

Why votes are (not) for sale — Empirical evidence from Southern India

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Abstract

India is the world's largest democracy. One of the reasons why it is considered a “flawed” democracy is that elections are often “rigged” by the practice of political candidates paying “cash for votes” (C4V). C4V is potentially undermining democratic values and good governance. My talk provides a progress report on a project that uses large-scale surveys to identify determinants of why voters do (or do not) sell their votes in a rural border region of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. We use regression analysis to study correlates of voters' willingness to fight C4V, and their instrumental and non-instrumental motives to accept C4V. We also explore the causal effects of two interventions to mitigate C4V which relate to strengthening civicness among voters and improving transparency about politician characteristics.

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