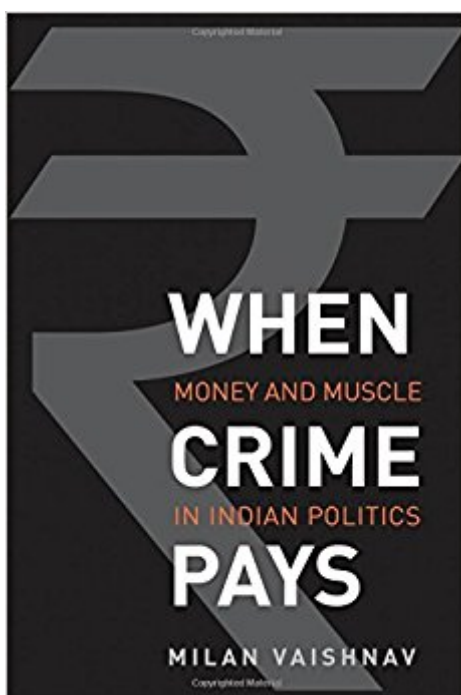


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When Crime Pays: Money And Muscle In Indian Politics



Synopsis

The first thorough study of the co-existence of crime and democratic processes in Indian politics

— In India, the world's largest democracy, the symbiotic relationship between crime and politics raises complex questions. For instance, how can free and fair democratic processes exist alongside rampant criminality? Why do political parties recruit candidates with reputations for wrongdoing? Why are one-third of state and national legislators elected—and often re-elected—in spite of criminal charges pending against them? In this eye-opening study, political scientist Milan Vaishnav mines a rich array of sources, including fieldwork on political campaigns and interviews with candidates, party workers, and voters, large surveys, and an original database on politicians' backgrounds to offer the first comprehensive study of an issue that has implications for the study of democracy both within and beyond India's borders.

Book Information

Hardcover: 440 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press; 1 edition (January 24, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0300216203

ISBN-13: 978-0300216202

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #425,181 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #246 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Corruption & Misconduct #424 in Books > History > Asia > India #532 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Public Affairs & Administration

Customer Reviews

"The most systematic analysis of corruption and criminalization in the world's largest democracy. Harking back to the historical roots of this phenomenon, Vaishnav shows that it is growing because of societal, political, and economic factors, and that legislation passed to contain these factors has hardly made any difference. This remarkable book will change readers' view of democracy in India."--Christophe Jaffrelot, Senior Research Fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS (Christophe Jaffrelot)"This is the first book length treatment of a peculiar paradox of Indian politics: namely, the coexistence of criminality and democratic vigor.

— Milan

Vaishnav's analysis of this paradox is highly original and hugely fascinating, and will become a standard text on criminality, corruption and democracy."-- Ashutosh Varshney, Sol Goldman Professor of International Studies and the Social Sciences, Brown University (Ashutosh Varshney)"Why do so many people with criminal charges contest Indian elections, why do they win so often, and what does this tell us about parties and voters in the world's largest democracy? Milan Vaishnav's excellent book uses rich fieldwork and impressive quantitative analysis to provide compelling and surprising answers." --Steven Wilkinson, Nilekani Professor of India and South Asian Studies, Yale University (Steven Wilkinson)"While democracy is fast taking root in most parts of the world, criminality and corruption are getting increasingly entrenched. Ironically, voters seem quite comfortable with this state of affairs. This strange coexistence of free and fair elections with criminality and money power is beautifully analyzed in this important new book on electoral politics."--S.Y. Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India (S.Y. Quraishi)"A close look at the underbelly of the world's largest democracy." •The Wall Street Journal (The Wall Street Journal)"Vaishnav meticulously tracks the remarkable political success of India's accused murderers, blackmailers, thieves and kidnappers . . . When Crime Pays can be grimly amusing." •The Economist (The Economist)"Political scientist Milan Vaishnav has been studying links between crime and democracy in India for many years now . . . When Crime Pays offers some intriguing insights into what is a disturbing feature of India's electoral democracy." •BBC News (BBC News)"Milan Vaishnav offers illuminating answers to questions on the nexus between crime and politics." •The Hindu (The Hindu)"Voters are not necessarily blind to the predilections of the political class: many voters vote for politicians because, rather than in spite, of their criminal reputations," Vaishnav writes. Why? The author's explanation, at once persuasive and tragic, is that each has something to gain." •James Crabtree, Financial Times (James Crabtree Financial Times 2017-02-18)

Milan Vaishnav is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. He was previously a fellow at the Center for Global Development and has taught at Columbia, George Washington, and Georgetown Universities.

Most good social science doesn't make for page-turning reading, but Vaishnav's *When Crime Pays* is a major exception. The characters in this book (India's criminal politicians) come alive through

vignettes and stories in nearly every chapter, and their stories make the book's theory of why Indian voters seem to prefer politicians with criminal backgrounds intuitively accessible. This is a must read for people who care about the political economy of developing democracies, electoral politics, and the future of the world's largest democracy and fastest growing major economy. Vaishnav's counterintuitive, compelling theory (with lucid presentation) should be of major consequence for scholars of political economy in democratic societies, and equally important for readers outside the academy.

This book is beautifully conceived and presented. It goes in depth into many questions and scenarios that are often counterintuitive. It is a solid and deep piece of social and political science but at the same time is a good read. I learned so much from reading it and am going to read it again more slowly because I found myself whipping through it and I want to absorb all the wisdom and analysis and understand what is really happening in Indian politics. Kudos to the author and the publisher. This is a keeper.

Dr. Vaishnav's work always demonstrates his rare talent to combine the discipline of a true social scientist with a keen understanding of the human element in politics. This book is no exception. Equally at home on the shelves of a diplomat and an academic, it is systematic and rigorous without being disconnected or impractical. Nor is the audience limited to those with an interest in India. It should be required reading for anyone with an interest in how politicians interact with, and join, the criminal classes. Which is to say, it should be required reading for everyone.

Vaishnav flawlessly melds individual stories from on the ground in India with hard-core data, giving us an extremely readable explanation for the high numbers of criminal politicians in India. For anyone interested in how corruption may function and flourish in democracies across the world, this is an excellent choice.

Strikes the perfect balance between rigorous and engaging. Worth a read!

A painstakingly researched, wide-reaching, and essential contribution to scholarship on Indian democracy and corruption in general. This is required reading for anyone with interest in the field, and (as other reviewers have noted) reads like narrative journalism without sacrificing any of its scholarly rigor.

By far the best book about the political economy of corruption in the Indian political system I've ever read.

Very Biased anti-Modi take on 2014.author doesn't understand the aspiration of young and what Modi stands for running corruption free government for 2 years. Biased ...

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