



Political Development in India after the 2019 Lok Sabha Election: Review of Its Depiction in Academic Literature

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Introduction

As a result of the 2014 general elections, India is, for the first time since 1984, again being led by a majority party government (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 141). The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its leading figure, has been governing India since then. The BJP is the leading party in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a coalition of several regional parties (Bhatty & Sundar 2020: 639). Its re-election in 2019 is a clear sign that the BJP is maintaining popularity through its governing strategies. The Hindutva ideology at its base is gaining acceptance in the public sphere in India, and the election in 2014 marked the start of a new era of politics. However, the BJP has been working more offensively to establish their ideological ideas since their re-election, an endeavour shown in their domestic policy decisions and handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, and an endeavour causing considerable change in India's political landscape. Owing to the recent and current nature of these developments, the topic has yet to be sufficiently addressed by scholars. This article aims to address and analyse the existing literature on political transformation after the 2019 Lok Sabha National Election. It has been clear for some time that India is growing more important on the international-political scale, which means that the ideological and political direction India takes is significant for other political actors.



This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of selected research, with the literature included chosen based on the criteria of its currentness, thematic relevance, and depth of argumentation. The sources only include academic articles in English. It only includes literature published between September 2019 and July 2021 in accordance with its relevance for the research question, which is only concerned with literature covering political developments after the Lok Sabha Election in 2019. The literature reviewed in this article has been thematically chosen based on the profound level of authors' analysis of the political situation. Therefore, this review only includes papers in which the authors develop their own distinctive argumentation concerning India's political development since 2019.

Political system change (ideologically)

Since the re-election of the BJP, the political system in India has been in a transformative process, one moving away from a more liberal form of democracy and further from one seeking to provide equal rights for citizens. Some authors argue that India is transforming into a majoritarian state under BJP-rule, either on the way to becoming or already having reached the status of an established ethnic democracy. The majoritarian worldview in India has its roots in Hindu nationalism, which makes the majoritarian tendencies even more problematic as political decisions are thus taken in accordance with Hindu nationalist ideas, with Hindu rights given preference.

Majoritarianism and ethnic democracy under BJP-Rule

The current political strategy the BJP is following is majoritarian, as majority "rights" are being given preference in the democratic system, and 'the new waves of nationalism are empowering the majority to abuse minorities' rights' (Chapparban 2020: 52).¹ The majoritarian worldview in India has its roots in Hindu nationalism (Chhibber & Verma 2020: 144).² Therefore, decisions are legitimised on religious grounds and taken in favour of the Hindu majority and in accordance with Hindutva ideas.³ Various authors agree that India could now be called a Hindu majoritarian state (Girvin 2020: 40; Varshney 2019: 74; Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 141). The shift from majority to majoritarian nationalism has been achieved by means of controversial policies implemented since the re-election, for example the withdrawal of Article 370 in combination with the BJP's rhetoric. Christophe Jaffrelot and Gilles Verniers (2020: 141) go as far as to say that 'the BJP's rise to power has transformed not only the party system, but also the political system itself.'



Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020) describe majoritarianism as a process that gradually creates ethnic polarisation, followed by political polarisation when 'the protectors of the majority' identify those fighting for minority rights as anti-national and 'resort to anti-constitutional means, including violence' as defence (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 142). As already mentioned, Hindutva is the ideology at the base of the BJP agenda and thus views the Hindu religion and culture as superior to other Indian religious minorities and, accordingly, the Hindutva goal to create a Hindu nation is also being utilised to mould a majoritarian identity in India (Leidig 2020: 216). Katherine Adeney (2020: 398) notes that the BJP uses the language of democracy to convey its majoritarian nationalism.⁴ Muslims in India, accordingly, are viewed as threatening both the nation and unity of the majority group, which under the definition of the BJP is "the" nation (ideally, comprised of Hindus).

The argument that Muslims are underrepresented in the Indian political sphere falls under the category of increasing majoritarianism and can be shown to operate on both the state and national level. Muslims have been consistently underrepresented since independence, but what has changed since the BJP gained power is 'a decidedly majoritarian understanding of democracy' (Farooqui 2020: 170f.). Majoritarianism is likely to increase with falling representation of Muslims, as well as a 'culture of impunity in relation to minorities' (ibid.: 171). Adeney (2020: 401) agrees, noting that the representation of Muslim issues on the national level has intensified under BJP rule. However, on the state level, the underrepresentation of Muslims in politics has decreased since the central government has been under BJP rule. Neither Farooqui (2020) nor Adeney (2020) note how this form of underrepresentation can be effectively combatted. With the growing strength of the BJP, it is becoming harder for Muslims to enter or operate on the political sphere, with their issues failing to be addressed to an ever-greater extent as a result.

The BJP treats national and religious minorities as a threat to 'national unity and cultural uniformity' (Girvin 2020: 40). Indeed, India has dropped in most democracy indexes while Hindu nationalists aim to claim hegemony (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 141). Adeney (2020) refers to the National Election Survey, which shows that the number of supporters of the view that 'the will of the majority community (a religious definition) should prevail' has increased to 49 per cent in 2019; in 2014, only 35 per cent supported this view. It is not only BJP voters who responded in this manner, which, in accordance with Adeney's view, shows that 'the "center" has moved "towards a more and more majoritarian and pro-Hindutva platform"' (Adeney 2020: 406f.).



With the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act, India is now making a clear distinction in eligibility of citizenship based on ethnic differences. Julius Maximilian Rogenhofer and Ayala Panievsky (2020: 1400f.) agree, arguing that the 'revocation of minority rights' and 'the tacit support for moral panics and vigilant violence' based on Hindutva views are utilised to decrease Muslim minorities' liberal rights and participation in democracy, as Modi makes an ethnoreligious discourse the central feature of his construction of "the Indian people." Hindu identity is equated to national identity, with religious homogeneity within Hindutva emphasised. The abrogation of Article 370 was the most significant change in the Constitution and demonstrated an increasing tendency towards forming an ethnic democracy (Adeney 2020: 399). India is now making distinctions in citizenship rights based on religion, which is an institutionalisation of the BJP's "othering" of Muslims. This polarising strategy, exposing a tendency towards ethnic democracy, is one of the BJP's most powerful tools with which they aim to structurally implement their ideology and gain support among the population, namely among Hindus.

The BJP under Modi is mobilising around identity politics, purposefully creating a Hindu versus Muslim narrative (Adeney 2020: 397). Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020) go as far as to say that in the time since re-election, six months prior to when they were working on their paper, the government had 'radically changed gears and used the legislative and executive route to transform India into a de jure ethnic democracy.' This is obvious in all domestic policy decisions since the re-election in 2019, and they even add that India has taken 'a turn towards an illiberal democracy' (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 143). Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020: 14) draw an instructive conclusion concerning this in reference to Samy Smootha. In their view, Indian democracy is "ethnic" precisely because it is combined with Hindu majoritarianism.

India has substantially been a liberal democracy, but while the electoral features are still intact, the liberal features of its polity are gradually reaching critical points of danger. If Hindu majoritarianism continuously rises in an unquestioned manner, liberal freedoms will further decline, minorities will become more vulnerable, and India's future will become highly dependent on the judiciary. The concept of secularism established in the Indian Constitution could keep Hindu nationalism from further manifesting in the sphere of politics—but only if the judiciary body adequately enforces it (Varshney 2019: 74-6). Nonetheless, Hindu nationalism will increasingly influence daily life in India, even if it does not openly challenge the Constitution (ibid.: 74). Varshney (2019: 76) concludes that if current trends deepen, 'India will be fundamentally transformed and become a majoritarian and illiberal



democracy.' COVID-19 has not exposed new phenomena but intensified existing trends in Indian politics. Foremost it increased Hindu majoritarianism (Nelson 2020: 12).

Nationalism, right-wing authoritarianism and populism

Liberal democratic structures are becoming more unstable in India as nationalist, populist, and authoritarian tendencies grow.⁵ Various authors see different ideological ideas as more apparent or weak in the current Indian political sphere. While nationalistic tendencies are very distinct, some scholars see them as combined with populist communication styles or modes of creating an "us versus them" narrative. Some more radical choices the government has taken over recent years hint at a growing right-wing authoritarian trend in Indian politics, while some authors even go as far as to call some of the government's leanings fascist.⁶

Eviane Leidig (2020: 221) sees Hindutva as a form of 'ethnonationalism, authoritarianism and chauvinism.' She states that 'contemporary Hindutva actors express Muslim Otherness in a vocabulary similar to European right-wing extremists' (Leidig 2020: 221), which means she bases her argument on Hindutva actors' application of communication. Alf Gunvald Nilsen (2021: 4) calls the 'hegemonic project of the BJP' authoritarian populism and adds that as is typical for this political strain, the BJP has Narendra Modi as their strongman figure at the top, upon whom they rely. He is 'linked directly to the people, opposed to both corrupt elites and threatening Others, and crucially, capable of decisive action and leadership in the national interest' (Nilsen 2021: 4). Sumit Ganguly (2020) directly calls Modi a 'populist with profound authoritarian leanings' (Ganguly 2020: 110). This is reflected in his mode of decision-making, which is abrupt and often without consultation from experts or parliament, whilst dramatic and with the aim of creating a spectacle. Ganguly (2020: 110) and Kiran Bhatta (2020) agree on this, while Bhatta (2020: 636) adds that this contributes to his power to mobilise the people.

What has become clear over the pandemic is that this practice of decision-making is unsuitable for handling such a crisis (Ganguly 2020: 110). Nilsen (2021: 4) argues that this decision-making style demonstrates to the wider public that Modi will act fast when dealing with concerns in the people's interest. Nilsen further maintains that Modi bases his abilities to enforce authoritarian populism, give 'empty neo-liberal promises' and get citizens to stand behind majoritarian policies to create a 'Hindu nation' on politics of trust and belief. Indian citizens, in general, do not judge Modi based on what he delivers but on what he



promises (ibid.: 5). The result is that Modi's supporters have extreme confidence in him and inherently trust that he will keep what he promises before questioning the validity of their own convictions. This makes it hard for opponents to counter as Modi can tell people what they want to hear to gain votes without being sufficiently questioned or held accountable later. This trust gives him extreme power and leverage in the political sphere.

Rogenhofer and Panievsky (2020: 1402) call Modi's politics a 'populist infusion of patriotism and nationalism with religion.' Nilsen (2021: 10f.) argues that, in Modi's form of authoritarian populism, "the people" are constructed in contrast to "the corrupt elites" and "threatening Others," which include both Muslims and political dissidents. Rogenhofer and Panievsky (2020: 1402) argue that the BJP constructs the concept of "the people" only by excluding those who 'are or allegedly support Muslims.' This style of mobilising "the people" and creating such an entity on an ethnic basis is a populist notion. "The elite," as an entity, remains largely unmentioned in the literature. Most authors do not define clearly whom the BJP view as "the elite." One could argue that the current goal of achieving a Congress-free India is the government's clear signal that they are in opposition to "the elite," as the Congress party, which led the government before the election of the BJP in 2014, is portrayed as "the established elite."

Modi's relationship with independent and critical media also reveals populist tendencies as he views them as restricting his 'unmediated and unscrutinised relationship with the "people"' (ibid.: 1406), a likewise clear hint that, under Modi, India is distancing itself further from liberal values. Bhatti (2020: 636) remarks on the notion of free information: 'As with authoritarian leaders elsewhere, the BJP's electoral success rests heavily on misinformation and fake news.' Democratic governance, in general, is becoming increasingly threatened as Modi, by means of restrictions and attacks on the media, tries to keep information from the Indian public with the aim of negating their ability to hold him and his government accountable (Rogenhofer & Panievsky 2020: 1403f.; Mukherji 2020: 102). Ashutosh Varshney (2019: 73) describes that the fourth estate has already recoiled from its role, with only a few remaining media outlets reporting freely and insubordinately about the government. Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020: 145) find that 'many Indian voters are voting not for the BJP, but for Modi at the national level.' It also shows that Modi is a leading figure on his own, and the success of the BJP is dependent mainly on his skills as a populist leader.

As mentioned earlier, Leidig (2020: 216) describes that the goal of building a Hindu nation is central to Hindutva and is similarly used to



build a majoritarian identity in India. Importantly though, she also adds that 'Hindutva actors view violence as a legitimate means to achieving ethnonational territorial claims, and the state has, at times, resorted to violent means.' Varshney (2019: 72) also describes that the government has gone further than jailing dissidents to the point that it 'has extended to vigilante groups murdering journalists and writers, with no forthright condemnation from the Modi government.' This non-opposition to the use of violence for propagation and implementation of one's ideas or even the support of violence by a government, when in the government's interest, is a clear feature of authoritarianism.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang (RSS), a Hindutva paramilitary organisation, continuously influences the BJP, an influence highlighted by Modi still being a member and devoted supporter. As Bhatta (2020: 633) describes, Modi's connection to a cadre-based organisation like the RSS, 'modelled explicitly on fascist lines,' is what distinguishes the Modi government from other 'exclusionary, authoritarian regimes.' Since the re-election, Modi has more openly supported and embraced their agenda. This became visible in the decision to criminalise triple talaq, a form of Muslim divorce, in addition to the choice to diminish Article 370 and the instance when 'the Supreme Court rewarded the RSS/BJP with land to build a Ram temple on the site of a mosque it had illegally demolished' (Bhatta 2020: 636).

The increasing influence of the RSS on national policies is alarming as their agenda is opposed to the secularism enshrined in India's Constitution. If Hindu scripture became part of Indian law, the situation for India's religious minorities would become highly precarious. The greater interest of both the RSS and Modi's increasing willingness to include them and their radical agenda into the decision-making process is a clear hint at the radical political transformation in India away from liberal democracy with equal rights for citizens. Furthermore, Bhatta (2020: 636) describes institutional subversion in India, a crucial feature of right-wing regimes, as positions in almost all institutions are increasingly filled with pro-BJP actors, with others acting in an obliging manner either out of fear or the hope of benefitting on a personal level. This structural step ensures that the BJP's radical, exclusionary policies are both passed and implemented.

As Leidig (2020: 235) notes, the re-election of the BJP in 2019 is a clear sign that Hindutva has become mainstream in India and thus reached a point of normalcy and legitimacy. She predicts that this is a trend in Indian society likely to continue. Mukherji (2020: 102) holds a similar view, considering the 'attack on civil liberties, federalism, Parliament, and independent regulatory institutions.' He predicts that



stopping the country from passing 'the point of no return' by confronting the authoritarian politics the BJP will enforce with such a weak opposition that must act in the realms of the system enforced by the BJP is going to be immensely challenging (Mukherji 2020: 102). Aiyar and Tillin (2020: 122) refer to the current composition of the parliament and see it as likely that 'centre-state relations' are going to impact 'any efforts of co-ordination among non-BJP opposition parties.'

At present, the BJP does not hesitate to physically act against opposition leaders to silence them, to make them less of a competition by pressing charges against them, to put them under house arrest or arrest them (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 144). The BJP often uses the rhetoric of 'antinationalism' when pressing charges against critics. The sedition laws give them the chance to raise charges against dissidents (Varshney 2019: 73). These vaguely formulated and questionable laws in the Indian Penal Code give people in power the possibility to randomly declare others as acting or attempting to act against the government's ideas and will. This makes laws particularly ineffective or dangerous when a government that does not respect democratic structures is in power.

The government could eventually use laws to undermine India's liberal democratic principles entirely. Rogenhofer and Panievsky (2020: 1405) note that democracy is threatened because of the 'bypassing of representative institutions through decision-making by ordinance, requiring neither formal debates nor parliamentary votes.' This form of decision-making, which ignores all democratic institutional rules and power structures, clearly shows that India under Modi is leaning more towards authoritarian rulership.

BJP influence on the judiciary

The growing influence of the BJP on judiciary power means that constitutional changes become more distinctly possible and viable, potentially resulting in a legally established hegemony for the BJP. Increasing political pressure is being put on the judiciary in India, where 'judicial review is an integral part of the constitution' (Varshney 2019: 73). The Supreme Court, which 'has long been regarded as a pillar of human rights and democracy,' has recently shown a 'growing tendency to ignore excesses on the part of the central government' (Mukherji 2020: 99). Bhatti (2020: 636) describes that the Supreme Court did not hear charges against controversial policies decided under the BJP-government. This is, as mentioned earlier, partially a result of more pro-BJP personnel being assigned institutional positions (such as in the Supreme Court) and additional pressure being put on those already in



office, who give in, out of fear or opportunism. Rahul Mukherji (2020: 99) also describes chief justices who now have the power to 'marginalize justices with contrarian views' becoming dominant in the Court. If courts in India, especially the Supreme Court, do not independently decide on the validity of legislative acts and executive divisions of government, Indian democracy is in severe danger.

During the pandemic in particular, the 'hollowing-out of judicial review' has become a more severe threat to the democratic system of governance (Mukherji 2020: 102). The Supreme Court has proven to be submissive and deferential towards the BJP-led government (Mukherji 2020: 99; Ganguly 2020: 111). An example of this can be seen in the Court's response to the media and NGOs that made the public aware of migrant workers' precarious situation under Covid-restrictions. The Court issued a mandate that called the media to 'reference the government's covid-19 information' and, through that, warned the media of behaviour that would further reveal information regarding the government's decisions or judge it (Mukherji 2020: 100). As Varshney (2019: 73) concludes: 'Modi vows loyalty to the constitution, but his government's relations with the judiciary are fraught,' and it seems that in India, independent legal judgment (of the Supreme Court in particular) can increasingly not be seen as a body upon which one can rely.

Political system change (structurally) and party system change

Centralisation of power

Scholars agree that the re-election of a majority BJP government will cause far-reaching changes for India's federal order as it will have implications in the constitutional, administrative, and fiscal spheres. With the Lok Sabha elections in 2019, a new phase of single-party dominance began. The BJP's aim for a united, Hindu nationalist India, also called a Hindu "rashtra," powers ongoing aspirations towards centralisation (Aiyar & Tillin 2020: 117f.). This Hindu "rashtra" (which translates to "nation") is the goal of Hindutva, thus making Hindutva a tool for nation-building (Leidig 2020: 216). The idea is opposed to that of federalism, which in contrast is viewed 'as a device to accommodate multiple ethnic and religious identities' (Aiyar & Tillin 2020: 124).

The "One Nation" project aims for 'a more unitary, Hindu nationalist conception of Indian identity' and includes taking central power in matters that earlier belonged to the states (ibid.: 117f.). Brian Girvin (2020: 39) also argues that, at present, the BJP is more flexible than one would have guessed based on their ideological background. Trying to win over Hindu votes, they have partially adopted alliances with local



parties in regions where Hindutva is not as accepted. These strategies are all applied with the ulterior motive that all regions should become politically integrated 'into the national community.' Girvin (2020: 27) foresees for the future that this majoritarian nationalism is leading 'away from pluralistic possibilities to a unitary nation-state model.'

The Modi-led BJP has ignored both parliament and state governments in the decision-making process for measurements to reduce the spread of Covid-19, even though public health constitutionally is part of the jurisdiction of the federal states (Mukherji 2020: 95, 102). During the pandemic, emergency relief was centralised, which made the state governments dependent on the centre's discipline (ibid.: 94f.). The central government is purposefully making state governments financially dependent on the centre in order to gain more control and thus more power over them. This also means that the BJP might have the power to decline a state financial support in the future when such a respective state government contests decisions taken by the national government. Part of this also concerns the politicisation of vaccines. Modi promised some state populations free vaccines during his regional election campaigns, a promise that might lead to tensions among the states and therefore be problematic for the coordination of the federal system as previously understood (Chatterjee et al. 2021: 362f.).

Party system change

Scholars draw two complementary conclusions that hint at a changing party system in India since the re-election of the BJP in 2019. First, the BJP has been influencing the parties on the federal state level via acts of centralisation. Second, the BJP influences other parties' political agendas. The Modi government has managed to 'occupy the centre-ground in Indian politics, which has moved decisively rightward since 2014' (Girvin 2020: 37). Despite this, Aiyar and Tillin (2020: 121) hold that the BJP made progress in the 2019 elections in the fight against regional parties though these parties continue to be a threat. It would therefore be presumptuous to say that the BJP has already established hegemony and changed the party system, at least when talking about the party system at the federal state level.

BJP influence on party structure in federal governments

Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma (2020: 132) argue that the elections in 2014 were the start of a 'fourth party system in India.' The outcome of the 2019 elections consolidated this party system, a system led by and built around the BJP, a system in which the Congress Party is largely



marginalised, and a system which results in regional parties losing further to the BJP in their states. Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020: 145), on the other hand, consider that the national and regional election results show a marked difference, with the two scenes seemingly "delinked." This could imply that voters do not necessarily support the BJP's political ideas and ambitions in general, but rather Modi as an individual. For Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020: 141), this leaves, 'the question of Hindu nationalist hegemony' in terms of a long-term perspective open.

On the other hand, Yamini Aiyar and Louise Tillin (2020: 118) argue that there has been a trend towards more similarity between the parties elected to the government at the state and the central level, albeit not uniform. They predict a further centralisation of power, referring to the growing consensus between parties in government on the state level and the central government. This 'will make the BJP's internal party organization an increasingly important vehicle for centre-state dialogue' (ibid.: 121). Therefore, they comprehend the situation from a long-term perspective, stating that though there is still a difference, but in contrast to earlier election results the centre and the federal governments are now moving closer together. 'India's competitive political landscape has entered a new phase of single party dominance, and with this the BJP as the Center has pushed ahead more boldly with its One Nation agenda' (ibid.: 118).

BJP influence on other parties (and their political agendas)

Trying to attract more voters, other parties in the Indian political sphere have changed their agendas because they fear 'majoritarian backlash and countermobilization' (Adnan 2020: 171). After the 2019 Lok Sabha election, developments have shown that opposition parties increasingly share the BJP's ideological ideas, this behaviour is partly due to the BJP's ability to make 'its opponents believe that the values they are meant to defend and embody have little currency among voters, and therefore their defence of these would lose them votes' (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 148).

The BJP, with growing power, has managed to make Muslims unimportant in the calculations for elections, even parties that traditionally represented issues important to Muslims. It is here where the BJP's success lies: They make 'Muslim issues invisible from the mainstream political discourse' (Farooqui 2020: 171). This is a decisive success for the BJP and their goal of establishing hegemony on the national level. If other parties approximate their ideology, it would then become questionable for voters where differences lie, and it might seem unreasonable to vote for a party other than the well-known and strong



BJP. It would also become difficult for citizens who do not agree with the BJP's political ideas to find a strong party that supports an alternative agenda, making it harder to overrule the BJP via electoral means.

Milan Vaishnav and Jamie Hinton (2019: 29) maintain that India is entering an era of a new political party system, one they refer to as the fourth party system. They argue that the BJP is a system-defining party as the recent political formation of other parties can be seen as a reaction to the BJP's standing. Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020: 149) reason that opposition parties are better coordinated amongst each other, particularly because they must unite to have at least some power against the BJP. The BJP is directly targeting regional parties as these serve as a consistent opposition, and the BJP's goal is an 'opposition-mukt Bharat,' an opposition-free India (Aiyar & Tillin 2020: 121).

Girvin (2020: 73) notes that, after the 2019 election, he believes the country to be closer to Amit Shah's goal of a Congress-free India, referring to India's now second-largest party on the national level, The Congress Party, and the BJP 'may also be in a position to ignore the opposition altogether.' This can be seen in connection to the notion that the BJP has managed to get opposition parties to move to a position ideologically closer to them, which means that the BJP, accordingly, are already achieving an opposition-free India. Many state governments that are led by parties opposed to the BJP have said that they would, for example, not implement the discriminating National Register of Citizens in their respective states. It is questionable whether they will stick to this decision when it becomes a resolution, but it shows that they are not entirely allied to the BJP's ideology (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 147f.).

Domestic policies

As already mentioned, the different decisions the BJP-led government has reached since their re-election have had a significant influence on the changing political environment in India and are the topic of many scholarly discussions. In academic literature, many arguments for a changing political environment in India are based on recent developments in domestic politics. The Citizenship Amendment Act, enacted in 2019 together with the planned National Register of Citizens, is seen by many as a clear sign of the exclusionary nature of current political decisions. Most scholars agree that the domestic policy decisions taken by the BJP since 2019 reflect the BJP's goal to gain hegemonic power in India, with some even going as far as to state that their use of legislative and executive means has already transformed India into a legitimate ethnic democracy.

*Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens*

The government's decision to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in August 2019 is a way to redefine citizenship in an ethno-religious way. In combination with the planned nationwide implementation of the National Register of Citizens, the Act would signify the (planned) exclusion of Muslims in India based on their religious orientation. These are, therefore, policy decisions that show the ethnic path India's democracy has taken under BJP rule. According to Chapparban (2020: 57), 'the CAA is an amendment of the "Citizenship Act of 1955" which will modify the conditions required to obtain Indian citizenship from "period of stay of foreign immigrant (5 years)" to "a religion of a foreign immigrant."' Because people who identify as Muslims are unmentioned in the law, it excludes Islam as a religion. 'It also changes the definition of "illegal migrant" from "a foreigner who has entered India without valid passport or other legal document" to "a religion of the migrant"' (ibid.: 57). Implementing the National Register of Citizens would leave people without documentation substantiating their Indian citizenship stateless. As a result of the CAA, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian refugees 'who fled persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before December 2014' would have the possibility for a faster path to regain their Indian citizenship (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 143). This means that those who get left off from the National Register of Citizens—except Muslims—could re-apply for fast-processed citizenship through the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Sajaudeen Nijamodeen Chapparban (2020: 52) describes the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens as tools being used 'against the Muslim minority in India in the process of Hinduization of the country.' Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020: 143) agree by stating that implementing the laws is paramount to an explicit 'exclusion of any Muslim refugee or of refugees from other neighbouring countries.' Both changes in the Indian Legal System are tools for political discrimination by the right-wing leadership to target the Muslim minority population with the goal of nation homogenisation (Chapparban 2020: 56f.). The Register of Citizens has already been implemented in the state of Assam, which led to the exclusion of 1.9 million so-called "doubtful citizens" in Assam's 33 million-strong population (Jaffrelot & Verniers 2020: 143).

Chapparban (2020: 58) also notes that the government takes a defensive tone when the laws are criticised on the international stage, often pointing to the fact that 'selective discrimination' is an 'internal matter' that thus forbids intervention from outside of India. What is happening in Assam hints at what might happen nationwide should the



National Register of Citizens be implemented in all states. The Indian government would disadvantage people based on their religion, and this ethnic discrimination is veritably alarming for India's future as a liberal democracy.

Chapparban (*ibid.*: 56) sees another intention the BJP seems to be pursuing with the act: they want to strengthen the Hindu community and expand Hindu voters. The implementation of the act would give all Hindus the opportunity to apply for citizenship in India. Therefore, as both (Bhatty 2020: 632f.) and Adeney (2020: 400) note, the CAA makes religion an essential differentiation in decisions on citizenship, which is a violation of the secular nature of the Indian state, embedded in the Constitution. Girvin (2020: 37) sees the Modi government in this context as promoting new legislation that 'redefine citizenship to reflect its ethnoreligious perspective.' This is a sign that India is increasingly turning into an ethnic democracy.

The passing of the CAA was met with nationwide protests, which took place right before the pandemic hit and were later influenced by measures. Farooqui (2020: 171) argues that the protests are especially noteworthy, as they were organised mainly by civil society organisations who managed to unite Muslims and Hindus under a shared agenda in opposition to the laws. This shows that there is still resistance against ethnoreligious discrimination among the Indian population. However, public resistance now comes at a price. Bhatty (2020: 633) notes that the 'government has managed to criminalise protest,' because, in her view, the way student protests are handled by the government show 'the BJP's attempts to establish hegemony.'

The police's attacks on universities, through arrests of and charges against students in connection with the protests, have caused more dissent and disaffection with the regime. The repressive behaviour of the government, restricting topics of discussion in universities, has led to increasingly widespread protests among students throughout almost all parts of the country, a situation which was met by even more surveillance of campuses by the police (Bhatty 2020: 641). These proceedings against the protests are authoritarian. The right to and freedom to protest and freedom of speech are no longer to be taken for granted in the Indian public sphere, which means that democratic rights are no longer granted equally to all citizens. Again, it is essential to note that many state governments do not want to implement the National Register of Citizens in their respective states, even if it becomes a national law (Chapparban 2020: 57).

*Abrogation of Kashmir's Autonomous Status (Article 370)*

In the BJP's understanding, a unified India should include the region of Jammu in addition to Kashmir. Until August 2019, India's Constitution contained Article 370, ensuring India's only Muslim-majority state, (Jammu and) Kashmir, autonomy. This was the condition under which Kashmir joined India soon after partition in 1947 (Varshney 2019: 72). The decision to abrogate Article 370 in August 2019 reflects the BJP's commitment to achieving a unitary nation-state on what they claim is Indian territory (Girvin 2020: 37). The abolition is a constitutional change and is thus problematic, as it expresses the power the BJP has when it aims to enforce its ideas. It exemplifies both the support and power the BJP has, both in India's upper and lower houses of parliament.

Varshney (2019: 72) notes that this legislative development was foreseeable as this had been on the BJP's agenda for some time, but the way it happened was unexpected. Kashmir was made subject to extreme non-democratic measures to silence protesters and politicians in the state government. After six months, most restrictions had to be lifted after the Supreme Court had reviewed them, but the government subsequently used anti-Covid measures as an excuse to reintroduce restrictions (Nelson 2020: 6). Matthew Nelson (2021: 7) notes that '[t]he Indian government in Kashmir adopted an "emergency" model focused on a suspension of democratic norms.' Varshney (2020: 72) sees as especially problematic the circumstance that the region of Jammu and Kashmir did not get the status of a federal state but instead as union territory under the direct rule of the government in New Delhi. The BJP thus not only managed to position itself as opposed to Muslims by removing the independence of India's only Muslim majority state but also gained more power as the state has come under complete control of the parliament in Delhi.

Scholars present different names for the aim of the BJP to unify India. Aiyar and Tillin (2020: 117) refer to the BJP's slogan of 'One Nation,' which lies at its ideological base and 'its approach to governance.' They also talk about the concept of 'One Nationism' across cultural and political domains, which followed the abolition of Article 370 (Aiyar & Tillin 2020: 132). This can be seen as a straightforward project of centralisation and levelling down. Leidig (2020: 235) mentions the 'Hindutva ambition to restore Akhand Bharat,' which translates to "undivided India." Girvin (2020: 39) concludes that 'the decision on Jammu and Kashmir delivers on a key commitment by Hindu nationalism, demonstrating that government office does not necessarily moderate a party with strong ideological commitments.' The BJP thus



sticks to its fundamental ideological ideas even in office when faced with everyday political decisions.

Most recent developments – Indian politics during the pandemic

The most recent developments in domestic policy happened in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic. Much late academic work has focussed specifically on the implications of pandemic politics on India's current and future political situation. What has been happening in relation to the pandemic is partly due to a dire economic structure and unbearable conditions for the working poor. However, it is also a result of India's poor health care system. Looking closer at the measurements taken, it becomes clear that the dire conditions during Covid-19 in India are primarily due to the government's response, linked to the BJP's authoritarian populism and their goal of reaching hegemony (Nilsen 2021: 3-10; Ghosh 2020: 519; Ganguly 2020: 111; Rahman 2020: 134).

Pandemic politics as a tool to silence dissidents

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The government used the cover of pandemic measurements to silence dissidents by stopping protests and arresting opponents to spread fear in relation to anti-CAA protests (Ghosh 2020: 529). This has happened in cooperation with the Delhi Police, which spread conspiracy theories about the demonstrators (Nilsen 2021: 11f.). Additionally, the government has used the opportunity to further exterminate checks on its authority by collaborating with government-friendly courts to prosecute critics and avert their criticism (Mukherji 2020: 102). Social distancing came in time to stop protests against the CAA and the National Register of Citizens, which became impossible to organise during the lockdown. However, the Modi-led government even went as far as to imprison more dissenters based on sections of the Indian Penal Code while the public sphere was in the exceptional state of the national lockdown (Ghosh 2020: 529).

The arrests have been used to spread fear and silence citizens. Raj and Subramanian (2020: 34) also note that human rights activists and student leaders were arrested during the lockdown period, and Sabina Yasmin Rahman (2020: 134) concludes that, accordingly, the Indian Supreme Court is no longer providing a 'rights-oriented judicial review.' The severity of this has become more visible in the exceptional state of the lockdown, in which people have been distressed. This makes the



exploitation of the situation by the government even more dangerous, as it builds mistrust.

Amit Shah, the Minister of Home Affairs, who has direct control over the Delhi Police, used the cover of the lockdown "to persecute leading anti-CAA activists" (Nilsen 2021: 11f.). The Delhi Police claims that the violence in North-East Delhi in 2019 resulted from a conspiracy among protesters against the CAA. Assertions by those who testified have been altered to frame the situation differently, and 'evidence related to violence and incitement to violence by Hindu nationalists has either been suppressed or disregarded' (ibid.: 12). This is a clear sign that India is no longer a state where liberal freedoms are given to all. The modification of witness statements means that the possibility to discover the truth and win a case has become difficult for those opposed to the government. The people whom the government wants to silence cannot rely on the judiciary to defend their rights anymore.

Mukherji (2020: 92f.) notes that the BJP is using its structural power to repel criticism by journalists, activists, and others, especially concerning the consequences of the lockdown for certain groups. The media, which has been struggling to report freely ever since the BJP gained more power, has faced even more significant challenges during lockdown (ibid.: 100). These are apparent authoritarian features, as these are ways to establish a strictly ordered society, in which violations are severely punished, political opposition is not tolerated, and existing law is disregarded.

The framing of Muslims ("The Muslim virus")

BJP politicians used the frame of Covid-19 to spread conspiracy theories about a "Muslim virus," blaming the spread of the virus on Muslims, which has led to an increased atmosphere of anti-Muslim sentiment and hatred. Different scholars have found that Modi-friendly media have spread false accusations and fake news with the support of the government (Nilsen 2021: 13; Rahman 2020: 134f.; Ray & Subramanian 2020: 39). Nelson (2020: 4) describes how Muslims were framed directly by the government. Ray and Subramanian (2020: 39) mention that certain events created an environment that allocated blame for the virus, a virus that spread simultaneously, susceptible to manipulations. They refer first to the peaceful sit-in protests in Delhi against the CAA, mainly by Muslim women, second to the election campaign launched by the BJP, and third to the communal violence at the end of February 2019 in Delhi. The BJP has not been treating all citizens equally but has used the pandemic to marginalise and stigmatise



Muslims further. This polarisation tool is especially fruitful in an already charged environment, such as during a pandemic.

The Tablighi Jamaat's international conference, which took place in New Delhi in late February 2020, became representative for all Muslims, who were then made responsible for the spread of the virus and labelled 'the national enemy' after the event was declared the first "super-spreader" in India. (Nilsen 2021: 13; Rahman 2020: 134-6). As Rahman describes, Muslims were seen as 'the ultimate threat to majoritarian social solidarity' (Rahman 2020: 136). Nilsen (2021: 13) concludes in connection to this that 'such scapegoating aligns with the efforts of the Modi regime to produce a Hindu nation out of a secular constitutional democracy.' It is important to note that only Rahman (2020: 134) mentions that the framing of Muslims was not only used to create a common enemy and blame Muslims but also to distract from government failures. The creation of a common enemy is a tool often used by populists and in a nationalist setting. In a situation like the one caused by the pandemic, people tend to look for someone to blame, and the BJP exploited this notion.

The national lockdown

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The national lockdown, introduced in March 2020, was a way to centralise control under the cover of pandemic measurements, staged as a public spectacle, that helped the BJP to gain power, bringing them closer to hegemony, while putting the citizens more at risk both economically as well as from a health perspective. The lockdown was 'imposed by invoking the Disaster Management Act 2005,' which has allowed for complete centralisation of decision-making and gave the Union Government the power to override any other law (Ghosh 2020: 522). It was introduced in March 2020 (Nilsen 2021: 2), and the Indian public was left in complete uncertainty about details, with only four hours to prepare (Raj & Subramanian 2020: 4). The enforcement was possible by means of propaganda strategies and police violence, showing clear populist and authoritative signs.

The government decided to go into lockdown without any consultation of the opposition parties or the federal state governments and imposed most measures in ignorance of advice from economic and health experts (Mukherji 2020: 92f.; Nilsen 2021: 3f.). Mukherji (2020: 93) notes that these actions are a severe threat to the stability of India's federal system and 'threaten to further undermine some of the main checks on the BJP's power.' The Indian government used the lockdown as a strategy before introducing other pre-steps and then had to lift it when cases were still rising because it became economically impossible to sustain. The



government also failed to use the period to take measures to deal effectively with the pandemic after the lockdown and even made it more difficult for state governments to take measures. A situation erupted, which Ghosh (2020: 522) has called 'centralisation, without co-ordination.' The government used the situation of distress, which the pandemic caused, for its gains, to further push centralisation and take power from the federal state governments.

The lockdown was part of Modi's political spectacle mode (Nilsen 2021: 3f.). Ray and Subramanian (2020: 11) argue that instead of taking well-considered steps, the Indian government preferred to enforce a lockdown to gain international eminence. Some scholars give Modi full credit for staging this type of public spectacle and his ability to mobilise "the people" which became evident, for example, when people were asked to clap their hands and light lamps during the lockdown. The fact that his requests have been followed is, for Bhatta (2020: 636), a sign of affirmation of his leadership abilities. V. Sujatha (2021: 263) sees the lockdown more positively and argues that the sudden announcement of the lockdown had an extreme impact on the 'health behaviour of the people by etching the virus in public memory.' She argues that this strict measurement brought immediate awareness of the severeness. This resource can be used in similar situations in the future. Without any pre-steps to stop the spread, the announcement of the lockdown was a way to create a spectacle that would cause worldwide attention. Modi has been striving for public attention, including on the international scale. This step was thus a clear example of his attempts to re-invent the Indian political sphere around him as a person.

Centre State intervention is intended to gain visibility. Implementing an immediate lockdown without delivering compensation for those in economic distress was only possible as a result of propaganda strategies, while slower responses are less of a "spectacle" and harder to implement (Ray & Subramanian 2020: 11). Police violence against citizens not confiding to the restrictions has increased, and distressing scenes have occurred, especially in connection with migrant workers trying to get to their homes in rural areas directly after the lockdown announcement (ibid.: 33). Both propaganda and police violence as means of enforcement are clear signs of populist and authoritative governing.

India's vaccine nationalism

India strategically uses its position as the world's largest producer of vaccines to follow its version of vaccine nationalism. By this, it extends



its geopolitical position and redirects attention from its failures in addressing the pandemic. The developments around vaccines in India have only been investigated in-depth by Niladri Chatterjee, Zaad Mahmood, and Eleonor Marcussen (2021). India gave rushed emergency approval to two vaccines early in the process. The push for fast approval was stirred by nationalistic will to have a vaccine produced in India as one of the first on the market. It has led to controversy about the efficacy of vaccines and stirred distrust even towards other vaccines by different producers (Chatterjee et al. 2021: 363).

Nonetheless, India has a unique position in its 'vaccine production, distribution, and procurement globally,' which has been seen as a way to distract from Modi's failure to address the unprecedented crisis (Chatterjee et al. 2021: 358). Unlike most richer countries, which have tried to hoard vaccines for their population, Modi has stated that vaccine production in India will benefit everyone in the fight against Covid-19, not just Indian citizens. He has promised doses as grants to India's neighbouring countries, thereby covering the ground in the area that usually relies on China (ibid.: 360f.). This is a big step for India's geopolitical position in this area and, therefore, a structural move. It shows that the BJP is trying to establish India in a new position of power in the surrounding area. However, what has not yet been explored in academic research is how the Indian public has received and responded to this decision. It seems contradictory for a government with clear nationalistic tendencies not to put its citizens first in this type of matter. The "gift-giving" attitude might help the government in international politics but might hurt them domestically as India struggles with a low vaccination rate.

Future handling of Covid-19

The creation of spectacle-oriented, ill-considered decisions taken by Modi and the government considering the pandemic may have extreme long-term economic and societal health consequences (Ganguly 2020: 110). Ganguly (ibid.: 138) sees India approaching a significant public health challenge, where the way the central government exerts power becomes the new normal. He describes the need of the state 'to overcome its repressive tendencies and structural bias' to be able to deliver on the health and welfare needs of all citizens.

Nilsen (2021: 15) describes a similar need for change but sees the citizens as the actors that must voice 'discontent with Modi's neoliberal Hindu nationalism' and connect this with 'struggles against capitalist exploitation' and a striving 'for recognition, secularism, and democratic rights' so that India can have a 'progressive post-Covid future.' He,



therefore, argues that not only resistance to Modi's Hindu nationalist politics is necessary, but also an attempt to address other structural problems (which are also, at least partly, a result of Modi's neoliberalist agenda over the past years). Nilsen (*ibid.*: 13) questions whether the BJP can maintain its hegemonic position in Indian politics after the second wave of the pandemic (which hit India while he worked on his paper). The second wave has not been tackled in any way as seriously as it could have, with instances of the government ignoring expert advice. The incompetence of the Modi regime concerning the pandemic has sparked discontent even within the ranks of the BJP and the Hindu nationalist movement in general.

Conclusion

The purpose of this review was to explore and discuss the arguments and trends in the academic literature concerning India's political development since the re-election of the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha Election. In the academic work included in this paper, there are two different main trends of argumentation concerning political developments in India since the re-election of the BJP. The first argues for change in the political system, both ideologically and structurally, while the second argues that India is in the process of changing the party system. While these are different conclusions, they are not exclusionary, with some authors arguing the case for both.

There are two main trends inside the argumentation for change to the political system: One for ideological change, and one for structural change in India's political system. Inside the argumentation for change to the ideological system, some authors conclude that India is transforming into a majoritarian state under BJP-rule, some going as far as to argue that it is already an ethnic democracy; other authors conclude that India is taking a nationalist path that is increasingly more right-wing authoritarian, with some authors seeing this trend combined with typical populist tendencies. They all agree that since the BJP was re-elected into office in 2019, India can no longer be regarded as having a liberal democratic system. Two complementary arguments have been made in the academic literature for change to the party system. First, there is the argument that the BJP is continuously influencing the party system structure in the federal governments, primarily by trying to centralise power.

The differing results between national and state elections show that many Indians vote for Modi as a leading figure on the national level whilst not necessarily supporting the BJP's ideology in general. Scholars agree that the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 marked the beginning of a



new era of single-party dominance and that this will continuously lead to extensive changes in India's federal system. There are still huge differences between the composition of the central government and the federal state governments. However, scholars argue that, seen from a long-term perspective, the central and the federal governments are moving closer together, with the BJP also influencing parties at the federal state level.

The second argument concludes that the BJP is influencing other parties internally, especially their political agendas. Parties opposed to the BJP adjust their political agendas and change their appearance with the aim of luring voters and gaining votes back from BJP supporters, a problematic development for citizens who do not share the BJP's views as it gets hard to find another comparably large party for which to vote and a situation that makes it more difficult to overrule the BJP through electoral means.

Those trends in political system change and party system change appear in domestic policy decisions, the BJP's institutional influence, and the current developments concerning the pandemic. Something demonstrated consistently throughout all the argumentations is the BJP's goal to establish hegemony in India. This is the main driver behind their actions and, therefore, the reason why India is changing both its party and its political system. The current government is purposefully trying to undermine the separation of powers in the state or the system of checks and balances. This has been combined with the support of the spread of false information, which has led to false accusations against Muslims, who have been stigmatised by the BJP, with them using polarisation as a means to achieve their political gains.

The analysis of existing literature on political change in India since the 2019 election suggests that further research from differing perspectives is needed. Existing literature has focussed heavily on the policy decisions and actions taken by the BJP and developments within the existing political establishment, for example, the relationship between the BJP and the RSS. What is lacking from the picture is an analysis that focuses on citizens including those who only partake in the political life in elections and those who actively try to exert influence, like civil societal actors. Quantitative studies considering people's ideas for India's political future might be helpful in determining what India's population wants. Qualitative research is needed to obtain a clear insight into civil society projects, student organisations, and protesters' views of the current situation. The existing literature I considered lacks insights into what impact opponents and dissenters have had on political change.



Although the changing party landscape and how other parties adapt their political agenda are described, what is lacking is perceptiveness concerning opposing parties' influence on the political transformation and their adjustment. Future research should put other actors than the BJP in focus. The BJP's or the current government's actions are predominantly placed in the centre of analyses, with other actors considered only in terms of their relation to the BJP. It is essential to change perspectives because it could provide more precise insights, especially concerning India's political future.

A change of perspective might also include looking at responses by international political actors. How are surrounding countries responding to developments in India? It would be insightful to consider international political organisations and India's international cooperation partners. Another interesting view from outside of India would also be that of the Hindu diaspora, which is often distinctively socialised, living in other parts of the world but nevertheless holding a close connection to India. Further research might want to find answers to different questions. What exactly do dissidents of the current political strategy want for India's future? What does the Muslim community want for India? How are developments in India perceived outside of India? What are the responses of different actors besides the government? How do they evaluate the situation? In what position do they see themselves and with what responsibility?

Furthermore, there is a gap in research when it comes to what one might call solution-focused research. It is essential to examine how the political transformation process driven by the BJP in government may be combatted to understand what India's future might hold. For example, as regards the underrepresentation of Muslims in institutional positions, it would be insightful to see suggestions of how this could be tackled in the future by different political actors—or if there even is the will or the possibility to change this state of affairs. Further research is also required on the decision to build the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, in particular concerning the potential tensions and communal violence it might cause and the symbolic power it has. To date, it has been only mentioned and not examined in detail. The same applies to the newly implemented Labour Laws.

As already mentioned, the currentness of the topic means that not a lot of research has been conducted to date. Current research mainly relies on other research and, based on that, interprets the changing situation, drawing also on newspaper and magazine articles. It is hard to recognise separate trends in the field of academic research on political developments in India. Most authors do not clearly define what terms



their research utilise, leading to the lines between the different concepts often becoming blurry. Some authors generally refrain in large parts from categorising and leave their findings open for interpretation. This makes it harder to compare different arguments and have a clear overview of what various authors think about India's political standpoint. Researchers must be careful when using concepts, especially those concerning ideology. A clear definition is often helpful, something that was lacking in most of the research I encountered. The pandemic has caused a new problem for researchers, as field research has become almost impossible. It must also be noted that research in the field may become more challenging to conduct as the political situation in India gets more charged and both access to information and the conducting of research become more challenging.

The further development of the pandemic will influence how India's political environment develops over the coming years. It will be beneficial for future research to examine elections on the federal state level, as they might predict the preferences of the Indian population. At present, in particular, at a time when the pandemic has caused a new challenge for the country which will have severe political consequences, the next national election in India is scheduled for the beginning of 2024 and will likely show how far the BJP has come in its project of establishing hegemony. As Mukherji (2020: 92) puts it: 'The world's largest democracy is sliding toward competitive authoritarianism, and the covid-19 pandemic has sped it along the way.'

Endnotes

¹ Majoritarianism is the idea that any final decision should be taken by the numerical majority of a population, meaning that only the majority can determine the outcome of a decision (Capaldi 2016).

² The fundamental idea of religious nationalist movements is based on morale, which starts in the election campaign and later defines the following government methods. The basis of many movements of this kind is the idea of defining national identity differently so that certain religious minorities are excluded or marginalised (Vaishnav 2019: 5).

³ Nationalism is an excessive awareness of the importance and the value of one's nation, thereby glorifying it and downgrading other nations. It goes hand in hand with the will to shape the whole world according to one's ideas (Thurich 2011: 39).

⁴ Ethnic democracy is a product of ethnic nationalism, in which a majority group is defined through shared ethnic features. The state in an ethnic democracy identifies ethnic differences and based on these distinguishes an ethnic majority that becomes 'the core ethnic nation' (Smootha 1997: 199). Ethnic democracy is somewhat contradictory, as it combines both democratic principles. However, it does not grant the rights this entails to every citizen but differentiates on ethnic principles and thus favours the ethnic majority while discriminating against minorities (ibid.: 199f.).



⁵ The core of populism is the divide between "the elite" and "the people", with often a strong leading figure at the top (Moffitt 2020: 28). Populists claim legitimacy because they speak for "the people," who are seen as the "silent majority," that must be mobilised against the corrupt elite (Canovan 1999: 4f.).

⁶ The extreme right believes that democracy must be replaced, and violence against those proclaimed as the enemies of their unity is seen as the ideal legitimate means (Berntzen 2020: 33); Authoritarianists believe in a strictly ordered society, and in a stern punishment of violations of that order (ibid.).

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