was impossible to reserve a fraction of one posts.

I.2 1993

On 23rd August, 1993, the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 came into force, which followed the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution that mandated that Gram Panchayats be included as the third tier of administration. Summarizing the changes,

The Act provided for constitution of Panchayats at three levels. The village level was constituted at the village level, the intermediate level was constituted at the block level and the district level was constituted at the district level. Summarizing the changes, Prasad et al. (2006) note that Act made "reservation of seats in the Panchayats at every level for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes on the basis of their population proportionate to the total population in the area of the

Panchayats. The Act made horizontal reservation of one-third of the total number of seats at each level for the women."[40]

Once more the validity of introducing reservation at the village head level in the Act of 1993 was challenged in the High Court by petitioners. And once again, the High Court held that the challenge was valid on the grounds that the proposed reservation exceeded 50%. More importantly, the Bihar High Court held that villages were single unit seats and in the light of the 1987 judgment, this made it impossible to reserve any seat.

I.3 2006

The 2001 GP elections were held without any reservations. Most other Indian states had implemented political reservation by then. In 2006, the Bihar legislative assembly passed the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 2006. This mandated 17% reservation for SCs, a maximum of 20% reservation for extremely backward castes (EBCs) and 1% reservation for Scheduled Tribes. Within each category, a maximum of 50% seats would be reserved for women. Over 100 writ petitions were filed – by various groups, mostly belonging to powerful backward and upper-castes – challenging the validity of the 2006 Act.

The High Court dismissed the writ petitions and upheld the constitutional validity of the 2006 Act. It held that, even if GPs were seen as "self-contained units", the Constitution of India mandated that reservation be implemented across all GPs and that superseded any concerns of reserving single unit posts.

[40] They go on to note that: "The Act reserved seats of Chairpersons at every level, namely, the seats of Mukhiya at the village level, of Pramukh at the intermediate level and of Adhyaksha at the District level, for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes in proportion to their population to the total population of the area of the Panchayats."

J Reservation rule Description

Bihar has reservation for SCs, STs, EBCs (*not* OBCs) and women. The rule for these is given below. The crucial takeaway from the sections below is that, focusing solely on SC reservation, there exists an SC population threshold below which no GP is reserved and above which a majority of GPs are reserved. Note, also, that the rule for 2006 is fixed till 2016 (two election cycles), after which the reservation cycle switches. Below, we describe the reservation algorithm for caste/gender, first for 2006 and then for 2016.

J.1 2006

The reservation rule proceeds in the following manner:

- First, based on the proportion of SCs (STs) in the block, the number of GPs to be reserved for SCs (STs) is decided. If there are N_j GPs in block j and θ_j is the proportion of SCs (STs) in block j, then the number of GPs, n_j, to be reserved is

$$n_j = round(\theta_j * N_j, 1)$$

- Let n_{SC} and n_{ST} be the number of GPs to be reserved in block j for SCs and STs, respectively. The number of GPs to be reserved for EBCs is given by

$$n_{EBC} = min(round(0.2 * N_j, 1), round(0.5 * N_j - n_{SC} - n_{ST}, 1))$$

- If there are no STs in the block or n_{ST} is 0 (which is true in 480 of the 534 blocks), then the rule skips to the next step. However, if $n_{ST} > 0$, the rule proceeds by arranging all GPs in descending order of their ST population. The first GP in the list is then reserved for STs.
- Now, all remaining GPs are rearranged in the descending order of their non SCST population. The first GP on this truncated list is "blocked". The choice of word is deliberate and conveys an important distinction: the GP is not "reserved", it is merely blocked.
- Now, all unreserved and unblocked GPs are rearranged in descending order of their SC population. The first GP in this further truncated list is now reserved for SCs.

- This algorithm proceeds until the number of GPs reserved for STs = n_{ST} or the number reserved for SCs is n_{SC}. Once, a group hits its quota of reserved GPs, then the rearranging of GPs is no longer done by that group. For instance, if n_{ST} = 1, then, in the second round, GPs are no longer rearranged by ST population - instead, the rule proceeds straight to rearranging by non-SCST population.
- The algorithm further proceeds till the second group also hits its quota of reserved GPs. This throws up two sets of GPs, n_{ST} GPs that are reserved for STs and n_{SC} GPs that are reserved for SCs.
- Now, all the unreserved GPs (including the "blocked" ones) are collected and arranged by descending order of GP population.
- The first n_{EBC} GPs in this list is reserved for EBCs.
- Thus, for each block, one can arrive at an SC population cut-off - the SC population of the last GP to be reserved for SCs - below which no GP is reserved. This threshold varies by block. Figure J1(a) gives the first stage and shows that the first stage is robust to (a) adding block fixed effects (Panel (b)) and (b) dropping all ST/EBC reserved GPs.

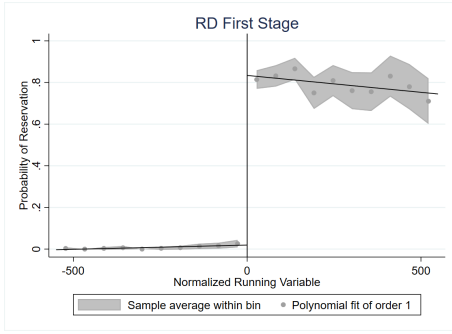
J.1.1 Gender Reservation

– All the n_{SC} seats determined to be reserved for SCs within a block are arranged in descending order of SC population and *up to* 50% of them with the highest populations are reserved for SC women. For instance, if there are n_{SC} = 3, then 1 GP is reserved for SC women – the one with the highest SC population. On the other hand, if n_{SC} = 4, then 2 GPs are reserved for SC women – the top 2 highest SC population GPs.

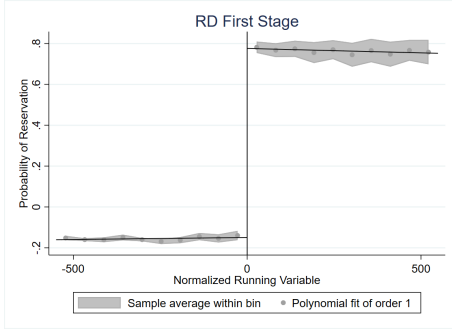
– All the n_{ST} seats determined to be reserved for STs within a block are arranged in descending order of ST population and *up to* 50% of them with the highest ST populations are reserved for ST women.

– All the n_{EBC} seats determined to be reserved for EBCs within a block are arranged in descending order of total population and *up to* 50% of them with the highest total populations are reserved for EBC women.

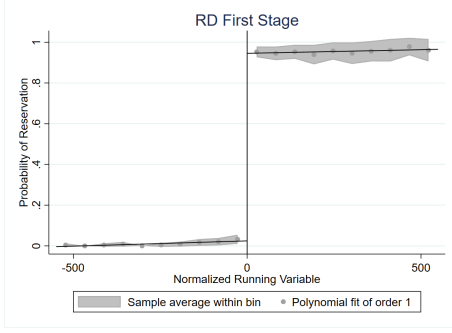
– All the n_{GEN} seats determined to be caste unreserved within a block are arranged in descending order of non-SCST population and *up to* 50% of them with the highest non-SCST populations are reserved for women.



(A) First stage keeping all GPs



(B) First stage keeping all GPs and running Block Fixed Effects



(C) First stage only keep either sc reserved GPs or unreserved GPs

FIGURE J1. We show first stage for different types of samples and estimation strategies.

J.2 2016

The reservation rule for 2016 proceeds in a similar manner to that of 2006, with two major changes. First, it changes the order in which GPs are arranged. In 2006, GPs were arranged first by STs, then non-SCSTs, then SCs. In 2016, GPs are arranged first by non-SCSTs, then by SCs, then by STs. Second, since there is no provision for recudrring reservation, no GP previously reserved for SCs (STs/EBCs) can again be reserved for the same. So, when GPs are arranged by descending order of population of a particular group, those previously reserved are struck off the list, even before the algorithm begins.

K Algorithm Examples

In this section, we describe two examples of fictitious blocks where gender balance could occur across the threshold in seemingly arbitrary ways. For ease of exposition, we consider small blocks with only 5 GPs. Typically, a block is gender balanced if the gender reservation status of GPs does not jump discontinuously across the threshold. In these examples, hence, we focus on the gender reservation status of the last GP to be reserved for SCs and the GP below the threshold that narrowly missed out. If the gender reservation status of these two GPs are similar, we consider the block gender balanced. In actuality, a block has about 15 GPs, so balance across the threshold may imply more than just those nearest to the threshold on either side having the same gender reservation status – however, given the size of these example blocks, without loss of generality, we only focus on the pair of GPs closest to the threshold.

K.1 Example A: Inversely varying SC and Total Populations

GP Serial Number	*SC Pop*	*ST Pop*	*Total Pop*	*Non-SC -ST*	*Blocked*	*SC Res.*	*Gender Res.*	*Running Variable*
1	1000	0	10000	9000	1		1	-2500
2	2000	0	9000	7000	1		1	-1500
3	3000	0	8000	5000				**-500**
4	4000	0	7000	3000		1		**500**
5	5000	250	6000	1000		1	1	1500
To Reserve for SCs	2							
To Reserve for STs	0							
To Reserve for OBCs	0							
SC Threshold	3500							

In example A, the SC populations of GPs vary inversely with the Total Populations of GPs. There are a total of 5 GPs in the block. The total population of all GPs is 40,000; the SC population is 15000. The number of GPs to be reserved for SCs is (15,000/40,000)*5 = 1.875, which, when rounded to the nearest integer is 2. Similarly, the number of GPs to be reserved for STs is (250/40,000)*5 = 0.03, which when rounded to the nearest integer is 0. The number of GPs to be reserved for EBCs cannot exceed 20%, so that would imply 1 GP to be reserved for EBCs. However, because the algorithm prohibits the sum of SC, ST and EBC reserved GPs to exceed 50% of the GPs in the block, we do not reserve any GPs for EBCs.

The algorithm then proceeds in the following manner:

Step 1: We arrange all GPs in descending order of non-SCST population and the first GP in this list is blocked. This implies GP #1 is blocked.

Step 2: We now rearrange all remaining non-blocked GPs in descending order of SC population and the first GP in that list is reserved for SCs. This implies GP #5 is reserved for SCs.

Step 3: We re-arrange all remaining non-blocked, non-reserved GPs in descending order of their non-SCST population and the first GP in this list is blocked. This implies GP #2 is blocked.

Step 4: We re-arrange all remaining non-blocked, non-reserved GPs in descending order of SC population and the first GP in the list is reserved for SCs. This results in GP #4 being reserved for SCs.

Step 5: For gender reservation within SC-reserved GPs, we reserve up to 50% of GPs, implying 1 GP of the 2 reserved for SCs needs to be gender-reserved. Both the SC reserved GPs are arranged in descending order of SC population and the top one is reserved for women. Hence GP #5 is reserved for women.

Step 6: For gender reservation among unreserved GPs, all unreserved GPs (GPs 1, 2 and 3) are arranged in descending order of non-SCST population and up to 50% of them are reserved. Since 50% of 3 is 1.5, the rule mandates that this is rounded downwards to 1. The GP with the highest non-SCST population is GP #1 and it is reserved for women.

Now, both GP #4 – the last GP to be reserved for SCs – and GP #3, the GP that narrowly missed out on being reserved for SCs, are gender un-reserved. This creates balance in the gender reservation status.

K.2 Example B: Co-Varying SC and Total Populations

GP Serial Number	*SC Pop*	*ST Pop*	*Total Pop*	*Tot - SC -ST*	*Blocked*	*SC Res.*	*EBC Res.*	*Gender Res.*	*Running Variable*
1	4000	0	10000	6000	1		1		1200
2	3400	0	9000	5600		1			600
3	2200	0	7000	4800					-600
4	1400	0	6900	5500				1	-1400
5	600	250	6000	5400					-2200
To Reserve for SCs	1								
To Reserve for STs	0								
To Reserve for EBCs	1								
SC Threshold	2800								

In example B, the total populations remain unchanged, but the SC population now is correlated positively with the total population. We still have 5 GPs in the block, to maintain comparability with example A.

Here, as before, we calculate the total GPs to be reserved for SCs, STs and EBCs as per formulae described in the algorithm. This gives us the following: the total GPs to be reserved for STs is 0 and SCs is 1. And that allows for one GP to be reserved for EBCs (20% of 5).

The reservation algorithm then proceeds in the following manner:

Step 1: All GPs are arranged in descending order of non-SCST population adn the first GP in that list is blocked. This is GP #1.

Step 2: Now, the remaining un-blocked GPs are arranged in descending order of SC population and the first GP in that list is reserved for SCs. This is GP #2.

Step 3: Since we have exhausted the quota of GPs to be reserved for SCs, all unreserved GPs (including those previously blocked) are arranged in descending order of their total populations and the first GP in that list is reserved for EBCs. This is GP #1.

Step 4: Since there are only 1 SC reserved and EBC-reserved GPs, neither are reserved for women. The remaining GPs are arranged in descending order of their non-SCST population and up to 50% of them – i.e 1 GP – is reserved for women. This happens to be GP #4.

Once more, as in example A, the last GP to be reserved for SCs (GP #2) and the one that narrowly missed out on getting reserved (GP #3) are both gender non-reserved. There is balance across the RD threshold.

K.3 Takeaways

In examples A and B, we saw 2 blocks with the same total populations of GPs, but very different populations of SCs. In example A, the SC populations decreased with total populations, whereas in example B, the opposite occured – i.e. SC population increased with total population. Examples A and B also varied in the number of GPs to be reserved for SCs, which had consequences on how many could be reserved for EBCs, which had a knock-on effect on how many GPs could be reserved for women. Yet, these blocks ended up having GPs on either side of the SC reservation RD threshold that were gender balanced.

These examples showcase that the ways in which gender reservation works below the threshold is complex. Slight changes in the populations of SCs, STs or non-SCSTs, could radically alter what could occur. This is because these changes could affect the number of GPs to be reserved for each group and this subsequently could affect the number of GPs to be reserved for women. Overall, this suggests that gender reservation status of GPs below the threshold could change arbitrarily.

This artefact of the algorithm suggests two things: first, these examples indicate that blocks where there is gender balance and blocks where there is gender imbalance across the threshold may be similar, on average. Empirically, the balance table comparing these two types of blocks (Table D18) suggests the same. This gives more credence to our exercise which shows that outcomes in gender balanced blocks is similar to the overall effects (Table 8).

Second, these examples also suggest that below the SC reservation threshold, GPs reserved for women could be similar to those that are not. We know that above the threshold, gender reserved and non-gender reserved GPs do not show differential outcomes (Table C8; discussion in section 7.2). The fact that gender reservation is arbitrarily assigned even below the threshold makes comparing gender-unreserved GPs on either side of the threshold a useful exercise (as we do in section 7.2; see Tables C6 and C7). Table C3 shows that these GPs are balanced on observables. The examples described above indicate dropping gender unreserved seats may not cause severe selection concerns and these results may be indicative of the overall effects.

K.4 Defining Running Variables and Estimating Equations for Gender Reservation

Given the gender reservation rule, our running variable is the difference in SC population of a GP and the mean of the SC Population of the last SC reserved GP to be reserved for women and the first SC reserved GP to not be reserved for women. Thus, for GP i in Block j:

$$Running_{ij} = SCPop_{ij} - (\frac{SCPop_{1j} + SCPop_{0j}}{2}) \tag{K.1}$$

where $SCPop$ refers to SC Population and 0 and 1 subscripts stand for the the last GP to not be reserved and the first GP to be reserved, respectively.[41]

Formally, if TG_b is the gender threshold for each block b, then we use the same specification as before, but with the new threshold to identify effects:

$$\begin{aligned} Reserved_{gb} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 1(SCPop_{gb} > TG_b) + \gamma_2(SCPop_{gb} - TG_b) + \\ \gamma_3(SCPop_{gb} - TG_b) * 1(SCPop_{gb} >= TG_b) + \delta * X_g + \psi + \eta_{gb} \end{aligned} \tag{K.2}$$

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{gb} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Reserved_{gb} + \beta_2(SCPop_{gb} - TG_b) + \\ \beta_3(SCPop_{gb} - T) * 1(SCPop_{gb} >= TG_b) + \omega * X_g + \alpha + \varepsilon_{gb} \end{aligned} \tag{K.3}$$

One concern with an exercise such as this is that the set of GPs around reservation the gender threshold may not be comparable to the set of GPs around the SC reservation threshold. To account for this, we report results first for blocks where the gender and the SC reservation thresholds are not too far apart. The mean difference in these thresholds is 400. We, therefore, report results for blocks where the difference is under 400: in other words, the gender RD sample in these blocks are broadly comparable to the SC reservation sample.

[41] To fix ideas: if there are 4 GPs to be reserved for SCs in block B - G_1, G_2, G_3 and G_4. Say that in terms of SC population, $G_1 > G_2 > G_3 > G_4$. Then G_1 and G_2 are reserved for women.

L A Model of Temporary Reservation

The model has one purpose: to show how a temporary restriction on candidate eligibility can persistently change political entry and, through the identity of the officeholder, the distribution of resources. It deliberately takes the effects of observed rule on electoral reputation and of exclusion from office on an inherited political network as primitives. This is analogous to taking group differences in policy preferences and candidacy costs as primitives in a citizen-candidate model.

The organization separates the model's logical claims. Equations defining preferences, entry, and state transitions are primitives. The proposition is the core equilibrium result: it states when temporary reservation changes post-quota entry. Corollaries record direct consequences of that result for policy and comparative statics. Remarks add interpretations or extensions that are not required for the proposition.

Connection to the empirical framework. The assumptions correspond to the institutional channels described in the paper rather than to additional objects introduced for the model. The policy preference $\theta_S > \theta_N$ summarizes discretion over targeted welfare and the placement of local public goods. The condition $c'(W) < 0$ captures the up-front costs of candidacy and the lower financing constraint faced by groups with more assets or liquidity. The reputational transition $\Delta > 0$ captures the possibility that observed rule changes beliefs about the viability of SC government. The network transition $K_1 = \delta K_0$ allows broker and client relationships tied to control over programmes, contracts, and GP offices to weaken while the patron is out of office. Because that last channel is less directly pinned down, the parameter space includes $\delta = 1$, in which it does not operate.

The fixed flow Y is a simplifying resource constraint, not a result of the model. It isolates changes in incidence from changes in aggregate provision. Likewise, G is not an independent transfer: it is the politically mobilizable part of the redistribution generated by SC control. Labour-market effects, durable public goods, complaints, and other channels discussed in the paper may reinforce persistence, but they are not needed for the threshold result.

L.1 Political entry

A village contains two political sides. Side S represents the historically excluded SC population and side N the historically dominant non-SC patron. Let

$$b = b(\mu, \sigma)$$

denote the SC side's effective electoral base, where μ is its population share and σ its cohesion. We require only $b_\mu > 0$ and $b_\sigma > 0$: larger and more cohesive groups command a larger effective base under plurality rule. A transparent special case is $b(\mu, \sigma) = \mu\sigma$, where σ is the share of SC voters coordinated behind the best-placed SC candidate.

If an SC candidate contests an open election, his probability of defeating the patron is

$$p_t = F(b + \pi_t - K_t)\,, \tag{L.1}$$

where F is continuous and strictly increasing. The variable π_t is the electorate's assessment of an SC candidate's ability to govern. It is a group reputation: experience under an SC administration benefits subsequent SC candidates, not only the individual who governed. The variable K_t is the patron's inherited electoral advantage from brokers, clients, and political organization. Equation (L.1) is a reduced-form probabilistic-voting equation. Group attachment, candidate-specific tastes, and the plurality rule are summarized by F and b.

Let W_t denote resources on the SC side that can be mobilized to finance political entry. These need not be held by the candidate himself: supporters and politically connected households may help finance a candidacy. Standing costs $c(W_t)$, where $0 < c(W_t) < V$ and $c'(W_t) < 0$. A potential SC candidate stands if and only if

$$p_t V \geq c(W_t). \tag{L.2}$$

Define

$$z^*(W_t) = F^{-1}(c(W_t)/V)\,, \qquad z^{*\prime}(W_t) < 0,$$

as the electoral-viability threshold. An SC candidate therefore enters an open election if and only if $b + \pi_t - K_t \geq z^*(W_t)$.

Before reservation, SCs have no local history of governing, so their reputation is π_0. The patron has an inherited organizational advantage $K_0 > 0$. We study villages in which

$$b + \pi_0 - K_0 < z^*(W_0). \tag{L.3}$$

No serious SC candidate enters in these villages. The patron retains office, and the absence of SC rule leaves π_0 unchanged.

Redistribution and political resources. There is a fixed flow $Y > 0$ of discretionary public resources in each term. The identity of the head changes its incidence but not its total. Let θ_g be the share reaching SC households when side $g \in \{S, N\}$ governs, and assume

$$\theta_S > \theta_N. \tag{L.4}$$

SC rather than patron rule therefore redirects

$$D \equiv (\theta_S - \theta_N)Y > 0 \tag{L.5}$$

towards SC households. Suppose a fraction $\lambda \in [0, 1]$ of these gains can be mobilized by potential candidates or their supporters. The increase in politically usable SC resources is

$$G \equiv \lambda D = \lambda(\theta_S - \theta_N)Y \geq 0. \tag{L.6}$$

Thus G is funded by redistribution of a fixed resource flow, not by an increase in aggregate provision. The case $\lambda = 0$ switches off the resource channel.

L.2 Reservation and withdrawal

Reservation restricts eligibility to SC citizens. An SC entrant then wins with probability one, and $V > c(W_0)$ guarantees that at least one citizen stands. Suppose the seat remains reserved for the period observed in the data. At the

end of that period,

$$\pi_1 = \pi_0 + \Delta, \qquad K_1 = \delta K_0, \qquad W_1 = W_0 + G, \qquad \Delta > 0, \quad 0 < \delta \leq 1, \quad G \geq 0. \tag{L.7}$$

Observed SC government raises the SC side's electoral reputation by Δ. Meanwhile, the patron may retain only a fraction δ of his organizational advantage when the broker and client relationships underlying it are harder to sustain without control of office. Setting $\delta = 1$ switches off this channel. Finally, the redistribution in Equation (L.5) increases by G the resources on the SC side that can be deployed in subsequent political contests. We do not require voters to become unconditionally favourable to SC candidates, the patron's network to disappear, or the resource channel to operate through the candidate's own wealth.

REMARK L.1 (*Duration*). Allowing the reputational gain to depend on the length T of observed SC rule, write $\Delta = \Delta(T)$ with $\Delta'(T) > 0$. Holding the other changes fixed, one term can leave the SC side below the open-election threshold while two terms move it across. This is a counterfactual statement about what would have happened had reservation been withdrawn after the first term. The second election remains reserved, so an SC candidate wins it regardless of whether the first incumbent survives. Because reputation accrues to the group, the second term adds exposure even when a different SC individual holds office. This extension is not required for Proposition L.1.

Once reservation is withdrawn, an SC candidate enters if and only if

$$b + \pi_0 + \Delta - \delta K_0 \geq z^*(W_0 + G). \tag{L.8}$$

PROPOSITION L.1 (Persistent political entry). *Suppose* $V > c(W_0)$ *and*

$$b + \pi_0 - K_0 < z^*(W_0), \qquad b + \pi_0 + \Delta - \delta K_0 \geq z^*(W_0 + G). \tag{L.9}$$

Then no SC candidate enters before reservation, an SC candidate governs under reservation, and SC entry persists after reservation is withdrawn. Conditional on

entry, the post-reservation probability of an SC victory is

$$F(b + \pi_0 + \Delta - \delta K_0) > 0.$$

Persistence is more likely when the effective SC electoral base b is larger, the reputational gain Δ is larger, a smaller fraction δ of the patron's initial advantage survives, or SC control creates a larger stock G of politically usable resources.

Proof. Equation (L.3) and the entry condition imply no SC entry before reservation. Eligibility restriction and $V > c(W_0)$ produce SC entry and victory during reservation. By Equation (L.7), reservation raises the SC side's electoral score by

$$\Delta + (1 - \delta)K_0 > 0.$$

It also lowers the entry threshold by

$$z^*(W_0) - z^*(W_0 + G) \geq 0,$$

with a strict inequality when $\lambda > 0$. The second inequality in Equation (L.9) implies that the post-reservation entry condition is satisfied. The comparative statics follow from the monotonicity of F and $z^{*\prime} < 0$. □

The proposition makes no claim that reputation, network depreciation, and financial resources can be separately identified from the entry response alone. All three relax the same entry condition.

L.3 Policy and distribution

The allocation rule in Equation (L.4) is the citizen-candidate element of the model: candidates cannot commit to ignore their distributional preferences once elected. It captures both the enforcement of programmes formally prioritizing SC households and discretion over the location and beneficiaries of welfare and public goods.

Let q_1 denote the post-reservation probability that an SC head holds office, taking account of entry:

$$q_1 = \mathbf{1}\{b + \pi_0 + \Delta - \delta K_0 \geq z^*(W_0 + G)\}\, F(b + \pi_0 + \Delta - \delta K_0)\,.$$

Expected post-reservation targeting towards SC households is therefore

$$E[\theta_1] = q_1\theta_S + (1 - q_1)\theta_N.$$

COROLLARY L.1 (Persistent distributional change). *Under the conditions of Proposition L.1,*

$$E[\theta_1] - \theta_N = q_1(\theta_S - \theta_N) > 0.$$

Thus a temporary reservation can change the expected distribution of public resources after the eligibility restriction ends. By assumption, total provision Y is fixed; the derived result concerns its incidence, not its aggregate level.

To connect flows to assets, let household assets equal initial assets plus the sum of net flows received over time. When an SC head governs, per-capita SC receipts rise by $Y(\theta_S - \theta_N)/\mu$, while per-capita non-SC receipts fall by $Y(\theta_S - \theta_N)/(1 - \mu)$ relative to patron rule. Repeated SC officeholding therefore narrows the SC–non-SC asset gap whenever SCs are initially poorer. This accounting observation supplies no prediction about the size of the effect or its exact distribution within either group.

By Equation (L.6), the politically mobilizable fraction of these gains produces the increment G in Equation (L.7). The economic effect of SC office then feeds back into politics by lowering $c(W)$. If an SC candidate wins again after the quota lapses, the same logic raises politically usable resources further and relaxes the next entry condition. Political control and economic resources can therefore become self-reinforcing.

REMARK L.2 (*New and displaced elites*). A fixed part R of the ruling side's allocation may accrue to the head's household and nearby political associates. Under patron rule, this return goes to households connected to the historically dominant side; under SC rule, it goes to households connected to the SC head. The change in officeholding can therefore enrich a concentrated set of SC households, widen inequality within the SC population, and remove the returns to office from the previously ruling non-SC side even though total resources remain fixed. The model does not derive which households become connected or the resulting quantile effects.

L.4 Group size, cohesion, and scope

The threshold representation gives a simple interpretation of the size results. Define

$$b_0 = z^*(W_0) - \pi_0 + K_0, \qquad b_1 = z^*(W_0 + G) - \pi_0 - \Delta + \delta K_0.$$

COROLLARY L.2 (Population share and cohesion). *The two dimensions generate distinct treatment-effect patterns.*

Population share. *For fixed σ, because $b_1 < b_0$, reservation changes the extensive margin of SC entry for villages with*

$$b_1 \leq b < b_0.$$

For $b < b_1$, the SC side remains below the entry threshold after withdrawal. For $b \geq b_0$, it was already viable without reservation. The effect of reservation on political entry is therefore concentrated at intermediate values of μ. With an S-shaped F, the corresponding change in victory probability is also largest around this interval: at low μ treated villages remain below the threshold, while at high μ controls begin to catch up.

Cohesion. *Define the never-reserved probability of SC officeholding as*

$$q_0(\mu, \sigma) = \mathbf{1}\{b(\mu, \sigma) + \pi_0 - K_0 \geq z^*(W_0)\}\, F(b(\mu, \sigma) + \pi_0 - K_0)\,,$$

and let $\tau(\mu, \sigma) = q_1(\mu, \sigma) - q_0(\mu, \sigma)$ denote the effect of prior reservation. Fix μ and suppose baseline exclusion holds throughout the observed support of cohesion:

$$b(\mu, \overline{\sigma}) + \pi_0 - K_0 < z^*(W_0). \tag{L.10}$$

Then $q_0 = 0$ throughout that support, while q_1 is weakly increasing in σ and strictly increasing wherever an SC candidate enters. Hence the effect of reservation, τ, increases with cohesion over the observed range.

The cohesion result is deliberately local to the empirical support. At a sufficiently extreme value of σ, a never-reserved village could also cross the baseline threshold, at which point the treatment effect need not

keep increasing. The distinction is that the observed population range spans the region in which controls catch up, while the maintained condition in Equation (L.10) says the observed cohesion range does not.

REMARK L.3 (*Selection, proximity, and within-group incidence*).

The core model treats the SC candidate as representing a political side. We now distinguish the personal wealth of potential candidates from the resources available to that side. Let w_i denote the wealth of potential candidate i, while W_t remains the stock of SC-side resources that can support political activity. Candidate i enters when

$$\varphi_{it} V \geq c(w_i, W_t), \qquad c_w < 0, \quad c_W < 0, \tag{L.11}$$

where φ_{it} is the candidate's perceived probability of winning among the individuals contesting the election. This individual probability is distinct from p_t, the probability that the SC side defeats the non-SC patron.

Holding φ_{it} fixed, Equation (L.11) defines a personal-wealth threshold

$$w_i \geq w^*(W_t), \qquad w^{*\prime}(W_t) < 0.$$

When SC-side resources are initially scarce, this threshold is high and early entrants are positively selected on wealth. Redistribution subsequently raises W_t, lowering the personal-wealth threshold and allowing entry from a broader part of the SC wealth distribution.

Allocation within the SC population. Let h_t denote the SC head in term t. We distinguish two relationships to the head:

$$E_{ih_t} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if household } i \text{ is an economic or political associate of } h_t, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}$$

and

$$P_{ih_t} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if household } i \text{ is connected to } h_t \text{ through physical or social proximity,} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Economic and political associates are more likely to be initially wealthy, whereas proximity connections need not be. Let $q_i \in [0,1]$ denote household i's initial wealth rank within the SC population. We assume

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial q}\Pr(E_{ih_t}=1 \mid q_i=q,S)>0, \qquad \Pr(P_{ih_t}=1 \mid q_i=q,S)=\bar{P}_t>0. \quad \text{(L.12)}$$

The second condition is a transparent benchmark: households throughout the wealth distribution may live near, be related to, or otherwise interact with the head.

Decompose the redistribution D into a broadly allocated component $D-R$ and an office-linked component R, where $0 \leq R \leq D$. The latter can include private returns, brokerage benefits, and preferential access to programmes. Let $\rho \in [0,1]$ denote the share of R directed through economic and political relationships rather than proximity. The material gain to SC household i is

$$g_{it}^{S}=\frac{D-R}{\mu}+\frac{R}{\mu}\left[\rho\frac{E_{ih_t}}{\bar{E}_t}+(1-\rho)\frac{P_{ih_t}}{\bar{P}_t}\right], \quad \text{(L.13)}$$

where

$$\bar{E}_t=\Pr(E_{ih_t}=1 \mid S), \qquad \bar{P}_t=\Pr(P_{ih_t}=1 \mid S).$$

This normalization preserves the aggregate redistribution:

$$\int_{i\in S} g_{it}^{S}\,di=D.$$

Equation (L.13) generates two forms of short-run heterogeneity. First, early heads and their economic associates are positively selected on wealth. The expected gain at wealth rank q is

$$E[g_{it}^{S} \mid q_i=q,S]=\frac{D-R}{\mu}+\frac{R}{\mu}\left[\rho\frac{\Pr(E_{ih_t}=1 \mid q_i=q,S)}{\bar{E}_t}+(1-\rho)\right],$$

which increases with q whenever $R\rho>0$. The model therefore predicts larger gains towards the upper part of the SC distribution without specifying a particular percentile at which the effect begins.

Second, the effect is not confined to households that were initially wealthy. An initially poor household with $P_{ih_t} = 1$ receives the proximity component of R in addition to the broad component $D - R$. The model can therefore produce both an initial separation of the upper deciles and genuine gains among poorer households connected to the head. It does not require that all members of the head's SC jati receive the office-linked component; the relevant connection is household-specific.

The displaced non-SC jati. Let $J_i = 1$ if non-SC household i belongs to the jati that would have controlled the GP in the absence of reservation, and let

$$\bar{J} = \Pr(J_i = 1 \mid N).$$

The material loss to non-SC household i is

$$\ell_i^N = \frac{D - R}{1 - \mu} + \frac{R}{(1 - \mu)\bar{J}} J_i. \tag{L.14}$$

The first component spreads part of the loss across non-SCs. The second removes the office-linked returns previously received by the counterfactual ruling jati. Hence members of that jati lose

$$\frac{R}{(1 - \mu)\bar{J}}$$

more than other non-SC households. Moreover,

$$\int_{i \in N} \ell_i^N \, di = D,$$

so Equations (L.13) and (L.14) remain consistent with the fixed resource flow.

Broadening over time. The broad component $(D - R)/\mu$ accumulates whenever SC rule continues. Meanwhile, the increase from W_t to $W_t + G$ lowers $w^*(W_t)$, allowing later entrants to come from lower wealth ranks. If the identity of the head changes across terms, the sets of economic associates and proximate households also change. Repeated SC rule can consequently expand the set of households receiving office-linked benefits. Early effects may therefore be upper-tail-heavy while still reaching some poorer proximate

households; subsequent entry and changing networks can make the incidence of gains broader over time.

This extension yields qualitative rankings rather than an exact distribution. It does not predict a particular decile cutoff, the number of connected households, or the rate at which benefits broaden. None of these refinements is required for Proposition L.1.

REMARK L.4 (*What the model leaves to the data*). The core model's SC candidate represents a political side rather than a particular person or jati. Proposition L.1 predicts whether at least one serious SC challenger emerges, not the number of entrants or their strategic interaction.

Remark L.3 refines this representation by distinguishing the candidate's personal wealth w_i from the SC side's political resources W_t. It generates qualitative rankings: initial entrants are positively selected on wealth; office-linked gains are larger among the head and his associates; proximity allows some initially poorer households to benefit; and the displaced non-SC jati loses the returns attached to office. When economic connections are positively associated with initial wealth, these gains are initially concentrated towards the upper part of the SC asset distribution. As W_t rises, the personal-wealth threshold for entry falls, allowing the candidate pool and the relevant political networks to broaden.

These are directional predictions. The model does not determine the exact wealth percentile at which effects become larger, the number or jati composition of entrants, personal turnover, vote shares, or effect magnitudes. Broadening over time additionally requires either changing heads and networks or accumulation of the broadly distributed component of SC gains. Finally, because π_t belongs to the SC side, political persistence does not require personal incumbency.

Summary. The core model reduces the argument to one entry condition. Reservation raises the SC side's electoral score by

$$\underbrace{\Delta(T)}_{\text{observed SC rule}} \quad + \quad \underbrace{(1-\delta)K_0}_{\text{interruption of patron advantage}} \quad ,$$

TABLE L1. A compact mapping from the model to the results

Model object	Logical role	Empirical counterpart
Baseline exclusion, Equation (L.3)	Maintained condition	In never-reserved GPs, SCs supply fewer than 6% of candidates and hold 1.8% of headships.
Persistent entry, Proposition L.1	Core equilibrium result	After withdrawal, SC candidacies increase 2.5-fold and SC headships sixfold. The model predicts the extensive-margin change, not these magnitudes.
Persistent distributional change, Corollary L.1	Direct implication	Formerly reserved GPs continue targeting PMAY housing and water-and- sanitation projects towards SC households and wards.
Population share and cohesion, Corollary L.2	Comparative static	Effects are largest at intermediate SC population shares. Over the observed range in which controls remain excluded, the reservation effect increases with SC homogeneity.
Individual entry cost $c_i(w_i, W_t)$, Remark L.3	Optional selection refinement	The entry condition produces initial positive selection on wealth. As SC-side resources increase, the wealth threshold falls, permitting subsequent entry from a broader part of the SC distribution. The model does not predict the exact composition or number of candidates.
Broad allocation $D - R$ and office-linked allocation R, Remark L.3	Optional incidence refinement	Gains are larger towards the upper part of the SC asset distribution and among the head and nearby households, but are not confined to households that were initially wealthy. The non-SC jati displaced from office falls behind ruling jatis in never-reserved GPs.
Duration, Remark L.1	Optional extension	Increasing $\Delta(T)$ provides the model hook for why two reserved terms can produce post-quota viability when one term would not.

and lowers the entry threshold by

$$\underbrace{z^*(W_0) - z^*(W_0 + G)}_{\text{resources generated by SC control}} .$$

If these changes jointly cross the entry threshold, a temporary quota creates persistent SC competition. Group-aligned distributional preferences then

change who receives public resources, while the politically usable share of those gains facilitates subsequent entry.

The incidence extension does not alter this core result. It separates personal wealth w_i from group resources W_t and divides redistribution into a broad component $D - R$ and an office-linked component R. A high initial wealth threshold selects relatively wealthy entrants and makes early gains upper-tail-heavy through their economic associates. Because political networks also include poorer proximate households, gains need not be confined to the initially wealthy. As group resources rise, the individual entry threshold falls and subsequent political participation can broaden. At the same time, the non-SC jati displaced from office loses the office-linked component of its prior allocation.