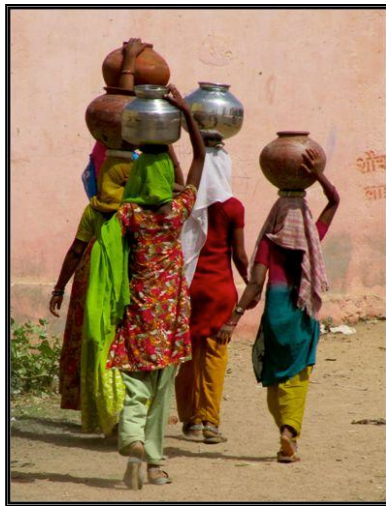


Democracy Beyond Elections: Citizen claim-making in rural India



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Citizen claim-making

- How do ordinary people see & experience the state?
- Whether & how citizens claim services
 - Rarely purely “public” services
 - Subjects of political contestation
- Political participation & representation
 - Quotidian citizen-state relations
 - Beyond the voting booth

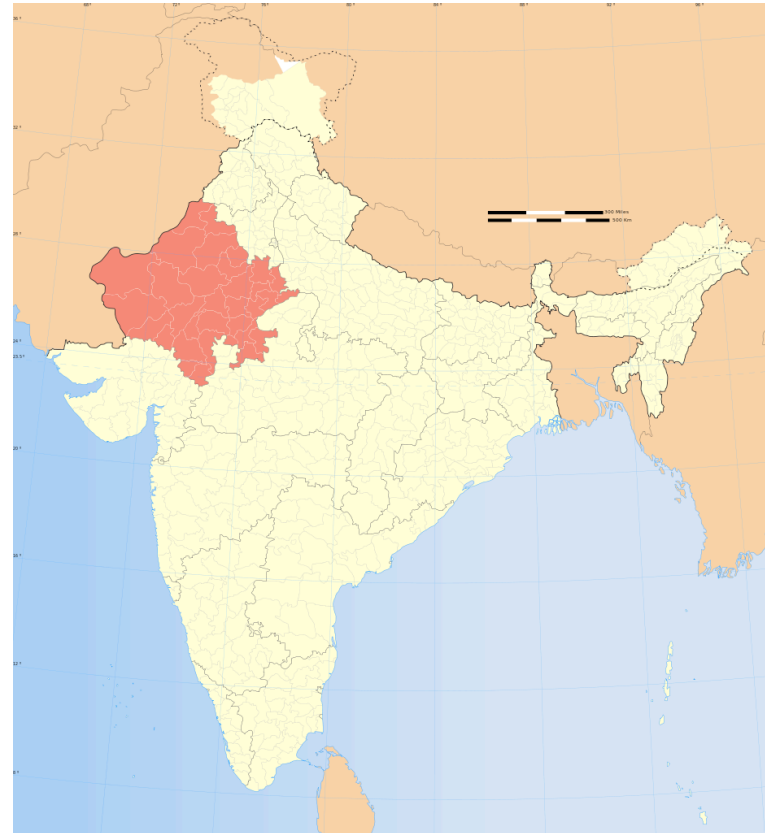
Context

- 18 months in Rajasthan, India
 - 2210 surveys
 - 400 interviews
- Why India?
 - Robust procedural democracy
 - Participation by poor & lower castes
 - Procedural vs. substantive outcomes
- What do citizens of the world's largest democracy do on a day-to-day basis when seeking services from the state?



Context

- Rajasthan
 - Poor, rural
 - Princely, feudal legacies
 - But (relative) progress in human development and social spending
 - Proliferation of services, but uneven delivery





We know about *sarkari* [government] schemes.... We know our rights, we demand them. When the water is not flowing, it is the responsibility of the *sarkar*. They bring the water, from god knows where, but they bring the water.



Sarkar? Where is it here? We have no services, no water. No one comes to us.... We are excluded. What can we do? God willing, we survive.

“For years we have suffered because of lack of water in this neighborhood. The village council does not hear us, so why should we waste our time going there? At election time the *mota aadmi* [fat men] make many promises, then they forget us. The only way we will get water is to dig our own well.”

“There are so many schemes, for electricity, for education, for [welfare programs]. But who is going to hear the *aam aadmi* [common man]? We went so many times, but they did not hear us. Finally, we approached Mr. G [a caste leader]. He is *jagruk* [aware] and knows how to get things done. When the right people speak, then they hear us.”

“When the teacher did not come, we organized ourselves. We went out to the main road and we blocked it with stones. They had to pay attention. Even the District Collector came The teacher was embarrassed, and the issue was improved. When the work is not done, go straight to the top!”

Questions

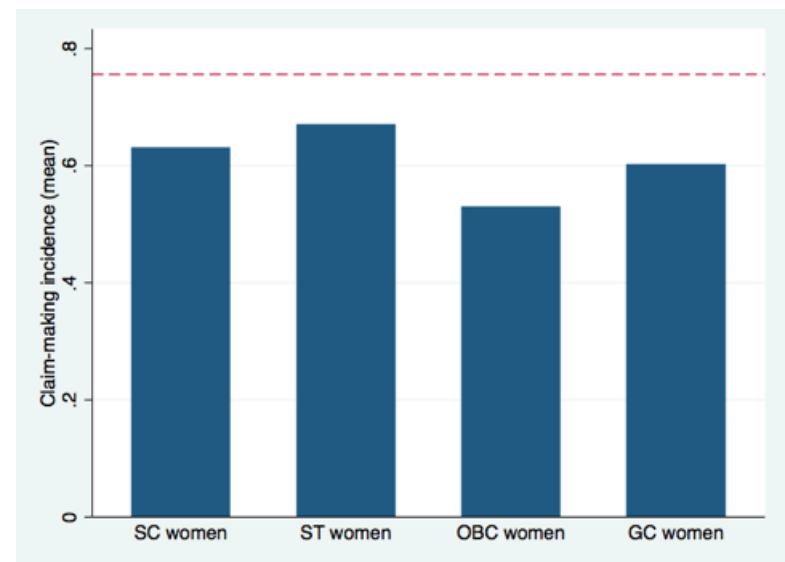
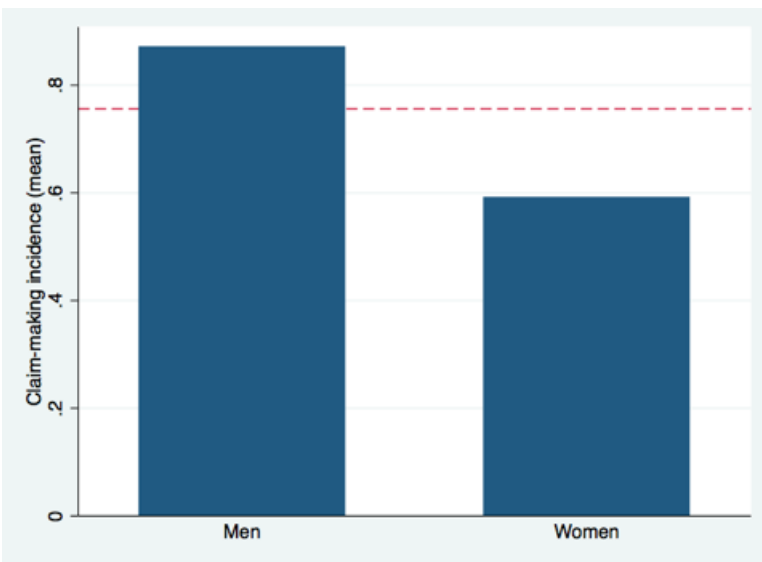
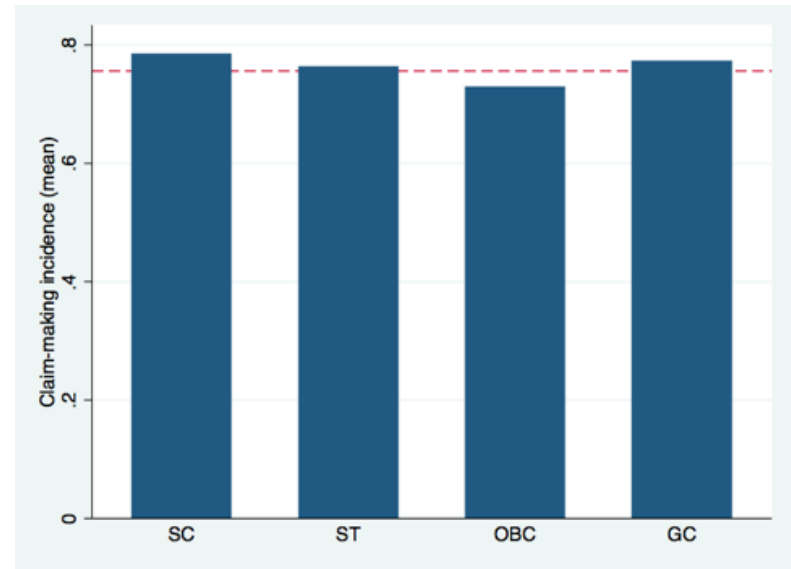
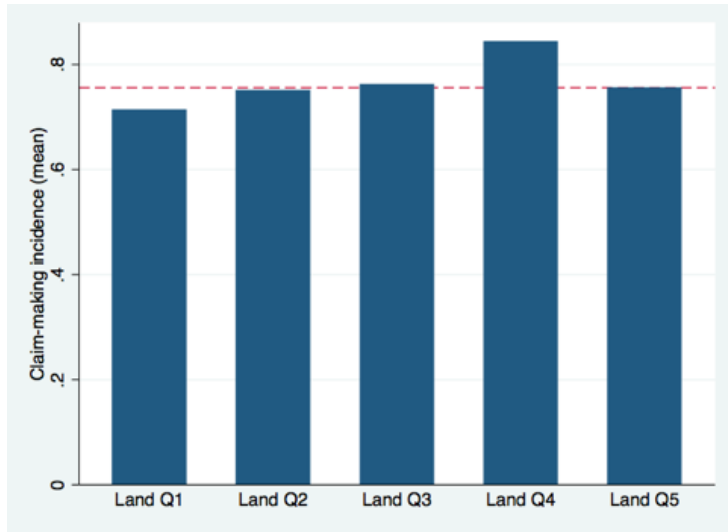
- Participation: who speaks up?
 - Who makes claims on the state?
- Representation: who speaks through whom
 - What are the channels for claim-making?
- Citizen-state relations: how do citizens navigate the state day-to-day?

Outline

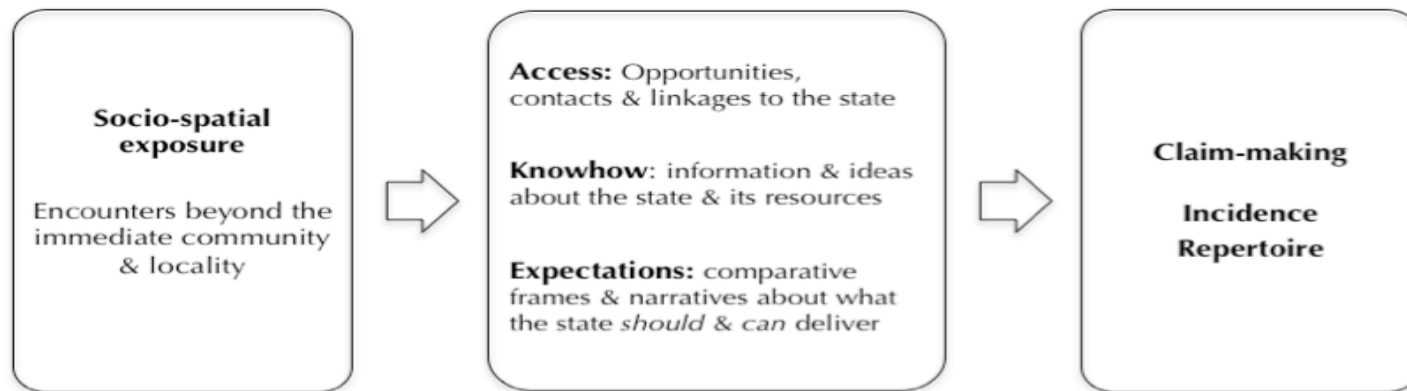
1. Data: patterns & puzzles
2. Theory: accounting for individual variation in claim-making practice
3. Qualitative accounts of why & how citizens engage the state
4. (If time) snapshot of results from survey analysis

Claim-making practice

Obs. = 2210	Mean	Std. Dev.
INCIDENCE	0.76	0.43
DIRECT	0.65	0.48
Gram Panchayat	0.62	0.48
Parties	0.22	0.41
Bureaucrats	0.21	0.41
MEDIATED	0.54	0.50
NH Association	0.22	0.41
Village Association	0.15	0.36
Caste Association	0.23	0.42
Inter-caste body	0.14	0.34
NGO	0.03	0.16
People's movement	0.09	0.28
Fixers	0.17	0.37



Socio-spatial exposure



- Exposure beyond immediate community & locality
- Access, Knowhow (information, ideas), Expectations
- Exposure to difference: diversity as a resource

Illustrations

“Because I move outside I see things, how the world works. And when I come home I know that the panchayat should be doing such and such thing, that the *sarkar* should provide all these things.” (OBC man, traveling cook)

“We see how in other villages people are getting things. Poor people like us. That is how we have come to know about all the schemes that are available....I saw a man who got a house under the SC scheme....Next time my son will go to the meeting and demand that our name is on the list. If he is getting these things, why not us?” (Scheduled caste woman)

“You would have to be blind not to see! There are so many schemes. Over there [in the main village] they have CC [paved] roads, and the panchayat brought water connections to every house. Where is our road? Where is our water?” (Scheduled caste man)

Illustrations

“I talk to people on the way, and in the fields, and this way you come to learn about who is good, who will help you. Someone will say, so-and-so, he is *jagruk* (aware), he can get things done. And so when the water pump was broken, I knew where to turn.” (Woman agricultural worker)

“My cousin-brother works in Ahmedabad and Mumbai, and he tells how people there block up the traffic and raise their voices when there is some issue to resolve. So I thought, let us try this here.” (Youth protest organizer)

Illustrations

“Sarpanch sahib has to do this work. Who else would we turn to? We are not *setting-log* [connected people]. There is the sarpanch and only the sarpanch. So if he lies about eating fruits, then what are we to do? Nothing. We sit here and we die.”

“We asked and asked. We went every which way telling people about our need. This is how work gets done – by raising the issue to anyone with an ear.... both here in the village and outside. Tell it to any official or *neta*, any *babu*, even the *sanstha* [NGO] people.”

Summing up

- Socio-spatial exposure as a driver of claim-making
 - Exposure facilitates access & knowhow
 - Enables & motivates claim-making,
 - More likely to make claims (incidence)
 - Diversity of practices (repertoire)

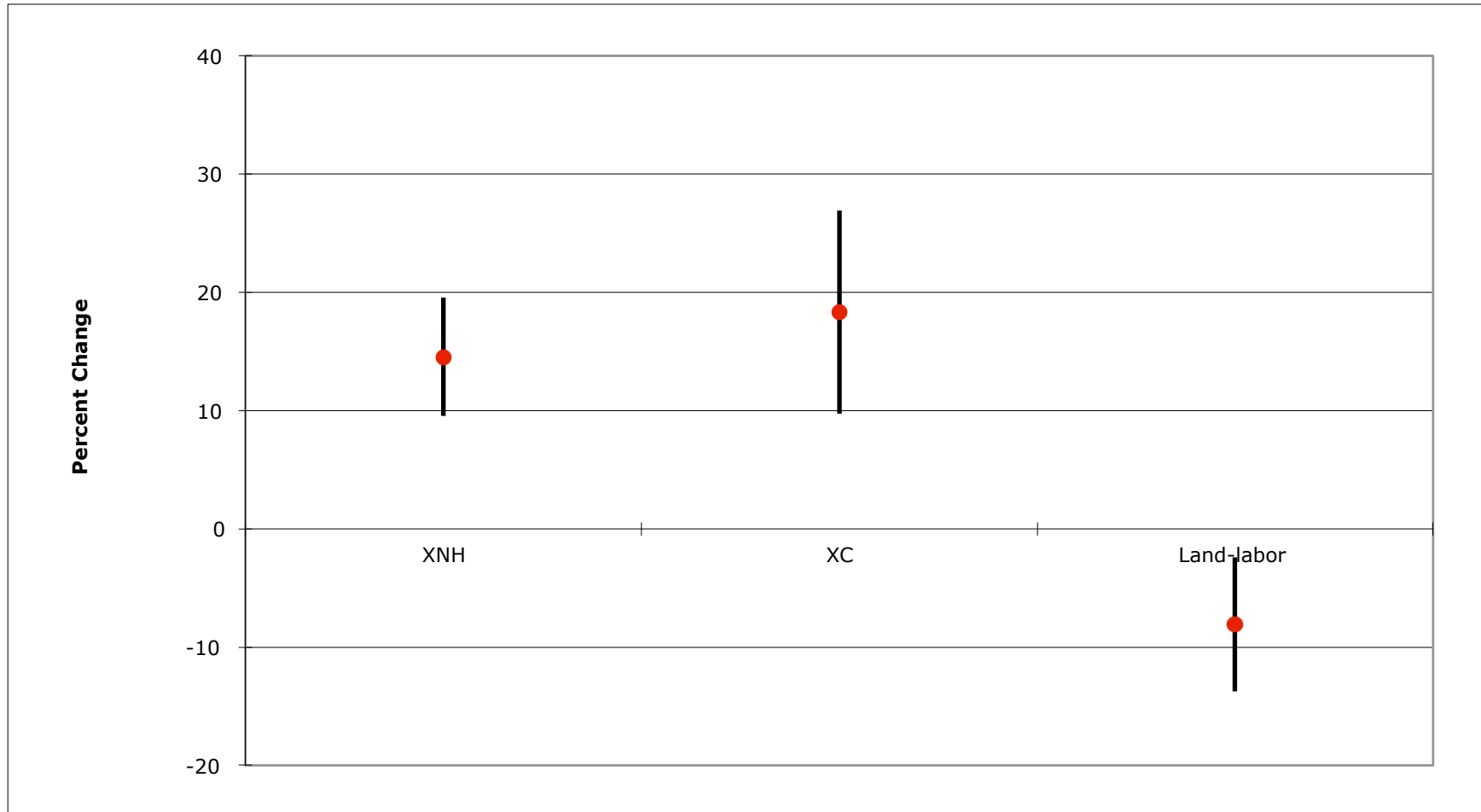
Conclusion

- Socio-spatial exposure as a key driver of claim-making incidence & repertoire
 - Greater exposure = more likely to exercise political voice & to engage the state in more diverse ways

Implications & interpretation

- Implications for theories of participation
 - Micro-determinants, beyond SES, caste, gender
 - Diversity as a resource?
- Theories of citizenship
 - Claim-making as citizenship practice
 - What conditions produce active citizens
- Interpretation?
 - Active citizens in a robust democracy?
 - Or active citizens facing a democratic deficit?

Exposure & claim-making incidence



Exposure & claim-making repertoire

