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The Impact of Consociationalism in India: Understanding the BJP's Saffron Sweep

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Abstract

Consociationalism has evolved to become the dominant theory for managing political stability in heterogeneous states. Consociations fragment power, delineate societies, adopt group-based rights and are governed by elites representing different ethnic groups. However, the primordialist understanding of identity, institutionalised policies of differential treatment and a number of normative failings means consociationalism actually increases the political instability it is purported to mitigate.

India, one of the most diverse and complex societies on earth, has adopted several consociational mechanisms upon independence. The recently increased consociational nature of India has strengthened specific identities and increased intergroup and intragroup antagonisms resulting in rising political instability. This is empirically demonstrated by data from India's National Crime Records Bureau.

The 16th Lok Sabha election in 2014 represented a watershed moment for Indian politics and the saturation point for consociationalism. A disenchanted electorate turned overwhelmingly to the most anti-consociational party in the political system – the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The party has been the most outspoken critic of consociational policies often describing them as 'minorityism' (Varshney, 1993:252). The BJP, with a platform of development intertwined with an Indian identity, transcended the entrenched norms of Indian politics. The rise of the Saffron party challenges the theoretical validity and epistemological underpinnings of consociationalism. The normative manifestations – coalition governments and affirmative action programmes – played a paramount role in the BJP's ascendency.

The shifting landscape of Indian politics is not limited to the national level. The BJP now controls the majority of state governments. In India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, where caste mobilisations are especially strong, the BJP gained a landlside victory in the 2017 Vidhan Sabha election.

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Abbreviations

AIADMK	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
CSDS	Centre of the Study of Developing Societies
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazagam
ECI	Electoral Commission of India
GOI	Government of India
INC	Indian National Congress
JD	Janata Dal
JP	Janata Party
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
OBC	Other Backward Class
RLD	Rashtriya Lok Dal
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SC	Scheduled Caste
SP	Samajwadi Party
SRC	States Reorganisation Commission
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TDP	Telugu Desam Party
TSP	Telangana Praja Samithi
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
VHP	Vishva Hindu Parishad

Introduction

For political scientists and scholars, India's continual existence as a functional democracy has remained a puzzle. The large-scale population, overall heterogeneity and high degree of fragmentation along linguistic, religious, and caste lines, are hypothesised to be problematic for political stability (Swenden, 2016a:246).

Approaches to address internal diversity can be separated into two dichotomies occurring on a continuum between accommodationist and integrationist policies (McGarry et al., 2008:41-90). Integrationists advocate equal citizenship rights, emphasising the commonality and shared interests of different ethnic groups, whilst rejecting practices that entrench differentiation such as affirmative action and quotas, asymmetric territorial autonomy, and other multicultural policies. Conversely, accommodationists recognise ethnic differences and mandate 'group-specific rights and policies' (Swenden, 2016a:248). Consociational theory can be considered the epitome of accumulative accommodationist policies. Developed by Arend Lijphart in the 1960s to explain stability in Western Europe, it has evolved into a prescriptive set of policy norms comprised of four pillars: grand coalition, segmental autonomy, proportionality and minority veto.

The literature review reveals consociational states only appear successful after careful theoretical manipulation. Consociationalism is undermined by its conceptions of primordial, static identities and homogenous ethnic groups, which institutionalises certain identities, ignoring both the variability and multiplicity of identities and pervasiveness of intra-ethnic differences. Governance is elitist rather than democratic and the overreliance on negotiations and compromise between disparate elites establishes ineffectual policy-making. The literature review forms the theoretical framework and enables the development of a hypothesis: consociational policies

cause rising political instability by increasing inter-ethnic antagonisms and establishing ineffectual governments.

A review of existing literature concerning Indian consociationalism exposes substantial debate over the country's consociationalism nature although there is general scholarly consensus political stability has increased. However, the Indian case has been misunderstood and a more nuanced, holistic, and contemporary understanding is required.

The failure to adequately assess the Indian case facilitates the development of the first research question - to understand the impact of consociational policies on political instability in India. In Chapter Two a historical analysis demonstrates India has maintained several consociational elements since independence, which have strengthened since the 1990s. Process-tracing these elements exposes their detrimental impact on political stability and social cohesion. This is supported by findings of a quantitative analysis of key political instability indicators - incidences of rioting and crimes against SCs - from India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Consociationalism relies on the existence of reinforcing cleavages and accordingly policies are based on a 'singular criterion of difference' (Heyer & Jayal, 2009:7). To apply such policies in India, a country with significant ethnic fractionalisation and numerous crosscutting cleavages, creates serious challenges. A more appropriate response, accounting for the plurality of Indian society, suggests adopting a non-consociational or integrationist approach to managing stability.

The second interrelated research question considers how the recent successes of the BJP can be understood as a consequence of consociationalism. Chapter Three first considers the nature of the BJP and Hindu nationalism and demonstrates the party is 'clearly anti-consociational' (Lijphart, 1996:264). Despite many alarmist overtures from political scholars and commentators, the BJP has transformed since the early-1990s to become a more moderate party.

A backlash against consociational policies allowed the BJP to surpass expectations and win the 16th Lok Sabha election in 2014 - becoming the first party with a majority since 1984. In the following years, the saffron sweep continued with the BJP now controlling 17 states and a further five governed by NDA partners. The election represents a critical juncture in Indian politics and the failure of consociationalism.

A case study of the 2017 Vidhan Sabha election in Uttar Pradesh in Chapter Four highlights both the theoretical and normative failings of consociational theory. Reservations hinge on a homogenous understanding of caste-groups, a perception which resulted in the failure to address socio-economic imbalances, increased caste antagonisms, and facilitated caste-based parties - BSP and SP - to dominate state politics. Analysis of *jati*-level voting behaviour highlights the fluidity of identity and importantly demonstrates the successful exploitation by the BJP of *jati* untouched by reservations.

The thesis contributes to the literature concerning consociational theory by demonstrating consociational policies in the world's largest democracy have *increased* rather than decreased political instability. It provides a nuanced, contemporary account of consociationalism in India - an area devoid of recent academic attention. The scope of instability is broadened to include levels of rioting and caste conflict, whereas most scholars focus on levels of Hindu-Muslim violence. It also furthers understanding of the recent and unprecedented saffron sweep by the BJP, presenting the rise of the party as both a consequence of the failure of consociational policies and BJP's ability to exploit these failings.

Methodology

Researching the relationship between consociationalism and political instability and understanding the rise of the BJP requires several different approaches. A literature review of consociational theory and its critiques enables the development of a hypothesis. A historical analysis of consociational policies in India combined with a quantitative analysis of political instability indicators demonstrates their interrelationship. A qualitative assessment of the BJP exposes its anti-consociational nature and facilitates a quantitative analysis of the 16th Lok Sabha election. A case study of Uttar Pradesh further legitimises the arguments in the preceding chapters and allows for a deeper analysis.

Theory

Consociationalism is classified as a typological theory as it delineates independent variables (the four pillars) into categories that can then be analysed individually, allowing for contingent or conditional generalisations on their joint configuration to affect a specified dependent variable (political stability) (George & Bennett, 2004:857).

The thesis adopts a critical rationalist approach, which conceives social science progress through the reduction in unwarranted beliefs and the falsification of theories and hypotheses (Blatter & Haverland, 2012:10). Critical rationalists use deductive research to explore a theory, develop a new hypothesis and test its validity in a specific circumstance. Testing of typological theories requires process-tracing, an analysis of the causal mechanisms that transmit forces from X to Y, linking causes and outcome (Van Evera, 1997:64).

Case Studies

Case studies are a proven method to construct, refine, and falsify typological theories and a mechanism to trace causal-processes (George & Bennett, 2004:861) Application of a theory in a specific context allows the effects of both agents and social structures to be considered in a single framework whilst accounting for diverse discourses and material factors (George & Bennett, 2004:861). The use of detailed and specific evidence facilitates greater consideration between 'empirical evidence and abstract' (Blatter & Haverland, 2012:13) and ensures conclusions are robust and not based on reductionist conceptions.

It is impossible to analyse Indian politics without case studies of Indian states. Reading policies and actions by the Centre masks many changes occurring sub-nationally. Indian states are 'the effective arena of political choice' (Palshikar & Yadav, 2009:56), where social cleavages and identities of caste, language, and religion are fostered and mobilised (Manor, 1998:22) and have the primary responsibility for many consociational policies. A case study of Uttar Pradesh needs little justification. UP is considered the cradle of India's liberation movement, the centre of Muslim politics and crucible of reservation politics (Kudaisya, 2002:155). The state weighs heavy on national politics; its demographic strength justifiably means it plays a significant role in political life. It is the epicentre of identity politics and its caste-religious mobilisations often affect the national body politic (Hassan, 2017).

Jati

The caste system is not a simple hierarchical division of castes or *varnas*. Hindu India is comprised of over 3000 subcastes or *jati* that range in size from a few hundred to millions of people. Unlike the universalisms of *varna, jati* are geographically and linguistically bound (Dutt, 1998:423). The categorisation of India's population into broad social groups - SCs, STs and OBCs - is inadequate in understanding political mobilisation (Trivedi et al., 2017:125). Recent analysis (Huber & Suryanarayan (2014), Thachil & Teitelbaum, (2015)) validates *jati* as the most appropriate dimension for demonstrating the variation in voting patterns. *Jati* can be considered the narrowest segmental identity available for political mobilisation, thus exposing the most nuanced variations in support for political parties.

Ethnicity

The complexity of Indian society 'makes it [SEP] harder and more risky to apply [the term ethnicity] in India than almost anywhere else in the world' (Manor, 1996:463) and traditionally scholars avoided it. However, recently a broader definition of ethnicity has been mainstreamed in political science and Indian politics. The thesis adopts Chandra's (2005:358) definition which focuses on descent-based attributes meaning 'nominal membership in an ascriptive category, including race, language, caste, or religion'. The definition therefore allows *jati* to be considered an ethnic identity.

Measuring Political Stability

Political instability is comprised of two related components:

(1) Governmental instability relating the fragility and effectiveness of government as well its propensity for change and levels of corruption.

(2) Non-governmental components concerning broader factors, such as public demonstrations and ethnic violence (Dowding & Kimber, 1983:229-243).

The definition facilitates a quantitative measurement of non-governmental components using key political instability indicators and qualitative analysis of governmental instability.

Data

To empirically demonstrate the relationship between consociationalism and political instability, a framework extending beyond Hindu-Muslim violence is required. Incidences of rioting and crimes committed against SCs have been compiled from India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) annual *Crime in India* reports (1953–2016). Since 1974 crimes against SCs have been recorded, first by the Committee on the Welfare of the SCs and STs and then by the NCRB. Crimes against SCs (committed by non-SCs/STs) are recorded under the Indian Penal Code and

Special and Local Laws[1].

The NCRB, with the exception of SCs and STs, does not record other 'ethnically' motivated crimes independently but rather under the broad categorisations of the Indian Penal Code (Murder, Dacoity etc.). Therefore the use of riot data is justified as an effective measurement of political instability by incorporating antagonisms and discontentment outside of caste-religious confines. Indian criminal law defines a riot as 'an assembly of five or more persons engaged in unlawful activities directed against government institutions, the laws, persons, or property, for the purpose of committing mischief or criminal trespass, or other offence' (Brass, 2005:66). However, the NCRB relies on reporting from local police stations, which exhibit spatial and temporal variations in recording crimes and a predisposition to underreport certain incidents. Furthermore riot numbers do not reflect the number of deaths or duration. Although the datasets are imperfect, they provide an effective insight into overall trends of political instability.

Data concerning the social profiles of political parties support bases has been compiled from the Centre of the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). Field investigators collect data from face-to-face interviews to comprehend political attitudes before and after elections. All CSDS data cited is publically available except the 2017 'U.P. post-poll survey' providing *jati*-level voting behaviour (permission has been granted for the results to be reproduced).

All data concerning national and state elections has been accessed directly from the Electoral Commission of India (ECI).

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[1] Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Literature Review

Consociational Theory

Consociationalism was first developed by Arend Lijphart in the 1960s, progressing from 'a description of conflict resolution in Western Europe' (Wilkinson, 2000:767) to the dominant theory for managing stability in heterogeneous states throughout the world. Lijphart's contribution has been so influential that the theory is often equated with his work.

A consociational state is consists of four pillars (Lijphart, 1977:25):

(1) A government through a *grand coalition* where political elites representing all significant ethnic groups govern collectively.

(2) *Segmental* or *cultural autonomy* where decision-making is delegated to the relevant ethnic groups of the state, taking the form of territorial and non-territorial federalism.

(3) A *minority veto* over important legislation that offers minority groups a guarantee they will not be out-voted by the majority when their vital interests are at stake. This can be through *de jure* mechanisms or *de facto* when coalitions are dependent on minority parties.

(4) *Proportionality,* which is the basic consociational standard of representation, extending beyond electoral systems to include education, the allocation of funds, and public sector employment.

The fundamental aim 'is to share, diffuse, separate, divide, decentralise, and limit power' (Lijphart, 1984:168). Consociational scholars argue that the fragmentation of politics encourages elites to create coalitions across ethnic lines to form governments. Political elites use electoral leverage to secure power in the executive and make political gains for their community (Choudhry, 2008:19). The aim 'is not to abolish or weaken segmental cleavages but to recognize them explicitly and to turn the segments into constructive elements of stable democracy'

(Lijphart, 1977:42).

The Failings of Consociational Theory

Proponents have continued to refine and adapt consociationalism, extending the theory beyond its original scope. Although Lijphart (2008:4) states that definitions have remained stable since 1996, with his analysis of India representing the 'final formulation of consociational theory', much ambiguity remains with no clearly defined manifestations of the four pillars. The fact consociational theory is a 'moving target' has proved a useful tool in academic debates, which overtly focus on specific case studies. The ambiguity allows for theoretical manipulation in specific contexts to cause the broader concept to appear successful. However the general theory with defined norms does not stand up to scrutiny. Empirical studies have failed to address the conceptual whole by reducing consociationalism to federalism and proportional electoral systems.

Identity

Democratic states remain stable through the pluralist theory of crosscutting cleavages, which rests on two assumptions: opposition parties and minority groups will eventually share power because of the changing nature of political coalitions around different issues and the attenuating effects of citizens' competing identities. For example, the identity of a Tamil speaker crosscuts caste and religion. However, Choudhry (2008:17), in congruence with consociationalist scholars, argues that in heterogeneous states the assumptions do not prevail, unlike the moderating effects of crosscutting cleavages, reinforcing cleavages cause immoderation. Political divisions and mobilisations are formed around the different ethnic groups with minorities continually locked out of power (Lijphart, 1977:72).

Consociationalists ignore the existence of crosscutting identities or their ability to develop, believing opponents 'seriously underestimate the strength and persistence of segmental

divisions' (Lijphart, 1985:108). This overestimates the 'degree of segmentation among ethnic and communal groups' and fails to consider segmental groups as heterogeneous entities that can be divided internally to 'undermine segmental cleavages and permit inter-segmental alliances' (Brass, 1991:338-340). Furthermore, recognising ethnic groups as homogenous units neglects intragroup socioeconomic differences, which in many circumstances are greater and therefore mitigate intergroup difference.

In *Ethnic Conflict in Multiethnic Societies* Brass (1991:333) dedicates a chapter to consociationalism, highlighting the shared set of assumptions among consociationalist scholars. Identity and cleavages are conceived as primordial and static, for example McGarry et al. (2008:53) argue 'ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups have existed since time immemorial and will remain a permanent fixture of politics […] national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions and identities are resilient, durable, and hard'. Consociationalists' 'segregation-oriented theoretical disposition' (Dixon, 2011:310), derives from the erroneous assumptions political mobilisation along segmental lines is inevitable and 'there is a fixed number of ethnic groups that can each be satisfied with a portion of political power and state resources' (Wilkinson, 2000:787).

Plides (2008:177) successfully demonstrates the magnitude of empirical and theoretical research which 'consistently reveals a dynamic process behind the formation, maintenance, and diminishment' of identity. Brass and Plides adopt an instrumentalist and social constructivist approach to identity, recognising variability and fluidity and the fact citizens have a multi-faceted - as opposed to a singular - identity. As Dixon (2011:210) identifies, prioritising certain identities 'reinforces precisely those antagonistic communal identities that policy makers are supposed to be managing into less antagonistic forms'. The failure of consociationalists to acknowledge the dynamism of identity exposes a significant theoretical flaw.

Role of Elites

Consociationalism does not just reject the role elites play in shaping and mobilising different identities but actually incentivises elites to maintain divisions to ensure they are a partner in the system (Brass, 1991:338). Political power is an effective vehicle for distributing resources through patronage, redistributive policies, government employment, or other measures. When resources are distributed unevenly, elites from disadvantaged ethnic groups mobilise members by 'intensifying and multiplying' differences from more advantaged groups (Brass, 1991:33). In the absence of 'objective bases for mobilization' elites establish the perception of disadvantage and discrimination 'by magnifying minor cases' (Brass, 1991:293). By promoting reinforcing cleavages, utilising symbols and other devices, elites construct the idea of their group being distinct. Identities mobilised by elites for political purposes 'radiate into other arenas, including more general cultural and social understandings' (Plides, 2008:178). To demonstrate the role that political parties play, Brass (1991:49) uses the example of the Akali Dal that not only identified itself with the Sikh community but also shaped what it means to be a Sikh.

Consociationalists embrace their system as elitist, justified because other systems are considered equally elitist (Lijphart, 1985:110). They believe the option for heterogeneous states is not between consociational or adversarial democracies but between the consociational model and no democracy at all (Lijphart, 1977:238). As consensus cannot be achieved, elites are expected to act with moderation, negotiate the politics of compromise, and impose decisions agreed. The process 'entails a strengthening of the political inertness of the non-elite public and of their deferential attitudes towards segmental leaders' (Lijphart, 1997:169). The reliance on elite governance raises serious questions about the quality of democracy that consociationalism allows, whilst making dangerous assumptions about the deference of the wider population.

Grand Coalitions & Proportionality

Although Horowitz, like Lijphart, is from the accommodationist school of thought, he remains

deeply critical of consociationalism. Consociational democracies, according to Horowitz, are absent of competition for the median voter. Individuals vote for their own societal group, meaning elections are not democratic but an 'ethnic census' (Horowitz, 1985:53). Horowitz (2002a:17) argues consociationalism is 'motivationally inadequate', failing to provide a coherent argument as to why segmental elites are incentivised to cooperate in a grand coalition, and overestimates the power elites have over the societal segments they represent. Elites have frequently been subjected to a backlash from their community, who view compromises as an act of betrayal. The result is a loss of support for moderate and 'outbidding' where more extreme and uncompromising candidates win elections (Chandra, 2005: 236). Instead of competition for the moderate centre, there is competition on the extremes (Choudhry, 2008:17).

Grand coalitions must be composed of all 'major' societal segments. Leaving aside the ambiguity of what constitutes 'major', coalitions comprised of internally cohesive parties with vast ideological differences creates a high number of veto players, limits areas of consensus and makes 'significant departures from the status quo impossible' (Tsebelis, 2002:2). Simple electoral arithmetic establishes a *de facto* minority veto over *all* government policy, as the removal of support causes governments to collapse. Therefore grand coalitions and the inherent minority veto produce political instability and ineffectual decision-making.

The concept of proportionality, particularly in public sector employment, fosters resentment from ethnic segments not privileged by quota systems. Groups demand greater allocations for their community or to be recognised as 'a separate ethnic group and to become an equal partner in the consociational system' (Weiner, 1978:216). Failing to consider intragroup difference allows the upper echelons of segmental groups to benefit from institutionalised quotas, whilst those at the bottom remain excluded. Thus proportionality creates both intergroup and intragroup tension and conflict (Brass, 1991:333). Similarly non-territorial autonomy creates antagonisms between ethnic groups through policies of differential treatment and perceived discrimination (McGarry

et al., 2008:72).

Conclusion

The successes of consociational states are almost non-existent. The breakdown of consociational systems in Cyprus and Lebanon, the disintegration of former communist federations in Eastern and Central Europe and the transition away from consociational democracies by Western European states demonstrates consociational theory does not guarantee political stability (McGarry et al., 2008:102).

Consociationalism freezes existing identities and cleavages that reflect 'the circumstances at the moment of formation' (Plides, 2008:185). The theoretical framework adopts an elitist, primordialist, and reductionist approach that rests on the politics of segregation or 'voluntarily apartheid' (Lijphart, 1969:219). It violates the rights of individuals and groups not reorganised in the consociational system (Brass, 1991:342). Consociational theory fails to recognise the multiplicity and dynamism of identities, intra-segmental group differences and pervasiveness of crosscutting cleavages. Consolations reify certain identities above others, overestimate the ability of elites to gain the support of their community for compromises agreed, creates deficiencies of grand coalitions, and antagonism associated with preferential treatment. Thus consociationalism does not mitigate, but furthers political instability.

Indian Consociationalism

The extent to which India has conformed to consociational theory throughout its history has been highly debated, predominately between Lijphart, Wilkinson, and Brass. All three concede that India has adopted some consociational elements but maintain substantial differences over their nature, longevity, and effect. In addition, many scholars have analysed different components of the four pillars but have not explicitly considered the consociational framework. Although disagreement over India's consociational nature exists, there is scholarly consensus that political instability has increased.

India has traditionally been considered the major anomalous case for consociationalism. However, Lijphart's (1996:258) *The Puzzle of Indian Democracy* controversially stated: 'India is not a deviant […] but, instead, an impressive confirming case'. This was in response to Brass' (1991:342) claim: 'consociationalists […] consistently ignore the experience of India, the largest, most culturally diverse society in the world that has functioned with a highly competitive and distinctly adversarial system of politics'. Lijphart (1996:258-259) argues India was a 'perfectly and thoroughly consociational system […] displaying all four crucial elements' for the first two decades of independence and attributes increased intergroup tensions and communal violence to the weakening of consociationalism after the late-1960s.

However, Lijphart's conclusions rely on reading central government policies and the Indian constitution. This neglects state-level analysis and fails to acknowledge the gulf between policy and outcome. As Manor (1996:474) highlights, 'political action has always been more important than political rhetoric in determining outcomes in India'. Lijphart's arguments are further weakened by an overreliance on anecdotal or singular examples. The 1965 agreement that Hindi would not become the sole national language with opposition from the Dravidian-speaking states is insufficient in demonstrating evidence of a wider minority veto, whereas there have been

countless examples of linguistic legislation enacted against the expressed wishes of the minority community affected (Wilkinson, 2004:110-136).

Over a decade later, Lijphart's article was republished in *Thinking about Democracy: Power Sharing and Majority Rule in Theory and Practice.* Although the preamble acknowledges the decline of Congress and shift to a multiparty system created 'very broad coalition cabinets often including more than a dozen parties' (Lijphart, 2008:5) thus strengthening consociationalism, the subject is not discussed further and his assessment from 1996 remains unchanged.

Lijphart (1996:226) alleges India provides a 'theoretically coherent' explanation and at times his analysis maintains theoretical congruence with earlier work; for example, by maintaining an elitist position by attributing the decline of consociationalism to 'greater mass mobilization and activation'. However acknowledging 'socioeconomic differences within religious and linguistic groups are so much larger that they overshadow intergroup disparities' and 'overarching loyalties reduce the strength of particularistic loyalties' (Lijphart, 1996:263), undermines contrary assertions in previous work.

In *India, Consociational Theory,* and *Ethnic Violence* and *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Violence in India* Wilkinson (2000:767) is critical of the consociational model and 'reassesses the value of consociational power sharing as a method for reducing ethnic violence'. Wilkinson (2000:770) takes the opposite view to Lijphart, arguing India was a non-consociational state under Nehru as 'minority opinion was frequently overruled by the majority', lower castes, religious and linguistic minorities were excluded from government jobs and political power and the poor enforcement of reservation quotas for SCs and STs. However this overlooks many institutionalised consociational elements that India adopted upon independence: linguistic reorganisation, constitutionally guaranteed educational autonomy, and separate personal laws for different religions. For Wilkinson, Indian consociationalism increased after

Nehru as reservations were expanded and enforced more effectively and the rise of caste-based parties more closely aligns to the consociational model. Both Lijphart (1996:265) and Wilkinson (2004:99) are in agreement that this period in India's political history is characterised by rising Hindu-Muslim violence.

Although Wilkinson (2000:787) demonstrates 'consociational policies in India have not historically been associated with lower levels of ethnic violence', the argument focuses on consociational policies not mitigating instability rather than those policies being the source of instability. The absence of process-tracing to demonstrate the correlation with rising instability forces Wilkinson (2000:787) to conclude 'it is possible that the historical association between consociational policies and ethnic violence in India is simply a coincidence'.

Brass (1991:343) adopts a more nuanced view; although believing India to be thoroughly non-consociational recognises 'it has adopted many consociational devices, some permanently, some temporarily'. For Brass (1991:334) the 'successes and failures in resolving ethnic conflicts do not support the assumptions of consociationalists […] or the solutions offered by the consociational model', believing the model inapplicable because India has operated a system of both 'interethnic aggregative parties' and 'ethnically exclusive or primarily monoethnic parties'. By assuming that grand coalitions must be comprised of 'monoethnic' parties, he overlooks its varying manifestations and the diversity of the *Congress System*. Brass primarily engages the theoretical critiques of consociationalism in abstract form. His approach is too reductionist, overtly focusing on political parties and grand coalitions during Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister, whilst neglecting the three other pillars.

The Indian consociational debate pays little attention to the crosscutting nature of caste, language and religious cleavages. Contrastingly, Manor (1996:459-475) demonstrates that the complex cleavage structure prevents conflict 'building up along a single fault-line'. Caste cleavages

prevent the consolidation of single Hindu majority and diminish the likeness of communal violence whilst 'regional divisions undermine interregional alliances on religious and class lines. Caste, class, and religious conflicts damage regional solidarity. Urban-rural rivalry weighs against most other types of conflict' (Manor, 1996:459-475).

Commenting on the variability of Indian identities, Manor (1996:459) stated 'citizens shift their preoccupations from subregional to national and then to regional identities, passionately, but with great speed and fluidity'. Like Weiner, Manor (1996:464) uses the case study of Telengana to strengthen his argument. In 1971, through alleged discrimination by the state government, the subregional Telengana identity was mobilised, and consequently the Telengana Praja Samithi (TPS) won 10 of the 11 seats in the region. Following an elite compromise the TPS merged with Congress and focus shifted to the national level with caste and class identities playing a significant role in the 1977 and 1983 elections. However by 1983 the state identity was decisive, with people 'protesting about affronts to the dignity of the entire state' and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) won Andhra Pradesh. Therefore implications for applying consociational policies based on reinforcing cleavages and a singular, fixed ethnic criterion of difference are increased political instability.

Previous academic work has largely misunderstood the Indian case by failing to adopt a holistic approach accounting for both theoretical underpinnings and normative manifestations. Academic analysis is out-dated, largely occurring in the 1990s and thus does not consider recent trends in contemporary Indian politics: regionalisation, political fragmentation, coalition governments, and OBC reservations and their relationship with consociationalism. There is also an absence of process-tracing consociational policies to understand their negative consequences. Lijphart and Wilkinson's arguments focus on Hindu-Muslim violence, whereas consociational systems concern an array of non-religious ethnic groups.

Consociationalism & Political Instability

India has displayed several consociational elements since independence that have increased over time due to the introduction of reservations for OBCs and the regionalisation of Indian politics necessitating coalitions at the Centre. This chapter conducts a historical analysis of consociational policies in India supported by previous academic work, with emphasis from the early-1990s onwards. This allows for causal process-tracing of consociational elements to demonstrate their detrimental effect on political stability. The latter section analyses empirical evidence of rioting and crimes against SCs to provide quantitative validation.

Table 4.1 Three interpretations of Indian Consociationalism

	1947 - 1964	1964 - 1989	1989 - 2014
Lijphart (1996, 2008)	Fully consociational	Less consociational	N/A
Wilkinson (2000, 2004)	Non-consociational	Increasingly consociational	N/A
Saunders (2018)	Semi-consociational	Increasingly consociational	Most consociational

The Nehruvian Era (1947-1964)

Grand Coalition

The term *Congress System* is used to describe the unique style of governance that previously existed in India. The INC, which governed India uninterrupted until 1977, encompassed 'all the major sections and interests of society' (Kothari, 1989:22). As the 'party of consensus' at the political centre, Congress was surrounded on both sides by minor parties or 'parties of pressure', preventing it from straying too far from the 'the balance of effective public opinion' (Kothari, 1989:22-27). Congress was a 'vertically integrated federal party' dependent on local elites, vote-banks and a patronage system in rural areas (Kothari, 1964:1163). The *Congress System* largely conforms to the concept of a grand coalition, with disparate elites 'reconciling their difference through bargaining amongst themselves' (Lijphart, 1996:260). The system flourished before

mass political mobilisation and the 'first democratic upsurge' (Verma, 2016:44) in the 1960s as elites were better positioned to impose policy decisions on a deferential electorate. The elitism in Congress explains Lijphart's identification of the system as consociationalism

Segmental Autonomy

Three elements of segmental autonomy in India can be identified: linguistic, educational, and religious. Following tension and violence in Andhra, in 1955 the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) recommended state reorganisation along linguistic boundaries. Lijphart (1996:260) and Kothari (1970:115) consider linguistic federalism 'a cementing and integrating influence' rather than a 'force for division'. However language politics have produced more street violence in the twenty years after partition than religious violence (Desai, 2000:93) and 'threatened to push newly independent India to the brink of instability' (Kudaisya, 2002:163). The failure to designate a singular national language, or more significantly specify official state languages in perpetuity allowed languages to be conceived as open and amendable. Linguistic groups are incentivised to demand their language be upgraded to an official language or the language of another group be downgraded, establishing linguistic mobilisation as a recurring issue (Chandra, 2000: 235-252).

Linguistic federalism allowed minorities to become majorities at state level and allowed dominant language groups to discriminate against minority languages. There was a concerted effort by states to underreport levels of linguistic minorities and a refusal to offer government publications, civil service examinations, or educational facilities in minority languages (Wilkinson, 2004:116). For example, the UP State Government stated it was 'not inclined to provide secondary education through the mother tongue of linguistic minorities' whilst the Tamil Nadu government continually refused to supply Hindi language education (Wilkinson, 2004:116).

Figure 4.1 Linguistic Reorganisation (1953-1966)
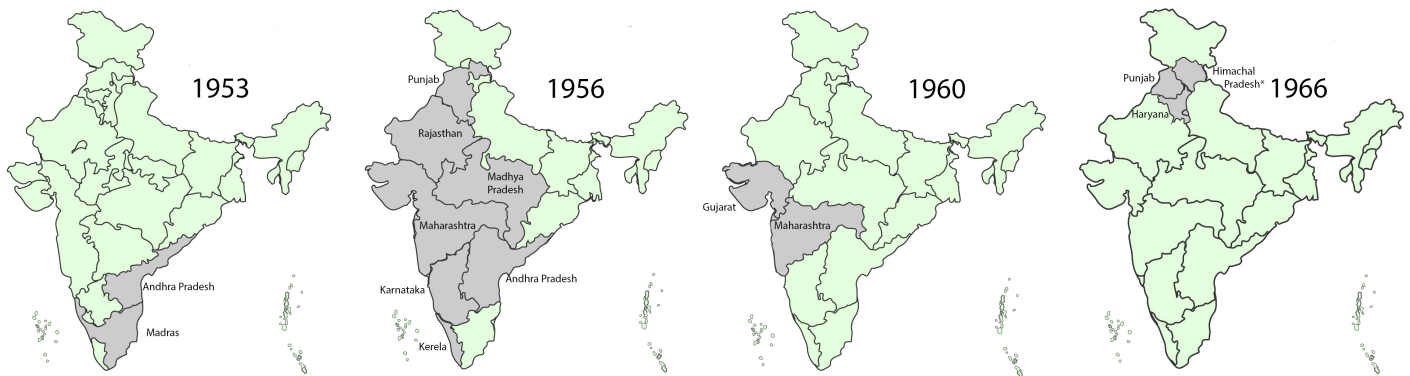
Source: Author's own

The Indian Constitution (Article 30) grants religious and linguistic minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions. Article 44 is anti-consociational in mandating 'the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code'. However it has not been implemented and a system of separate personal laws is in place that governs family matters for different religions (e.g., Hindu Succession Act, 1956, Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937).

Proportionality

The Constitution (Article 15(4)) states 'nothing shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement' of backward classes, SCs, and STs. The latter two groups were granted proportionality in education and public employment, and reserved constituencies in national, state, and local legislatures (Chandra, 2000:235-252). The policy was envisaged to last a decade but successive amendments to the Constitution enabled its continuity. However, a vast gulf between policy and implementation existed. SCs and STs collectively represented 22.5% of India's population, but in 1964 occupied 4.53% of Class I and II jobs (Table 4.3). The demonstration of failing to fill reserved jobs is symptomatic of how consociational policies are often poorly implemented.

Many constituencies reserved for SCs are in areas with substantial Muslim populations (often over 50%)[2], meaning they are excluded from contesting elections. The Sachar Commission Report (2006:25) stated the SC reserved seats 'reduces the opportunities that Muslims have to get elected to democratic institutions'. Thus accommodating one minority has been at the expense of another.

Minority Veto

There is little evidence to suggest minority groups had the ability to veto legislation affecting their communities. Job reservations and guaranteed political representation for religious minorities were abolished upon independence. There are also many incidences of majoritarian impulses; 14 states enacted legislation banning cow slaughter that disproportionately affected religious minorities, and in UP, Hindi was designated the sole official language (at the expensive of Urdu) despite opposition from the Muslim community[3] (Wilkinson, 2004:119).

During the Nehruvian era, India was neither wholly consociational nor non-consociational, having a grand coalition, segmental autonomy and proportionality for SCs but denying many groups proportionality and no minority veto. It is clear the consociational policies have been discriminatory and detrimental to political stability.

Increasing Consociationalism (1964-1989)

The ascension of Mrs Gandhi to Prime Minister marks the beginning of the decline of the *Congress System*. The INC was made 'utterly dependent on her, suspending intraparty democracy and debate, and weakening the organisation' (Varshney, 1993:243). Similarly, the Indian state was centralised through the increased use of the President's Rule, allowing the Centre

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[2] Sachar Commission Report (2006), appendix 2.2
[3] Vote passed 105 to 23, only members of the Muslim league voted against.

to remove democratically elected state governments and impose direct rule. Furthermore, *The Emergency* (1975-1977) was one of the most controversial periods of Indian politics. Mrs Gandhi was empowered to rule by decree, national and state elections were postponed, political opponents arrested, civil liberties curtailed, and a number political parties and other organisations outlawed. With a two-thirds parliamentary majority, the ruling Congress was empowered to unilaterally pass laws and change the Constitution. Clearly, the centralisation tendencies of Indira Gandhi were not just anti-consociational but anti-democratic.

Table 4.2: Incidents of Presidents Rule (1950-2015)

Year	Frequency	Average Days	
1950 - 1960	6	234	
1960 - 1970	14	239	
1970 - 1980	47	107	+ Emergency
1980 - 1990	23	251	+ 2100 days Punjab
1990 - 2000	22	165	
2000- 2015	11	125	

Source: Swenden (2016b:500).

The anti-consociational centralisation was offset by other changes. The 1971 decision to bifurcate state and national elections created a strong regionalising effect generating a fertile environment for the rise of regional parties. States became the effective arena of political choice with increased autonomy and assertion (Brass, 1991:122-133). Reservations were also better enforced thus increasing proportionality for SCs and STs.

The landmark Shao Bano case cemented separate personal laws and furthered the minority veto. Shah Bano, a Muslim divorcee sought financial support from her husband, which is not mandated by Islamic law. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of Bano, referencing Article 44 of the Constitution, arguing in an anti-consociational manner 'a common civil code will help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to laws which have conflicting ideologies' (Khan v Bano, 1985:32). However, in accordance with consociational theory, Congress reversed

the decision following a backlash from the Muslim community, which considered the ruling as a violation of their personal laws.

Table 4.3: Percentage (%) of SC & ST Representation in Central Government Employment

	1963	1989	1996
Category I	1.5	10.8	10.1
Category II	3.0	13.7	21.7
Category III	9.0	19.3	16.2
Category IV	20.7	26.7	21.3

Source: Wilkinson (2004:113).

Most Consociational

The increase in India's consociational nature from the early-1990s can be attributed to two interrelated factors: the fragmentation of the political system facilitated the rise of state parties which in turn cemented 'grand coalitions', UPA and NDA governments, at the Centre. The Mandal Commission increased proportionality by extending reservations to OBCs. During this period, the criticisms of consociationalism became more pronounced.

Mandal Commission

In 1991, the JD government implemented the recommendations of the Mandal Commission that mandated the 'backwardness of OBCs justified reservations of 27% in the bureaucracy and the public sector' (Jaffrelot, 2000:94). *Jati* are classified as OBC according to social, educational, and economic criteria. Although OBC reservations were agreed upon between many upper-caste elites, the implementation 'precipitated riots and concomitant deaths throughout India' as many upper-caste Hindus believed they were being unfairly treated (Fickett, 1993:1151). This demonstrates the way in which consociationalism overestimates the support elites will receive from their communities for their negotiated compromises, without offering any explanation of how to go about this.

The OBC category is too heterogeneous; with 256 *jati* listed as OBC in Maharashtra alone. In congruence with the consociational conception of homogenous ethnic groups, reservations consider 'backwardness an attribute not of individuals but of communities' (Beteille, 1981:8). Overlooking inter-*jati* differences within the OBC category created the well-documented 'creamy-layer', where more socio-economically advanced *jati* dominate reservations, receiving a disproportional share of the benefits (Jaffrelot, 2000:100).

Following Mandal, caste-based mobilisations and antagonisms flourished. New parties were formed, not just representing specific caste identities but playing a crucial role in shaping them (Chandra, 2004:47). A number of states suffered from a high degree of political fragmentation, allowing caste-based parties to make narrow social appeals (Chibber & Nooruddin, 2004:152). The strong link, between caste or *jati* and party caused political and social identities to become blurred, with BSP as 'the Dalit party' and the SP the 'party of Yadavs' (Heath, 2014:746-757).

Initially, OBC identities became reinforced and more unified, but soon fractured to protect their interests as reservations created institutional encouragement of the polarisation and strengthening of *jati* identity (Verma, 2004:5463). As separate state and national lists of OBCs exist, with both subject to revision, *jati* across India agitate to be listed as OBC with regular mass violence or the prospect of violence erupting (Kumar, 2016:10). Reservations contributed to the fractionalisation in the Indian political system, incentivising identity politics and the salience of caste.

Coalition Governments

The already crumbling *Congress system* fully disintegrated, ushering in an era of coalition politics based on a multi-party, regionalised system. Although the last majority government was in 1984, the breakthrough came in 1996 when the United Front, a coalition of 13 parties, formed a government. Regionalisation increased the multi-centric nature of Indian politics and created an upsurge of regional identities, necessitating alliances between national and state parties at the

Centre (Kothari, 1989:13).

Figure 4.2: **Percentage (%) of Seats Held by State Parties in the Lok Sabha, 1989-2014**

Year	Percentage
1989	5.73
1991	10.72
1996	32
1998	26
1999	42.81
2004	43.68
2009	28.82
2014	35.2
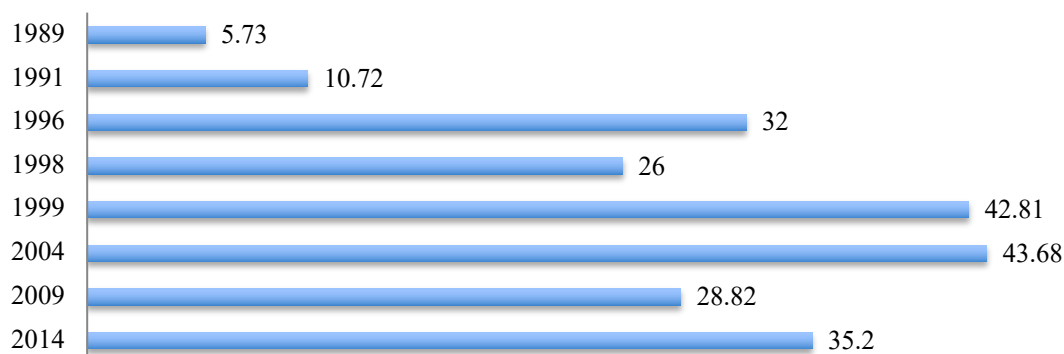
Source: ECI (1989-2014)

The inherent problems are summarised by Brass (2010:98) and demonstrated by the UPA government under Manmohan Singh and NDA administration headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

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> 'State parties treated the allocated ministries as virtual fiefdoms and used them as patronage to the advantage of their parties. Cabinet cohesion and collective responsibility are stretched and diversified beyond constitutionally recognised limits to extra-parliamentary centres of powers'

The UPA government was subjected to a well-documented 'policy paralysis'. Whilst India was facing a fiscal deficit with high inflation and interest rates, the government was unable to take decisive action. Manmohan Singh acknowledged the 'lack of political consensus on many issues was impeding rapid economic growth' (Thakurta & Raghuraman, 2008:80). The differences between the composite members of the UPA were acted out in the public arena, promoting the image of disunited government strife. Likewise, the NDA government was subject to confusion over the direction of economic policies because of 'deep-rooted ideological differences' (Thakurta & Raghuraman, 2008:85).

Coalition politics reduced the powers of the Prime Minister and cabinet positions had to be given to coalition partners that were then utilised for partisan and state purposes instead of pan-Indian, inclusive policies. As their support was necessary for government survival, they were protected from dismissal. Such invincibility increased corruption and fraudulent schemes. The UPA was plagued by high-profile cases including the 'Coalgate scam' and the '2G spectrum scam' (Chhibber & Verma, 2014:44). The latter, one of the biggest in India, resulted in an estimated loss of ₹1760 billion and the imprisonment of Telecommunications Minister and DMK politician Andimuthu Raja (Times of India, 2010).

The NDA administration, which failed to secure a parliamentary majority, was able to form a government as several parties abstained in the vote confidence (Thakurta & Raghuraman, 2008:427). This precarious position allowed a block of 27 MPs from Tamil Nadu led by the AIADMK to exert considerable influence, demanding several ministerial portfolios and politically expedient bureaucratic transfers and postings (Sharma, 2015:21). When the BJP refused to concede any further, the AIADMK withdrew its support, a critical factor in the government losing a vote of confidence by one vote 18 months after formation (Times of India, 2008). Coalitions, rather than granting minorities a veto over policies concerning their vital interests, establish a *de facto* veto over all government policy.

The political realisation of a grand coalition has been an unsuccessful exercise in the Indian political arena, creating political instability through policy paralysis and ineffectual governance with corruption and patronage politics flourishing. The UPA and NDA, comprised of disparate parties representing different social groups, are a closer realisation of the consociational grand coalition than the Congress System, which was comprised of all Congress politicians.

Measuring Political Instability

Empirical evidence from key political instability indicators, Crimes Against SCs and levels of rioting, demonstrates rising political instability, especially in more recent times when India has been the most consociational.

Figure 4.3: All-India Incidents of Rioting, 1953-2016 & Crimes Against SCs, 1 974-2016
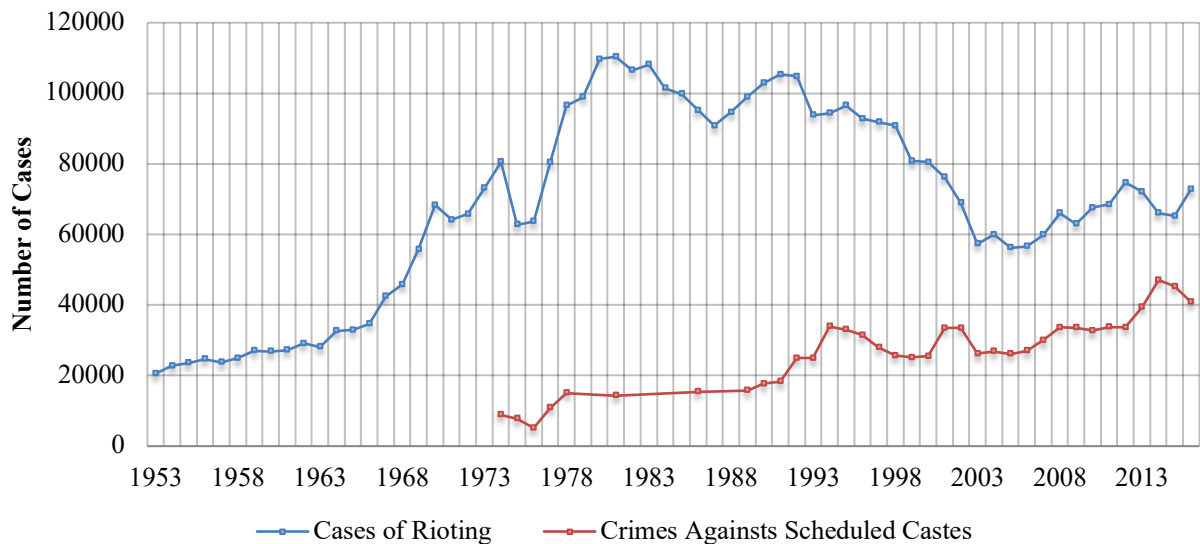
Sources: NCRB (1953-2016). Committee on the Welfare of the SCs & STs (1974-1992).

Crimes against SCs have been steadily increasing since records began in 1974. The sharpest increase occurred between 1991-1994, a period which coincided with the Mandal Commission implementation. The introduction of reservations for OBCs intensified all caste identities and turned previously politically aligned marginalised groups into rivals. As SCs are at the bottom of the hierarchy, they are usually the victims of caste conflicts (often by OBCs).

Levels of rioting have increased since independence, peaking between 1979-1990, before steadily declining in the 1990s. The decreases in rioting, despite growing consociationalism, can be explained by two key factors. In 1991 wide-ranging reforms liberalised the economy resulting in an unprecedented rise in income at the national level (Varshney, 2014:42). Where a divided state exhibits relatively low levels of economic development the likeliness of conflict remains high (Swenden, 2017: 246). India-specific analysis demonstrates a '1% increase in growth rate

and decreases the expected number of riots by over 5%' (Bohlken & Sergenti, 2010:489). Furthermore, between 1998 and 2004 India was governed by the NDA, headed by the anti-consociational BJP. The twin factors of an NDA government at the Centre and an upturn in economic development produced a short mitigating effect of the negative consequences of consociationalism.

Fundamentally, the steady increases observed since the early 2000s demonstrate rising political instability, when India has been the most consociational with the accommodationist UPA government at the Centre, a high number of veto players, and expanded and greater enforced reservations.

The Rise of the Saffron Party

Understanding the BJP

To understand the meteoric rise of the BJP it is necessary to consider the space it occupies in Indian politics. The majority of literature fails to adequately analyse the BJP and its brand of Hindu Nationalism. Most work adopts an over-sensationalised, alarmist response before concluding the BJP poses a threat to the very fabric of the Indian state (Pai, 2014:16-19). This has detracted from a more holistic discussion of the party and its anti-consociational approach to governance. Whilst several troubling, well-documented factors associated with the BJP exist, particularly in its local manifestations espousing anti-Muslim sentiments, the party has consistently moderated since the mid-1990s to gain electoral support (Mitra, 2016:91). It is the BJP's anti-consociational tendencies and transition to a moderate party that facilitated the BJP's recent electoral successes.

Hindu Nationalism, the BJP & Sangh Parivar

The BJP is described as a *Hindu* nationalist party, yet Hindu nationalism is not a clearly defined movement or ideology but a broad and varying field of thought (Zavos, 2005:37). The focus on the divisive and destructive nature of Hindu nationalism overlooks the moderate anti-consociational tendencies that exist within the BJP. Traditionally understood as a 'homogenisation-hegemony project' seeking integration through a national identity based on Hindu culture (Palshikar, 2015:720), Hindu Nationalism aims 'to get beyond social divisions' and construct a nation based on a common culture (Jaffrelot, 2009:8), extending 'beyond the discourse of communalism' (Zavos, 2005:40). *Hindutva* (lit. 'Hinduness') is less a religious and more a cultural signifier with Hinduism 'only a derivative, a fraction, a part of *Hindutva*' (Savarkar 1989:3). The promotion of a common cultural identity allows the transcendence of ethnic identities. Thus it can be argued Hindutva is not about Hinduism but about 'Indianess'.

However in extreme forms, there is slippage into 'more clearly religious territory' (Zavos, 2005:45), which is dangerous for political stability and social harmony.

The family of *Hindutva* organisations are collectively known as the Sangh Parivar. The most prominent, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is 'the ideological and institutional keystone of Hindu nationalism' (Varshney, 2014:38). When former BJS members broke away from the Janata party to form the BJP, it was characterised by a close alignment with the RSS. The reductionist approach of many scholars erroneously conflates the RSS and the BJP, overlooking their 'complex and dynamic' relationship (Palshikar, 2015:720). Fundamentally, the BJP is a political party, accountable to the electorate and tested during elections whereas the RSS remains outside democratic politics (Jaffrelot, 2009:191). Electoral compulsions forced the BJP to widen its appeal and abandon several anti-consociational policies still supported by the wider Sangh Parivar, such as opposition to reservations and linguistic federalism. Moreover, the BJP's economic policies often conflict with the *Swadeshi* (self-reliance) ideals of the RSS (Desai, 2005:256).

A Moderate BJP

Critics argue the BJP invokes the politics of communal polarisation and undoubtedly the Muslim-Hindu cleavage remains important (Varshney, 2014:34). However, the party has progressively moderated, with many criticisms no longer holding up to scrutiny. It is this moderation that allowed the party to win in 2014. Some scholars point to the constraints of coalition governments and the Constitution for the BJP's moderation[4]. Although these factors influenced the party, electoral incentives provide a more effective explanation.

In the 1989 and 1991 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP adopted a miltitant *Hindutva* message and mobilisation strategy in an attempt to establish a single Hindu vote-bank. It reignited communal

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[4] Mitra (2016), Varshney (2014).

agitations by evoking the controversial issue of building the Ram Temple at Ayodhya with party leader L.K. Advani's *Rath Yatra*. The rationale was clearly anti-consociational: to convince OBCs their Hindu identity was more important than caste. Conflating *Hindutva* with religious sentiments increased the party's support from devout Hindus (Palshikar, 2015:724) but its ideological positioning and mobilisation strategies created deep divisions within the Hindu community. A majority of the BJP's support base, 67.5% of graduates, 66.2% of urban and 63.8% of upper-caste Hindus, believed the demolition of the Babri Mosque unjustifiable (Mitra & Singh, 1999:145).

Table 5.1. BJP Historical Support

Year	Vote share (%)	Number of Seats
1984	7.4	2
1989	11.4	85
1991	20	120
1996	20.3	161
1998	25.6	182
1999	23.6	182
2004	22.2	138
2009	18.8	116
2014	31.4	282

Source: ECI (1984-2014).

As a result of Mandal, caste proved more significant for political mobilisation than religion. In response the party abandoned its opposition to reservations and BJP General Secretary K N Govindacharya, initiated a social engineering programme granting OBCs more space in the party. The BJP demographics were transformed with swathes of non-upper caste, non-RSS joining (Jaffrelot, 2000:105). In states like UP and Bihar, the leadership became dominated by OBCs.

After losses in the 1993 Assembly elections, exhausting *Hindutva* issues and exploiting the support of upper-caste Hindus to saturation point proved insufficient to capture power at the Centre (Mitra, 2005:80), the BJP realised the limits of communal mobilisation. The impetus was confounded further when the BJP government collapsed after 13 days, as other parties refused to enter a coalition with a party perceived to be 'extreme'. The adoption of party moderate Atal

Bihari Vajpayee as the Prime Ministerial candidate in the 1996 election marks the beginning of the transition to a moderate party (Pai, 1998:842). Under Vajpayee's leadership the BJP projected itself as a 'responsible' national party, focusing on developmental issues (Pai, 2014:130). It moderated its *Hindutva* stance to become more inclusive:

> '*Hindutva* is not to be understood or construed [as] narrowly confined to religious practices or expressed in extreme forms. It is related to the culture and ethos of the people […] giving equal treatment to all regardless of their personal faith is integral to this idea' (BJP, 2009).

The most sustained criticism against the BJP concerns its attitude towards minorities, which was valid during the early phase of the party and against many members today. However the experience of the previous NDA administration suggests a positive position on minorities. For example, there was 50% increase in Hajj subsidies and 50% increase in allocation of funds to improve Wakfs and Wafks boards (Mitra, 2005:80).

The BJP & Consociationalism

The BJP has always advocated against consociational policies, describing them as 'minorityism' (Varshney 1993:2520) and consistently rejects the consociational segregation-orientated approach to governance 'an ideal society is not one that is compartmentalised into segments, but an integral whole' (BJP, 1998). Consociational policies are opposed as they promote ethnic identities and division rather than a national identity and unity.

Hindu Nationalists support a strong Centre and conceive 'federalism and linguistic states as conducive to divisive nationalism' (Hansen & Jaffrelot, 1999:15). They support the establishment of 100 *janapadas* (administrative districts), dividing 'linguistic zones and ensuring […] they did not become mini-nations' and limiting subnational powerbases (Jaffrelot 2009:99).

This rationale explains the previous NDA government's creation of three new states for administrative rather than linguistic purposes.

Concerning normative anti-consociational policy positions, the party maintains a continued commitment against separate personal laws by advocating a uniform civil code (BJP, 2014:44) and opposes the special status and autonomy afforded to Jammu and Kashmir by the Constitution (Jaffrelot, 2009:193). The BJP's educational imperatives and the language adopted are anti-consociational by promoting pride in 'culture, heritage, and history', with emphasis on 'national integration, social cohesion, religious amity, national identity and patriotism' (BJP, 2014:17). The BJP champions the use of Hindi as the national language, allowing linguistic barriers to be broken, facilitating nationwide communication and economic integration, and fostering trade between different regions. Economic integration is reflected in the BJP's implementation of a common Goods and Services Tax (GST) to align states closer together.

The party adopts an anti-consociational 'non-essentialising' approach to ethnic identities (Mitra, 2005:80), empathising the shared interests between the majority and minorities and engaging with groups on concrete issues rather than identity politics. The BJP attempts to diminish the role of class and caste in politics 'as such social categories are recognised as dividing India' (Jaffrelot, 2015:25). The party continually attempts to strengthen the 'all India paradigm' (Palshikar, 2018:38), with phrases such as 'One Nation, One People and One Culture' (BJP, 1998). Caste cannot be transcended if there is institutional encouragement to keep caste identities alive, thus the BJP historically opposed reservations. Although the modern BJP accepts institutionalised quotas, the party often argued reservations should be based on economic criteria alone and thus open to all economically weaker sections of society' (Jaffrelot, 2009:257). Modi, from an OBC caste, is generally perceived to oppose affirmative action programmes. As the son of a *Chai wallah* (tea-seller) to the Prime Minister, his life exemplifies success without reservations is possible. The anti-consociational platform and moderation of the party were instrumental for the

BJP's recent electoral successes.

The 16th Lok Sabha Election: The Saffron Sweep

The 16th Lok Sabah election in 2014 signified a fundamental change in Indian politics. The consociational approach that has dominated recent political history suffered a setback. The BJP recorded its most successful electoral performance, gaining support from previously unreachable regions and social groups. With 31% votes and 51.9% seats, it was the first time since 1984 that a single party secured a parliamentary majority. The election exposes the flawed consociational assumption of static and primordial identities and the BJPs successes can be understood as backlash against grand coalitions, identity politics and reservations.

A speech delivered by Modi in 2013 in Delhi defined the themes of the election: development, good governance and anti-Congress sentiment (The Times of India, 2014) with Modi referencing his OBC background to appeal to lower-castes (Palshikar & Suri, 2014:43). The BJP presented its most moderate platform to date, concessions to Muslims were the highest in the party's history and contentious Hindu-nationalist themes were scarce.

The BJP increased its support across all states (except Punjab), castes, classes, and both urban and rural voters - with most gains between 10% and 20%. The party's support was historically confined to upper-caste, urban, and middle-class voters whilst performing poorly with lower-castes, Dalits, and religious minorities (Varshney, 2014:35). It successfully outperformed Congress in all social groups except Muslims. The BJP solidified its position with its traditional support bases whilst simultaneously attracting large numbers of OBCs, lower classes, and tribal voters. It was the support of these groups that handed the BJP a decisive victory.

Table 5.2: 16th Lok Sabha Election Results of Major Parties

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Seats Won (%)	Vote Share (%)
NDA				
BJP	427	282	51.9	31
SHS	58	18	3.3	1.9
TDP	30	16	2.6	3
SAD	10	4	0.7	0.3
LJP	7	6	1.1	0.04
UPA				
INC	464	44	8.1	19.3
NCP	36	6	1.1	1.56
RJD	30	4	0.7	0.7
IUML	25	2	0.4	0.2
JMM	21	2	0.4	0.3
Left Front				
CPI(M)	93	9	1.66	3.25
CPI	67	1	0.2	0.8
RSP	6	1	0.2	0.3
Major Non-Aligned Parties				
AIADMK	40	37	6.8	3.3
AITMC	131	34	6.3	3.8
BJD	21	20	3.7	1.7
SP	78	5	0.9	1.3
BSP	503	0	0	4.19
Others		52	11.5	19.5

Source: ECI (2014).

Figure 5.1: UPA & NDA Vote Share & Seats, 2009-2014

Source: ECI (2010, 2014).
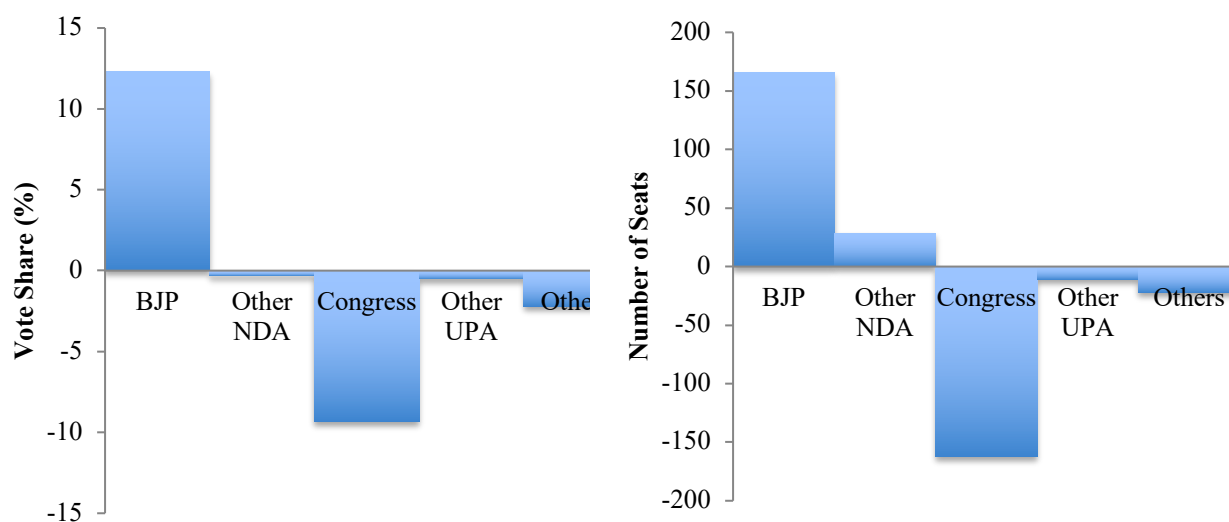
Critics argue the BJP is only a party for North India and Hindi heartlands. Whilst the BJP secured

67% of seats in the region, it made significant gains in areas previously unreachable. Adeney's

(2015:11) analysis using the cumulative regional inequality score, enables the calculation of the regional-concentration of political parties. A score of 0 indicates perfect geographical spread and 1 indicates complete geographical concentration (*e.g.*, the AIDMK scores 0.93). The BJP and NDA receive scores of 0.15 and 0.26 respectively, whereas Congress and UPA score 0.24 and 0.28. Therefore, the BJP is more 'national' than Congress and its outreach greater than usually implied (Adeney, 2015:12). Furthermore, since 2014 the BJP has swept to power in state legislatures throughout India, commanding power in all but the Southern and Eastern coastal states.

Although the cumulative support of state parties marginally increased from 2009, a distinct change can be observed between regionalist and regionally-based parties. Regionalist parties that have strong ties to specific state, like the AIADMK, performed well. Conversely regionally-based parties, which do not articulate a regional identity but represent caste and community in a concreted area like the SP and BSP, recorded decreases in support. In 2014, regionalist parties increased from 105 to 168 seats whilst regionally-based parties decreased from 107 to 46 (Kailash, 2014:68**).** This is the sub-national manifestation of the shift away from consociationalism occurring at the national level. The regionalist parties promote a crosscutting regional identity, integrating segmental cleavages, whereas regionally-based parties that focus on narrow caste identities and promote reinforcing cleavages. The variation in support of regional parties undermines consociationalism, which predicts a stable vote share for these parties due to the primordial understanding of identity: electoral outcomes are determined by the demographics of ethnic groups who are expected to vote for their representative party.

Table 5.3: Changes in BJP Vote Share, 2009-2014

	Vote Share (%) 2009	Vote Share (%) 2014	Change (%)
State			
Andhra Pradesh	3	9	+6
Assam	16	37	+21
Bihar	14	30	+16
Chhatisgarh	45	49	+4
Goa	45	54	+9
Gujarat	47	60	+13
Haryana	17	35	+18
Himachal Pradesh	50	54	+4
Jammu & Kashmir	19	33	+14
Jharkhand	28	41	+13
Karnataka	42	43	+1
Kerala	7	10	+3
Madhya Pradesh	44	55	+11
Maharashtra	18	28	+10
NCT (Delhi)	34	46	+12
Odisha	17	22	+5
Punjab	10	9	-1
Rajasthan	37	56	+19
Tamil Nadu	2	6	+4
Tripura	3	6	+3
Uttar Pradesh	18	43	+25
Uttarakhand	34	56	+22
West Bengal	6	17	+11
Caste			
Upper castes	29	47	+18
OBC	21	34	+13
Dalits	12	24	+12
Tribals	24	38	+14
Muslims	4	8	+4
Class			
Poor	16	24	+8
Lower	19	31	+12
Middle	25	38	+13
Rich	22	32	+10
Rural/Urban			
Rural	18	30	+12
Semi Urban	19	30	+11
Urban	25	39	+14

Sources: ECI (2009, 2014), CSDS (2009, 2014)

The most important pillar of consociationalism, grand coalitions, played a decisive role in the BJP's victory. The 2014 election was the most 'presidential-style' ever conducted; the BJP campaign focused around the 'strong and decisive' leadership of Modi. A CSDS (2014) poll suggests 27% of voters nationwide would have changed parties if Modi were not the prime ministerial candidate. This was in contrast in Congress, which had operated under the tripartite-leadership of Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi, and Rahul Gandhi during the previous government and suffered from corruption and policy paralysis fostered by coalitions. The contrast between the BJP and Congress was compounded further by the INC's refusal to officially nominate a prime ministerial candidate during the election.

The BJP successfully undermined the caste-based and state-specific consociational approach of previous general elections by setting aside state-level factors, making them less relevant. This argument is strengthened by the 2017 UP Vidhan Sabha election, where Modi's message was not primarily about UP but his vision for all of India (Palshikar, 2018:37). Modi criticised the role of caste in politics and contrasted this with his pan-Indian rhetoric. Consociational policies were countered by arguing 'appeasement of one' has been 'at the cost of the other' which has resulted in the proliferation of identity politics, tokenism, and clientelistic approaches, with the benefits for Dalits, OBCs, and Tribals unsatisfactory (BJP, 2014:10).

The election demonstrated the fluidity of identity. An Indian identity developed and become more prevalent at the expense of a 'caste-orientated sense of belonging' (Jaffrelot, 2015:26). Palshikair and Yadav's (2009:38) analysis the 15th Lok Sabha election has far greater significance after 2014: 'the politics of social identity has hit a point of saturation, thus opening the possibility of other kinds of mobilisation'. To secure victory in many states, simple caste calculations were inadequate. The BJP successfully mobilised voters using a national identity, presenting a form of *Hindutva* at the election that diverged from traditional discourse, being reshaped by the concept of development, which combined material aspirations with identity concerns. The focus

on 'national development' allowed Modi to bypass issues of communal relations and minority rights (Palshikar, 2015:720) in congruence with the BJP's 'non-essentialising' approach. The BJP's anti-consociational platform sought to unite the population behind the 'meta-narrative' of development while other parties promoted the assertion of ethnic identities. The change in salience of different identities is inconceivable for consociationalists.

The BJP's successful mobilisation is highlighted by the increased voter turnout. Although the national turnout increased by 4.4% from 2009, in constituencies where turnout was over 15% the BJP had a win rate of 96% and constituencies with a 10%-15% increase the rate was still an impressive 86% (Sridharan, 2014:22-24).

The shift in identities away from caste to the national left can partially be attributed to moribund OBC politics (Jaffrelot, 2015:27). In the Indira Sawhney v. Union of India case (1993), the Supreme Court ruled reservations not exceed 50% and in 2006 they were extended to higher-level graduate education thus the maximum level is already operational. This is coupled with the states 'disinvestment policies' and a decreasing public sector.

Conclusion

The resounding victory demonstrates the BJP has become a 'catch-all' party in social terms (Jaffrelot, 2015:34), signifies the pan-Indian rejection of consociationalism, and highlights the fluidity and multiplicity of identity. The saffron party's ascendency represents a new anti-consociational ideological framework and a 'second dominant party system' (Palshikar, 2018:36). The electorate turned away from coalition governments, opting for strong and decisive leadership. The BJP's success is a demonstrable shift to a more unified Indian vote and receding importance of identity politics. The focus on development which the BJP presented in a 'holistic, uniform and all pervasive' (BJP, 2014:19) fashion enabled them to draw voters away from the regionally-based parties' identity politics. Throughout the election it was evident that the concept

of development was intertwined with the use of *Hindutva* to promote an Indian identity thus superseding ethnic loyalties. Although caste remains an essential building block of micro-level politics, building a national coalition from these blocks has suffered a setback.

Case Study: Uttar Pradesh 2017 Vidhan Sabha Election

Uttar Pradesh has been at the forefront of 'social and political designs in Indian democracy' and is the political 'heartland' of the nation (Kudaisya, 2002:163). India's most populous state weighs heavily on national politics, with its events often affecting all of India. The state, being an amalgamation of disparate regions artificially constructed by the British (Brass, 2015:64), lacks a distinct regional identity, meaning caste and religious cleavages are even more pronounced.

The political history of UP, understood in four distinct phases, closely mirrors the country as a whole (Farooqui & Sridharan, 2017:17). The first phase is characterised by the *Congress System*, with the second phase relating to its decline and the rise of opposition parties. The third phase witnessed the rise and subsequent decline of Hindu nationalism and the BJP, coupled with the rise of backward and lower caste parties. The political transformations in the 1990s created the **'**ethnification of the Party System'. The fourth phase of identity politics led to the rise and domination of caste-based parties - the BSP and SP (Chandra, 2005:236). Academic literature concerning UP politics reflects these developments and concentrates on four main areas of study: identity politics and the rise of marginalised castes, communal violence, Hindu nationalism, and patronage and clientelism in politics.

An analysis of *jati*-level voting behaviour successfully refutes the primordial and static understanding of identity. Furthermore the consociational conception of homogenous ethnic groups (in India Dalits and OBCs for reservations) has facilitated more socio-economic and numerically dominant *jati* monopolising public employment and political office. Reservations, the proportionality pillar of consociationalism, institutionalised certain identities which reinforced allegiances to the elites of those groups, created the growth of identity parties, and

fractured the political system. The BJP successfully exploited these failing to win the Vidhan Sabha election.

Party System

UP exemplifies an 'ethnic party system' where political parties derive their support overwhelmingly from a particular ethnic group and serve their interests (Horowitz, 2000:291). Electoral winners in UP, like many states, are not won with programmatic merits, but through patronage politics and clientelistic strategies: overtures to specific communities with promises of jobs, infrastructure, cash, goods and access to government (Thachil & Teitelbaum, 2015:1047). Elections are perceived as a mechanism to make communal gains and prevent others taking away those already won (Heath & Michelutti, 2013:57).

Consociationalism encourages the multiparty system that was fostered by reservations. The fractured system with four parties in contention for power enabled the SP and BSP to form majority governments with just 30% and 29% of the vote respectively in 2007 and 2012. High competition encourages parties to make narrow social appeals as a broad-based approach risks 'outbidding' by other parties making more direct appeals to specific communities. Politicians use strong rhetoric to evoke *jati* identities, sharpening divisions, causes violence during elections and tensions between previously allied marginalised groups (Chibber & Nooruddin, 2004:152-187). The increased political conflicts over resources are often manifested locally in the form of social conflict and tensions between the main support bases of differing parties. The ability to form majority governments with a low vote share increases the stakes, heightening antagonisms.

The BSP and SP

The SP, founded in 1991 by Mulayam Singh Yadav, developed from a broad-based, secular, socialist platform to a caste-based party representing the interests of Yadavs, the dominant OBC *jati* in UP (Pai, 2016). The SP was the main beneficiary from the Mandal mobilisation, rallying Yadavs and other supporters to dislodge anti-reservation forces. Following the Ayodhya incident, the SP presented itself as the defender of Muslims and gained their support. The alliance enabled the SP to form majority governments in 2002 and 2012.

The BSP, established in 1984 and led by Mayawati since 2003, consolidated its support among Dalits, especially Jatavs. The party uses strong rhetoric of fighting social injustices and championing Dalit interests. The BSP strengthened and shaped Dalit political identity, which also prevented the party from becoming more inclusive. The BSP formed a majority government in 2007 whilst Mayawati was Chief Minister on three previous occasions with support from other parties.

Table 6.1: Vidhan Sabha Elections 1989 – 2017[5]

	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2007	2012	2017
BJP	57	221	177	174	88	51	47	312
BSP	13	12	67	67	98	206	80	19
INC	94	46	28	33	25	22	28	7
SP	-	-	106	110	143	97	224	47
JD	208	92	27	7	-	-	-	-
Others	53	54	20	33	49	27	24	18
Total	425	425	425	424	403	403	403	403

Source: ECI (1989-2017).

The SP and BSP are 'narrow ethnic parties', deriving their core support from a single *jati* and suffer from a 'hypercentralisation' of power (Chhibber et al, 2014:503). Demands are framed around social justice to uplift their support base at the expense of other groups (Heath &

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[5] Highlighted cells denote the party of the Chief Minister(s).

Michelutti, 2013:56). The BSP government was criticised for large, symbolic expenditures, particularly parks and statues, to glorify Dalits and their political assertion, whilst neglecting socio-economic issues (Michelutti & Heath, 2013:58). The party subverted public resources, concentrating spending on Dalit communities through programmes such as the 'Ambedkar Village Scheme' and other infrastructure projects (Heath & Michelutti, 2013:58). Mayawati implemented a 'climate of fear' in the bureaucracy, making the positions of Dalits unquestionable (Jaffrelot, 2003:416). The BSP and SP greatly altered the demographic composition of the civil service and police, shaping it in favour of their own communities, which has facilitated lawlessness and corruption (Jaffrelot, 2003:416).

The Mandalisation of Politics

The mandalisation of politics resulted in the fragmentation of OBCs, establishing two further categories to the lexicon of reservation politics, Economically Backward Castes (EBCs) and Most Backward Castes (MBCs), as a reaction to the 'creamy-layer'. Yadavs use their relative economic advantages to monopolise reservations and government positions, leaving other OBCs 'politically emaciated' (Kang, 2016:17). Yadavs constitute 19% of OBCs yet occupy an estimated 33% of reservations. As a result, EBCs and MBCs follow their own development agenda by alternating between parties (Kang, 2016:16). Likewise, exclusions within the SC category are 'structurally similar' to OBCs (Kumar, 2017:29). As reservation categories are conceived as homogenous, whereas the needs between jati differ, OBC and Dalit groups have fractured as *jati* agitate for greater, more specific reservations.

Table 6.2: Percentage (%) of *Jati* in OBC & SC Category and Percentage (%) in Reserved Jobs

Jati	Classification	Percentage (%) of OBC Category	Percenatge (%) of Reserved OBC Jobs
Yadav/Ahir	Upper OBC	19.4	33
Kurmi	EBC	7.46	12.49
Lodhi	EBC	4.9	4.16
Jat	EBC	3.61	6.85
Gujar	EBC	1.7	2.07
Sonar	EBC	0.5	1.7
Gaderia/Pal	MBC	4.43	3.78
Kewat/Mallah	MBC	4.33	1.36
Momin/Ansar	MBC	4.15	2.28
Teli/Sahu	MBC	4.03	2.81
Kumhar	MBC	3.42	2.34
Kahanr	MBC	3.31	2.63
Kachi	MBC	3.25	2.97
Nai	MBC	3.01	2.92

Jati	Classification	Percentage (%) of SC Category	Percentage (%) of Reserved SC Jobs
Chamar/Jatav	SC	55.7	56.67
Pasi	SC	15.91	11.13
Dhobi	SC	6.51	7.96
Kori	SC	5.38	3.84
Balmiki	SC	2.96	3.25
Khatik	SC	1.82	3

Source: Verma (2001)

Table 6.3: Estimated UP Demographics

	Caste/Jati	Percentage (%) UP Population
Upper Caste	Brahim	8.5
	Thakurs/Rajput	7.5
	Kayastha	1
	Vaishya	2
Total	4	19
OBC	Yadav	9
	Kurmi	4
	Lodhi	2
	Gaderia	2
	Kahanr	2
	Kewat	2
	Other	20
Total	79	41
Dalit	Jatav/Chamar	13
	Other	8
Total	66	21
Muslim		18
Other		1
Total		100

Source: Verma (2001)

Figure 6.1: UP Incidents of Rioting & Crimes Against SCs , 1994 – 2016
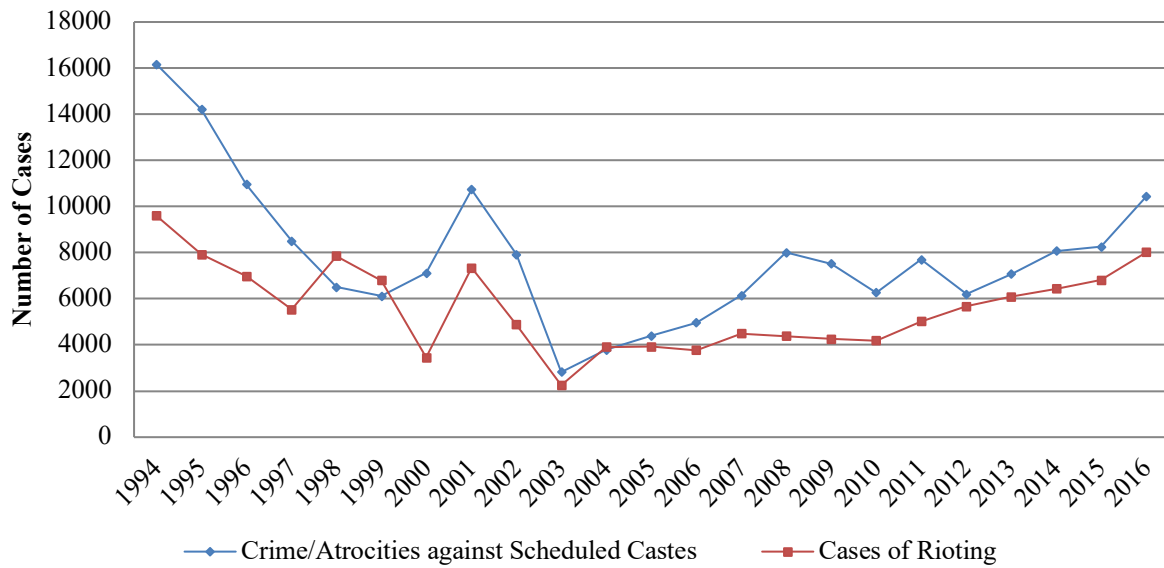
Source: NCRB (1994-2016).

The antagonisms outlined above are empirically supported by the NCRB incidences of rioting and crimes committed against SCs in UP. Both riots and crimes against SCs were at their highest immediately following the implementation of Mandal and reached the lowest point in 2003. Significantly, the period of BSP and SP majority governments has created a steady rise in both instability indicators. The increases demonstrate that majority 'ethnic party' governance, created from Mandal and the proportionality pillar of consociationalism, has increased political instability. The caste-based politics in UP pitted the previously allied Yadavs and Jatavs against each other as they fight for resources, creating 'the apogee of caste-based political mobilisation in the state' (Farooqui & Sridharan, 2017:17). Reservations have increased levels of polarisation and caste antagonisms leading to the 'atomisation of society' (Tenhuen & Säävälä, 2012:40).

Following Mandal, Dalits and OBCs cooperated as part of the 'second democratic upsurge' (Yadav, 1999:3293). However, since 1995, following an attack on Mayawati by SP members

after breaking their alliance, the BSP and SP have operated as political rivals, demonstrating that the cooperative claim by consociationalists is overestimated with only temporary incentives.

2017 Vidhan Sabha Election

The BJP entered continual decline in UP following Mandal and the demolition of the Babri Mosque. It became the party of urban upper-caste Hindus, with minimal outreach to lower-caste and rural communities. The trend reversed significantly in 2017 with the party converting its 39.7% vote share into 312 seats (77%), representing a swing of 24.7% and a 265-seat increase. Conversely, the BSP, SP, and INC all recorded decreases in support of 3.7%, 7.1%, and 5.5% respectively.

Table 6.4: Changes in Party Support Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2012-2017

Party	2012		2017		Change 2012 - 2017	
	Vote Share (%)	Seats Won	Vote Share (%)	Seats Won	Vote Share (%)	Seats Won
BJP	15.0	47	39.7	312	+24.7	+265
BSP	25.9	80	22.2	19	-3.7	-61
SP	29.1	224	22.0	47	-7.1	-177
INC	11.7	28	6.2	7	-5.5	-21
Independent	4.1	6	2.6	3	-1.5	-3
Others	14.2	18	7.3	15.0	-6.9	-3
Total	100.0	403	100.0	403		

Source: ECI (2012, 2017).

Table 6.5: Changes in *Jati*-level Voting Behaviour Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2012-2017

Jati/Caste	2012				2017				Change 2012-2017			
	BJP	BSP	SP & Congress	Others	BJP	BSP	SP & Congress	Others	BJP	BSP	SP & Congress	Others
Brahmin	38	19	32	12	79	4	10	7	+41	-15	-22	-4
Rajput	29	14	39	18	65	11	17	7	+36	-3	-22	-11
Vaishya	42	15	33	11	73	3	16	8	+31	-12	-17	-3
Other Upper Caste	17	17	27	39	60	8	23	9	+43	-9	-4	-30
Jat	7	16	17	60	34	2	17	47	+27	-14	-1	-13
Yadav	9	11	70	10	10	6	76	8	+1	-5	+6	-2
Kurmi and Koeri	20	19	48	13	57	16	20	7	+37	-3	-28	-6
Other OBC	19	19	42	20	60	14	18	8	+41	-5	-24	-13
Jatav	5	62	19	14	9	86	4	1	+4	+24	-15	-13
Other SC	8	48	32	12	39	39	14	8	+31	-9	-18	-4
Muslims	7	30	57	6	9	21	60	11	+2	-9	+2	+5
Others	16	23	40	21	46	24	24	6	+31	+0	-16	-15

Source: CSDS (2012, 2017).

The BJP's election strategy was overwhelmingly successful; the party increased its support across all *jati*. The scale of victory can be attributed to non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits, with swings of over 30% and 40%. Upper-caste Hindus returned to the BJP now they were a viable contender for power. The smallest swings came from Yadavs (0.8%), Jatavs (3.9%) and Muslims (2%) which all stayed with their traditional parties.

BJP President Amit Shah coordinated the campaign and sharpened focus on these constituencies by portraying the BJP as a mechanism for development. Non-Yadav OBCs were disproportionally selected as BJP candidates and 65 tickets were granted to non-Jatav Dalits in reserved seats with the BJP winning in 68 out of 87 reserved seats (Verma, 2017). The BJP refused to nominate a Chief Ministerial candidate until after the election with 'clinical organisation of all election-related activities' focussed around Modi (Verma, 2016:90).

The BSP and SP were continually criticised as 'single-caste platforms' by the BJP, building on non-Yadav OBC disenchantment with the SP and resentment of Yadav domination (Kang, 2016:18). To win the support of non-Yadav OBCs, the BJP went against its anti-consociational approach by proposing to divide the 27% OBC reservation between EBCs, MBCs and OBCs , with 9% each (Kang, 2016:18). The social engineering formula can be observed in BJP election posters, which featured Modi, Shah and four state leaders, two from upper-castes and two from non-Yadav OBC castes.

The defeat of the SP and BSP signifies a decline in identity-based politics and the diminishing effectiveness of caste mobilisations. The failings of reservations fragmented caste identity, as the BSP and SP are single-*jati* parties not representing marginalised groups as a whole. The agenda of good governance and development and its more inclusive conception of identity helped

supersede the politics of caste and community and aligned voters with a wider narrative than the fragmentation inherent in caste politics (Hasan, 2017).

However, *jati*-identity politics continued to play a significant role in the BJP's success. Confident of upper-caste support, the party engaged with social engineering. The BJP was able to exploit the discontent among the non-Yadav and non-Jatav populace, where the politics of consociationalism and social justice advocated by the BSP and SP had failed. The social justice agenda was subverted by broad-based identity politics and the BJP created a non-Yadav-non-Jatav-Upper Caste coalition combined with development.

Conclusion

UP is the crucible of reservation politics. The manifestation of consociational proportionality has created political instability by increasing intergroup tensions. The SP and BSP both adopt strategies to increase the salience of *jati* and maintain segmental divisions to gain electoral support. Marginalised groups are now in frequent conflict over resources with the socio-economically and numerically-dominant *jati* from each reservation category receiving a disproportionate share of resources and dominating political life. NCRB records of rioting and crimes against SC are a quantifiable demonstration of increasing political instability in UP.

The concept of proportionality and identity politics are intertwined, with the former reinforcing the latter. Reservations have elevated the role of caste identity which has been exploited in UP's recent history. However, the politics of reservations, which dominated the political agenda, has started to recede with 2017 representing the saturation point.

The case study of UP falsifies the consociational conceptions of primordial or static identities and homogeneous segmental groups. The BJP was able to exploit the proportionality pillar of

consociationalism and theoretical flaw of segmental groups as homogenous. The party successfully capitalised on the discontentment with identity politics by large segments of OBCs and Dalits which 'turn[ed] the politics of social justice on its head' (Hasan, 2017). The Dalit and OBC movements initially gave a voice for marginalised groups but have been reduced to reservation politics for specific *jati* in these groups, alienating other *jati* within the wider category and leaving non-Yadav OBCS and non-Jatav Dalits untouched by Mandal. Yadavs and Jatavs have become 'interest groups with political instruments' (Jaffrelot, 2015:31), focusing on identity, diluting ideology, and epitomising the criminalisation and clientelism of politics.

UP demonstrates the complexity and fluidity of identities. As Pai states, 'mandalisation has run its inevitable course', creating an increased fragmentation within the OBCs (Pai 2016). Mobilising the non-Yadav OBCS and non-Jatav Dalits 'blunted the politics of BSP and SP in one stroke' and the BJP created a broader form of identity politics 'on the ruins of the old political order which had outlived its utility for a critical mass of OBCs' (Hasan, 2017).

Conclusion

The impact of consociationalism in India has been twofold. Firstly, consociationalism increased antagonisms and caused rising political instability. Secondly, the increase in consociationalism in recent political history reached a saturation point in 2014 and enabled the BJP's saffron sweep in both the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. Furthermore, India validates the false theoretical underpinnings of consociationalism.

The literature review exposed the false assumptions: ethnic groups as homogenous, identities as primordial and static and the inexistence of crosscutting cleavages. The normative manifestations of segmental autonomy and proportionality, through policies of differential treatment, create antagonisms and conflict between ethnic groups. The prioritisation and institutionalisation of certain identities violates the rights of individuals, and groups not recognised in the consociational system. It does not account for groups being formed and reformed over time. These factors facilitated the development of the hypothesis, in accordance with critical rationalist theory: not only can consociationalism be falsified, consociational policies produce political instability, the very factor they are purported to mitigate.

The first research question considered the impact of consociational policies on political instability in India. The historical analysis of Indian consociationalism demonstrated a number of consociational policies were adopted upon independence, which have increased dramatically in the 1990s through the introduction of OBC reservations and coalition governments at the Centre. Process-tracing of policies exposed the consociational approach to governance facilitated the omnipotence of caste, linguistic and religious mobilisations.

Grand coalitions, in the form of the NDA and UPA, became the norm at the Centre. The ideological gulf and competing interests between coalition partners made consensus near impossible. Minority groups made unreasonable demands and wielded a veto over all government policy. Corruption flourished with ministries treated as fiefdoms by state parties. Consequentially, grand coalitions and minority vetoes in India created dysfunctional and ineffectual governments by inserting policy paralysis into the decision-making process. The introduction of reservations for OBCs, which increased proportionality, increased caste antagonisms between marginalised groups in frequent conflict over resources. The political instability indicators, crimes against SCs, and riots, provided a quantitative demonstration of rising instability to support the historical analysis and process-tracing.

Effectual understanding of the BJP and its place in Indian politics is essential to critically analyse the party's recent saffron sweep of the political map. Undeniably the BJP suffers from anti-Muslim sentiments, particularly at the lower levels of the party. However, the overt focus on the religious cleavage and the alarmist tones by many scholars overlooks the continued moderation of the BJP since its close alignment with the RSS and militant Hindutva message in the early-1990s. It was this moderation, which began with Vajpayee in the mid-1990s and was extended in 2014, which allowed the party to extend its outreach socially, linguistically and geographically to limits previously considered inconceivable.

The second research question considered the extent to which the 16th Lok Sabha election and subsequent Vidhan Sabha elections can be understood as a consequence of consociational policies. The BJP is the most anti-consociational party at the national level and its continual electoral victories represent the saturation point of consociational policies. In India's most 'presidential' election, the electorate rejected the grand coalition and tripartite leadership of the UPA and turned to Modi's decisive leadership. The inclusive message of good governance and

development intertwined with *Hindutva* promotes an Indian identity that transcends identity politics and the cleavages of caste, language and region. In many respects the 16th Lok Sabha election marks the renationalisation of Indian politics.

Electoral gains for the BJP have frequently been at the expense of identity parties. In a number of states the politics of reservations fractured the political system. The case study of UP demonstrates the domination of identity parties. The Yadav SP and Jatav BSP ensure unequal treatment and distribution of resources between *jati* as opposed to addressing the needs of Dalits and OBCs as a whole. The BJP exploited the consociational policy of reservations for electoral gain by recognising intra-group difference and rallying *jati* that have not benefitted from institutionalised quotas and are underrepresented in reservations. Thus, the decisive BJP victories can largely be attributed to the failings of consociationalism and the party's ability to exploit those failings.

The diversity of Indian states and the tendency of both Congress and the BJP to devise localised election strategies means drawing generalisations from a single state is inadequate. Comparative studies between states with different political compositions and identities would help develop a more robust insight. For example, Gujarat operates a two-party system and has always been a BJP stronghold. Conversely, the state of Tamil Nadu with its strong regional identity has shunned national parties since 1967 and the BJP has yet to make inroads. Allowing for narrower scope would enable the relationship between reservation politics and the BJP's ascendancy to be explored in greater detail.

Although the BJP has been in government for four years, the party's ascendency remains on-going in state elections. Many political and policy changes take a number of years to be realised, therefore it is still too early to understand the long-term effects that the saffron sweep will have

on political stability and Indian politics more widely. The findings outlined in this thesis predict that if the BJP were to maintain an anti-consociational approach to governance, India would become increasingly politically stable.

The conclusions have both theoretical implications for the consociational debate and normative implications for policy-making in India. Consociationalism not only provides an ineffectual set of policies for governance in heterogeneous states but also should be avoided to prevent further political instability. The opposing end of the spectrum concerning approaches to governance, integrationism, should be promoted as an effective form of managing stability.

Policy implications suggest political parties that have broad-based support should form governments and not a grand coalition established through an 'ethnic census'. Policies that strengthen segmental identities and reinforce cleavages should be avoided. In India this relates to reform or abolition of reservations and the realisation of Article 44 of the Constitution to adopt a uniform civil code. Institutionalised quotas in employment, political representation and segmental autonomy suffer from poor implementation, do not meet their intended goals and foster instability. Governments must adopt policies to promote crosscutting cleavages that enable ethnic divisions to be transcended.

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