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1. INTRODUCTION

The 'anti-corruption movement' that emerged in 2011 often looked likely to overturn long-held conceptions that observers had about Indian politics. The movement appeared to appeal to a popular and deep-set disillusionment with the political class in India, and drew large crowds, fired up by the effort to eliminate corruption from public life. It at times appeared to herald a structural shift in Indian politics, given its fleeting capacity to energise the steadily more apathetic middle-classes to re-engage in politics. Despite the victory by Narendra Modi's BJP in the 2014 election, the movement is by no means over: a central aim of this research is to understand the impact of the anti-corruption movement, which is vital if we seek to comprehend fluctuations in contemporary Indian politics.

1.1 Argument outline

This paper examines the impact that the increasing salience of corruption has had on political discourse surrounding Indian MPs. By content analysing two English-language newspapers, it finds that over two timeframes before and after the emergence of the anti-corruption movement in 2011, the way that Indian MPs were represented became increasingly negative, with the predominant issue being corruption. This broadly holds true for all parties, not just incumbents, suggesting increased negativity is not simply due to fatigue with the party in power.

The paper then discusses these findings against the results of the 2014 Lok Sabha election, in which the highest ever number of candidates with criminal charges became MPs (ADR India 2014). Using the findings from the CSDS National Election Survey in order to resolve this apparent paradox, it contends that while the English-language discourse suggests that a 'good' MP is one not 'tainted' by corruption, voters

appear willing to overlook this if other factors are present. Moreover, the average voter may hold dissimilar conceptions of the 'good' MP as compared with middle-class counterparts. In discussing the findings and their implications, the paper points to further avenues for research in examining the notion of the good MP.

1.2 Rationale and Aims

This paper is being written in the wake of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) victory in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. Led by Modi, the traditionally Hindu nationalist party ran on a platform of development. While the BJP ran an effective campaign, at times it appeared as though the anti-corruption movement would derail the party's prospects. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by Arvind Kejriwal, a key player of the movement, rose to become Chief Minister of Delhi in the assembly elections in late 2013. So far, this has proved to be the zenith of the party's success, and AAP gathered only four seats in the Lok Sabha in 2014, with around 2% of the vote share (Election Commission of India 2014).

'Corruption' is taken to mean "the abuse of public authority or trust for private benefit" (IMF 2014). In India, it is deemed to be ubiquitous in public life: the country ranked 94th in Transparency International's *Corruption Perception Index* (2013). 'Crorepati' politicians (i.e. worth more than 10million Rupees) often seemed to exemplify this problem: 82% of the new cohort falls into this category (ADRIndia 2014).

This research does not focus on the policies and potential of the anti-corruption movement, or its party offshoot, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Instead, it explores the effect that the increasing salience of corruption, signalled by the movement's emergence, has had on the representation of India's elected MPs through a specific medium. To be sure, corruption existed in political discourse, and public life, before the anti-corruption movement emerged (as the furore surrounding the 2010 Commonwealth Games

demonstrated). The hypothesis here, however, is that the general representation of MPs, specifically through their English-media portrayal, has become more negative since corruption became an increasingly prominent issue.

By looking at two one-year timeframes before and after the emergence of the movement, this paper aims to discern, understand and quantify the impact that it has had on the representation of MPs in the English-language print media. This is the key significance of the research. Furthermore, the media is not a passive reporter of facts but an actor too, and this examination will look at how it has responded to and relayed the corruption rhetoric, alongside subsequent discourses surrounding Indian MPs.

The paper contains both explanatory and exploratory elements. It is explanatory in its use of content analysis to test hypotheses about the changing discourse surrounding Indian MPs, as well as by revealing the way in which Indian MPs are represented in one important section of political discourse, and how this has changed after the emergence of the anti-corruption movement.

The research is exploratory, however, insofar as it is enquiring into a recent and continuously emerging phenomenon. In exploring the general representation of Indian MPs in the English-language press, this research finds numerous avenues for further study, particularly in the context of the 2014 election.

1.3. Scope

By concentrating on the English-language media, this research focuses on the impact of the representation of Lok Sabha MPs in the context and discourse of India's English-speaking, middle-classes. The focus was narrowed to Lok Sabha MPs, rather than politicians of all kinds, because of their national, elected character, and because time commitments prevented the possibility of examining the discourse surrounding a broader set of political actors. To attempt to assess the impact of the anti-corruption

movement across the entire spectrum of Indian public life would also be an impossibly large feat for an MSc dissertation, and logistical constraints have narrowed this focus to a small but important part of India's political discourse. Moreover, the question of how the 'good' MP is conceptualised focuses on the representation of Indian MPs in media outlets that cater specifically to readers from India's English-speaking middle-classes, who invariably hold different views to those of the larger masses.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. MPs and criminalisation

The English-speaking middle-classes, a group defined by Varma (1998) as aloof and concerned with consumption and material self-interest, nowadays broadly tend to have a poor image of Indian politicians, and frequently describe them as "lazy", "corrupt", "incompetent", or even "criminal". The last of these descriptions is well-documented: almost one third of the 15th Lok Sabha's parliamentarians had criminal charges against them (see ADRIndia 2013; North 2013a, 2013b; Vaishnav 2014a). Of these, 44 of the ruling Congress Party's 206 MPs had declared criminal charges against them (North 2013a). Demonstrating that this is not an anomaly, the recently elected 16th Lok Sabha contains the largest number of criminal MPs ever (ADR India 2014).

The churning of MPs between the 15th and 16th Lok Sabha demonstrates at once the description by Mitra about an anti-incumbency tendency to "throw the rascals out", which subsequently creates the opportunity to "induct some rascals in" (Mitra 2001:125). This appears to sum up the Congress's plight, having been reduced to just 44 MPs at the 2014 election, while the BJP has acquired 282 MPs, of which 35% have criminal cases pending against them (ADR India 2014).

This anti-incumbency mood is far removed from the early years after Independence, when Congress dominated elections and its leader, Nehru, was akin to a "philosopher king" (Kaviraj 1991:85). Indian politics has experienced various structural changes in its 67 years, however: the decline of Congress and the rise of caste parties, Hindu nationalists, hereditary MPs, and even 'bullock capitalists' and business MPs have transformed the nature of Indian democracy and the composition of its politicians (Bose 2013; Corbridge & Harriss 2003; Sinha 2010; Sridharan 2010). Moreover, as the number of parties has proliferated, the proportion of votes needed to win a plurality has decreased, incentivising MPs to dispense private benefits to patronage networks, or 'vote banks', rather than deliver public goods (Chhibber & Nooruddin 2004). This problem of fractionalisation within the electorate has been documented in other developmental contexts (Alesina, Baqir & Easterly 1999). Some politicians even simply appeal for votes based on caste or regional identities, rather than on promises of delivering better public services (Jeffrey 2002; Michelutti 2007, 2008). On this basis, some conceive India as essentially a patronage-based democracy (Piliavsky *forthcoming*), with only scattered outliers, particularly Kerala, successfully generating social development (Heller 2000:486). The incentive to deliver immediate private over long-term public goods is an endemic problem for democracy (Dahl 1989).

The criminalisation of politics may be symptomatic of this process (see Corbridge, Harriss & Jeffrey 2013; Singh 1997). Even the oldest politicians in parliament lament the visible decline in political standards (Economist 2013). In 2002 the Vajpayee administration overturned an Election Commission order compelling parliamentary candidates to declare criminal records (Hewitt & Rai 2010). Meanwhile, a government ordinance in 2013 protecting criminal MPs was described by the usually tacit Rahul Gandhi as "complete nonsense" (Mallet 2013).

Aidt, Golden and Tiwari (2011) find, however, that some parties actively nominate known criminals as this depresses turnout by intimidating voters. Vaishnav (2014a) argues that criminals often have a better chance of winning, as they tend to be self-funded, and, in some contexts, such as those with weak rule of law and divided communities, a criminal reputation suggests that the candidate would credibly protect his community's interests. If so, while incentives for such selection remain in place, expecting criminal MPs to disappear from public life may be far-fetched without broader structural changes.

Despite this, many Indian politicians still paradoxically attempt to uphold a 'Gandhian' image by preserving the tradition of wearing white *khadi*, thereby presenting a 'clean' impression, rather than surrendering to new fashions of global capitalism (Chakrabarty 1999).

Given these structural shifts that have allowed for the rise of criminalisation and patronage networks, perception of corruption in India is endemic. According to *The Economist*, "[i]n a recent poll 96% of Indians said corruption was holding their country back, and 92% thought it has got worse in the past five years" (Economist 2014). India came 94th with a score of 36 out of 100 in Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index* of 2013, where 0 is "highly corrupt", and 100 is "very clean". This, has deteriorated slightly since the anti-corruption movement emerged: it came 87th in 2010. Moreover, the Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy Index* of 2012 placed India a respectable 38th, but listed it as a "flawed democracy" largely because of its score for "political culture" which earned it 5/10: the same as China, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

2.2. Demographic shifts

Alongside these developments, by 1999 a marked, paradoxical shift had taken place in the composition of the electorate, with poor, less-educated voters becoming much more

politically active, relative to their better-off counterparts (Alam 1999; Yadav 1999). Corbridge, Harriss and Jeffrey (2013) argue that the middle-classes, who are often the best equipped to engage in politics and ensure accountability, have largely withdrawn from the public sphere and increasingly choose private services over public alternatives – an aspect of their "elite revolts". Alam (2004) suggests that these classes have become disillusioned with the functioning of India's democracy. Trust in government has waned (Mitra 2001). Moreover, Drèze and Sen (2013) posit that this ability to choose private services and insulate oneself from public life reflects the increasingly destructive divide between India's "haves" and "have-nots".

This disillusionment arguably laid the foundations for the anti-corruption movement, with the hunger strike in 2011 by the social activist, Anna Hazare, bringing the issue of corruption in politics to the forefront of many voters' minds, with regular protests and demonstrations over the issue. Politicians were seen as the "definition of contempt" (Laul 2013), and MPs were accused of abject incompetence (Bhat 2012). The 'anti-corruption movement' now comprises various factions, including AAP, which sought to appeal to the disillusioned middle-classes, by focusing on corruption (Wyatt 2014). The record turnout in the December 2013 Delhi election appeared to indicate early success in this endeavour (*Times of India* 2013; Vaishnav 2013a). The new "None of the Above" option on ballots has also allowed voters to actively express dissatisfaction, but while Election Commission (2014) data claims that six million voters chose this option, it may not prove transformative as it is not a right-to-reject option (Vaishnav 2013b). Moreover, some have suggested AAP's idealistic platform would hinder India's long-term economic development (Das 2014; Vaishnav 2014b).

2.2.1. Rascals everywhere

Politicians are nowadays low in the esteems of citizens in many democracies: in 2013, 18% of British voters believed that politicians tell the truth (Ipsos MORI 2013), while in

the US, Congressional approval ratings sank to 9% in November 2013 (Newport 2013). But when Indians, especially educated ones, see chaotic images of hysterical MPs blocking proceedings (or using pepper spray) in parliament, they may be especially repulsed; this, along with the serious dysfunction itself, presents a danger to India's parliamentary democracy (Khaitan 2013a). Indeed, it is one reason why other institutions are becoming more activist, notably the Supreme Court (Hewitt & Rai 2010; Khaitan 2013b).

2.3. Corruption

The abuse of public office for private gain is a universal phenomenon, considered by the IMF (2014) to have a damaging impact on a polity's governance. Khan (1996) points out that corruption can be defined both normatively and positively: normative definitions consider corruption to be a deviation from ethical norms or something that harms public interest, while positive definitions relate to breaking legal rules.

While corruption is generally accepted to be a bad thing, in some developing country contexts it has been considered "an efficient grease", substituting for deficient institutions (Chang 2007; Leff 1964; Méon & Weill 2010). Bertrand et al (2008), however, show that in India, corruption often leads to distorted resource allocations and regressive consequences. By looking at corruption within the driving regulatory authorities, they note that many unqualified drivers obtain licences through bribery, reducing public safety.

This research does not explore questions of the costs and benefits of corruption, and works with the assumption that political corruption involves an element of illegality, such as bribery or kickbacks. By working with this formal definition, this research acknowledges but bypasses a wider debate over the limits of corruption.

2.4. Media

The print media market in India is the world's largest and growing fast, making it a valuable channel for interpreting political discourse (Vaidyanathan 2011; KPMG & FICCI 2009; MRUC & Hansa 2012). Significant research has been conducted into the media's role, and, specifically, how it does not simply report facts but filters the message in ways that can spin stories or attach ideological bias (see Davies 2009; Goldberg 2008; Jamieson & Campbell 2005; Mullainathan & Schleifer 2002).

Sen (2012) has worried about heterogeneity, inaccuracy, and bias prevailing in the Indian media. Indeed, Indian politicians have been known to purchase space in some newspapers, especially local ones, to ensure favourable publicity (Sainath 2013). With the enormous exposure that some newspapers can offer, some celebrities have seen the benefit of this too (Auletta 2012).

Newspapers remain vital for disseminating information about MPs, however, thereby influencing voter behaviour (Keefer & Khemani 2004). They are therefore a useful medium through which the discourse surrounding MPs can be analysed. Because of significant differences in the content between Indian newspapers (Vilanilam 1975; Haneefa K & Nellika 2010), this research uses more than one newspaper.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Newspapers

This study uses a content analysis methodology, examining a sample of articles from two national newspapers. Mass circulation, English-language newspapers were used both because they contain and reflect political discourse, but also because it was feasible to analyse their content within the research timeframe. For a variety of reasons, the

newspapers selected were the *Times of India* (ToI) and the *Indian Express* (IE). Firstly, their mass circulation indicates that their coverage is broadly mainstream rather than fringe or parochial. Second, they are largely considered to be located around the centre of the political spectrum. By using two newspapers, the potential problem of bias or ideology contained by either newspaper was mitigated.

Most importantly, however, these publications were both easily accessible through LexisNexis software, which contained many though not all Indian national newspapers, shrinking the pool of available options.

3.2. Years

The years of analysis are 2010 and 2013. Initially, the intention was to use 2008 and 2013, as both lie at the same points in their respective electoral cycles: i.e. the year preceding a general election. However, the database did not contain full samples of articles for 2008, and therefore, for logistical reasons, a decision was taken to use 2010 instead. As 2010 lies before the emergence of the anti-corruption movement (taken to be 2011), this remained logical, given that the timeframes still lie before and after this phenomenon's rise. 2009 was ruled out because it was a general election year, which would most likely skew the results by raising the coverage of Indian MPs.

3.3. Content analysis

The content analysis methodology entails "a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings" (Berg 2009:338).

Articles from the newspapers were filtered and gathered through LexisNexis using the Boolean search term "'MP" & "Lok Sabha'" and coded using Microsoft Excel. Given the time constraints and enormity of data, a systematic sampling method was adopted, filtering every second article in the data set. This yielded 1224 articles, after

duplicates were identified and removed. Table 1 shows the breakdown of articles in each sub-set of the sample.

		Total articles	Sample (without duplicates)	Duplicates (removed)
2010	ToI	325	160	2
	IE	352	173	3
2013	ToI	1154	565	11
	IE	689	326	18
Total		2520	1224	34

Table 1: Number of articles in dataset

Coding of articles was conducted to reflect whether the tone of the MP's depiction is "positive", "negative", or "neutral". To enhance the methodology's validity, the study "analyse[s] the data minutely", by coding multiple categories (Berg 2009:354). These include: the reasons for the tone; whether the newspapers were covering similar stories; length of articles; specific party coverage; mentions given to the anti-corruption movement; and the most common negatively mentioned MPs.

Disaggregating these variables allowed for alternative hypotheses to be tested, such as that the government has simply become more unpopular (or corrupt) over this period, and that media representation merely reflects this. This might be supported if representation deteriorates solely in the case of MPs belonging to the ruling coalition.

Moreover, to test for the possibility that a greater proportion of media stories represent MPs negatively *only* because of the reporting of the pronouncements by leaders within the anti-corruption movement (who often focus on political corruption), a binary variable was applied to indicate whether the article mentions members of this movement.

Although causality cannot be inferred from this method alone, evaluating these findings allows us to see if the hypothesis that MPs are increasingly depicted in a negative light in political discourse after the emergence of the anti-corruption movement is supported. The findings here are the project's key, original contribution to knowledge.

Furthermore, the findings from this methodological approach are easily replicable given the parameters laid out.

3.4. Limitations

3.4.1 Causality

Given the time constraints, there are numerous limitations to the methodology. Content analysis allows for hypotheses about the impact of the anti-corruption movement to be tested, and permits a broad appreciation of the shifts in political discourse and the way that MPs are represented. But it does not allow for causality to be comprehensively concluded, which would require an even larger data-gathering exercise, followed by further statistical testing.

3.4.2. Database limitations

In addition, the use of the years 2010 and 2013 is adequate given that they are respectively before and after the emergence of the anti-corruption movement, but 2008 may have been preferable to 2010 given that both years would then lie at the same point in the electoral cycle. For logistical reasons, however, LexisNexis did not contain data for 2008 for either of these newspapers (or for any other similar English-language Indian newspaper), and gathering this data would therefore have been impossible given the time constraints.

3.4.3. Search terms

Given the study's focus, the search terms used were: "'Lok Sabha" & "MP'". The study and search terms were limited to Lok Sabha MPs because expanding the research to examine MPs from both houses, as well as ministers and very prominent MPs (such as Rahul Gandhi), or even state- and local-level politicians, created prohibitively large datasets. As elected national politicians, Lok Sabha MPs were the focus of this study,

though further research could expand the scope to see if similar results are produced when examining other groups of politicians.

3.4.4. Confined to one social group

Moreover, the methodology adopted here focuses on the English-language media and therefore the conception of the good MP within the discourse of India's urban, middle-classes. While this is interesting, given the schisms in Indian society and the growing inequality and disconnect between the middle-classes and the larger population, it is important to recognise that the findings here only tell a small part of the story about how MPs are conceived across society. The idea of the good MP in contemporary India is almost certainly not uniform, and it is probable that different groups within society have conflicting conceptions.

The findings of this study are restricted to this one elite section of Indian society therefore. The elites are likely to expect and demand different things of Indian MPs, as compared with other, poorer sections of society. Inferences cannot be made about the shifting representations of Indian MPs, or about the impact that the anti-corruption movement has had on political discourse, beyond the domain of the English-speaking middle-classes.

Recognising this limitation points to the possibility for much further research into the way that Indian MPs are represented in discourse across Indian society, and how the good Indian MP is conceptualised according to different groups, as well as how these conceptions may have changed over time.

4. ANALYSIS

Having constructed the database of articles that mentioned "Lok Sabha" and "MP" from the two newspapers and over the two one-year periods, the analysis developed in a number of phases.

4.1. Tone

The coding system for the article tone was tripartite, using the terms "positive", "negative" or "neutral".

A negative article was one in which an MP was described in a way that alluded to or alleged "corruption", "criminality", "disruption", "incitement", "misconduct", or "negligence". These six sub-categories collectively encompassed all varieties of negative MP description. While corruption often involved committing a specific crime (such as bribery or fraud), this was treated as a separate category as it was of special interest. Disruption referred to actions in the parliament. Incitement related to the inflammation of usually communal tensions. Misconduct could range from unwanted sexual advances to making objectionable comments. Negligence referred to an MP's incompetence, or failure to take an action that was expected or warranted.

Positive articles, which were far less frequent, were grouped into four sub-sets: "action", "integrity", "obituary" and "image". Action often referred to the establishment of a development project or scheme or other 'good works'. Integrity referred to the broader attitude of the MP being described in an amenable way. Image was more specific, as some MPs were often praised for their "clean" image, for example, or for their effectiveness. Obituary was a category in itself because it was frequently the case that MPs were described positively only after they had died.
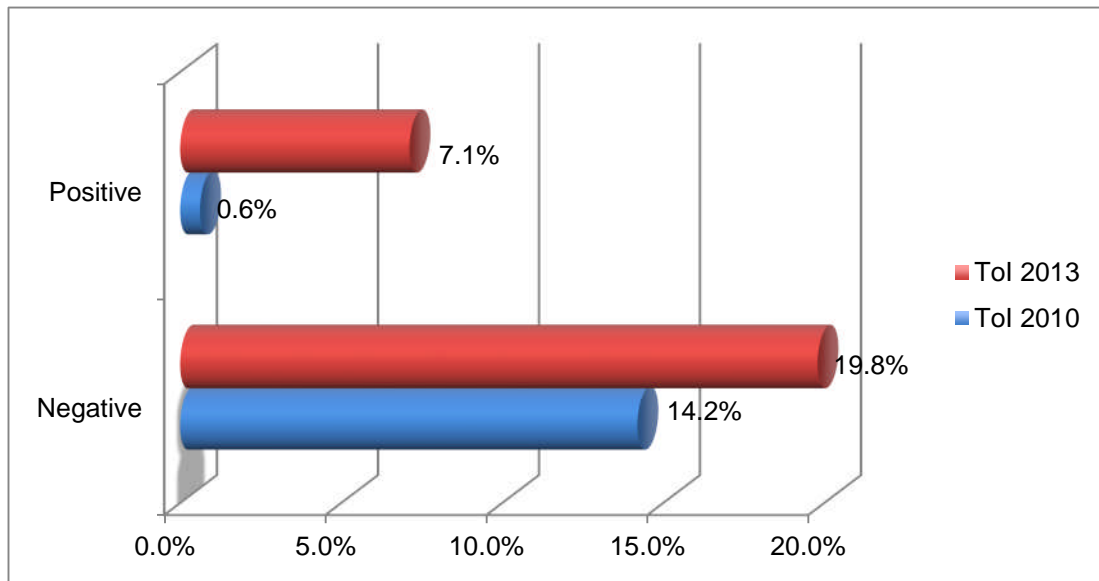
Figure 1: Share of *Times of India* negative and positive articles about Indian MPs
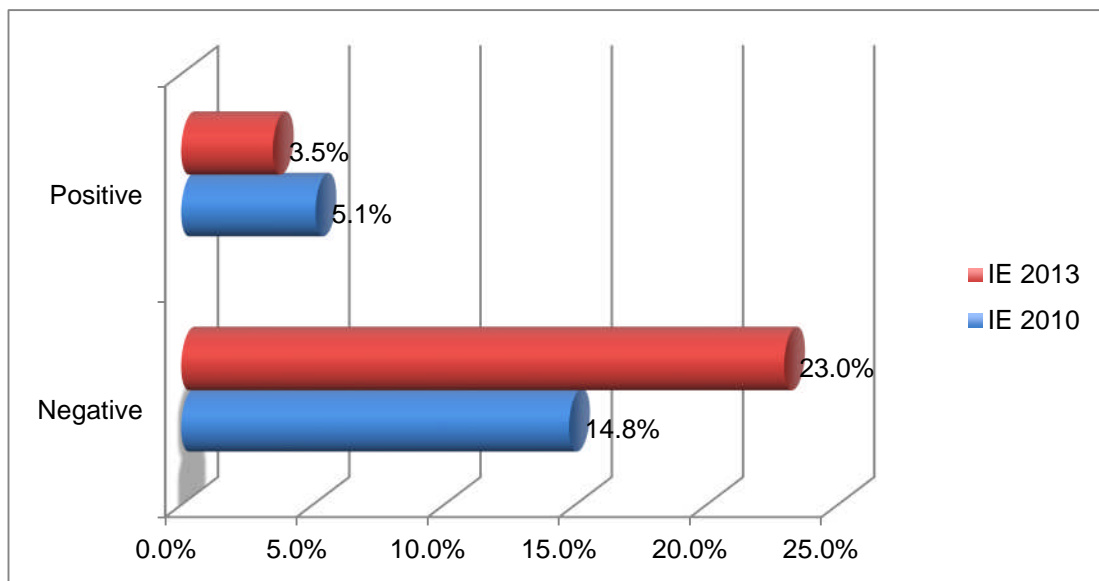
Figure 2: Share of *Indian Express* negative and positive articles about Indian MPs

The result of this analysis, depicted in Figures 1 and 2, showed that the proportion of negative articles did increase noticeably between the two periods. The *Indian Express* jumped from containing 14.8% negative articles in 2010 to 23% in 2013. For the *Times of India*, the corresponding figures were 14.2% and 19.8% respectively.

The proportion of positive articles was significantly lower than that of the negative articles. In the case of the *Indian Express*, the proportion of articles decreased

from 5.1% in 2010 to 3.5% in 2013. In absolute terms, this constituted just nine and 12 articles respectively. For the *Times of India*, the proportion rose markedly from 0.6% in 2010 (just one article), to 7.1% in 2013 (41 articles).

The vast majority of articles were neutral, in which none of the positive or negative categories applied to the description of the MP. In most cases, these articles referred to matters of party organisation, party disputes (both within parties, and between parties), and campaigns.

4.1.1. Campaign articles

It was also notable that the absolute number of articles for the 2013 sample for both newspapers was significantly higher than for the 2010 sample. The proximity to the 2014 general election appeared to be a key reason for this. This is suggested by the frequency of (neutral) articles that were categorised as "campaign".

		"Campaign" articles	% of total articles	% of neutral articles
2010	**ToI**	19	11.88%	14.18%
	IE	10	5.78%	7.25%
2013	**ToI**	165	29.20%	39.95%
	IE	99	30.37%	41.77%

Table 2: Frequency of articles categorised as "campaign"

Table 2 shows that in 2013 mentions of Lok Sabha MPs had increased markedly in both newspapers, largely because of the election campaign, which accounted for roughly 30% of articles in both newspapers. While there were occasional state elections and by-elections that occurred in 2010, the prominence of a national election campaign was a significant factor behind the rise in overall coverage.

4.1.2. Reasons for negative descriptions

Having categorised the articles according to their tone, and after establishing that many more negative articles appeared than positive ones, the research examined the reasons for the negative descriptions. The specific focus was on corruption and criminality, with the

other categories being grouped together as 'others' because individually they were far less frequent. The results are shown in Figure 3.
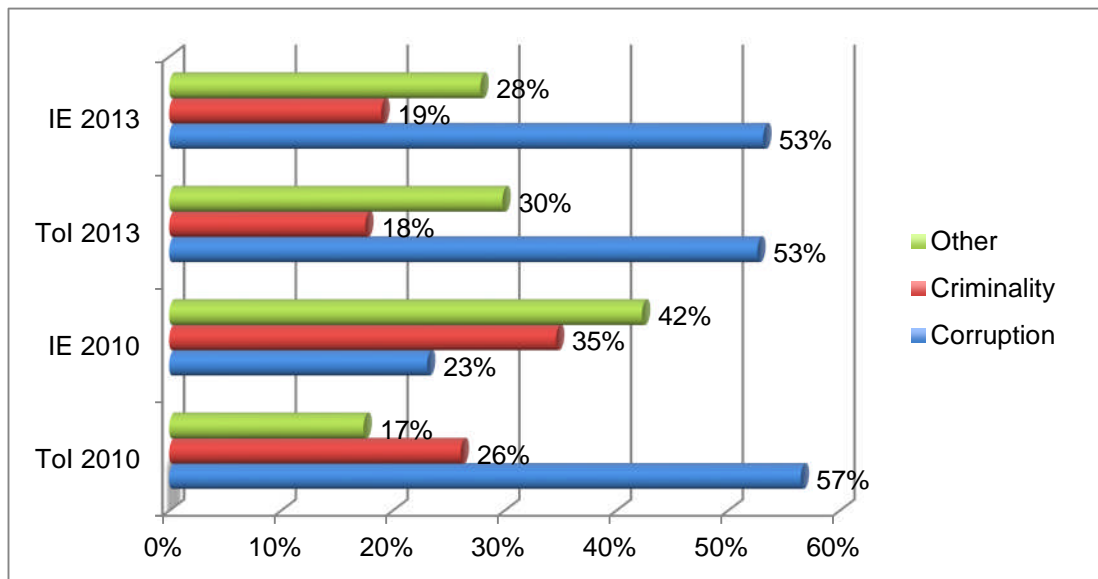
Figure 3: Reasons for negative tone

Corruption became the predominant negative issue, accounting for over 50% of the negative articles in both newspapers in 2013. In 2010, most of the *Times of India's* negative articles referred to corruption too, but for the *Indian Express* these accounted for 23%.

A key finding, therefore is that negative articles in general had increased in 2013 as compared with 2010, and that of these articles, corruption became the predominant issue.

4.1.3. Reasons for positive descriptions

The same process was conducted for positive articles, in order to assess whether there were any discernible changes in areas of positive descriptions of MPs. The results are shown in Figure 4. The sample for *Times of India 2010* is not shown in the figure below, because only one article was deemed positive, categorised under "obituary".

Figure 4: Reasons for positive tone

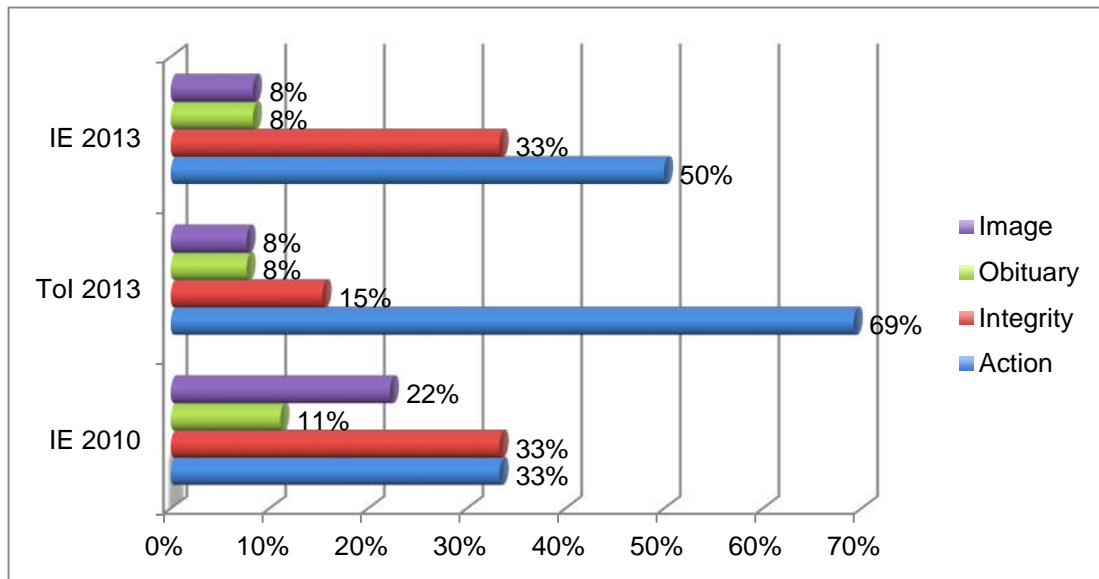In 2013, the predominant reason for a positive article was an MP's action. These mainly related to development projects carried out by MPs. By way of example, Sameer Bhujpal, National Congress Party (NCP) MP for Nashik in Maharashtra, is mentioned positively in the *Times of India* on three occasions for development work. While integrity remains important, therefore, this finding suggests that MPs are praised if they succeed in carrying out development schemes.

4.2. Same stories covered?

In order to examine whether the print media simply follows negative or positive stories, rather than demonstrating some autonomy in setting the tone and agenda, the study considered the correlation of negative coverage on a monthly basis. If a political scandal broke in one month, for example, and the media simply reported it as an impartial communicator, we could expect to see a strong positive correlation between the proportions of negative articles held in each newspaper on a monthly basis. If, however, newspapers possess their own autonomy, including the capacity to apply spin or ideology, we could expect a weaker correlation.

Oddly, the strength of the correlation differed markedly between the two timeframes. In 2010, the correlation between the monthly proportion of negative articles in the *Times of India* and *Indian Express* was 0.06, which effectively represents no correlation. In 2013, however, there was a moderately positive correlation of 0.6. The results are found in Figure 5 and 6.
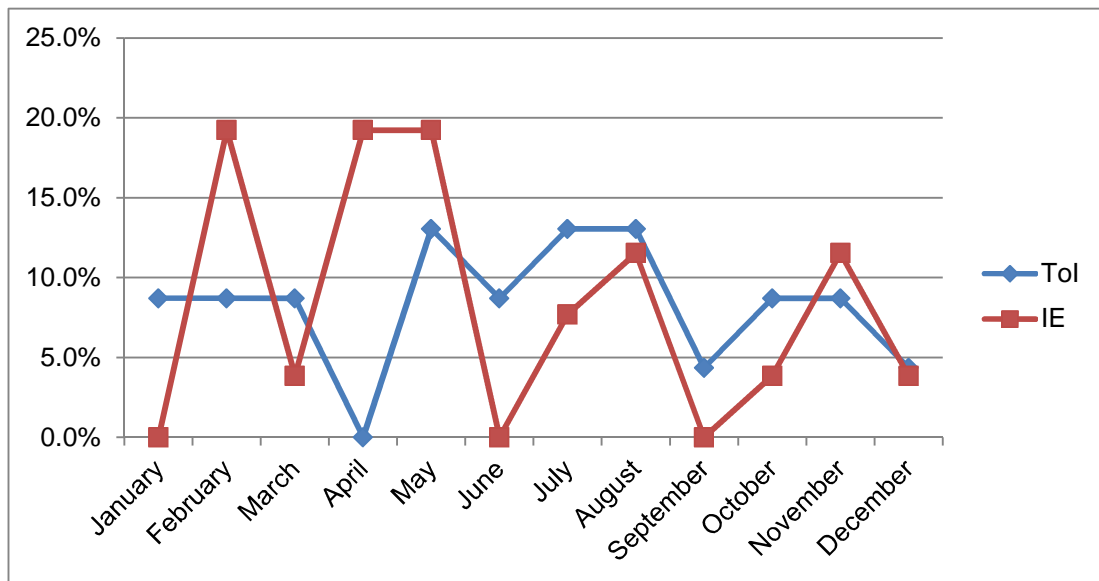

Figure 5: 2010 distribution of negative articles on a monthly basis
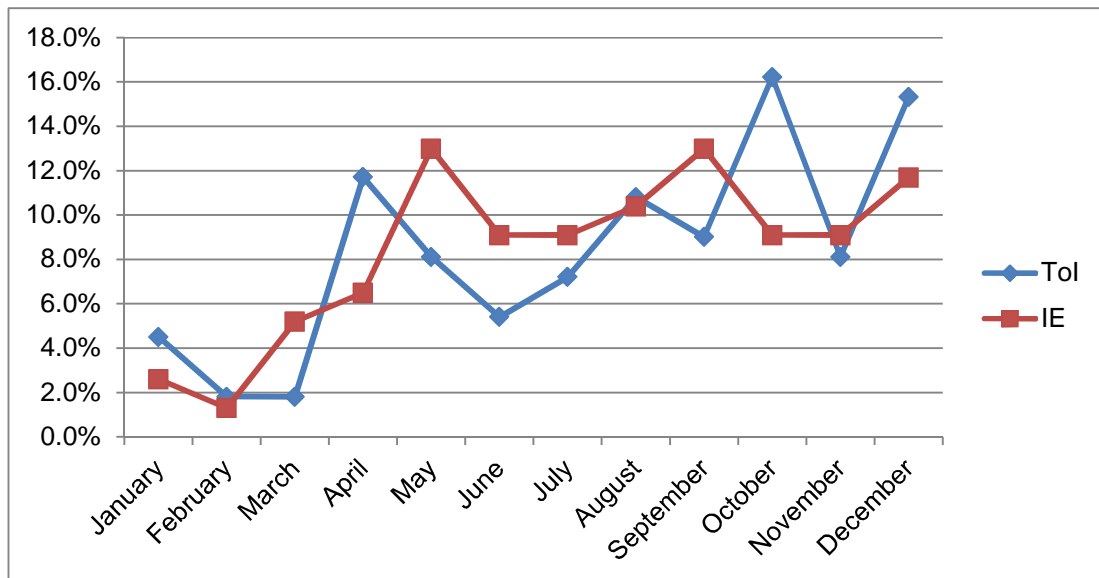

Figure 6: 2013 distribution of negative articles on a monthly basis

It could be that there are simply *more* political scandals in 2013 than 2010, which newspapers consider to constitute better stories, hence the convergence of negative

coverage. But it is more likely that a declining public attitude and impression of Indian MPs, following the emergence of the anti-corruption movement, made Indian newspapers more reactive to issues of political corruption. This would explain the converging coverage, as well as the increasing share of negative stories that highlight on corruption.

4.3. Space devoted to articles

Simply noting the proportion of negative and positive articles assumes that they receive the same prominence. The content analysis therefore examined whether there was a discernible difference in the space given to the different article types, and therefore, whether negative articles had risen in size as well as proportion between the two timeframes.

The two newspapers were compared individually, to see how they have each changed over the different periods. The *Times of India* appeared to show a marked shift, with the average length of negative articles increasing from 441 to 497 words, and the length of positive articles shrinking from 474 to 352 words. The *Indian Express* showed a similar but less pronounced pattern, with negative articles increasing (from 475 to 542 words) and positive articles decreasing (from 611 to 588 words) over the period. The results are shown in Figures 7 and 8.
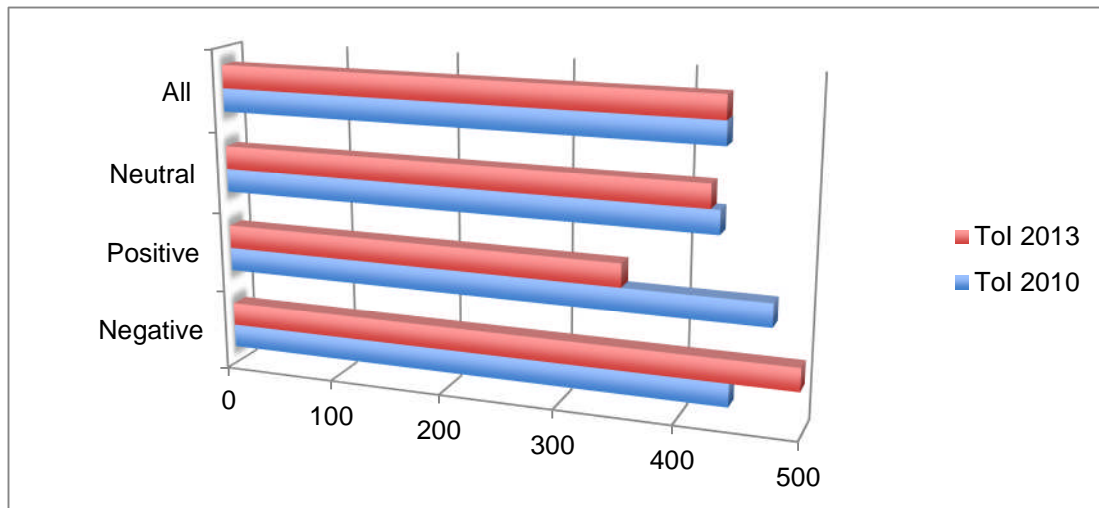
Figure 7: *Times of India* **average article length (words) for each tone category**
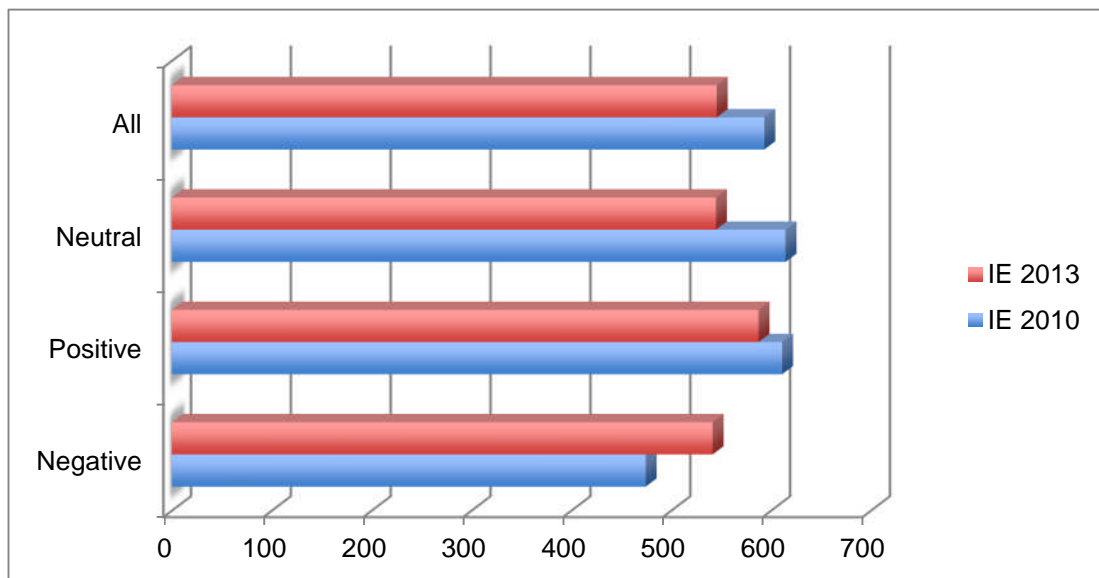
Figure 8: *Indian Express* **average article length (words) for each tone category**

So far, we have seen that in both cases, the proportion of negative articles was greater in 2013 than in 2010, and the main reason for these negative articles was the issue of corruption. Moreover, we can sense that there has been a shift in the media's general representation of MPs by the space that is devoted to their good and bad deeds: negative articles have expanded in length, while positive articles have shrunk.

4.4. Sections

Examining the section location of the articles in the newspapers was also important, in order to assess whether negative or positive pieces featured mostly in the Editorial and

Opinion sections, for example. The data showed that the vast majority of articles appeared in the News sections (usually with a specific city or region as the section given), and very few appeared as opinion pieces. Table 3 shows the number of opinion articles.

		Opinion and Editorial articles				
		Negative	Positive	Neutral	Total	% of total
2010	ToI	0	0	3	3	1.85%
	IE	0	3	12	15	8.52%
2013	ToI	1	0	0	2	0.35%
	IE	1	1	3	5	1.45%

Table 3: Opinion and Editorial section articles

The 2010 results for the *Indian Express* seem anomalously high, but overall we can see that opinion articles had little impact on the results given their surprising infrequency. It may be that editorial styles tend to omit the descriptor "Lok Sabha MP". We can conclude from this though that the findings showing increasingly negative coverage do not result from increasingly critical columns, as the articles in the sample come overwhelmingly from News sections.

4.5. Parties

Having gauged that negative coverage has increased over the period, it was vital to determine whether this has merely happened because the incumbent has become more unpopular over time. As governments continue in office, their popularity tends to wane (Beck, Carr & Walmsley 2012; Dewan & Myatt 2012). Moreover, the media often envisages its responsibility as scrutinising government actions, suggesting that the incumbent would receive the most attention and even criticism (Besley & Burgess 2002; Davies 2009). As the dominant party during these two timeframes, the hypothesis is that the INC received the largest share of negative articles.

In order to test this, an analysis of the parties receiving negative coverage was undertaken. The parties were categorised as "INC", "BJP", "Regional", "Left", and, "Many", which referred to instances when there were numerous parties mentioned and none specifically receiving criticism. The data showed the INC did receive a large share

of negative articles, but this only increased in the case of the *Indian Express*. Figure 9

shows the distribution of negative articles for the *Times of India*, and Figure 10 for the

Indian Express.
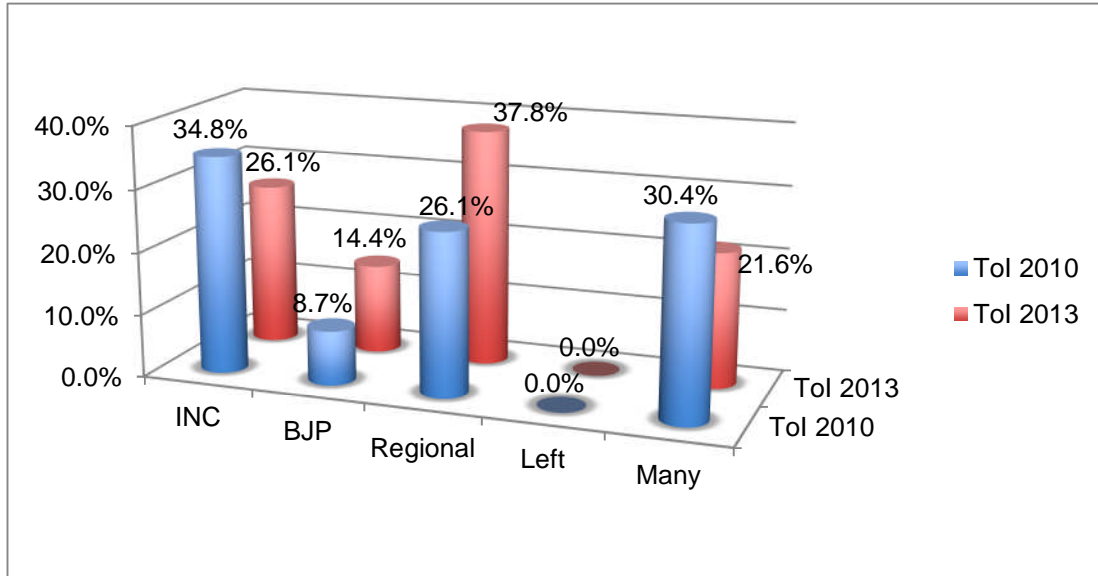
Figure 9: *Times of India* negative party coverage as percentage of total negative coverage
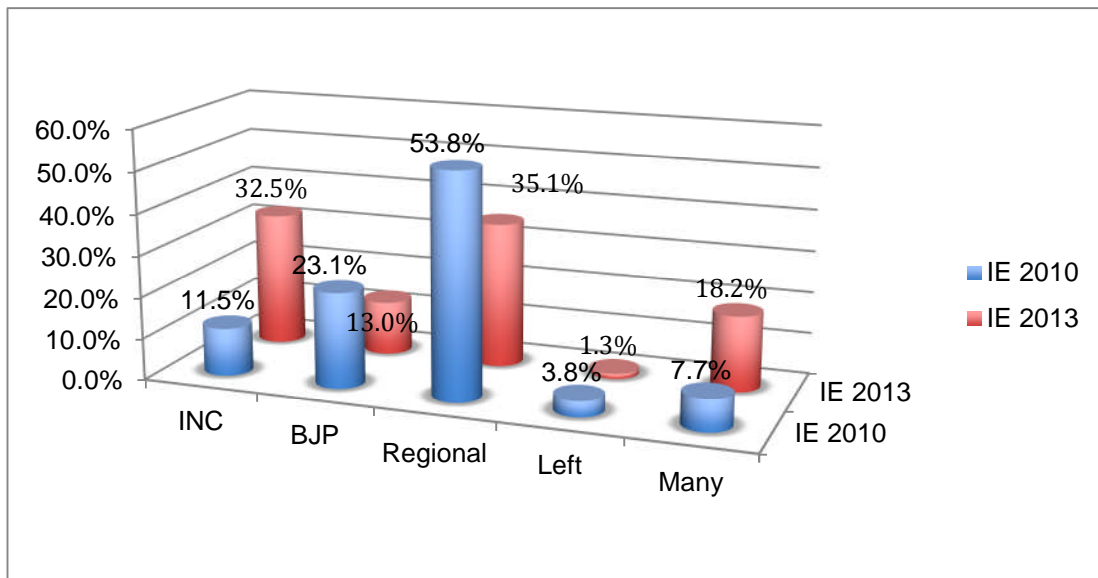
Figure 10: *Indian Express* negative party coverage as percentage of total negative coverage

The results show that regional parties collectively tend to receive the highest

share of negative coverage, but that as a single party, the INC receives significantly more

than anyone else. We cannot conclude, however, that increasing negative coverage

affects the INC alone, given that the share of negative coverage for the opposition BJP

rose in the *Times of India* between the two timeframes, and the INC's declined. We can conclude that in both newspapers the INC MPs receive significant negative coverage, but there does not appear to be a uniform increase that has followed the onset of the anti-corruption movement.

However, this finding may also be skewed by the fact that the INC, as the main party in government, may receive significantly more overall coverage than other parties, including the main opposition BJP. Indeed, this is intuitive, on the same grounds that the media is likely to aim to hold power to account. Therefore, an analysis not just of the negative media coverage is required, but the general coverage over both years.

With all articles coded according to the main party mentioned, the analysis shows that the INC, as an individual party, did in 2010 receive the most coverage – almost as much as all regional parties combined. By 2013, the BJP received similar levels of coverage however, largely because of the election campaign. Figures 11 and 12 show the distribution of coverage for the two newspapers.
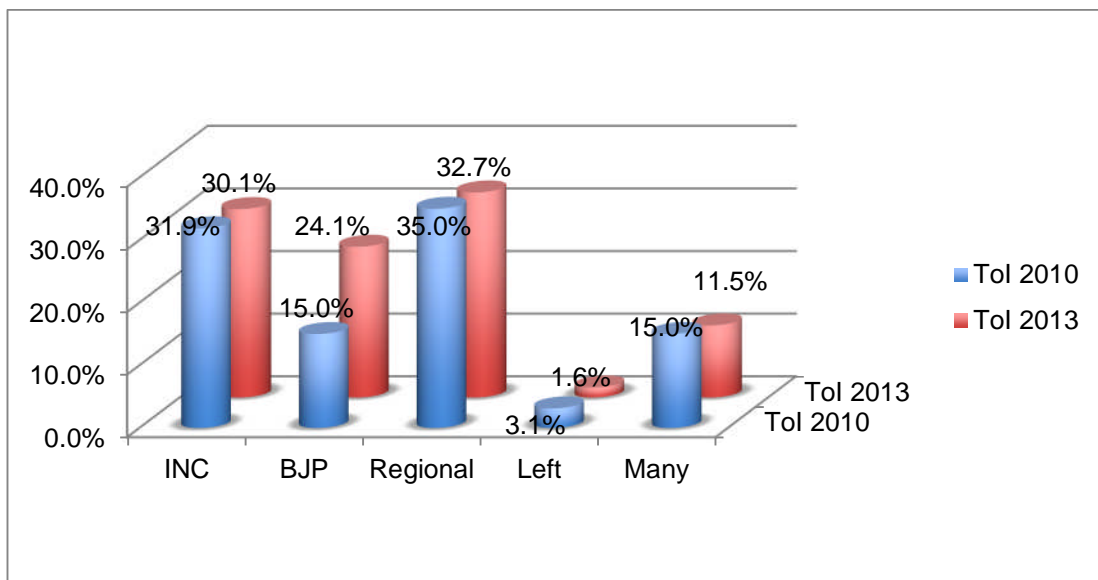
Figure 11: *Times of India* general coverage of parties as percentage of all coverage
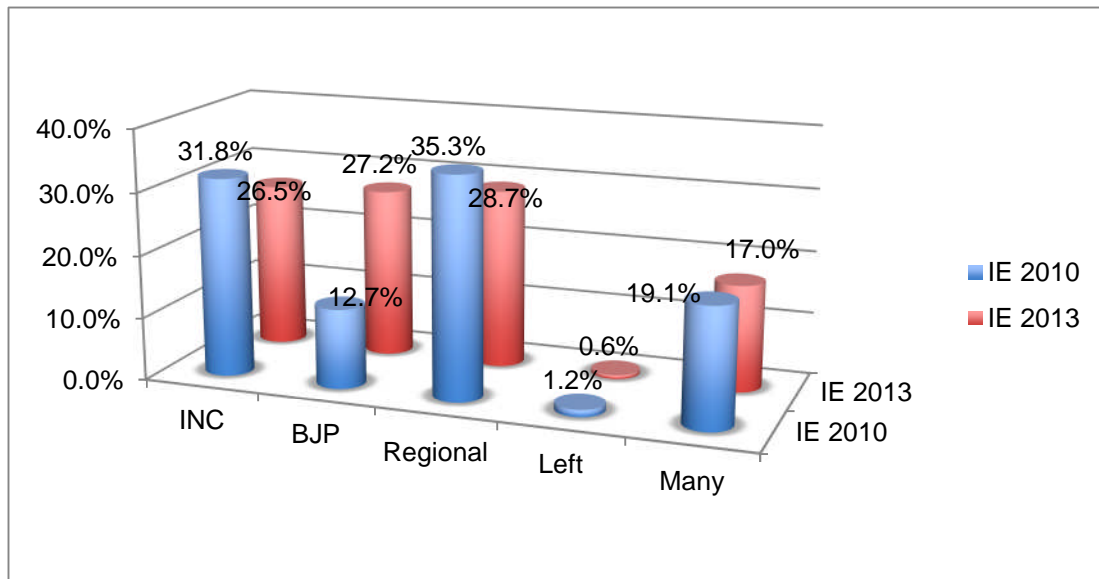
Figure 12: *Indian Express* general coverage of parties as percentage of all coverage

We can see therefore that the BJP's coverage was similar to the INC's by 2013 (and actually greater in the *Indian Express*). Since we know that the INC receives a higher proportion of negative coverage in 2013 than the BJP, despite having a similar amount of overall coverage, we can infer that the INC receives a greater ratio of negative articles to its total party coverage than that of the BJP.

To test this, a percentage was calculated, showing the negative coverage that the party receives in relation to its total party coverage, rather than in relation to all negative articles in the sample. Because of the relatively small absolute numbers attributed to the "Left" and "Many" categories, the analysis here restricts itself to the INC, BJP and Regional parties.
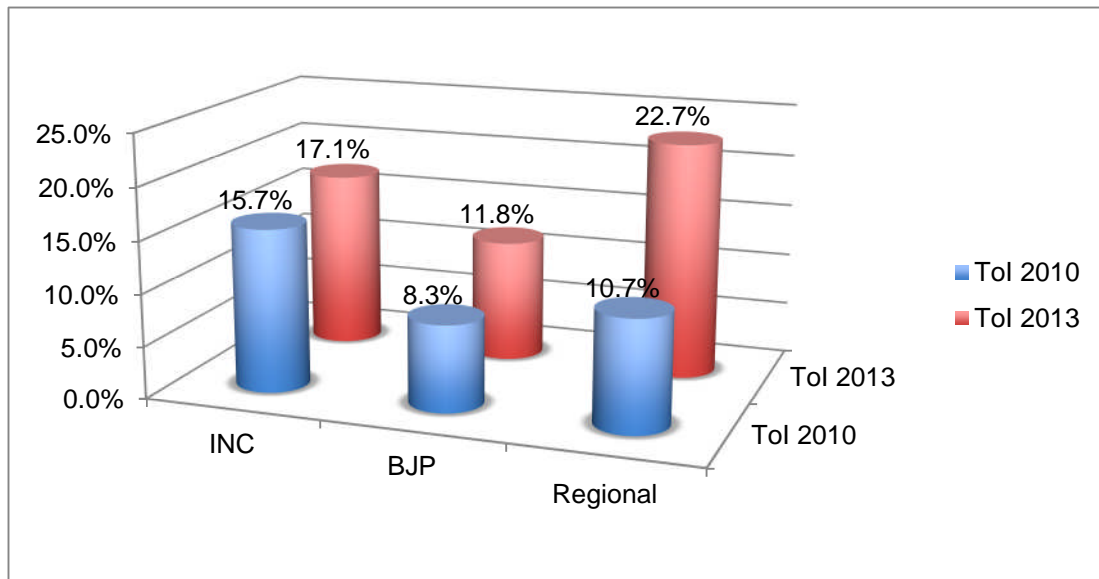
Figure 13: *Times of India* **negative party coverage as a proportion of total individual party coverage**
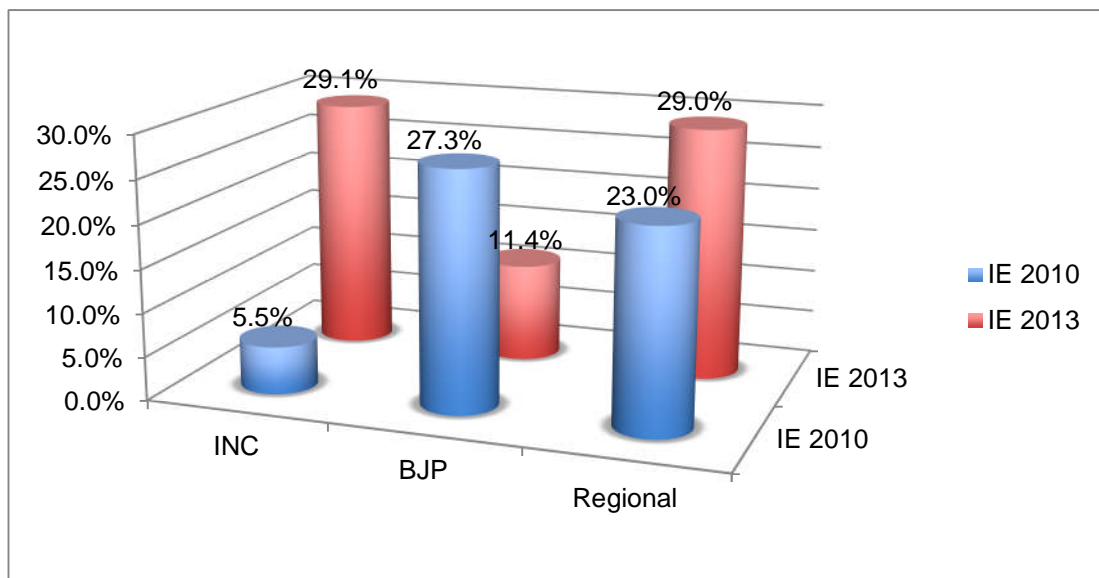
Figure 14: *Indian Express* **negative party coverage as a proportion of total individual party coverage**

The results, shown in Figures 13 and 14, are much more stark, but again we have contradictory findings between newspapers. The media representation of MPs belonging to the INC deteriorates markedly in the *Indian Express*, shifting from a negative coverage rate of 5.45% of articles focusing on the INC in 2010 to 29.07%. By contrast, for the BJP, the opposite pattern occurs, with the 2010 proportion being rather high at 27.27% but dropping to just 11.36% in 2013. For regional parties, the proportion rises from 22.95% in 2010 to 29.03% in 2013.

For the *Times of India*, the pattern of rising negative representation of MPs holds true for all three categories. The INC representation begins at a higher level, 15.69%, than in the *Indian Express*, but rises only slightly to 17.06%. Here, the negative representation of BJP MPs also rises, from 8.33% to 11.76%, suggesting that we cannot simply assume that rising negative coverage of MPs results merely from fatigue and disillusionment with the incumbent. However, BJP coverage in both cases does remain less negative than that of the INC. The type most negatively reported in the *Times of India*, however, is the regional party category, jumping from 10.71% to 22.70%.

We can conclude so far that negative articles increased as a share of the coverage of Lok Sabha MPs over the two timeframes in these two newspapers. We can also see that corruption became the predominant concern in 2013, with both newspapers focusing over 50% of their negative articles on this issue.

Moreover, we have seen that not only is more attention generally given to the INC (though the BJP catches up somewhat by 2013), but that the proportion of negative articles about the INC, relative to its total party coverage, is fairly high, and rises between the timeframes. However, articles about regional parties too become proportionately more negative over the timeframes, but in the case of the BJP the coverage is mixed: in the case of the *Indian Express* it becomes much less negative, unlike in the *Times of India*.

4.6. Explicit Anti-Corruption impact

To test whether the results are merely a consequence of the rise of mentions of the anti-corruption movement, the study checked the proportion of articles mentioning the movement explicitly, whether by referring to one of its leaders, rallies, statements, or its political offshoot, AAP.

The results here were surprising. In both newspaper samples for 2013, very few articles mentioned the anti-corruption movement explicitly: roughly 2% in both cases. Of

these, however, Lok Sabha MPs were often referred to negatively: in five out of 11 instances (45%) in the *Times of India*, and in two of seven instances (29%) in the *Indian Express*. The results can be seen in Table 4.

		Articles				
		Negative	Positive	Neutral	Total	% of total articles
2013	ToI	5	0	6	11	1.95%
	IE	2	0	5	7	2.15%

Table 4: Articles in sample that mention the anti-corruption movement

We cannot conclude, therefore, that negative coverage has increased simply because of explicit coverage of the anti-corruption movement, given that Lok Sabha MPs were referred to surprisingly rarely in the context of the anti-corruption movement in 2013.

It is not as though the anti-corruption movement received no coverage in the media, however. To verify this, another search in the LexisNexis database was conducted. The results are shown in Table 5, indicating that the movement and its leaders did receive significant coverage.

		Articles mentioning:			
		"anti-corruption movement"	"Arvind Kejriwal"	"Anna Hazare"	"AAP"
2013	ToI	36	492	344	950
	IE	20	399	202	609

Table 5: Coverage of anti-corruption movement, 2013

It is a surprise that there is so little overlap between explicit mentions of the movement and its actors, and Lok Sabha MPs, however. One possible explanation for this could be that the movement predominantly operated through social media, rather than traditional media forms (Mohapatra 2013). If so, this may explain the latent impact that the movement had on the mainstream media coverage of Lok Sabha MPs. But nevertheless, the infrequency of explicit mentions in the context of these MPs is unexpected.

4.7. Frequently mentioned MPs

Finally, the research examines the 'villains'. By considering those MPs that have been most frequently mentioned negatively, and the reasons for these frequent mentions, we may be able to gain a broad appreciation of which issues hurt an MP's reputation.

Very prominent MPs, who are not introduced as MPs but as ministers or powerbrokers, were eliminated, however, as this skews the data. MPs such as Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh or Mulayam Singh Yadav appear regularly in the dataset, but are not referred to or described as "Lok Sabha MPs", as is standard for less well-known MPs. To check the total frequency of mentions of these MPs in the respective newspapers in the two timeframes, the LexisNexis database was consulted using the MP's name as the search term. Table 6 below shows the number of articles that mentions some of these prominent individuals.

		Rahul Gandhi	Sonia Gandhi	Mulayam Singh Yadav	Narendra Modi *(not MP)*
2010	**ToI**	660	989	231	567
	IE	582	787	265	589
2013	**ToI**	1554	1766	763	>3000
	IE	1203	1070	650	2837

Table 6: Prominent MP mentions

As can be seen, in some cases, these individuals are mentioned more often than all the articles in our sample. They were therefore omitted in this analysis.

Former MPs, however, were included if they were still known for and described by their role as an MP. These were relatively infrequent, but in instances of notoriety, they received significant coverage, as the 2010 sample for the *Indian Express* demonstrates.

Table 7 shows those MPs that are mentioned negatively most frequently in the two newspapers in both timeframes.

		Name	Party	Reason	Mentions
2010	**ToI**	Rajaram Pal	INC	**Corruption**	3
	IE	Afzal Ansari *(former MP)*	SP	Criminality	2
		Anand Mohan *(former MP)*	Independent	Criminality	2
		Suresh Kalmadi	INC	**Corruption**	2
		Virender Kashyap *(Rajya Sabha)*	BJP	**Corruption**	2
2013	**ToI**	Suresh Kalmadi	INC	**Corruption**	9
		Lalu Prasad Yadav	RJD	**Corruption**	8
		Madhu Koda *(former MP)*	Independent	**Corruption**	4
		Pawan Kumar Bansal	INC	**Corruption**	3
		Brij Bhushan Saran Singh	BJP/SP	Criminality	3
	IE	Lalu Prasad Yadav	RJD	**Corruption**	7
		Suresh Kalmadi	INC	**Corruption**	5
		Pawan Kumar Bansal	INC	**Corruption**	5
		Vivekanand Gaddam	INC	**Corruption**	3
		Dhananjay Singh	BSP	Criminality	3

Table 7: MPs with most frequent negative mentions

The table gives the names for all those MPs featuring on more than two occasions in each newspaper sample, except for the 2010 sample for the *Indian Express*, where no-one was mentioned negatively more than twice. Moreover, in this sample, only Suresh Kalmadi was a current Lok Sabha MP who was depicted negatively more than once, with the other three either being former (or jailed) MPs, or MPs in the Rajya Sabha.

The most frequent reason for repeated negative mentions was corruption. Suresh Kalmadi and Lalu Prasad Yadav, involved in high-profile corruption scandals, for which both received jail terms, received substantial coverage from both newspapers in 2013. Those MPs that were considered criminal politicians were from regional parties.

4.8. Key findings

To conclude the analysis, it is worth reiterating the key findings:

• In their representations of Indian MPs, newspapers hold a **larger share of negative articles** than positive articles. This proportion of negative articles was larger in 2013 than in 2010.

- In 2013, **corruption became the predominant reason** for these negative articles, constituting more than 50% of negative articles in both newspapers. In 2010, only the *Times of India* devoted more than 50% of its negative articles to corruption, while the figure for the *Indian Express* was just 23%.

- In 2013, there was a moderately strong correlation between the monthly negative coverage of Indian MPs in the two newspapers. In 2010 there was no correlation. Despite this, the newspapers differed in some of their results, mainly to do with party coverage.

- The **average length of an article that represented MPs negatively increased** in both newspapers in 2013, relative to 2010. By contrast, the average length of positive articles decreased.

- As an individual party, the INC received the most coverage in both newspapers, but as a proportion of its overall coverage, **negative coverage of its MPs increased markedly between the two timeframes**, with negative articles constituting 29% and 17% of all articles about the party's MPs in the *Indian Express* and *Times of India* respectively. Regional parties also received high and rising proportions of negative coverage, but while the same pattern occurred for the BJP in the *Times of India*, the proportion of negative articles about BJP MPs declined in the *Indian Express* between the two timeframes.

- The **Anti-Corruption movement's impact was not explicit**: the movement received surprisingly few mentions in the context of Lok Sabha MPs. It appeared in roughly 2% of articles in both 2013 samples. Of the articles that it was mentioned, many were negative about MPs: 45% in the *Times of India*, and 29% in the *Indian Express*.

- Finally, the MPs that received the most negative coverage in the samples were Lalu Prasad Yadav and Suresh Kalmadi, both for reasons of corruption. Corruption was

the predominant reason that MPs were negatively represented on more than two occasions.

5. DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

Having examined the English-language press coverage of Indian MPs in the two timeframes, we can conclude that the issue of corruption has become more prominent, and the general representation of MPs has deteriorated with negative articles becoming more frequent, longer, and increasingly affecting all parties, not just incumbents. The 'good' MP in this discourse has a clean image, carries out developmental work, and does not engage in criminality or corruption. Other negative traits, such as disruption of parliament, behavioural misconduct, and negligence of duties are to be avoided too.

5.1. A paradox

Despite this, the latest general election produced an outcome that places the largest number of "criminal politicians" – individuals charged with criminal offences, including for rape and murder – in the Lok Sabha (ADR India 2014). There appears to be a disconnect between the way that Indian MPs are represented in the mainstream English-language press, therefore, and the prospects of these MPs. If the average voter shared the same impression of MPs as these newspapers, it would appear to be contradictory that so many criminals would win their votes.

This finding seems to generate a paradox. If voters are indeed increasingly concerned with corruption, how did the new crop of even more 'tainted' MPs get elected? In order to resolve this paradox, this final section proceeds in two stages. It first considers the reasons that have been given in post-election surveys for why voters made their decisions. It then reflects on the various problems of the electoral system that allow

parties to focus their attention on specific sections of society in order to build pluralities, while considering the implications for India's democracy.

5.2. National Election Survey

A National Election Study (NES) conducted after the 2014 Lok Sabha election by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) aimed to discern various demographic trends and motivations that lay behind voter decisions. The findings, serialised in *The Hindu* in the final days of May, provide some answers to this conundrum of why the current batch of MPs was elected.

5.2.1. Leadership

To begin with, party leadership was a crucial variable. Of all those who voted for the BJP, on average, roughly 25% said they would have voted for another party if Narendra Modi had not been the Prime Ministerial candidate (Shastri 2014). In Karnataka, this proportion jumped to 60%. Many people were not voting for the local candidate, therefore, but for the party leader; whether they considered their MP to be a 'good' MP was not the predominant concern. Moreover, Modi was the most preferred candidate on a range of indicators of 'leadership quality', including "concern for people, trustworthiness, getting things done, taking other leaders along and experience". He also came top in the survey on the question of who would be best able to deal with development, inflation, national security, and corruption (Shastri 2014).

The 'Modi factor', therefore, cannot be underestimated in this election, and to a large extent may have mitigated the flaws that local BJP candidates may have been perceived to possess, given that 35% of the BJP's MPs in the new Lok Sabha have criminal charges pending against them (Rukmini 2014). The question of the good MP may have been a fleeting concern for a large swathe of voters, more interested in 'the good Prime Minister'.

5.2.2. States and Demographics

Voters in each state tended to have specific, sometimes parochial concerns that motivated their decisions, and demographic allegiances shifted between parties accordingly. In Tamil Nadu, for example, national issues carried little weight (Ramajayam & Shastri 2014). Anti-incumbency and development concerns were broad variables too that impacted on the election too, varying in importance according to region.

Broadly speaking, many social groups, including large parts of the English-speaking, middle-classes, seem to have largely been taken in by Modi's allure. Nationally, "first-time voters, urban, educated, with high media exposure, upper caste, and economically well off were more likely to vote for the NDA" (Chhibber & Verma 2014). In Delhi, the BJP's rivals (INC and AAP) could not match its ability to capture these groups' "heightened aspirations" (Mohanty 2014). In Madhya Pradesh, "educated, urban voters flocked to [the] BJP" (Sisodia 2014). The BJP won a plurality of votes, largely, by building a primarily Hindu coalition that in many places appealed to various castes and classes. The 'Modi factor' was a key variable in achieving this, with Chhibber and Verma (2014) stating: "it is Modi, not BJP that won this election".

5.2.3. Corruption

While leadership was a crucial variable, capturing the imagination of individual voters across social groups, it turned out that political corruption, a more pertinent factor for the purposes of this study, was not. The surprising conclusion was that knowledge of high-profile political corruption scandals made no difference to the average voter's decisions; as an independent variable, it was not statistically significant (Chhibber, Shah & Verma 2014).

Voters seemed to care little about high-profile scams, but were more concerned with local issues of corruption that affected daily life, which were perpetrated by low-level bureaucrats, rather than politicians. The authors of this part of the survey conclude:

"corruption is not an issue on which voters discriminate while exercising their franchise" (Chhibber, Shah & Verma 2014).

We can see therefore that consideration of the qualities of specific candidates was not a key factor in this election. Rather, this election was won by Modi, having run the campaign as a "plebiscite" on his leadership and governance in Gujarat (Palshikar 2014). His campaign also focused on appealing to multiple social groups, in order to build winning coalitions in multiple states.

With this in mind, it is easier to understand why 35% of BJP MPs (plus 83% of Shiv Sena MPs, who are NDA allies) have pending criminal charges against them (Rukmini 2014). When voters decided, the salience of corruption and criminality were trumped by other factors.

5.3. The electoral system

A further explanation is needed, however, to understand the broader proliferation of criminal MPs. This is a structural explanation, focusing on India's electoral system. In this way, we shall see that the concerns of the English-speaking, middle-class can often be ignored by parties and candidates, if other voting groups do not share similar concerns.

To be sure, the discourse reflected in English-language newspapers is representative only of one section of society: broadly, the elite, English-speaking, middle-classes. This group may constitute just 5% of Indian society (EY 2013). Simplifying this group into a homogenous category is fraught with difficulties, but the concern here is the discourse surrounding MPs that pertains to this group, rather than the composition of the group itself.

This discourse may be a useful proxy for the increasingly negative impression that these people appear to have about Indian MPs. But they do not reflect the way that Indian voters *in general* view Indian MPs. Despite large metropolises, India remains a primarily poor, rural society, with roughly three-fifths of the population still working in agriculture (Panagariya 2008). These voters may well have a very different conception of Indian MPs, relative to their urban, middle-class counterparts, and appear to have different ideas of what constitutes a negative or positive attribute. The continued electoral success of Lalu Prasad Yadav, one of the most negatively mentioned MPs in the samples, may reflect this, as his party, the Rastriya Janata Dal (RJD), aims to give his caste group a sense of social justice through the acquisition of power, irrespective of the apparently negative attributes of party leaders (Palshikar 2004). Of the incoming contingent, 100% of RJD MPs have pending criminal charges (Rukmini 2014).

The discourse surrounding Indian MPs resonates in different ways, therefore, depending on the perspective and position of the Indian voter. Those who do not read the English-language news appear to be unperturbed by the increasing salience of corruption, because this may not be the message they are hearing, or the message that they are necessarily concerned with. Different concerns apply to the English-speaking elite, and, judging by the political discourse, increasing corruption appears to be one of them. If different segments of society have conflicting, even contradictory impressions of what constitutes a 'good' MP, various problems associated with how that MP represents his constituents, arise.

This is an outcome of Drèze and Sen's (2013) description within Indian society of being composed of "haves and have-nots". While the "haves", who read the English-language press, seem to be concerned about corruption, their capacity to change this is increasingly curtailed. The result is likely to be a further manifestation of Corbridge and Harriss's (2003) "elite revolts", with the urban, affluent middle-classes increasingly

retreating from the public sphere, constructing walled 'colonies', and, where possible, turning to private options. The democratic act of voting becomes an unnecessary burden. If the disconnect between groups remains, it may be futile too.

The "haves and have-nots" distinction is helpful for understanding why the increasing salience of corruption is corroding the impression that the urban middle-classes have about MPs, while apparently having little effect on electoral outcomes. This distinction is just one more social cleavage in India's diverse polity. As India has multiple fault-lines running through society, we see a proliferation of region- and caste-based parties (Alam 1999). This transforms the nature of expectation that people have about Indian MPs, and their conception of what constitutes a good MP. Chhibber & Nooruddin (2004) show that in multiparty contests, using India's 'First Past the Post' electoral system, a smaller winning coalition is required to win a contest. In two-party contests, a winner needs 50% of the vote plus one. Between 1967 and 1997, in multiparty contests, winning coalitions were on average just 31% (Chhibber & Nooruddin 2004). In 2014, the BJP scraped this 31% threshold, yet secured a majority of Lok Sabha seats. This is the lowest score ever for a majority-winning party (Palshikar 2014). Evidently, parties do not need to appeal to *all* members of society in order to win a plurality.

The effects of this are damaging: the main incentive in multiparty contests becomes securing the support of "vote banks" that are won over by the promise and delivery of private goods, such as government jobs, rather than public goods which benefit everyone (Chhibber & Nooruddin 2004). A critical mass of voters in vote banks is required to win the contest therefore, leading to "more targeted redistribution in a more narrow constituency" (Persson and Tabellini 1999:16). Consequently, a party that promises transparency and public goods, which benefit everyone, risks being undercut by parties that understand the electoral arithmetic and make more enticing promises to a

smaller proportion of people, knowing that this smaller sub-set is likely to generate a plurality.

It is common for Indian parties in multiparty contests, therefore, to appeal to caste identity in order to gain votes. Using this socially-embedded, 'fixed' identity allows for the targeting of specific groups of known sizes, and also allows parties to dispense patronage to identified followers. It has proven to be an election-winning strategy in the northern Hindi-heartland. It may also be responsible for the proliferation of criminal MPs, along with disastrous development outcomes.

The conception of the 'good' MP in such situations is very different to that produced by the data analysis above. The anti-corruption movement corresponds with an increasingly negative representation of Indian MPs in middle-class political discourse, but the movement's efficacy across wider society may be limited. Further research must be conducted to assess this claim, but using the 2014 election results, we can see that seemingly negative attributes of individuals did not resonate, and that 'caste' parties continued to win huge numbers of votes, even if in many cases they did not succeed in converting this into seats. This lack of conversion is a result of the voting system, however, and not because parties that have traditionally established support through patronage (and often have notorious reputations for corruption) such as the RJD, or Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party, have been dented by the anti-corruption movement. Indeed, if the movement had been uniformly successful across India, it is likely that its political outfit, AAP, would have gained more 2% of the vote.

Indeed, this patronage and caste focus of regional parties may also explain why they tend to come across rather badly in the samples, with negative articles comprising 29% and 22.7% of all articles that focus on them in the *Indian Express* and *Times of India,* respectively.

The implications for democracy itself may be profound. Modi's personal appeal to India's English-speaking, middle-classes appears to lie in his leadership qualities of having a "clean" image in terms of corruption, and his ability to "get things done" – two features that are highlighted in the analysis as main reasons for positive mentions for MPs. But alongside, the desire for a 'good' leader of this type may also be obscured by the disaffection with the negative attributes associated with MPs: the English-speaking middle-classes want someone who can prevent corruption.

If the propositions presented above relating to contradictory conceptions of the good MP are true, the middle-classes, too small in number to constitute a minimal winning coalition, may be increasingly fed up with the election of so many 'rascals'. To overcome this, some have claimed that India may need a dose of autocracy (Kansal 2013; Traub 2014). Although Brown (2014) has demonstrated that the promise of strong leaders is a myth, these are the features that appear to be desired by India's middle-classes today. It is an ominous desire, but perhaps may come to constitute the most profound 'elite revolt' yet.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The emergence of the anti-corruption movement corresponds with increasingly negative discourse surrounding Indian MPs in the English-language media. While we cannot conclusively claim that there is a causal relationship, the latent impact on the way Indian MPs are represented in the English-language media seems clear by the change in the discourse surrounding them.

In both newspapers sampled, the period after the anti-corruption movement had emerged showed an increase in the proportion of negative articles, and an increase in the average length of negative articles. These negative articles, moreover, tended to focus

predominantly on corruption. While MPs from the incumbent INC received the most focus, as a single party they also received the largest share of negative articles relative to their total coverage. But the hypothesis that the increasing negative representations are accounted for through fatigue with the incumbent is largely refuted by the fact that negative coverage of regional parties also increased between the timeframes. The same phenomenon occurred with the (then opposition) BJP in the *Times of India,* but not in the *Indian Express.*

The English-language print media focuses on corruption as a negative issue, but treats the successful implementation of development projects positively. A 'good' MP, therefore, is conceived as someone who is not "tainted" by corruption, or other forms of criminality, and works to enact development for his constituents.

This is the conception of the 'good' MP in the discourse relating to the English-speaking, middle-classes, not Indian society as a whole. Given the country's enormous diversity, the conception is likely to change profoundly. This research has focused on the elites, however, whose role and engagement (or lack of it) in politics can be a key determinant of India's democratic prospects. But India's English-speaking, middle-classes remain a relatively small group. In a multiparty system, they may not constitute a serious concern for parties that operate through patronage systems and adopt caste and regional consideration in their election strategies, and routinely select individuals with pending criminal charges as candidates. The wishes of this group and their associated conceptions of a 'good' MP, may not be heeded or accepted therefore by parties and politicians across India. Functional, transparent and substantive democracy would be the loser for it.

[Words: 9,990]

APPENDIX

Table of negative/positive/neutral articles in samples

		Negative	Positive	N&P	Neutral	Total
2010	ToI 2010	23	1	2	136	162
	%	14.2%	0.6%	1.2%	84.0%	100.0%
	IE 2010	26	9	0	141	176
	%	14.8%	5.1%	0.0%	80.1%	100.0%
2013	ToI 2013	114	41	2	419	576
	%	19.8%	7.1%	0.3%	72.7%	100.0%
	IE 2013	79	12	0	253	344
	%	23.0%	3.5%	0.0%	73.5%	100.0%

Reasons for negative articles

		Corruption	Criminality	Other
2010	ToI 2010	13	6	4
	%	56.52%	26.09%	17.39%
	IE 2010	6	9	11
	%	23.08%	34.62%	42.31%
2013	ToI 2013	60	20	34
	%	52.63%	17.54%	29.82%
	IE 2013	42	15	22
	%	53.16%	18.99%	27.85%

Reasons for positive articles

		Action	Integrity	Obituary	Image	Total
2013	ToI	27	6	3	3	39
	%	69.23%	15.38%	7.69%	7.69%	100.00%
	IE	6	4	1	1	12
	%	50.00%	33.33%	8.33%	8.33%	100.00%
2010	ToI	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	IE	3	3	1	2	9
	%	33.33%	33.33%	11.11%	22.22%	100.00%

Space devoted to positive and negative articles (words)

		Negative	Positive	Neutral	All categories
2010	ToI	441.4	474.0	430.2	433.2
	IE	474.6	611.2	614.6	593.4
2013	ToI	497.4	352.0	422.5	432.6
	IE	541.6	587.6	544.9	545.7

Correlations

2013	ToI	IE
January	4.5%	2.6%
February	1.8%	1.3%
March	1.8%	5.2%
April	11.7%	6.5%
May	8.1%	13.0%
June	5.4%	9.1%
July	7.2%	9.1%
August	10.8%	10.4%
September	9.0%	13.0%
October	16.2%	9.1%
November	8.1%	9.1%
December	15.3%	11.7%

Correlation: *0.597216857*

2010	ToI	IE
January	8.7%	0.0%
February	8.7%	19.2%
March	8.7%	3.8%
April	0.0%	19.2%
May	13.0%	19.2%
June	8.7%	0.0%
July	13.0%	7.7%
August	13.0%	11.5%
September	4.3%	0.0%
October	8.7%	3.8%
November	8.7%	11.5%
December	4.3%	3.8%

Correlation: *0.059124911*

Distribution of negative articles by party

		Negative	Positive
ToI 2010	INC	34.8%	100.0%
	BJP	8.7%	0.0%
	Regional	26.1%	0.0%
	Left	0.0%	0.0%
	Many	30.4%	0.0%
IE 2010	INC	11.5%	44.4%
	BJP	23.1%	22.2%
	Regional	53.8%	11.1%
	Left	3.8%	0.0%
	Many	7.7%	22.2%

		Negative	Positive
ToI 2013	INC	26.1%	58.6%
	BJP	14.4%	0.0%
	Regional	37.8%	34.5%
	Left	0.0%	0.0%
	Many	21.6%	6.9%
IE 2013	INC	32.5%	41.7%
	BJP	13.0%	16.7%
	Regional	35.1%	25.0%
	Left	1.3%	0.0%
	Many	18.2%	16.7%

Distribution of all articles by party

	ToI 2010	ToI 2013	IE 2010	IE 2013
INC	31.9%	30.1%	31.8%	26.5%
BJP	15.0%	24.1%	12.7%	27.2%
Regional	35.0%	32.7%	35.3%	28.7%
Left	3.1%	1.6%	1.2%	0.6%
Many	15.0%	11.5%	19.1%	17.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Negative coverage of party relative to total party coverage

	ToI 2010	ToI 2013	IE 2010	IE 2013
INC	15.7%	17.1%	5.5%	29.1%
BJP	8.3%	11.8%	27.3%	11.4%
Regional	10.7%	22.7%	23.0%	29.0%
Left	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Many	29.2%	36.9%	6.1%	25.5%

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I was able to gather all articles for the years 2010 and 2013 from the newspapers *Times of*

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