Who Put the BJP in Power?
Decoding the Government's Mandate

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BJP won 282 seats on 31% of the vote share in 2014, while the Congress won just 206 seats on 29% of the vote share in 2009.

What explains BJP’s efficiency in converting votes into seats?
Orienting Questions

- BJP won 282 seats on 31% of the vote share in 2014, while the Congress won just 206 seats on 29% of the vote share in 2009.

- What explains BJP’s efficiency in converting votes into seats?

- India had its highest ever turnout, at 66%, in 2014. This is a sharp increase over the 58% turnout in 2009.

- What is the relationship between the turnout and BJP’s victory?
BJP’s Overall Performance

- BJP won 282 out 428 contested constituencies – 66% strike rate

This figure displays the overall distribution of constituencies won, lost, and not contested by the BJP. The BJP won in 66% of the constituencies in which it contested.
Regional Variation

Consider the states of **Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh**

- BJP won 194 out of 213 contested seats – strike rate of 91%
- 69% of the total number of seats won by BJP
Regional Variation

Consider the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh

- BJP won 194 out of 213 contested seats – strike rate of 91%
- 69% of the total number of seats won by BJP

Now consider Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal

- BJP won 7 out of 101 contested seats – strike rate of 7%
- 2% of total seats won by BJP
Regional Variation

(a) Bihar, Gujarat, MP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, UP

Figure (a) displays the constituencies in which BJP was (was not) victorious for the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. In this these states, the BJP had a strike rate of 91%, providing 69% of BJP’s seats. Figure (b) displays the constituencies in which the BJP was (was not) victorious for the states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. The BJP had a strike rate of 7% in these states.
Competitiveness

A party was coded as *competitive* if it was one of the top 2 vote getters in the constituency.

- BJP competitive in 79% of the constituencies in which it contested
- BJP won in 84% of the constituencies in which it was competitive
(a) Competitive Constituencies

Figure (a) displays the set of constituencies in which the BJP was competitive. The BJP was competitive in 79% of the constituencies in which it contested. Figure (b) overlays the competitive constituencies in which BJP was (was not) victorious. These figures demonstrate that the BJP tended to win in constituencies in which it was competitive, except on the eastern coast of India. The BJP was victorious in 84% of the constituencies in which it was competitive.

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Head-to-Head Against Congress

BJP Won (Head-to-Head)
Congress Won (Head-to-Head)
Not Head-to-Head
Head-to-Head Against Congress

Figure (a) displays the set of constituencies in which the BJP and Congress were both competitive, i.e., they competed head-to-head, as well as which constituencies were won by the BJP and Congress. In these constituencies, the BJP had a strike rate of 88%. Figure (b) overlays the constituencies in which the BJP and Congress were not competing head-to-head. In these constituencies, BJP’s victories (the yellow-colored constituencies) are clustered in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In these two states, BJP had a strike rate of 86%. The BJP lost or did not compete across most of the east coast of India, down through to Kerala.
BJP won 166 out of 189 constituencies head-to-head against Congress – strike rate of 85%.

Strike rate in Bihar and UP was 85%.

Taken together these two categories yielded 247 out of the 282 seats for BJP (88%).
Making Sense of the Data

- Extremely regionally concentrated results – this explains how vote share is converted into seats
  - Outside of Bihar and UP and head-to-head battles with Congress, BJP competitive in just 39% of constituencies
  - Strike rate of 63% in those competitive constituencies

- BJP was the only true national party in this election but paradoxically is not representative of India

- What do West Bengal and UP tell us about the future?
Preliminaries

- **Modi Wave** – Narendra Modi’s ability to bring new (or passive) voters to the polls and create a swell of support for the BJP

- I will undertake an analysis of *turnout change* between 2009 and 2014.
Figure (a) displays the percentage of constituencies won by the BJP in which they contested the election above and below a cutoff for a 5% change in turnout from 2009 to 2014. Figure (b) fits a cubic thin-plate (penalized) regression spline with 50 knots to the data, where the dependent variable is a binary indicator of whether the BJP won in the (contested) constituency and the predictor is the change in turnout from 2009 to 2014 at the constituency level. In figure (b), the saffron colored dots indicate constituencies won by the BJP for a particular change in turnout, and blue dots indicate constituencies in which the BJP lost. In both cases, the graphs demonstrate that the likelihood of a BJP victory is significantly higher when the change in turnout between 2009 and 2014 is greater.
Increase in Voter Turnout vs. BJP Support

This figure displays the average increase in voter turnout between 2009 and 2014 in the following four types of constituencies: 1) those in which BJP went head-to-head against Congress; 2) those in which BJP was competitive against another party; 3) those in which BJP was not competitive; and 4) those that BJP did not contest. Voters were heavily mobilized in constituencies where BJP was competitive, particularly in head-to-head competition with Congress.
Increase in Voter Turnout vs. BJP Support

Figure (a) displays a heat map of the changes in turnout between 2009 and 2014. Figure (b) displays the constituencies won by BJP. A side-by-side comparison suggests that the BJP won in constituencies with higher changes in turnout.
Regional Variation

This figure displays the 2009 and 2014 voter turnout for the 15 most populous states in India. In 2009, 4 states had less than 50% voter turnout, but in 2014 the lowest voter turnout was 56% (Bihar). The gap in voter turnout across states significantly narrowed in 2014.
Regional Variation

This figure shows a side-by-side comparison of two regions using the previous heat scale. In figure (a) the change in turnout from 2009 to 2014 is shown for Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. In these six states, the BJP had a strike rate of 91% and won 69% of their seats. In figure (b) the change in turnout from 2009 to 2014 is shown for Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. In these states, the BJP had a strike rate of only 7%. Changes in turnout were significantly smaller in the states where BJP did poorly.
Questions

- Big Question: Who are the new voters?
- Can the BJP convert already mobilized voters going forward?
- What does the BJP need to do going forward to hold on to new voters?
Lok Surveys

- **Goal**: To understand the social and political reconfigurations taking place across India today

- Multi-year panel of 65,000+ households in 24 states and UTs
The Economy Dominates

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Access to Govt Benefits</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
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<td>Identity</td>
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Growth: Large State-Level Variation

Share of respondents influenced by growth:

- CTG: 43%
- PUN: 43%
- GUJ: 41%
- WB: 38%
- RAJ: 32%
- TN: 31%
- KER: 28%
- KAR: 22%
- AP: 21%
- MP: 20%
- HAR: 19%
- MAH: 17%
- UP: 13%
- BIH: 7%

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Who Put the BJP in Power?
Top Issues by State

**Corruption**
- Kerala: 43%
- Bihar: 40%
- Uttar Pradesh: 33%
- Andhra Pradesh: 26%
- Madhya Pradesh: 25%

**Economic growth**
- Chhattisgarh: 43%
- Punjab: 43%
- Gujarat: 41%
- West Bengal: 38%

**Inflation/price rise**
- Maharashtra: 29%
- Haryana: 25%
- Tamil Nadu: 31%
- Karnataka: 22%
Bharat vs. India

- Rural illiterate: UPA 24%, NDA 28%
- Rural literate: UPA 22%, NDA 33%
- Urban illiterate: UPA 23%, NDA 27%
- Urban literate: UPA 24%, NDA 32%

Who Put the BJP in Power?
Bharat vs India?

- Access to Govt: 9% rural, 5% urban
- Personal Income: 16% rural, 12% urban
- Corruption: 19% rural, 23% urban
- Identity: 2% rural, 4% urban
- Inflation: 19% rural, 17% urban
- Law and Order: 8% rural, 6% urban
- Leadership: 4% rural, 6% urban
- Economic Growth: 27% rural, 23% urban

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Who Put the BJP in Power?
Looking Forward

- Will the coalition (NDA) matter?
- Very strong evidence of economic mandate. How do recent actions play?
- What does the stock market tell us?