

## **Technocratic-Populism in India: How Modi and the BJP Maintain Their Vast Winning Coalition**

**Abstract**

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The politics of both technocracy and populism are viewed as hostile to representative democracy and pluralistic politics. The study of technocratic-populism in politics has proliferated in recent times, with researchers examining how both seemingly contradictory ideas combine to form a distinct political outlook or even a political logic. Furthermore, one has emerging literature examining the adverse impact of technocratic populism across various democracies. Applying Friedman's paradigm of *democratic technocracy*, and Ostiguy and Moffitt's performative-relational approach towards populism, this study explores technocratic-populism in Indian politics. The administration of Narendra Modi and the BJP has been widely studied and critiqued for their authoritarian, Hindu nationalist, and populist politics, with concerns over increasing religious polarization of the public and democratic backsliding. This study employs a demand-supply model to show the importance of technocratic-populist appeal in Modi and the BJP's broader political practice and discourse in impressing the voting public. With the use of survey data on the demand-side of politics, involving the examination of public opinions and attitudes, and the analysis of the political, discursive, and rhetorical practices of Narendra Modi (as the face of the BJP) in particular, this study shows that technocratic-populism plays a major role in the BJP's political discourse, even playing a complementary role to their traditional Hindu nationalist appeal.