

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Master Thesis**

**BJP IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A MULTIPLE  
TIME ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGY IN TERMS  
OF POPULISM AND NATIONALISM**

**AHMAD SABBIR**

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

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by

**AHMAD SABBIR**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Political Science and International Relations**

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

APPROVAL PAGE

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## ABSTRACT

### BJP IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A MULTIPLE TIME ANALYSIS OF IDEOLOGY IN TERMS OF POPULISM AND NATIONALISM

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MA in Political Science and International Relations

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The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) of India has achieved unprecedented electoral success in its last two terms, resulting in two consecutive wins with a large majority. This success, both in national and local elections, is often credited to their successful use of social media in mobilizing people on their behalf. For this reason, the national election in 2014 and subsequent local election at the federal level was termed the first “social media election” in India. There is an effort to see and connect the BJP’s use of social media and its success with the global rise of populism and their inclination to use alternative media. On the other hand, most of the literature previously produced regarding the BJP considered the BJP as a nationalist or right-wing nationalist political party. This study attempts to analyze the BJP’s social media articulation and decide if they are nationalist or populist. To do this, different timeframes are observed, as well as if it creates any variation or stability in the BJP’s articulation in terms of its ideological position. The research shows that most of the fluctuation is related with shorter layer of time, while there is a stability in their imagination of longer time.

**Keywords:** populism, nationalism, BJP, social media, multiple time,

## ÖZ

### SOSYAL MEDYADA BJP: POPÜLİZM VE MİLLİYETÇİLİK AÇISINDAN İDEOLOJİNİN ÇOKLU ZAMAN ANALIZI

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Hindistan'daki BJP (Bharatiya Janata Partisi) son iki döneminde büyük bir çoğunlukla birlikte art arda iki galibiyetle sonuçlanan eşi görülmemiş bir seçim başarısına imza atmıştır. Bu başarı, hem yerel hem de ulusal seçimlerde, insanları kendi lehlerine harekete geçirirken sosyal medyayı çoğunlukla başarılı bir şekilde kullanmalarına bağlanmaktadır. Bu sebeple, 2014'teki ulusal seçim ve ardından yapılan federal düzeydeki yerel seçim Hindistan'daki ilk 'sosyal medya seçimi' olarak adlandırılmıştır. BJP'nin sosyal medya kullanımını ve bu başarısını popülizmin küresel yükselişi ve alternatif medyayı kullanma eğilimleri ile bağdaştırma ve görme çabası olmuştur. Öte yandan, daha önceden üretilmiş literatürün çoğu BJP'yi milliyetçi ya da milliyetçi-sağ parti olarak değerlendirmiştir. Bu çalışma BJP'nin sosyal medya üretimini analiz etmeyi ve milliyetçi mi yoksa popülist bir parti mi olduklarına karar vermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bunun için, farklı zaman dilimleri incelenmiş, aynı zamanda ideolojik pozisyonu açısından BJP'nin üretiminde herhangi bir değişime ya da istikrara yol açıp açmadığı incelenmiştir. Bu araştırma göstermiştir ki daha uzun zaman imgelemlerinde bir istikrar varken, dalgalanmaların çoğu daha kısa zaman dilimleriyle ilişkilidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** milliyetçilik, Halkçılık, BJP, Sosyal medya, Çoklu zaman

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BJP- Bharatiya Janata Party [ Indian's People's Party]

RSS- Rastriya Samaj Sevak Sangh [ National social Service organization]

VHP- Vishva Hindu Parishad [World Hindu Council]

BD- Bajrang Dal [ Party of Hindu God]

DT- Discourse Theory

CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis

NDA- National Democratic Alliance

HA- Hindu Army



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

There is a new surge of right-wing politics and rising populism worldwide, refuting the comfortable assumption of “end of history” and the idea that there is a gradual acceptance of liberal-democratic systems. On the contrary, the rise of populism across the world is promoting majoritarian will, which threatens minority rights and multicultural coexistence. Although populism is believed to be exceptional in Europe, and a minor current in other parts of the world, research shows that it is becoming mainstream and expanding. Chantal Mouffe articulates this aptly:

Democracies in the world are to finally take seriously the growth of right-wing populism. To be sure, such parties have already existed for some time, but they were considered marginal.... However, the increasing success of right-wing populist parties in most European countries and their increasing popular appeal makes it very difficult to maintain such a thesis. So instead of being seen as an exception, those parties are now presented as the main threat to our democratic institutions. (Mouffe 2005, 37)

In this new-found reality, there is a widespread attempt in academia to define the term populism in one line of discourse and characterize the populist politics of a certain group of a certain culture in another. In both cases we see diversity of opinion rather than consensus. The challenge of defining populism is partially due to the fact that the term has been used to describe political movements, parties, ideologies, and leaders across diverse geographical, historical, and ideological contexts.

Populism encapsulates various contexts: geographical, historical and cultural. One important definition of populism refers to it as an ideological entity, where populism is presented as a “thin” ideology. This definition is proposed by Cas Mudde (2004) in a series of his studies. Another important current of understanding is to define populism in terms of its structural features: dividing people into ‘us’ and ‘others’. Though this definition was originally proposed by Ernest Laclau (1985, 45), the same understanding is articulated by other scholars in different ways (de la Torre 2000, 4;

cited in Barr 2009), where they conceptualize it as a style of discourse. Populism, in their understanding, is seen as a “rhetoric that projects politics as a struggle between ordinary people and powerful elites. Apart from this, populism is also defined as a “political strategy which is intended to popular mobilization for electoral win or defeating power establishment.” (Ware 2002, Moffit & Torme 2014,)

Differences in the way that ‘populism’ is defined are also reflected in the way that different political projects that are detected as populist are characterized. For instances, the works of Cas Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012) on populism in West Europe associate populism with right-wing political parties, while in Latin America, populism is mostly associated with left-wing parties. Additionally, populism has been identified in different historical phases. For instance, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, populism was mostly associated with farmers’ movement in Russia and the US, while in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was mostly used to indicate the movement in Latin America. Recently, the world is experiencing the resurgence of populism on a global scale encompassing Europe, the US, Latin America and other places. More research has recently been published tracing this rise using different conceptual lenses. However, due to the unprecedented rise in populism, conceptualizing the term and grasping a specific political project has become more complicated. (Roberts 2010, Taggart 2000, 2007, Levitsky and Roberts 2011, Rosenthal and Trost 2012, Jagers and Walgrave 2013)

More importantly, this debate and difficulties in conceptualization are not only confined to populism. Rather, a fresh debate has surfaced in regard to the distinction between populism and nationalism. In this debate, Yannis Stavrakakis et al. (2017) take a strong conceptual position against the tendency to incorporate all extreme right-wing parties into the fold of populism. They rather argue to make a necessary differentiation between populism and nationalism and claim that European right-wing parties, which have been so far termed as right-wing populist, are actually mostly extreme right-wing nationalist:

After surveying, from a discourse-theoretical point of view, parties that are categorized – usually by default – as right or extreme right-wing populist, we can revisit the reified association between the extreme right and the ‘populist’ designation. We can thus firstly claim that contemporary research needs to acknowledge the priority of

nationalist and xenophobic, anti-immigrant and more generally exclusivist elements in the discourse of these parties. In this sense, Wodak is correct when she stresses ‘the overtly nationalistic orientation of such movements’ (2014) and their ‘exclusionary agenda’ (2015, p. 2); something also registered in recent attempts to distinguish inclusionary from exclusionary types of populism within mainstream political science (see Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Here a perspective focusing on discursive architectonics as well as on the intricacies of signification can reinforce the conclusions of such orientations offering them an additional grounding (Stavrakakis et al. 2017, 307)

What is agreed upon is that populism [or, nationalism] is confrontational, transforming rapidly, with some cultural specificities and is in many cases context bounded (Arter 2010, 490). Despite these differences, one significant common reality is that social media platforms play an increasing role in populism (Erns et al. 2017, 02). In fact, use of social media helps them to challenge existing parties and methods in an innovative way that was unthinkable a decade ago (Bartlett 2014, 99). This is because social media allows right-wing parties and leaders to access audiences directly while avoiding the formalities of mass media. Thus, social media gives populists the opportunity to disseminate their messages with more freedom without having to face the rules and limitations of the more-developed legal accountability involved in printed and visual mass media. (Bartlett 2014, 105). Right-wing parties are quicker than their political opponents to spot the opportunities that this new medium presents them, allowing them to connect directly with a large number of voters and interactively overcome the hurdles presented by conventional media platforms.

Taking all this complexities regarding populism into consideration, it is quite striking how little has been written to analyze the populism of the Bharatiya Janata party of India (BJP) (Macdonnel 2017, 04). Though the BJP’s outstanding presence in social media has started to attract the attention of the researchers, impoverishment is more acute as far as analysis of discourse is concerned. This study will focus on the BJP and its social media discourse in terms of populism and nationalism through a multidimensional analysis. In this analysis, the study will attempt to incorporate multiple temporal and spatial features related to the BJP and its leaders to grasp the complexities of political, historical and virtual realities.

## **1.2. Statement of The Thesis:**

In political campaigns, the use of social media platforms by politicians and parties is gradually increasing. The BJP, the current ruling party in India, is one clear example of a party successfully using social media in propagating an electoral message (Kapoor & Dwivedi 2015). Due to their extensive use of social media and subsequent success having single party majority for the first time in Indian electoral history, the general election of 2014 is being called India's first social media election (Ali 2014). This reality reveals the need to analyze the BJP's presence in the online social networks and identify their propaganda and strategies not only in addressing needs, but also in re-manufacturing recent and historical events to shape the mind of the masses and reconstruct its memory on many levels.

In the existing literature, there is some debate which attempts to clarify the BJP's ideological position. Although most of the literature frames it within the right-wing nationalist block, the features and extent of their right-wing position is again debated. Variations range from radical Hindu nationalism, to far-right extremism, to soft Indian nationalism placing the BJP in a center-right position. Some recent additions to the literature, though few in number, identify the BJP as a populist party. This diversity in thought is understandable if we take India's population (both in numbers and diversity) into account, as well as the BJP's success to manage this population to gain electoral support. Explaining the different ways that the literature identifies BJP's ideological stance inevitably becomes more complex when social media is taken into account due to the scope of fragmented and seemingly decontextualized ways of representation. (Engesser 2017, Gounari 2018, 213).

With the complexities of identifying the BJP's ideological position and the importance of analyzing its discursive representation in social media due to its unprecedented success in electoral politics, this paper devises a research plan that can interpret the BJP's ideological position in social media while taking the possibility of fluctuation or dynamic nature of their discursive representation into account. This thesis attempts to ground the discourse of the BJP in its geographical and cultural context and bring into analysis the factor of time in its short term "contemporality", as well as its



historical dimension to show how events were used to re-construct events and history to serve the targets of selected candidates.

### **1.3. Research Questions:**

Main Question:

1. How can the discourse of the BJP be characterized in terms of populism and nationalism on social media through using multiple time analysis to understand the political campaigns?

Other Questions:

1. How can different imagination of time explain the variation or contradiction in the ideological position of leaders?
2. Is there any stable ideological position reflected in a certain layer of time where consensus appears across geographical backgrounds of candidates?
3. Is there any difference in the representation between populism and nationalism?

### **1.4. Social Media, Facebook and India**

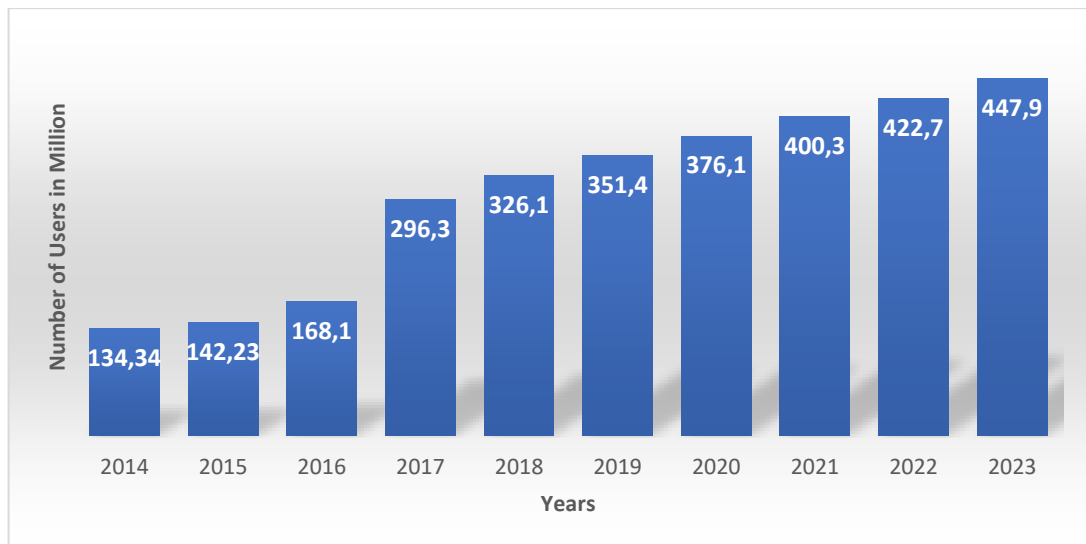
As previously discussed, the BJP has a large and active social media presence. In fact, according to the statistics by ‘Social Bakers’<sup>1</sup>, among the 20 most popular pages in India, more than ten pages are run by the BJP as an organization or by its leaders.<sup>2</sup> Another important feature regarding the impact and usage of social media is that its use is increasing in Indian society. According to a report by ‘Statistica’, India has the fastest-growing social media usage of any country<sup>3</sup>. Along with that, it is important to note that India is one of the major countries with a large youth population. It is also clear that social media is mostly used by the youth population and the BJP had huge success in mobilizing young voters in their favor through their activism in the virtual world.

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<sup>1</sup> A prominent research institute on virtual world

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/india/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278407/number-of-social-network-users-in-india/>



**Chart1.1. : Number of social network users in India from 2014 to 2023 (in millions)<sup>4</sup>**

But it might be reasonably asked why a focus is placed on Facebook rather than several other social media platforms, especially because the literature on European cases mostly focuses on Twitter. Simply, Facebook is far more popular in India than any other social media platform. In fact, among the seven most-popular social media platforms in the world, Twitter is the least popular platform in India. One of the causes of this might be Twitter's word restriction and relatively its target of global audience while Indian politicians are more focused on national audiences. In fact, Facebook's lack of a word limit helps research concerning political motives, since leaders can express themselves more freely, which allows researchers to gain a clearer understanding of their unhindered articulations.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/284436/india-social-network-penetration/>

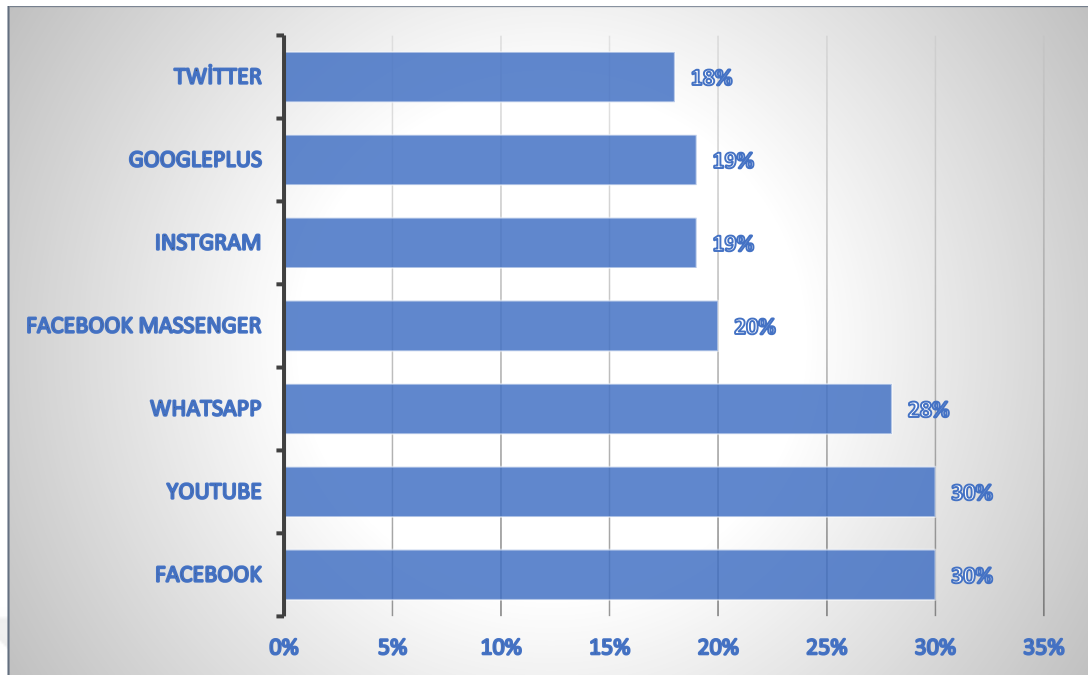


Chart 1.2. : Penetration of leading social networks in India as of 3rd quarter 2017<sup>5</sup>

### 1.5. Data Collection and Arrangement

In this study, to understand the BJP's social media presence, data is extracted from the page of the ten most popular leaders of the BJP on Facebook. For the purpose of this study, popularity is measured based on the number of followers. The ten leaders are as follows:

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Norendro Modi      | Prime minister                             |
| 2. Amit Shah          | President of the BJP                       |
| 3. Raj Nath Singh     | Interior minister, ex-president of the BJP |
| 4. Devendra Fadnavis  | Chief Minister, Maharashtra                |
| 5. Sarbananda Sarowal | Chief Minister, Assam                      |
| 6. Yogi Adityanath    | Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh              |
| 7. Devendra Fadnavis  | Chief Minister, Maharashtra                |
| 8. T. Raja Singh      | MP, Telangana                              |
| 9. Vinay Katyar       | MP, Uttar Pradesh, Rajya Sabha             |
| 10. Sangeet Sham      | MLA, Uttar Pradesh                         |

Two periods of data will be analyzed: the four months from January to April 2014 and the six months from July to December 2017. These periods were chosen to cover

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/284436/india-social-network-penetration/>

both national and local elections that took place during these two periods, respectively.

To extract data from the Facebook pages of the the BJP leaders mentioned above, a software called 'Netvizz' is used. It facilitates the extraction of data from Facebook groups and pages. Data will be collected on the five issues that are significantly highlighted in real time both nationally and locally in India. The issues are as follows:

- 1. Issues of development and good governance**
- 2. Celebrating historical personalities and national events**
- 3. Vision of managing India as a state and its key institutions**
- 4. Vision of managing diversity: Discrimination and communalism**
- 5. Discourse regarding the relation between secularism and religion**

#### **1.6. Objective and Limitation:**

The primary goal of this study is to figure out the ideological representation of the BJP in social media. There are extensive works of literature with diverse opinions on the question of the nature of the BJP's political ideology. However, how these ideologies reflect themselves in social media platform has not been studied adequately, despite the existence of a myriad of works concerning BJP's presence on and utilization of social media platforms. Within this scope of research, populism and nationalism of the BJP as two broad ideological categories are the locus of the current study.

But to state the limitation of this research, first of all, our analysis is restricted within Facebook while the BJP's presence encompasses many other platforms. Additionally, the analysis will cover only ten leaders who are most popular among the BJP leaders. Since India is a large country of many regions with different cultures and contexts, these ten individuals may not accurately represent the BJP and their social media activities. However, it is also important to know that despite the BJP's wide presence in other platforms, Facebook is the most popular social media platform in India. So, using Facebook in the study, rather than any other social network site, is quite justifiable. In terms of choosing the leaders from which to extract data, the study's interest is to identify the BJP's ideological position in relation to its ability to gain popular support, rather than the BJP's representative position within the virtual world. In accordance with this goal, the leaders were selected based on their popularity in

social media. Therefore, the selection of the leaders is again consistent with the goal of this research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### INITIATION WITH THE BJP AND ITS LEADERS

#### **2.1. Literature Review: The BJP as a Political Party**

To understand the discourse of the BJP in social media, this study intends to locate itself into two types of literature.

1. The BJP's ideology and politics
2. The BJP and social media

##### **2.1.1. The BJP's Ideology and Politics**

In this section, we will focus on literature that deals with the BJP's politics based on its ideological connection. This literature can be divided into two major categories, the BJP and Hindu nationalism, and the BJP and populism.

##### **A) The BJP and Hindu Nationalism**

There is an ample volume of literature concerning Hindu nationalism and the BJP's connection with it. Hindu nationalism is often connected with Hindutva ideology that is built upon the notion of Hindu identity, culture and tradition, as well as their prioritization over any other identity marker (Bhat 2000, 67). According to Vinod Savarkar (1923, 23), one of the founding ideologues of Hindutva ideology, Hinduness, includes three elements: Hindu lineage or one born of Hindu parents, one who regards India as his or her motherland and considers it as sacred, and one who believes in Hindu culture and civilization. So, Hindutva ideology considers the Indian nation (*Hindu Rastra*) as a very ancient entity that existed since antiquity rather than a mere geographic entity formed after the end of British colonization. Hindu nationalism based on this doctrine includes all Indian originated religion such as Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, but excludes Islam and Christianity from its fold (Sharma 2002). This brand of nationalism had been turned into a movement that has expanded its roots in Indian society through several volunteer organizations, namely RSS (*Rastriya somaj*

*Sangha*), VHP (*Bhishya Hindu Parishad*), etc. (Gopal 1997 232, Jaffelot 2010 124). These organizations adhere to a far-right position, which stresses the need and

rights of homogenized majority and uses the Hindu religious symbols and myths to demonstrate cultural supremacy, ignoring and even ostracizing non-Hindu local beliefs and religious streams (Banrjee 2005, 34). Due to all these traits in idea and practice, this Hindu nationalism based on Hindutva ideology is opined by many as ethnic nationalism with an exclusionary nature (Jeffrelot 1996, Krishna 2011).

The BJP's connection with Hindu nationalism is postulated from two aspects: one, its connection with Hindu nationalist movements and their political frontiers; two, the BJP's vision and activities as a political party. The BJP is claimed to have evolved from its political predecessors, namely the *Janasangh*<sup>6</sup> and *Janata party*<sup>7</sup>, which were manifestly the political extensions of RSS and VHP (Jaffrelot 2007, Corbridge 1999). Many of the key leaders of the BJP, including its founders, were members of *Sangh Parivar*<sup>8</sup>. Based on this connection at the party and individual level, the BJP is described as an adherent of Hindu nationalism (Jafrelot 2007, 233, Corbidge 1999, 123).

On the other hand, literature regarding the BJP's vision and activities as a political party analyzed the BJP's role in various defining moments of its history. Several studies connected the BJP's rise to power, for the first time in 1991, with its blatant showoff and exploitation of the Hindu nationalist card (Jaffrelot 1999; Bhatt 2001; Austin and Jon 1993; Corbridge and Harris 2006). Similarly, Chris Ogden (2006) studied the BJP's regime in the period between 1998 and 2004 and reflected upon its impact on the Indian state. He argued that through the effort of implementing the ideological core of Hindutva, the BJP precipitated profound changes in the nature and functioning of Indian domestic politics during and after that period. Some other studies

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<sup>6</sup> Jan Sangh, a political party, existed from 1951 to 1977

<sup>7</sup> Janata party- it is formed in 1977 merging with Jana Sangh and several other lefts, right and center parties

<sup>8</sup> The **Sangh Parivar** (RSS family) refers, as an umbrella term, to the collection of [Hindu nationalist](#) organizations by the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](#) (RSS) and remain affiliated to it.

looked at different periods of the BJP in and outside positions of power and its effect upon state structure. These studies concluded that the BJP tried to change state

institutions in favor of majoritarian rule replacing multi-ethnic, multicultural and liberal state machineries (Berglund 2004; Kim 2012; Kim 2017; vishvanath 2000).

According to these studies, the BJP's activities are overwhelmingly anchored in religion and nationalism, threatening the Indian secular constitution and other state institutions. They further contended that the BJP had accepted secularism in the state, but the BJP tried to define secularism in BJP's own terms. Its idea of secularism is understood as mono-culturalism or religious secularism, which claims to accept the coexistence of all cultures and religions while defining them collectively as Hindu. (Berglund 2004, 34; Corbridge 1999, 211). Similarly, there were studies that dealt with the BJP's divisive politics and its inclination to resort to communal hatred for electoral gain. These types of studies mostly focused on the BJP's programmatic policy of communalism against different minority groups, who were often Muslim, based on religious and cultural narratives and symbols (Engineer 1991, 2002; Ahmed 2002; Varshney and Gubler 2012; Ogden 2012). Though this type of literature focused on practical political activities on a grassroots level to show the BJP's racial politics, violence, and exclusion, these findings again basically confirms the BJP's Hindu nationalist orientation, since these communal and violent activities are deeply anchored in Hindu nationalist rhetoric.

It should be noted that there is some literature, though not voluminous, that projected the BJP as a center-right political party based on evidence from the beginning period of its journey, where it prioritized Muslims and other minority groups' representations in the frontline. This literature emphasized the BJP's divergence from many ideological positions of Hindutva supremacy and its prioritization of indigenous policy. It also focused on the BJP's adoption of neoliberal economic policy and acceptance of global modernity (Ali 2002; Avishek 2005). T. Hansen (2009) and C. Jaffrelot (2007) also agreed to an extent with this narrative but they restricted this within a time span. They argued that in the early 1980s, under the leadership



Vajpayee,<sup>9</sup> the BJP tried to manifest itself as a center-right party. But after its failure to succeed in electoral politics in the 1984 election, the BJP slid towards the extreme right under the leadership of Advani and continued to slide in that direction. This conclusion was summarized in the following way:

Evaluating the reasons for the dismal performance in the elections, where the BJP only won four seats, Vajpayee admitted the failure of his centrist politics of loyal opposition to Congress, his personal responsibility for this, and the deep crisis of the party.... From these intense and protracted deliberations over strategy and organization emerged a set of new compromises between the contradictory pulls and compulsions within the *Sangh paribhar*<sup>10</sup>. On internal matters, decisive concessions were given to a more “purist” line emphasizing the BJP’s profile as the defender of “Hindu society,” in order to win back the support of the local RSS cadres. (Hansen 2009, 45)

the various explanations of the BJP’s ideology in the above literature accepted the BJP as a right-wing nationalist party, despite some debate over the extent and nature of its right-wing nationalist position. However, there is one recently-developed literature that attempted to associate the BJP’s politics with populism. This will be examined in the following section.

### **B.) The BJP and Populism:**

Literature that identified the BJP as a right-wing populist party tried to locate BJP’s recent trajectory within the global trend of rising authoritarian populism (Macdonnel & Cabrera 2018; Gudavarthy 2018). Macdonnel and Cabrera (2018) established the politics of the BJP as populist through interviews with various politicians of the BJP across the country. According to the study, BJP leadership propagates the ideology of nationalism which is very thin, and it thinks in terms of “us”, “elite” and “other” having the ideational and structural features of populism within the party. Moreover, leaders of the BJP defined ‘us’ as common Hindu people and ‘elites’ as left-liberals and the pro-secular intellectuals of India. In the category of ‘other’, they mostly define Muslims, but in some cases they include Dalit and Christians communities as well. This article also acknowledged the scope of further research to understand the nature

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<sup>9</sup> Three times prime minister of India and first president of BJP

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 8

and different features of the BJP's populism both comparatively and intrinsically. Ajay Gudavarthy (2018) focused on understanding the current Modi rule in India and defined it as right-wing authoritarian populism. According to him, the BJP under Modi is trying to destroy all liberal democratic institutions and develop majoritarian rule

through playing 'us vs. other' politics. Apart from defining the BJP as right-wing populist, these two studies contended that exclusionary nationalism is part of its right-wing populism.

One of the problem with this literature is that it does not consider any conceptual differences between nationalism and populism. This is the overall tendency of the literature that dealt with populism (Starvakasis 2004, 15). Despite the advancement in the conceptualization of populism to a more precise definition, which allows us to avoid the reduction of populism to nationalism, linking it with ultra-nationalism has become the common convention in this type of study (Stavrakasis 2013). This combination leads to confusion and hampers our clear understanding regarding populism and nationalism as two distinct political projects. Working upon the conceptual distinction, Cleen & Stavrakasis (2017) built a theoretical framework that can help tackle this confusion. Using this framework, an empirical study can distinguish between populist and nationalist discourse and how they are combined in politics; this framework will be discussed in the next chapter. However, it is also necessary to study the literature regarding social media and the BJP and its ideological presence in the platform before discussing the framework.

### **2.1.2. BJP and Social Media**

A significant portion of the growing literature regarding BJP's social media presence focused on the impact of social media on the electoral gain of BJP (Wani & Alone 2014; Narasimhamurthy 2015). Another portion of it showed the gradual increase of social media use among the political leaders of India where BJP leaders were found in the forefront. (Rajput 2014; Chopra 2014).

Additionally, there is some discussion on the content and strategy of BJP in social media that yielded them success in the elections. Paula Chakraborty and Sri Rupa Roy

(2015) described the success of Modi in the national elections of 2014 as due to the strategy of using both conventional and social media platforms to propagate BJP's populism. Kapoor, K. & Dwivedi, Y. (2015) showed how the use of populist language in social media and unmediated communication with its support base helped Modi to become very popular. In a similar fashion, Subir Sinha (2017) showed how social media has generated a new competing model for establishing oneself as a political leader. He further reflected on Modi's strategy on social media, which yielded him with unprecedented popularity and encouraged others to follow suit in the same quest.

Although these studies regarding social media and the BJP stressed the populist rhetoric of Modi and BJP, they did not establish this claim based on any discursive analysis of their social media content. More importantly, all the literature discussed above analyzed the BJP's discourse in a unilineal manner without consideration to temporal or spatial factors explaining variation, contradiction or consistency in their ideological positions. The first type of literature dealing with the ideological manifestation of the BJP reflected the scope to figure out the possibility of dynamic reality in the BJP's action and articulation. This scope to analyze the variation turns into a necessity when dealing with social media due to its inherent nature of the fragmented and decontextualized representation of reality (Fuch 2017, 134). So, to explore the meaning produced on this platform, it is not enough to analyze the text without taking multiple temporal and spacial factors into account. To do a multi-dimensional analysis dealing with dynamic reality, Reinhart Koselleck's imagery of "multiple layers of temporality" (Koselleck 1979) can be used as inspiration and will build a multiple temporal and spatial framework. Through this framework, this paper will try to understand the BJP's discursive representation in social media and determine the variation or constancy in their ideological stances.

## **2.2. Biographical and Spatial Features of The BJP Leaders**

Each person has his or her own history and biography containing different experiences, associations, upbringing and position. These personal histories and differing experiences may be reflected in a person's perception and promotion of ideology. As this paper examines the BJP's ideology through ten of its leaders, it is important to

know each leader's historical and biographical background to help understand his ideological stance and its similarities or differences with other leaders. In order to achieve this goal, the following specific biographical features will be considered and later, determined if they affect the ideological position in their articulation.

### **1. Socio-economic Condition of upbringing**

The condition of upbringing has an enormous impact on perceptions of reality. In this case, we will consider two upbringing conditions of these political leaders.

#### *Economic condition of the family<sup>11</sup>:*

We will consider the economic status of each politician's family when the politician was young. To measure economic condition, income will be split three categories. These categories are determined from the data of the national per capita income of India in the 1970s and 1980s, since all these leaders were brought up and seasoned within this time frame. In the 1970s and 1980s, the average per capita income was around 1500 dollars per month<sup>12</sup>. Based on that average per capita income, we can consider the families as the upper, middle and lower-income class. Our three income classes are as follows:

- Upper-income class: monthly income above 1500 dollars per month
- Middle-income class: monthly income of 1500 dollars
- Lower-income class: monthly income less than 1500 dollars

#### *Social Caste of the family:*

Indian society has been maintained historically with the hierarchy of the Hindu caste system. This caste system still heavily impacts the social, economic and political mobilization of an individual and thus forms his or her ideology. India has four large castes with innumerable sub-castes within that. The castes will be separated into the following three categories for analytical purposes

- High caste: the two upper castes, Brahmin and Rajput

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<sup>11</sup> Data collected from world Bank Data Source

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/india/gdp-per-capita>

- Mid-level caste: the Vaishya caste
- Lower caste: the lowest level of caste, 'Shudra and people of scheduled caste will be included.

## **2. Demographic Balance of The Constituency<sup>13</sup>:**

The demographic condition of a constituency represented by a politician is significant to him or her in terms of political success. Here, the demographic situation will be evaluated based on the politician's level of representation in party and politics. Each leader will be evaluated by the demographic makeup of their constituents (ie national leaders by the demographics of India, state leaders by the demographics of their state, and local leaders by their local demographics

## **3. Current and Previous Ideological Affiliation Outside The BJP**

Many leaders of BJP are seen to engage with other social, cultural or religious organizations apart from their association with BJP. This matters because many of those cultural or religious organizations often promote Hindutva ideology explicitly. Besides, it is also seen that those organizations are often involved in generating communal tension. They are also involved in the lynching that took place against Muslims and Dalits. Due to this, we will consider their affiliations or lack thereof with Hindutva organizations both in the present time and in their past activities. Based on the aforementioned three features, it is possible to build a table that will reflect the various ideological affiliation of the leaders and it is possible to analyze it from different perspectives. So the following are the characteristics of the leaders under consideration:

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<sup>13</sup> Data collected from National census 2011, India, <https://www.census2011.co.in/>

Table 2.1. Demographic feature of the constituency as well as social and economic background of the leaders

Name of the leader	Level of leadership	Demographic proportion of the constituency	Economic background	Social and cultural background
Narendra Modi	National- Prime Minister	Hindu-	Lower economic class	High social caste (Brahmin)
Amit Shah	National- president of the party	-	Upper Economic class	Mid-level social caste
RajaNath Singh	National- Ex president of BJP and Home minister	-	Upper Economic class	High social caste (Rajput)
Debendra Fadnavis	State (Chief Minister) (Maharashtra)	Hindu- 79%, Muslims- 11.00%, Scheduled caste-12.72%	Upper economic class	High social caste (Brahmin)
Yogi Adityanath	State (Uttar Pradesh)	Hindu-79.73% Muslims- 19.26%	Middle class	High social Caste (Rajput)
Sarbananda Sarowal	State ( Assam)	Hindu- 61%, Muslims- 34%	Middle class	Midlevel social caste
Raja Singh	Local(MLA) (Hyderabad) (Telengana)	Hindu-51.89% Muslims- 43.45%	Middle Class	High social caste (Rajput)
Vinoy Katyar	Local(Faizbad)	Hindu-93%, Muslims- 6.19%	Middle class	High social caste
Sangit sing som	Local(Sardhana Tehsil)	Hindu- 63%, Muslims-35%	Middle class	High-social caste
Dillip Ghosh	Local(Unnao)	Hindu- 87.89%, Muslims- 11.69%	Lower economic class	Lower caste (Scheduled caste)

Table 2.2: Ideological Affiliation of the Leaders.

Name of the leader	Affiliation		Nature of organization
	Past	Present	
Narendra Modi	Regional organizer of RSS(1979-85)		RSS-Hindutva ideology
Amit Shah	Student leader of RSS (1983-1987)		RSS-Hindutva ideology
RajaNath	Member of RSS	-	RSS- Hindutva ideology
Debendra Fadnavis		Executive member of RSS	RSS-Hindutva ideology
Yogi Adityanath	Founder of Hindu youth army(HUA)	head priest of the Gorarkhnath Temple,	HUA-, Militant Hindutva ideology, communal violence
Sarbananda Sarowal	President of All Assam student union(AASU)		AASU- Assamese nationalism
Raja Singh		President of Hindu army(HA) arranger of Rama devotee journey	HA- Hindu religious nationalism
Vinoy Katyar		Founder president of Bajrang Dal(BD), member of Vishva Hindu Parshad(VHW)	BD, VHW- militant Hindu nationalism, Hindutva ideology.
Sangit sing som	Member of Hindu Hriday Samrat(HSS), Mahathakur Sangharshveer (MS)		HHS, MS- Hindu religious organization
Dilip Ghosh	Principal of Maharaj Hindu Ashram(MHA)		MHA- Hindu religious educational institute.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

#### **3.1. Analytical Framework: Multiple Time and Spatial Features.**

For a multidimensional analysis, this study will create and use a multiple time and spatial framework that will give insight to the BJP's ideology and its variation with the change in temporal and spatial factors.

##### **3.1.1. Multiple Layers of Temporality and The Identification of Three Distinct Times**

###### **3.1.1.1. Conceptual Inspiration:**

In the effort to include multiple time and spatial analyses, inspiration is gathered from Reinhart Koselleck (1979) who developed the idea of multiple layers of temporality in conceptual history. Having an affinity for the discourse theory, which will be used as one of our methodological tools, Koselleck claimed that concept is never fixed in its meaning. Rather, it varies with ideology, time and culture. Understanding an interpretation or meaning occurs through encountered experience. Based on this idea, he questioned the concept of historical time which was previously mainly understood as chronological time. From the interpretation of different events and relationships, he argued that temporal perception always transcends natural or physical time as a universal standard. Rather than understanding time as solely chronological, the existence of multilayered temporality was proposed in the use of language and perception of political or social concepts. According to Koselleck, "every concept expressed in political or social language has its own internal temporal structure which is multilayered and transcends contemporary reality imagining present past and future in a certain way". (Koselleck 2004, 56). In his proposition of complex and interlocked temporality, he shows the possibility of the existence of various tracks of temporality through imagining three layers of time:

- 1) A layer of short-term distinct experiences that break the repetition of everyday life



- 2) A layer of mid-term temporality that contains the recurrent feature of daily life
- 3) A long-term temporal layer that transcends the experience of the current generation and works as a unit to measure current success and future goals.

Inspired by his imagery of multilayered time in the language of historical description, in the following section, three layers of time are imagined in the discursive presentation of the BJP's ideology. The ways in which ideology reflects in those temporal layers and whether biographical idiosyncrasies have any impact on that presentation will be examined.

### **3.1.1.2. Three Temporal Layers and Reflection of Ideology:**

In this multiple timeframe analysis of the BJP's discourse on Facebook, three temporal layers are determined in order to see the ideological reflection in those layers. The three layers of time are as follows:

#### **1. Political Time**

The layer of political time can be located in the party and its leaders' effort to win the election as well as in their vision of ruling the country for the given period. how the leaders evaluate their own party's different periods of the ruling, and how they assess their rival political party's performance both in local and central government can be seen as a reflection of political time. But the fundamental characteristics of this layer is the focus on the next ruling time: what they think and promise to do within this time. The following features, as for example, could be considered as reflections of political time:

- Highlighting and glorifying manifestos
- Highlighting groups, area or institutions as neglected and promising to fix it within the next ruling time
- Criticizing previous Governments and emphasizing upon their failure and incapacity and their plan to fix it within the next ruling period.
- Reflection of contemporary global political development

#### **2. Historical Time:**

In the historical temporality, a long temporal duration is imagined that goes beyond a certain ruling period as well as the experience of the current generation. In this

temporality, identity, culture or civilization is constructed connecting with the ancient past and envisioning a utopian future. In this process, they try to build their conception of original identity, culture, or civilization authentically. Reinhart Koselleck (1979, 86) termed this long-term temporal layer as normative time since it works as a standard to measure the existing situation. It will be determined if this kind of temporality exists in the leader's articulation and how ideology manifests there.

### **3. Virtual Time:**

This certain layer of time is imagined based on the theoretical positioning taken by Marshall McLuhan (1967). He coined the famous statement, "medium is the message," implying that the nature of the medium itself is more influential than the content that goes through it. This is also true for the virtual world. And importantly, the virtual world also contains its own temporal feature. There are several works that focused on the distinctiveness of this world in its conception and reflection of time. In one such case, Paul Virilio (2005, 117) showed that the virtual world generates acceleration of all reality. So, immediacy or instantaneousness is prioritized over any other concern. Similarly, Manuel Castell (2000) termed the virtual temporality as "timeless time", where the sequential order of phenomenon is broken down:

The culture of real virtuality associated with an electronically integrated multimedia system, as argued in chapter 5, contributes to the transformation of time in our society in two different forms: simultaneity and timelessness. On the one hand, instant information throughout the globe, mixed with live reporting from across the neighborhood, provides unprecedented temporal immediacy to social events and cultural expressions. (Castell 2000, 234)

In fact, the features of virtual time stated above takes distinct and more concrete forms in social media. Various studies (Fuch 2014; Dean 2005; Gounari, 2017) focused on the nature of political rhetoric in social media and showed how primacy of instantaneousness or breakdown of sequential order is reflected in this platform. From their discussions and findings, the following characteristics that reflect the nature of virtual time in social media can be outlined:

#### **A.) Instrumentalization or Operationalization:**

Christian Fuch (2017, 134) argued that language in social media is decontextualized and fragmented. It closes the discourse of universe and restricts it only within his or

her constructed reality. It does not allow its reality to engage with any other alternative discourse. In fact, this instrumentalization is possibly due to the prioritization of immediacy or instantaneousness in social media over consistency or authenticity.

**B.) Commodification of Discourse:**

Panayota Gounari (2017), borrowing from Herbert Marcuse (1967), described social media as the product of the capitalist culture industry, which fundamentally follows capitalism's commodity logic. In consequence, social media reduces the human being to the consumer of advertisements and promotion of the product. This feature again can be connected with the preference of immediacy where discourse is regarded as a commodity and instant source of gratification.

**C.) Flashy and Pompousness:**

For advertisement purposes, the use of flashy and pompous words is the convention. It reflects colorfulness and creates a binary or simplified vision of reality while repressing complexities.

**D.) Discourse as Amusement:**

An additional layer of complexity is the fact that social media is marketed as entertainment – amusement that is accessible 24/7. This entertainment must fulfill the need for instant gratification without the necessity of any independent thinking. This feature of social media can be again connected with the malady of our capitalist, mechanized, consumerist societies, where involvement through constant distraction and callousness is interpreted as participation, agreement, and democratic opinion (Horkheimer & Adorno 1994, 136- 137). Panayota Gounari (2017, 214) described social media as a platform for a politics of inertia where every person believes that his or her networked contribution matters, though they only participate by agreeing with the trend. Jodi Dean (2005, 65) describes the situation as such:

“under conditions of intensive and extensive proliferation of media, conditions wherein everyone is presumed to be a producer as well as a consumer of content, messages get lost. They become mere contributions to the circulation of images, opinion, and information, to the billions of nuggets of information and affect trying to catch and hold attention, to push or sway opinion, taste, and trends in one direction rather than another”

### **E.) Dehistoricization and Decontextualization:**

An important aspect of the discourse produced in social media is the wiping out of historical context. While there is around-the-clock exposure, constant access, and immediacy (content is instantly and constantly available for receiving and circulating), the message is often decontextualized or dehistoricized. The context always focuses on the immediate moment, which essentially restricts broader interpretations, rigorous connections, and exploration of consequences.

### **3.1.2. Biographical and Spatial Features for Explaining Variation in Different Layers of Time**

The biographical and spatial features of the political leaders, which were discussed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, will be used to explain the variation of ideology in different layers of time. The factors that will be considered are mentioned below:

#### **Biographical Feature of The Political Leaders**

1. Economic condition of the family in early life
2. Social caste of the leaders
3. Current and previous ideological affiliation outside BJP

#### **Spatial Features Related with The Leaders**

1. Demographic balance of the constituency
2. Economic condition of the constituency
3. Party position of the leaders

### **3.2. Methodological Framework:**

For a suitable methodological framework, two relevant models will be combined: the discourse theory devised by Ernest Laclue & Mouffe (1985, 2001) and the critical discourse analysis by Norman Fairclough (1992). The following section will discuss both of these theoretical models, their differences, the potential of combining both methods, and the exact way of employing them in this research.

#### **3.2.1. Discourse Theory:**

The fundamental building block of discourse theory is its specific position regarding meaning. Meaning is produced through historical or social systems of relations

among different practices, objects, and being. Within these relations, the social agent is given a subject position to identify with that produces meaning. The crucial aspect of this theory is that the conception that all practices and objects are meaningful, but their meaning can never be permanently settled. There is an ongoing struggle among various competing discourses that define reality in a structurally different way. Consequentially, their claim of truth of a particular social or cultural aspect differs from one another. So, people's acceptance of meaning is contingent upon the interaction of those discourses that represent social practices and identity in a certain configured way. On the contrary, meaning is open to constant changes as identity and social practices can be represented in various ways through negotiation among those competing discourses.

The goal of discourse analysis, according to discourse theory, is not to uncover the truth, but rather to interpret existing structuration of reality through articulating and contesting various discursive practices naturally and neutrally. The underlying axiomatic feature of this goal is assuming a concrete system of social relation that is intrinsically antagonistic. So, all the constitution of social practices and the formation of institutions are considered as political. Due to this reason, social relation and practices are deemed as dependent upon a political frontier that draws upon insiders and outsiders. The power relations or exercise of power are in the center behind the contingency of the discourses. The historically excluded discourses from the inner structure always come as contesting forces to alter and reconfigure the meaning. In this way, discourse theory contends that all social practices and objects are ideological and reject the notion that ideology is one minor part of many types of social relation. They deny, for instance, the distinctions between political, economic and ideological practices; rather they integrate all of these into the fold of discourse.

### **3.2.1.1. Key Analytical Concepts:**

#### **A.) Discourse:**

Ernest Laclau & Chantal Moufée (1985) described discourse as an exercise of power to determine a web of meaning within a certain realm. The discourse is constituted by establishing certain meanings while excluding others through structuring signs in a

certain pattern. All signs in a discourse can be defined as *moments*. “They are the knots in the fishing-net, their meaning being fixed through their differences from one another (‘differential positions’)” (Philip & Jorgensen 2002, 56). Discourse can also be explained as a reduction of possibilities as some possible meanings are excluded. Both included and excluded meanings constitute the field of discursivity. According to Laclau and Mouffe: “Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursively, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a center (Laclau & Mouffe, [1985] 2001, 112).”

### **B.) Nodal Point:**

Nodal point can be described as a reference point or central signifier around which other signifiers are bound together. This can be termed as ‘Points the caption’ (Lacan 1977). The web of meaning in a discourse surrounds this nodal point through the relationship of other signifiers to the nodal point. But the nodal point, termed as an empty signifier, itself does not take any specific meaning due to the absence of any signified counterpart of it. The meaning of a nodal point is achieved through its relative positioning with other signifiers.

### **C.) Articulation, Elements and Moment**

“Articulation” can be defined as the practice that establishes certain relations among elements as much as the identity of different elements is modified through this articulatory practice. An articulation relation between a nodal point and other signifiers is structured establishing a certain discourse as a totality. Articulation generates a temporary break, termed as “closure”, in the constant alteration of meaning. “Element” is defined as a sign that has multiple competing meanings, and accepted meaning is not settled yet in the system of discourse. When this meaning is ascertained by a discourse, it is called a “moment”. Criteria of a moment are never completely achieved as the closure is not ever permanent (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, 110).

### **C.) Floating Signifiers:**

Elements which take different meanings in different contexts and different times across different relatively settled discourses are called floating signifiers. A nodal point may seem like a floating signifier because it does not have any specific meaning. However, according to Philip & Jorgenson (2002, 78), the nodal point is a crystallized

position within a certain discourse while floating signifier refer to the struggle of settling the meaning of signifiers among the discourses.

#### **D.) Logic of Equivalence and Logic of Difference:**

“Logic of equivalence” generates the social imaginaries that construct social antagonism. It plays a key role in shaping identity, splitting the system of differences among various social groups and incorporating them into a common identity. In this way, two different political frontiers are formulated and two discursive systems are imagined, accepting one and negating the other. On the other hand, “logic of difference” is the conceptual other of “logic of equivalence.” According to Jergensen & Philip (2002, 62), “logic of difference” functions through breaking down the existing chain of equivalence and integrating those dissolved elements into a widening order. Benjameen De Cleen & Yanis Stavrakakis (2017, 312) explain these two concepts, “whereas a project employing the logic of equivalence seeks to divide social space by condensing meanings around two antagonistic poles, a project employing a logic of difference attempts to weaken and displace a sharp antagonistic polarity, endeavoring to relegate that division to the margins of society.”

#### **3.2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis and The Differences with The Discourse Theory**

Critical discourse analysis attempts to clarify the often vague relationship between discursive practices, text, and events within greater social or cultural systems. It attempts to determine how existing social and cultural systems produce a discourse and how that discourse shapes social and cultural structures. The fundamental paradigmatic difference between these two theories are that discourse theory considers reality as completely constituted and mediated by discourse, while critical discourse theory makes a distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices. Jeggerson & Phillip (2002, 45) identify five features of critical discourse analysis below:

1. On one hand, discourse constitutes social reality but on the other, it also gets constituted by having a dialectical relationship between social structures and discursive practices.
2. Though all social phenomena do not possess linguistic and discursive characteristics, the nature of many social and cultural structures is discursive.

According to this theory, discourse refers to not only written and spoken language but also visual image and still pictures.

3. Followers of critical discourse analysis engage in systematic empirical studies of language use, while followers of discourse theory do not carry out concrete linguistic textual analysis.
4. A fundamental goal of critical discourse analysis is to unleash how ideology creates and reproduces unequal power relations. According to this theory, discourse is ideological.
5. Critical discourse analysis considers discourse historical. It claims that discourse cannot be fully grasped without taking historical and social context into account.

### **3.2.3. Framework and Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis:**

Norman Fairclough (1993) devised a framework for a text-oriented critical discourse analysis dependent on three components: description, interpretation, and explanation. This framework is consistent with the CDA's emphasis on systematically analyzing written or spoken language. To integrate these three analytical components, his framework includes three functional features that can connect the micro-level data of textual articulation to macro-level social practice. The three-dimensional frameworks are as follows:

1. Text: This includes both written and spoken words. Here, the text structure, use of certain word, cohesion, and even grammar is carefully examined.
2. Discursive practices: These are the processes through which text is produced and consumed. This framework examines how different texts and discourses are interconnected.” Because of that, intertextuality and inter-discursivity, which will be analyzed later, are two important concepts in CDA.
3. Social practice: These are the organizational and institutional structures of discursive events and the effects of discourse.

These three factors are relevant for the three components of analysis because the text is used for describing linguistic properties. Through this framework the relationship between textual properties and broader discursive practices is interpreted and the explanation is used to figure out the connection between discursive practice and social



practice. Apart from these frameworks, two other concepts are crucial for the successful implementation of critical discourse analysis:

**Intertextuality:**

According to Jergensen (2017), “intertextuality refers to the condition whereby all communicative events draw on earlier events.” This term was first used by Julia Kristeva (1986, 89) and it implies an injection of history and society into text and concurrently, text impacts history and society. Intertextuality shows how previously accentuated words or language can be rearticulated, referred to, or responded to in justifying or refuting some points. Intertextuality can take place in different ways, including by mentioning a topic, an actor, or a word in a continuous way. Citing another text explicitly is another form of intertextuality called “manifest intertextuality” (Fairclough,1992b). Due to the presence of intertextuality, one of the aims of CDA is to search the ways in which language and different semantic signs are used by individuals or groups to construct or question social roles, behaviors, or meaning.

**Interdiscursivity:**

Interdiscursivity refers to a situation when different discourses are articulated together. It can be explained as follows: “The use of elements in one discourse and social practice which carry institutional and social meanings from other discourses and social practices (Candlin and Maley,1997: 212). Inter-discursive practices are when different discourses intermingle in creative and complex ways to produce new practices of articulation. This articulation might be inside or outside of the border of discourses where the producer may articulate it consciously or unconsciously.

Interdiscursivity is considered a sign of change in discursive and socio-cultural practices, while the use of discourses in an existing way is a sign of stability. (Philip& Jargensen 2002). Discursive reproduction and changes in wider socio-cultural practices can be investigated by looking for the connection between discourses inside and outside the existing boundary of discursive practices (Fairclough 1995b, 56).

Both intertextuality and interdiscursivity may play a role in challenging the status quo if they are reproduced innovatively and dynamically. Or, they can help sustain existing socio-cultural structures if they are used in a conventional way.

#### **3.2.4. Possibility of Combining Two Approaches:**

Before attempting to marry concepts from Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory (DT), a fundamental paradigmatic difference should be acknowledged between DT and CDA. The main difference is that CDA assumes there is a contrast between discursive reality and social reality while DT interprets reality as fully mediated and constituted by discourse. Despite this difference, both of the approaches consider discourses or social practices as subject to change and therefore contingent in nature. Due to this agreement it is possible to use both methodological tools interchangeably and in the same content for analyzing different dynamics of social and cultural system. This position is also held by Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1992, 45).

In fact, the concept of articulation eradicates the distinctions between the three dimensions of CDA: text, discursive practices, and social practices. It collects together the shifting elements of the social and turns them into moments achieving relative stability in the meaning. Furthermore, articulation transforms the meaning of moments by combining them in a different way. How this articulation transforms meaning and creates new "moments" or a certain combination of "moments" can be figured out through intertextual or inter-discursive analysis.

On the other hand, equivalence/difference produces relative stability in discourse through arranging the structure of connection of different signifiers in an intertextual chain. But as Laclau & Mouffe (1985, 48) show, no discourse can determine the web of meaning in an absolute way. The field of discursivity enables the multiplicity of conflictual discourse in articulation, creating the possibility for a signifier to attain different meaning in different discourse. Similarly, the idea of nodal point as an empty signifier can take different meaning in different contexts. To find out this different connotation, intertextuality and interdiscursivity are two effective tools.

### **3.2.5. How Both Methods Would Be Used in This Study:**

Two of the major goals of this study are to distinguish nationalism from populism and identify the intricate connections between them. To accomplish this goal, discourse theory as discussed above is appropriate. Through discourse theory's framework, nationalism and populism are analyzed as linguistically constructed categories rather than preexisting socio-political categories. The assumption behind this is an ontological argument which, posits meaning in the center of the social world. Following this assumption, discourse theory will examine the underlying logic behind the development of these categories rather than a sociological way of understanding groups and its role.

The more practical reason for using a discourse theory framework to define nationalism and populism and their interconnection is that it provides a methodological basis for a conceptual distinction between them. As discourse theory defines social reality as discursive, it implies that discourses can be figured out by analytical distinctions between them. Apart from that, it introduces some other useful concepts that provide the tools to grasp the structuring of discourses. In this regard, articulation, which is discussed above, is the most significant concept. On the one hand, articulations are contingent relations with no necessary correspondence where pre-existing discursive elements are arranged in a certain way to produce meaning. On the contrary, through this new arrangement, articulations create moments and thus relative stability in the meaning. As a result, through analyzing articulatory practices, the interconnection between populism and nationalism and their relative position in a discourse can be determined. In this ambition, the concept of nodal point or point the caption (Lacan 1973) in an articulation is a crucial point to fix the meaning in a signifying chain.

However, the aim of this study is not only to figure out whether the discourses of the BJP in social media are populist, nationalist, or both but also to analyze other ideological content in the party such as new racism, xenophobia, and extremism and their impact on the nature of populism and nationalism. To this end, apart from analyzing the discourses in the text, it is important to locate them in the wider context of discursive and social practice. In this regard, Fairclough's three-dimensional

framework is suitable, as it explores the specificity of any discourses while distinguishing features in the text and wider socio-cultural representation.

Using these three-dimensional framework, it is also possible to compare and contrast the populism or nationalism of the BJP with those in other cultures. Using the two conceptual tools, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, would be crucial to attaining that aim. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity would give that option to determine the specific nature of a discourse.

### **3.3. Conceptual Framework:**

Since this paper focuses on ideology in general and populism and nationalism in particular, it is important to define these concepts and explain how we are going to use them in the analysis.

#### **3.3.1. Populism and Nationalism:**

I will use the definition of nationalism which is based on the discourse theory model rather than the definition based on the structural condition for the existence of a nation. Benjamin De Cleen & Yannis Stavrakakis (2017) define nationalism as “a discourse structured around the nodal point “nation,” envisaged as a limited and sovereign community that exists through time and is tied to a certain space, and that is constructed through an in/out opposition between the nation and its out-groups.” (Cleen & Stavrakakis 2017, 223)

This definition of nationalism focuses on the nodal point “nation,” around which the meaning of nationalism is structured. Using the word nation as nodal point changes the scope of the term “nationalism” from exclusionary to inclusionary, from banal nationalism to the existing form of nationalism or any other specific feature of it within a specific culture. It is also useful to think of nationalism in a spatial terms structured around “in vs. out” relations, where “in” refers to a member of a nation and “out” refers to a non-member of a nation.

However, this “in vs. out” distinction is not unique to nationalism; other ideological discourses are also built upon this distinction. In fact, a nation is imagined

distinguishing between one nation and other nations and between member and non-member of a nation. So, however inclusionary or exclusionary a nation-state may be, “nationhood” is built on the concept of considering other nations and non-members as constitutive of “the other.” Therefore, the distinction between the “in-group” and “out-group” in nationalism is horizontal, as it makes a distinction in the same flat line. That does not mean that nationalism does not operate in hierarchal terms, but that it is not the necessary condition.

This definition of populism is also based on discourse theoretical model and taken from Benjamin De Cleen & Yannis Stavrakakis (2017), but it differs from the latter work of Laclau (2005a, 2005b). Their definition is as follows:

Discourse of populism is built keeping the people in the center where dichotomy is constructed between people and elite in a vertical manner where elite is placed in an upper position and people is in down. So, the populist politics construct people as majority of powerless people who are being deprived of their legitimate rights and demands by the powerful elite while these rights and demand is portrayed as expression of people’s will (Cleen & Stavrakakis 2017, 224)

This discourse theory definition of populism emphasizes constructing the identity of people by depicting the elite as constitutive “other.” This definition is based on logic, which is termed by Laclau as “the populist reason.” where the focus is shifted from the content of populism to the structure of it. And in this structure, the signifier “the people” is kept as “point the caption” or “the nodal point” which can bring together different demands and identities through imagining a chain of equivalence. Additionally, this structure constructs an antagonistic dichotomy, considering elite as “other” from the people. But this dichotomy can be deemed in a spatial term: as down/up or vertical relations. In fact, the crucial and essential position of populism is that people are ordinary, the common man, a down group or underdog, while the elite are a ruling and powerful class. This vertical structure is one of the major elements that differentiates populism from other discourses and that also use people as nodal point but signify it differently.

Based on the above, we can clearly differentiate between nationalist and populist discourse using the discourse theory model. We can outline the differences in a table created by Benjamin De Cleen & Yannis Stavrakakis (2017, 324):

Table 3.1: Criteria for Nationalism and Populism

Formal Criteria	Nationalism	Populism
Nodal point of chain of equivalence and claim to represent	The nation and/or the people-as-nation	The people-as-underdog
Subject position offered	Citizen of "the nation"	Member of "the people"
Outside constitutive to creation of chain of equivalence/identity	Non-members and /or other nations	The elite/establishment
Orientation of relation between nodal point and constitutive outside(s)	Horizontal: in/out (membership or identity related to shared territory and time)	Vertical: down/up (hierarchy, power, recognition, incorporation, socioeconomic and/or sociocultural position)

### 3.3.2. Approaches in Nationalism and Populism: Inclusionary vs. Exclusionary Approach

Apart from defining nationalism and populism, it is also important to analyze the approaches these ideologies take. To consider this, we will divide two approaches: Inclusionary and exclusionary.

To define these two terms, we will use Dani Filc (2010). Filc defines the "inclusionary" as when groups are included materially, politically, and symbolically within an ideological boundary. Based on that definition of inclusionary and exclusionary approach we can define four other ideological positions:

- 1) **Inclusionary Populism:** When all marginal groups (economic and social) are included within the rhetoric of "common" or "ordinary" people.
- 2) **Exclusionary Populism:** When some marginal groups are portrayed as excessively privileged by political elites and are excluded from their rhetoric of common people.
- 3) **Inclusionary Nationalism:** When nationalism is based on the civic idea of citizenship rather than the ethnic or religious concept of citizenship, where, as outside constitutive, other nation state is considered. No groups based on religious or ethnic identity are considered as outside constitutive.
- 4) **Exclusionary Nationalism:** When religious, cultural, or ethnic nationalism is invoked and certain ethnic, religious, or cultural groups are identified as "other".

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYZING DISCOURSE TOPICS

#### **4.1. Discourse Topic 1: Managing The Economy**

Managing the economy in the short and long run is always a pressing issue for any political party. In fact, the global rise of right-wing politics is often explained as a partial product of economic discontent among large numbers of the population (Jackman & Volpert 1996, Arzheimer 2009, Golder 2003, Arzheimer & Carter 2006). In India, the economy has special significance, as the country is still undergoing rapid development<sup>14</sup> and additionally, the percentage of its population under the poverty line is the second largest in the world.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the middle class is expanding and inequity is rising. Since there is a great prospect, there is a great discontent. In this context, looking at how the BJP leaders express themselves in social media in relation to economic issues is a good place to begin analyzing their ideological position.

#### **4.1.1. Political Time: Development for Everyone**

The most ubiquitous elements expressed within social media by the BJP party on the issue of the economy is the reflection of the electoral manifesto. The elements of political time on the issue of economy in social media is the reflection of the electoral manifesto<sup>16</sup>. In the electoral manifesto of 2014, the BJP highlighted the issue of economic development and presented a vision of comprehensive progress for the country. In fact, development and good governance were the two most emphasized issues in the document (Ali 2016). In social media, this emphasis is explicitly manifested, exhibited by frequency they mentioned the slogan, chanting, and pictures connected with this discourse in their posts (Avishek 2015). The most common slogan they use in this regard is “with everyone and for everyone’s development.” Words

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/04/18/how-indias-economy-went-from-weak-to-fastest-growing-in-the-world.html>

<sup>15</sup> World poverty clock, URL: <https://worldpoverty.io/index.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://cdn.narendramodi.in/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Manifesto2014highlights.pdf>

like “everyone,” “all,” “every Indian,” and “all people” are used almost inseparably whenever they speak about this topic. But if we analyze what they mean by this inclusive word, it is found that they appeal to both populism and nationalism

#### **A.) Populism and Development: An Inclusionary Approach**

Instances of associating “everyone” with “common people,” “poor people,” or “ordinary people” was most commonly seen in this discourse topic on social media. “Common people” as a signifier includes various economic groups such as small traders, farmers, the poor, and other marginalized people. It also mentions different social caste like the Dalits who were treated as socially untouchable in traditional Hindu society (Wille 1979).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, their rhetoric tries to integrate different ethnic and religious groups such as tribal people, Sikhs, and Buddhist<sup>1</sup>. So, defining “everyone” with “ordinary” or “poor people” and including various identity groups shows the existence of inclusionary populism. The following posts reflect this rhetoric:

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<sup>17</sup> Willie, Charles Vert. *The caste and class controversy*. Bayside, NY: General Hall, 1979.



- P1. This country of development once again won. Thanks a lot to the people of the state for the grand victory in Uttar Pradesh elections. Many good wishes to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and all party workers. This victory will motivate us to work more towards the welfare of the people. **We will work “for everyone and for everyone’s development”** (Modi 2017).
- P2. Gujarat Government came to power due to the arrival of BJP Government. The Congress government of Gujarat was a symbol of corruption whereas BJP government is a symbol of transparency and development. **We want everyone’s development** (Amit Shah 2017).
- P3. Skill Development Plan, launched by Prime Minister for self-development and self-employment of the youth, is an important ambitious and potential scheme. Through the skill development campaign, the government is committed to fulfil its vision: **with everyone and for everyone’s development** (Adityanath 2017).
- P4. The establishment of this commission is an important step towards the empowerment of all sections of the socially and economically backward sections, which will further strengthen the campaign of Modi Government **with everyone and for "everyone's development"** (Katyar 2017).
- P5. **It is about giving India a strong stable & inclusive Government which will implement the development of everyone and only NDA can provide this.** (Modi 2014).

#### **Poor as Common People:**

- P6. Increasing **purchasing power of the common people** is very important. Once that happens the **earnings of our small traders** will be enhanced. Trust deficit between the Government & **people** must end (Modi 2014).
- P7. Congrats to Karyakartas of BJP Maharashtra CM Shri Devendra Fadnavis and State President Shri Rao Saheb Danve for splendid victory in Gram Panchayat polls in

Maharashtra. Victory in 50% Gram Panchayats is remarkable and an endorsement of BJP govt's **pro-poor & pro-farmer policies** under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi. The results clearly reflect **common man's** faith in BJP's **politics of development** that is empowering the **last man of the society** (Amit Shah 2014).

P8. Addressed four election meetings in Odisha today. Odisha is a state rich in mineral resources **but its people are forced to live in poverty. People are bound to suffer when rulers become corrupt.** During the 14-year BJD rule Odisha witnessed the huge mining scam involving Rs 60 000 crore while corruption in MGNREGA was to the tune of Rs 600 crore. If BJP comes to power, it will ensure that culprits in corruption cases are punished (Rajnath 2014).

P9. For **rich Congress leaders** politics is a hobby but for us it is a medium to serve society and common people. Congress misgovernance shows their concern for poor. India's coal resources should help **the people** but sadly it has filled the pockets of Congress leaders. Can you trust those who steal coal? **Son of king [opposition leader]** should tell us who are the magicians, who took land of **farmers & became rich overnight.** How is he related to **such people**? If there is an improvement in anyone's life, it's in lives of **Congress leaders & their families. Common people** have suffered in last decade (Modi 2014).

P10. **Akhilesh Yadav** has realized that he is going to lose the election, so he gave **Congress** 105 seats. On the one hand, parties are fighting among themselves for their personal gain, Modi Government is constantly working for the **betterment of the people** (Som 2016).

P11. Congress must come clean on serious allegations of undeclared foreign bank accounts of their Amritsar candidate & his family members. If Cong can't tell truth about their own former CM how can we trust them. The Govt. after 16th May will place everything in front of **nation.** We have given our lives for **India** & are determined to remove **India** from current mess (Modi 2014).

### **Economic Class as Part of People:**

P12. “We have immense confidence in the skills and strengths of **our middle class**. We do not want our **middle class** to face any burden and include them into our **development plan** (Modi 2017).

P13. We must ensure availability of proper financial resources for **our farmers**. If agriculture sector shines **the purchasing power** in our villages will increase & this will further **India s economic growth**. NDA will provide an agriculture friendly & farmer friendly government that will address every concern of **our farmers**. (Fadnavis 2014)

P14. Had a wonderful interaction with **traders** at the All India Traders Convention. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi was present on the occasion. We must come out of web of laws that are impeding **progress**. Spoke about the need to boost online trade instead of limiting it. Once that happens the earnings of our **small traders** will be enhanced. (Raj Nath 2014)

P15. After the Honorable Prime Minister's appeal, the reduction in interest rates by banks will not only benefit the economy of the country, but because of the low cost of housing vehicles and venture loans, it will prove to be a boon for poor middle class and middle class. The effort being made to connect the poor and the underprivileged to development is the result of the vision of Prime Minister Modi, for which I congratulate the Prime Minister towards the crores of BJP workers.(Amit Shah 2014)

### **Social and Cultural groups and Ordinary People:**

P16. During my visit to Kerala yesterday I met several people of the Dalit community at a programme organized by the KPMS. I recalled the contribution of saints & seers from the backward castes towards society & their efforts in eradicating untouchability. Assured the gathering that the coming decade will be a decade of the marginalized sections of society. NDA Government will work for their development. (Modi 2014)

P17. The overwhelming response at the rallies in Sangli Solapur & Latur clearly shows people are eager to uproot anti-people Congress-NCP. Cong-NCP is not bothered

about farmers & traders. When farmers ask for water what do their Ministers reply? And LBT has ruined traders. Congress leaders specialise in poverty tourism. With cameras they go to villages sit with the poor eat their food & get pictures clicked. From Tandoor Case to recent Latur Case Congress commitment to safety & dignity of women is evident. Nothing has changed in so many years When a Govt. is immersed in worshipping own family (Parivar Bhakti) instead of serving country ( *Desh Bhakti*) result is a weak Govt. in Delhi due to which every neighbour troubles us. NDA is committed to fulfilling Atal ji s dream of river linking so that Maharashtra s farmers don t have to suffer” (Amit Shah 2014)

P18. Addressed 2 rallies in Jharkhand. Appealed to the people to support BJP in all 14 seats of Jharkhand in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections. Recalled Atal ji’s commitment to development of Tribal communities. It was Atal ji who created a separate state of Jharkhand and it was Atal ji who created a separate ministry for development of tribal communities. (Raj Nath 2014)

### **Religious groups:**

P19. Punjab’s recent agriculture summit & Progressive Punjab summit to draw more investment shows Punjab Govts commitment to all-round growth. Farmers from Punjab have done excellent work in Kutch! Sadly, some **people** with vested interests are more interested in misleading the people. **No Sikh farmer will ever be asked to leave Kutch.** (Modi 2014)

In the above posts, two main identity framing characteristics can be highlighted. In almost all the posts, the phrases “people,” “ordinary people” or “common people” are used as nodal point of identity. Various other identity markers like “farmers,” “middle class,” “poor people,” and “marginalized people” are used as chain of equivalence of that nodal point. So, all these “elements” have turned into “moment” being associated with the meaning of ordinary people. Additionally, as an outside constitutive of that nodal point, various political parties, party chiefs, and ministers, who we can collectively dub “political elites,” are vehemently dismissed for corruption and a failure to provide “transparency,” “good governance.” and “inclusive development.” So, the political elite can be identified here as outside constitutive of the nodal point,

“common people.” Therefore, using ordinary people as the nodal point of identity and characterizing political elite as its outside of its constitutive reflects the populist way of presenting the discourse. Their rhetoric’s reflects an inclusionary approach when articulating populism.

### **B.) Populism and development: An exclusionary approach**

However, there are some instances where the BJP defines common people as chain of equivalence in their rhetoric and blame political elites but also exclude other groups also from their definition of the common man. For example:

P20. With the determination to bring **good governance** from the corruption of the Congress, the SP and the BSP, **the allocation of the Muslims reservation quota** will be opposed. OBC will not tolerate any reduction in reservation.” (Amit Shah 2014)

P21. We will not allow to make politics of appeasement of Congress and who for gaining vote focus on development of some religious groups while common people irrespective of religion and caste is deprived of ( Adityanath 2016)

In this case, Amit Shah and Yogi Adityanath expressed their support for the development of backward class and common people while simultaneously blaming political parties for their failure to work for these groups. However, they also promote the exclusion of Muslims from this definition of common people. The reality is, Muslims are a marginalized group in India in terms of economic, educational, and social conditions (Misra 2012). An interesting thing to notice is that to exclude Muslims, they did not invoke nationalism here. Instead, they drew on populism, making common people or the marginalized class a nodal point.

### C.) **Development and nationalism: Inclusive approach**

There is another category where they tried to show themselves as inclusive. They use nationalist rhetoric for this purpose. In this case, they focused on Indian identity without any religious or ethnic connotations and use the concept to incorporate different groups.

P22. In Uttar Pradesh, every citizen should join **the campaign of development and nationalism** of the Indian Janata Party for an **inclusive development of the India**. And we have to uproot **Congress and its corrupted leaders**. They became **rich looting the resource of the people**. Only through stopping Congress, chaos and anarchy of UP could be stopped and new dimensions of development will be established (Adityanath 2016).

P23. Congress must come clean on serious allegations of undeclared foreign bank accounts of their Amritsar candidate & his family members. If Cong can't tell truth about their own former CM how can we trust them. The Govt. after 16th May will place everything in front of **nation**. We have given our lives for **India** & are determined to remove **India** from current mess and will not allow it to be a **country like Pakistan** (Modi 2014).

P24. Narendra Modi's speech in the National Council is the plan of action for the creation of 'Nav Bharat' [new India]. The vision for the development of 'Nav Bharat' [new India] is embedded in it. Modi addressed many issues like poverty alleviation education development, health care, manpower development and employment sustainable agriculture development. It's blue print of new India. A path to socio-economic growth. A positive agenda for young & vibrant India. We as a **nation will work for such inclusive and comprehensive development** (Fadnavis 2014).

P25. I welcome the latest amendments by GST Council. The new tax rates will boost consumption which is good for the economy. **It indicates government's willingness to take all sections of the society forward based on Indian Identity as we build a new India**. Modi government's openness to ideas and suggestions on important reform measures such as GST has ushered in a never seen before participative governance. It strengthens our institutions and serves democracy well (Amit Shah 2014).

P26. The heart-warming congratulations of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the historic decision of establishing the Social and Educational Backward Classes National Commission (NSEBC) as a constitutional unit on the success of Ram Manohar Lohia ji's birth anniversary. This commission will be replaced by the "Backward Classes Commission", which will be more effective with more rights for **all Indians**. The establishment of this commission is an important step towards the empowerment of all sections of the socially and economically backward sections, **which will further strengthen the unity among Indians and help India to grow as a nation. It will accomplish the campaign of Modi Government with the development of "everyone's development"**(Katyar 2016).

In the upper Facebook posts, they focused on the Indian nation and India as an identity to reflect their inclusive plan of “developing everyone.” In this articulation, being Indian is defined through civic nationalism rather than ethnics

#### **D.) Development and Nationalism: Exclusionary Approach**

Despite this, there are some instances where they define nationalism in an ethnic or religious sense that excludes various identity groups who are part of Indian society. For example:

P27. The Samajwadi Party government in Uttar Pradesh has done many havoc in the name of secularism. In their view, secularism means providing money for the development to a particular religion. For the development of girls' funds is reimbursed for development of Muslims girls, 24 hours of electricity for special development sites, but for temple and Hindu religious places it is only for 6 hours, not only for the development project of Muslims, but also cemeteries of them is taken care of. this extra privilege to Muslims in the name of development must be stopped (Adityanth 2016)

This exclusionary nationalism in the discourse of economic development focuses on how people of Hindu religion and culture are discriminated against by Muslims. But, instances of exclusionary nationalism are very few in numbers in this medium of discourse.

#### 4.1.1.1. Ideological position of Different Leaders

In the above discussion, it is shown that both populism and nationalism are used to promote the BJP's vision of managing the economy, development, inequality, and poverty. But here we mostly see inclusionary approaches with a few exceptions where they take the exclusionary position. In the following table, the numbers of leaders with different ideological stances is listed in the table.

Table 4.1.1. Ideology of Leaders for Political Time in Discourse Topic 1

Ideology \ Approach	populism	nationalism	ambiguous
Inclusionary	5 persons (Modi, Amit Shah, R.Nath Singh, Fadnavis, Adityanath)	6 persons (Adityanath, Modi, B. Katyar, Amit Shah, S. Som, Dilip Ghosh)	
Exclusionary	1 person (Amit Shah)	1 person (Adityanath)	
Ambiguous		S. Sanowal	

#### 4.1.2. Historical time and economic issues:

In terms of economic issues, historical temporality is drawn on in some places but is not frequently articulated by leaders. However, whenever history is evoked as inspiration for economic development, it is always through a nationalist lens.

P28. Republic Day is a day of national strength & self-confidence. **It is a day to celebrate our history & look ahead to create a prosperous India keeping our historic past and tradition in mind.** We have faith in our nation our people & our culture and our history. Together let us build a nation that once again defines the story of humankind as it did in its ancient civilization. Let us pledge to harness dreams not dependency. **Let us empower every Indian to break free from the chains of poverty.** Let us devote ourselves to the cause of nation building guided by **Mantra of India First.** (Modi 2014)



P29. **All Hindus** will get the taste of development and a **Hindu state** will be established fulfilling the dream of our ancestors (Raja Singh 2016)

The two examples above show how the rhetoric depends upon nationalism. But in the first case, Modi uses India and “every Indian” in his definition of nationalism while in the second example, only Hindus are considered part of the development plan. In both cases, history, civilization, and past are drawn on as their standard of economic development and poverty alleviation.

#### 4.1.2.1. Number of Persons in Different Ideological Position

Table 4.1.2: Ideology of The Leaders for Historical time in Discourse Topic 1

Ideology \ Approach	populism	nationalism	ambiguous
Inclusionary		1 person ( Modi)	
Exclusionary		1 person (T Raja Singh)	
Ambiguous			

#### 4.1.3. Virtual Time in Economic Issues:

One common and conspicuous aspect of this discourse is how it presents development as a commodity, fetishizing it through the flashy and pompous vision of developing everyone and everywhere. But again, they present the discourse in a fragmented way and do not provide a working plan for how their proposed comprehensive and egalitarian development project could be achieved. The linguistic form they use prevents the development of a meaningful discourse on the issue (Marcuse 1964, 86). What is lost is the complex and layered social relationships of production and the

struggle over them. They speak about the development of the common people, saying that political elites have exploited the “average man” without explaining how they will stop that exploitation. In fact, this way of using language helps them create an ideological confusion to hide their support for the economic elite, capitalism, and neoliberal economic order.

This ideological confusion is also featured in their populist position despite their stated concern about the economic plight of common people and desire to improve the economic positions of the poor. Outside of their rhetoric, they do not target any economic elite or speak about any redistribution policies. Rather, they tend to include even the economically privileged class, such as big corporations, in their definition of common and ordinary people. This feature of virtual time represents the general characteristics of right-wing politics, which attack the political elite rather than the economic ones, even in the case of economic problem and redistribution (Wodak 2015).

The right-wing character of the BJP is also reflected by their stance in the case of Muslims. Despite their support of different religious identity groups, they do not speak about Muslims at all or plan to include them in the development and good governance vision. Rather, there is evidence that they oppose any attempt to give Muslims any affirmative economic privileges, even though Muslims are one of the most marginalized groups in India (Misra 2012).

#### **4.2. Discourse Topic 2: Glorification of Culture, Personalities and Events**

The glorification of what a political party considers endeared to them is the place where they express their position clearly and articulately. The process of glorification often draws on tradition, history, culture, or cult of personalities. By looking at what a political party glorifies, their ideological position can be revealed. In the case of BJP, their leaders often glorify themselves through in social media (Ali 2016). Therefore, this is a good place to examine their discursive representation and the ideology embedded within.

#### 4.2.1. Political Time and Glorification:

One of the reflections of political time in glorification can be figured out by searching the reflection of the BJP's electoral manifestos. One of their key slogans is "One India, greatest India." This slogan or ethos is used often in the Facebook post of BJP leaders. The leaders glorify in various ways, but their nodal point is consistently nationalism. Some examples of this are below:

- P1. Let us devote ourselves to the cause of nation building guided by **Mantra of India First and turn it a place for all segment of society** (Modi 2014).
- P2. Let us walk ahead with the **Mantra of India First** and fulfill our dream of a **best India in the universe** (Raj Nath Singh 2014).
- P3. Let us empower every Indian to break free from the chains of poverty. Let us devote ourselves to the cause of nation building guided by **Mantra of India First** (Amit Shah 2014).
- P4. For Congress secularism is Religion First but for us it is **India First**. India needs to break free from Congress's divisive mindset & take every section of society together for India's progress. Let us **turn India supreme in the universe** and establish right for Hindus (Raja Singh, 2017).

In these posts, India is glorified through various slogan like "India first" and "Best India in the universe."

Apart from the existence of the electoral manifesto, another political time can be identified here: the rhetoric of European Right, which is becoming more popular in contemporary times. When promoting nativist agendas or Eurocentric visions that alienate Muslims and refugees, they often use this kind of rhetoric (First, Greatest) (Wodak, 2017). In the BJP's case, this language means diverse things. In some cases, it is used to show inclusive nationalism or Hindu nationalism and in other cases to distract from their main agendas.

When Modi was asked about the meaning of "India first", he said for him, it means prioritizing the Indian identity over any other identity based on religion or caste. This

similar language is found by Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh in their Facebook posts. In other instances, such as in posts by Yogi Adityanath and T. Raja Singh, the expression of “India first” prioritizes a Hindu identity. The following table gives examples of the diverse ways leaders from the BJP party define “India First”.

#### 4.2.2. Number of Persons in Different Ideological Position

Table 4.2.1. Ideology of The Leaders for Political Time in Discourse Topic 2

	populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Inclusionary		4 persons (Modi, D. Fadnavis, R. Nath Singh, Amit Shah)	
Exclusionary		3 persons (Y. Adityanath, T Raja Sing, Dilip Ghosh)	
Ambiguous		S. Sanowal	

#### 4.2.3. Historical Time and Glorification:

Two features can be observed where historical time is invoked:

- A.) The promotion of historic personalities, their dreams, and their commitment to shape India accordingly
- B.) The promotion of Indian culture, language, tradition, and heritage, along with the pressure to accept this historical identity within the national or local life

##### A.) Historic Personalities and Hindu Nationalism:

The following personalities are commonly celebrated by all the leaders:

1. Lala Lajput Rai
2. Veer Savarkar
3. Sardar Ballavbhai Patel
4. Chattapati Shihbaji

The following posts reflects those along this line:

P5. Lala Lajpat Rai was one of those Amar **freedom fighters of India** who made every possible effort to **free the motherland from the yoke of slavery**. He is our motivation to **build a new India** Today, on his birth anniversary, I bowed my head (Amit Shah 2017).

P6. After the death of Veer Savarkar ji, fighter of the front line of Indian independence movement and the intense nationalist leader, Veer Savarkar ji's dream India must be attained ( Adityanath 2017).

P7. The Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is a symbol of determination and strong will, who, through his tireless efforts, made the country a unity. Due to Sardar Patel, **the nature of today's modern India could be realized**. On such a **great patriot** politician's birth anniversary, we bowed our head (Modi, 2014).

P8. Chhatrapati Shivaji's contribution towards good governance & people management is unparalleled. He integrated **people & took everyone along**. Shivaji Maharaj saw the importance of the seas not only for war but for trade. He gave importance to building a navy. **Shivaji Maharaj sowed dreams for our nation. he dreamt of a Bhavya & Divya Bharat**. Those dreams are calling us!( Modi 2014).

P9. I bow to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose a phenomenal freedom fighter an exceptional leader and a brave son of mother India on his anniversary. Netaji's unmatched bravery courage and patriotism will continue to inspire the coming generations (Ghosh 2016).

P10. Salute on the death anniversary of Lal Chandrashekhkar Azad ji of Goddess India, who is preparing his life for the hero and the motherland of Indian independence struggle (Raja Singh, 2017).

Nationalism is a common feature of all the above posts. It is used as a nodal point and is different than other signifiers such as patriot," "freedom fighter," and "visionary of great India" that work here as its chain of equivalence leading to the definitive conclusion of Indian nationalism. Though on the surface, these posts might appear to promote Indian nationalism in a civic way, they are actually endorsing Hindu nationalism based on Hindutva ideology and Hindu cultural and religious supremacy.

The underlying agenda of these message can be explored by analyzing the life and ideology of the people being celebrated. Some of the personalities presented above were leading figures of Hindu nationalist movement in late British period. Others are pioneering figures of Hindutva ideology and activism, while some are celebrated figures within Hindu nationalist circles. For example, Lala Laj Put Roy, a key Hindu nationalist leader in the late British period, introduced the “Indigenous Movement,” (*Shadeshi Andolon*) demanding a land only for Hindus, thereby excluding Muslims from the country.

Similarly, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who has been commemorated with the epithet “heroic and honorable Savarkar,” was considered to be the founder of Hindutva ideology. Hindutva ideology promotes a mixture of religious and ethnic nationalism that emphasizes the Indian nation and a Hindu civilization. His Hindutva nationalism is exclusionary to Muslims and Christians, as he stressed the unity between Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. He considered Muslims and Christians as "misfits" in the Indian civilization, arguing that the holiest sites of Islam and Christianity are in the Middle East and not India (Trehan 1991, 89).

Other personalities like Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Chattrapati Shivaji were also heroes of Hindu nationalism. Sardar Vallabh vai Patel is considered to be a successful executioner of Savarkar’s ideology and pioneer in the modern form of Hindu nationalism. Shivaji Maharaj was a 16<sup>th</sup> century personality considered a great fighter against Muslims rulers at the time.

Interestingly enough, while certain personalities are glorified to promote the Hindu nationalist agenda, others are excluded from the narrative. A quintessential case is Mahatma Gandhi who is the founder of the current Indian nation and is often considered to be a promoter of unity and diversity in Indian nationalism (Dalton 1996, 12). However, he has never been represented in the BJP leaders’ posts by the same language as the other historic personalities. Below are some examples of how he has been commemorated on his birthday or the anniversary of his death in their posts:

P11. He died in this day. on the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (Amit Shah 2014).

P12. Gandhi ji's dream of a clean Bharat will be fulfilled by the collective strength and efforts of 125 crore Indians (Fadnavis 2014).

P13. Paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Raj Ghat ( R. Nath Sing 2014).

Most conspicuously, Gandhi is never called a nationalist or awarded with any kind of equivalent signifier that is used to describe the Hindu nationalist figures. He has not been endorsed as a patriot, freedom fighter, or even a great Indian leader in their rhetoric. And most importantly, among the ten politicians included in the study, five of them did not even mention anything about Gandhi on the anniversary of his death.

#### **B.) Indian Culture and Civilization**

The presence of historic time can also be located in the celebration or commemoration of Indian culture and prior civilizations. Historical Indian civilizations and cultures or India as a unified land has been invoked by almost every BJP politician. Some of the following posts highlight this trend:

P14. Through education we as a Nation can contribute immensely towards humankind. Civilizations have come & gone but our glorious culture stands! (Modi 2014).

P15. If you can't say 'victory to Goddess India', you should not live here (Fadnavis 2014).

P16. Glory to the Mother India - In these two words, it is the power that can force the greatest power of the world to kneel before Hindus and those who cannot fulfill their mother's land have no right to live on this earth ( Katyar 2014).

P17. Indian version of calendar is the oldest one that is 4 billion and 32 million old. It shows the permanence of Hindu civilization. We should uphold that glory (Adityanath 2017).

P18. Hindi Hindu Hinduism is our identity. We cannot make Hindi a national language yet but Hindi has made a different identity in the world today. According to an estimate, more than one billion thirty million people are speaking Hindi in 206 countries in the world which is the highest in the world. If every Indian starts using Hindi in their daily

colloquial language, then the world will automatically adopt Hindi as the symbol of Indian Bindu. We feel proud to adopt Hindi (Adityanath 2017).

P19. Glory to the Mother India - In these two words, it is the power that can force the greatest power of the world to kneel before Hindus and those who cannot fulfill their mother's land have no right to live on this earth ( Som 2017).

P20. If you can't say 'victory to Goddess India', you should not live here (Fadnavis 2014).

P21. It is our best wishes to all citizens to be auspicious and happy on the first date of the 1st century AD beginning January 1. This date belongs to Jesus Christ. It started by Rome emperor Julius Caesar, whose sophisticated form was prepared by Pope Gregory in 1582 AD, hence it is also known as Gregorian calendar. The calculation of this calendar started only two thousand years, whereas Greece's calculation of calendar is more than 3,500 years ago old. Jewish calendar is only 7,000 years old. Among all these, the Indian version is the oldest. It started with the age of earth which is 4 billion and 32 million years old. Constitution of Indian calendar has its relation with the world astronomical theory and the planets and constellations of the universe. So, celebrating 1 January as New Year rather than first day of Indian calendar means "like lamp trying to enlighten a sun." This is a symbol of inferiority complex and symbol of slavery. It is also great disregard to Hindu civilizations (Adityanath 2017).

One important feature of this glorification is to personifying Indian civilization, culture, and land as mother and goddess. Historic time can be located in imposing apotheosis on India as a mother goddess. This imposition originates from Hindutva ideology and Hindu religious myths. Within this framework, India is considered as a sacred and ancient land - a land for Hindus only. Moreover, In Hindu religious myth, India is considered to be the most ancient place in the world. These beliefs reflect an exclusionary identity projection where apart from Hindu identity, all other identities are not part of the leaders' imagination of India's future and past. This approach is more indirect, some other approaches articulate Hindu nationalism more explicitly through supremacist thought and imagination.

The centrality of Indian nationalism is the focal point of discussion in the above posts. In them, Indian nationalism is connected with the Hindu cultural and religious identity



and Hindi linguistic identity. Based on this identity projection, the BJP leaders not only promote Hindu nationalism, but also explicitly exclude groups in general and Muslims in particular from their rhetoric (Vaan dar ver 1994). In this exclusionary and hegemonic approach, these leaders construct reality through a binary prism: Hinduism is the only accepted way to be Indian; the rhetoric implies either you are a Hindu or you should not live here.

#### 4.2.3.1. Ideological Position of Different Leaders:

Historical time of this discourse topic is limited within nationalism. All leaders except Sarbananda Sanowal expresses nationalism in exclusionary terms. Sarbananda Sanowal basically promotes Assamese nationalism without anchoring it in Hindutva ideology or Hindu religious symbol. Apart from him, there are a few instances where leaders who previously took exclusionary stances in their posts are found to render expressions that cannot be categorized within exclusionary or inclusionary space. We will categorize these stances as “Ambiguous.”

Table No. 4.2.2. Ideology of The Leaders for Historical Time in Discourse Topic 2

Ideology	populism	nationalism	ambiguous
Approach			
Inclusionary			
Exclusionary	1 person (Amit Shah)	9 persons except S. Sanowal	
Ambiguous		S. Sanowal, Modi	

#### 4.2.3. Virtual Temporality and Glorification

##### A.) Instrumentalization of Discourse:

One of the features of virtual time in this topic is instrumentalization of discourse. BJP leaders are using the language of American and European right-wing politics like ‘India first’, ‘make India great’ or ‘turning India into the supreme nation’. Despite this explicit use of European and American right-wing language, they instrumentalize it in both ways. They use it to promote exclusionary Hindu nationalism, but again claim it

in some places as an inclusionary approach. Despite this dual approach, whenever they are found to use this to express their exclusionary nationalism they do it very explicitly.

#### **B.) Discourse as Commodity:**

The commodification of personalities and ideology is another available feature of virtual time where historical personalities and collective identity markers like Indian national identity and its historic roots are fetishized through using pompous and flashy words (First, best, greatest, ever sustaining). In this way, personalities and their understanding of collective identity are being branded or advertised, but it is done without caring about historical complexities. In fact, it is already shown that this branding is very selective where the political leaders mostly promote Hindu nationalist figures in a euphoric manner and avoid other important figures or mention them in an impassionate way.

#### **4.3. Discourse Topic 3: Managing The State and Its Institutions**

How the state should be run, and how its key organs, institutions, and the relations among them should be arranged is another significant discourse in which BJP is found to be vocal in the real and virtual worlds (Ali 2016). They vociferously criticize the current management of the Indian state and simultaneously speak about their vision. On this important topic, the BJP's discourse is revealing of their ideology.

##### **4.3.1. Political Time and Managing The State:**

Political time in managing the state is mostly reflected in the BJP's vehement criticism of the government's way of dealing with the state and its institutions. They also describe how they will fix it if they come to power. Two broad positions are evident regarding their stance on managing the state:

- A.) Institutional independence and rule of law based on populism
- B.) The primacy of public opinion based on nationalism

##### **A.) Institutional Independence and Rule of Law based on Populism**

The fundamental stance here is how failure and corruption of the government led by their rival political party eroded the balance of power within key organs of the state. Political leaders also focus on how different key institutions such as defense, the

election commission, and the supreme court are weakened and have lost their freedom. They further assert their vision of regaining and strengthening the constitutional and federal system and democratizing them through establishing institutional independence, accountability, and rule of law.

P1. A noble nation like ours is being troubled by our neighbours while the Centre stands helplessly. We need a strong government to change this. Be it CBI various commissions or IT department the misuse of every institution has been the hallmark of UPA. Court orders are not followed. For the 1st time there was a major conflict between Defence Ministry and the Armed Forces. This is not a good thing. Federal Structure must be preserved in letter & spirit. Our work culture must be of cooperation not confrontation. Language & arrogance of Congress leaders & Ministers is deeply unfortunate. People know who is fooling them & will not tolerate Congress now (Modi 2014)

P2. The attacks on the common man and the organized crime incidents are as big as the Akhilesh's tenure, with the whole atmosphere of terror and anarchy in the entire state. The morale of the criminals in the state has increased so much that people are not safe even in the police. The BJP will fight Uttar Pradesh's bad law and order from the village and the streets of Uttar Pradesh to the Parliament in Delhi. After the formation of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, it will be our priority to bring the state's law system back on track and [send] the criminals to jail. (Amit Shah 2014)

P3. Addressing the gathering in Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Shri Krishna, the UP [Uttar Pradesh] needs a government that can take care of cultural heritage with development. The government, which cannot stop killing and rape, does not have the right to rule. This election is an election to change the fate of the UP and bring about change. (Adityanth 2017)

P4. INC stands for Institutions Neglecting Congress! Their habit is to misuse[,] abuse and reduce our institutions. Fear of defeat is making Congressmen abuse Honourable Supreme Court & Election Commission. Odisha must send maximum Lotuses for a strong stable and development oriented government at the Centre! Sharing these & other excerpts from my speech at the recently held rally in Sambalpur Odisha in this newsletter. (Raj Nath Sing 2014)

P5. From being a land known for tourism Kerala has become a nursery of terrorism. [It's] high time UDF & LDF answer people why this is happening. Kerala can give lots to the world but due to lack of jobs at home it is exporting its youth in large numbers. This is costing Kerala dearly. Be it killing of Kerala fishermen by Italian marines & suffering of farmers due to Endosulfan Centre & Kerala Govt[']s silence is deafening. Cong promised zero tolerance towards terror upgradation of arms & [equipment] in its previous manifestos. Did they do anything about it? UPA is more interested in Defence Deals rather than Defence Power & this explains why we are facing so many problems today. Congress is like a watermelon- green outside but red from within. Time to reject such a Party across the nation. (Modi 2014)

P6. We, the people of India [are] solemnly resolved to turn India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure social economic and political justice for all the people irrespective of class, religion and caste. We want to ensure freedom of expression, exercise of faith and worship, equal opportunity for all. We want to promote fraternity, dignity of the individual and unity and integrity among the people. (Fadnavis 2014)

All of the above messages show the BJP leader's positive stance and concern about the existing 'bad situation of rule of law' and other constitutional and state structures. These postings vociferously speak of upholding independence and neutrality in different institutions like the judiciary, election commission and support for decentralization of power through upholding federal structures. It also focuses on the army and defense and empowering them and allowing them to work freely within their juridical power. Carefully looking at these discourses reveals that they actually propagate those messages based on populism. Most of the problems they identify are anchored on how common people are affected by the disruption of the rule of law and lack of institutional freedom and transparency. As outsiders constituted by common people, they clearly blame the political elite—the then existing government and political leaders.

### **B.) Primacy of Public Opinion and Nationalism:**

This position of the BJP directly contradicts the earlier one, as here they propagate for the priority of public opinion and the majority's will over any institutional decision and constitutional framework. The following posts can be considered in this regard:

P7. The communist saying Babri Masjid was the symbol of secularism. Who are we, who are weaker than us? We only keep a sense of peace and harmony. [But] keep one thing in mind which will try to break our religion pillar, we will uproot it! [Victory] to Rama. (Som 2017)

P8. The state and the central government had to bow down before the public pressure. But the construction of the temple was not possible as long as the structure did not stop there. Hindu leaders said that if Muslims are fascinated by this structure then they should be transferred from scientific method; [but] the government was bound by the greed of [Muslim] votes. He kept praying to the court every time. **Hindu activists of VHP Shiv Sena etc. argued that the court cannot decide the matter of faith. Seeing the motive of governance, Hindu society has agitated and intensified.** (T. Singh 2017)

P9. Let's go to Musheerabad – Devunithota. **Let's save our Temple, land from traitorous Government & [terrorists].** [The] present situation of Mahadev Temple in bholakpur (devunithota) is very bad. Temple is pending from 4years. And tomorrow there will be an open auction for buying land for Company. [Many Muslim] **candidates are going to participate in it to buy it and hamper building temple here.**(Katyar 2017)

P10. Committing comments on Facebook Whatsapp and other social media networks will not protect the religion and the country. **Today's young Hindus will have to work for religion at the grassroots and they will have to be organized to protect the country and religion.** (Adityanth 2017)

One conspicuous thing in the BJP supporting the primacy of public pressure over any court rule or constitutional restriction is that they no longer depend upon populism or promote the cause of ordinary people or the common man. In contrast, here they construct this discourse upon Hindu nationalist framework focusing upon Hindu faith and cultural integrity.

Moreover, in some places, they go to the direct threat of committing violence or using language to incite violence, which is in direct contrast with their earlier commitment and vision to regain rule of law, transparency and neutrality of state institutions, and checks and balances in state organs. One commonality in the instances of inciting

violence is that they are again anchored upon nationalism, making Hindu religion and culture as its chain of equivalence, while Muslims are presented as dangerous others that hamper their faith and religious integrity.

#### 4.3.1.1. Ideological Positions of Different Leaders:

In the political time of this discourse topic, there are basically two main ideological positions: inclusionary populism and exclusionary nationalism. The following table shows the numbers of the leaders in the different ideological boxes.

Table 4.3.1. Ideology of The Leaders for Political Time in Discourse Topic 3

	Populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Inclusionary	4 people (Modi, Amit Shah, Raj Nath Sing, Fadnavis)		
Exclusionary		4 people (Raja Singh, Y. Adityanath, Katyar, S. Som, D. Ghosh)	
Ambiguous		S. Sanowal	D. Ghosh

#### 4.3.2. Historical Temporality and Managing The State:

In their evaluation of the Indian state, BJP leaders are not confined to criticizing the existing or previous governments' failures and articulating their plan for the next ruling period. Rather, they invoke the past as a normative standard and, based on that, they express their vision of an ultimate future Indian state. In this imagination, a more radical type of nationalism is used, in which they specify those whom they consider enemies and explicitly threaten to expel them from Indian territory. In this case, along with direct threats of violence, there is conspicuous use of racial stereotypes.

- P11. The unbroken Hindu state will have to be **achieved at the tip of the sword, every Hindu will have to accept the dream of the unbroken Hindu state as it was in ancient time.** ( T. Raja Singh, 2014)
- P12. State institutions should be careful about Indian history and culture. Our societies were ruled by [Hindu] values and it was harmonious. Now, in the name of [the] religious right, they are disregarding those immutable things. (Adityanath, 2017)
- P13. **Rama devotees will never forget the sacrifice of Kothari Bandhu.** The Calcutta Bajrang Dal's Kothari Bandhu has become immortal by sacrificing his life in regaining **Rama's birth land.** 23-year-old Ram Kothari and 21-year-old Sharad Kothari went to Calcutta from Ayodhya for Rama birth land procession on October 22, 1990. At that time in Uttar Pradesh, on the orders of Mullayam Singh Yadav, they had fired devotees in which the two brothers died. At the time of death, there was only one slogan from the mouth of all Hindus; **Batton will be charged ; [the] temple will be created; [but] now the time has changed; as is the slogan of the Hindus. Batton and bullet will be shot itself and the temple will build itself.** ( Ghosh, 2016)

The above Facebook posts show the imagination of a normative time in terms of historical and mythical personalities and events. They mention Rama, a figure in Hindu mythology and one of the key avatars of Hindu religion, and then call people to build the future Indian state based on him. They mention different religious symbols, portray them as ancient and then call for the building of a Hindu state to protect them. In a nutshell, they draw on the ancient past, whether it is historical or mythical, and use it as a reference to build a future Hindu state. In their vision, they clearly consider Muslims as outsiders, portraying them as enemies, conspirators, or terrorists who need to be subdued or expelled from their envisioned state.

#### **4.3.2.1. Ideological Positions of Different Leaders:**

Though the historical time in this discourse topic features Hindu nationalism based on Hindu religious symbols and Hindutva ideology, this explicit position is not found in everyone's references. This extreme articulation is used by only three leaders: Yogi Adityanath, Raja Singh, and Dilip Ghosh. On the other hand, Sarbananda Sanowal draws on Assamese history and dreams of its fulfillment in the future state of India.

Table 4.3.2. Ideology of The Leaders for Historical Time in Discourse Topic 3

	Populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Exclusionary		3 people (T.Raja Singh, Y. Adityanth, Dilip Ghosh)	
Inclusionary			
Ambiguous		S. Sanowal	

### 4.3.3. Virtual time and Managing The State:

#### A.) Instrumentalizing:

One common feature showing the existence of virtual time in this issue is the instrumentalizing. This instrumentalization is seen both in populist and nationalist articulations, but its content of it differs. Populists mainly instrumentalize the notion of institutional independence and the constitutional and federal structure of power sharing. Nationalists instrumentalize public opinion and majoritarian views. They also use Hindu cultural and religious notions or symbols in the latter case.

#### B.) Binary Projection of Reality:

Populists create a Manichean world between themselves and their rival political party. But for nationalists, the enemy is not only the rival political parties, but also Muslims. Populists do not use any violent threats against their rival political leaders, but nationalists often threaten to use violence against Muslims.

#### C.) Discourse as a Commodity:

Populist articulation commodifies institutional independence, balance of power in the federal structure of India, and rule of law. Nationalists do the same to public opinion and majoritarian opinion. They also try to commodify history, tradition, and myth in this regard and often use them to invoke fear of Muslims in Hindu community and thus threaten violence against them.



#### **4.4. Discourse Topic 4: Relations among Different Identity Groups: Discrimination and Communalism**

Indian society is full of diversity in terms of religion, ethnicity, and culture. It is the site of four major religions of the world, with Islam and Christianity having a long history of existence there. There are more than 2,000 ethnic groups in the country (Chakrabarty 1994, 149). Only within Hindu society does social and economic stratification exist. Due to this diversity, relations among the various religious, cultural, and social groups are always a significant issue for Indian society. Political parties aspiring to rule this diverse society always have to assert their position regarding their vision for managing this diverse society, as well as their evaluation of its current reality. BJP's position in this regard is another good place to evaluate their ideological stance.

##### **4.4.1. Political Time and Discrimination**

BJP leaders frequently post about their stance against any kind of discrimination based on religion and caste and opposing communalism and racism. Political time here is present mostly in the form of blaming rival political parties for using communalism, discrimination, and racism to win elections and gain votes. They argue that religion and castes on one hand and communalism and racism on the other are used in politics to create division. In this political time, they are found to take two major positions:

- A.) Opposing discrimination and racism based on religion or caste
- B.) Identifying who is discriminated against and who is privileged

##### **A.) Position Against Discrimination and Communal Politics**

P1. Now that people have seen through Congress[']s empty slogans & commitment towards secularism they have turned to open communalism. Congress President[']s recent appeal on religious lines is shocking! Such divisive politics is against [the] laws of our land. EC must take action. For us secularism is to unite & work for the nation. **For Congress secularism is Religion First but for us it is India First. India needs to break free from Congress's divisive mindset & take every section of society together for India['] s progress (Modi 2014)**

P2. Only way to save India is Congress Free Bharat[India]. A democracy has 4 enemies- **dynasty, racism, communalism & opportunism**...sadly Congress has all 4 in plenty. (Amit shah 2014)

P3. Congress[’s] divisive nature is shown in the manner in which they have sown seeds of division between Brahmaputra & Barak valleys. Immersed in vote bank politics Assam Government has **abused human rights in name of detention camps!** We will end these camps [upon] coming to power. (Raj Nath Singh 2014)

In this category, leaders emphasize equal treatment of all groups and stand against the use of religion in politics or giving privilege to some groups for political gain. They also stress the need for unity among different identity groups:

Noticeably, these posts use both populism and nationalism. They focus on how discriminatory politics harm both the nation and ordinary people. In each case, they focus on inclusivity and their position against any divisive politics. This dual use of populism and nationalism and the inclusivity message is ambiguous, as it does not clearly say who has been discriminated against and who is the beneficiary of these discriminatory politics and policies. But this ambiguity is clarified in the following issue regarding discrimination.

#### **B.) Identifying Who Is Discriminated and Who is Privileged:**

In this case, they not only blame their rival political parties for causing communal politics and discrimination, but also name the groups that they consider to be beneficiaries and that they think are adversely affected by these politics. Interestingly, they encourage discrimination and racialize groups that they consider to be privileged. They even use human rights discourse to justify their policy.

P4. There is no place for **infiltrators from Bangladesh** who have come to further the vote bank politics agenda of others. They should be sent back. Not Assam alone but all states must accommodate **Hindus [come] from Bangladesh & offer them a life with dignity**. Nation [can’t] wait any [longer]! Let us uproot Congress from every part of India & make Congress free[ing] Bharat a reality. (Amit Shah 2014)

P5. Hindus will have to live and survive as a Hindu. Racism and Muslims are the greatest political problems in the country. The disease of racism is centuries old, **which, after independence, political parties went ahead for their petty political interests, the poor politics of appeasement has been inherited by Angra. The only treatment for both diseases can happen only by making an sense of Hindu Asmita and Hindu Jagaran.** The trivial understanding of caste cult language will make us refuge[es] in our country. Our values will be humiliated and terrorism will work only for the sake of extremism and Naxalism. Hindus will awaken and survive as a Hindu (Adityanath 2017)

P6. Jihad in the guise of madarsas and mosques ... It is a strange situation that most prosperous countries in the world are prohibiting from watching the secrets of mosques and madarsas, but by encouraging them with the vote bank in India, it has been encouraged so far. The latest information is from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. More than 9000 mosques and madarsas have been attributed to the current anarchy of the Kashmir Valley. That is the role of the Imam and mollahs etc. In those mosques and madarsas have been found to be extremely dangerous. In Anantnag, 2300 in Baramulla, 1400 in Srinagar, 1100 in Srinagar, 900 in Kupwara, 937 in Pulwama, 700 in Gondal, 400 in Shopia and 350 mosques and madarsas have been found in anti-national activities. Will the J & K Government take action against the Imam maulvis involved in these activities and stop such centers strictly? (Adityanth 2017)

P7. West Bengal's silence? Bengal has been the focal point of religious-spiritual and intellectual consciousness since independence in the country. But today is going to Bengal? Anarchism is at peak in the preservation of power. Illegal Bangladeshi intruders are constantly distorting the demographic balance of that region. **The government has given such exemption to the mullahs of the people that they are misguided to give fatwa even against the country's prime minister.** Bengal is silent on the abusive Fatwas of a Maulana. Bengal is silent on illegal infiltration. Bengal is still silent on the anti-Hindu riots bombing that has taken place. This "silent" is dangerous. The breakdown of this silence is very important in the larger national interest. (Ghosh 2016)

P8. In the backdrop of a religious or religious ceremony, the enemy comes in the category of anti-trafficking and shouting in support of the country and [waving] the flag of the enemy country. Administration should come out strictly with such elements. (T. Raja Singh 2016)

In these social media posts, the leaders declared that Muslims are the beneficiaries of communal politics, while Hindu people are the victims. Rather than using populism and inclusivity, this discourse is mostly anchored on exclusionary nationalism. But another important feature of this discourse is the use of anti-discrimination and anti-communalism rhetoric while promoting discrimination or racial treatment based on that rhetoric. For instance, in one of the above posts Narendra Modi utilizes the discourse of human rights, and then in the same thread, he promotes human rights violation against Muslims.

#### 4.4.1.1. Ideological Positions of Different Leaders:

Table 4.4.1. Ideologies of The Leaders for Political Time in Discourse Topic 4

	Populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Inclusionary	4 people (Modi, Amit Shah, Rajnath, D. Fadnavis,)	5 people (Modi, Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Fadnavis, Dilip Ghosh)	
Exclusionary		6 people (Modi, Dilip Ghosh Adityanth, S. Som. B.Katyar, Raja Singh)	
Ambiguous			

#### 4.4.2. Historical Times and Communalism:

History can be traced here in the BJP leaders' understanding of India as an ancient territory with an everlasting historical tradition. Based on that, they define who is part of Indian society and who is outside of it.

The following messages show the reflection of history:

P9. The democracy of India and the Constitution of India have given the right to religious freedom of every citizen without any discrimination, but in the sphere of opinion and religion, **a person or community openly slaughters the majority society, against the Mother of India, make [unrest] and support of the enemy country[.] It can not be accepted in any state by saranging its flag by sloganeering.** No decent and self-respecting society can accept it. Those who are not happy with the **land of Bharat Mata or who have no sense of affection and respect towards the motherland**, they are free to go where they like. But staying indoors in India, anti-India conduct, it is directly betraying salt bribery and the nation. Such people are also **stigmatizing their tradition and ancestors.** (Adityanath 2017)

P10. "Love Jihad" is an international conspiracy of demographic change. Do not change love for fraud. It is a serious conspiracy for dangerous social maladies and national security and changing historical course of India and its ancient culture (Raja Sing 2016)

P11. We will ensure implementation of NRC [national registration of citizenship] in the entire country. We will remove every single infiltrator from the country, except Buddha, Hindus and Sikhs who stayed here generation after generation and whose religion originated here. (Amit Shah 2014)

The above posts show exclusionary nationalism. Here, history is invoked in several ways, such as India being deemed as a goddess mother or as a birthplace for Rama—a Hindu mythical personality considered an avatar in Hindu religion. India was even presented as only owned by Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs historically. Through all of this rhetoric, they connect India with an ancient normative time. This historical imagination of an Indian state that is basically based on Hindutva ideology essentially excludes Muslims from the fold of collective identity. It also incorporates a different kind of stereotypes against Muslims, of which the most prominent one is the criminal stereotype. Muslims from Bangladesh are regarded as infiltrators, while Muslims

ulamas are collectively termed as anti-national and terrorists. Muslims are termed collectively as conspirators against India.

#### 4.4.2.1. Ideological Positions of Different Leaders:

This historical discourse is not invoked by many leaders. We only find three leaders who express this extreme vision:

Table 4.4.2. Ideology of the Leaders for Historical Time in Discourse Topic 4

	Populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Inclusionary			
Exclusionary		3 leaders (Adityanth, Amit Shah, T. Raja Singh)	
Ambiguous			

#### 4.4.3. Virtual Time in Communal Relations:

##### A.) Ideological Confusion Versus Clarity:

The most common feature related to virtual time is the leader's simplistic depiction of the problem and binary projection of the reality. In this case, the problem of communalism or discrimination among different groups is presented in a simplified manner. They locate the problem of communalism invariably within their rival political party or other minority groups, which are mostly Muslim. But their allegations against rival political parties, which are made in their populist rhetoric, are limited to discriminatory treatment against common people and using religion in politics but do not denote who is discriminated against and who benefits from this policy. So in populist rhetoric they create a deliberate confusion, presenting themselves as opponents of discrimination, racism, and communalism. Nationalists not only blame political parties, but also explicitly say that it is Muslims who are privileged and Hindus who are discriminated against. Furthermore, they promote fear of Muslims using race and stereotypes, and even threaten to incite violence against them.

## **B.) Discourse as a Commodity:**

For populists, human rights and a stance against discrimination and racism are commodified, while nationalists use discrimination based on Hindu identity and Hindutva ideology as a commodity.

### **4.5. Discourse Topic 5: Relationship Between Secularism and Religion**

Another important topic of discourse propagated by BJP leaders is the relationship between religion and secularism. Religions are historically rooted deeply in Indian society, but the Indian constitution adopted secularism. Consequently, Indian political parties are always describing their positions regarding secularism and religion. No party can deny secularism, but they blame one another for either violating secularism or defaming religion or sacredness. In this context, the thoughts of BJP leaders about the connection between secularism and religion are an important place to locate BJP and its leaders.

#### **4.5.1 Political Time and Secularism:**

Political time in this discourse topic is found in the leaders' objection to their rival political parties abusing and distorting secularism for electoral gain. It is also found in the reflection of the electoral manifesto in their posts, in which they define secularism as not ostracizing religion from politics rather than equal opportunity and access for all religions. On Facebook, BJP leaders often profess that they have no problem with secularism, and then define what secularism is or how they understand it. They often claim that the Hindu religion and culture is itself secular, and thus bringing religion into politics is not a violation of secularism. On the contrary, BJP accuse opposition parties of abusing secularism for vote bank politics and allege that opposition brought religion into politics in the name of secularism.

P1. Religion and politics complement each other. If you say religion is a short-term politics then politics is a long-term religion. Demarcating religion from politics is harmful for the interest of common people. In fact, this only [benefits] the elites. (Adityanath 2017)

P2. [People] have seen through Congress empty slogans & commitment towards secularism they have turned to open communalism. Congress President[']s recent appeal on religious lines is shocking! Such divisive politics is against [the] laws of our land. EC must take action. For us secularism is to unite & work for the nation. **For Congress secularism is Religion First but for us it is India First. India needs to break free from Cong[ress']s divisive mindset & take every section of society together for India s progress** (Modi 2014)

P3. Raising the question of killing of SIMI terrorists in a police encounter is a part of [a] conspiracy to undermine the country's fight against terrorism. **Such rhetoric in the name of secularism should be strictly prohibited.** (Raja Singh 2017)

P4. Secularism in a political hypocrite country, has remained a political [hypocrisy]. The Modi government of the Center is not for any of its schemes, not on the basis of caste or religion, but without discrimination. Still the Modi government is blamed communal. On the other hand, there are teams like the Congress SP BSP whose policies have been made keeping in mind the caste or religion. They all became secular. There cannot be a bigger political hypocrisy than this. (Katyar 2017)

The above posts show that the leaders consider Indian culture as secular, and secularism has no problem with bringing religious values into the political sphere. Rather they define secularism as treating all people not based on their religion, but based on their Indian-ness. They use India as a nodal point to reflect their nationalist position, but it is not clear whether they should be considered inclusionary or exclusionary. They are known to chant the slogan 'India first', bearing similarity to the American and European right, which uses this to alienate Muslims and other immigrants and refugees. They claim 'India first' is meant to give Indian-ness priority over any other identity marker to avoid divisiveness, but along with that they blame rival political parties, especially Congress, for using secularism to appease some



religious groups. Due to the lack of explicit articulation in their approach, we will consider this position ambiguous.

#### 4.5.1.1. Ideological Positions of Different leaders:

Table 4.5.1. Ideologies of The Leaders for Political Time in Discourse Topic 5

	Populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Inclusionary	3 people (Modi, Raj Nath, Fadnavis)	4 people (Amit Shah, Modi, Fadnavis)	
Exclusionary		4 people (Raja Singh, Katyar, Adityanth, D. Ghosh)	
Ambiguous			

#### 4.5.2. Historical times and Secularism:

In the relationship between secularism and sacredness, historical analysis shows that the Hindu religion and culture themselves were historically secular, and thus the BJP believes that prioritizing Hindu religion and culture does not violate secularism. Moreover, they postulated that the current form of secularism promoted and adopted by the opposition parties is problematic because sacredness is evicted from society. Rather, they promote ancient Hindu society as the perfect example of practicing secularism.

P5. Indian culture has been a strong influence of secularism. If secularism is a universal religion, then it is not needed in the constitution of India. Anyway, Article 25 26 27 and 28 of the Indian Constitution [have] a clear mention of practicing equally towards all sects. This word has become synonymous to appeasing and humiliating Hindu society-culture and traditions in India and appeasement of class-specific. This is a planned conspiracy against a political hypocrisy and democracy. (Adityanth 2017)

P6. The spirit of patriotism is an automatic motion. It connects with sacraments. By combining the education with the rituals, the bhav that will arise will in reality be valued with values of ideology and patriotism. The sad situation in India's perspective is that after independence, we have separated education from rituals. Secularism has been replaced by the sacrament. This is also the reason for the current problem. (Adityanth 2017)

P7. What is the message of Raja Bhai is India is [historically] Hindu. So country is not secular in Uttar Pradesh or it is Hindu Government, the saffron government. And everyone other than Hindus knows that the saffron is heavy on them. Victory to Rama (Raja Singh 2016)

The three above posts show two different positions. In the first two posts, they claim that they have no problem with secularism and reference historical Hindu society, arguing that Hindu society has always been secular. They define secularism in their own way. The latter two posts show that, in their view, the current form of secularism creates a divide between sacredness and secularism, and they lamented that this secularism replaced sacredness and is responsible for the current crisis. In all of the cases, ancient Hindu culture and society are imagined as secular in an exclusionary manner. Muslims are portrayed as the only beneficiaries of the current form of secularism, while and Hindu people are portrayed as the most affected. This overall representation clearly reflects their exclusionary nationalism.

#### 4.5.2.1. Ideological Positions of Different Leaders:

Table 4.5.2. Ideology of The Leaders for Historical Time in Discourse Topic 5

	Populism	Nationalism	Ambiguous
Inclusionary			
Exclusionary		2 people (Adityanath, T. Raja Singh)	
Ambiguous			

#### 4.5.3. Virtual Time and Secularism:

Instrumental use of secularism is very conspicuous and the BJP leaders use it pragmatically. They did not deny secularism; rather, they define it in their own way that serves their purpose. But similar to the previous discourse, populists attack the political elite and blame them for misusing secularism without clearly articulating who is benefiting from the misuse. Nationalists scapegoat Muslims using race and stereotypes. It is evident that Muslims are stereotyped as the perennial enemy of Indian civilization and religion.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

We can summarize the findings for different time frames in the following ways:

#### 5.1. Political Time: Fluctuation in Ideological Positions

In political time, we see wide fluctuation in the ideological positions of leaders. This fluctuation occurs at two levels: Fluctuation within the same discourse topic and across discourse topics. The following table shows that fluctuation occurs in different discourses, including both populism and nationalism and both inclusionary and exclusionary approaches.

Table 5.1. Ideological Positions of The leaders in Various Discourse Topics:

	Inclusionary Populism	Inclusionary Nationalism	Exclusionary Populism	Exclusionary Nationalism
N. Modi	4	4		1
Amit Shah	3	4		
Raj Nath Singh	4	3		1
D. Fadnavis	4	3	1	2
Y. Adityanath	1	1		5
Sarbananda Sanowal				
Dilip Ghosh			1	4
T. Raja Singh				4
Sangeet Singh Som		2		4
Vinay Katyar	1			5

The above chart shows that political leaders take differing ideological positions within and across discourses. Some leaders such as Modi, Amit Shah, and Raj Nath Sing adopt both ideological positions and both approaches. Interestingly, they sometimes take these different stances in the same discourses.

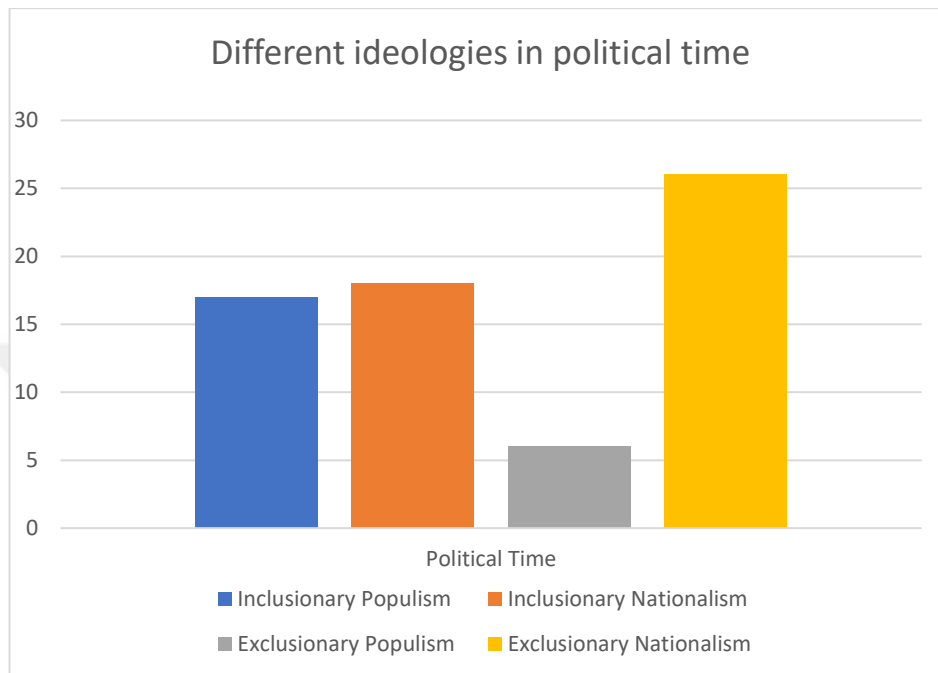


Chart 5.1: Different ideologies in political time

### 5.1.2. Relevant Factors for Explaining Variation Within Political Time

In chapter 2, we discussed biographical and spatial factors that affect the leaders we are analyzing. Here we will use some of those factors that seem relevant to explain the variation in political and historical time.

One thing that can be seen here is that the first four leaders (N. Modi, Amit Shah, Raj Nath Singh, D. Fadnavis) are mostly found to take the inclusionary approach, while another four leaders (Yogi Adityanath, T. Raja Sing, S. Sing Som, V. Katyar) are mostly found to take the exclusionary approach. In terms of populism versus nationalism, there is a clear distinction between these two groups. The first group uses populism more, while the latter accepts nationalism. Another clear divide between these two groups is that while first group fluctuates more, the latter takes more stable positions. To find probable causes of variation between these two groups, we will try to find correlations between their biographical and spatial features. We will not consider correlations as causal factors due to our small sample size. But on the basis

of the correlation, we can build some hypotheses that can be used in our future research.

**A.) Nature of Party Position: Center Versus Grassroots**

One differential factor that can be used to explain these variations is party position. N. Modi, Amit Shah, and Raj Nath Singh represent the central BJP and are considered national leaders. On the other hand, T Raja Sing, S. Sing Som, and V. Katyar represent the grassroots level. So, the three national leaders are take relatively inclusionary approaches and populist positions, while grassroots leaders take more exclusionary and nationalist positions. It can safely be hypothesized that politicians in the central positions fluctuate more but take softer positions, and grassroots politicians fluctuate less but take more radical positions. It is a plausible hypothesis because politicians in the center represent wider populations and are always in the limelight. Thus, their statements are more cautious and they try to avoid controversy. Grassroots leaders, on the other hand, are relatively free from this constraint.

In fact, this hypothesis gains plausibility, because other common biographical or spatial features under consideration in this thesis do not explain the differences. For example, demographic patterns, economic positions of their constituencies, upbringing in social and economic class, or current and previous ideological associations do not explain the differences.

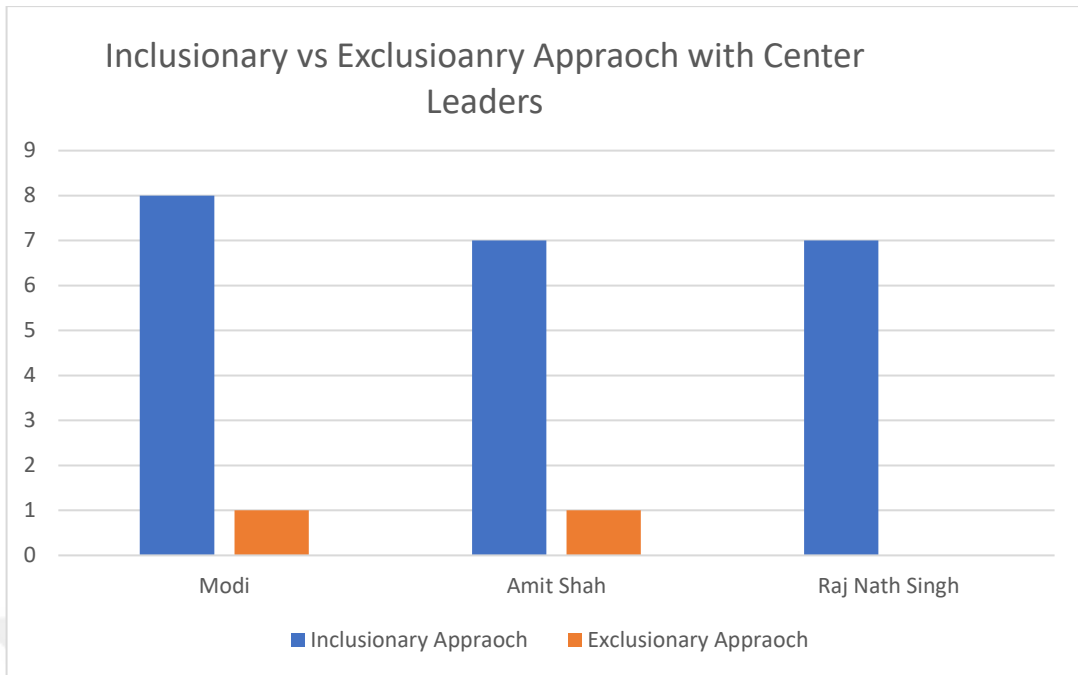


Chart 5.2.1: Inclusionary vs Exclusionary Approach with Center Leaders

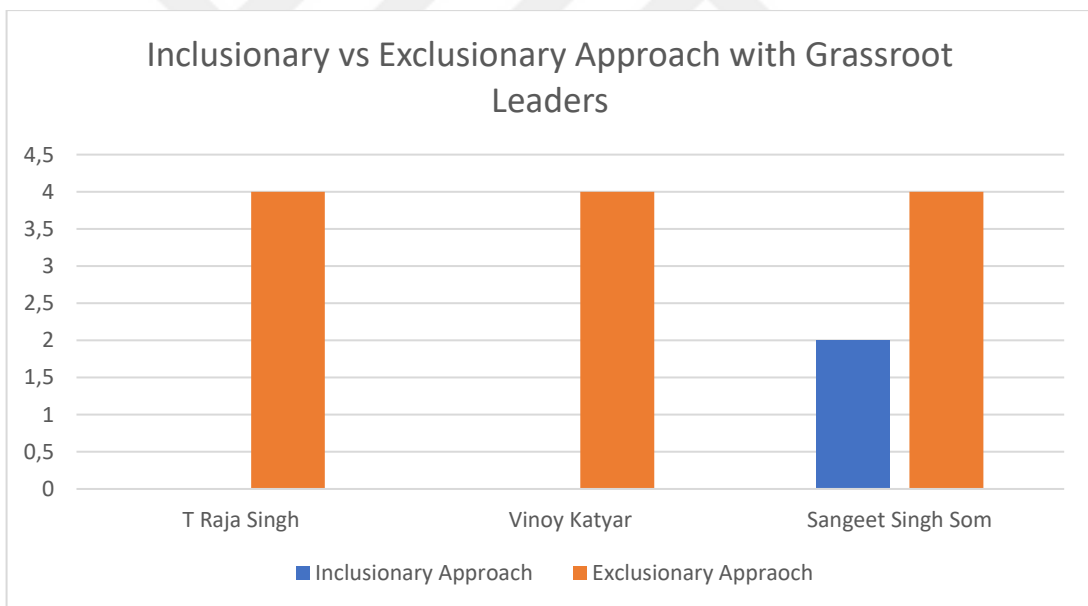


Chart 5.2.2. Inclusionary vs Exclusionary Approach with Grassroots Leaders.

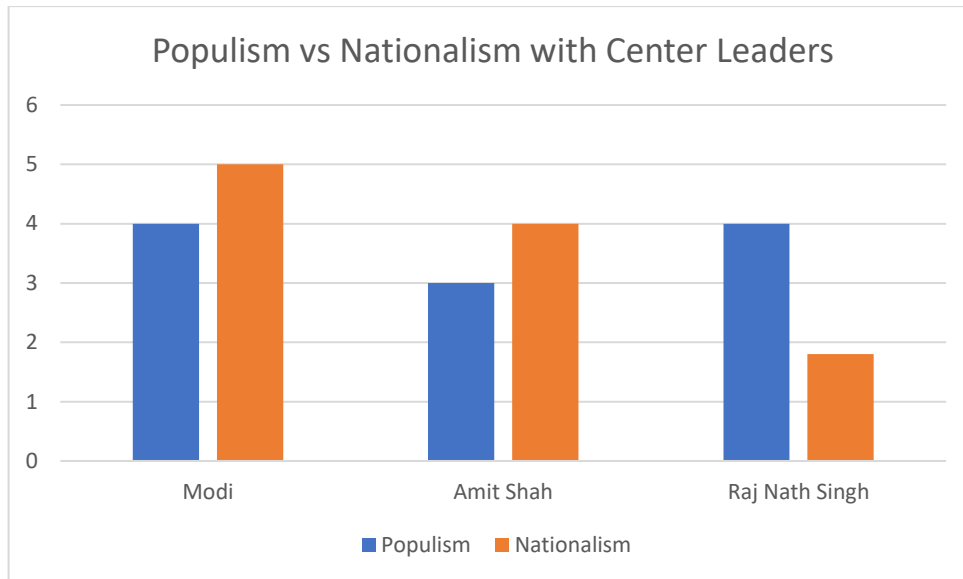


Chart 5.3.1 Populism versus Nationalism with Center versus Grassroots



Chart 5.3.2. Populism vs Nationalism with Grassroots Leaders

**B.) Economic condition of The Constituency:**

The economic condition of leaders' constituencies might be another factor that explains the variation. There is already a lot of literature contending that radical political positions breed in relatively worse economic situations. This may explain positions of D. Fadnavis and Yogi Adityanath, since we cannot include them in the grassroots or center categories of party position. D. Fadnavis represents the most economically prosperous state, while Yogi Adityanath represents the state with one of the lowest incomes per capita.



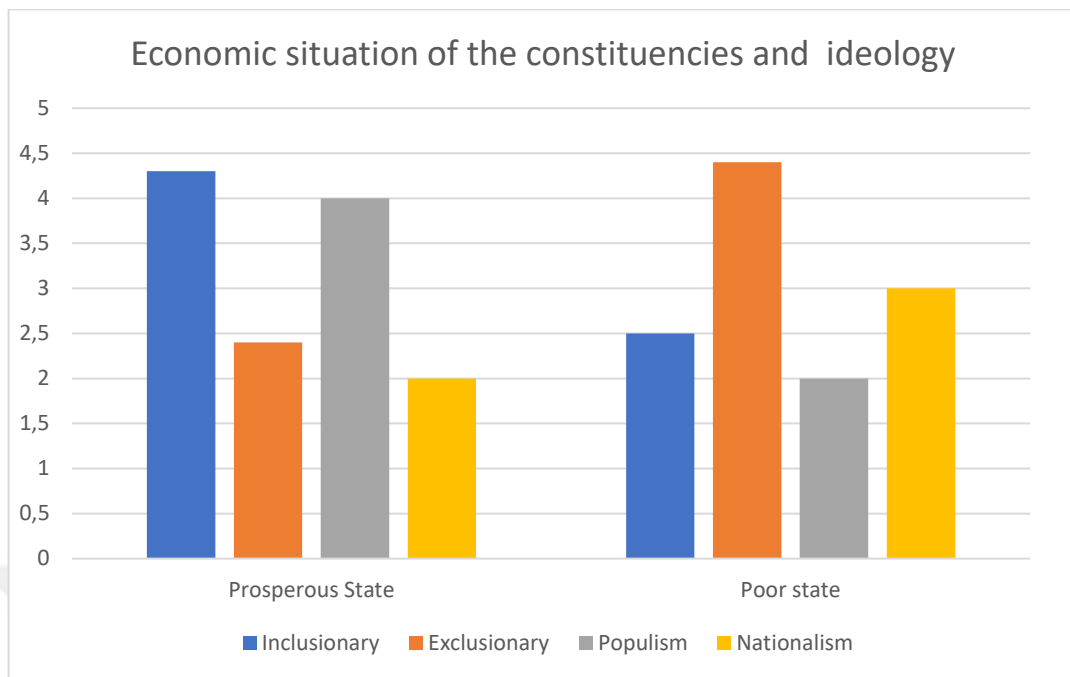


Chart 5.4 Economic Condition of The Constituency and Ideology

**C.) Demographic Situation of The Constituency:**

Ideological variations also reflect the demographic situations of constituencies. There is literature claiming that more riots occur in the places in which there are relatively more Muslims. With this finding, it might be that leaders who have constituencies with relatively large numbers of Muslims tend to take relatively radical stances such as the exclusionary approach. Muslims comprise more than 30 percent of the constituencies of the four leaders who take more exclusionary approaches. But the Muslim population of the state of D. Fadnavis, who takes a mostly inclusionary approach, is 13 percent.

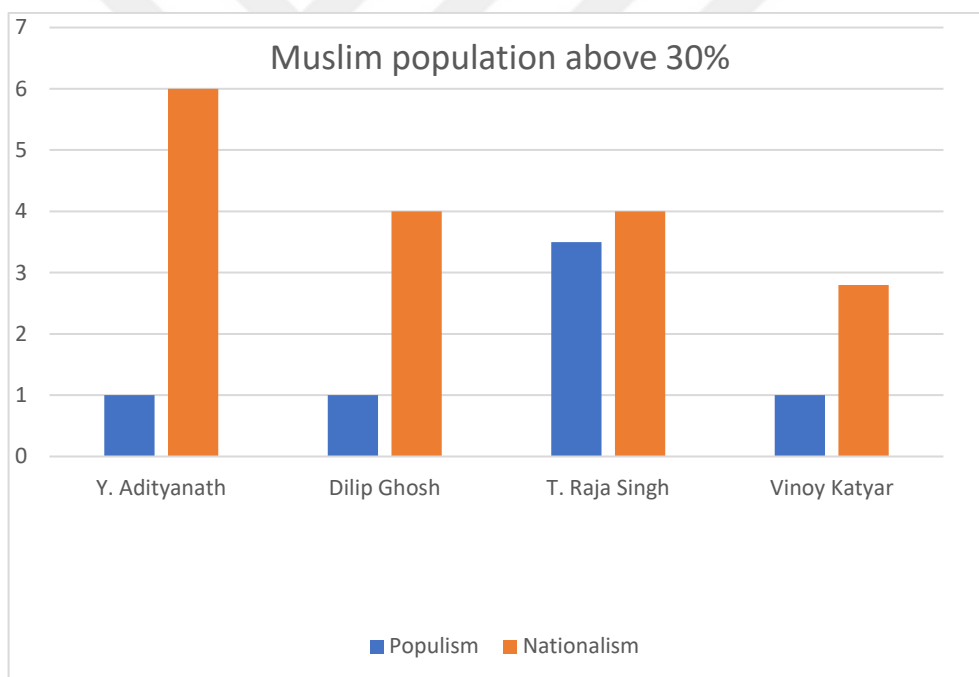
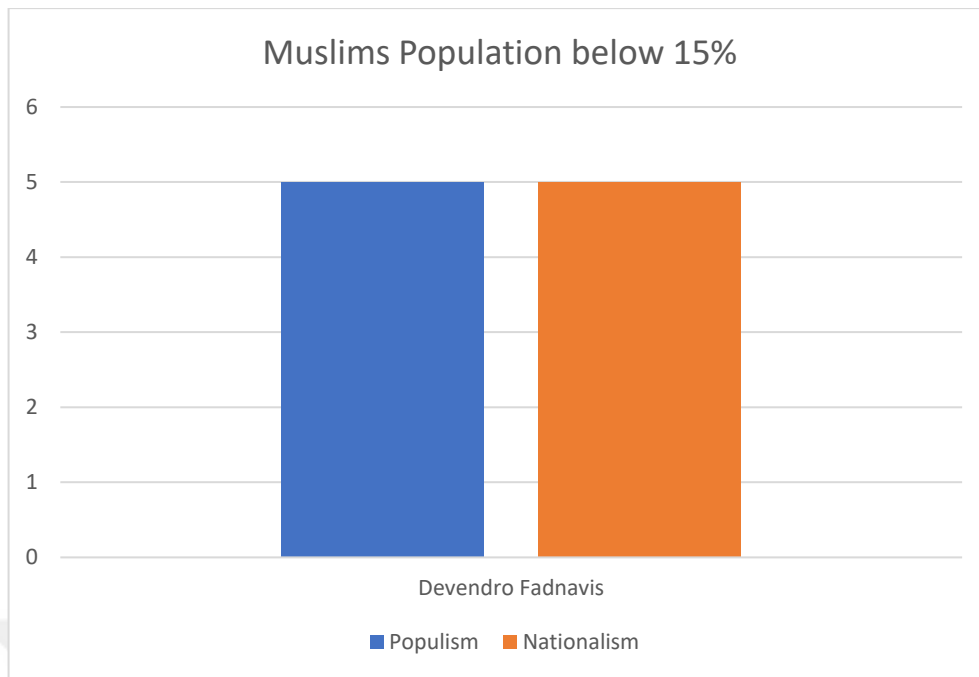


Chart 5.5. Demographic situation of the constituency and populism versus nationalism

**5.1.3. Factors Not Relevant in Explaining Variation:**

The following factors are not relevant for understanding the fluctuation of ideology.

- 1. Socio-economic Background of The Leaders:** We have considered two factors in socio-economic background: Income level of the family and social caste of the family. Variation in these two factors is not related to the variation in the leaders’ articulation.

**2. Previous and Current Ideological Affiliations Outside BJP:** Differences in previous and current ideological positions also are not related to the variation in ideology. Previous connections with radical Hindu organizations do not make any difference in ideological variation.

### 5.2. Historical Time: Stability in Ideology

In historical time, we see a situation in which ideological positions remain more stable within nationalism. With two exceptions by two leaders, exclusionary nationalism is used. This exclusionary nationalism is again mostly based on Hindu nationalism, with the exception of S. Sanowal, who invokes Assamese nationalism.

Table 5.2. Historical time and ideological position of leaders in number of discourse topics

	Inclusionary Populism	Exclusionary Populism	Inclusionary Nationalism	Exclusionary Nationalism
N. Modi			1	2
Amit Shah			1	1
Raj Nath Singh			1	
D. Fadnavis				1
Y. Adityanath				4
Sarbanada Sanowal				
Dilip Ghosh				2
T. Raja Singh				4
Sangeet Singh Som				3
Vinay Katyar				3

#### 1. Nationalism as a stable ideological position:

In historical time, it is clear that almost all of the leaders are using nationalism. Thus, historical time shows more stability in ideological position.

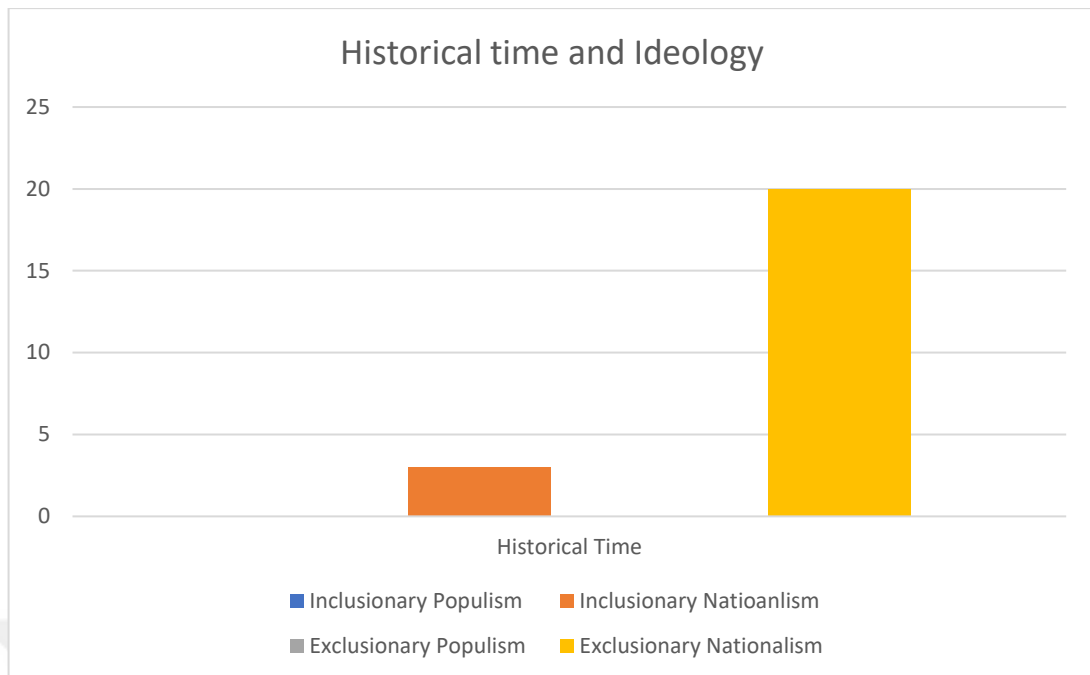


Chart 5.5: Historical Time and Ideology

## 2. Hindu Identity as A Basis of Exclusion:

There is minor variation in the brand of nationalism that the leaders promote. Most of the leaders promote exclusionary nationalism, and their basis of exclusion is Hindu identity, Hindutva ideology. The exception is S. Sanowal, who uses Assamese nationalism or Assamese identity to promote nationalism. But in all cases, the common groups that are targeted always include Muslims.

## 3. Variations Within Nationalism:

Despite mostly using exclusionary nationalism, there are some instances of the leaders' taking inclusionary approaches of nationalism is not made clear. This is the case for the first four leaders (N. Modi, A. Shah., Raj Sing, and D. Fadnavis). On the other hand, the last four leaders in the table articulate exclusionary nationalism in greater numbers than that of the first four leaders.

### 5.2.2. Relevant Factors for Explaining Variations Within Historical Time:

Potential explanatory factors for this small variation are:

1. **Grassroots Versus Center Position in The Party:** Three center leaders are found to take inclusionary approaches in one discourse topic, while there are not any

instances of grassroots leaders doing so. Thus, party position may be a relevant explanatory factor for this difference.

**2. Economic Conditions of The Constituency:** The economic condition of the leader's constituency might matter here. D. Fadnavis represents the most affluent state in India. Though he is found to take exclusionary approaches, he does so less than the leaders who represent poorer constituencies.

### **3. Demographic Constitution of Electoral Areas:**

The demographic constitution of electoral areas might be relevant, as the leaders of states with fewer Muslims, such as the state of Maharashtra represented by D. Fadnavis, show less exclusionary nationalism than the leaders of constituencies with relatively larger proportions of Muslims.

#### **5.2.3. Factors not Relevant for Explaining Variation Within Historical Time**

The following factors are not relevant for explaining variation.

1. **Socio-economic Background of The Family:** Whether the leaders come from lower, middle, or upper economic class families does not create any variation in ideology. Similarly, the caste of leaders' families, whether upper, middle, or lower castes, does not impact the fluctuation of ideology.

2. **Previous and Current Ideological Affiliations Outside The BJP:** This factor also does explain the differences in ideological position.

#### **5.3. Relevance of External Spatial Features And Irrelevance Of Personal Biographical Features In Both Political And Historical Time:**

When examining political and historical time, spatial factors are capable of altering political outcomes, while personal or biographical features of the leaders have no impact in changing the political outcome. Socioeconomic upbringing and personal ideological affiliation, both in the present and the past, are not connected with the variation in ideological position. These issues are mostly personal idiosyncrasies. On the other hand, the economic conditions of the leaders' constituencies, their demographic constitutions, and leaders' political positions in the party are the external spatial factors that impact outcome. Differences in these factors explain the variations

in ideological stances. This shows that BJP leaders are working more as members of a political party and their populist or nationalist articulation is connected with either with pragmatic politics or party ideology. Their pragmatic politics is visible as economic of condition, or demographic constitution of their constituencies create variation in their articulation. On the other hand, party position is also relevant in creating differences in both historical time and political time. This can also be explained as the reflection of pragmatic politics, as different positions in the party may warrant different roles. But personal ideological connections outside the BJP do not matter. BJP leaders prioritize the party, its ideology, and pragmatic politics over personal biographical features.

#### **5.4. Virtual Time: Difference in Representation Between Populism and Nationalism**

In political and historical time, I try to identify the stances different leaders have taken in terms of populism and nationalism and we find that some spatial features might be relevant factors to explain the variation in different times. But in virtual time, we check how nationalism and populism are represented. Variation in the representation can hardly be explained through biographical and spatial features. We can explain the variation in the representation using the category of populism versus nationalism. In fact, the feature of virtual time is found both when the leaders use populism and when they use nationalism. But the meanings produced by these two ideologies differ in their implications. We can summarize the difference in such way:

Table 5.3: Virtual time and populism versus nationalism

	Populism	Nationalism
Instrumentalizing ideology	Instrumentalizing ideology but creating confusion to indirectly support Economic elite Exclusion of Muslims	Instrumentalizing ideology and articulating it explicitly to support 1.Hindutva ideology 2. Hindu state 3. Anti-Muslim position
Using discourse as a commodity	Discourse as commodity- Economic development Institutional independence Upholding the constitution Position against discrimination, racism, and communalism	Discourse as commodity- Hindu nationalist personalities Historical myths and religious symbols and events Primacy of public opinion
Binary projection of reality	Binary reality between the BJP and political parties 1. Asking people to defeat them in elections 2. Threatening to try them in court	Binary division between Muslims and Hindu society and doing- Racializing Direct call of human rights violation Inciting violent action

The above chart shows features manifested in the right-wing element of politics, either right-wing populist or right-wing nationalist, in virtual time. For populists, ideology is manifested in their support for the economic elite and neoliberal economic development. For nationalists, their right-wing position often slides to right-wing extremism. The core of right-wing extremism can be summarized as consisting of the principles of 1) authoritarian populism guided by the leadership principle, 2) nationalism, 3) the friend-enemy scheme, and 4) militarism (Fuchs 2017, 2018a). In the case of their nationalist articulation, the above features are mostly found.

### **5.5. Conclusion:**

The overall finding shows the importance of multi-dimensional analysis in terms of temporal and spatial features of the BJP's representation in social media to understand their ideology. Though this study focused on reflection of multiple times in the BJP and how they can reveal variations or stability of their ideological stance, it also incorporates some spatial feature as probable explanations for their variation. One of the important findings in this study is the BJP leaders' more sustaining position across discourses and across political leaders in their imagination of historical time. They present themselves in this time as nationalist, and their nationalism is mostly exclusionary based on Hindutva ideology and Hinduism. Another sustaining feature is the differences in the representations of populism and nationalism in the virtual time. Despite the presence of the features of virtual time in both populism and nationalism, representations of nationalism are more explicit, radical, and often have affinity with right-wing extremism, while presentations of populism are far less radical.

Further research is needed to explain the cause of variation in political time. To do that, apart from temporal features we need to study the impact of spatial features. In our analysis some tentative explanations were presented, but the scope of data was not sufficient to make a strong claim on those hypotheses. It would be very interesting to examine those hypotheses with a large sample size. One of the hypotheses in terms of spatial features that we presented here is the difference in the ideological positions between the center and grassroots leaders. Grassroots leaders take more exclusionary and nationalist positions, while center leaders take more inclusionary and populist positions. This explanation might solve the riddle of some leaders' radically different postures in Facebook posts over time. For example, Narendra Modi, the current prime minister, was considered an extremist leader in the BJP. In his term of working as state minister of the BJP, he was widely accused to be one of the key linchpin behind the Gujrat riot that killed more than 2,000 Muslims. Ali (2010) showed that his speech at that time was very provocative against Muslims, and that he was a very strong proponent of Hindu nationalism. But his Facebook presence, which started in 2014 after he turned into a center leader and candidate for prime minister, does not exactly reflect that.



Although we could not establish those spatial features as causal connections behind variations, we can surely say that, to understand the ideology of the BJP on social media, it is not enough to restrict our analysis to social media. One important reason behind is that social media is not a segregated place; variation of different circumstances in the real world may have a significant impact in the behavior of social media activities (Tsou& leitner 2013, 56).

But more significantly, we need to remember that India is considered the largest democratic country in the world with a population of more than one billion. This population is clustered into numerous castes, religions, and social and cultural groups. This myriad of identities sometimes overlaps and sometimes clashes. As a political party that has the ambition to rule the whole of India and a strong presence all over India, the BJP cannot be outside of the influence of this diversity. In order to get maximum support and strengthen their presence in different identity groups and regions, they must diversify their strategies that might lead to fluctuation in their articulation of ideology. It is not possible to explain this diversity and its reflection in the actions and words of the BJP without multidimensional analysis.

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## APPENDIX

### WEB LINK OF FACEBOOK POSTS

#### Discourse Topic 1: Managing Economy

- P1. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10159738903130165/>
- P2. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1747959901912077/>
- P3. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/505282893147750/>
- P4. <https://www.facebook.com/1227353213955341/posts/1533995516624441/>
- P5. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154010461615165/>
- P6. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10153895569900165/>
- P7. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1716119598429441/>
- P8. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10152022658023837/>
- P9. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154050338955165/>
- P10. <https://www.facebook.com/257091654446979/posts/741377736018366/>
- P11. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154050338955165/>
- P12. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154018228935165/>
- P13. [https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/348653871954218/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/348653871954218/?substory_index=0)
- P14. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10151946468343837/>
- P15. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1360625087312229/>
- P16. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154034437390165/>
- P17. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154038544165165/>
- P18. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10151913093923837/>
- P19. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10153881909985165/>
- P20. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/703275409713870/>
- P21. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/395671930775514/>
- P22. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/566808720328500/>
- P23. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154003031830165/>
- P24. [https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/277573475728925/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/277573475728925/?substory_index=0)
- P25. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1754824717892262/>
- P26. <https://www.facebook.com/1227353213955341/posts/1533995516624441/>

P27. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/426755227667184/>

P28. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10153776181480165/>

### **Discourse topic 2: Celebrating historical personalities and national events**

P1. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10153776181480165/>

P2. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10151903665803837/>

P3. <https://www.facebook.com/AmitShah.Official/videos/1788834671157933/>

P4. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1674651762578005/>

P5. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1403356513039086/>

P6. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/509256822750357/>

P7. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10158373960860165/>

P8. [https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/382189235267348/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/382189235267348/?substory_index=0)

P9. [https://www.facebook.com/917244741693768/posts/1023781427706765/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/917244741693768/posts/1023781427706765/?substory_index=0)

P10. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1675390059170842/>

P11. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10151907159323837/>

P12. [https://www.facebook.com/917244741693768/posts/1100926196658954/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/917244741693768/posts/1100926196658954/?substory_index=0)

P13. <https://www.facebook.com/1227353213955341/posts/1386760454681282/>

P14. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10153720534600165/>

P15. <https://www.facebook.com/sangeetsinghsom/videos/651909401631867/>

P16. <https://www.facebook.com/sangeetsinghsom/videos/651909401631867/>

P17. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/394684227540951/>

P18. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/399585300384177/>

P19. [https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/377795962373342/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/377795962373342/?substory_index=0)

P20. [https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/377795962373342/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/377795962373342/?substory_index=0)

P21. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/394684227540951/>

### **Discourse topic 3: Vision of managing India as a state and its key Institutions**

P1. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10153947427580165/>

P2. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1409746905733380/>

- P3. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/558922214450484/>
- P4. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10151857252163837/>
- P5. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154034437390165/>
- P6. <https://www.facebook.com/257091654446979/posts/677609405728533/>
- P7. <https://www.facebook.com/RajaSinghOfficial/videos/1677145975661917/>
- P8. <https://www.facebook.com/1227353213955341/posts/1620424824648176/>
- P9. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1663698687006646/>
- P10. [https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/374905105995761/?substory\\_index=0](https://www.facebook.com/239595939526679/posts/374905105995761/?substory_index=0)
- P11. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1665746053468576/>
- P12. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/468361970173176/>
- P13. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1617463091630206/>

#### **Discourse Topic 4: Vision of managing diversity: Discrimination and communalism**

- P1. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154017921100165/>
- P2. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154014954035165/>
- P3. <https://www.facebook.com/288308213836/posts/10151985740973837/>
- P4. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/634420373266041>
- P5. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/409418579400849/>
- P6. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/432603313749042/>
- P7. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/405004663175574/>
- P8. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1659340430775805/>
- P9. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/408858496123524/>
- P10. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/425340201142020/>
- P11. <https://www.facebook.com/529977907043622/posts/1399862206721850/>

#### **Discourse Topic 5: Discourse regarding the relation between secularism and religion**

- P1. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/417381948604512/>
- P2. <https://www.facebook.com/177526890164/posts/10154003599940165>
- P3. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1659339610775887/>
- P4. <https://www.facebook.com/1227353213955341/posts/1449941621696498/>
- P5. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/408858496123524/>

P6. <https://www.facebook.com/281796902163018/posts/401443350198372/>

P7. <https://www.facebook.com/1154289381280915/posts/1661288090581039/>



## CURRICULAM VITAE

Sabbir, Ahmad – CV

21<sup>st</sup> September, Saturday, 2019

Ahmad Sabbir

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### **Employment:**

Teaching Fellow

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### **Education:**

1. Master of Social Science in Political Science and International Relations

Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey

CGPA: 3.90/4.00

2. Master of Social Science in Economics, Univeristy of Dhaka, 2014

CGPA: 3.25/4.00

3. Bachelor of Social Science in Economics, University of Dhaka

CGPA: 3.20

### **Research and Teaching Experience:**

1. Worked as a Teaching Fellow in Ibn Haldun University and taught World literature and Culture in session 2018- 2019
2. Worked as a Teaching assistant of Dr. Heba Raouf for a course named “Comparative sociological theory” in session 2017- 2018.
3. Worked as Teaching Associate in Political Science at Texas Tech University, USA, 2017

**Award and Scholarship:**

1. Full Funded scholarship in Political Science at Texas Tech University, USA, 2016
2. Full Funded Scholarship in Political Science at University of Kentucky, USA, 2017
3. Merit Scholarship in Political Science and International relation at Ibn Haldun University, 2017

**Themes of Research Interest:**

1. Political Sociology
2. Political and social theory
3. New media and politics

**Language Skills:**

1. Bengali (Native)
2. English (Proficient) (TOEFL Score: 102; R: 27, L: 29, S: 24, W:22)
3. Arabic (Intermediate: 4 years of training)
4. Urdu (Intermediate: 3 years of training)

**Computing Skills:**

1. Proficient in statistical analysis and statistical programming with SPSS, Stata, and R.
2. Proficient in various application programs within MS Office environment and Visual Basic Programming in MS Excel.

**Personal Information:**

Date of Birth: 1<sup>st</sup> February 1991

Sex: Male

Marital Status: Single

Citizenship: Bangladesh

**References:**

Will be provided on request