Democratic Revival – an Agenda for Action

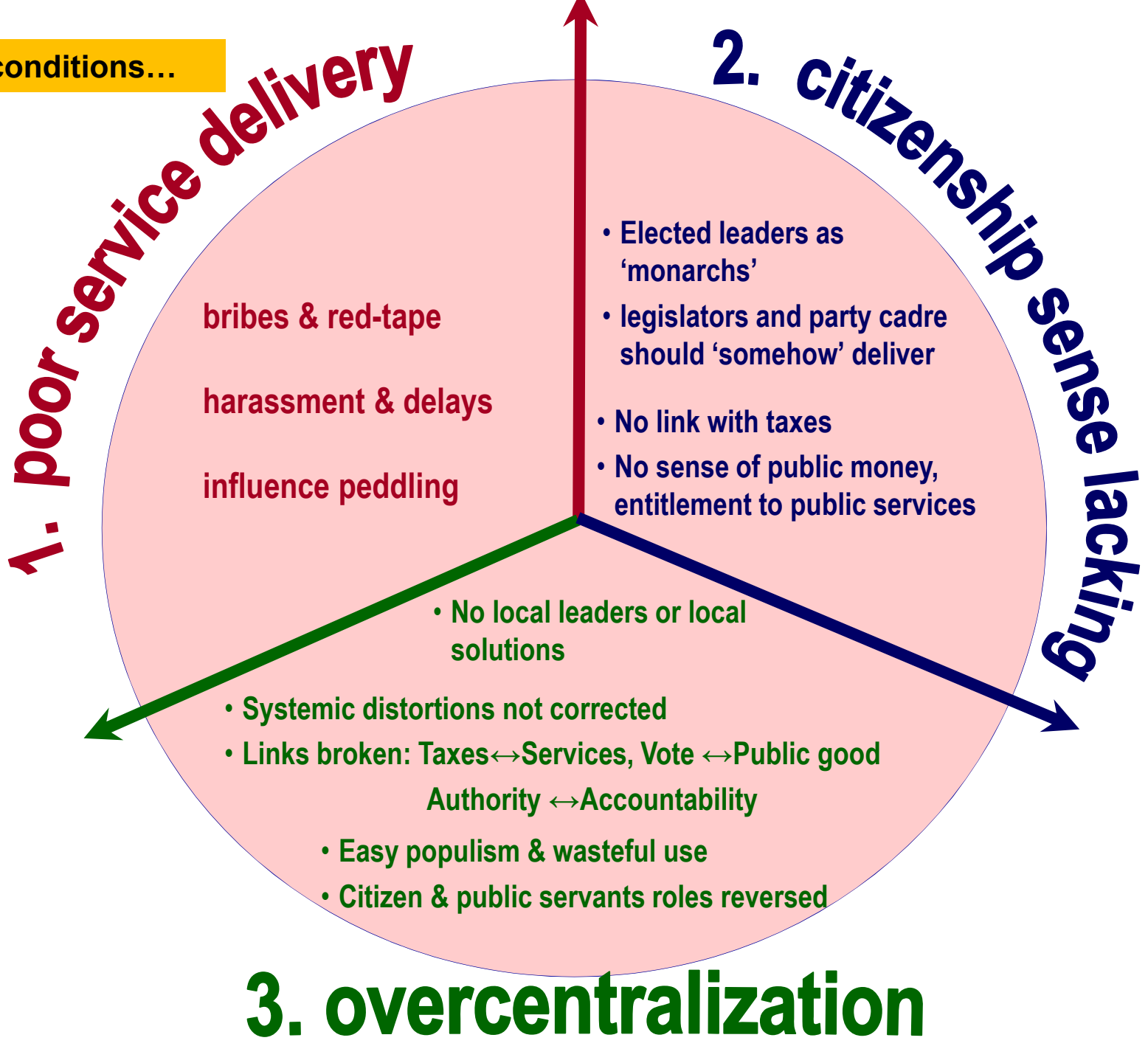
9th November, 2012; Mumbai

by

Foundation for Democratic Reforms

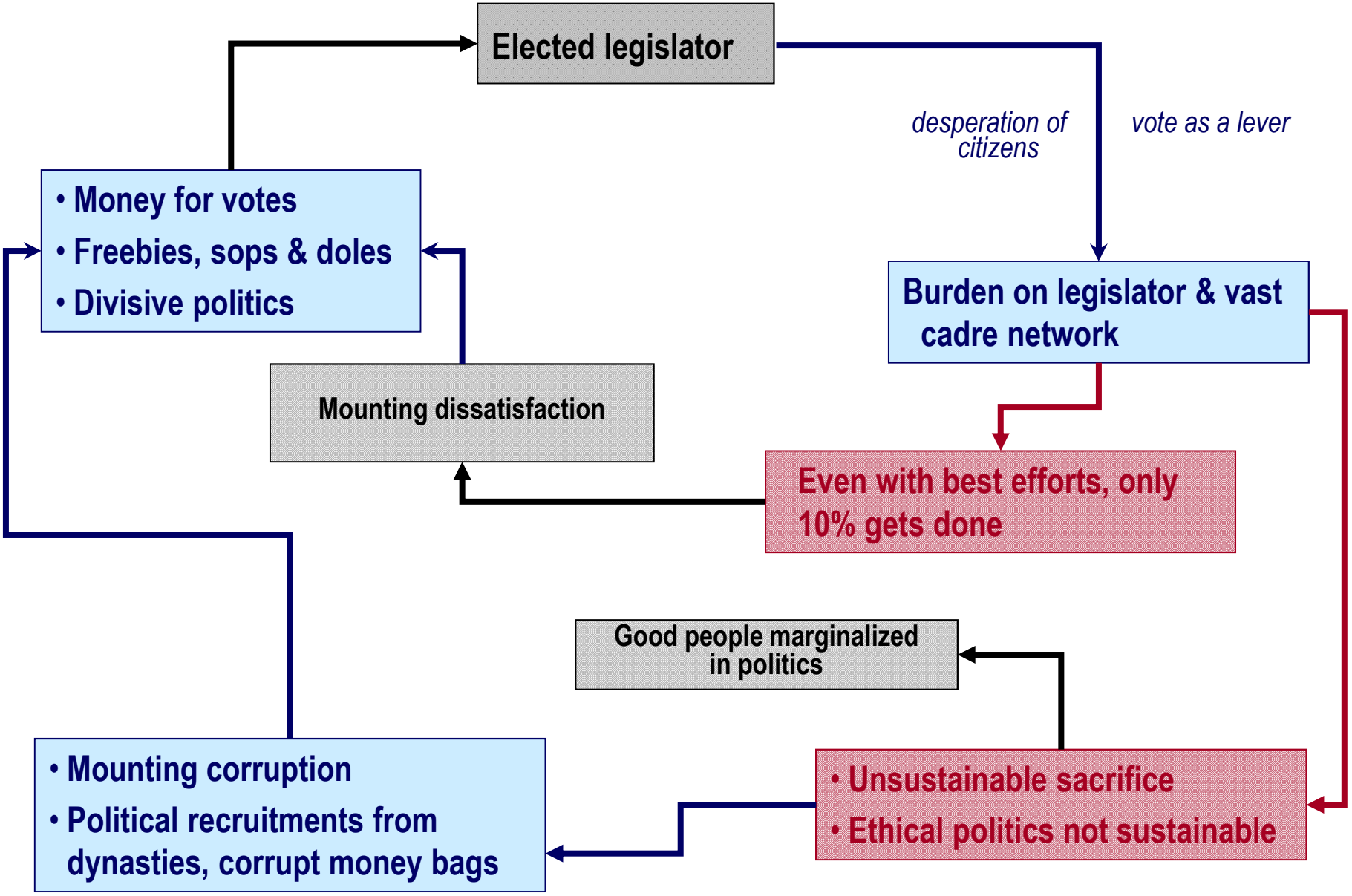
Flat No. 801 & 806, Srinivasa Towers, Beside ITC Kakatiya Hotel,
Begumpet, Hyderabad – 500016 Tel: 91-40-23419949; fax: 23419948
email: drjploksatta@gmail.com

The initial conditions…

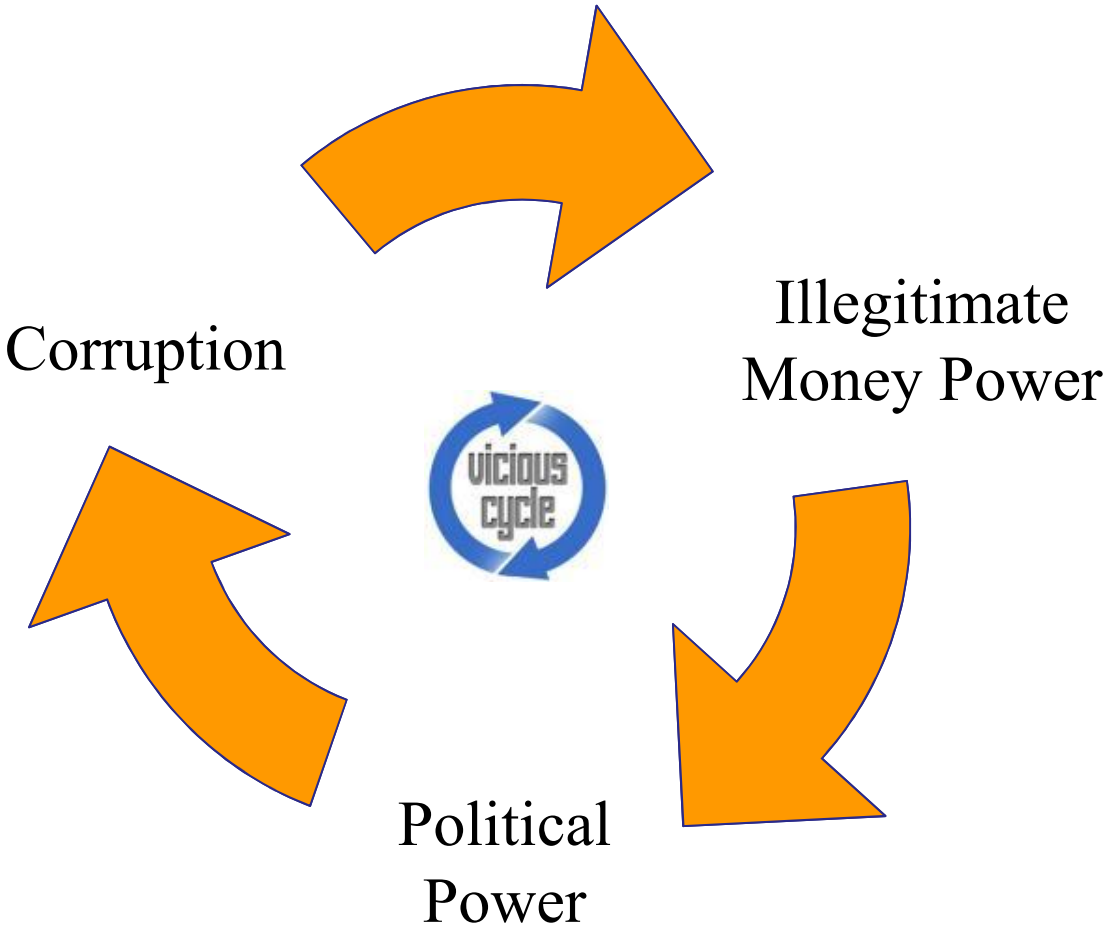


As a consequence…

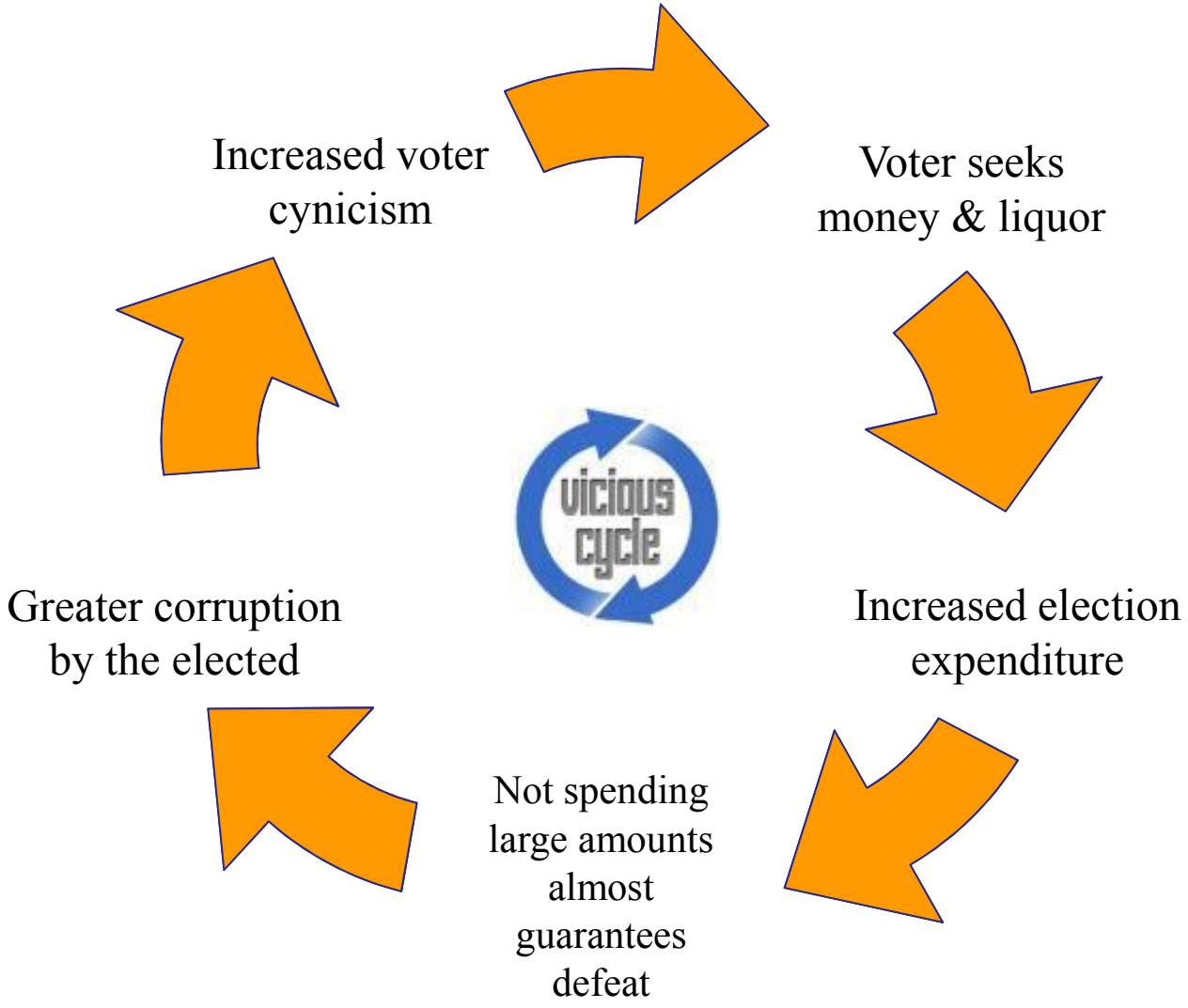
- excessive dependence on elected legislators
- vote as a lever for getting even the smallest thing done
- party cadres have to devote vast amount of time at local level
- great sacrifice expected from legislators and political workers


Elected legislator
desperation of citizens
vote as a lever
• Money for votes
• Freebies, sops & doles
• Divisive politics
Burden on legislator & vast cadre network
Mounting dissatisfaction
Even with best efforts, only 10% gets done
Good people marginalized in politics
• Mounting corruption
• Political recruitments from dynasties, corrupt money bags
• Unsustainable sacrifice
• Ethical politics not sustainable

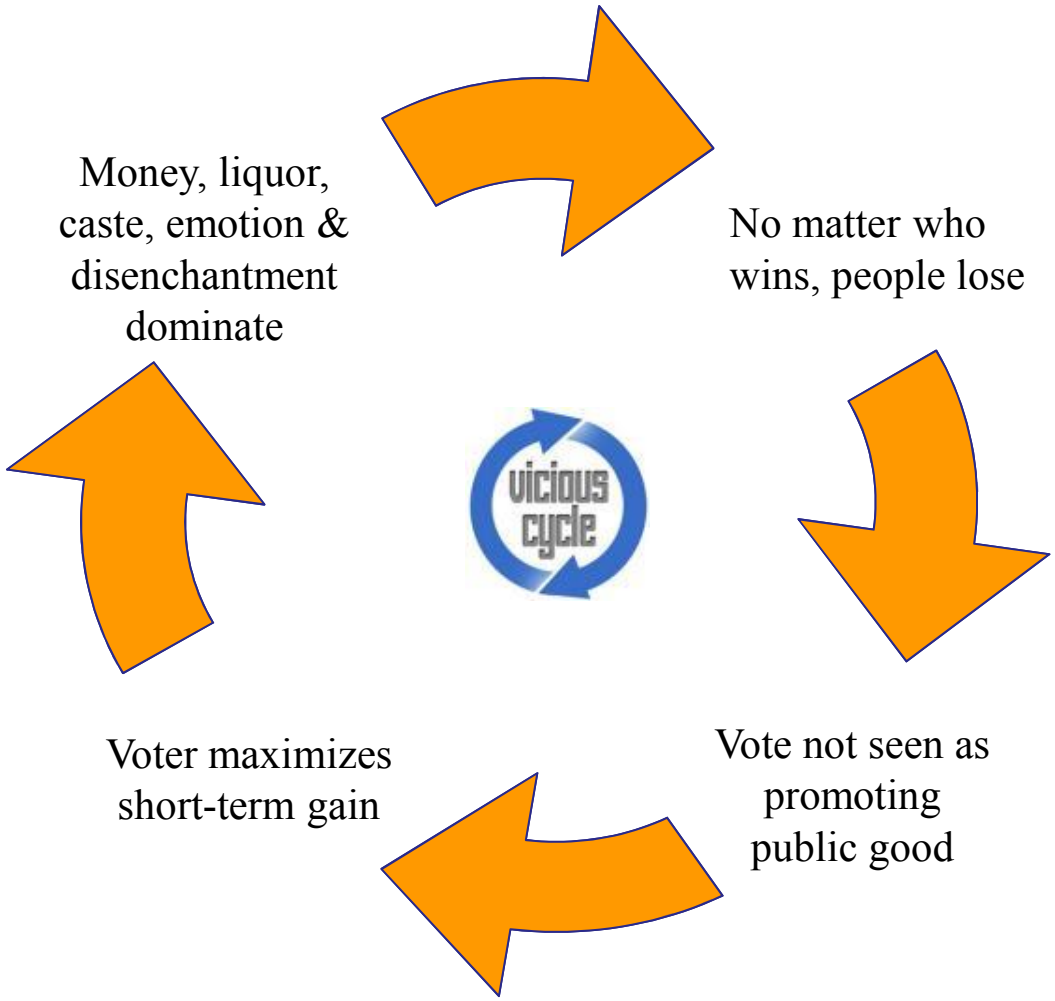
Inexhaustible demand for illegitimate funds



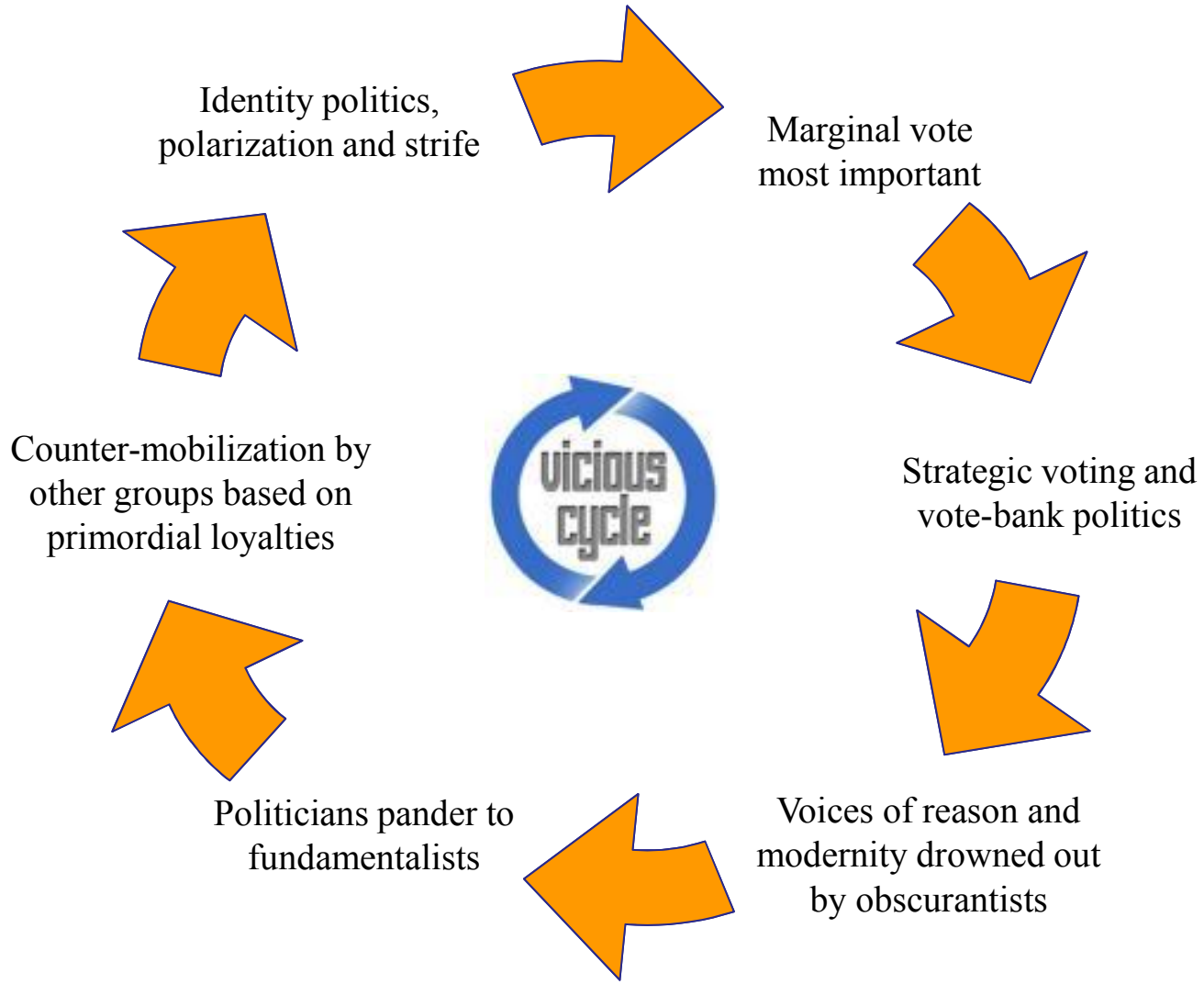
Most election expenditure is to buy votes



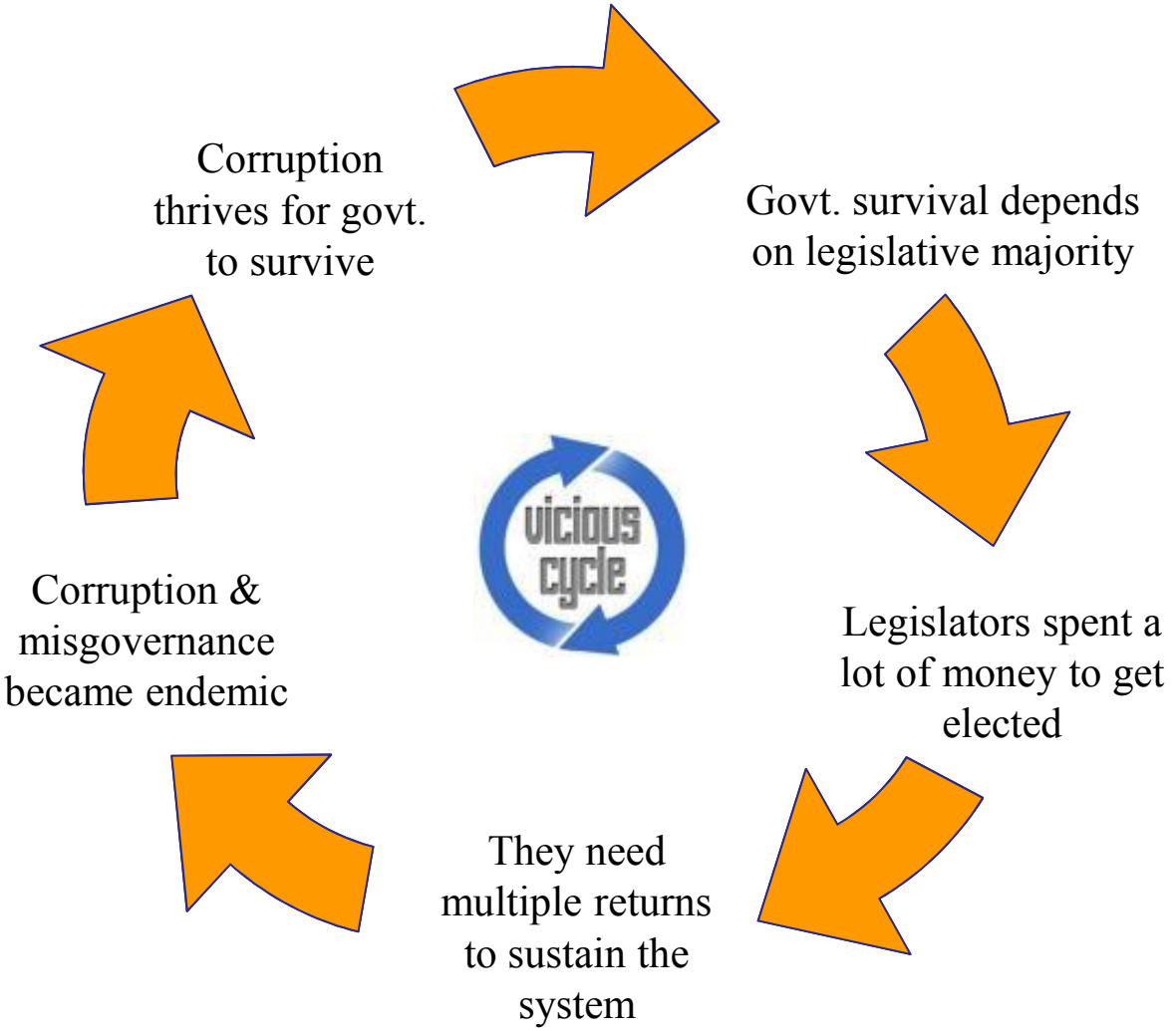
Vote de-linked from public good



Social divisions exacerbated

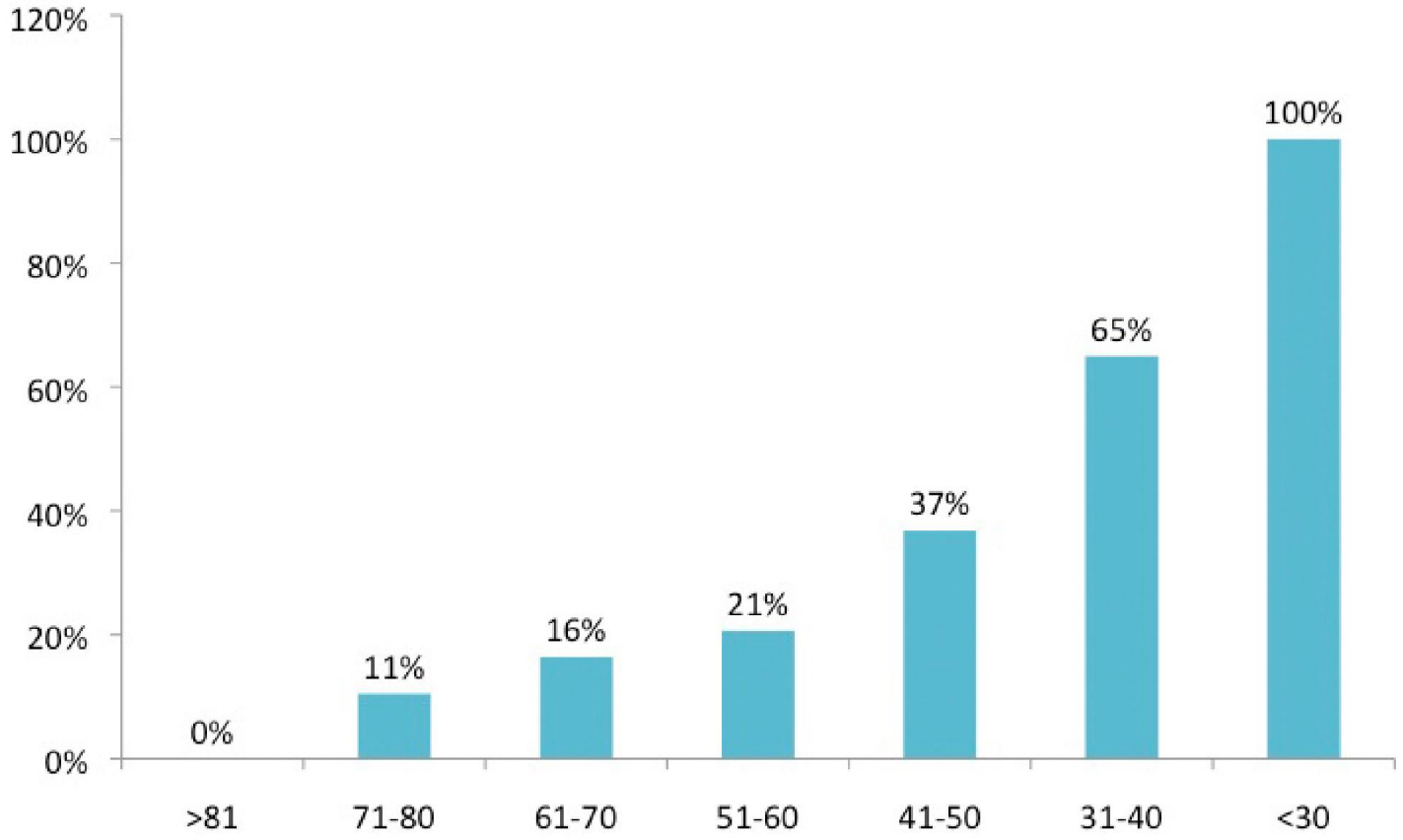


Political survival and honesty became incompatible

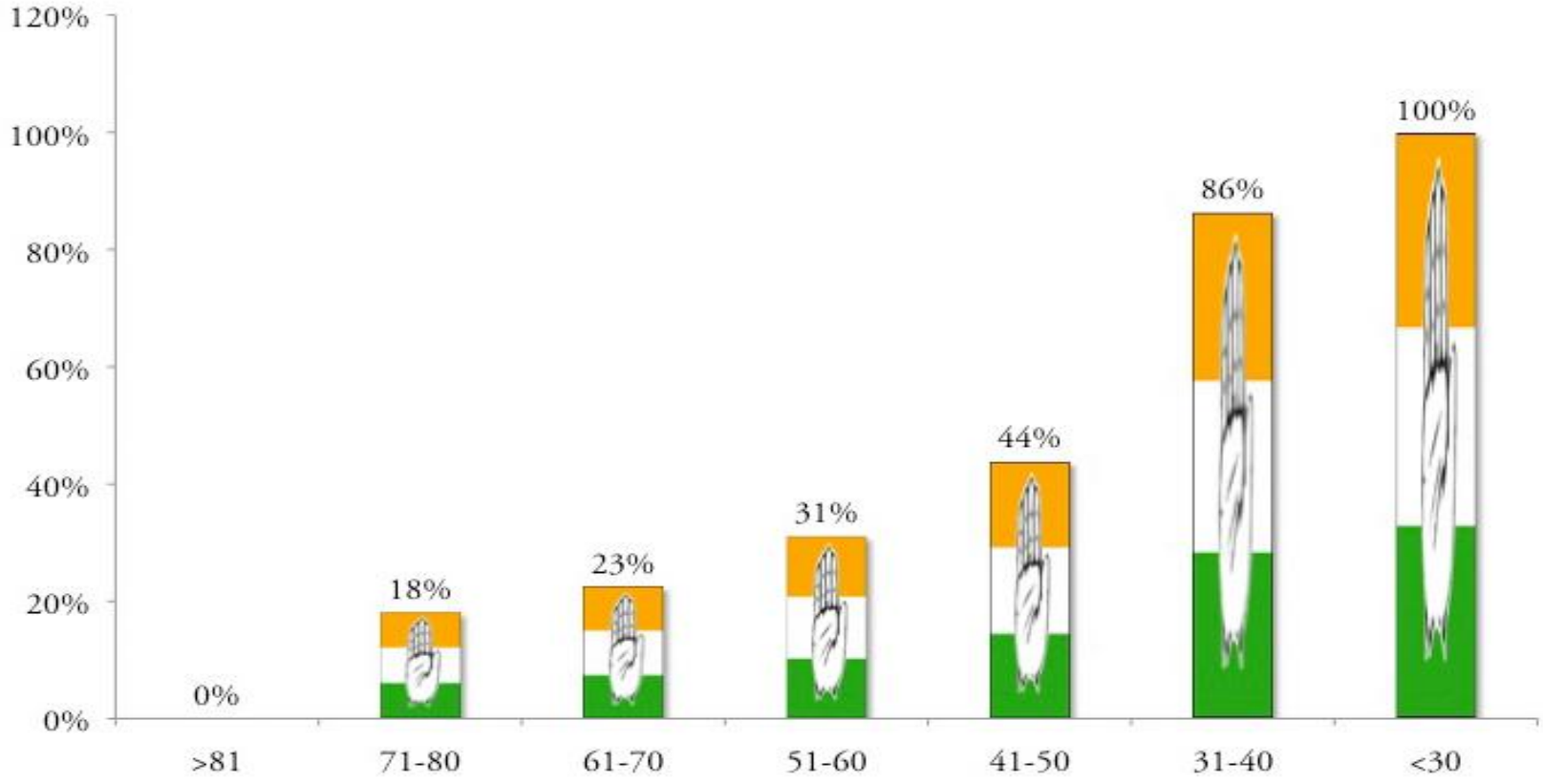



BARRIERS
vote BUYING
party MANAGEMENT
political RECRUITMENT

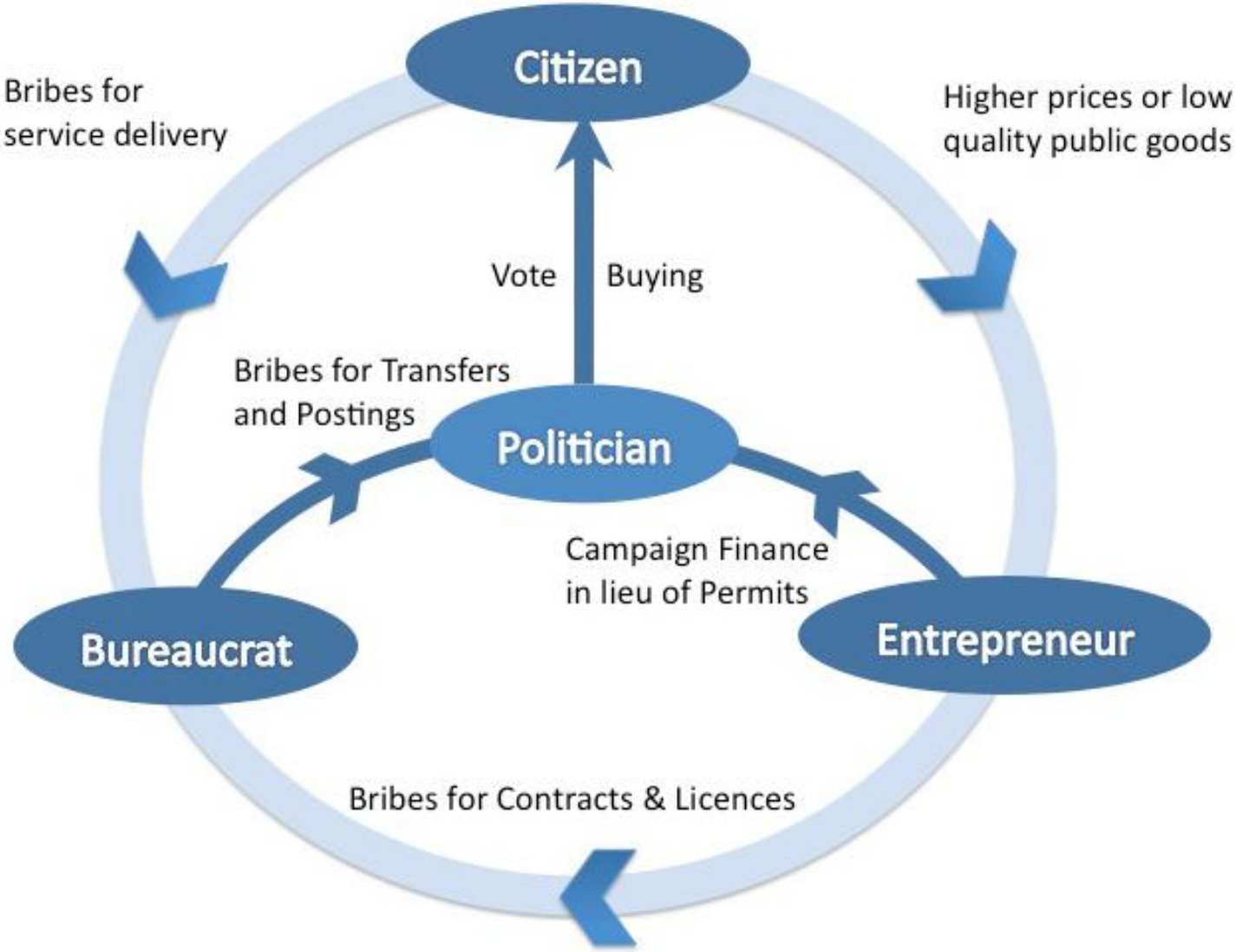
PERCENTAGE OF HEREDITARY MPs IN 15th LOK SABHA BY AGE



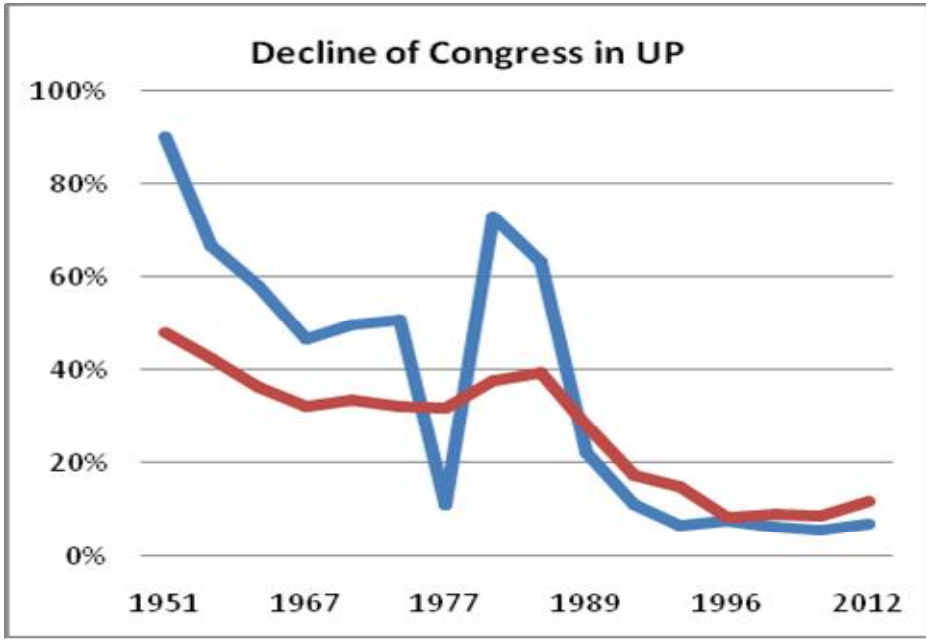
PERCENTAGE OF HEREDITARY MPs IN CONGRESS BY AGE

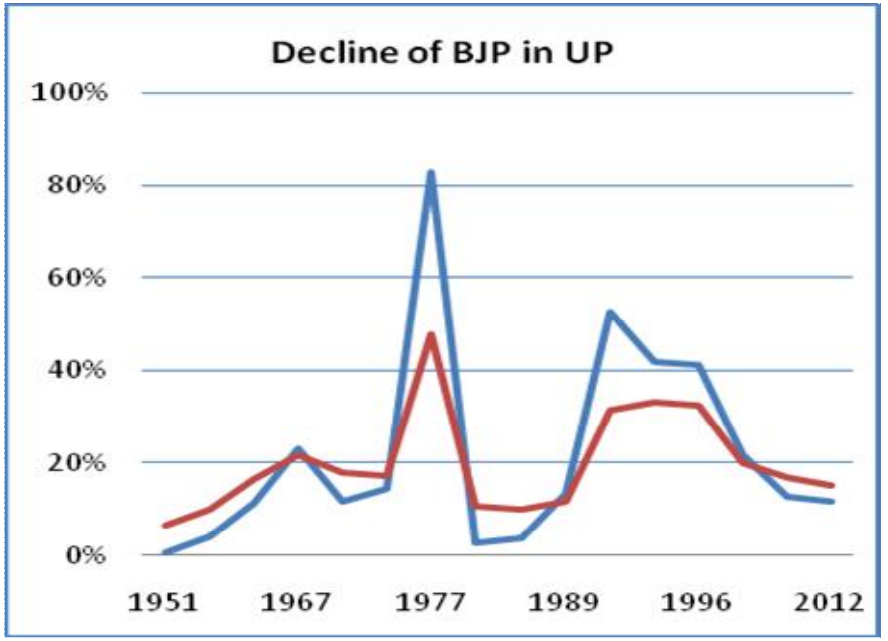


THE WHEEL OF CORRUPTION



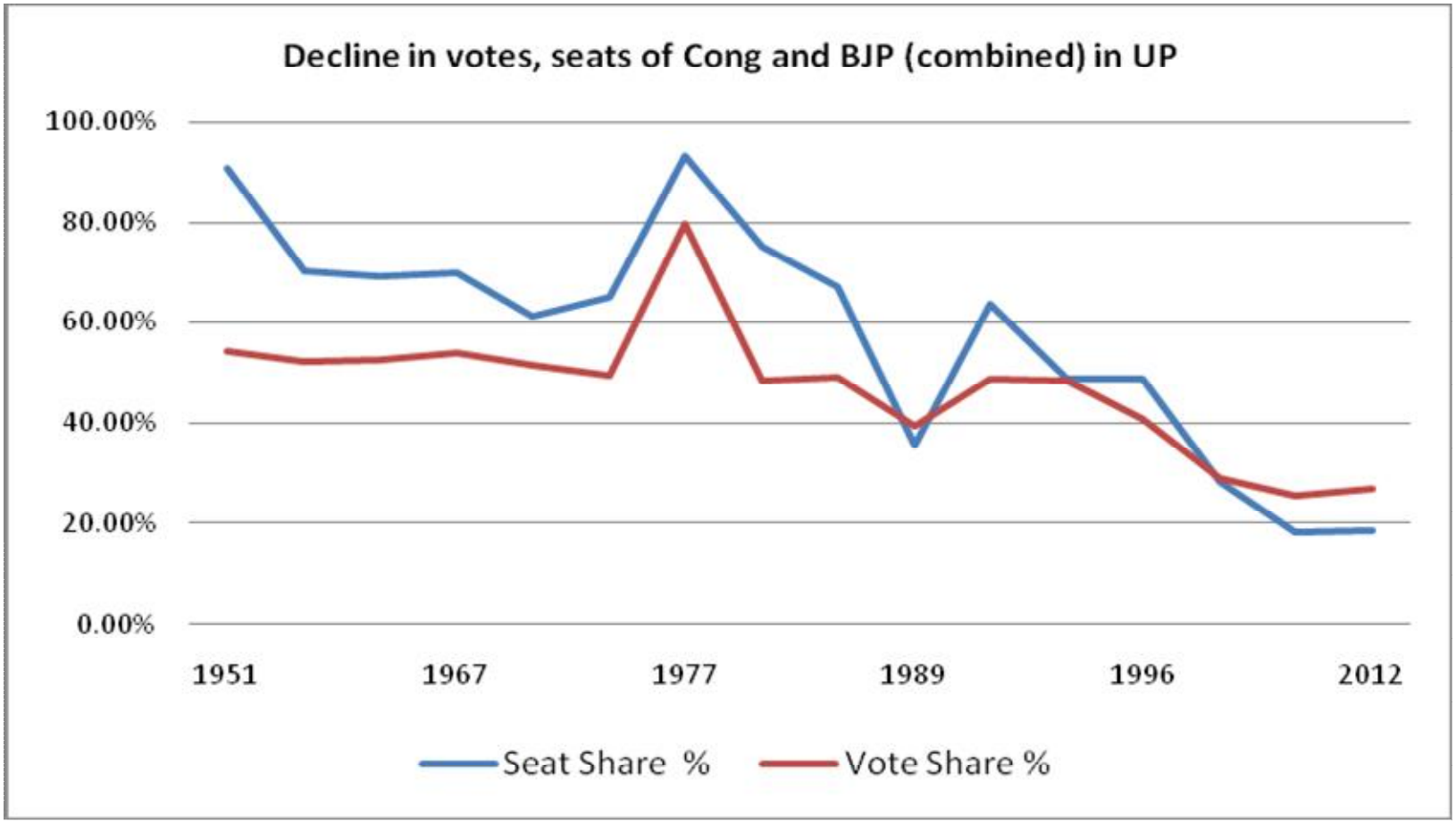
Decline in vote share & seat share of both BJP & Congress in UP Assembly elections





Seat Share % Vote Share %

Decline in vote share & seat share of both BJP & Congress in UP Assembly elections

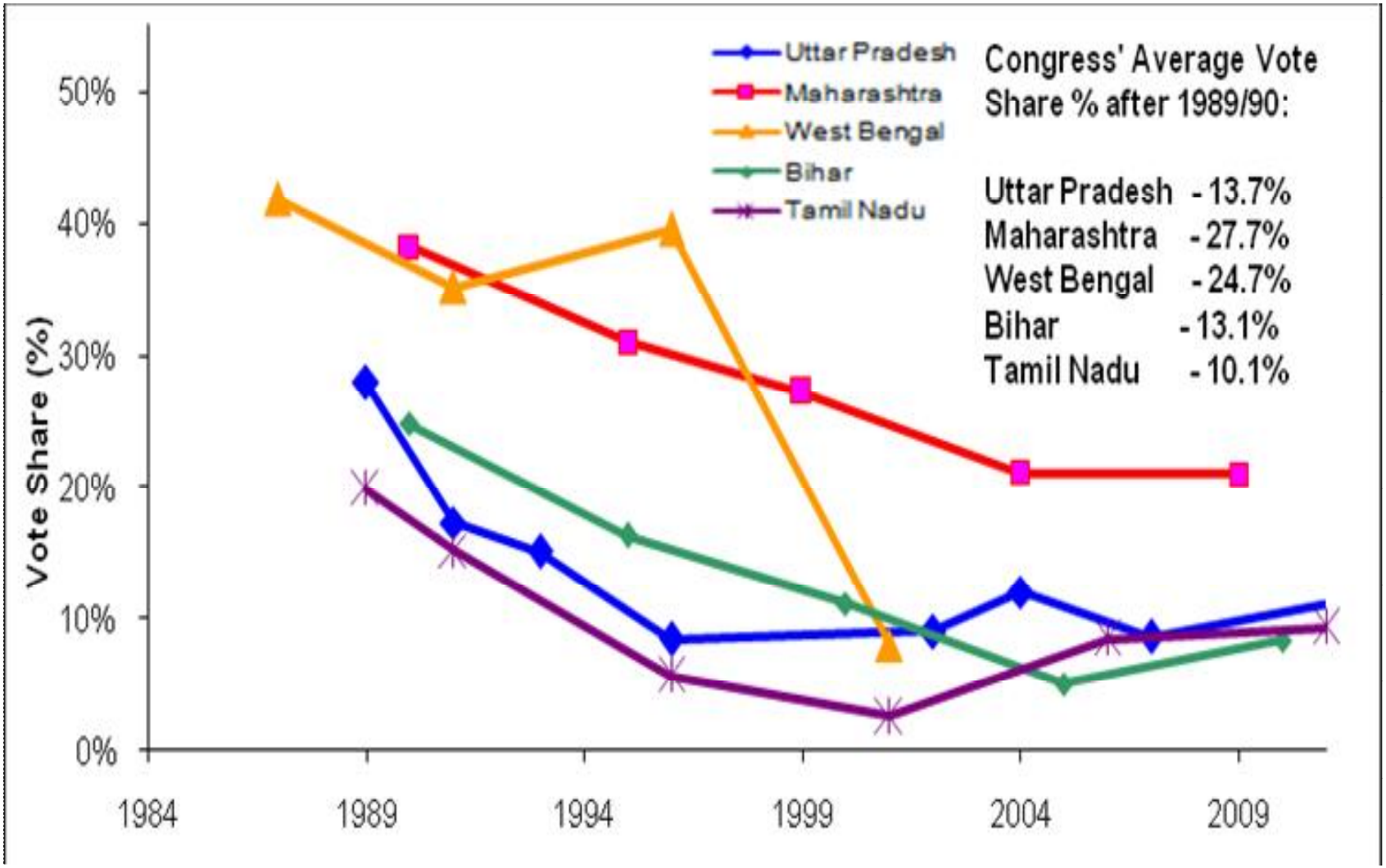


Similarly, performance of both BJP and Congress declined rapidly in other major states when they did not have alliances

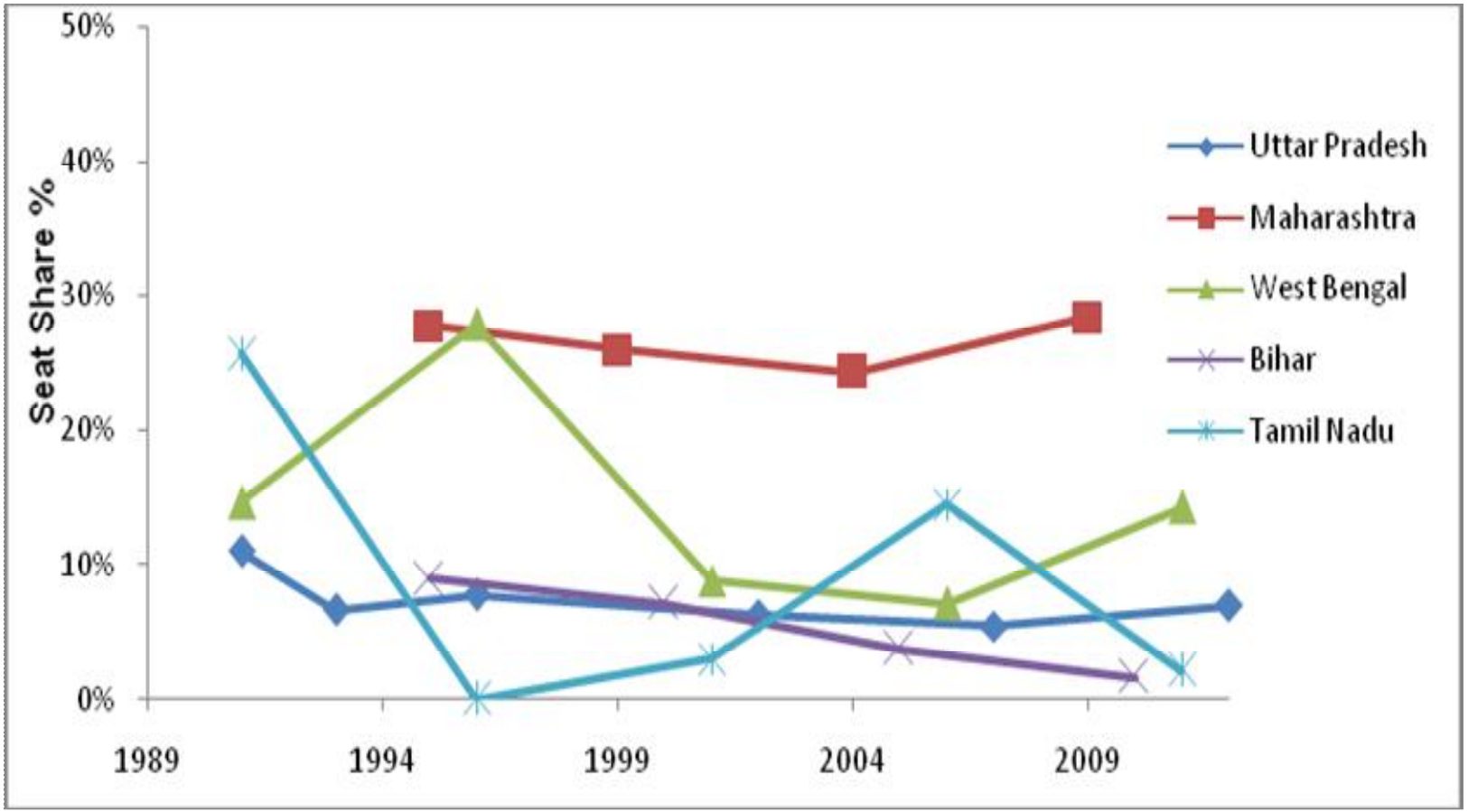
Decline of Congress in the largest states of India

State									Avg. vote share in state elections since 1989
Uttar Pradesh	1989	1991	1993	1996	2002	2004	2007	2012	13.70%
	27.90%	17.30%	15.10%	8.40%	9.00%	12.00%	8.60%	11.60%	
Maharashtra	1990	1995	1999	2004	2009				27.70%
	38.20%	31.00%	27.20%	21.10%	21.00%				
West Bengal	1987	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011			24.70%
	41.80%	35.10%	39.50%	8.00%	14.7%	10.68%			
Bihar	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010				13.10%
	24.80%	16.30%	11.10%	5.00%	8.40%				
Tamil Nadu	1989	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011			10.10%
	19.80%	15.20%	5.60%	2.50%	8.40%	9.30%			
Karnataka	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009				36.30%
	43.80%	27.00%	40.80%	35.30%	34.60%				

Falling vote share of Congress since 1989



Consequent decline in share of seats in all states except Maharashtra

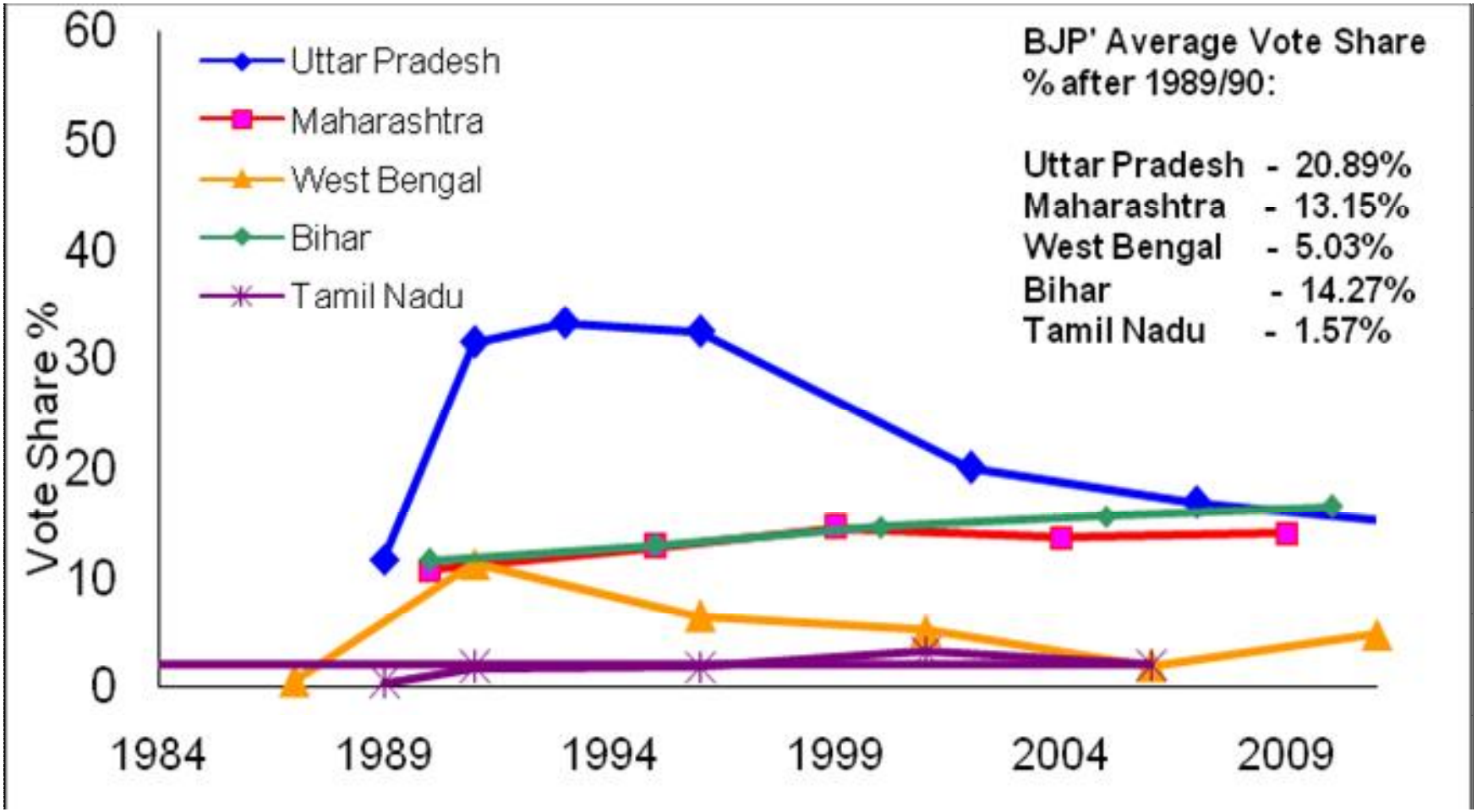


Note: Only in UP & Bihar do seats and votes reflect Congress' own strength; in other states alliances have given Congress better results

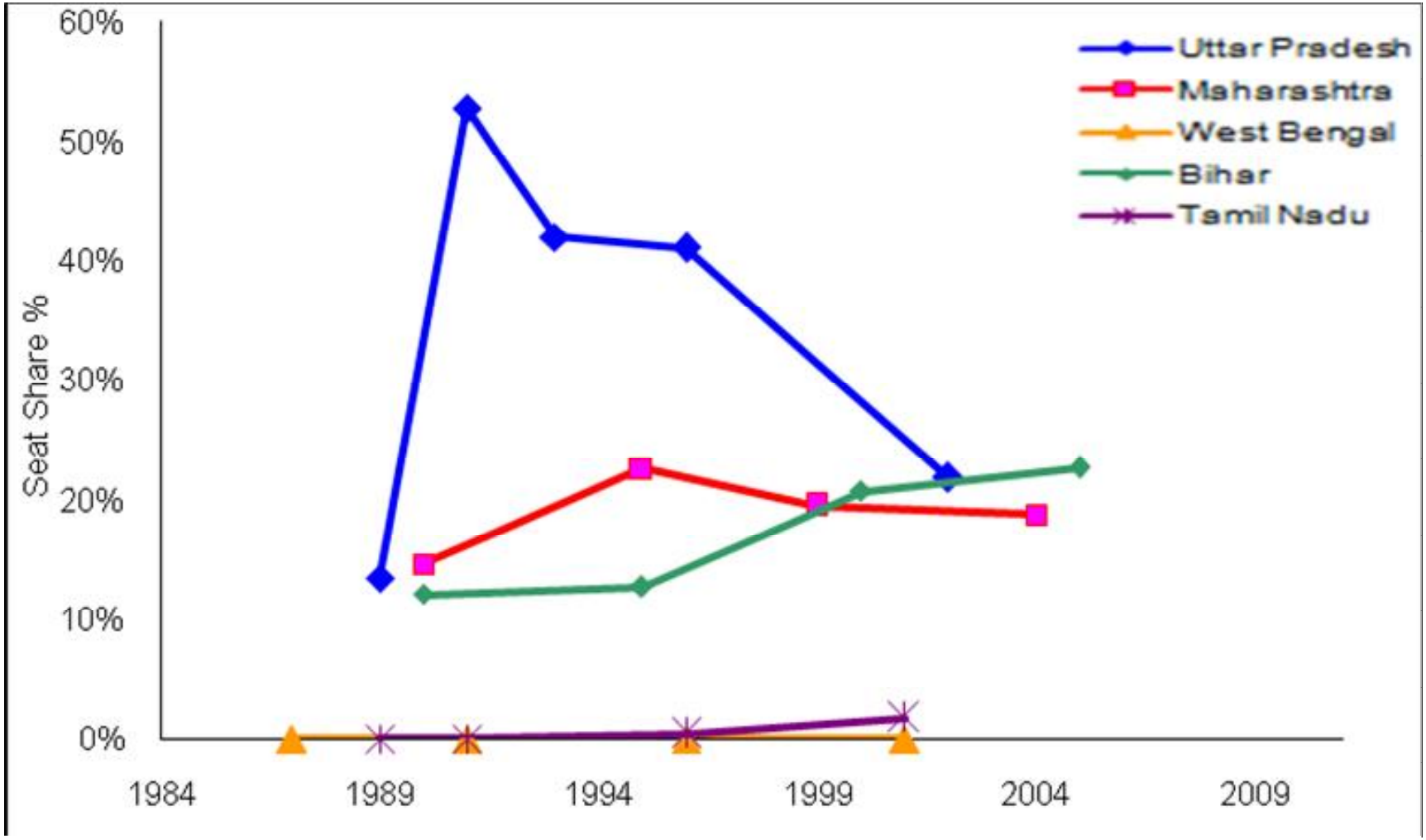
Decline of BJP in the largest states of India

State								Avg. vote share in state elections since 1989
Uttar Pradesh	**1989**	**1991**	**1993**	**1996**	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**	23.0%
	11.7%	31.5%	33.3%	32.5%	20.1%	17.0%	15%	
Maharashtra	**1990**	**1995**	**1999**	**2004**	**2009**			13.1%
	10.7%	12.8%	14.5 %	13.7%	14.0%			
West Bengal	**1987**	**1991**	**1996**	**2001**	**2006**	**2011**		5.0%
	0.5%	11.3%	6.5%	5.2%	1.9%	4.8%		
Bihar	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**	**2010**			14.3%
	11.6%	13.0%	14.6%	15.7%	16.5%			
Tamil Nadu	**1989**	**1991**	**1996**	**2001**	**2006**	**2011**		1.6%
	0.4%	1.7%	1.8%	3.2%	2.0%	0.4%		
Karnataka	**1989**	**1994**	**1999**	**2004**	**2009**			17.5%
	4.1%	17.0%	20.7%	28.3%	33.9%			

Falling vote share & seat share of BJP in the major states since 1989



Falling vote share & seat share of BJP in the major states since 1989

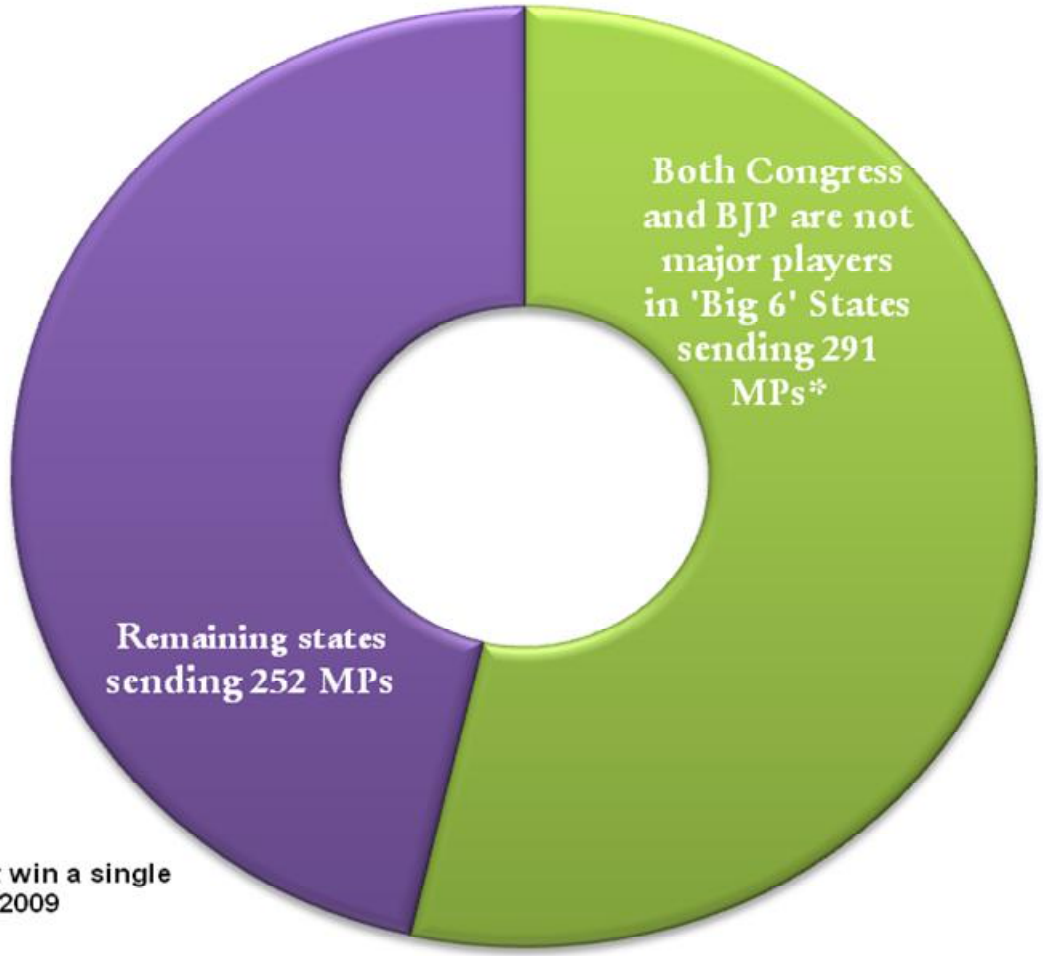


Note: In Bihar and Maharashtra BJP is in alliance with regional parties

BJP & Congress do not matter in more than half of India

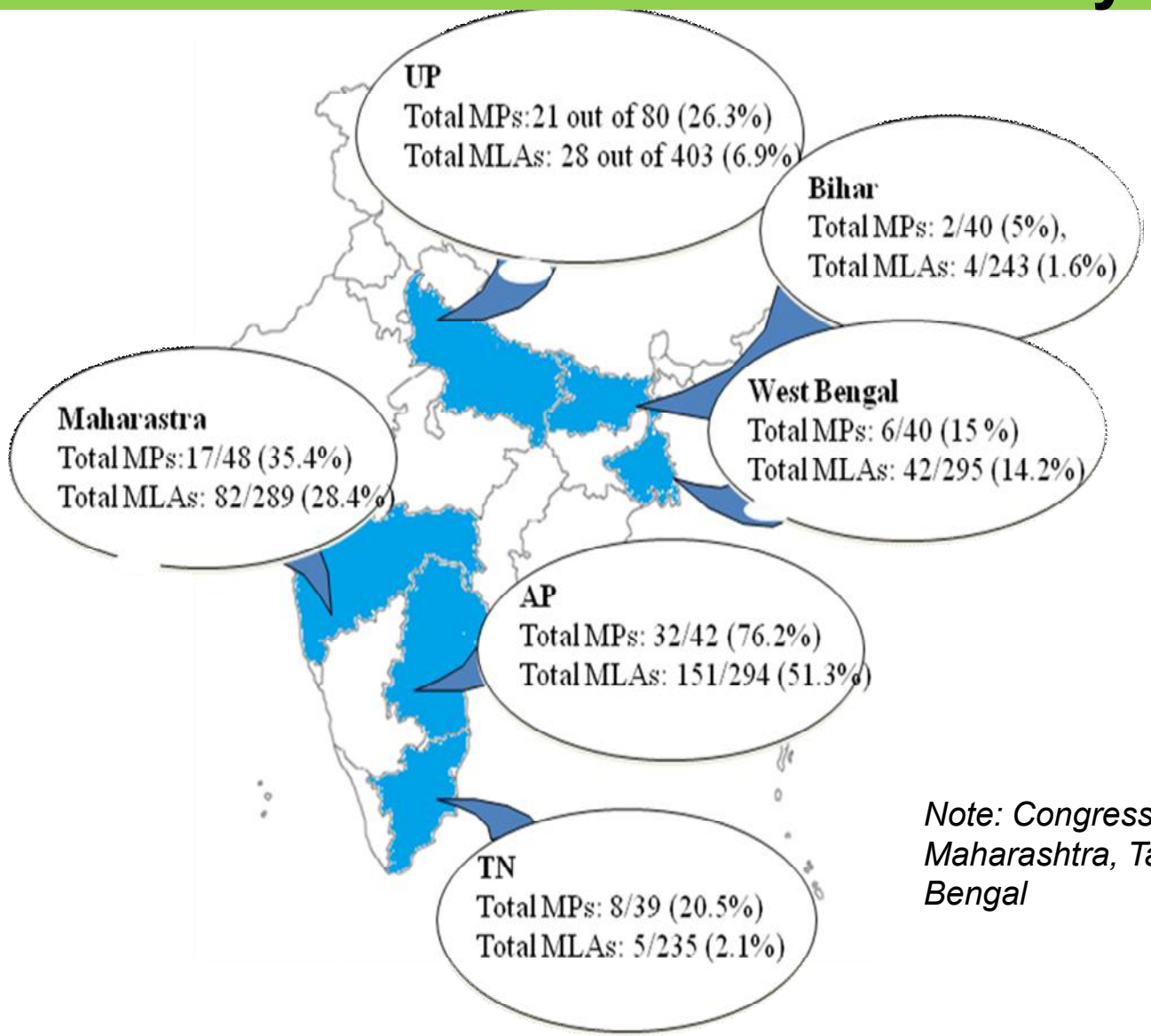
Total Seats in Lok Sabha : 543
Halfway mark: 272

'Big 6' States	-	291 LS Seats
Uttar Pradesh	-	80 LS seats
Maharashtra	-	48
West Bengal	-	42
Andhra Pradesh		42
Bihar	-	40
Tamil Nadu	-	39



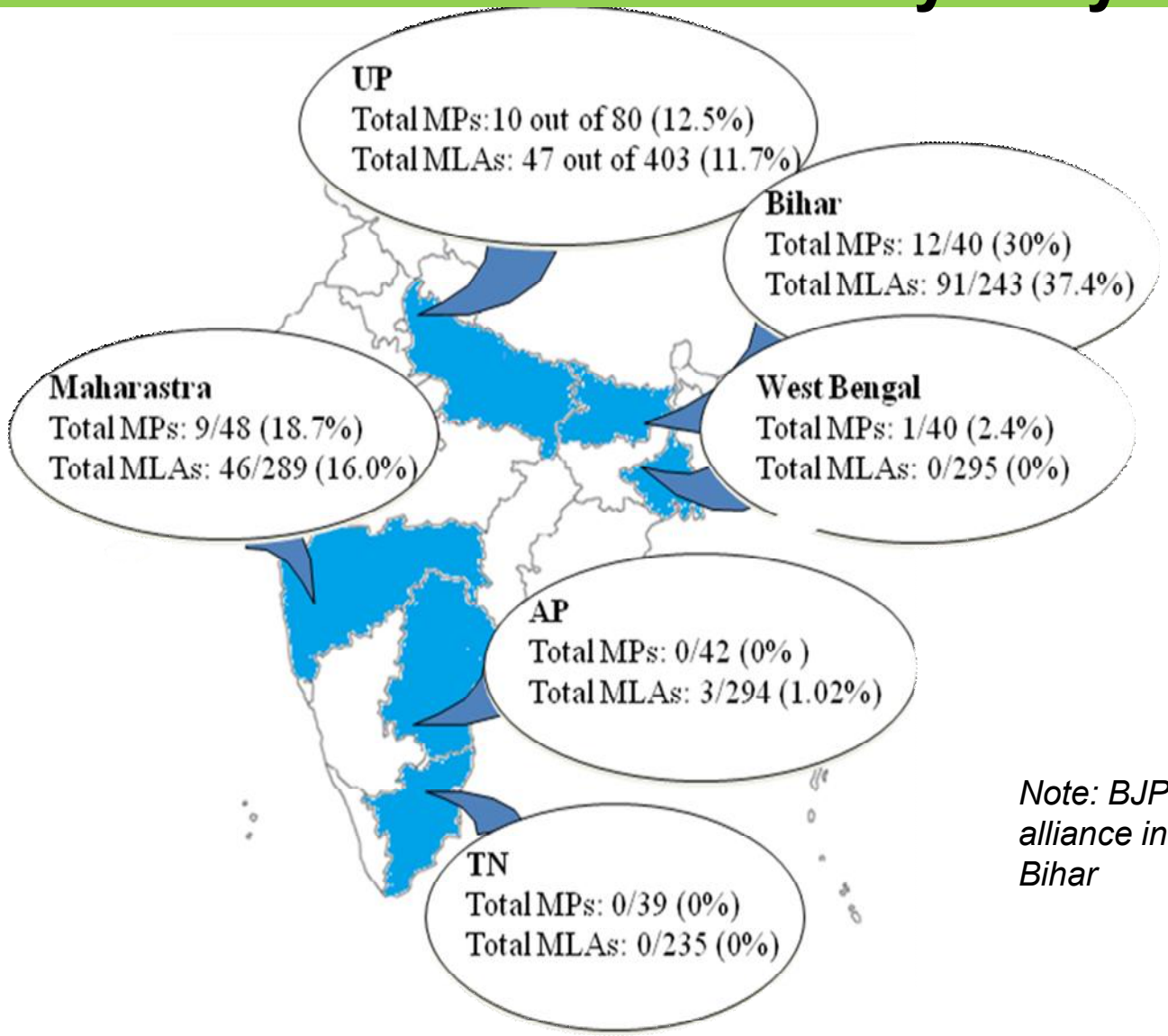
* AP included as Congress could not win a single seat in any of the by-elections since 2009

Performance of Congress in the 'Big 6' states: Lok Sabha and Assembly Tally



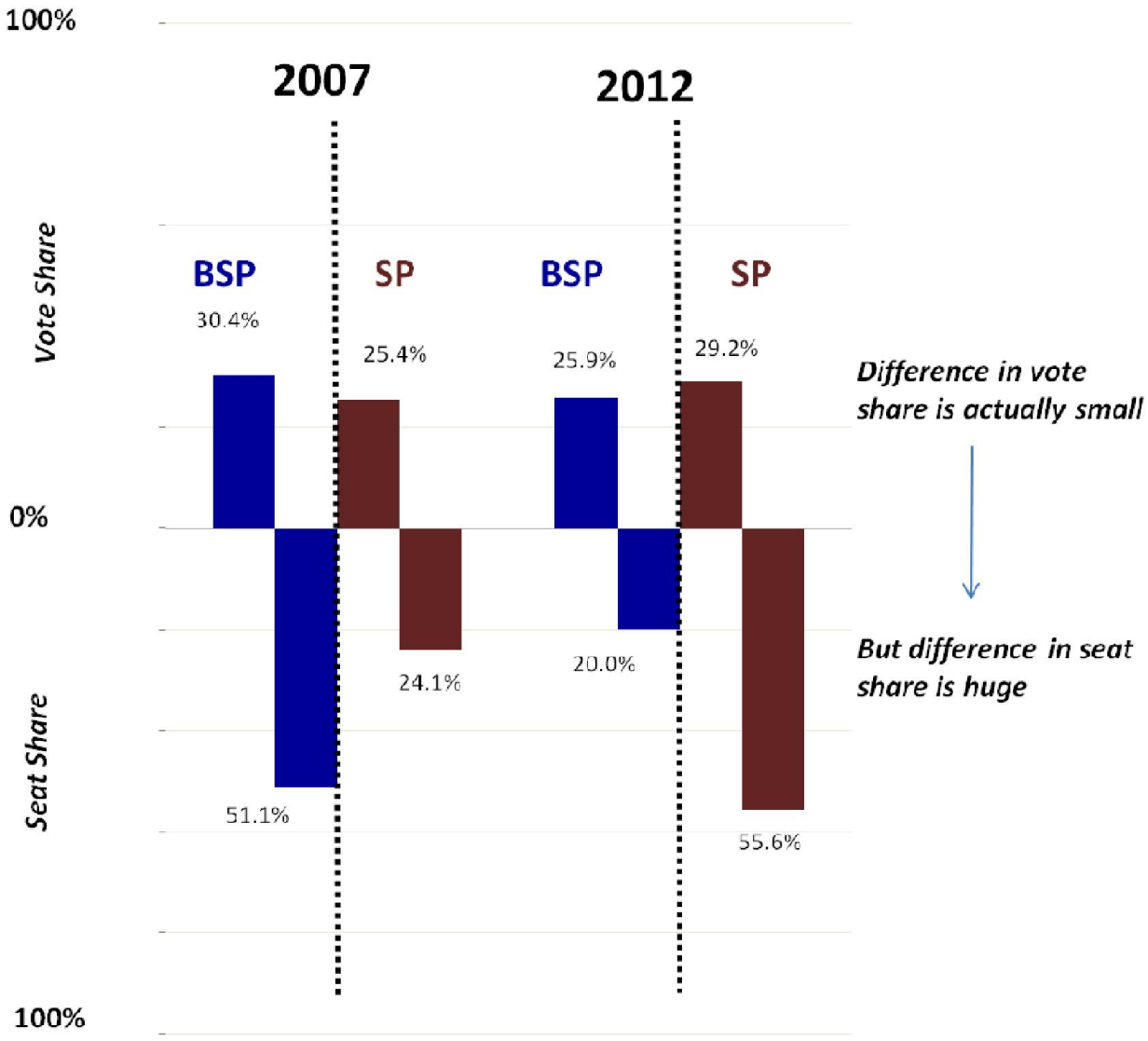
Note: Congress has regional alliances in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal

Performance of BJP in the 'Big 6' states: Lok Sabha and Assembly Tally

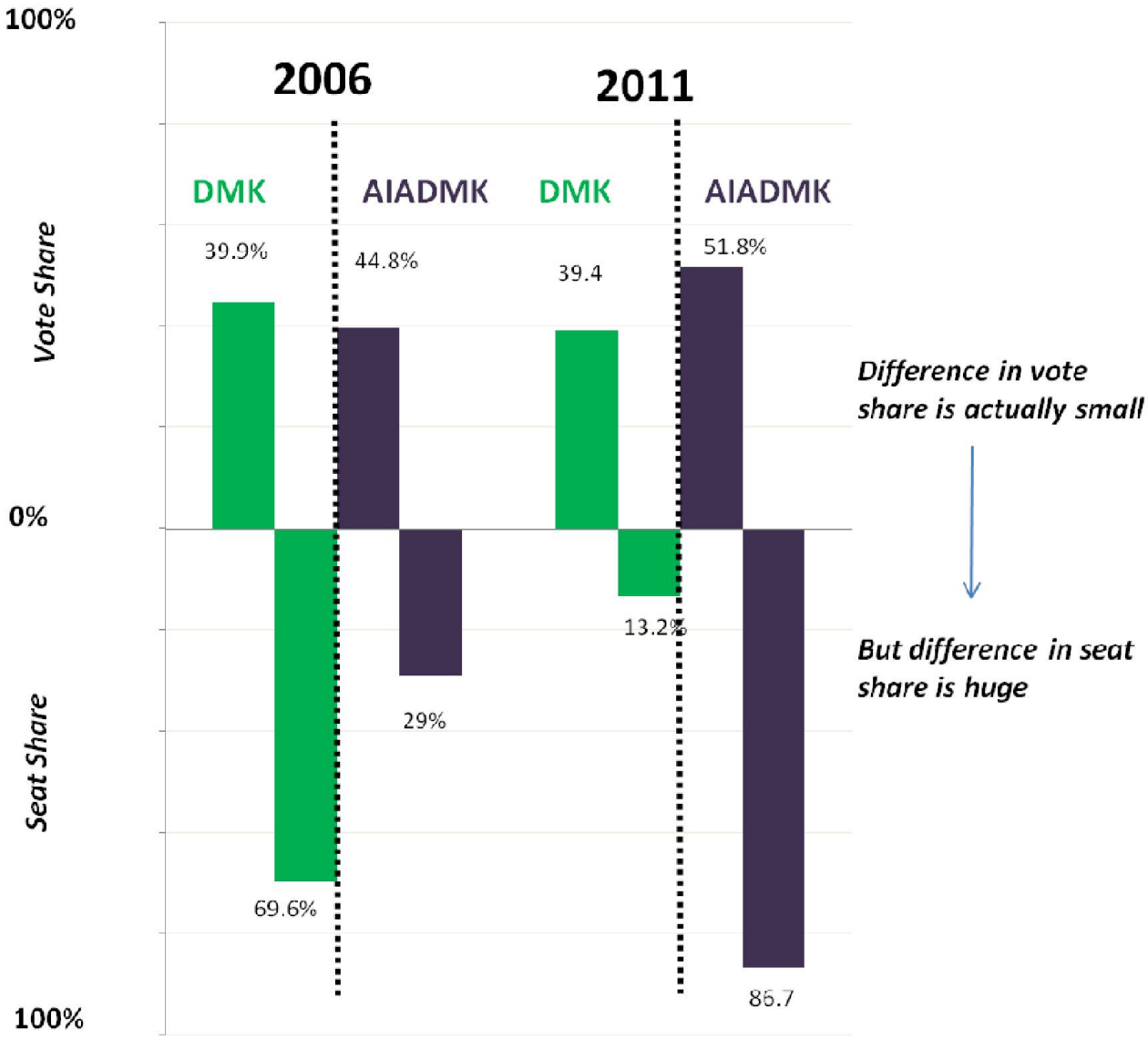


Note: BJP has regional alliance in Maharashtra and Bihar

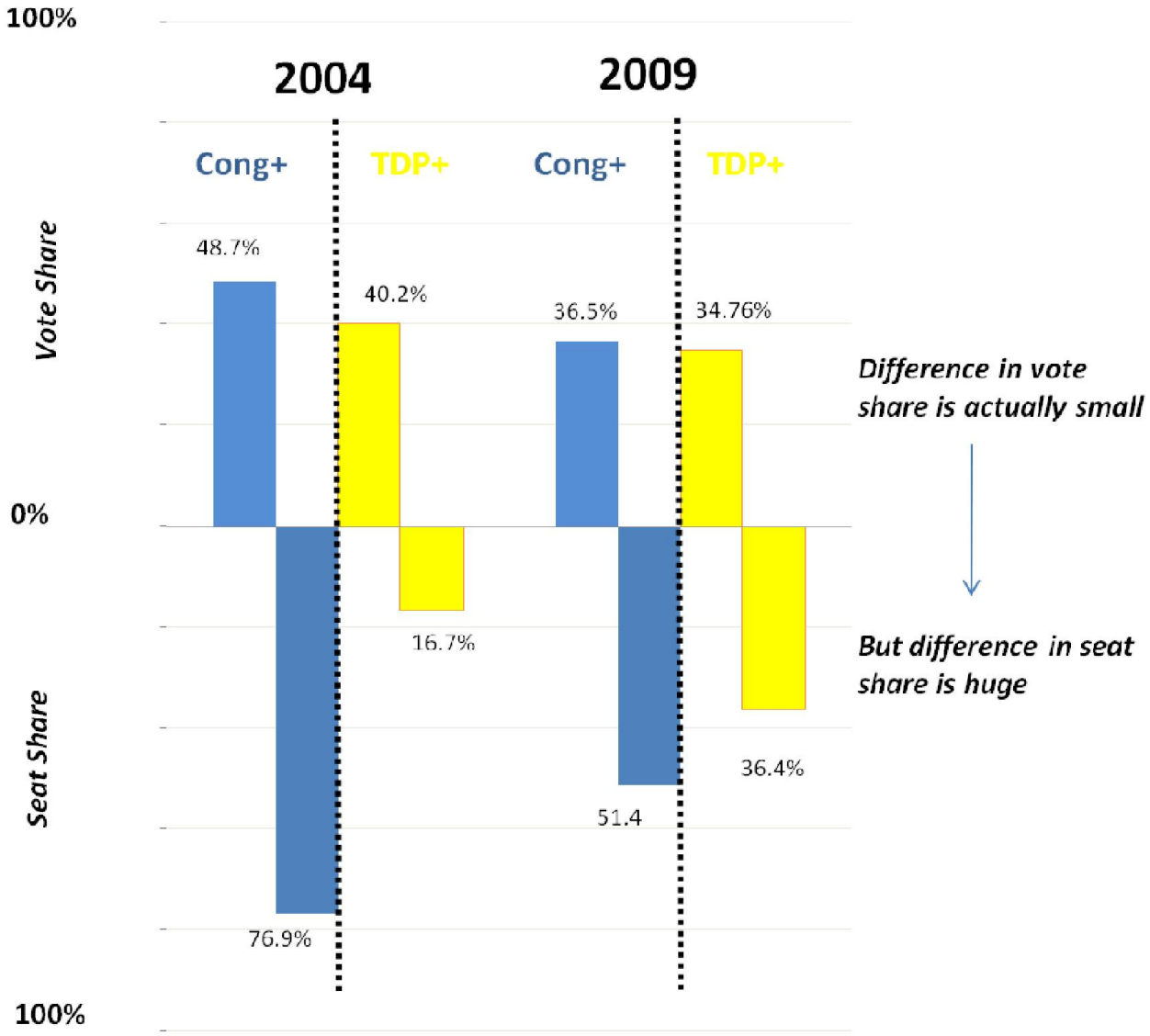
BSP vs. SP in Uttar Pradesh: Small difference in votes but huge difference in seats



AIADMK vs. DMK in Tamil Nadu: Small difference in votes but huge difference in seats



Cong+ vs. TDP+ in Andhra Pradesh: Small difference in votes but huge difference in seats



Countries and their electoral systems (FPTP & PR)

Classification of countries by type of electoral systems	
First Past The Post (FPTP)	**Proportionality-based**
UK (*only for House of Commons*), Canada, India, Australia	Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain
USA	Germany, New Zealand
Bangladesh, Pakistan	South Africa, Brazil, Argentina
Ethophia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya	Israel, Turkey, Sri Lanka
Jamaica, Barbados & Bermuda	Russia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea & Mexico

**IDEA Table of electoral systems worldwide - http://www.idea.int/esd/world.cfm*

Distortions of FPTP

- National Parties marginalized in most large states
- Political fragmentation
- Money power for marginal vote leading to corruption
- The best and brightest shun elections and politics
- Politics of fiefdoms has taken root
- Competitive populism to attract marginal vote
- Divisions exacerbated for local political gains
- Political recruitment flawed, to ‘somehow’ win constituencies
- Tactical voting because of ‘wasted’ votes
- Voter apathy and cynicism

Merits of Proportional Representation

- Vote buying diminishes as marginal vote is not critical
- Competent and honest politicians with good image become electoral assets.
- Rational, long-term policies can be pursued as marginal vote is unimportant
- National parties will be viable in all states
- Vote reflects voters' views
- Greater voter participation
- Voice and representation to all segments and views

Potential problems of PR

Problem	Solution
• Political fragmentation as each caste/group floats a party	• Reasonable threshold level, of say 5% vote in a large state – as required for representation, in and from, that state.
• Link between vote and legislator	• Allocation of each constituency to a member on agreed basis. A member will represent a territorial constituency within a larger multi-member constituency
• Autocratic parties	• The problem exists in FPTP also. Democratization of parties and selection candidates

A simple PR model for India

- State as unit for PR threshold (for Assembly & Lok Sabha)
- Multi-member constituencies – 6-10 seats
- Parties get seats in proportion to their votes in a state, if they cross the minimum required vote, of say 5% in a large state.
- Members elected from party lists in each multi-member constituency
- Each elected member is allotted to an assembly / Lok Sabha segment by referential choice based on party vote share in the MMC

How Incentives Change for Various Players in FPTP and PR for **Party**

FPTP Incentive	Outcome
Need for most votes in the constituency	Winnable, wealthy candidates who buy votes are preferred. Respected, clean, competent candidates are rejected
Importance of marginal vote to win	Corruption is condoned as necessary evil. Vote buying is all important.
Contest in only select constituencies to maximize seats and gain power	Divisions are fomented to capture vote banks
Lobbying for gerrymandering while drawing constituency boundaries	Certain constituencies, from which the ruling party has legislators, benefit at the expense of the other constituencies
• Major national party needs alliances to win power / seats • Desperation to forge alliances once party is below threshold • Eventual marginalization as party withers away	

Contd…

How Incentives Change for Various Players in FPTP and PR for **Party**

PR Incentive	Outcome
Need for broad-based appeal and image	Projection of clean and competent candidates; focus on policies and ideas
Overall vote share, not marginal vote in a constituency matters	Legitimate campaign financed by honest resources
Party can contest on own agenda and image	No need for amassing black money and corrupt practices because no vote buying is necessary
No need for pre-electoral alliance	A party can be viable with decent vote share and good ideas
Party building across state to nurture vote share	National / major party never marginalized
Post-electoral alliance	Foot print of national parties in all states
No desperation to win marginal votes – more rational politics	Competitive populism will give way to long-tem policies

How Incentives Change for Various Players in FPTP and PR for **Candidates**

FPTP Incentive	FPTP Outcome
Marginal vote all important to win	• Buying votes, arousing caste and sectarian divisions all important. Vast, unaccounted, illegitimate expenditure • Impenetrable entry barrier for honest, competent persons with clean image
PR Incentive	**PR Outcome**
Overall share of vote of the party and image ensure election; vote buying not needed	• Leaders of quality emerge and enter politics • Corrupt candidates have no advantage
Marginal vote in a constituency not important	• Entry barrier for honest, competent leaders, in politics lowered • Vote buying diminishes

Contd…

How Incentives Change for Various Players in FPTP and PR for **Voter**

FPTP Incentive	Outcome
Marginal vote all-important	Vote has a price, not value
All parties distribute money	Take money from all; vote for whomever you want
A 'good' candidate / party will not win	• Don't waste vote. Vote for someone else who can win • Vote for second worst party, not best party
A totally undesirable candidate may win	Vote tactically in favour of his nearest rival, irrespective of merits
No matter who wins, things don't change	No point voting. Stay away from politics & polling

Contd…

How Incentives Change for Various Players in FPTP and PR for **Voter**

PR Incentive	Outcome
Vote is not wasted. Each vote counts, and the party vote will result in seats	Vote for the best party, not second-worst party
Election outcome actually brings about visible change	Voters who stay away from polls become politically active and start voting
Marginal vote is not critical	Each vote has a value, not price
Choice to select a party whose policies and image they like	Vote for a party based on agenda, image and the list of candidates in MMC


VOTE
TAXES
AUTHORITY
PUBLIC GOOD
SERVICES
ACCOUNTABILITY

Local governments


SUNNYVALE
Lachine Dr
Lowell Ct
W Homestead Rd
Homestead Rd
Homestead Rd
Homestead Rd
Noranda Dr
Dr Tang Acupuncture Clinic
CUPERTINO

Need for judicial reforms

- National Judicial Commission
- Judicial accountability
- Indian Judicial Service
- Procedural reforms for speedy justice
- Local courts
- Independent, accountable crime investigation
- Independent prosecution

- Service delivery guarantees
- Local government empowerment
- Independent accountability mechanisms
- Judicial and police reforms
- Electoral system reforms