

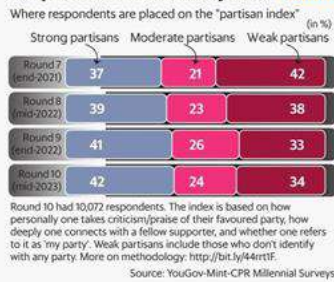


# Political fissures alive, no consensus in sight

BY RAHUL VERMA AND MELVIN KUNJUMON

India's political space continues to be marked by polarized viewpoints on various matters of national debate, with little consensus in sight. Past rounds of the biannual YouGov-Mint-CPR Millennial Survey have given ample evidence of this phenomenon, as did the latest one. The 10th round of the urban-India survey, held in June, didn't find any notable increase in the already-intense partisan feelings, but it showed that the supporters of the ruling party and the newly formed Opposition alliance have vastly different views on India's progress relative to China's, New Delhi's G20 presidency, and population control.

## Partisan feelings in India have deepened in the last two years



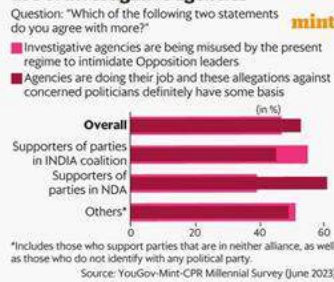
## 1 Partisan Fissures

AROUND 42% of the respondents showed a strong attachment towards their favoured political party, while a quarter emerged as "moderates". These shares have not moved much since the previous round but the share of weak partisans has declined sharply from 42% in mid-2021 to 34% now, showing that urban Indians have become more vocal in their politics. "Weak partisans" are those who are either weakly attached to the party they claim to identify with, or do not identify with any party at all. "Strong partisans" tend to take criticism or praise of their favoured party personally, deeply connect with fellow supporters, or even refer to the party as 'my party'. The survey had 10,072 respondents across over 200 cities and towns. Around 42% of the respondents were born after 1996 and 41% were born between 1981 and 1996. Mint conducts the survey in association with survey partner YouGov India and Delhi-based think-tank Centre for Policy Research (CPR).

## 2 Government vs Opposition

THE ALLEGED misuse of investigating agencies by the ruling party to target political opponents has repeatedly featured in the public discourse. The popular view on this issue is divided. Over half of the respondents (53%) believed that the agencies were merely doing their job and the allegations of corruption against the targeted politicians would definitely have some merit. The rest picked the option that the agencies were being misused to intimidate the Opposition. Predictably, the response differed along political lines. Since Bharatiya Janata Party supporters were the largest group (39%), their views shape the overall sentiment (see Plain Facts, 23 August 2023). The share of those siding with the agencies went up to 61% among supporters of parties in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). But even among supporters of parties in the Opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), the share dropped no further than 45%—a minority but a significant one.

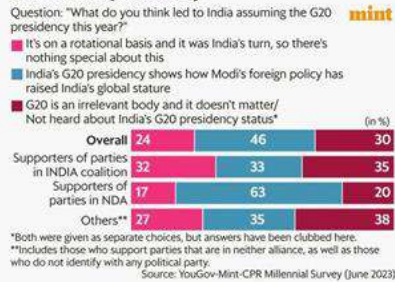
## Urban India polarized on 'political' use of investigative agencies



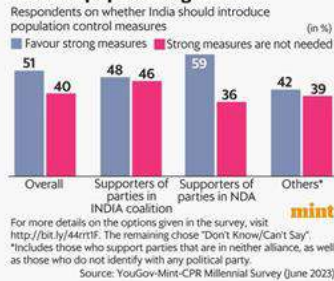
## 3 Global Stature

INDIA IS set to host the annual summit of G20 nations next month. The survey asked people to place India's debut presidency of the G20 bloc in the context of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy. Although the G20 presidency is determined on a rotational basis, as many as 46% of the respondents attributed it to Modi's efforts in elevating India's stature. This indicates the ruling party's narrative-setting advantage. Just one in four picked the option that there was nothing remarkable about it since it was India's turn. The rest (30%) either did not know about the topic, or found the presidency of G20 bloc inconsequential. Respondents who support the NDA parties were more likely to believe the G20 presidency was a result of Modi's foreign policy efforts, with 63% holding the view. Among those who support Opposition parties, only one-third held a similar view.

## Around 46% see Modi's foreign policy behind G20 presidency



## NDA supporters seek strong measures to check population growth



## 4 Population Check

INDIA has surpassed China to become the most populous nation. In this context, the survey asked respondents whether India needed strong population control measures such as China's now-withdrawn one-child policy or restricting the right to contest in elections. Half of the respondents called for strong measures, while 40% did not see the need. Here too, significant variation existed between the two political camps. Around 59% of those who support the NDA parties called for strong measures, while the share was 48% among INDIA supporters. Among those who support non-aligned parties, around two-fifths of the respondents called for strong measures. Overall, more than 40% respondents felt India was doing worse than China on population control. The survey was largely themed around India's newfound status as the most populous nation, and a bulk of related findings were released in an Independence Day special feature in Mint (see "The population puzzle: What Indians feel", 15 August 2023).

## 5 India vs China

THE SURVEY also asked respondents to compare India's progress with China's. On economic growth, startup push, and the adoption of technology, NDA supporters were more likely to assess the country's progress in a positive light. More than half of them assessed India's progress to be better than that of China in all three aspects. The share was roughly one-third among other respondents. Moreover, one-third of the respondents across the spectrum viewed the progress to be similar to that of China. The time-series data on partisanship that we collect in the next few rounds will help us understand better whether partisan voices in India get shriller as elections draw near and become muted post-elections.

The authors are associated with CPR, New Delhi. More stories, raw data and methodology details about the survey available here: [bit.ly/3NBU6b3](http://bit.ly/3NBU6b3).

## Urban Indians have a partisan lens in their assessment of India's growth

