



**PANEL DISCUSSION:**  
Assessing US Presidential Elections 2024

# EVENT REPORT

## PANEL DISCUSSION: “ASSESSING US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2024”

*(Organised by Ramjas Political Review on 13th December, 2024)*

### **Attendees:**

- 1) Vidit Baya, Journalist, Republic TV
- 2) Manav Dalmia, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University
- 3) Surbhi Jha, Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi
- 4) Piyush Rangra, Associate Editor, Ramjas Political Review

### **Moderator:**

Prem Ansh Sinha, Editor-in-Chief, Ramjas Political Review

1. The Ramjas Political Review organised an online academic panel discussion on the US Presidential Elections, 2024 on the 13th of December, 2024. The objective behind the discussion was to assess the underlying factors that concluded the election results, along with their implications, while analysing the socio-cultural, economic, and judicial factors that could have impacted voting behaviour in the nation.
2. Featuring students belonging to different colleges and disciplines, the discussion followed three comprehensive rounds of deliberation, delving into the various demographic factors that could have impacted the election results, and observed the trends of varying voter patterns across different regions in the country based on available electoral data. Further, the discussion moved on to third-party politics and judicial proceedings that could have influenced the election results.

## PANELLIST’S SESSION

3. **Mr Vidit Baya**, a journalist at Republic TV, opened the discussion by evaluating the significance of third-party candidates in splitting the votes. He stated that Duverger’s Law, a staple in political science, inevitably favours the *de facto* two-party system in the United States, pushing the third-party and independent candidates to the periphery of the electoral sphere.

4. Additionally, he talked about the lack of resources present with the third-party candidates essential to sustain in the politics of a country as vast as the States. Recalling figures such as Ralph Nader and Ross Perot, he then emphasised the symbolic significance of independent candidates in disrupting the “ideological marketplace” by campaigning on neglected policy discourses such as climate change, wealth inequality, and electoral reforms.
5. Furthermore, Vidit talks about the ‘spoiler effect,’ wherein third-party candidates syphon off ideologically aligned major candidates, inadvertently leading to their victory, which in this case, favoured the Republican Party. He then emphasised the role of the media in not presenting the independent candidates as viable contenders, which impacts voter perception and causes them to neglect them.
6. Lastly, he highlighted the need for electoral reforms, such as the ranked choice voting and proportional representation to mitigate the spoiler effect, and provide a more inclusive and representative electoral landscape.
7. **Mr Manav Dalmia**, a student from IMS Banaras Hindu University, went on to examine the shifts in regional trends and demographic changes where he laid an emphasis on the Hispanic shift (27 per cent) which favoured the Republican Party, especially in states such as Texas, Florida, and New Mexico where the Hispanics make up a significant part of the population. He substantiated further by emphasising the Asian Americans who shifted (by 12 per cent) towards the Republicans.
8. Debunking the claim that the Democrats lost out on the Black voters, Manav addressed the economic factors that shaped the voting patterns by highlighting how the lower economic groups shifted pro-Republican whilst the higher economic groups shifted towards the Democrats. Interestingly, he stated how the rural Americans voted in favour of Trump in large numbers as his economic policies influenced them. He also addressed the very crucial red shift in the Democratic strongholds such as New York, New Jersey, California, and Massachusetts, and the convincing victory in Republican strongholds where Trump overperformed the polls.
9. Moving on to the seven swing states, he accounted the economy to be the primary cause for the shift in voting dynamics, especially in Wisconsin, Michigan, and the state of Pennsylvania — which is the key state during elections, where, apart from economic distress, Donald Trump’s assassination attempt played an important role in gaining voter sympathy. In Georgia, North Carolina, and Wisconsin, early voting resulted in support for Trump.

10. In the state of Arizona, Manav highlighted how Trump was able to convince the voters how he was the “best man” at the border; meanwhile, in Michigan, the majority Arab American voters were convinced that Trump could be the one to resolve the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel. Lastly, he summed up with the case of Nevada, where he specified how the voters were swayed away by Trump’s ‘No Tax on Tips’ policy.
11. **Ms Surbhi Jha**, a student of the Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi, started her discussion on the importance of Latino and youth voters and if they played a decisive factor in the elections. She mentioned how both the Latino and youth voters have traditionally been pro-Democrat, and while they continued to support Harris, their vote share declined considerably in the 2024 elections. Further, she mentioned how the youth voter turnout was less than half, and it was the urban, college-educated youth of colour who voted for the Democrats, while the White, rural, and non-college-going youth favoured Trump.
12. Further, she drew attention to the case of Latino men and young white women, who were split on their votes. The economy seemed to be the most important factor for both voting groups, with immigration and abortion following second, respectively. She highlighted how the women voters continued to support Harris; however, their vote share considerably declined as the policies on abortion took a back seat and the economy became their primary concern.
13. In the case of Latino men, Surbhi talked about how, despite being traditionally Democrat supporters, they shifted towards Republicans as income, crime, and immigration became their primary concerns, in contrast to Harris’s campaign, which surrounded healthcare, abortion, and climate change. Additionally, she mentioned how a growing number of male Latino youth had gotten increasingly *Americanised* and resonated more with the White American youth, as to why Trump’s remarks on immigration did not discourage them from voting red.
14. Moreover, she highlighted the case of the Latino-dominated blue wall in the states of Texas, Wisconsin, and Michigan, which turned red due to the Democrats taking them for granted. Lastly, she mentioned how Trump’s “macho rhetoric” attracted young male Latino voters.
15. **Mr Piyush Rangra**, the last panellist, an Associate Editor at the Ramjas Political Review, delved into the impact of Supreme Court decisions and judicial politics’ influence on voting patterns. He started his discussion by providing a brief overview of the judicial politics of the US while citing the case of Roosevelt during his effort to implement the Great New Deal. He

talked about Trump's last presidency, where he appointed three permanent judges to the Supreme Court, leading to an ideological balance in favour of 'originalists,' as he went on to highlight the current three main judicial aspects pertaining to abortion, voting rights, and affirmative action.

16. Piyush mentioned how the overturning of *Roe v Wade* by the Supreme Court of the United States, led the Democrats to outperform in the midterm elections; however, during the presidential elections, the issue of the economy took centre stage. Moving on to voting rights, he evaluated the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its overruling, citing unconstitutionality, by the court in its landmark decision of the *Shelby County v Holder Act*.
17. Furthermore, he talked about the decrease in popularity of the Supreme Court since its verdict on *Dobbs v Jackson*. Two other cases of significance he mentioned were *Trump v United States* and *Trump v Anderson*, where the court ruled in favour of Trump, giving him absolute immunity to his executive actions. He highlighted the other important aspects, such as the funding of the judiciary, with the increase in lobbying across the US, which the Republicans have been doing through the Federalist Society and the Democrats through the American Constitution Society.
18. Moreover, Piyush advocated for having term-based appointments on the Supreme Court bench as a solution-orientated approach, while ensuring transparency in the judicial processes to avoid lobbying, and instilling an ethical code. Lastly, he proposed having mandatory retirement provisions for the justices, which would require active support from Congress, which, sooner or later, could be accomplished.

## MODERATOR'S COMMENTS

19. Moderator **Mr Prem Ansh Sinha**, posed a question to **Vidit** on the broader trajectory of the third-party and independent candidates in American Politics and if there could be an emergence of a new political force, or a realignment in the future. Vidit went on to state that he is not very optimistic about the future of the third-party candidates, as their voter percentage remains negligible. On the question of Andrew Yang's Forward Party, Vidit stressed the relevance the third-party candidates bring to the electoral debate, but they fail to garner

sufficient resources required to run a huge-scale campaign, and while Yang has been doing relatively well, he fails to mobilise the people in a country as dynamic.

20. **Manav** was questioned on the trends of rural and urban migration in the swing states and their role in shaping electoral campaigning. For the rural voters, he replied that the assurance of manufacturing jobs attracted the voters towards the Republicans. In the urban areas, he elaborated on how there's a difference in the trends in cities and suburbs, observing how the Republicans have been losing support in the suburbs but increasingly gaining votes in the cities.
21. On the question of how the generational replacement theory can explain the growing political influence of young voters, **Surbhi** expressed that while the older Latino voters remain loyal towards the Democrats, the second and third generation Latino youth, especially men, feel more "Americanised" and resonate more with white American youth, moving towards the Republican Party.
22. To **Piyush**, the moderator posed a question on the Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action, if the ruling can be viewed as a part of a broader conservative movement, and whether the trend would be seen in legislation during Trump's presidency as well. He replied that the ruling did not attribute to a broader conservative movement, but was rather a long-term ruling to safeguard affirmative policies. Further, he also expanded upon Trump's neutrality over cultural discrimination and issues pertaining to abortion rights.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

23. The panel discussion concluded with the moderator, **Prem Ansh Sinha**, thanking the panellists for their insightful remarks on the topic. He summed up by mentioning the impact of Trump's presidency on India in the background of Trump's recent remarks on the BRICS and their new 'inward-looking' approach. Though there are no definite answers, he anticipated that the discussion would add to the academic discourse on the subject.

*Ends.*