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India's Watershed Vote

HINDU NATIONALISM IN POWER?

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India's sixteenth general election was remarkable for a number of reasons. At nearly 67 percent, voter turnout was the highest ever, and first-time voters, of whom there were more than 100 million, turned out at an even higher rate.¹ The share of eligible voters who went to the polls in northeastern India—widely viewed as a neglected and disaffected region with a history of insurgencies—exceeded that of most other regions. The urban middle class, long disenchanted with democracy, returned to vote in substantial numbers. And for the first time since independence, women cast nearly as many ballots as men did.

More than anything, however, it was the massive victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Narendra Modi, that made the latest elections truly distinctive. For most of India's postindependence history, the Indian National Congress (INC or Congress party) has dominated national politics. The INC has been in power for all but thirteen of the sixty-seven years since independence.² With the partial exception of 1977, no single party other than Congress has ever won a majority of seats.³ The BJP's 2014 electoral performance has changed all that. The BJP on its own now controls 51.7 percent of seats in the 545-seat Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament.

Of the many questions that the BJP's newfound parliamentary dominance raises, perhaps the most important concerns India's religious diversity. The BJP is a Hindu-nationalist party, and its guiding ideology is deeply distrusted by India's minorities, especially Muslims, who make up 13.4 percent of the country's population. Throughout the last century, India experienced frequent outbreaks of conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Moreover, some of India's worst Hindu-Muslim riots

took place in 2002 in the state of Gujarat, whose government was then headed by Modi. Although the courts have not found him guilty of inciting the riots, Modi's ascent to India's highest office has generated enormous anxiety among India's liberals and Muslims. Many assume that the country will go through a period of communal unrest and violence under Modi's rule.

Yet such a turn of events is not a foregone conclusion. It is unlikely that governance under BJP rule will be a linear extension of the party's core ideology. Since developing ambitions of governing India, the BJP has tended to function according to three sometimes conflicting imperatives: ideological, electoral, and constitutional. Paradoxes and contradictions emerge, often forcing the party to walk a tightrope. Hindu nationalism might be the BJP's ideological foundation, but its desire for power necessarily propels the party toward constructing a minimum winning coalition across India's many diversities, which requires alliance-building and ideological moderation. Once in power, the party must abide by the constitution, which represents the values of India's freedom movement, not the tenets of Hindu nationalism. Unless the constitution is radically changed, it will be extremely difficult to make governance in India a Hindu-nationalist ideological enterprise. The last BJP-led government (1998–2004) could not do it. Will the current one, with its legislative majority, succeed where its predecessor failed?

To answer that question, we must first examine the scale and social basis of the BJP's victory and the INC's defeat. The scale of victory normally sums up the strength of a party's popular mandate, at least in the initial years of rule, while the social basis—who voted for a party and who did not—should provide some indication of what a party will do once in power.

So how did the BJP and INC fare in terms of votes and seats? Congress won a mere 19.3 percent of the national vote, dipping below 20 percent for the first time ever. It now controls only 44 seats (8.1 percent) in the Lok Sabha. It has been virtually wiped out across northern and western India, where the BJP and its alliance partners performed spectacularly well and which account for roughly 60 percent of all seats.

Although the BJP holds a majority of seats on its own, it has maintained its campaign coalition, the National Democratic Alliance, after the elections. Some alliance members even gained prominent positions in Modi's cabinet. For all practical purposes, however, it is a BJP government. If necessary, the party can abandon its alliance partners and yet the government can last its full term. Although non-Congress political hegemony has long existed in several states, never before has a party other than the Congress exercised such dominance in Delhi.

Which groups voted for the BJP and Congress, respectively? The BJP has long been seen as a party of upper-caste Hindus, with some support

among the middle castes but very little among the lowest-caste Dalits and virtually no support among Muslims. When the BJP's coalition won power in 1998, the party was able to garner support from the lower castes primarily via its alliance partners. In recent years, the Congress base has generally been viewed as the BJP's obverse. It has drawn most, if not all, of its support from groups at the bottom of the Hindu social hierarchy as well as from Muslims.

Yet in 2014, the BJP's vote share exceeded that of the Congress for every key social group, except for Muslims. Although the BJP and its allies won an unprecedented share of the upper-caste vote—roughly 54 percent to the Congress party's 12 percent—what was more surprising was the BJP's performance among groups at the lower rungs of the social ladder. The BJP won 24 percent of the Dalit vote as opposed to the Congress's 18.5 percent; 37.5 percent of the Scheduled Tribes' vote versus the Congress's 28.3 percent; and 33.6 percent of the middle-caste vote to the Congress's 15.1 percent. The BJP also outperformed the Congress among rich voters, middle-class voters, and both urban and rural voters.

Thus the BJP defied most articles of conventional political wisdom in these elections, with one major exception. The party simply could not win any significant support from India's 170 million Muslims.⁴ Although the BJP won a larger share (8.5 percent) of the Muslim vote in 2014 than in 2009 (4 percent), 91.5 percent of Muslims remained unwilling to put their faith in Modi or the BJP to lead the country. The Congress, by contrast, won almost 38 percent of the Muslim vote. Perhaps one of the biggest questions resulting from this election is how the relationship between the BJP and the Muslim community will evolve. Other minorities, including Christians, view the BJP with suspicion and fear as well. Yet no intercommunal relationship in India is as fraught as that between Hindus and Muslims. That cleavage is a master narrative of Indian politics.

Muslims and Hindu Nationalism

The adversarial relationship between the BJP and Muslims has a lot to do with the Hindu-nationalist ideology, known as Hindutva. The BJP as a party was born only in 1980, but all its predecessor organizations have stood for Hindu nationalism. Now nearly nine decades old, Hindutva was institutionally born in the 1920s. Although the ideology has evolved, some of its core values remain unchanged. The basic idea of Hindutva is that India is a Hindu nation. In 1923, the movement's founding father Vinayak Damodar Savarkar wrote: "A Hindu means a person who regards this land . . . from the Indus to the seas as his fatherland (*pitrībhūmi*) as well as his holyland (*punyabhūmi*)."⁵ This definition of a Hindu includes three of India's religious minorities—Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists—as Hindus, for India is also their holy land. But it excludes

Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Parsis, for their holy lands are located elsewhere. According to Savarkar and his followers, the inner conflict between these two commitments—to the fatherland that is India and the holy land that is not India—can only create divided loyalties, impeding the full flowering of patriotism.

Of these groups, Jews and Parsis are miniscule in number. Hindu nationalists view them as either “assimilated” or nonthreatening. Christians are greater in number, though they make up barely over 2 percent of India’s population. Yet they are of some concern to Hindu nationalists, who find Christian proselytizing unacceptable. When a BJP-based alliance was last in power in Delhi, there were attacks on Christian churches that not only destroyed property but also caused injuries and deaths.⁶

Muslims, however, are the primary object of Hindu-nationalist suspicion, partly because the Muslim population is so large, but also because a Muslim homeland, Pakistan, was created by the British when colonial rule ended in 1947. Many Muslim families are divided between India and Pakistan. The two nations have fought four wars over the last six and a half decades, and their competing claims about who should rule Muslim-majority Kashmir continue to bedevil relations between them. Thus, in the eyes of Hindu-nationalist ideologues if not all BJP leaders, Muslim loyalty to India is less than complete and inherently suspect.

Some Hindu-nationalist ideas about what Muslims must do to win the approval of Hindus are undoubtedly alarming. In an infamous passage written in the late 1930s, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, an early stalwart and towering figure in the Hindu-nationalist ideological pantheon, asserted:

The foreign races in Hindustan [India] must . . . adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture . . . [and] may [only] stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing . . . not even citizen’s rights.⁷

The passage of time has not entirely eradicated such views. After the BJP’s recent victory, Ashok Singhal, leader of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a sister organization of the BJP, stated, “Muslims . . . must learn to respect Hindu sentiments. If they keep opposing Hindus, how long can they survive?”⁸ Although some lower-level leaders and cadres still hold such profoundly anti-Muslim sentiments, the BJP’s top brass has shown signs of moderation since the mid-1990s. It would not be an overstatement to say that the electoral imperative, by and large, has been the cause of moderation. Those Hindu-nationalist organizations that stand outside the electoral arena have remained ideologically “pure.”

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is the most important of all such organizations. Formed in 1925, the RSS is the ideological and institutional keystone of Hindu nationalism. The RSS does not field candidates for political office, but it does provide volunteers to campaign for BJP candidates, as it did for Modi in this most recent election. Modi and many other BJP leaders were ideologically groomed by the RSS before rising to prominence. The BJP and RSS are intricately intertwined, but it would be a mistake to conflate the two. The BJP seeks votes; the RSS does not. Thus each functions according to a different logic.

Hindu nationalists, despite their first impulse to act ideologically, find it hard to go against the constitution. Thus there is an inherent tension between ideological commitments and constitutional propriety.

The RSS itself has several sister organizations, of which the most prominent is the VHP. Like the RSS, these groups preach ideological purity and do not participate in elections. Some have even campaigned against BJP ministers and candidates who were thought to have made too many ideological compromises for the sake of political power—for example, some VHP leaders campaigned against Modi in Gujarat state elections.

Why do elections and the pursuit of political power induce ideological moderation? Some political scientists interpret this as the “median voter” effect—that is, in order to win power political parties must mold their strategies and programs according to what the median voter wants. By contrast, ideological purity demands hewing to extremes, a strategy normally viewed by candidates as a sure way to lose, since most voters tend to be somewhere in the middle.

The Indian version of this problem has two dimensions. The first has to do with India’s distinctive electoral demography. Because India, with its many political parties, has a first-past-the-post electoral system that does not require a “50 percent plus one” vote for victory, a mere 30 to 35 percent of a constituency’s vote is often all it takes for a candidate to win. If, as most observers agree, Muslims constitute 20 percent or more of the electorate in 70 to 80 constituencies and 10 to 20 percent of the electorate in another 120 to 130 constituencies,⁹ then the Muslim vote, if united, can be decisive in 190 to 210 constituencies out of a total of 543 unless the Hindu vote is consolidated. Except in a few regional pockets, Hindu consolidation has yet to happen. Hindus are divided among castes, and numerous parties mobilize the lower castes, making consolidation nearly impossible. Anti-Muslim hysteria and single-minded devotion to Hindutva therefore do not pay at the national level.

The logic of rule is the second factor generating moderation. This logic inevitably becomes a constraint when a Hindu-nationalist party comes to power. India's republic and constitution, which derive inspiration from the anticolonial freedom movement, are founded not upon Hindu nationalism, but upon what in India is called secular nationalism. Hindu nationalists see Hindus as the primary owners of the Indian nation and believe that minorities should defer to Hindu primacy; secular nationalists, by contrast, call this Hindu majoritarianism and view it as a constitutional subversion. In order to safeguard against Hindu majoritarianism and to guarantee equality for all religious groups, India's secular nationalists refer to the principle of minority rights, which, as in many democratic polities, is enshrined in the country's constitution. Once in power, Hindu nationalists, despite their first impulse to act ideologically, find it hard to go against the constitution. Thus there is an inherent tension between ideological commitments and constitutional propriety. In wrestling with this ambivalence, BJP governments have tended to choose ideological moderation. While still imparting a certain Hindu cast to statecraft, they avoid outright defiance of the constitution. The last two BJP-led governments in Delhi (1998–2004), led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, were clearly caught by such cross-pressures and governed for the most part in an ideologically moderate way. Will Modi follow suit, or will he try to change the rules of the game?

Three themes dominated Modi's roughly eight-month-long election campaign: economic growth, good governance, and an unflinching critique of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty and its hegemonic hold on the Congress party and its government. Except for occasional and brief references, Hindu nationalism and anti-Muslim virulence were absent from the campaign.

Hindu-nationalist themes were likewise scarce in the BJP's election manifesto, while concessions to Muslims were substantial. "It is unfortunate," reads the manifesto, "that even after several decades of independence . . . the Muslim community continues to be stymied in poverty. Modern India must be a nation of equal opportunity. . . . India cannot progress if any segment of Indians is left behind."¹⁰ The manifesto then laid out the party's new Muslim agenda, which included efforts to "strengthen and modernize minority educational systems and institutions"; "augment [Muslims'] traditional artisanship and entrepreneurial skill"; "empower Waqf Boards"; and institute a "permanent inter-faith consultative mechanism to promote harmony." In the history of Hindu nationalism, such concessions to the Muslim community have rarely, if ever, been made. Modi's desire for power pushed him to seek favor from all of India's communities, including Muslims. Yet in the end, despite the explicit move toward moderation by Modi and the BJP, only a small share of India's Muslims found this conciliatory stance to be credible.

Since coming to power, Modi has kept this moderate bearing, refraining from any profoundly anti-Muslim statements.¹¹ He has repeatedly called India's constitution "the only sacred book," and has avoided allocating cabinet positions on the basis of ideological purity. The RSS tends to covet four particular cabinet slots: home (for law and order and intelligence), defense (for national security), finance (for the project of economic nationalism), and education (for shaping curricula and influencing the younger generation). Modi did appoint someone whom the RSS would endorse as home minister, but the finance, defense, and education posts have not gone to RSS ideologues. To what extent these ministers will be open to RSS influence remains to be seen. Some early signs, however, point not in the direction of resolute moderation, but rather toward the kind of ambivalence that has in the past also marked the BJP's conduct in power.

Ideology, Culture, and Education

As of this writing, the new government is a little over a hundred days old, but some of its key decisions in education have been based on ideological rectitude rather than academic excellence, causing concern among liberals and minorities about what lies ahead. The RSS has always viewed education as the foundation of social order and a means of changing minds and behaviors. Whenever possible, therefore, it seeks control of the most powerful educational offices as well as school curricula. Since the government still largely shapes India's educational system, the BJP's rise to power at the state or central level nearly always facilitates the educational mission of the RSS.

What exactly is that mission? Most of all, the RSS aims to alter the interpretation and teaching of Indian history, to glorify Hindu culture, and to devalue Muslim contributions to the nation. It also presents a view of history that equates the decline of Hindu society with the arrival of Islam in India nearly twelve-hundred years ago. India's academically respectable historians have never approved of such simplistic binaries, and have written rigorous accounts of the many and substantial Muslim contributions to Indian culture and history. Yet Hindu nationalists would prefer to have the country's youth read what is ideologically congenial rather than what is academically sound.

As part of its efforts to regulate what and how Indians learn, the RSS often seeks a ban on books that present disagreeable views of Hinduism. The RSS and its affiliates do not shy away from using coercion to silence those who have alternative views and are prominent enough to draw a following. Thus the political rise of Hindu nationalism tends to have a paradoxical relationship with democracy: If a Hindu-nationalist party gains power, it does so via democratic mechanisms—namely, elections; once in power, however, it often weakens

or restricts the liberal aspects of democracy, such as freedom of expression.

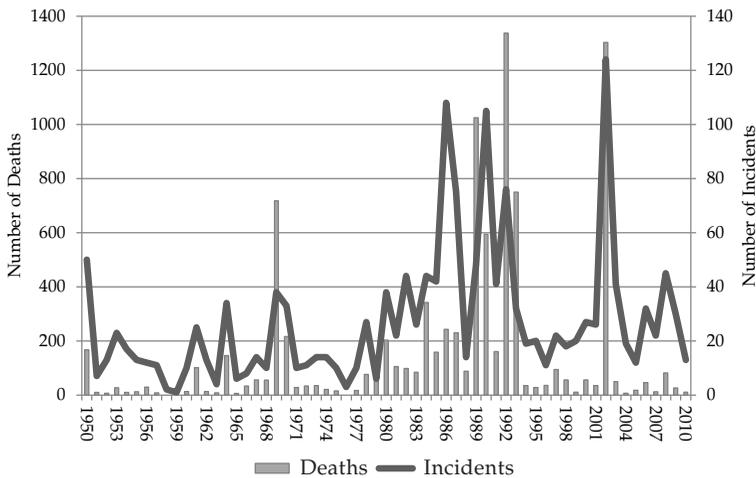
It should be clear that the cultural and educational mission of Hindu nationalism can only be a long-term project. It is interrupted each time Hindu nationalists lose power. In order for a durable change in the writing and teaching of India's history to take place, Hindu nationalists must consistently remain in power. That has not happened yet, and it might not happen in the foreseeable future. Until it does, the educational mission of the RSS cannot be fully accomplished.

Communal tensions and violence, of course, are a more serious and immediate cause for concern than the writing of history. The BJP's top leadership might demonstrate moderation, but lower-level leaders and rank-and-file members often do not. In their view, Muslims are disloyal to India and have hurt the growth of Hindu society, which to them is synonymous with India—they even use the terms Hindu and India interchangeably. The electoral rise of Hindu nationalists is generally accompanied by assertions of Hindu pride, attempts to consolidate the Hindu vote, and displays of open animosity toward Muslims. We have seen this happen over and over again in states where the BJP has held power and also, to varying degrees, when the BJP has been part of the ruling coalition in Delhi (1977–79, 1998–99, 1999–2004, and now).

In theory, communal tensions can lie dormant if Muslims remain mute in response to Hindu-nationalist assertiveness. But the problem is not so simple. The BJP's rise to power also creates strategic opportunities for two other types of political actors: the Muslim right, whose political fortunes improve when communal fires are raging, enabling it to present itself as a savior of Muslims in an adverse environment; and some non-Muslim, anti-BJP political parties who make the same calculation. In short, if communal violence erupts, other parties—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—can blame the BJP and court the Muslim vote or work to consolidate it.

Something like this has been happening recently in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India's most populous state (home to a population nearly the size of Brazil's) with the largest representation (80 seats) in the Lok Sabha. Of late, communal violence has repeatedly broken out in UP. Beginning during the campaign period, Modi's rise emboldened BJP state-party cadres, and there are also some Muslim leaders in UP who thrive on communalism rather than moderation. They have sensed a political opportunity in the unrest, as has the Samajwadi Party (SP), which runs the state government and has a close relationship with the Muslim community. The SP hopes that by presenting itself as the protector of the Muslim community, which feels insecure and threatened by the Hindu-nationalist political ascendancy, it will perhaps be able to consolidate its Muslim support. In short, numerous political actors have an interest in reigniting communal tensions.

FIGURE—TRENDS IN HINDU-MUSLIM VIOLENCE IN INDIA (1950–2010)



Notes: Based on data from Nina Kaysser, Sonia Bhalotra, Irma Clots-Figueras, and Lakshmi Iyer, “Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950–2010” (2014; unpublished). This series is an update of the Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on “Hindu-Muslim Violence in India: 1950–95,” available at the Inter-University Consortium of Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

The developments in UP, which are a departure from national trends, are troubling. As the Figure above illustrates, after rising alarmingly over a decade and a half (1977–93), Hindu-Muslim violence in India has subsided significantly since 1993. The great exception was 2002, when anti-Muslim riots took place in Gujarat during Modi’s tenure as that state’s chief minister. As I have already noted, the courts have not found him guilty of anything. But the political narrative of his culpability remains strong among liberals and Muslims. Modi’s opponents have a truly Herculean task ahead of them. They have been unable to pin him down legally, and now a great election victory has immeasurably boosted his stature. The political and legal ghosts of the Gujarat riots are unlikely to haunt Modi as long as he is prime minister.

Will the tensions in UP revive a wider trend toward the large-scale Hindu-Muslim rioting that so deeply marked India’s last century? If they do, some of the worst fears about Modi’s rise to power will come true. If they do not, what factors are likely to impede the resurgence of mass communal violence? Three, in particular, deserve consideration: 1) income, 2) Hindu-Muslim ties, and 3) Modi’s political strategy.

The scholarship on the relationship linking incomes to riots and civil wars suggests that in high-income countries riots become episodic and civil wars disappear. Although the United States and France both experienced riots in recent decades (in Los Angeles in 1992 and in the Paris suburbs in 2005), such outbreaks of violence were isolated incidents rather than part of a regular and continuing phenomenon, as they tend to

be in lower-income countries. Many studies have identified state capacity as a key variable in determining whether or not communal violence will spin out of control. In high-income countries, tensions and small skirmishes may emerge. Before they turn into full-fledged rioting, however, the police or security forces tend to intervene and put down the disturbances.

This argument, although correct, needs to be qualified in terms of the Indian experience. Two seemingly paradoxical features of Indian riots must be noted. First, Hindu-Muslim riots are primarily an urban rather than rural phenomenon,¹² even though the average income in cities has been higher than in villages. In other words, in India more riots have broken out in higher-income locales. If the urban-rural disaggregation is any guide, higher incomes alone are not enough to predict a decline in violence and rioting.

The second feature of Indian riots, however, goes in the opposite direction. The period of declining riots (1993–2010) in India coincides with a period during which incomes were rising at an unprecedented rate at the national level. But has India yet reached that threshold where riots, as a result of higher state capacity, will definitely decline? Because law and order is a state matter in India, we must look at incomes at the state level in order to answer this question. As one would expect, India's richer states have not witnessed riots since 2002. And Uttar Pradesh, where riots have returned, is among the poorest states in the country. This pattern does provide some validation for the income-level theory, but firm conclusions on the basis of income *per se* cannot yet be made.

The second factor—the nature of Hindu-Muslim ties—was a key argument in my own work on Hindu-Muslim relations.¹³ In urban India, the primary site of Hindu-Muslim violence, riots were concentrated locally. In cities where “bridging” ties existed between the two communities—in business, politics, education, and other facets of life—peace prevailed, or at least violence was rare. This was true even when India's income was quite low. By contrast, cities in which there were no links between Hindus and Muslims were the most likely to experience rioting.

At higher incomes, different communities often, if not always, develop ties of interdependence by virtue of being thrown together economically, politically, and socially. If India's economic growth produces bridging ties, one should not expect a major resurgence of riots. If, on the other hand, economic development forges only bonding ties—that is, ties within the respective religious communities, not across religious boundaries—the constraining effects of bridging will not be felt.

It is the third factor, Modi's political strategy, that may turn out to have the greatest significance. In India, law and order falls under the purview of state governments, which are primarily responsible for riot control. Yet the central government has constitutional powers that al-

low it to intervene in states. For example, if a state government has failed to maintain law and order, Delhi can suspend that government and directly take command of the state's policing and internal-security functions.

Ultimately, stemming Hindu-Muslim unrest will be in Modi's hands—the tenacity and resolution with which he wields the power of the state to combat local-level political strategies will determine how far communal violence goes.

If major Hindu-Muslim rioting does return, it will hurt Modi in two ways. First, it will make it harder for him to keep his promise of restoring economic growth to India, which was one of his main campaign themes. Modi is known for advocating an investment-driven model of growth, and massive riots would seriously damage prospects for both private investment and growth. Second, over the last several years, Modi has been striving to put the 2002 riots squarely behind him and to forge a new political identity based on a record of good governance. If riots spread and he is unable to control

them, this strategy will come to naught and all the accusations, images, and politics of 2002 will resurface. Not only would Muslims continue to shun him, but many Hindus who gave him their votes based on promises of good governance and economic growth, not on Hindu nationalism, would also desert him. Surveys show that every fourth voter for the BJP voted not for the party, but for Modi.¹⁴ Moreover, his newly acquired international standing, which has taken a long time to build, would also suffer.

Given all this, Modi will likely be opposed to the instrumental use of riots in politics—by the BJP or any other party. Yet Hindu-nationalist cadres, including some lower-level BJP leaders, might not be so opposed to stoking communal fires for political gain. Nor is there any guarantee that other, non-BJP political players who stand to benefit from violence would attempt to keep the peace. Ultimately, stemming Hindu-Muslim unrest will be in Modi's hands—the tenacity and resolution with which he wields the power of the state to combat local-level political strategies will determine how far communal violence goes. In my view, we should expect small disturbances but not big conflagrations, certainly nothing like the 2002 riots in Gujarat.

Modi's rise to power is a momentous event that is full of possibilities. On the whole, the prime minister faces two great challenges: fostering economic development and ensuring communal harmony. With regard to the latter, the ideological proclivities of his party are in direct conflict with the political and constitutional realities of India. Given this clash, Modi's leadership will play a decisive role in how India evolves in the near future. The likelihood is that moderation will prevail. Communal discord might occasionally arise, but in all probability, large-scale com-

munal riots will not return. If they do, the health of Indian democracy will undoubtedly deteriorate.

NOTES

1. All election statistics in this articles are based on Lokniti's National Election Studies (NES) 2014. Some of these were reported in a series of articles by NES participants in the newspaper *The Hindu*, 22 May–25 June 2014.

2. The INC itself has been in a coalition since 2004.

3. In 1977, the victorious Janata, though formally a political party, was for all practical purposes a ragtag coalition of parties, hastily brought together after emergency rule was lifted, jailed opposition leaders were freed, and elections announced.

4. This figure comes from the 2001 census; the 2011 census data on religion have not yet been released.

5. V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva*, 6th ed. (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1989), title page and 110–13.

6. In 1999, Graham Staines and his two sons were killed in the state of Odisha, allegedly on grounds of converting tribal peoples to Christianity.

7. Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, originally published in 1939. For Golwalkar, Muslims were one of the “foreign races.”

8. Quoted in Prashant Jha, “BJP Win Blow to Muslim Politics: Singhal,” *Hindustan Times*, 17 July 2014.

9. For a variety of reasons, statistical exactitude is virtually impossible on how Muslims are distributed across India's electoral constituencies. These estimates were first presented in Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). These figures are pre-2009 estimates. Constituencies were redrawn in 2009, but no election specialist argues that the overall distribution is significantly different.

10. All citations in this paragraph are from Bharatiya Janata Party, *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*, Election Manifesto 2014, 26 March 2014, available at www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2014/full_manifesto_english_07.04.2014.pdf.

11. Except for a couple of lines in a speech in Parliament, which I have analyzed in “Modi's Ambivalence,” *Indian Express*, 28 June 2014.

12. Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

13. Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*.

14. Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma, “It Is Modi, Not BJP That Won This Election,” *The Hindu*, 1 June 2014.