

Political Moderation in India: The Case of Bharatiya Janata Party

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Abstract

Present study draws important conclusions about the changes in the Indian party system with regards to the party transformation process in the post-Congress polity. It presents a case study of Bharatiya Janata Party transformation, as the party that came from the fringes of Indian political system to occupy the dominant position. In the beginning, party's success was largely attributed to mobilization of Hindu votes, as it possessed strong right-wing ideology rooted in the ideas of Hindu nationalism. In order to expand its electoral support and to forge strategic alliances with regional parties, BJP had to redefine its agenda and social base. These efforts brought electoral benefits in 2014, when BJP emerged as the single largest party after a decade of the Congress rule, securing votes across different segments of society. This study finds that BJP, previously seen to be posing a major challenge to secularist political ideology, successfully managed to overcome the narrowness of its image as Hindu fundamentalist party, although the extent of this transformation remains limited.

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Introduction

The changes in the Indian party system were brought about by the decline in the electoral share of the Indian National Congress and the rise of regional and state-based parties. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged among them as an alternative force to Congress at the national level and in several states. In the beginning, party's success was largely attributed to mobilization of Hindu votes, as it possessed strong right-wing political ideology rooted in the ideas of Hindu nationalism. In order to expand its electoral support and to forge strategic alliances with regional parties, BJP had to redefine its agenda and social base. These efforts brought electoral benefits in 2014, when BJP emerged as the single largest party after a decade of the Congress rule, securing votes across different segments of society.

This study aims to analyze how BJP, previously seen as posing a major challenge to secularist political ideology, managed to overcome the narrowness of its image as Hindu fundamentalist party in order to attract support of the wider audience. Based on the results of thematic analysis of the election campaign communication, the study then proceeds to discuss the extent of party transformation. It attempts to examine whether BJP fits the “catch-all” model of the party that turns away from representing particular social group or ideology and focuses on increasing its market share across different segments of society. In this regard, it draws support from the studies dedicated to the transformation of BJP, which present a divided opinion on the question. While some authors insist that party has succeeded in moderating its position, others warn about its limited moderation, maintaining that party adopts moderate line in order to maximize its vote share but does not abandon its traditional commitments which continue to bring electoral benefits and help the party to stand out on the political arena.

The first chapter of the thesis outlines the main characteristics which make Indian politics an interesting subject for the research, by drawing attention to India's preconditions for democratic

development, traditional structure and heterogeneity of the Indian society. It analyzes the development of the Indian party system, which can be broadly divided into two phases, the first marked by the Congress dominance, while the second witnessed its decline and became commonly referred as post-Congress polity. At this stage, Bharatiya Janata Party, the main subject of the research, entered political arena along with multiple regional parties, making Indian party system more pluralistic. Chapter focuses on the rise of BJP, as a party with strong ideological commitment to the idea of Hindu nationalism, and its subsequent transformation into catch-all party. The chapter attempts to place the process of party transformation into a broader context using the theoretical framework introduced by Kirchheimer and later elaborated by Phule, Ware and others, in order to find out whether developments that BJP has undergone allow to categorize the party as catch-all. Chapter proceeds to review the literature dedicated to BJP transformation, to analyze the evidence in favor and against the successful moderation of the BJP position with regards to the right-wing ideology.

The second chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the BJP election campaign 2014, which exceeded previous campaigns in its reach and intensity and saturated the public space leaving BJP opponents far behind. Indian parliamentary elections 2014 brought BJP to power as the single largest party and significantly reduced the seat share of the Congress party. The chapter aims to analyze how BJP redefined its position to reach wider electorate and secure support of previously antagonized groups. It includes empirical study of the speeches delivered by Narendra Modi, party's Prime Ministerial candidate at that moment, whose personality was at the forefront of the election campaign. The analysis aims to identify the main themes that BJP chose to highlight in its communication aimed at moderating party's image for the electoral purposes. It also aims to find references to party's historic ideology, which, if found, can suggest that BJP remained committed to its traditional values despite attempts for moderation. Findings of the content analysis allow to draw a broader conclusion regarding the approach to

campaigning that parties can adopt in order to maximize their vote share in a very diverse electorate.

Final chapter of the study discusses the results of empirical analysis and brings additional evidence such as party's nomination strategy, and the excerpts from its election manifesto, to advance the conclusion regarding party transformation.

Chapter 1. Transformation of the party system in India and the rise of Bharatiya Janata Party

1.1 Changes in the party system

Despite the absence of certain prerequisites associated with democracy, such as mass literacy or minimal standard of living, India has succeeded in developing a viable system of democratic governance. Democratic development in India has come through several turning points, and continues to deepen with more social groups seeking participation in political process. Parties in India play a crucial role in organization of polity, they do not only exercise their main function of representing various segments of Indian society, but they also successfully mobilize population and assure the presence of political alternatives.

Indian system does not clearly correspond with conventional forms of party politics known in the literature, which mainly builds its theories based on western democratic experience. Party processes are greatly influenced by traditional structures that organize Indian society, which is often held responsible for such problems as patronage and corruption often found in India. They combine the features of modern parties, which can be observed, for example, in their model of campaigning, with traditional practices. One of the reasons why Indian party system represents an interesting case for the research on democratic development, is social heterogeneity of India, where groups are differentiated based on ethnicity, religion, caste and class. Unlike major parties that seek dominance across the regions, small parties secure power relying on a very narrow base of support, that sometimes consists of a particular caste or an ethnic group. This explains high number of parties, that now amount to more than 1800, and also high variation in political alliances across the country.

Indian political system witnessed several realignments since Independence. Zoya Hasan (2010) points to two major phases in the process of development: during the first phase, India was

characterized by the dominance of one party – the Indian National Congress, party that emerged during the British Rule and had been on the forefront of the Independence struggle - as well as moderate level of participation and elite consensus. The second phase marked the shift towards higher inclusion of non-elite groups, with Congress losing its dominant position and regional parties taking control over several states. Political competition increased manifold which led to the fragmentation of party system and coalition politics becoming a norm. In some states, state parties were powerful enough to move main parties to the fringes of electoral competition. These parties are regional or ethnic in character, and are often recognized as electoralist (Hasan, 2010). Thus, multiparty system of India owes its complexity to the high number of social cleavages that continue to bring more groups into political process. Although parties, by providing representation to underprivileged groups, help to enhance democracy in India, at the same time most of them lack intra-party democracy and engage in illegal practices in order to secure votes, or mobilize electorate by appealing to their ethnic or religious identities. Newly formed parties often split, merge or try to secure benefits for themselves by aligning with one of the major parties which further complicates the system.

The Indian National Congress has been a central force in the Indian politics from the pre-Independence time and for nearly three decades afterwards. Party managed to secure three fourth of the seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower chamber of Indian Parliament, in three consecutive elections starting from 1952 when elections were held for the first time in the history of independent India. Despite being led by high caste elite, party provided representation of minorities, such as Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and enjoyed support among both urban and rural population. In 1969 Congress experienced the split and underwent transformation, eventually turning into, as Hasan notes, an electoralist catch-all party (Hasan, 2010). In this period, the vote share of the Congress fluctuated greatly: first, due to Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi in 1971, which resulted in the first defeat that Congress suffered in

the center in 1977 from the opposition that emerged in a form of conglomeration of parties; second, when disappointment with opposition rose and brought Congress back to power in 1980. In 1984 the vote share of the party again reached its previous height which was attributed to the sympathy wave after Indira Gandhi's death.

The end of Congress dominance gave start to the second phase of development in Indian politics. This phase is marked by the emergence of BJP, the heir to the first oppositional formation of 1977. For a decade after its entry into political arena in 1980, party continued to secure only a tiny share of seats, which drastically changed in 1996, when it became a single largest party with a vote share equal to 20.3%. After three years of unstable governments, in 1999 BJP-led coalition under the name of National Democratic Alliance (NDA), consisting of 24 parties in total won 304 seat out of 543 and managed to serve a full term in the office.

Unlike Congress, which at the early stages represented a coalition of different ideologies, ranging from the right to the left, BJP since the beginning was committed to the interest of a particular group – the Hindu population of India. BJP identified itself with an ideology of Hindutva, or Hinduness, doctrine that promotes Hindu nationalism. The character of the party has been mixed since the beginning due to, on the one hand, the moderate leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and on the other hand, party's connection to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu nationalist organization. As Heath (1999) notes, BJP came to power “denouncing Nehruvian secularism, advocating militant Hindu nationalism, and encouraging anti-Muslim rhetoric and action” (Heath, 1999). After a term in the office, BJP was overthrown by a newly formed coalition led by Congress, under the name of United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which secured 220 seats in the Parliament. In 2009 the vote share of NDA decreased further and now amounted to 24.1 as compared to 41.1 in 1999. BJP not only lost its support among electorate but also several parties decided to leave the alliance holding it responsible for

their defeat. When support of BJP declined, Congress, on the opposite, made inroads in a number of states and secured a victory although short of majority.

The increase in the vote share of the regional parties, that reached 29% by 2009, happened at the expense of the two major parties. The vote share of both Congress and BJP combined by 2009 amounted to less than 50%, which means that although power alternated between two main contenders, regional parties represented a significant force in Indian politics. Thus, the system has become more pluralistic, with coalitions emerging based on spatial compatibility (Hasan, 2010, P. 246). Ideology played secondary role for the parties forming coalitions, often built on the opposition to one of the contenders, at the same time their ideological differences in some cases led to withdrawal of support and collapse of the government.

One of the main characteristics of the post-Congress polity is loose ideological framework that parties maintain. Prior to that, differences between parties' ideologies were clearly marked, with some of them representing underprivileged groups, while others were interested in supporting the status quo, and the third advocating social and economic reforms. In the second phase, the ideological differences between the parties have lost its significance, and parties' attention shifted to electoral strategies. This development is in line with Downs' argument about ideological convergence stated in the *Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), which assumes that parties' primary goal is to win the elections, and thus, in order to maximize their vote share, they abandon their ideological commitments and disregard the interests of their traditional electorate (Downs, 1957).

From the beginning, Congress covered the whole ideological spectrum by having multiple factions, and attracted support from all the segments of society, while BJP targeted specific part of the Indian electorate. In the post-Congress polity BJP showed the signs of transforming into "catch-all" party, similar to what Congress has already been

1.2 Socio-structural change

The concept of catch-all parties was introduced by Otto Kirchheimer in 1966 as an attempt to explain the changes in the party system of Western Europe. Kirchheimer in his work holds socio-structural change, caused by secularization and decline in class differences, responsible for the party transformation in post-World War II Europe. While mass-integration parties used to rely on class or denomination, catch-all parties came to transcend these boundaries and incorporate the wider range of interests (Phule, 2002, P.60). A social change is believed to reduce the size of the groups with strong party preferences, while the number of voters who demonstrate floating preferences has increased. Parties have to adapt to the new circumstances of political contestation by changing their organizational structures and campaigning strategies. Since parties can no longer rely on the votes from defined social category, they have to utilize pervasive strategies appealing to voters unassociated with particular political force or societal group (Smith, 2009).

Although in general, socio-structural shift in India is happening at a slower pace as compared to post-World War II Europe, there are certain changes that can be clearly observed. Three important factors can be identified as driving the ongoing change. First of all, economic growth that India has witnessed in decades since liberalization reforms were initiated, led to the expanded opportunities for employment, rising personal income, increased literacy rate and improved social mobility. This significantly reshaped the demands and expectations the electorate shows in respect to the Indian government. They see the need and opportunities for development in every field of economic and social life, which makes it one of the most salient points for the election campaigns in India. Indian electorate has become increasingly aware of widespread corruption and government failures to implement the programs and deliver welfare services. In this situation, the promise of good governance under strong uncorrupted leadership serves to create a universal appeal among Indian voters.

Another important change is increased number of young voters, who constitute a significant electoral force. Around 50% of Indian population is under the age of 26, with over 100 mln first time voters added to the electoral register since 2009 (The Economist, 2014). Born after liberalization reforms have started, they force parties to adapt their agenda to aspirations and demands of the youth. Thus, many traditional issues that parties used to campaign on do not hold either losing their pervasiveness or creating a threat of antagonizing young voters. Youngsters are mainly concerned with education and job opportunities, and less with their identity, which often exploited by Indian parties.

Finally, urbanization is a one of the major factors driving social change in India. Steady growth of urban population had been observed since 1961 and is expected to continue in the future. 150 out of 543 electoral constituencies in India marked as “totally or substantially urban” force parties to focus on the issues important for urban voters, which include economic development, infrastructure and employment. The exchange between the city and the village has increased as many rural dwellers search for jobs and education in towns, new technologies enter the countryside, rural population adopts new consumer habits, - all these are important factors that affect public opinion.

Such changes suggest that electorate, affected by developments, would be concerned with economic prospects rather than their religion or caste identities. Nevertheless, despite the observed progress, there is still significant amount of population in India who did not benefit from economic and social progress. At the same time, older voters, religious and ethnic minority groups who demonstrate strong political preferences, also have to be taken into account while assessing the patterns of electoral support. Thus, Indian electorate can be characterized as highly diverse which makes it difficult for parties aiming at vote maximization to create a universal appeal. Parties are forced to adapt their electoral strategies to meet the demands of the voters by incorporating wide range of interests. Focusing on the issues of development,

parties ought to include points relevant for traditional voters and large groups associated with particular identity in order to secure sufficient support.

1.3 BJP as a catch-all party: 5 main aspects

Instead of formulating a definition of catch-all party Kirchheimer (1966) identified five main elements, which included de-ideologization, increased importance of leadership as oppose to party organization, declined role of individual party membership, with growing appeal to larger population instead of class or religion based groups, and increased role of interest groups driven by financial considerations (Kirchheimer, 1966). Regarding the ideology of the party he notes that “a party large enough to get a majority has to be so catch-all that it cannot have a unique ideological program” (Krouwel, 2003, P.29). Having shown clear sign of reduced ideological commitment, BJP conforms to this condition, although, as present research aims to demonstrate, it has not completely abandoned it.

Increased role of leadership, described by Kirchheimer, can be also observed during BJP campaign, as party’s potential was judged through the personality of its leader, with 25% of National Election Survey respondents claiming that they would not have voted for BJP if Modi had not been its Prime Ministerial candidate (NES, 2014). Krouwel notes, that having similar programs aimed at including wide range of interests, catch-all parties utilize other means to stand out in elections, such as personalities, for example. (Krouwel, 2003, P. 29). BJP has successfully used the personality of Modi to connect to voters and to secure electoral benefits, using his name as a sign of credibility and directly associating it with the promise of development.

In regards to “downgrading of the role of the individual party member” (Kirchheimer, 1966), BJP shows an opposite trend, as it launched nationwide membership campaign aimed to triple its numbers and make party more diverse by attracting the people from every section of the

society (Hindustan Times, 2014). As a result, BJP has become the largest political party in the world in respect to its primary membership. Given the fact, that BJP has built an effective organizational structure and highly relies on vote mobilizers in its election campaigns, individual party membership is likely to remain important for party support and to be encouraged by its leadership.

In 2014 BJP attempted to attract the votes across the class and religion boundaries, which can be observed in its communication, where Modi directly spoke to backward communities, tribals, Muslim population, youngsters, “neo-middle class”, farmers and urban dwellers. This is in line with Kirchheimer’s argument, which holds that catch-all parties abandon social-class or denominational orientation and turn to population at large (Kirchheimer, 1966).

Interest groups are believed to play an important role for the party’s support, as BJP is known to stand for the interest of the business community. Nevertheless, as recent report showed, 65% of party’s funding has been received from unknown sources, which makes it complicated to build a coherent list of party’s contributors (TOI, 2017).

Phule sees party transformation as a gradual process, maintaining that many European class or denomination based parties reveal certain features typical of catch-allism, while parties identified as catch-all have preserved characteristics of their class of denominational orientation (Phule, 2002, P.65). In this regard, BJP belongs to the second type, with its catch-all stance being formally recognized, but at the same time party retains traits that imply connection to its ideological past. Phule makes an important note, that membership or electorate of catch-all parties have hardly reflected the composition of society, since historical background and tradition continue to affect the character of party’s support base (Phule, 2002). This can be observed in the pattern of support that BJP received in 2014: despite the fact, that it has successfully reached to the new groups of voters, it remains more popular in the Hindi-speaking region, while, at the same time, party doesn’t have a single MP from the Muslim community.

Following Kirchheimer, Phule outlines the trends in party transformation that allow it to classify as catch-all. He maintains, that parties' programs, class and religious associations lose its significance, although not entirely, with voters continuing to identify them along left/right dimension. As they cease to represent the interests of particular groups, their traditional ties in the society weaken (Phule, 2002). This is partially true for the case of BJP, which emphasizes on representing the interests of the entire population of India, although still remains to be seen as favoring the Hindu majority. Phule notes, that parties resort to market-related strategies to maximize their vote shares and members: "Political issues and proposed solutions had "to be sold", and how to sell them has often turned out to be more important than the issues and solutions as such; accordingly, image has often counted more than competence" (Phule, 2002, P.69). This trend is clearly observed in the efforts party invested into organization of the election campaign, which was aimed at marketing the image of the party as concerned with the well-being of all the communities and the image of its leader as a proxy for development. Campaign's commercialization and professionalization noted by Phule is also observed in the case of BJP, who attracted large number of professionals from different sectors to organize the election campaign. Following the trend noted by Phule, program of BJP demonstrates sufficient similarity on the key aspect of governance with Congress program, while both the parties attempt to catch the votes near the center of ideological spectrum.

Alan Ware (1996) identifies four main assumptions that underlie party system transformation in western democracies: weakening of traditional cleavages, lack of new cleavages that can prompt mobilization of electorate, weakening ideology, party's ability to transform organizationally (Ware, 1996, P. 227). Ware challenges these assumptions by insisting, that firstly, while some division, such as class or religion have become less silent, other already existing division, such as regional or ethnic divisions gained strength. Secondly, he draws attention to post-materialist concerns that can possibly constitute new cleavages and challenge

the catch-all strategy. Thirdly, he points out that ideological commitments continue to bring electoral benefits, especially for the parties characterized as “New Right” in the West. Finally, he notes that despite catch-all parties being present in most of the system, other parties survived without adopting new organizational forms (Ware, 1996).

Ware’s conclusion, important for this study, holds that societies persists to be divided, although the lines tend to shift. Thus, the party has to identify the most important division that helps to attract voters irrespective of political circumstances. Catch-all model, according to Ware, leads to party’s disconnection from society, and, while being successful in mobilizing electorate, it will fail to secure votes in a long term, with voters turning to parties that exploit cleavages. In case when transformation of social structures is less significant, parties can easily adapt to new conditions without undergoing radical transformation itself (Ware, 1996).

1.4 Transformation of the BJP: opinion divided

Ware’s comments on the catch-all model helps to shed the light on the changes that BJP has been undergoing. As Hasan (2010) maintains, Indian parties are more pragmatic than ideological; their ideology is often referred to during election campaign, in order to create a distinct appeal, but once in power their policies are likely to represent a mix of various interests (Hasan, 2010). One possible explanation for such shift points out to the change in India’s social structure, where growing middle class and at the same time growing number of various groups claim representation of their interests. Parties unanimously express their concern for the poor and underprivileged, and they also seem to be in agreement on the number of issues regarding economy and foreign policy, with both Congress and BJP remaining committed to neo-liberal economic policies.

This indicates the electoralist nature of many Indian parties, which employ various means with an ultimate goal of securing the maximum number of seats. Among all it includes mobilization

of electorate along ethnic or caste lines, that often guarantees the votes of particular group. Hasan concludes, that “political parties have undergone a gradual transformation from policy-oriented parties to office-seeking parties” (Hasan, 2010, P. 248). It should not be assumed that parties abandon their identities for electoral purposes, on the opposite, they behave in a very pragmatic way, by bringing in certain aspects of their ideology into political debate whenever it can help them to secure electoral benefits.

Jaffrelot (2013) notes that radical parties in India tend to shift between their ethno-religious identities and tactical moderation, while their core ideology remains unaffected, which means modernization was never successful. He also indicates that in many cases moderation is merely caused by political circumstances, rather than genuine tendency towards transformation. Thus, he disagrees with applicability of moderation thesis to the Indian context, by claiming that while moderation thesis implies that competitive elections make parties adjust its agenda to include wider range of political opinions, in India they often have an opposite effect. Electoral competition in India encourages ethno – religious conflicts since parties use it as a guaranteed way to secure their vote share. Jaffrelot brings in the example of Jana Sangh that abandoned its Hindi-only approach in order to widen its appeal, but at the same time both Jana Sangh and BJP attempted to polarize electorate through violent means (Jaffrelot, 2013).

This is specifically the case for Bharatiya Janata party, a party with ideologically weighted past, that emerged as an advocate of Hindu nationalism and came long way to make their secular stance a campaign theme in recent elections. BJP’s victory in 2014 was seen as a critical realignment by many, who marked its significant transformation. Prior to this extraordinary come back to power, the opinion regarding transformation was divided, when some observers believed that BJP has moved towards the center of political spectrum driven by dynamics of electoral competition, while others insisted that party ought to demonstrates its commitment to nationalistic stance (Basu, 2001). Moderation thesis based on spatial model in voting behavior

as elaborated by Downs suggests that parties seeking vote maximization will move to the center of ideological spectrum as to satisfy the preference of a median voter (Downs, 1957). BJP, despite contesting Indian election for more than three decades and holding power at the center and in the states, is nevertheless seen as the party at the extreme end of the spectrum, mainly due to its associations with right-wing organizations and its clearly sectarian past. Although some scholars, like Llewellyn (2011), argue in favor of successful moderation, BJP's position remains ambivalent with regards to some issues related to secularism, such as their intention to abolish provision in constitution of India that grants Kashmir special status and BJP's policies towards minorities.

Palshikar (2004) insists that BJP didn't abandon its ideological commitment to Hindutva, as observers concluded based on the fact that party didn't emphasize this issue during election campaigning in 2004. Although this core issue was not explicitly present in the campaign communication in 1999 and 2004, party's support for Modi as well as its reaffirmed position regarding construction of the temple in Ayodhya, common civil code and other issues, driven by anti-Muslim sentiments, clearly speak in favor of party's consistent ideological affiliation. It is important to note party's attitude towards Gujrat riots, when BJP didn't attempt to recover its image in the aftermath of events that resulted in more than 2000 casualties among Muslim population of the state. Palshikar points out that already in 1998 BJP tried to shift the focus away from Hindutva politics, instead emphasizing the issues of development and governance. Neither concerns over secularism figured prominently on the agenda of the parties fighting elections 2004, which prohibits from concluding that the results of elections signaled voter's rejection of BJP's communal stance (Palshikar, 2004).

Palshikar makes a significant contribution to the understanding of political contestation in India. He identifies six main points that characterize what he calls a "middle ground" of Indian politics: a majoritarian viewpoint, high expression of religiosity, insistence on maintaining

group boundaries, lack of awareness about communal events, mild approval of minority interests, a weak association between these and partisanship in case of BJP (Palshikar, 2004: P.5427). According to him, these conditions can bring Hindu votes to BJP making it possible for party's election campaign to succeed without explicit references to Hindutva ideology. He insists that differences between the parties has become less expressed, according to National Election survey 2004 both BJP and Congress attract those who hold majoritarian views and reveal high religiosity as well as those who support group boundaries in almost equal proportions (Palshikar, 2004). This allows to conclude, that communal question, being inherent in the middle ground of the public opinion, doesn't get contested in the elections, since the parties don't possess the ability to redefine it but rather exploit the question for their electoral gains. While BJP is pursuing the vote of Hindu followers, Congress in its turn, tries to appeal to other groups which also have distinct identities, such as ethnic minorities, backward castes and Muslims. Palshikar notes that in 2004 BJP having lost the elections could have actually secured the «long-term victory for its politics of communal cleavages» (Palshikar, 2004, P.5430).

Amrita Basu argues, that BJP maintains two identities, one of a militant social movement, and another of a moderate political party, which it chooses to highlight depending on the context and political situation. The party adopted a combined approach as early as 1986: moderation that BJP demonstrated facilitated an agreement with Janata Dal, which in turn helped the party to increase its vote share in 1989 as compared to 1984. But at the same time BJP continued to work with the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), religious organization aimed at promoting Hindutva ideology, largely involved in agitational activities. BJP joined Ayodhya movement in 1990s, a controversial campaign aimed at the restoration of the allegedly destroyed Hindu temple at the place of the Mosque, which subsequently was demolished by the mob of Hindu activists leading to the riots breaking out in different parts of the country. BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh(UP), the state where Ayodhya is located, with the help of the movement

approach, but as a governing party it came under pressure from the both sides – VHP insisted on constructing the temple, while BJP felt the need to comply with the rules of democratic governance. But as a result, it failed to prevent the demolition of the mosque, and later on attempted to divert attention from the issue.

Going for elections 1991, BJP realized that it has to make its image more inclusive which led to economic issues having been added to the party agenda. At the same time, BJP hoped to secure benefits from the Ayodhya campaign, which was evident from election speeches of the senior leaders of the party, that emphasized the attempt of the party to “right a historical injustice”, calling Muslims who defended the mosque anti-national, and the disputed site - the birthplace of Ram (Basu 2001). Campaign was particularly aggressive in UP, which translated in a overwhelming support for the party in the state in elections 1991, a year before the incident. Thus, between 1989 and 1992 BJP was more inclined towards its movement side, and changed its approach after 1993. Movement approach brought unfavorable results in elections in 1993 and 1995, the party also lost support in UP, state that witnessed demolition and subsequent riots. BJP realized the necessity to moderate its stance, it now emphasized its secular position, and put forward the issues of economy liberalization and corruption. Not only the question about constructing the mosque wasn’t raised, but also Advani, the senior leader and hardline ideologist of the party, demonstrated his support towards Muslims. This shows that BJP opts for mobilization only if it promises electoral benefits, which can also be short-sighted, while the violence of the campaign has proved to bear negative consequences for the party, since not only Muslim population suffered but also Hindu supporters were affected by the riots that broke out. As Basu notes, moderate line helped BJP to secure support of the lower castes. If in 1996 BJP received less votes from among Other Backward Castes voters than other parties – it managed to secure only 11%, in 1998, their share reached 42%, which made it the most popular party among OBC (Basu, 2001).

Another reason for BJP to develop a centrist line was its regional confinement to the Northern part of India, or Hindi belt. In 1996 96% of the votes that BJP secured came from this region, along with two western states, Gujrat and Maharashtra. Divisive issues that BJP employed in its campaign, such as anti-muslim sentiments, or Ayodhya temple, would not have succeeded in the southern region. Having adopted centrist position, BJP managed to increase its vote share in the south to 31%.

Thus, BJP, while following a moderate line, tends to employ its movement identity for electoral benefits. Moreover, it helps the party to stand out in political arena, which an asset considering tight competition that parties in India face. As Basu notes, even during the periods of relative moderation, BJP continued to draw attention to Ayodhya campaign. The senior party leaders, including Atal Behari Vajpeyee, the moderate face of the party, endorsed the demolition of the mosque. Party's manifestos for elections 1996 and 1998 both contained extensive references to Ayodhya, including promises to build the temple (Basu, 2001).

While assessing BJP's projects for moderation Basu critically notes, that "political parties cannot adopt and shed identities at will. They face pressures by leaders and constituencies to abide by past commitments that make it extremely difficult for them to reinvent themselves entirely. Changes in strategy are more likely to be cyclical than permanent" (Basu, 2001: P. 179). At times BJP spoke in two voices, as for example in party manifesto for elections 1998. While keeping with its ideological commitments developed in 1989, BJP in its manifesto promised to build the temple, to remove the special status of Kashmir granted by constitution and to introduce uniform civil code. However, these issues were omitted in the common NDA manifesto, so their status on BJP's agenda remained dubious. Two different voices that BJP has are also reflected in the dual leadership that BJP used to have. Moderate Vajpeyee and Advani, called "The Iron Man" who represented strong ideological stance of the party, symbolize the dual identity of BJP.

Basu also notes, that polarization along religious lines has proved to bring electoral dividends and, although many parties used communal appeals to attract voters, BJP stands out in this regard as a party that emphasized its commitment to communal ideology and explicitly used violent means to secure power (Basu 2001). Their success in 1991 was attributed to Advani's yatra, campaign that preceded mosque demolition. Basu indicates that in several cities and states electoral success BJP was preceded by violent outburst of communal tensions (Basu, 2001). Important to note that electoral gain from militant movement tended to be short-lived, especially when media drew critical attention to the aftermath of the riots and put responsibility for violence on BJP.

BJP's reliance on RSS as a successful grassroot organization holds the party back and forces it to make concessions. RSS provides valuable support to the party in terms of mobilization forces, that no other Indian party can assure. For right-wing organizations associated with Sangh Parivar, BJP is a mean to influence Indian politics while avoiding direct involvement. Party cadre is largely drawn from RSS, including current prime minister, which is also reflected in cabinet appointments. At the same time, BJP's connection with such organizations as RSS and VHP, help to expand its support base by making party more inclusive. Traditionally BJP is known as elitist party which associates itself with upper-caste Hindus, but their relations with grassroot organization help to attract other groups, such lower castes, into its fold. Although, as Basu notes, the inclusion was rather symbolic and didn't translate in tangible electoral benefits (Basu 2001).

Subhrata Mitra (2013) argues, that for successful conversion of the party three main conditions have to be satisfied. Firstly, the parties have to range along a dimension to allow them to compete for a median voter and thus converge to the center of this dimension. But in India a conventional dimension exists alongside with anti-system dimension, which gives electoral strength to extremists parties and fractions of the parties, that do not allow them to moderate.

Secondly, he assumes that there is a need for securing territorial niche for the parties that represent the extremes of the spectrum, which he believes can provide the incentive to the party to become moderate. However, nationalist parties seeking dominance across the country, such as BJP, as oppose to regional nationalist parties cannot acquire such territorial niche. Thirdly, party has to effectively constrain the radical wing or associated organization so that it would not interfere with party's political activity. But in the absence of central authority in Hindu religious organizations extreme groups are free to act as they wish and cannot be prevented from disrupting political activities of the parties they associate with. Thus, he argues, that in India these three conditions are not met which impedes BJP's moderation (Mitra, 2013).

As Mitra points out, according to survey, BJP' electorate reveals two conflicting leaning. On one hand, supporters of the party are inclined towards Hindu religious extremism, while there is a clear moderate segment of electorate as judged from their position on four critical issues in Indian politics. This means, BJP combines two tendencies of conflicting nature, extremist and moderate, while the gap between two is the lowest for BJP as compared to other parties (Mitra, 2013). The implication suggests that BJP cannot disregard either of two tendencies, and has to seek a balance to satisfy the interests of both. Thus, social base of the BJP voters doesn't become more moderate, but continues to favour its traditional ideology which impedes moderation. In line with this argument, Palshikar and Suri insist that BJP attempts to expand its social base by making it more inclusive instead of focusing on Hindu upper caste electorate. But they maintain that although these issues are not raised by the party in the course of campaign, its followers continue to hold the view of the party as committed to Hindu ideology (Palshikar, Suri, 2014).

Although Varshney believes that BJP is successfully transforming into a moderate party through participation in elections since mid 1990-s, still he admits that despite the efforts of the party leadership to maintain moderate stand on divisive issues, lower level party cadre continues to revel anti-Muslim attitudes (Varshney, 2014).

At the same time Hansen, Hasan and Jaffrelot in their study also note, that BJP is likely to change its tactics but not strategy, and it has adopted pragmatic approach in the past at the same time reaping benefits of the Ayodhya campaign, for example. They point out that “and even as it moderates its public stance by toning down the anti-muslim attitude, the competing pressure to sustain its commitment to Hindutva is unmistakable” (Hansen, Hasan and Jaffrelot, 1998: P. 317).

Thus, opinion remains divided on whether BJP has successfully moved towards moderation or it still holds to both of its identities and will be ready to mobilize its resources when political situation requires so. While there is a clear trend towards transformation, as it can be judged from the election campaign 2014, the question holds whether there is enough evidence to speak about substantive moderation or only moderation in its functional understanding can be applied to BJP. Most scholars agree that BJP takes moderation line only to secure electoral benefits, but remains committed to its traditional ideology due to the preferences of its electorate and its close ties to the right-wing organization play a crucial role in securing support for the party at the grassroot level.

This brings up the question, whether BJP is going to be ultimately forced to adopt the centrist position driven by electoral competition and regular participation in elections, or will seek to balance dual identities as to maximize their vote share, since both prove to be electorally profitable (Mitra, 2013).

Chapter 2. BJP election campaign 2014

2.1 Modern style of election campaigning

A close connection is observed between a party type and election campaigning style. As Smith, referring to Norris, points out in her study on the process of party transformation in Britain, the transition from pre-modern to modern style of campaigning shares common elements and corresponds in time with the shift from mass to catch-all parties. At the same time, party classification of Katz and Mair includes “nature of party work and party campaigning” as one of the criteria (Smith, 2009, P.57). Kirchheimer also suggest that catch-all parties, give maximal importance to campaigning, as they are driven by vote maximization concerns, thus making political universe campaign-centric (Smith, 2009, P.58).

According to Smith, two main shifts in campaign strategies became prominent, first being the campaign’s emphasis on persuasion and the second is the increased amount of information that party needed to obtain about its electorate. Smith draws the difference between mobilization campaign, that mass parties used to secure support of traditional electoral base, while persuasion campaign aimed to attract voters with weak political preferences who tend to shift alliances. Goals underlying these two types of campaigns differ, since in the first case party needs to ensure that its loyal electorate turns out to vote, while persuasion campaign has to convince the uncertain voters who are as likely to support the opponents, in superiority of its candidates. Smith maintains, that persuasion campaign tends to focus on leaders’ personalities, party image and themes. In this respect BJP combines both approaches, since mobilization proves to be important for its electoral success. Given the organizational strength of the party and its affiliates, BJP has significant advantage over its competitors in term of grassroots mobilization. At the same time, campaign 2014 can be clearly classified as persuasive, since it attempted to expand its voter base, by reaching out to the first time voters and other groups who

were previously aligned with BJP's opponents. Modi's personality put in the forefront the campaign, clearly defined themes addressed in party's communication and its aggressive style demonstrate persuasive character of the campaign. Thus, BJP has moved towards persuasion campaign, common for catch-all parties, without abandoning old tradition of voter mobilization.

Persuasion campaign, in its turn, requires knowledge about the electorate it is aimed to appeal to, and leads to increased demand for information (Smith, 2009, P.563). Parties have a task to identify the issues of importance for voters, what voters find convincing and based on these findings make a decision about the themes and personalities that can help to secure support of potential electorate. In this regard, campaign 2014 can be seen as information driven, since BJP employed various methods to learn more about its voters. At the local level booth-level teams were given the task to gather information from voters about local concerns and problems, while data analyst teams developed models for voter engagement targeting minority and gender groups as well as swing state voters (CNBC, 2014). This made BJP communication highly effective, as could be clearly seen, for instance, during the rallies, when Modi successfully demonstrated his awareness and preoccupation with electorate's concerns.

It has been observed that party's image is becoming more and more secular from elections to elections and party's campaign fits the model of modern campaign, as defined by Swanson and Mancini (1996). According to them parties seek to increase their market share by making their agenda attractive for a wide range of groups. They avoid references to their traditional ideologies and tend to blur the main differences in policy issues. The content of communication changes, instead of defined programs and strong ideologies it is designed to include a wide range of political opinions (Swanson, Mancini, 1996). In 2014 BJP has adjusted its communication by giving less prominence to its traditional commitments associated with

ideology of Hindu nationalism and instead focusing on the broader issues which are important for different groups of voters.

In election 2014 party managed to widen its appeal and reach out to the electorate across various classes, castes and communities (Heath, 2015, Chako, Mayer, 2015). Moving away from relying primarily on the upper-caste Hindu, as well as urban voters and middle class (Chhibber, Osterman, 2014, Mitra, Schottli, 2016), in 2014 BJP won the support of the lower classes, Dalits (untouchables) and Adivasi (tribal population), improved its position in the regions beyond the Hindi belt, and managed to reap India's demographic dividends – the party attracted a large number of first-time voters (Basu, Misra, 2014, Mitra, Schottli, 2016, Jaffrelot, Kumar, 2015).

With regard to the economic argument, being an opposition party gave BJP certain advantages, it was able to attack the current government by drawing attention to its major failures, such as economic slowdown, price rises, corruption scandals (Chako, Mayer, 2015). Growing anti-incumbency sentiments provided an opportunity for the opposition to step forward with a more effective alternative, and BJP chose to focus on the promise of development and good governance (Sridharan, 2014). Without openly committing to specific economic and social policies (Jaffrelot, 2015, Mudgal, 2015, Ranganathan, 2016), BJP used its prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, as a proxy for development. The case of Gujrat, where Modi served as a Chief Minister for more than a decade, was used to support the promise – the economic model of the state was projected as a success that can be repeated at the national level under Modi's leadership (Sridharan, 2014, Kashwan, 2014). With anti-corruption sentiments being especially pertinent prior to the elections, BJP emphasized the need for change in the system being for long associated with the Indian National Congress. During the campaign, Modi's strong and incorruptible leadership was played against the weak performance of the Congress candidate, Rahul Gandhi, and was presented as a solution to the problem of government's ineffectiveness (Jaffrelot, 2015, Torri, 2015, Chhibber, Osterman, 2014). Thus, BJP influenced

the election agenda to its own advantage by insisting that India needs a strong and credible leader, which only BJP was able to provide.

BJP faced the challenge of responding to the regional diversity without antagonizing its existing electorate that continued to look at the party as patron of Hindu nationalism. At the same time, nomination of Modi as a prime ministerial candidate involved additional risk for secularization of the campaign due to his controversial past: his failure to stop the Hindu-Muslim riots that broke out in Gujrat in 2002 during his tenure as a Chief Minister, with subsequent charges against his government's alleged involvement in the attacks which invoked strong reactions (Mitra, Schottli, 2016, Chakravartty, Roy, 2015). Nevertheless, Modi's humble origin was highlighted in order to attract the votes of the lower castes electorate and at the same time set him off against the political culture of the dynasty-ruled Indian National Congress. Emphasizing hard work and Modi's achievements based on merit as opposed to parentage, BJP's campaign aimed at tapping into the aspiration of young people and the middle class (Mitra, Schottli, 2016). Despite the fact that political leaders in India always enjoyed wide publicity and support, it was often noticed, for the first time since Indira Gandhi, that the election campaign relied so heavily on the personality of the leader (Jaffrelot, 2015, Chakravartty, Roy, 2015).

Thus, this analysis is aimed to demonstrate how BJP, in its attempt to adapt to changing circumstances, has shifted their approach to campaigning strategy and techniques. It attempts to find out how BJP managed to overcome its narrow image and support its moderate identity in order to attract maximum number of votes, without antagonizing its traditional electorate.

2.2 Election campaign 2014

In 2014, unprecedented attention was attached to election campaigns of the major parties and, in particular, to BJP campaign that reached new levels in terms of intensity and employment of

various means and channels. It has often been labeled as “the most impressive communication campaign India had seen since Indira Gandhi in 1971” (Jaffrelot, 2015: P.155). This time, Congress, despite being an incumbent party, was unable to compete with BJP which not only saturated the media space but also successfully mobilized its grassroot resources and thus managed to engage with a larger number of voters.

Modern model of political campaigning is media intensive, when parties fight to get their share of media coverage to put their message across. Although it holds true for western democracies, where electorate highly depends on media for political information, in developing democracies situation is rather different. In a country like India, television, press and Internet are abundant and free, but public access to it is limited, mainly due to the problems of literacy and poverty. (Norris, 2004). For this reason, Indian parties cannot solemnly rely on media campaigns but in order to assure maximum reach they need to make rallies and other forms of public address an important part of their campaign strategies. At the same time, one can expect the difference in content of campaign depending on the level and the mean of communication: a TV ad or debate that are although available throughout the country will only be viewed by well-off part of electorate, while public rally in one of the constituencies will address more specific audience raising different types of concerns. For BJP, as a party that aims to create an appeal across various groups, communication at the national level is likely to focus on broad issues deprived of strong ideology, while local level communication can be expected to retain references to party’s traditional commitments. Thus, in order to start analyzing the transformation of a party image it is more conducive to look at the rally speeches produced by BJP, where references to party’s traditional ideology are expected to be found.

2.3 Thematic analysis of the speeches delivered by Narendra Modi

Rallies have been held across Indian states between September 2013 and May 2014, and in total Modi addressed 437 rallies speaking at three to four venues in one day (Jaffrelot, 2015, P. 155).

Widely using new technologies, already tested in 2012 during Gujrat campaign, Modi's 3D holographic image was broadcasted to 100 locations at the same time thus amplifying the reach. Modi's personal website states that 3D holographic projections delivered 12 speeches across 1350 venues in April and May 2014. In UP, vans transmitting Modi's 10-minute speech visited over 19,000 villages in 403 constituencies. 4000 tea stalls, as a reminder of Modi's occupation in his young age, were targeted with "Chai pe Charcha" or "Talk over Tea" campaign, when through a combination of technologies locals could directly interact with Modi (Jaffrelot, 2015, Mukerji, 2015).

Based on availability of video and transcripts, 23 speeches were selected for the analysis, for some of them Hindi and English transcripts were available on the personal website of Narendra Modi, while the rest of the speeches were sourced from the website of BJP and analyzed with the help of shortened transcripts available online. The sites where analyzed speeches were delivered include India's largest cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and less populous but well-known Varanasi, Jammu, Agra, Bhopal, Meerut, Patna and Jodhpur, as well as relatively small Dehradun, Panaji, Rewari, Guwahati, Jagdlpur, Gorakhpur, Ambikapur, Trichy, Imphal and Bemtara. The sample doesn't assure representativeness of the results, given that more than 437 rallies were held, but there are certain reasons to believe that valuable conclusion can be drawn from the study. Firstly, the demographics of audience receiving the speech remain largely constant. Secondly, although some of the rallies that sample includes were held in predominantly urban constituencies, some of them being metropolitan, others represent small cities. Thirdly, given constraints that party had to conform with to support its image of a "party for all" significant similarities are expected to be found in the content of the speeches across different states, with common elements built into a distinct regional context. Sample offers a variety in geography, sites where analyzed speeches were delivered are located in different regions, including the South (Hyderabad,

Chennai, Bangalore), North (Delhi, Jammu), West (Jodhpur, Panaji), East (Kolkata, Patna), North-East (Imphal, Guwahati), Centre (Ambikapur, Meerut) (see Fig.2 in Appendix 1).

Thematic unit was chosen as recording unit of analysis, and the size of the unit was a subject to vary. In many cases it was problematic to decide upon what constitutes a unit, since orator doesn't follow the script of the speech thoroughly and tends to repeat the phrase, or interrupt the flow of one theme with a reference to previous parts of the speech, or emphasize certain parts of it in order to increase the effect. The concepts used in analysis of the speeches were decided based upon the literature dedicated to the subject. Thorough analysis of these elections produced a significant number of studies dedicated to BJP's campaign that give a direction to this research. Concepts included *governance, development, Congress, Gujarat, youth, "common man", security, religion, patriotism*.

2.4 Results of thematic analysis

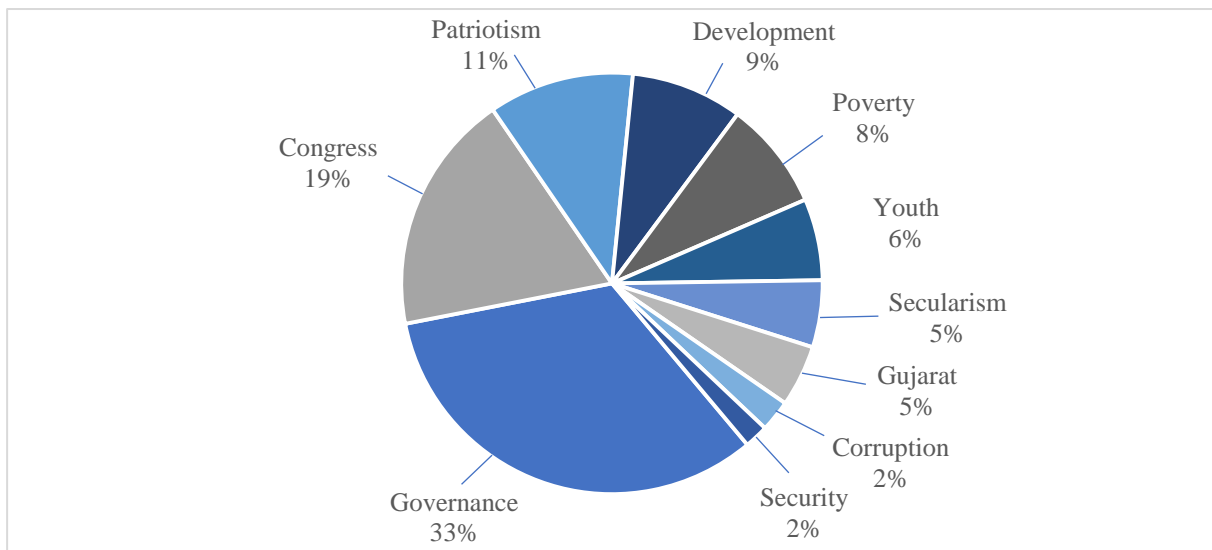


Fig.1 Frequency of occurrence of themes in the campaign speeches of Narendra Modi

a) Governance

As expected the most commonly presented theme is governance (see Fig.1), which was referred more often, than "development" probably due to significant overlap between these two categories. At the same time, there are no clear electoral promises or explicitly expressed

position on the issue. To get a better understanding of BJP's stance concerning governance, the category was split in two, "bad" and "good" governance. Discussion of "bad" governance usually took a form of direct attack on the Congress government and non-BJP ministers focusing on their failure to deliver growth and improvement of living conditions in India.

In the discussion on good governance three types of address can be identified. First, Modi employs abstract expressions like "we believe in delivering", "I emphasize on good governance". Second, he uses subjunctive mood in the sentence to describe situations that can become possible if his party is elected to govern or if current governance had been effective. Third, speaking of good governance he highlights the achievements of BJP either during its previous terms or its governing experience in other parts of the country. In most of the cases he refers to the case of Gujrat, by showing how similar problems, those relevant for the region where the speech is held and for Gujrat state, have been addressed in different ways. By doing so, he contrasts successful resolution of the problem in Gujrat with the lack of progress in the respective state.

Corruption is frequently referred in relation to bad governance. It has been addressed in the speeches in relation the scams that shook the reputation of the Congress government. Modi also talks about corruption in the job market, noting that getting a job without money or references is a difficult task for the Indian youngsters. Modi uses the example of check posts in Gujrat that bring higher income as compared to Maharashtra, due to reduced human intervention, to show how corruption can be successfully cut. Black money is also referred as one of the major issues that Modi would address if BJP is voted to power. He points out that Congress's speech on black money is devoid of substance, as they have no interest in stopping this practice.

Thus, none of the forms contains clear electoral promises regarding the improvement of governance. This finding is consistent with a description of a modern "catch-all" party that

avoids campaigning on defined programs but rather attempts to highlight the issues appealing to wider audience.

b) Congress

Congress has become the second highest mentioned theme in the sample. This finding is in line with a long tradition which persists in India of the parties relying on “demonization” of their opponent as a part of their campaigning strategy, similarly applied, for example, by Congress in 2004 when it was in opposition.

In many rallies Modi speaks with confidence about Congress losing the elections, assuring the audience that the people in the other regions have already made their choice not to support the party and are “desperate to overthrow the Delhi government”. In Delhi, Modi claims that people “want BJP to win and Congress get punished. This is the mood of the people” and that “the country has decided that there will be BJP government in Delhi”. He calls to “liberate India from Congress” and “to fulfill the dream of Congress-free India”. In this regard, Modi brings in the name of Mahatma Gandhi, claiming that one of his last desires was to make India Congress-free. He also emphasizes that not only the party, but more importantly, “Congress culture” has to be removed to improve the system of governance.

Taking into account the record number of rallies that Modi attended during the election campaign, his reference to Congress as the “government sitting in Delhi” is used to emphasize the fact that he is touring the country on foot while his opponents are sitting still. In Bangalore speech, referring to Congress he stresses that “they are the indoor players, while we play outdoors!”. He addresses Congress government as “Monarchs of Delhi”, “Delhi Empire”, “Delhi Sultanate”, and its leader Rahul Gandhi as “Shehzada”. By calling Sonia Gandhi “Madam Ji”, Modi is probably alluding to her foreign origin.

c) Regional context

It is important to mark significant efforts that party put into vernacularising its election campaign. In every state that Modi visited, rally was named differently to connect with the local voters. Modi's attire also changed from rally to rally, he wore the hat traditional for the state where the rally was held. BJP team has thoroughly collected information across the constituencies directly from the voters with regards to the relevant local concerns, which included, for instance, farmer's welfare and other rural development issues (Jaffrelot, 2015). These concerns were then connected to the national ambitions expressed in the party communication which gave voters a sense of inclusiveness.

While speeches followed similar structure, content was tailored to address concerns relevant for the region in general and locality in particular. Modi demonstrates his preoccupation with the problems sugarcane farmers in Meerut are facing, with drug consumption in Northeast, with inability of the local government in UP to maintain law and order, or with security concerns caused by Maoism movement. He always takes into account demographical composition of the locality: he speaks about the fishermen in Tamil Nadu, farmers in Uttar Pradesh, youth in Bangalore, saree makers in Varanasi.

In the regions, he often talks about local industries, like pharmaceuticals in the northeast, tourism in Agra, Uttarkhand and Kashmir, IT in Bangalore or Bollywood film industry in Mumbai, pointing out to its development potential. Avoiding giving details or promises, he emphasizes on existing prerequisites for development, points out to the failures of the current government and suggest what can be done to "take the industry to the new heights". He talks in terms of possibilities for development, such as building hydro-electric power plants, or expanding the rail connection to improve internal tourism, exporting herbal medicines, developing mining industry.

Modi contrasts past achievement of the region with the lack of development observed in present, or draws attention to the favorable conditions in terms of natural or human resources which are not used by the government for the benefit of the region.

Many references in Modi's speech are aimed to evoke the patriotic sentiments, some of them being universal for the entire nation, such as remarks about Independence struggle, or more abstract statements about cultural heritage, "future of the nation" or India's adherence to democratic development. Some references are clearly targeted to the people residing in the respective states and aimed at arising regionally-specific patriotic sentiments. He ignites the pride of the Bengali audience by emphasizing role of Bengal in the past as the leader of economic and cultural development and remembering intellectuals that Bengal is famous for. He reminds the audience that Bengal gave India an iconic symbol, Ambassador car and also gave a start to computerization of the country. In the state of Manipur, Modi mentions Manipuri dance, reminds the people that Lord Krishna, one of the central Hindu Gods, was married to Northeastern family, although takes a chance to connect it to Gujrat, as the place where Krishna lived. Bringing the memories of freedom struggle, Modi speaks of Meerut as the land that gave inspiration to 1857 revolt. He pays his respect to the martyrs in Assam. Significant part of Modi's speech in Patna is dedicated to Bihar's special place in the history of India and famous personalities associated with it, such as Ashoka, Lord Buddha, Guru Gobind Singh. Mumbai, as a city where many events during the Independence struggle took place, deserves a special note in his speech. He draws a parallel between the current situation and independence movement, calling to liberate the country from the Congress as once Indians forced the British to leave the country. He uses the famous slogan "Quit India", but this time against the Congress party. He also compliments the people of Dehradun by saying that "Uttarakhand has courage and bravery running in its veins", and applauds Kashmiri people as the ones who "live with pride and honor and die for the country".

Modi often shows his admiration with famous personalities who originated from the region where the rally is held, often finding their connection with Gujrat. Modi underlines that Gujarat and West Bengal “share a very close bond”, because the brother of Tagore spent time in Gujrat, and the brother of Subhash Chandra Bose took part in the development of textile industry in Gujrat. He cites the poet from Meerut, Hariom Panwar, who spoke about the connect between Ahmedabad and Meerut in his works. He also remembers Maharaja Hari Singh and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in Jammu and Kashmir, and Dayanad Sarasawati in Haryana.

In the attempt to show his personal connection with the region, Modi successfully connects from the first sight unrelated details. During his rally in Assam, state famous for its tea production, Modi speaks about his childhood experience at the tea stall: “I have a special bonding with tea, - In my childhood, I used to boil Assam's tea leaves, make tea and energize people, but it feels as if the same Assam is suffering from energy crisis.”

Special remark should be made about Modi’s ability to connect local issues with similar problem that his state of Gujrat was facing. He compares water resources of Agra and Gujrat, maintaining that despite Gujrat having only one river, water supply is successfully managed, while Agra experiences problems. In Tamil Nadu he speaks of fishermen being arrested by Sri Lanka army, while Gujrati fishermen “are arrested and tortured by Pakistan”. In West Bengal, UP and Maharashtra he talks about electricity shortage, maintaining that Gujrat has successfully provides its citizens with electricity 24 hours. Giving a speech in Mumbai, he refers to the special connection between Maharashtra and Gujrat, that have been the part of the same state in the past. Modi points out to political instability that Maharashtra experienced under the Congress governments, having seen 26 Chief Ministers when Gujrat had only 16 since the moment states got separated. He draws attention to how Gujrat “has touched new peaks of prosperity” and showed the growth despite hard conditions in the beginning. In Varanasi, he pays special attention to the pollution of the Ganges, the river highly revered by Hindus. He

compares it to Sabarmati, flowing in Gujrat, which was successfully cleaned under the government project. He also talks about connection that Surat, the city in Gujrat, and Varanasi have. Taking an example of the power loom industry, that both the cities are famous for, Modi demonstrates how technological improvements and financial support from the government helped the industry in Gujrat to grow.

Thus, BJP, determined to break its regional confinement to Hindi belt, invested in regional marketing by collecting the information regarding local concerns and targeting in its rally communication those issues, which guaranteed to evoke a positive response from the audience.

d) “Common man”

Taking into account that poor voters, first of all constitute a very powerful electoral force, and secondly, they are traditionally known to support Congress, Modi’s campaign, especially the rallying, was designed to address concerns of the underprivileged. In his speeches, he often accuses Congress of treating the poor electorate merely as a vote bank and becomes concerned for the poor only when elections are approaching.

Modi aims to contrast his close understanding of the grievances with ignorance of his political opponents. His background allows him to relate to the problems of the “common man”, who constitute his audience at the rallies. He speaks to the “worker who sweats for industrial development”, to the poor, farmers, Dalits, tribals, deprived, underprivileged. Modi creates an impression that he knows the situation well by asking “do you get electricity to run the fan when your mother is unwell? When your son has to study for the examinations, is there electricity at that time?”, “poor families do not get food to eat, the kids weep all night long and sleep crying of hunger”. He often points out that he is “a son of poor mother”, “chaiwala”¹, “a worker like you”, while his Congress opponents “were born with a silver spoon in their mouth”.

¹ Chaiwala – teaboy (hindi).

According to Modi, “they have not seen poverty,” they don’t know “how nights are spent shivering in cold”. In his Jodhpur speech Modi compares himself to Finance Minister of India stressing the difference in their background and political career path: “I am not as wise as you are, I have reached here selling tea, I was born in a poor family”.

Modi repeatedly points out that Congress calls poverty “the state of mind” and doesn’t recognize those with income above 26 rupees as poor. He uses it to support his argument that Congress is not aware of the situation as close as Modi, who comes from the poor background and knows that how much tea or onion this amount can buy. In Ambikapur speech he calls out: “I am hurt that there are such people in Delhi, who do not even know how much money is needed for a poor man’s food, there are such people who are not aware of how the poor man is surviving..!” and “They even do not know that how much pain a mother take to feed her kids..!” Another example that he brings is Sonia Gandhi saying that the reason for farmers’ suicide is people cultivating poison.

He emphasizes that he is different from the Congress leaders by saying that the country “should be run through hard work but not Harvard” as to underline their different paths to power. In his Varanasi speech, he insists that in India even a tea vendor, like himself, should be given an opportunity to rule the country. Knowing that his rally audience mainly consists of the laborers, he asks the audience “is it a crime to earn living by working hard and selling tea..?” He emphasizes that unlike Congress, he stands for the interest of the lower class: Congress has “to please the rich” and thus it creates obstacles for the small businessmen, while Modi knows the situation and understands the difficulties, for instance, of returning the loan.

At several rallies Modi brings an example of the mismanagement in grain supply that took place in 2012, when wheat harvest was left to rot instead of being distributed due to inefficient regulations. Taking into account low level of food consumption in India, widespread malnutrition, this case of food being wasted caused public outcry and was successfully used by

Modi in his attack on Congress. Maintaining that rotten wheat has been sold to brewers by Congress, Modi called it “an insult to farmers”, asking the public at the rally whether “the wheat should be used to feed the hungry or to fill the liquor bottles?”. This helps him to stress the gap between the Congress and the people: “for the people for whom wine bottles are more important than the starving poor, how can they do any good to the poor?”

Unlike relatively small cities, in Bangalore, Modi addresses urban middle class, stressing that Congress government is not concerned about them, while in Jagdlapur Modi frequently refers to tribals, who live in the area in large numbers, by reminding about the measure of BJP government under Vajpeyee to improve their situation, and assuring them that BJP stands firmly for their interests.

e) Youth

A distinct appeal to youth was expected to be found as BJP benefited from country's demographic situation characterized by a large number of young voters. The analysis of Modi's speeches across the regions, on the one hand, confirmed the strong presence of the appeal directed towards youth in party's communication. On the other hand, it also discovered that the theme of “youth” is for the most part accompanied by reference to “employment”, as their biggest concern, given current high demand for jobs.

Modi demonstrates that he is familiar with the situation that youngsters face at the job market, bringing up the issue of the wide spread corruption and reference hiring, problem of accommodation for youth in the big cities. Here again Modi talks about the example of Gujrat, where government provided 13 000 teachers with jobs through online application system, to avoid hiring through a recommendation. With regards to the youth employment Modi often notes that youngsters have to leave their home to look for opportunities in the other regions, he adds a sensitive point about leaving their family, their elderly parents, such as “do you want

your old parents to get proper medication?” He is encouraging the change by asking whether young people what to lead the life like their parents did. Modi adds to the fear by saying that if current situation continues, the youth of India “will be begging on the sidewalk”, and many, who is employed now, will lose their jobs. He accuses Congress of failing to manage the skill development in India as the party “doesn’t care about the youth of the country”. Modi claims that in Gujrat they have given the opportunity to the underprivileged kids, “children of poor and widow mothers” to get an education, suggesting that same can be done in the entire country if BJP is elected.

In Bangalore, a capital of IT industry in India, talking primarily to youth, he also raises a point about social media, claiming that Congress is afraid of it and tries to impose restrictions on it. It is important to note in this regard, that in Bangalore speech Modi often talks about democracy and Congress “having no faith” in it and trying to “suffocate it. Taking into account the demographic composition of the city, where young people prevail, Modi assumes higher political awareness of his audience and their concern with the state of democracy. Among the people and organizations who came in support of Modi, he refers to Goldman Sach, which, according to Modi, said that “if Modi keeps moving ahead, then the economy of India will be back on the track running ahead!” Bringing in a name of the reputed company is aimed at creating an impression among the young audience of Bangalore.

Bangalore speech stands out in terms of its special emphasis on skill development. Bangalore, known as a “Silicon Valley of India”, plays a leading role in country’s IT industry and attracts young professional from the entire country. Giving speech in this metropolitan area, Modi, first of all, speaks to the youth, stressing the importance of providing employment to youth and creating more institutions to train required manpower. Modi maintains that Congress government only sets up multiple committees to counter employment crisis, which proves to be ineffective.

f) Security

Security concerns were less frequently discussed in the literature on elections 2014, but they also found the place in the Modi's speeches, especially in the border areas, such as Manipur and Tamil Nadu. In Chennai he claims that current government doesn't confronts the neighbours, such as Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, who are "troubling" India. In Hyderabad, he attacks Congress for failing to respond to killings of the Indian soldiers by Pakistani forces and calls for the strong measures against those "who behead the soldiers of our nation." At the same rally, he talks about China trying to infiltrate into the Indian territory and capture Arunachal Pradesh, while in Trichy Modi also raises concerns over infiltrations made possible because of the Congress policies. Modi claims, that it will result in foreigners becoming Indian citizens and taking away their rights.

Modi calls the situation when China gives sim cards to Indian citizens in the border villages a "grave danger to Indian security" and accuses the Telecom Ministry of India of failing to take measures.

One of the heated topics in the public discourse in India, Indian army, is often addressed by Modi in his speeches. In order to create an emotional appeal, he highly praises the army and attacks the Congress for "disrespecting the soldiers who live and die for the country". In Jammu and Kashmir, state involved in ongoing conflict with Pakistan, Modi remembers famous high rank commanders and pays respect to defense forces personnel who died in fights.

Internal security is addressed by Modi when he talks about lack of law and order in the northern states of Bihar, UP and Assam, as well as the city of Delhi with regards to women safety. In Trichy, he criticizes current government because neither women, not the troops deployed at the border or the fishermen are safe.

g) Secularism

Secular agenda had been previously used by BJP's political opponents in order to draw the distinction between contesting parties. In 2014 BJP changed the strategy and began to emphasize on its secular stance, maintaining that its opponents have unjustifiably used secularism for its electoral benefits. He often calls them "defenders" or "guardians" of secularism implying the misleading nature of their claims. Given the fact that Gujrat has been associated with communal violence, it is highly important for Modi to demonstrate in his address that all the accusation of his opponents are false and religious communities of Gujrat live in harmony. In his speech, he admits that 10 years ago riots were regular in Gujrat, but the situation changed and now the state can assure the freedom from violence, peace and unity. Instead he claimed that while other states witness the outbreak of communal violence, "there is no riot under the Modi's rule".

Thus, vote bank politics that parties are pursuing, according to Modi becomes one of the most frequent themes raised in the attack on Congress and other political rivals. In his Delhi speech Modi presents an explanation to the audience on how the vote bank politics work, claiming that through various manipulations the independent contestants secure a small but sufficient amount of votes and later provide benefits only to its supporters, leaving the majority behind. Comparing to the situation in Gujrat, he notes that his state successfully tackled this issue and now "everyone is being benefitted beyond their cult, sects and communities".

Modi often accuses Congress of divide and rule politics, of making communities, castes and entire states fight one another. He claims that Congress is "infamous for inducing communal riots across the nation". Referring to the period when India gained independence and was split into India and Pakistan, Modi insists that Congress "divided the nation in the name of religion", while BJP, in contrast, stands for unity and harmony as prerequisites for prosperity. In Trichy, he criticizes Congress' decision to make special arrangement for Kashmir, to construct

linguistic states, to create division between forward and backward communities, - these all allows him to call the party “divisive Congress”. In Mumbai, he insists that Congress sets “brothers, races, fraternities, cults and sects against each other”.

As an example, still alive in the memory of the audience, he brings the case of Telengana, where the incidents of violent protests occurred in the process of its separation from the state of Andhra Pradesh. To support his argument, he contrasts it with the peaceful separation of Uttarkhand, Jharkhand and Chattisagarh under the BJP government. Giving a speech in Hyderabad, he calls to stop the hatred “among the two brothers”, and in Patna he addresses “poor Hindu and Muslim brothers”, calling to fight the poverty instead of each other.

Another instance of Congress’ ruling that Modi is highly critical of, is government’s attempt to count the number of personnel in the Indian defense forces belonging to different religious communities. For Modi, this a good chance to demonstrate that Congress is “farming a poison of communalism”.

In his Kolkata speech, for example, Modi insists that vote bank politics of his opponents “have reduced the minorities – the Muslim of India to non-entities – simple numbers in the vote bank” and that the parties have never worked to bring development for Muslim communities. Speaking in Kolkata and Patna, in order to demonstrate how his state of Gujrat takes care of its Muslim population he compares the applications for Haj coming from Muslims each year in Gujrat. By showing that the number of application greatly exceeds the quota, he points out that Muslims in Gujrat are included in the development process.

Giving a speech in Jammu he raises the question regarding the article 370, which grants autonomous status to Kashmir. He claims that the citizens of Kashmir should be equalized in their rights with other citizens of the country and calls to abolish the article which has long been one of the main controversies on the party’s agenda. In this respect, Modi holds the Congress

responsible for “politics of discrimination”, “the politics of separation” that has done harm to the country, thus insisting that the separate status of Kashmir has to be abolished. He also repeatedly speaks of Shia community of Kargil and Gurjar, the tribal community, blaming the government for failing to bring the development to these groups.

As BJP campaigns for cow protection, the incentives introduced by Congress to support meat exports and slaughterhouses, are highly criticized by Modi. This issue stands out in the party’s agenda, because it is seen as played out in the interest of Hindu population, and especially the upper castes.

In the end of the speech a catch phrase can be frequently found: “the government has got only one religion – “the nation first”, or “the religion of the government is India first” which Modi calls “a definition of secularism today”. He continues to proclaim that the only religious book of India is Indian constitution, and India’s worship is the only worship of the government.

Thus, identity politics or religion have not received as much attention as other themes. Although references to religion appear almost in every speech, they on average occur in the range of 1 to 5 times. They mostly include the mentions of Hindu Gods in a historical or regional context as well as frequently repeated pledge which states that “nation first” or “India first” is the only religion of the government. Given that party was in the past considered to be a threat to secular development of the country, Modi’s emphasis on secularism in 2014, can be seen as an attempt to create a more moderate image, appealing to the nation as a whole rather than to the Hindu community.

Chapter 3. The extent of the BJP transformation

Despite the fact that caste and religion have rarely been addressed by Modi and never in the negative way, we cannot conclude that politics of identity were completely absent from the party communication in the elections 2014. First of all, Modi spoke about the abolition of the article 370 which already caused controversies in the past but continued to be present on the party's agenda. Secondly, campaign has successfully drawn attention to Modi's background, which was contrasted to that of Rahul Gandhi not only in terms of class, but more importantly of the caste. Modi's family belongs to the Other Backward Castes, a segment of the Indian society which traditionally constitutes relatively small number among BJP supporters. In this case Modi's origin was advantageous for campaigning purposes, and he emphasized it in his rally speeches and interviews. Jaffrelot notes, that before the campaign started, Modi has never used his caste so explicitly, but, for instance, addressing the rally in Muzaffarpur in the state of Bihar, where significant section of population belongs to the OBC category, he mentioned that "the next decade will belong to the Dalits and backwards" (Jaffrelot, 2015).

Although Modi emphasized his party's adherence to secularism, according to Jaffrelot (2015), there is certain evidence of BJP making its Hindutva stance tangible through campaign communication: Modi addressed the Congress government as "The Delhi Sultanate" and personally Rahul Gandhi as "Shehzada" in a manner which taunted them for being too supportive of Muslims; he criticized Congress for subsidizing slaughterhouses and promoting meat exports, which is seen as a favor towards Muslims and against Hindu population which does not consume meat as often. Saffron clothes that Modi used to wear on the special occasions, Hindu sacred places that he visited and his choice of Varanasi, a holy city for Hindu, as a constituency to contest from also speak in favor of Modi being a candidate of the Hindu majority rather than the entire country where religious minorities claim their distinct presence. Apart from that he made appearance with the personalities famous among Hindu followers

(Jaffrelot, 2015). Another instance of BJP exploiting religious sentiments could be observed in the UP, where party attempted to mobilize women electorate. By organizing special religious prayers and rituals for the women in rural areas, party activists aimed to symbolically integrate women from backward communities into Hindu manifold and create the sense of identity consciousness (Mukherji, 2015, P.119).

While party tried to keep Modi's image out of any controversies, other party leaders were more vocal about the issues typically associated with Hindu ideology. Such claims included the construction of the temple, referring to Muslim as terrorists, using Hindu religious slogans at the rallies (Jaffrelot, 2015). BJP's treatment of Muzaffarnagar riots that took place in 2013 provides evidence for party's persisting concern over its traditional ideology. Some of the BJP ministers who were found complicit in the riots by the police were later addressed as protectors of Hindu or the heroes at the rally held in the area. Moreover, three of them were nominated by BJP to contest the elections, while one of them became the Minister of State in the Modi's government (Jaffrelot, 2015). Similar situation could be observed with regards to Gujrat riots that claimed many lives of Muslims in the state. Modi's government in the state has been considered complicit in the riots and widely criticized for the way it was handled. Although no evidence was found against Modi that would have allowed to bring the charges against him, it significantly damaged his image and provided the ground for journalists to raise the questions. Important to note that Modi, when directly asked whether he would like to apologize for pogroms, instead replied that people are the ones to judge him: "I am in the people's court and I am waiting to hear from them, and their verdict" (Jaffrelot, 2015, P.155)

One of the most controversial issues, the construction of the temple in Ayodhya, was not addressed in the rally speeches by Modi himself, but it can be found in the manifesto, which holds that "BJP reiterates its stand to explore all possibilities within the framework of the constitution to facilitate the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya" (BJP Election

Manifesto 2014). Party's disregard for religious minorities become clear in the "Cultural Heritage" section of the Manifesto, that contains only issues which are important for Hindu believers, such as "Ram Setu", "Ganga" or "Cow and its Progeny" and nothing for other religions of India.

Election Manifesto was released after the voting had started, which signals party's awareness of the fact that Indian voters demonstrate low interest in it. Manifesto for the most part was built upon the abstract claims and imprecise promises to bring development to the countryside, support urbanization, and contained the references to modernization in all the fields including police, armed forces, healthcare, railway, courts and schools. It as well introduced the names of the programs that BJP is planning to initiate once in power, but no further details were provided with regards the concrete measures it would take or expected results. These included "National Energy Policy", "Carbon Credit" as a part of BJP's concern for environment, "National Mission on Himalayas", "Young Leaders program" and many other names which lacked clear description (BJP Election Manifesto 2014). Remarkably, BJP manifesto contained very less numbers that could have been interpreted as commitments and later could have helped to hold the party accountable. Among the rare mentions expressed in numbers is the claim to create 100 new cities, to raise public spending on education to 6% of GDP. These findings suggest that party avoids campaigning on the defined program or explicitly mention its ideological commitments as to satisfy the interests of maximum number of groups.

Another measure aimed at strengthening party's hold on low caste voters was nominating the candidates based on the caste composition of particular constituency. It could be clearly observed in the state of UP where Dalits and OBC constitute a large part of voters. For example, Uma Bharti from Lodh community was nominated and eventually won the seat from the constituency where her community dominated. In order to appeal to Dalits, party made an attempt to integrate them into the religious mainstream with the help of Hindu organizations

and RSS, promising them socio-economic uplift (Mukherji, 2015). Jaffrelot notes, that campaign 2014 involved an attempt to polarize communities and take advantage of majoritarian point of view which is one of the main points that Palshikar pointed out to while describing the middle ground of political contestation. BJP gave only 7 tickets out of 428 to the Muslim candidates, which amounts to 2%. This strategy, however, in several instances brought additional seat to the party. For example, in two constituencies in the state of UP, Rampur and Moradabad, dominated by Muslim population, all contesting parties fielded Muslim candidates and only BJP nominated a Hindu candidate. As a result, Muslim vote got split between the candidates bringing the victory to the BJP nominee who secured support of all the Hindu voters in the constituencies (Mukherji, 2015). The pattern of ticket distribution in the constituencies with complex religious composition shows that BJP strategically chose its nominees taking in account dividing lines. Remarkably, that none of the Muslim candidates from BJP managed to secure the seat and become a member of elected Lok Sabha.

Thus, BJP has adopted the catch-all model of campaigning, focusing on concerns which are relevant for the broader audience and can guarantee the response. Highlighting its commitment to good governance and development, supported by example of Gujarat, BJP, as an oppositional party could effectively attack the incumbent Congress drawing attention to the lack of progress in economy, infrastructure, and public policy. Modern model of campaigning implies that parties do not give clear electoral promises, and do not campaign on defined programs, which is also true for the BJP campaign, that alludes to Gujarat and Narendra Modi as its Chief Minister as a guarantee for development. High level of personalization is regarded as one of the main characteristics of the modern model of campaigning. Charismatic personality of the leader, in the case of BJP - Modi's personality is used to divert attention from the lack of political commitments or clearly articulated agenda. In its communication BJP has specifically targeted the groups which could bring significant electoral dividends, such as youngsters or "common

man” - laborers, poor, underprivileged and others, who benefitted the least from the country’s economic growth. This can be seen as an attempt from BJP to reach beyond its social base, which previously consisted of mainly upper middle class, and to represent the interests of the wider electorate. In the same manner, it attempted to expand its geographical reach by observing and incorporating regional concerns in its rally communication. The absence of the clear references to traditional ideology or exploiting of controversial issues also suggest that party attempts to blur its ideological commitment as catch-all parties are believed to do to maximize their vote share. Instead, Modi in his speech attempts not only to dispel the accusation brought against BJP regarding communal tensions but also to transfer them on its political opponents, attacking Congress for its divisive policies and igniting the riots. He insisted that BJP is the only party committed to secular state, while his political opponents traditionally exploited this concept only to reap electoral benefits.

These findings support the argument that BJP has successfully redefined its image to appear catch-all or encompassing wide range of political opinion to voters across different segments of Indian electorate. At the same time, the findings from party’s manifesto, candidate nomination pattern and other abovementioned facts suggest that BJP has adopted this moderate image only to win the elections, while retaining its traditional commitments.

BJP doesn’t present the unique case in this regard, as similar processes can be observed in the political systems in the west. Two secular states, Poland and Turkey, have witnessed the religion of majority claiming its presence in public affairs.

Despite obvious differences in historical, religious and demographical preconditions, India and Turkey have two important things in common: in both states majority of population professes high religiosity and both states formally adhere to secularist principles, as stated in their Constitutions. Nevertheless, they failed to prevent the rise of religious political parties, AKP in Turkey and BJP in India. After the long period of thriving as a secular democracy, Turkey has

observed the ideological shift towards Islamism with the rise of AKP. Its power continues to grow as AKP successfully maintains majority in Parliament, due to increasing support coming from not only traditional religious conservatives but also growing middle class (Donovan, 2016). Similar to BJP, AKP demonstrates the shift towards moderation, it downplays religious rhetoric and tries to distance itself from the radical religious parties. Instead, AKP emphasizes its commitment to “democracy, national will, people power and economic development”, themes frequently addressed in the BJP communication. This attempt is seen to be driven by electoral considerations, with both parties aiming to secure the maximum number of votes and forge strategic alliances (Donovan, 2016).

Another case that offers the ground for comparison is Polish PiS, or Law and Justice party. In 2015, it managed to secure independent majority, for the first time in the post-communist Poland. Similar to BJP, the party which pursues traditionalist agenda, reached to various social groups, including catholic conservatives and moderates, citizens of rural areas and young urban voters. Despite being a far-right party, supported by the Catholic Church, PiS attempted to moderate its image and focused mainly on social welfare in its election campaigning. In elections 2015, the party tried to distance itself from the hardliners that dominated PiS earlier and, similarly to AKP and BJP, promised to bring a change. Thus, AKP, PiS and BJP have much in common in terms of ideology, rhetoric, policies and the type of electoral support. They regard the religion of majority as a guiding philosophy for the country’s values, while majority of the population in these countries are strong believers. The experience of India, Turkey and Poland demonstrates how democratic elections, with religiosity being distinctly manifested in the society, can give power to conservative and nationalistic forces. At the same time, these forces aim to redefine its image by making it more moderate in order to increase its political strength, which does not necessarily implies that they undergo substantial transformation and abandon its traditional commitments.

Conclusion

Present study draws important conclusions about the changes in the Indian party system with regards to the party transformation process in the post-Congress polity. It presents a case study of Bharatiya Janata Party transformation, as the party that came from the fringes of Indian political system to occupy the dominant position.

In the first chapter, the study highlights that post-Congress polity witnessed a clear shift in party's strategies from representing particular ideologies to vote maximizing. During the Congress dominance, party, characterized as catch-all, covered the whole ideological spectrum, successfully answering the demands of various groups that constitute Indian society, while BJP started as targeting a specific group of upper-caste Hindu voters. In the new phase of the party system development, Congress lost its ability to represent social divisions, which benefitted the caste-based and state-based parties, and BJP in particular, who managed to significantly expand its support across different segments of society. The second chapter attempts to find prerequisites for party's successful expansion by looking into socio-cultural change that took place in India in the recent decades, following the work of Kirchheimer who held social change responsible for emergence of catch-all parties in Western Europe. The chapter concludes that BJP managed to take an advantage of these changes brought about by economic liberalization, increasing urbanization and growing number of young population by targeting those groups affected by developments. For this purpose, BJP had to redefine itself, by deferring the controversial issues and creating a moderate image that answers the demands of the new social groups. At the same time, BJP had to find an approach to those, who didn't benefit from country's economic progress and voters with strong political preferences for caste or state-based parties. The later suggests that certain references to traditional ideology as well traditional practices can be found in the party's campaigning strategy. The chapter also concludes that BJP fits the model of the catch-all party, as elaborated by Kirchheimer, with the exception for

individual party membership condition, as the number of BJP members keeps increasing, who are recruited by the party or attracted by popularity of its leader, Narendra Modi. Mobilization plays a key role in the functioning of the party, which explains party's significant efforts in this direction.

Remarks made by Alan Ware regarding the limitations in party transformation can be used to explain the nature of BJP moderation. He notes, firstly, that although the cleavages weaken, societies remain to be divided but lines tend to shift, and secondly, that ideological commitments continue to bring electoral benefits. Catch-all model helps to mobilize the votes but doesn't assure long-term loyalty since the party gets disconnected from the society. To maintain its political strength party has to identify the most important division to secure support of the voters irrespective of political conditions. Following this line of argument, BJP can be seen as the party that moderates its position enough to be seen as catch-all and go beyond its traditional social base but continues to be anchored in the social cleavages, in order to retain its loyal supporters. Most importantly, Ware notes, if social transformation is less significant, parties can adapt to changing political circumstances, without radically transforming itself. In India, where large parts of population remained unaffected by the changes, this scenario is likely to be adopted by the parties, and namely BJP.

The analysis of the literature dedicated to the BJP transformation gives support to the argument which states that BJP has adopted moderate line for electoral purposes without completely abstaining from identity politics and removing the controversial issues from its agenda. Among the reasons that underlie the ambivalence of the moderation is, firstly, the nature of electoral competition in India which encourages mobilization of ethnic and caste lines, as it guarantees votes (Jaffrelot, 2013, Hasan, 2010, Basu, 2001). Secondly, the middle ground of Indian political contestation is characterized as adhering to majoritarian views, insistence on group boundaries, mild approval of minority interests and high religiosity of electorate, which creates

favourable conditions for BJP (Palshikar, 2004). Thirdly, although the party doesn't explicitly point out to its commitment to the Hindu ideology, BJP traditional electorate continues to support it which impedes moderation (Palshikar, 2004, Basu, 2010); Finally, party's links to right-wing organizations associated with Sangh Parivar, which play important role in mobilizing grassroots resources for electoral campaigning, reaffirm the right wing leaning of the party.

The third chapter is dedicated to the election campaigning in 2014 aims to find out whether BJP campaign fits the catch-all model of campaigning as described by Swanson and Mancini, which assumes that parties chose not to campaign on the clearly defined programs, avoid pre-electoral commitments as well as references to traditional ideologies, in order to include wide range of political opinions and thus maximize their vote share. The results of the content analysis show that BJP made governance and development the core issues of its campaign, focusing on the failures of the current government to deliver economic growth and improve conditions of the poor. At the same time party demonstrated its own commitment to development by using the example of the Gujrat state, promising that Narendra Modi would transfer its success to the national level if BJP is voted to power. Campaign 2014 is an example of successful regional marketing, as it managed to accurately address the issues important for each region or state in particular, depending on where the speech was held. "Common man" represents a collective image of the audience that Modi is addressing in his speech. He aims to emphasize his deep understanding of the problems that common man faces, by highlighting his own poor background. Youth, seen as possessing strong electoral potential, is repeatedly addressed by Modi, mostly with regards to the problem of unemployment. Security concerns also find their presence in the speeches, they are used to emphasize Modi's strong leadership which is able to save the country from potential threats posed by India's neighbors. The analysis didn't find explicit references to the party's traditional commitments in the speeches, apart from Modi

mentioning one of the controversial issues, such the repeal of the Article 370 of the Indian constitution, and him expressing concerns over cow protection. On the opposite, throughout its communication at the rallies, Modi insists on his party's adherence to secularism, in its "true sense" as oppose to his political opponents, accusing the Congress and other parties of the politics of vote bank and mistreatment of minorities. In attempt to recover the image of the BJP as the party accused of communal violence, Modi insists on its commitment to peace and unity, again bringing the example of Gujrat.

Thus, the approach to election campaign communication that BJP had chosen fits the model of catch-all campaigning, as party focuses on the issue that create universal appeal, such as good governance, and incorporates the issues salient for particular regions and groups, such as youth, as to secure support across various segments of society. At the same time, party doesn't give clear promises or commits to certain programs using its leader's personality as the proxy for development. Very low number of mentions that can be attributed to party's traditional commitment speak in the favour of the argument, that BJP has redefined its image enough to reach the broader audience and be regarded as "catch-all". But this conclusion has to be delivered with caution, as there are certain facts that speak against its substantial moderation. These include Modi's references to his caste, or his visit to the places revered by Hindu during rallies, the support of Hindu religious leaders, that Modi accepted. Party's manifesto also contains issues important for Hindu majority, and disregards the other Indian religions. Strong ideological commitments could be also found, as literature suggested, in the communication of other party leaders. Nomination of the candidates along religious and caste lines also speaks against party's moderation, as well as the fact that BJP, despite being a majority, has no Muslim MP in the Lok Sabha.

The policies and communication of BJP as a governing party need to be analyzed in order to predict whether it will be ultimately forced to adopt centrist position and transform itself driven

by electoral competition, or it will continue to maintain two the identities, moderate and religious, since both of them bring electoral benefits. Recent events that occurred under the BJP governance, such as cow slaughter ban or crackdown on the liberal educational institutions, suggest that BJP preserves commitment to its traditional ideology. Given the fact that BJP will aim at retaining power, its behavior has to be closely observed in the period preceding the elections 2019, which will allow to make a more confident conclusion regarding the extent of the party transformation.

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Appendix 1

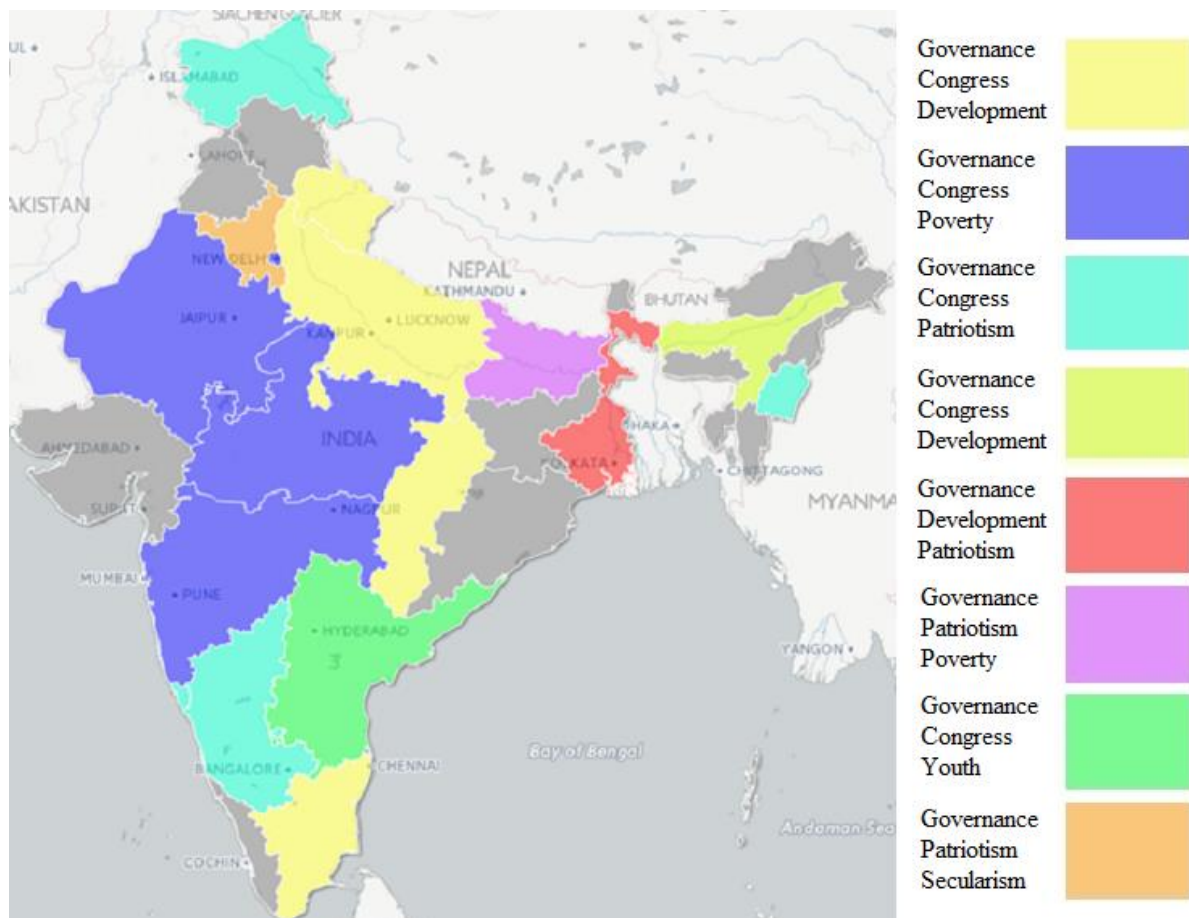


Fig.2 Distribution of themes across Indian states