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Abstract title:

How representative is our democracy ? Relating wealth and electoral performance in recent Indian general elections

Abstract:

Using open databases (publicly available on the Web) of assets declarations made by candidates contesting in the Indian general elections held over the last decade, we show that the distribution of their wealth follows a universal scaling form which is independent of the year, as well as, the different regions of the country, and, most surprisingly, even the political parties to which the candidates belong. Using an entropy measure, we propose a novel method for identifying the intensity of electoral contest in a constituency (i.e., how many cornered contest it was). We also observe that the set of winners, as well as, that of the “serious candidates” (contenders) have asset distributions which deviate significantly from those of the remaining candidates. This is a worrying aspect given the supposedly representative nature of electoral democracies, particularly in light of the recent worldwide rise to power of xenophobic populism.