

Trivedi Centre for Political Data

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

July 2018 - June 2019





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REPORT SUMMARY



This is the fourth annual activity report of the Trivedi Centre for Political Data (TCPD from here on), for the year 2018-19. It contains a description of the activities conducted by the Centre and its members this past year, elements of information regarding the Centre's structure and development as well as a description of the Centre's priorities and plans for the coming year.

The Centre's activities this year were concentrated around the coverage of the 17th General Elections, the development of our research program on women in politics, and the development of new research areas in the domains of contentious politics, the study of India's Parliament, merging political and census data, the coding the trajectory of Indian political parties and the coding of political families.

The Centre covered four state elections this year (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana), collecting data on main parties' candidates. Four ELM team members and three researchers from the Centre conducted fieldwork, supported by affiliated data collectors and external researchers on the field.

The Centre gained prominent coverage during India's 17th general elections. The Centre published above 25 articles in the two weeks that followed the results alone and our data was widely cited by publications such as the New York Times, Financial Times, the BBC, India Today, The Hindustan Times, The Statesman, The Deccan Chronicle, Livemint, Quartz Media, Scroll.in and The Print.

The Centre held four conferences this year. The Conference on Empirical and Computational Social Sciences in India (ECSSI) and the second LIA-SPINPER conference took place in December 2018. The other two conferences - on Women in the 2019 elections and the third LIA-SPINPER conference, on National and State

Perspective on the 17th General Elections, took place in Paris in June 2019. The Centre also hosted 15 guest lectures and organized 6 Dialogues on Indian Politics as part of our partnership with the Centre for Policy Research.

The Centre held its second Summer School in July 2018 as well as its first Summer Internship Program. 24 participants took part in the Centre's summer course and 20 students from Ashoka and beyond interned with the Centre this year. Eight of them worked with the centre through a semester or through the year.

In addition to the annual YIF course Making Sense of Indian Elections, two new courses offered to Political Science students have emerged from the Centre this year: Data-driven Electoral Analysis was co-taught for the first time by Gilles Verniers and Sudheendra Hangal. Priyamvada Trivedi taught a course on Empirical Studies of State Repression. Both courses drew from datasets built at Ashoka. The Centre functioned as a support structure for students. For the coming year, we look forward to strengthening the new research areas the Centre has undertaken and build on new collaborations and technical capacities.

SUDHEENDRA HANGAL

Professor of the Practice in Computer Science

Co-Director

GILLES VERNIERS

Assistant Professor of Political Science

Co-Director

1. STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES



GOVERNING BODY

There have been no changes to the composition of the Centre's two boards

EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Ashok Trivedi (Founder, IGate, Founder and Trustee, Ashoka University and Centre's donor)
- Ashish Dhawan (Founder and Trustee, Ashoka University)
- Christophe Jaffrelot (Sciences Po, King's College London)
- Pratap Bhanu Mehta (Ashoka University)
- S.Y. Quraishi (Former Chief Election Commissioner of India and Distinguished Fellow, TCPD)

SCIENTIFIC BOARD

- Christophe Jaffrelot (Chair, Sciences Po, King's College London)
- Pradeep Chhibber (University of California Berkeley)
- Ashish Goel (Stanford University)
- Milan Vaishnav (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)
- Francesca Jensenius (University of Oslo)
- Sudheendra Hangal (Ashoka University)
- Gilles Verniers (Ashoka University)
- Mukulika Banerjee (London School of Economics, South Asia Centre)
- Devesh Kapur (SAIS, Johns Hopkins University)

PERMANENT TEAM

- Sudheendra Hangal and Gilles Verniers (Co-Directors)
- Priyamvada Trivedi, Associate Director
- Neelanjan Sircar, Affiliated Faculty Member
- Mohit Kumar is a data scientist and GIS engineer
- Saloni Bhogale, Research Fellow
- Basim U Nissa, Research Fellow
- Dr. S.Y. Quraishi joined in July 2016, as Distinguished Fellow
- Hem Nath Mishra joined in December as Administrative Manager

SUMMER INTERNS

- Abhishek Mishra (UG, Ashoka)
- Aniruddhasingh Jafa (UG, Ashoka)
- Apoorva Jakhar (UG, Ashoka)
- Kairvy Grewal (UG, Ashoka)
- Kshitij Kapoor (UG, Ashoka)
- Manini Menon (UG, Ashoka)
- Tarini Nath (UG, Ashoka)
- Shekhar Chatterjee (UG, Ashoka)
- Sk. Zafar Ali (UG, Ashoka)
- Suvanshkriti Singh (UG, Ashoka)

WINTER INTERNS

- Archit Checker (UG, Ashoka)
- Hargun Sethi (UG, Ashoka)
- Prajwal Seth (UG, Ashoka)

RESEARCH FELLOWS AND SEMESTER INTERNS

- Divy Rangan (MA, Ashoka)
- Gauri Bansal (MA, Azim Premji University)
- Sofia Ammassari (MA, Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals, Spain)
- Sukanya Janardhanan (UG, Ashoka)
- Surya Harikrishnan (MLS, Ashoka)
- Tarini Nath (UG, Ashoka)
- Vibhuti Gour (UG, Ashoka)
- Yusuf Sait (web developer, UG, Ashoka)
- Zainab Firdausi (UG, Ashoka)

ELM

- Shubham Kumar (YIF, Ashoka)
- Sai Sasidharpatri (YIF, Ashoka)

2. SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES



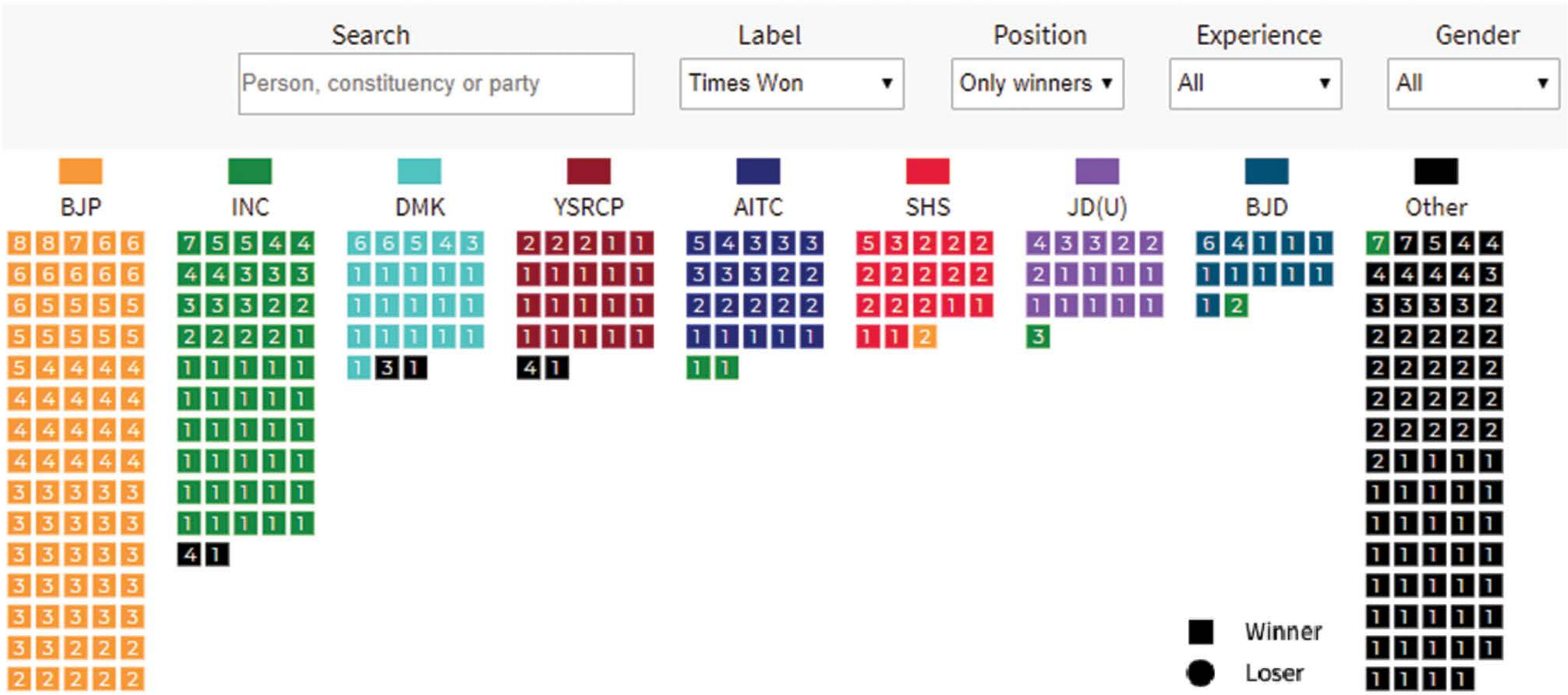
1. DATA RELEASE AND NEW DATA

1.1. Question Hour Data: In October 2018, the Centre released a new open dataset on Parliamentary Question Hour. The dataset contains questions raised in the Lok Sabha between the Winter Session of 1999 (13th Lok Sabha) and the Monsoon Session of 2018 (16th Lok Sabha), over 300,000 searchable questions currently available on our website. This dataset is part of a research project on political representation led by Saloni Bhogale. Saloni uses unsupervised machine learning algorithms for text analysis to build up an original textual research method that enables her to research how the interests of certain groups and social categories (minorities and women) are represented and by whom in the Indian Parliament. The data was scraped from the Secretariat of the Lok Sabha website, using web scraping scripts written on Python making use of Selenium. For the purpose of this dataset, the winners from the elections held between 1999 and 2014 (towards the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Lok Sabha) asking parliamentary questions has been obtained and merged with the electoral and gender attributes of the MPs raising questions. Lastly, the information on parliamentarians from the Lok Sabha's website has also been merged to get attributes like education and profession that have been added to build a publicly available dataset. It is currently available on

Github and a web application will be built to host and make this data easily accessible to researchers, journalists and the general public.

1.2. Incumbency data: the coding of individual incumbency and the attribution of a unique ID number to all contestants of all state and general elections since 1962 is now complete. The merger of these two datasets is ongoing. To complete this task, we developed and improved our name-matching tool Surf quite substantially. This is our first in-house software, which we currently use to cluster and standardize political party names. We are also trying to forge connections between our database and those of other organizations such as PRS Legislative Research and the Association for Democratic Reforms.

1.3. The Incumbency Visualisation (IV) is an interactive tool built by Shivangi Tikekar (graduated from Ashoka University, Computer Science and former TCPD intern) and Sudheendra Hangal (Co-Director, TCPD), that enables visualization of the Centre's data on individual incumbency. The IV displays the number of terms served by each parliamentarian or major party candidate in elections to the Lok Sabha as well as their party affiliation trajectory (turncoats). This tool contains data from the 13th to 17th Lok Sabhas.



Incumbency Visualization

1.4 Political families dataset: The Centre has started collecting data on political family affiliation of major parties candidates in general elections. The purpose of this dataset is to quantify the phenomenon of dynasticism in Indian politics, which remains prevalent. This dataset is yet to be released as we integrate it with data from state elections. This project is led by Gilles Verniers and Sofia Ammassari.

1.5 Costs of Contention dataset: The Centre is extracting information on contentious events in India from multiple newspapers (national and regional). The purpose of this dataset is twofold. The first is to analyze variation in claims made, tactics used and actors/organizations involved across space and time. The second is to compare national and regional coverage on identical events. Both the dataset and methodology will be made public. This project is led by Priyamvada Trivedi.

1.6 Merging ECI and Census data: The next frontier of social science research on Indian political data is located at the crossroad of political and socio-economic data. Mohit Kumar has started developing a method that uses GIS cartography to merge these two kinds of data. Primary census abstract 2011 for indian villages have been aggregated to assembly and parliamentary constituencies. The villages are mapped to constituencies spatially using centroids of villages and polygons for constituency boundaries. This creates a profile for each electoral constituency based on literacy, sex ratio, different types of working class populations and non workers. These different classes of constituencies were then compared with constituency wise electoral results to understand the impact of demographics on electoral variables. It was observed that in Andhra Pradesh, the constituencies with more proportion of agricultural labourers had more voter turnout. Also in constituencies with greater non working population proportion, BJP was more likely to win election. We were not able to extract precise relationships between various demographic and electoral variables as the census data was aggregated for an electoral constituency which might have homogenized the population proportions. Future scope of this work involves analysing polling booth data with village level census data.

Change in vote share as a function of constituency-based SC/ST populations

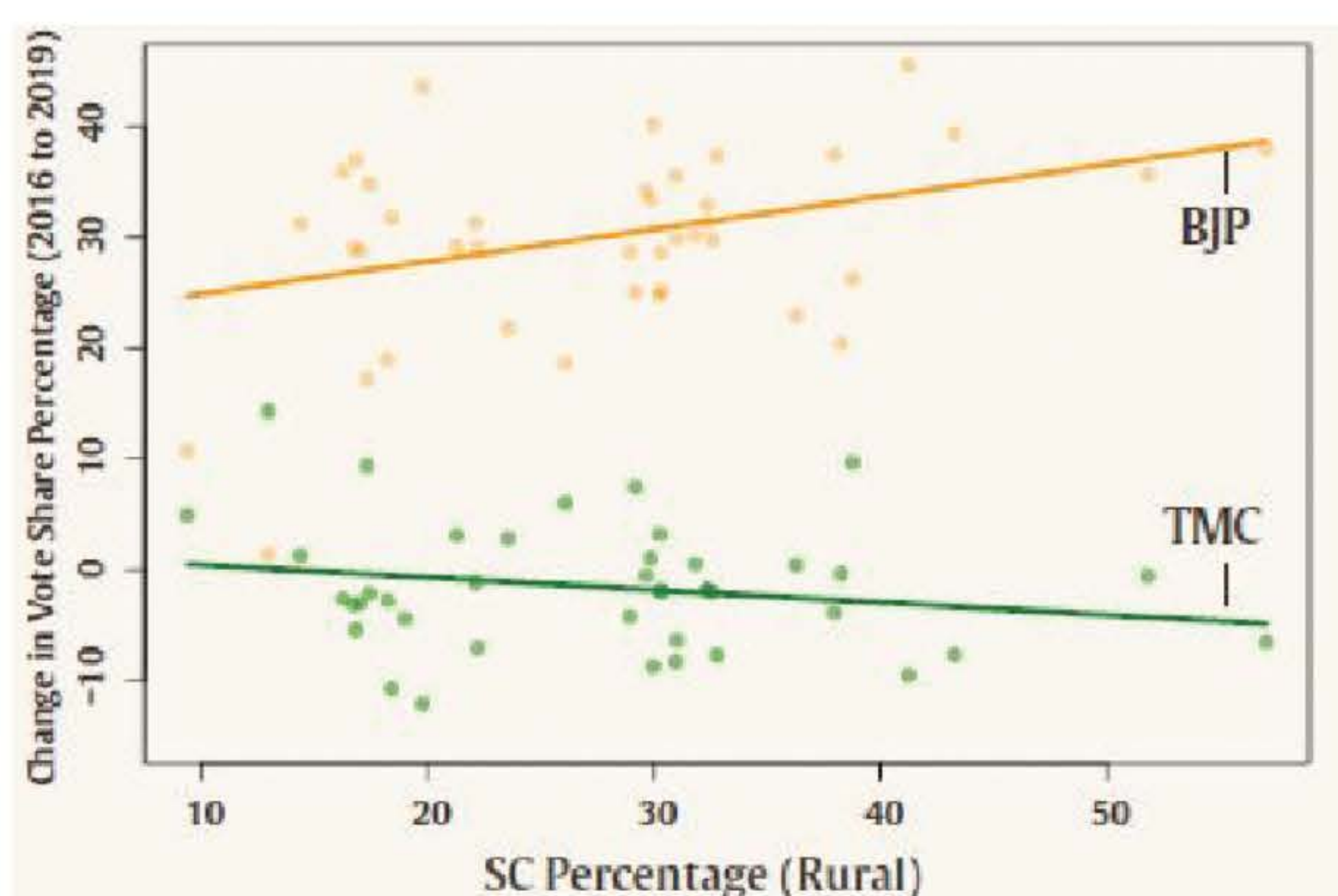
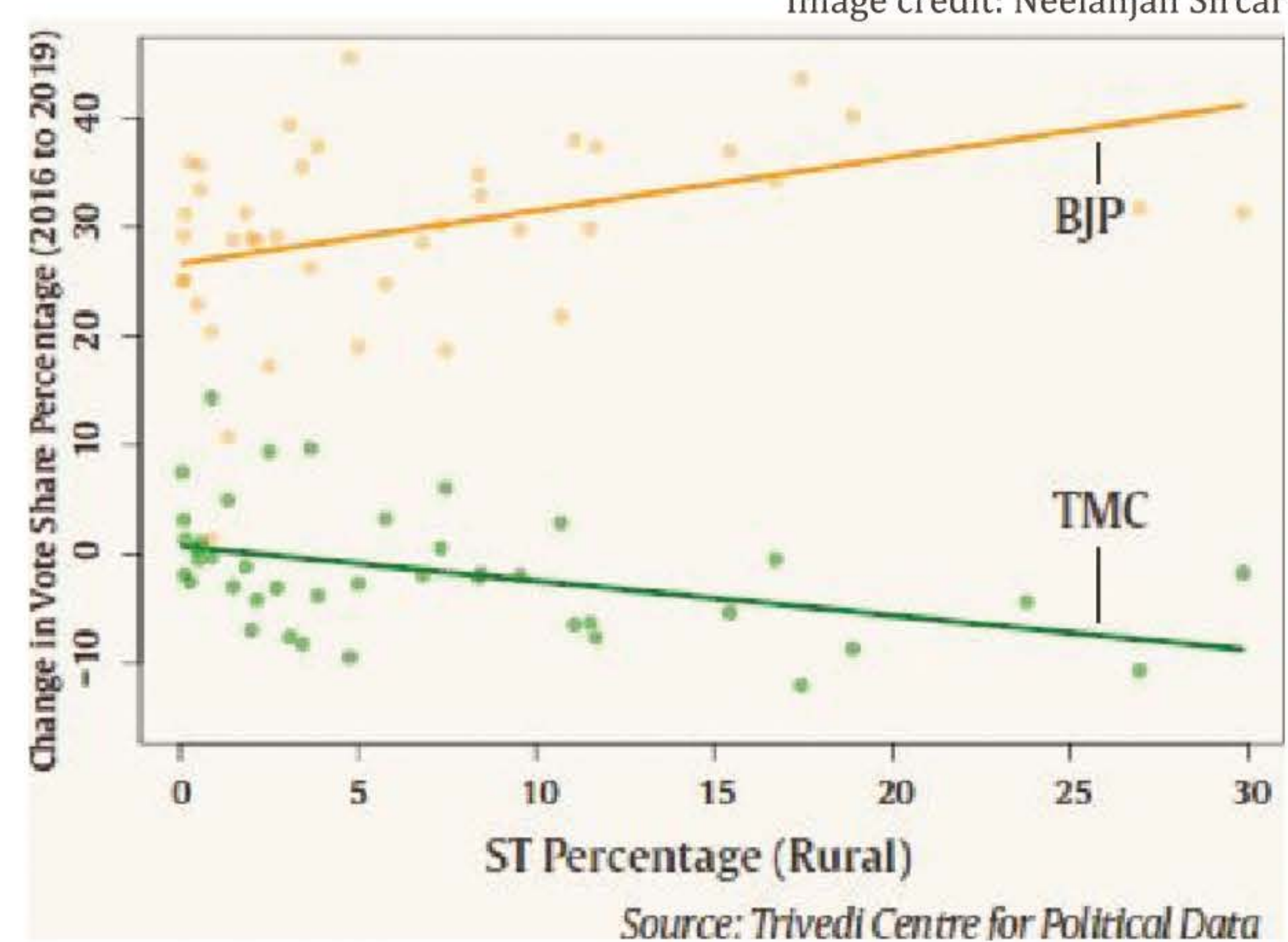


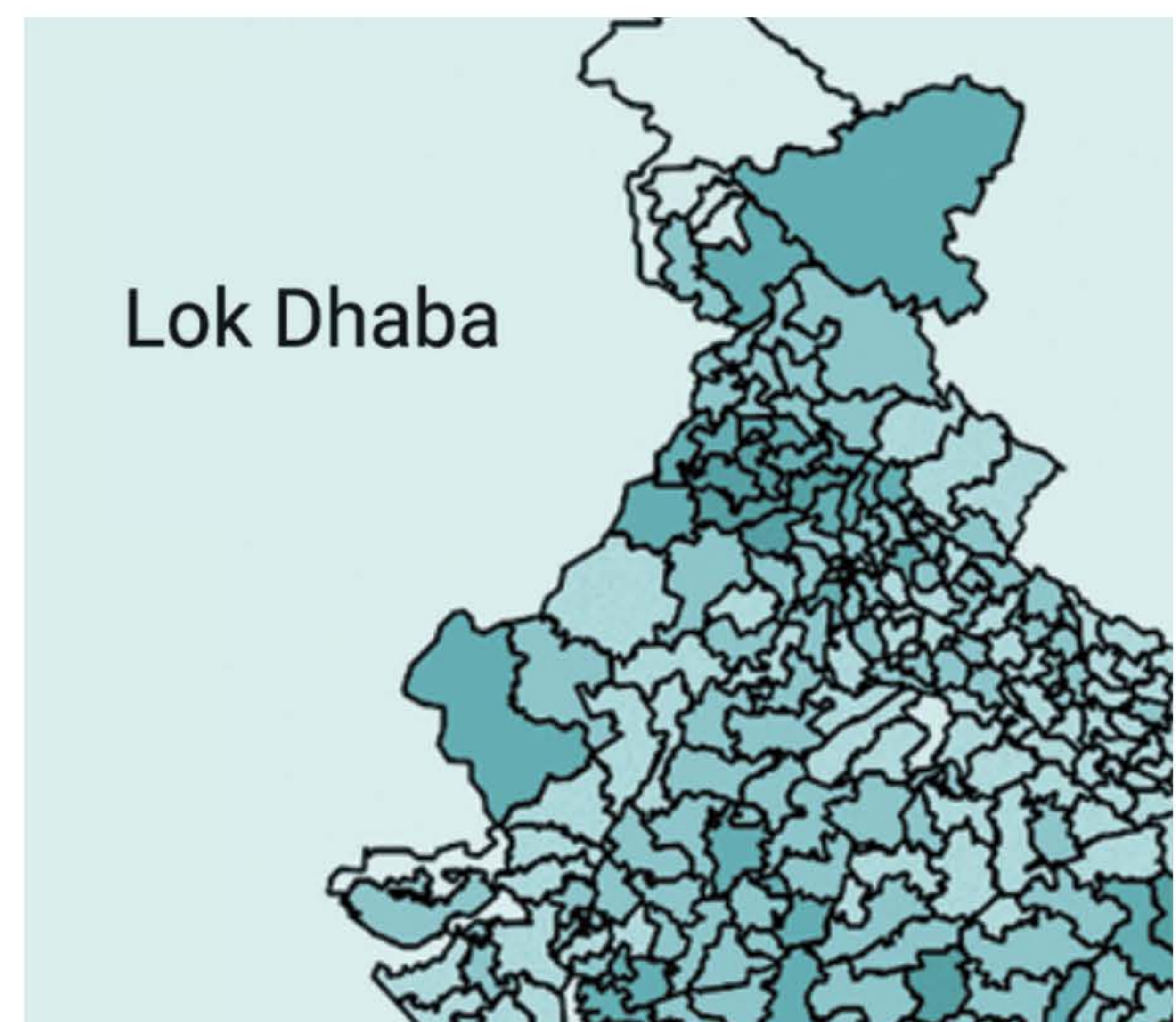
Image credit: Neelanjan Sircar

Image credit: Neelanjan Sircar



Source: Trivedi Centre for Political Data

2. LOK DHABA - NEW FEATURES



Mohit Kumar, Data Scientist and GIS Engineer at TCPD, has dedicated a substantial part of his time to develop further Lok Dhaba, our data visualization and dissemination tool.

Some of the major updates include:

- The ability to bookmark and download data from specific visualizations. Users now have two options
- “Bookmark Visualization” and “Download Visualization Data”, to facilitate the dissemination and the reproduction of our data.
- New variables: The dataset has been updated with incumbency related variables such as whether the individual is a turncoat, incumbent and the number of times they have contested elections.
- A public codebook: The Centre published a comprehensive code book providing the terms and conditions of using the dataset, details on all variables in the dataset and a few summary statistics.

3. RECURRENT PROJECTS

3.1. Mapping state elections: The Centre covered four state elections this year (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana). The Arunachal Pradesh elections were left out for practical and logistical reasons. We did not cover the state assembly elections of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, as they occurred at the same time as the general election. Fieldwork was conducted in these four states and the data collection on major parties' candidates caste, religion, occupation, education and individual political career trajectory is complete.

3.2. Incumbency mapping: The Centre has improved its name-matching algorithm and data cleaning software (Surf) and has completed the coding of individual incumbency for state and general elections. Each candidate is now linked to a unique identification number (PID) which figures in the Lok Dhaba data. This enables the tracing of the individual trajectory of every candidate in Indian elections, back to 1962. Surf is now additionally used for other similar kinds of name matching tasks, such as matching spellings of constituencies and matching party names and acronyms over time. At a technical level, we have made improvements to the algorithms to merge candidates based on expected streaks, and enabled Surf to be used on any dataset with Indian names, not just election candidates. Surf now allows the upload, cleaning and download of arbitrary datasets.

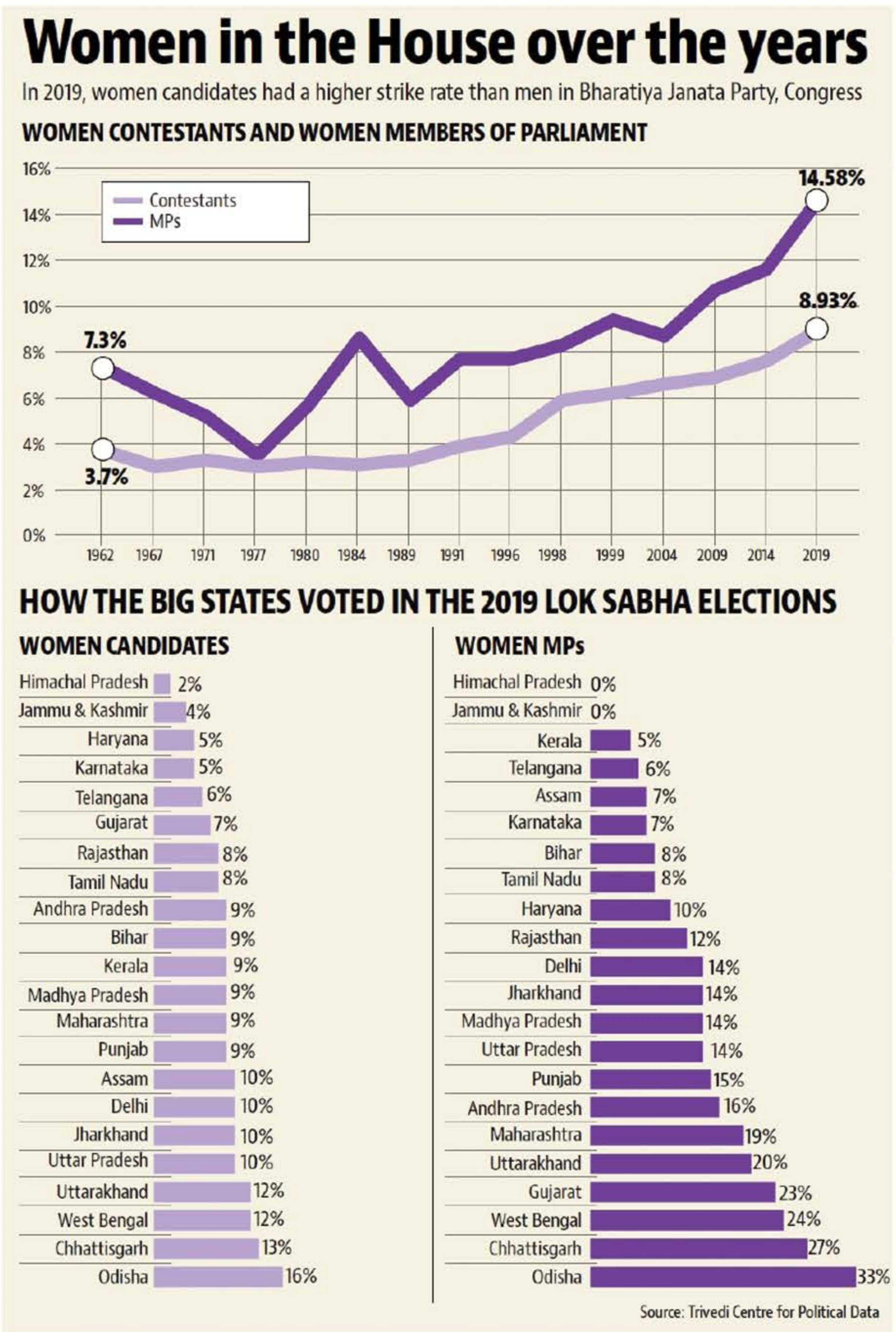
The next step is to complete the integration of state and general elections dataset, to measure the migration of state level candidates and MLAs in general elections and the Lok Sabha.

3.3. Women in Politics: The Centre expanded the scope of the Women in Politics project by including new states into its ambit (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana).

The Centre has designed a survey of women and men serving in Panchayat institutions in Haryana, to measure the gender dimension of political ambition of local bodies elected representatives. The actual survey has been postponed to Fall 2019 since we could not hold it at the same time as the General Elections. New variables have been included in the women legislators and candidates dataset, namely political family.

The Centre has gained visibility by publishing regularly data on women's representation among candidates in the general elections via press articles, social media and public interventions, including on television.

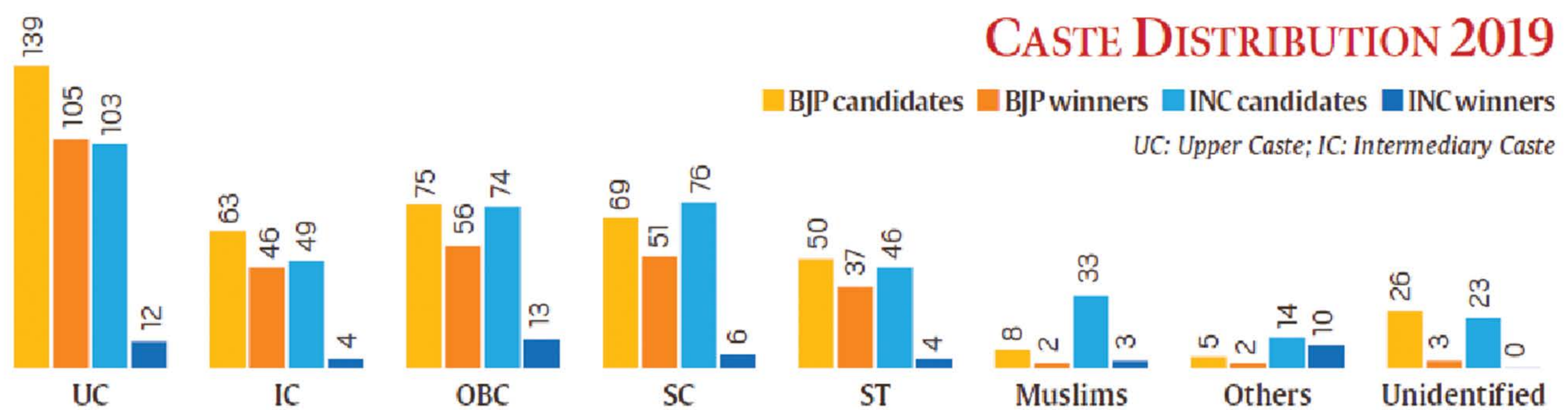
The Centre has gained visibility by publishing regularly data on women's representation among candidates in the general elections via press articles, social media and public interventions, including on television.



3.4. Profiling Indian legislators and candidates to Indian elections: This project is the object of the LIA-SPINPER partnership with Sciences Po and the CNRS and consists in a large-scale collection effort of data on major parties candidates to national and state elections. Eight states have been added or updated this year (Assam, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Telangana, Odisha) and we have made progress with the updation of Kerala, Tamil Nadu.

The General Election gave us an opportunity to update and expand Christophe Jaffrelot's original dataset on Hindi Belt MPs, by including all missing major states.

For this project, TCPD has hired and trained a number of field data collectors, and has affiliated a number of scholars and PhD students who were conducting fieldwork in India during the election. This represented a substantial coordination effort, led by Basim U Nissa.



Explained: In Hindi heartland, upper castes dominate new Lok Sabha, Indian Express, May 27, 2019.

Participants: Christophe Jaffrelot (Sciences Po), Nissim Mannathukkaren (Department of International Development Studies, Dalhousie University), Jusmeet Singh Sihra (PhD Candidate, Sciences Po and Hebrew University), Sharik Laliwala (Independent researcher, Gujarat), Drew Sommes (PhD Candidate, Yale University), Vatsal Naresh (PhD Candidate, Yale University), Gauri Bansal (M.A. student, APU), Avishek Jha (Independent Researcher), Manish Reddy (ex-YIF, Hyderabad), Gurmat Singh Brar (UG, Pol. Science, Ashoka), Tanvi Jawadekar (M.A. student, Sciences Po), Sofia Ammassari (intern, TCPD).

4. NEW PROJECTS

4.1. Costs of Contention: In partnership with the Peace Institute of Research Oslo (PRIO) and the University of Michigan, TCPD is working on building a dataset on evolving forms of contention across the country over space and time. To do this we have acquired newspaper archives (an English national daily and local English dailies). Based on standards and best practices in political science, we have worked with and trained several excellent Ashoka undergraduate students to read through newspaper articles and extract information in an event format i.e., who-did-what-to-whom-where-and-when. This project is led by Priyamvada Trivedi and Basim-U-Nissa.

4.2. Querying the Parliament: This project explores the content of questions parliamentarians asked during Question Hour. It seeks to map what Indian legislators are interested in, and the kinds of issues they raise in Parliament. To answer such questions, parliamentary questions raised by MPs are analysed by algorithms that are trained to unpack the themes and topics present in the questions. This helps us understand the substantive actions that they take regarding issues that are of concern to them. Linking this with other attributes about MPs (like gender, caste, legislative experience, etc.) can answer a range of questions about the legislative behaviour of Indian Parliamentarians. This project is led by Saloni Bhogale.

4.3. Mapping political parties in India: Political parties in India come and go, split and merge, change names and sometimes even location. So far, there has not been any systematic effort to trace the genealogy and trajectory of political parties in India. The first part of this project consists in standardizing party names and acronyms and create a unique identification number for each political formation in India. The second part consists in tracing the trajectory of parties splits, mergers, and factions through time. This project is led by Basim-U-Nissa.

4.4. Merging political and socio-economic data: See section above. This project is led by Mohit Kumar.

5. RESEARCH FUNDING

5.1. With the support and inputs from Gilles Verniers, Susan Ostermann and Julia Kowalski, from the Keough School, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, have earned a 10,000 USD competitive grant from their university to work on TCPD's survey of political ambitions of women and men leaders of panchayat in Haryana. They will be joining us this summer and winter to help conduct the survey and collaborate on the data it produces.

5.2. TCPD has partnered with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). This partnership emerged from the Empirical and Computational Social Sciences in India (ECSSI) conference that TCPD organized in December 2018. We have received a funding commitment of \$7900 from PRIO to work on building an event dataset using national and local newspaper archives. This is a part of the Costs of Contention project led by Christian Davenport (University of Michigan) and Håvard Mokleiv Nygård (PRIO).

6. RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

1. **Gilles Verniers.** "Conservative in Practice: The Transformation of the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh", *Studies in Indian Politics*, Vol. 6(1), pp.1-16. 2018.

2. **Gilles Verniers**. “The Transformation of Backward Class Politics in Uttar Pradesh”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 53, Issue No. 33, 2018.

3. Christophe Jaffrelot and **Basim-U-Nissa**. “The Struggle of RTI Activists in Gujarat”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 53, Issue No. 33, 2018.

4. Anirban Sen (IIT Delhi), Debanjan Ghatak (IIT Delhi), Kapil Kumar (IIT Delhi), Deepak Bansal (IIT Delhi), Gurjeet Khanuja (IIT Delhi), Kumari Rekha (IIT Delhi), Mehak Gupta (IIT Delhi), **Saloni Bhogale (Ashoka University)**, **Priyamvada Trivedi (Ashoka University)**, and Aaditeshwar Seth (IIT Delhi). “Analysis of Parliamentary Question Hour Data, Mass Media Data, and Social Media Data to Study the Discourse on Policies”, *ACM Compass* 2019.

Working Papers

1. **Bhogale, S.** (2018), Querying the Indian Parliament. What can the Question Hour tell about Muslim Representation in India?

2. **Bhogale, S.** (2019), Who speaks for women in the Lok Sabha? Understanding the substantive representation of women in the Indian Parliament.

3. Davenport, C., C. Loyle & **P. Trivedi** (2019), Prosecution, Punishment, or Persecution? Gacaca, Justice, and the Elimination of Rwandan Political Challengers.

4. **Hangal, S., M. Kumar**, & S. Prakash (2019), SURF: An entity matching and resolution system for Indian Names.

5. **Kumar, M., S. Hangal**, & C. Narayan (2019), Lokdhaba: An open source framework for dissemination and visualisation of Indian elections data.

6. **Nissa, B. & M. Kumar** (2019), Notes on methods, identifying and analysing political parties in Indian elections: Data introduction paper.

7. **Nissa, B., M. Kumar** & S. Houskeeper (2019), Factions and mergers in the Indian Party System - Evidence from Indian General Elections.

8. **Nissa, B.** (2019). Judiciary and Strategies for State Repression - Evidence from Jammu and Kashmir.

9. Nordaas, R. & **P. Trivedi** (2019), Extracting Data from Unstructured Text: Application to testimonials on Sexual Violence.

10. Phadnis, A. & **Bhogale S.** (2019), Understanding disruptions in the Indian Parliament.

7. TCPD CITATIONS

A growing number of scholars have used or referred to TCPD data in their work. Here is a sample of articles and scholarly publications that used our data:

1. Katharine Adeney, Wilfried Swinden (2019), Power-Sharing in the World's Largest Democracy: Informal Consociationalism in India (and Its Decline?), *Swiss Political Science Review*, doi:10.1111/spsr.12360.

2. Anustubh Agnihotri, Rahul Verma (2019), Content Analysis of Digital Text and Its Applications, *Studies in Indian Politics*, 7 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2321023019838653>.

3. Rydzak, Jan, Of Blackouts and Bandhs: The Strategy and Structure of Disconnected Protest in India (February 7, 2019). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3330413> (Stanford Global Digital Policy Incubator).

4. Milan Vaishnav, Saksham Khosla, Aidan Milliff & Rachel Osnos (2019) Digital India? an email experiment with Indian legislators, *India Review*, 18:3, 243-263, DOI:10.1080/14736489.2019.1616259

5. Rajkamal Singh, Rahul Hemrajani, Concentric Clientelism: A Case Study of Rural Saharanpur, *Studies in Indian Politics*, 6 (2), p. 247-266.

6. Shivaram Kalyanakrishnan et al. (2019), Opportunities and Challenges for Artificial Intelligence in India, *Proceedings of the 2018 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics and Society*, p. 164-170.

7. Chitra Jogani (2019), Effect of Political Quotas on Candidate Attributes and the Provision of Public Goods (Department of Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign).

8. Lakshmi Iyer (2019), Getting more women into politics: Evidence from elections in India, *CEPR Policy Portal*, University of Notre-Dame.

9. Anunay Kulshrestha (2018), Bittersweet Fruits of Incumbency Evidence from India, M.A. Dissertation, Stanford University.

10. Surbhi Bhardwaj (2019), Indian General Elections: A Cursory Analysis of Voting Behavior, *Econ. Paper*, Yale University.

3. TEACHING



Three courses have been developed by the Centre this year and been offered to Political Science students. Both courses used datasets and methods built and used by the Centre, which functioned as a resource centre for students. TCPD staff were involved as teaching assistants or as technical support.

1. Data Driven Election Analysis (POL 211):

This course was co-taught by Gilles Verniers and Sudheendra Hangal this semester. Saloni Bhogale was Teaching Fellow for the course. The course was designed to introduce students to electoral analysis by combining political parties' genealogies with a data-driven approach to political transformations. On account of the 17th General Elections, this course offered an opportunity to acquire the skills required to handle political data, from data handling and cleaning to data visualization and political cartography. It also addressed a number of key questions

pertaining to political representation - the role of caste, women and minority representation, the changing profile of elected representatives - through data as well as through the literature.

2. Empirical Studies of State Repression (POL 331):

This course was taught by Priyamvada Trivedi. This course exposed students to an empirical study of state repression. The core questions that were considered included: Why do governments repress individuals and groups within their jurisdiction? What are the ways in which government repress? What are the consequences of repression? And most importantly, how do we study state repression (well)? To answer these questions, the course began with an overview of a few perspectives that are used to think about state repression. We then covered some contemporary research why states repress. And lastly a considerable amount of time was spent on thinking through data that is used to document repression and evaluate the quality of data. Specifically, we evaluated assumptions, types of evidence/data (such as archival work, NGO reports, media reports, surveys), and methodologies that have been used by scholars to investigate state repression.

3. Making Sense of Indian Elections (YIF):

This is a recurrent six-week course taught in the Young India Fellowship. The course consists of an introduction to Indian electoral political combined with an introduction to political data handling, including mapping of state elections, political cartography and field data collection. This year, 98 fellows have conducted fieldwork in Delhi to profile state legislators.



Data Driven Election Analysis

4. PARTNERSHIPS



EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

- 1. Hindustan Times:** The Centre has published 17 articles in the Hindustan Times, as part of our partnership.
- 2. Centre for Policy Research:** The Centre held six seminars as part of the CPR-TCPD Dialogue on Indian Politics (see events section).
- 3. Sciences Po:** The LIA SPINPER project enters its third year. Data collection and bi-annual meetings have been held (see events section).
- 4. Facebook:** The Centre has completed two years of the Women in Politics project. Data was collected from half a dozen states. We added a component on political dynasties among women politicians.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- TCPD joined the **Centre de Sciences Humaines**, New Delhi, in the organisation of a series of lectures on political intermediation in India. The purpose of this series is to trigger a public conversation on the various forms and figures of political intermediation and on new forms of political participation in India. This project is funded by the Fond D'Alembert, French Institute in India.
- TCPD built a relationship with **NDTV**, a leading english news channel in India during the campaign, to provide them with data on demand for stories and to advise them on political data handling. Gilles Verniers and Neelanjan Sircar were regular guests on various political shows during and immediately after the campaign. A group of Ashoka student from the data-driven electoral analysis class fact-checked Prannoy Roy's latest book, 'The Verdict'.
- TPCD is collaborating with the **Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)** to build a dataset on evolving forms of contention across India. One of the outcomes of this collaboration is an annual conference in December where scholars will get together in order to engage with this dataset and build a research agenda which result in data releases and research publications.

5. EVENTS



The Centre organized four conferences, 15 guest lectures and 6 seminars with CPR this year, in addition to participating in a number of academic events

5.1 CONFERENCES ORGANISED BY TCPD

1. Empirical and Computational Social Sciences in India (ECSSI) (December 13-15, 2018):

The following individuals participated in the conference - Aaditya Dasgupta (University of California, Riverside), Adnan Naseemullah (Kings College London), Anshul Bawa (Microsoft Research India), Basim u Nissa (TCPD, Ashoka University), Brian Min (University of Michigan), Christian Davenport (University of Michigan), David Armstrong (Western University, Ontario), Deepak Malghan (Indian Institute of Management Bangalore), Farzana Afridi (Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi), Gilles Verniers (TCPD and Ashoka University), Jule Krueger (University of Michigan), Mohit Kumar (TCPD, Ashoka University), Monojit Choudhary (Microsoft Research India), Neelanjan Sircar (TCPD and Ashoka University), Pratap Bhanu Mehta (Ashoka University), Priyamvada Trivedi (TCPD, Ashoka University), Saloni Bhogale (TCPD, Ashoka University), Sudheendra Hangal (TCPD and Ashoka University) and Susan Ostermann (University of Notre Dame).



Empirical and Computational Social Sciences in India (ECSSI)

On the third day of the ECSSI conference, we organized a computational social science workshop. The workshop was a free and public event. There were 3 sessions led by four instructors who discussed their own research and conducted tutorials which lasted about 2 hours each. The first session led by David Armstrong (Western University) was on **Evaluating Measurement Models**. The afternoon session led by Monojit Choudhury and Anshul Bawa (Microsoft Research India) was a tutorial on **Computational Sociolinguistics: Interaction between Society, Language, Data and Algorithms**. And the last session in the evening was led by Jule Krueger (University of Michigan) was an introduction to Using **Latent Variable Models to Estimate the Prevalence of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict**. The purpose of this workshop was to expose participants to diverse computational techniques to investigate various topics within social sciences.

This event was supported by Ashoka University and Microsoft Research India.

2. LIA-SPINPER (December 21, 2018):

The conference on Democratic Politics in India (LIA-SPINPER) was held on December 21. Its purpose was to gather scholars having produced some of the most exciting empirical new work on Indian politics.

The following individuals participated in the conference - Adam Auerbach (American University), Anirvan Choudhary (University of California, Berkeley), Anjali Bohlken (Georgia Institute of Technology), Anustubh Agnihotri (University of California, Berkeley), Basim u Nissa (TCPD, Ashoka University), Christophe Jaffrelot (Sciences Po), Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner (University of Virginia), Gilles Verniers (TCPD and Ashoka University), Jusmeet Singh Sihra (Sciences Po and Hebrew University, Jerusalem), Kalaiyaran A. (Madras Institute of Development Studies), Mohit Kumar (TCPD, Ashoka University), Nikhar Gaikwad (Columbia University), Nissim Mannathukkaren (Dalhousie University), Priyamvada Trivedi (TCPD, Ashoka University), Rachel Brule (New York University, Abu Dhabi), Rikhil Bhavnani (University of Wisconsin Madison), Simon Chauchard (Columbia University), Thad Dunning (University of California, Berkeley), Jennifer Bussell (University of California, Berkeley), Sarthak Bagchi (Ahmedabad University) and Saloni Bhogale (TCPD, Ashoka University).



Democratic Politics in India (LIA SPINPER)

A couple of important takeaways from both the December conferences:

- The first is that TCPD's vision of leading by setting high standards for what constitutes best practices in data collection was reaffirmed by everyone. It is imperative that all steps of data collection - recruitment, training, sound and ethical behavior on the field, documentation, submitting data, version control, data verification and data release - receive the same amount of attention. Additionally, our commitment to making methodologies and data public were also reinforced. We will continue to work very hard to preserve data integrity.
- The second take-away is that by setting an example of sharing data, we hope to encourage others to do the same. We are hoping this would lead to important discussions on how to manage and merge datasets. And furthermore, encourage empirical research across various subfields within political science.

3. Women in Indian Politics (June 24, 2019):

The Centre co-hosted a one-day conference on women participation in the 17th Indian Election, as part of our Facebook grant project.

The following individuals participated in the conference - Carole Spary (University of Nottingham), Gilles Verniers (TCPD and Ashoka University), Neelanjan Sircar (TCPD and Ashoka University), Priyamvada Trivedi (TCPD, Ashoka University), Susan Osterman (University of Notre Dame), Saloni Bhogale (TCPD, Ashoka University),

Stéphanie Tawa Lama - Rewal (CEIAS-EHESS/CNRS), Tara Krishnaswamy (Co-founder of Shakti - Political Power to Women) and Virginie Dutoya (CEIAS-EHESS/CNRS).



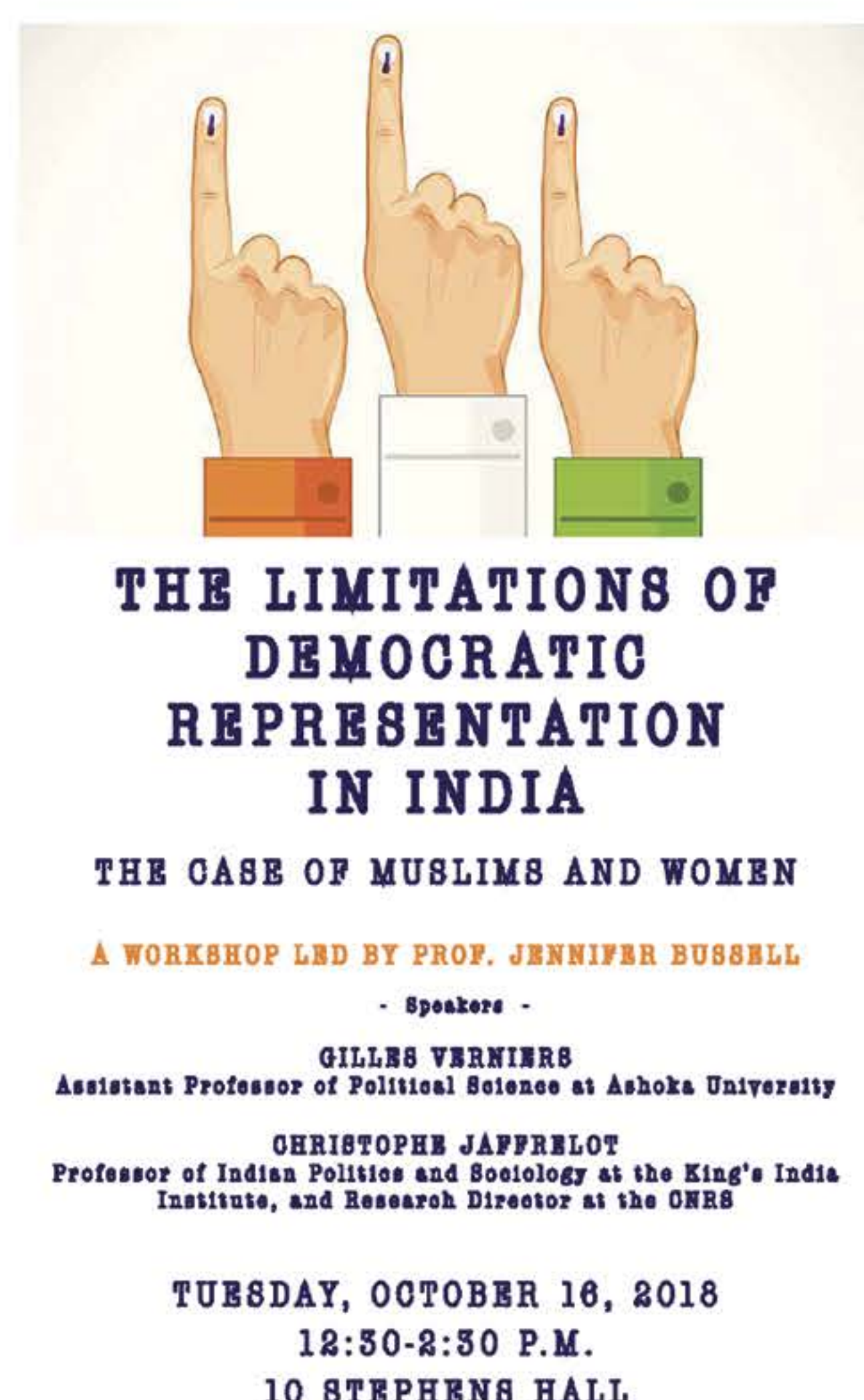
The 17th Indian General Elections: National and Regional Perspectives (LIA SPINPER)

4. LIA-SPINPER (June 25, 2019)

This conference, titled The 17th Indian General Elections: National and Regional Perspectives, was the fourth event organised as part of the LIA-SPINPER project. The following individuals participated in the conference - Aaditya Dar (Indian School of Business, Hyderabad), Carole Spary (Nottingham University), Christophe Jaffrelot (Sciences Po), Gilles Verniers (TCPD and Ashoka University), Jusmeet Singh Sihra (Sciences Po/Hebrew University), Neelanjan Sircar (Ashoka University), Oliver Heath (Royal Holloway, University of London), Pralay Kanungo (Heidelberg University), Sharik Laliwala (Independent scholar) and Vignesh Karthik (King's College). This was supported by the CNRS.

5.2 PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCES

1. July 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "The Representatives We Need: Missing Women in Indian Elected Assemblies. AAS Conference, New Delhi.
2. October 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "Political Data and Indian Elections", Kenyon College, Ohio.
3. October 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "India's Missing Politicians: Women in Indian State Assemblies", University of Notre Dame, Indiana, organized by the Liu Institute for Asian Studies and Keough School.
4. October 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "Assessing Modi's India", Roundtable at the South Asia Annual Conference held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
5. October 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "The Limitations of Democratization in India", University of California, Berkeley organized by the South Asia Institute.
6. October 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "The Transformations of Backward Politics in India: The Case of Uttar Pradesh", presented at Political Economy Seminar at the University of California, Berkeley.



7. October 2018: **Gilles Verniers**, "Studying Indian Politics with Data", San Jose State University organized by the Department of Political Science.
8. November 2018: **Saloni Bhogale** presented at the Grace Hopper Celebration India (organized by AnitaB.org in partnership with ACM India) in Bangalore. The title of her poster was "Computational Methods to understand the Indian Parliament". She was awarded the third prize for her poster presentation.
9. January 2019: **Gilles Verniers** presented "Transformation of Backward Politics in India" at IIM Bangalore.

10. February 2019: **Saloni Bhogale**, "Computational Methods to Understand the Indian Parliament", at the Workshop on AI for Computational Social Systems at IIT Delhi.

11. February 2019: **Gilles Verniers** was part of a panel discussion on "Women in Electoral Politics in the 21st Century" at O.P. Jindal University.

12. March 2019: **Gilles Verniers** presented his work on "The Resurgence of Traditional Elites" at Electoral Dynamics and Contours of the Party System: Run-up to 2019, an event organized by the Department of Political Science, Delhi University.

13. March 2019: **Saloni Bhogale** presented her work "What can Textual Data tell us about Women Representation in the Indian Parliament" at The 21st Century Indian Woman: Representations and Expressions, an event organized by PGDAV College, Delhi University.

14. April 2019: **Gilles Verniers** was a part of a panel on the 2019 General Elections held at Azim Premji University, Bangalore. His presentation was on "King in the North? The BJP's Prospects across the Hindi Belt and Beyond".

Panel Discussion 2.00 - 4.30 pm @ Seminar Hall, 10th Floor, Pixel A Azim Premji University

April 19, 2019

General Elections 2019

Panelists

SARAYU NATARAJAN
Founder,
Apti Institute

RAHUL VERMA
Fellow, Centre for Policy
Research, New Delhi

GILLES VERNIERS
Political Scientist & Co-Director, Trivedi
Centre for Political Data, Ashoka University

Moderator

CHANDAN GOWDA
Faculty,
Azim Premji University

photo: KhasRe.Com

15. June 2019: **Saloni Bhogale**, "Who Speaks for Women in the Lok Sabha" at Sciences Po/CERI, Paris.

16. June 2019: **Gilles Verniers**, "The Profile of the Women Candidates in the 2019 General Elections", at Sciences Po/CERI, Paris.

17. June 2019: **Priyamvada Trivedi**, "A methodological note on designing and executing surveys for women respondents in rural Haryana" at Sciences Po/CERI, Paris.

18. June 2019: **Neelanjan Sircar**, “An ascendant party machine: understanding the BJP’s sweep in 2019” at Sciences Po/CERI, Paris.

19. June 2019: **Gilles Verniers**, “Profile of the new Lok Sabha” at Sciences Po/CERI, Paris.

5.3 TCPD GUEST LECTURES

1. July 28, 2018: RTI Workshop with **Venkatesh Nayak** (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative CHRI).

2. July 31, 2018: Roundtable with **Professor Wendy Singer** (Kenyon College) on field work and data collection.



Professor Wendy Singer (Kenyon College) discussing her experiences of field work with the 2018 TCPD Summer Interns

3. August 1, 2018: Discussion with **Dr. S. Y. Quraishi** (former Election Commissioner of India and Distinguished Fellow at TCPD) on his experiences as an international observer during the elections in Pakistan.

4. September 10, 2018: **Professor Sanjay Kumar** (Director CSDS), on Emerging Trends and Patterns in Indian Elections.

5. September 12, 2018: Talk by **Vijay Dev** (Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi) on Democracy and Electoral Reforms in India.

6. October 31, 2018 - Talk by **Praveen Chakravarty** (Chairman of Data Analytics for the Indian National Congress) on Empirics and Data in Indian Politics.

7. November 21, 2018: Discussion with **Professor Carole Spary** (University of Nottingham) about her book “Performing Representation: Women Members in the Indian Parliament”.



Professor Carole Spary (University of Nottingham) discussing her book

8. December 13, 2018: Web Session on Women in Social Sciences (**Professor Amelia Hoover Green** (Drexel University), **Professor Anita Gohdes** (University of Zurich), **Professor Cyanne Loyle** (Indiana University), **Dr. Jule Krueger** (University of Michigan) and **Ragnhild Nordas** (University of Michigan)).

9. January 30, 2019: **Maansi Verma** (Founder of **Maadhyam**) on Citizen Engagement With Parliament And In Policy Making

10. February 14, 2019: **Dr. Anupam Anand** (World Bank) on Evaluating International Environment and Development Intervention.

11. February 20, 2019: **Professor Raphael Susewind** (Kings College London) on Complicating the ‘Muslim Ghetto’ in Urban India



Professor Raphael Susewind (Kings College London) on “Complicating the ‘Muslim Ghetto’ in Urban India”

12. February 28, 2019: **Sidharth Mishra** (Centre for Reform Development and Justice) on Profiling Delhi Politicians - Lok Sabha Members from National Capital

13. March 14, 2019: **Shantanu Agarwal and Rajat Gupta (Ank Aha!)** introducing the platform “Jaano India”, a Swaniti Initiative

14. March 27, 2019: **Ashok Lavasa (Election Commissioner of India)** on Ensuring Free and Fair Elections

15. April 18, 2019: TCPD Lok-Dhaba Teach-In



Mr. Ashok Lavasa (Election Commission of India)

5.4 CPR-TCPD DIALOGUES

1. July 2018: Interpreting the 2019 elections: Settling a research agenda by Ashutosh Varshney, Pradeep Chhibber, Vandita Mishra, Aditi Phadnis

2. August 2018: A Discussion on Crony populism by Michael Walton, James Crabtree

3. September 2018: Panel discussion on The Long March to 2019: Understanding the rise of farmers movements and its impact on the 2019 election by Mekhala Krishnamurthy, Harish Damodaran, V M Singh

4. December 2018: Panel discussion on Making Sense of the December 11 Results by Neelanjana Sircar, Gilles Verniers, Yamini Aiyar



CPR-TCPD Dialogues: Neelanjana Sircar and Gilles Verniers discussing “Making Sense of the December 11 results”

5. April 2019: Panel discussion on Women Candidates and Voters: Will they shape the 2019 election result? by Mukulika Banerjee, Gilles Verniers, Lipika Kamra, Rahul Verma, Madhu Purnima Kishwar.

6. April 2019: Book launch and panel discussion “Majoritarian State: How Hindu Nationalism Is Changing India” edited by Angana Chatterji, Thomas Blom Hansen, and Christophe Jaffrelot, jointly organized by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), TCPD, Centre de Sciences Humaines (CSH) and HarperCollins India.

5.5 TCPD WEEKLY RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Since September, we have been holding a weekly workshop, during the Common Hour. This workshop has been used mostly internally (although it is open to the Ashoka community) to present work-in-progress, new data, book and article reviews. External visitors have occasionally presented work informally during these workshops.

5.6 MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

TCPD started a monthly newsletter in October 2018. This newsletter goes out to the entire Ashoka community and to individuals who subscribe to them via our website. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide updates on the Centre’s project and research activities, publications and announcements related to summer school, internships and job opportunities.

6. SUMMER SCHOOL AND SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Summer School 2018

6.1. SUMMER SCHOOL

The Centre held the second edition of its summer school on political data, in July 2018. 24 (14 non-Ashoka and 10 Ashoka summer interns) participants spent a week covering various aspects of data-based research, including data gathering, cleaning, management, analysis, and visualization. They were taught to work with mapbased data and the challenges of combining quantitative and qualitative data. All teaching material used is available on TCPD's website.

Instructors: Gilles Verniers, Mohit Kumar, Neelanjan Sircar, Priyamvada Trivedi, Rajkamal Singh, Sudheendra Hangal and Venkatesh Rajamanickam (IIT Bombay).

6.2. SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

TCPD held its third Summer Internship Program. 15 students from Ashoka and beyond spent 6 to 8 weeks assisting on the Centre's projects and on their own research

1. Abhishek Mishra (UG, Ashoka) - scraping and formatting the historical Lok Sabha elections
2. Aniruddhasingh Jafa (UG, Ashoka) - cleaning and formatting the MPLADS data
3. Apoorva Jakhar (UG, Ashoka) - research and writing biographies on individual women politicians

4. Kairvy Grewal (UG, Ashoka) - research and writing biographies on individual women politicians
5. Kshitij Kapoor (UG, Ashoka) - scraping and formatting the historical Vidhan Sabha elections
6. Manini Menon (UG, Ashoka) - research and writing biographies on individual women politicians
7. Tarini Nath (UG, Ashoka) - merging individual level biographical data
8. Shekhar Chatterjee (UG, Ashoka) - scraping and formatting data from Haryana PRI website
9. Sk. Zafar Ali (UG, Ashoka) - scraping and formatting the historical Vidhan Sabha elections
10. Suvanshkriti Singh (UG, Ashoka) - research and writing biographies on individual women politicians

7. NEXT STEPS



OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020

The exposure gained through the coverage of the 17th General Election creates an opportunity to develop further the scope of the work done at TCPD. The incoming year should be dedicated to set the Centre on a path of capacity growth and development of the range of domains covered. This will be the object of a separate development plan document.

In the immediate future, the Centre's priorities are the following:

1. Increase external research funding by applying for grants and seeking funding through partnerships.
2. Build up on the new research projects started this year.
3. Increase the scientific production of the Centre by converting the data work done into research papers, for publication.
4. Organize regular data releases and publish new datasets, beyond the Lok Dhaba electoral data. The first datasets on legislators profile will be made available.

5. Integrate political and socio-economic data on the Lok Dhaba platform.

We are planning to hold the second ECSSI conference in December, possibly in Bangalore. Gilles Verniers and Jusmeet Singh Sihra will present new work on SC politicians' data at the South Asia Conference in Madison, in October. Two LIA-SPINPER events will be organised (agenda to be defined).

We will cover five state elections this year: Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Delhi and Pondicherry.

We will continue to hold Ashoka's summer school, which has become an important outreach instrument. From this year onwards, we will make it financially self-sustaining by charging a reasonable tuition fee.

The continuation of current and new projects require the hiring of an additional data scientist.

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[Narendra Modi’s “two-caste society” is a facade to hide the BJP’s casteist politics](#)

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[Spatial analysis of India’s 2019 elections reveals the unique geography of the Hindu Right’s victory](#)

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Nikita Kwatra

[BJP vulnerable in face of strong pre-poll alliance for 2019 election](#)

Hindustan Times, Aug 03, 2018

By Roshan Kishore

[BJP vulnerable in face of strong pre-poll alliance for 2019 election](#)

The Print, Aug 02, 2018

By Amit Ahuja and Rajkamal Singh

[Congress has hopes from Rajasthan, but it can easily swing in BJP's favour](#)

Hindustan Times, Aug 02, 2018

By Abhishek Jha

Media Exposure

Gilles Verniers and Neelanjan Sircar have been a part of several NDTV segments through the campaign period, mostly on Nidhi Razdan's Left, Right and Centre and Sreenivasan Jain's Reality Check.

Saloni Bhogale was a part of a panel discussion on Tiranga TV on the '[Marginalization of Muslim Votes: Are Political Parties Ignoring The Muslim Population?](#)' moderated by Barkha Dutt on April 28.

Gilles Verniers also participated in a podcast, [Grand Tamasha](#), which is a co-production of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Hindustan Times.