Trust in the Indian Government: Significant Factors and Regional Variations

Ananya Pujary

Professor Carey Stapleton

Advanced Quantitative Methods (DACSS 790Q)

December 15, 2023

Abstract

This paper explores the possible impact of a wide range of factors affecting Indian citizens' trust in their national and local governments in India in the context of the country's upcoming elections in 2024. Using Wave 5 of the Asian Barometer survey, two analytic approaches were employed to draw statistical insights: ordered logit and multilevel modeling. Some of its findings include variations in the factors that are significant to trust in the national government compared to the local government. The results also reveal state-wise differences, with the northern states of India being more concerned about economic conditions and safety than southern states in deciding whether to trust their government. This paper points to the multifaceted nature of trust in public institutions such as the government, and the importance of maintaining it for good governance.

Keywords: India, government, trust, state

Table of Contents

Trust in the Indian Government: Significant Factors and Regional Variations

Introduction

Trust in the government is essential to maintain the nation's political stability and for good governance (Kumar et al., 2020). Additionally, the 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer report found high levels of trust in the national government and business sector among Indians ('The Economic Times', 2023), so this paper is interested in investigating the factors that contribute to India's trust in the government, particularly at the national and local level across states. It considers a range of factors from tangible (access to public services) to intangible (perceptions of India as a democracy) to do so. This research is temporally relevant as the next election season in India begins next year (2024). The survey used (Asian Barometer Wave 5 (India)) was conducted the year of the country's last election season in 2019, and thus would be insightful. Thus, this paper first ventures into existing literature on the factors chosen and how they could possibly impact trust, going on to investigate any differences between trust in the national and local government as dependent on certain factors identified by existing literature. It uses advanced quantitative techniques such as ordered logit models and multilevel models to examine any state-wise differences. Lastly, it outlines the overarching results, implications, and future directions for this research.

Literature Review

Kumar and colleagues (2020) define trust as "public trust measured by the confidence of the people in the state governments in India" (p. 2). They recognize that public trust is deeply rooted in the public's perception of government activities being legitimate, that is "within the authority of public officials to effectively manage societal resources, and in more general to act in the public interest" (Prasejo, 2015, as cited in Kumar et al., 2020, p. 2). Common criteria used by citizens to judge their government include procedural fairness, effectiveness, accountability, and personal experiences with government programs and services. The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer report found high levels of trust in the national government and business sector among Indians ('The Economic Times', 2023). While their trust in the government and business sector increased from the previous year, ranking fourth on the index, their trust in media institutions decreased. Additionally, "73 per cent in India said they and their families would be

better off in the next five years, much higher than the global average of 40 per cent" ('The Economic Times', 2023).

Kumar and colleagues (2020) used a logit model analysis on data from the India Human Development Survey (2004-2005 and 2011-2012) to examine how "the level of household confidence in the state government changes with households' socioeconomic status, personal experiences, and benefits received from government programs and direct social benefit schemes" (Kumar et al., 2020, p. 1). Its findings revealed that those from low socioeconomic status (Scheduled Castes/Tribes, low income, less educated) households have more trust in their state government. Also, those households that have received benefits from a government program or social scheme were more likely to have more trust, along with residents of lesser developed states. Furthermore, the authors teased out the influence of public trust on power equations between the sub-national and national-level governments, since "those with greater trust in the government at the sub-national level (in this case, the state government) are more likely to support an increased role of the state government in policy-making rather than the national government" (Roeder, 1994; Wolak and Palus, 2010, as cited in Kumar et al., 2020, p. 3).

Mahmud and colleagues (2014) recognize that "trust is central to economic interactions" (Mahmud et al., 2014). A report by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs defined two interrelated factors have been found to affect institutional trust significantly: "economic insecurity and perceptions of poor or corrupt government performance" ("Trust in public institutions: Trends and implications for economic security", 2021). Across countries, people who are economically more well-off and hailing from high-income and highly-educated backgrounds trust institutions more than the rest of the population. While the quality of public services is important in determining the public's institutional engagement and trust, "the direction of causality is not straightforward as levels of trust in institutions might also impact perceptions of the quality of services received" ("Trust in public institutions: Trends and implications for economic security", 2021).

Trust in public institutions such as the government can be determined through satisfaction with the country's resources. A report by the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes project provides information on the Indian population's general satisfaction with the direction of their

country and why the population's perspective on the economy and democracy matter in their trust in the government. This survey conducted between May 23 and July 23, 2018 among 2,521 respondents found that the population reported certain aspects of the economy as the nation's biggest challenges. 76% of adults considered the lack of employment opportunities as a very big problem, followed by 73% of adults who saw rising prices as India's biggest challenge. Safety is another primary concern, with "more than half (54%) of Indians say the statement "most people live in areas where it is dangerous to walk around at night" describes India very or somewhat well" (Devlin, 2019). Lastly, approximately 54% of respondents were satisfied with how democracy functioned in the country. Of these respondents, 75% were BJP supporters, and Indians with a secondary education or higher were more likely to be satisfied than those with less than a secondary education.

Religion forms an important part of an Indian's social life, with 97% reporting that they believe in God in a Pew Research Center survey, and could affect their trust in the government (O'Reilly, 2022). An experimental study examining the effect of knowing a person's religion on trust found that rather than religion in itself, it is the status associated with a religion that influences trust behavior (Mahmud et al., 2014). This study included Hindus and Muslims from India, a Hindu-majority country, and Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country. When the respondent was part of a minority religion in their country, they tended to trust their own religion group more than the other. However, when they were part of the majority religion, they did not discriminate against those from the minority. Additionally, those who were more adherent to their religious identity displayed greater in-group bias in terms of trust (Mahmud et al., 2014).

Yet another factor that is influential on public trust is democracy. The Democracy Perception Index (DPI) found that 84% of its respondents from over 50 countries reported that it was important that their country should have democracy in 2022 (Lehane, 2022). In fact, the lowest dissatisfaction with the democracy level found in Asia. However, there has been a decline in trust in democratic institutions' performance. The biggest threat to democracy identified by this report was economic inequality, followed by corruption (Lehane, 2022).

Each Indian state has its own local government that deals with local problems at varying capacities, such as the COVID pandemic. From the documented success of Kerala's local

government in containing it, which employed actions that were supported as well as complemented by its citizens, it would be more likely that its people have greater trust in them (Jalan & Sen, 2020). Some factors that contributed to this state's fight were its strong social development indicators, leading to "a high level of 'public trust' bestowed by the citizens upon the state" (Jalan & Sen, 2020, p. 107) across class, caste, and religion. Patrick Heller highlighted three features of Kerala's model of development: "(a) the creation of a robust social democracy, that is built on a pact between the state and its citizens; (b) the strengthening of a system of rights-based welfare and social safely that is rooted in the state's accountability to its citizens; and (c) the formalization of a structure of decentralized governance leading to empowered local governments and community-based development groups" (Jalan & Sen, 2020, p. 108). On the other hand, by May 10, eight states (Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu) contained 90% of the disease load in the country (Jalan & Sen, 2020).

There exists regional disparities in economic growth as well. The five major contributors to the country's economy are Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, contributing a 47% share in the GDP ("Analysing Economic Performance of Indian States", 2023). On the other hand, northeastern states contribute just around 2.7% to the GDP. Safety is a significant factor as well, with Kerala and most southern states having a lower crime rate than northern states (Wikimedia Foundation, 2023).

Hypotheses

1. People who perceive the overall economic condition of India as good will have more trust in the Indian government than those who perceive it as bad (Mahmud et al., 2014).
2. People who perceive an easier access to public services (good roads, running water, public transportation, healthcare, police support, internet) will have more trust in the Indian government than those who perceive access to these services as more difficult (Kumar et al., 2020).
3. People who perceive their city/town/village as more safe will have more trust in the Indian government than those who perceive it as less safe (Devlin, 2019).

4. People who perceive a better quality of governance in India will have more trust in the Indian government than those who perceive a lower quality of governance (‘The Economic Times’, 2023).
5. People who perceive the India to be more democratic will have more trust in the Indian government than those who perceive the country as less democratic (Lehane, 2022).

Across states, it would be expected that the northern Indian states such as Delhi, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and so on would value safety to a greater extent in determining government trust than southern Indian states such as Kerala, which had the lowest crime rate in 2021 (Wikimedia Foundation, 2023). Furthermore, the southern Indian states such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana tend to contribute to the country’s GDP more than their northern counterparts (“Analysing Economic Performance of Indian States”, 2023). Hence, economic conditions would be more important to the northern states in growing institutional trust.

Research Design

This study uses data from Wave 5 of the Asian Barometer Survey focusing on India, which was collected in November 2019. This survey is cross-national and comparative in nature, and is “focused on socioeconomic modernization, regime transition and democratization, and changes in political values across the East Asia region” (Asian Barometer, n.d.b). One of the Asian Barometer Survey’s objectives include the generation of a region-wide dataset of reliable and comparable data on public opinion on issues such as democracy, governance, human security, and economic reforms. This survey’s data are collected by the Hu Fu Center for East Asia Democratic Studies in Taiwan. The Asian Barometer Survey is also conducted under the Global Barometer Surveys (Afrobarometer, Latinobarómetro, Arab Barometer, and Eurasia Barometer) that covers more than 80 countries. In particular, the research based in India was funded by the Institute of Political Science at Academia Sinica (Asian Barometer, n.d.a).

Its sample includes responses from 5318 Indian adults from 19 states across the country. Of these, 51.2% identify as male and 48.9% as female after applying weights. 13.1% were aged between 20-24, 25.8% between 25-29, 22.6% between 30-49, 17.6% between 50-69, and 20.9% were 70+ after weighting. This survey covers 19 regions across 67 Assembly Constituencies

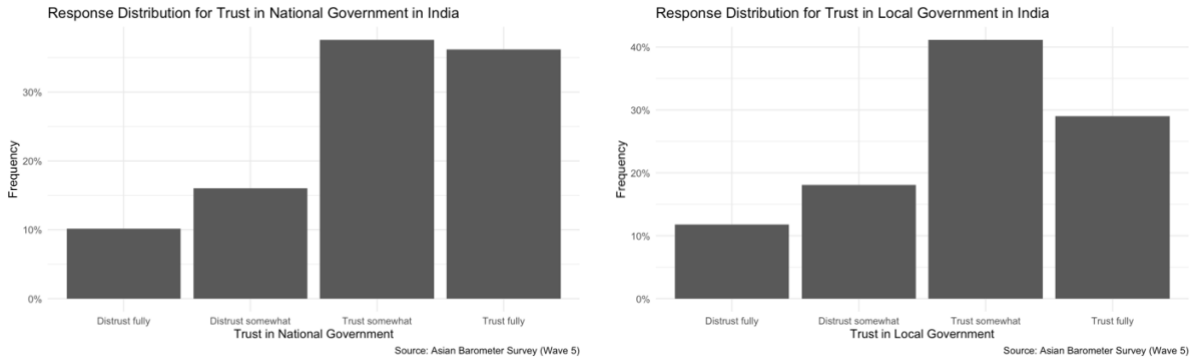
(ACs) in India. Listed below are the states represented and the total number of respondents sampled from each of them: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana. Thus, its results are meant to generalize to the Indian adult population.

Dependent Variables

To answer the research questions, two numeric-type dependent variables were included: trust in the national government and trust in the local government. These were two sub-questions under the main question: "I'm going to name a number of institutions. For each one, please tell me how much trust do you have in them?". Respondents were presented with a 6-point scale from 'Trust fully' to 'Distrust fully.' Below are the response distributions for both variables, from which it is evident that respondents only answered with four out of six response options:

Figure 1

Response Distributions for the Trust in National and Local Government Variables



The mean for the trust in the national government variable is 4.258, and is slightly lower at 4.045 for trust in the local government. The variance for trust in the national government is 2.458 and 2.4 for trust in the local government. Since there is a natural order to the response options for both variables, an ordered logit or probit model would be ideal. I'm also interested in state-level differences in trust and whether trust depends on different factors by state. The interclass correlation for trust in the national and local governments are 0.13 and 0.1 respectively, which indicates that there may be a clustering issue in the data. To deal with this, a multilevel model

will be used that allows for slopes to vary based on group membership, in this case, state. Thus, I use a varying slopes-varying intercepts multilevel model to generate these insights.

Independent Variables

This project includes five primary independent variables:

1. **Perceived economic conditions**: This variable was measured using the question: "How would you rate the overall economic condition of our country today? Is it...?" on a 5-point scale (*Very good, Good, So so (not good nor bad), Bad, Very bad*). A higher value indicates that the respondent believes the current overall economic condition of India is very bad, while a low value indicates that they believe it to be very good. This scale was reverse-coded during analysis to ensure ease of interpretation.
2. **Perceived access to public services**: This variable was measured through the question: "As far as you know, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services?" with a 4-point scale (Options*: Very Easy, Easy, Difficult, Very Difficult*). A higher value indicates that the respondent believes their access to public services is very difficult, while a lower value indicates very easy access. This scale was reverse-coded during analysis to ensure ease of interpretation. Responses from the six items under this question ('Roads in a good condition', 'Running water', 'Public transportation', 'Healthcare', 'Help from the police when you need it', and 'Access to the internet') were combined to create a single variable reflecting the underlying concept of perceived access to public services, since the scale's Cronbach's alpha value was 0.788 which suggested high internal consistency and reliability. For the analysis, the 'Healthcare' item was excluded since all of its values were missing, possibly suggesting that this question was not asked to the respondents.
3. **Perceived safety**: This variable was measured with the question: "Generally speaking, how safe is living in this city/ town/ village – very safe, safe, unsafe or very unsafe?" on a 4-point scale (Options*: Very safe, Safe, Unsafe, Very unsafe*). A low value indicates the respondent's belief in their city/town/village being very safe, and a high value indicates their belief in it being very unsafe. This scale was reverse-coded during analysis to ensure ease of interpretation.

4. **Perceived quality of governance**: This variable was measured with the question: "Now I am going to read to you a list of statements that describe how people often feel about the state of affairs in [country name]. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of these statements." On a 4-point scale (Options*: Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree*). This question includes nine items:

    1. Citizens are able to remove a government they don't like through elections.
    2. In our country, parties and candidates not in power have opportunities to be elected into government.
    3. Between elections, the people have no way of holding the government responsible for its actions.
    4. When government leaders break the laws, there is nothing the court can do.
    5. All citizens from different ethnic communities in [Country X] are treated equally by the government.
    6. Rich and poor people are treated equally by the government.
    7. People have basic necessities like food, clothes, and shelter.
    8. People are free to speak what they think without fear,
    9. People can join any organization they like without fear.

Responses from these items were combined into one scale since the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.765, indicating high internal consistency and reliability. A high value indicated that respondents disagree with the given items and perceive a lower quality of governance, while a low value indicates that they agree with the given items and perceive a higher quality of governance. This scale was reverse-coded during analysis to ensure ease of interpretation. Items 3 and 4 were excluded during analysis since the response patterns for these reverse-coded questions did not match the other items' responses and displayed negative correlations.

5. **Perceived democratic level**: This variable was measured with the question: "Remember the scale that we used before: 1 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic. Where would you place India today on this scale?" on a 10-point scale from 'Completely undemocratic' to 'Completely democratic.' A high value on this

variable implies that the respondent believes India to be completely democratic, while a low value implies the belief that it is completely undemocratic.

Control Variables

Six control variables were also included in the models after removing their missing values and using other data cleaning techniques:

- **Gender** (Options*: Male, Female*)
- **Actual Age**: Respondents answered this question with their current age. For ease of analysis, their ages were categorized into the following categories: *18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-64, and 65+*.
- **Education**: Respondents were presented with the question: "What is your highest level of education?" (Options*: No formal education, Incomplete primary/elementary, Complete primary/elementary, Incomplete secondary/high school: technical/vocational type, Complete secondary/high school: technical/vocational type, Incomplete secondary/high school, Complete secondary/high school, Some university education, University education completed, Post-graduate degree*). In the data cleaning process, this variable was recoded into a scale from 1-4 implying the following categories: *Less than HS, High School, Some University,* and *Advanced Degree*.
- **Religiosity Level**: Respondents were presented with the question: "Would you describe yourself as very religious, moderately religious, lightly religious, not religious at all?" and the options of*: Very religious, Moderately religious, Lightly religious, Not religious at all*. This scale was reverse-coded such that a higher value will indicate higher religiosity and vice versa.
- **Subjective Social Status**: Respondents were presented with the question: "People sometimes think of the social status of their families in terms of being high or low. Imagine a ladder with 10 steps. At step one stand the lowest status and step 10 stand the highest. Where would you place your family on the following scale?" and options from 1-10, with 1 indicating that the respondent believes that they belong to the lowest status and 10 means they belong to the highest status.
- **Social Mobility**: Respondents were presented with the question: "Imagine a staircase with 10 steps where the poorest people are on the first step and the richest on the tenth

step. Where would you put yourself on this staircase?" and options from 1-10, with 1 indicating that the respondent believe that they are part of the poorest people in society, while 10 means they believe themselves to be part of the richest.

These controls were chosen using findings from existing literature. Results from the 2021 OECD Survey indicated that "people with lower levels of education and income report consistently lower trust in government than other groups" (OECD, 2022). Furthermore, younger people were found to trust the government less than older people on average across countries, with 36.9% of 18-29 year-olds versus 45.9% of those aged 50 and over reporting government trust (OECD, 2022). There exists a gender gap as well, with women trusting the government less than men across countries (OECD, 2022). Additionally, perceived vulnerabilities was found to be a significant factor, with trust being "considerably lower among people worries about their personal financial circumstances" (OECD, 2022). In this dataset, this concept could be measured as perceived social status and social mobility. Across OECD countries, there was a trust gap of about 22.9 percentage points between those who consider themselves to be of higher social status and those of lower social status. Race/ethnicity was not included as a control variable since it was not asked to the respondents. Also, this demographic indicator would offer little insights in the regional context of India, where socio-economic status is much more prominent in societal structuring.

The first method this paper will employ is the ordered logit model to suit the data structure the most, since both dependent variables are ordered in nature. Second, a multilevel model approach will be used to draw state-wise insights into which factors mattered more in determining local and national government trust across the 19 states included in this dataset. The variable 'Region' that contained information on which state each the respondent belonged to was used as the grouping variable. This method would aid in making inferences about how the region influences the intercept and whether there are any varying relationships between the independent and dependent variables across these groups, allowing for more in-depth insights.

Analysis and Results

This section describes and interprets ordered logit and multilevel models varying by independent variables, also assessing state-wise difference.

Ordered Logit Models

The overall results for the ordered logit models with different dependent variables (national government trust and local government trust) indicate that while all of the independent variables (perceived economic conditions, perceived democracy level, perceived quality of governance, perceived access to public services, perceived safety) were statistically significant for trust in the national government, all except perceived democracy level was significant for trust in the local government (See Appendix A).

In terms of the controls, holding other variables constant, gender, age group, and religiosity were not statistically significant for either type of trust, while educational attainment was significant for both. Hence, respondents with higher educational attainment were significantly less likely to trust both the national (-0.095 logged odds) and local governments (-0.159 logged odds). Also, perceived social status significantly mattered in determining national government trust, with trust increasing with higher status (0.145 logged odds). Perceived social mobility was significant in the opposite direction for trust in the national government (-0.114 logged odds). Perceived social status and social mobility were not significant for trust in the local government at any level.

National Government Trust

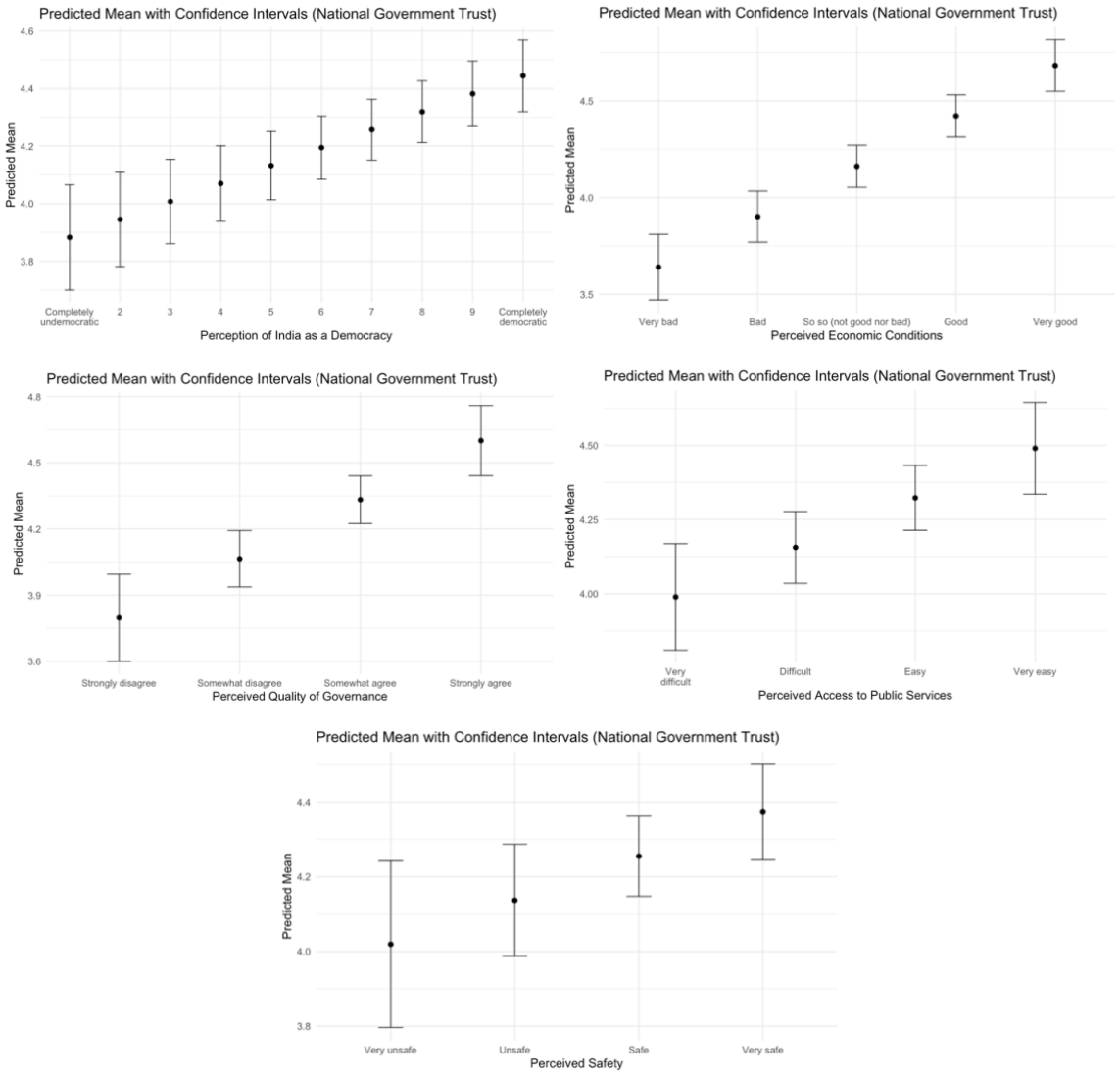
The omnibus results for this model's Brant test were significant (<.05), indicating that the parallel regression assumption has been violated overall. Also, perceived governance quality was also marginally significant, but since the significance is not large enough, no changes to the variable will be made. The AIC value for the ordered logit model was 6127.711, while the value for the OLS model was 9460.145. Since the former value is lower, the ordered logit model is a better fit to the data. At the same time, the graphs of predicted mean with confidence intervals were generated using the OLS version of the models to ensure clarity of interpretation since the coefficients were similar.

Referring to the table of results for this model (See Appendix A), holding other variables constant, respondents who perceived economic conditions to be better were significantly more likely to trust the national government (0.339 logged odds), along with those who perceived an easier access to public services (0.233 logged odds). Next, respondents who perceived their area

to be more safe were significantly more likely to trust this level of government (0.162 logged odds), as are those who agree on the good quality of governance (0.376 logged odds). Respondents who perceived India to be more democratic in nature were also significantly more likely to trust the national government (0.087 logged odds). Hence, these result support all five hypotheses that people who perceived better economic conditions, easier public service access, feel safer in their area, agree that India's quality of governance is good, and see India as more democratic will be more likely to trust the national government.

Figure 2

Predicted Mean with Confidence Intervals for Factors affecting National Government Trust (OLS Models)



The graphs above show that all of the primary independent variables affect trust in the national government in the positive direction, which is in line with the proposed hypotheses. In the first one, as the respondent perceives India to be more democratic, the more mean trust they have in the national government. Next, as respondents' perception of their country's economic conditions becomes more positive, the greater their trust in the national government. As respondents' agreement with their government's performance being of quality increases, the more they trust the national government. Also, as respondents perceive their access to public services such as good roads and running water to be more easy, the more they tend to trust the national government. Finally, respondents that perceive their city, town, or village to be more safe tend to trust the national government to a greater extent. However, this graph's large error bars may make it difficult to say this with certainty.

Local Government Trust

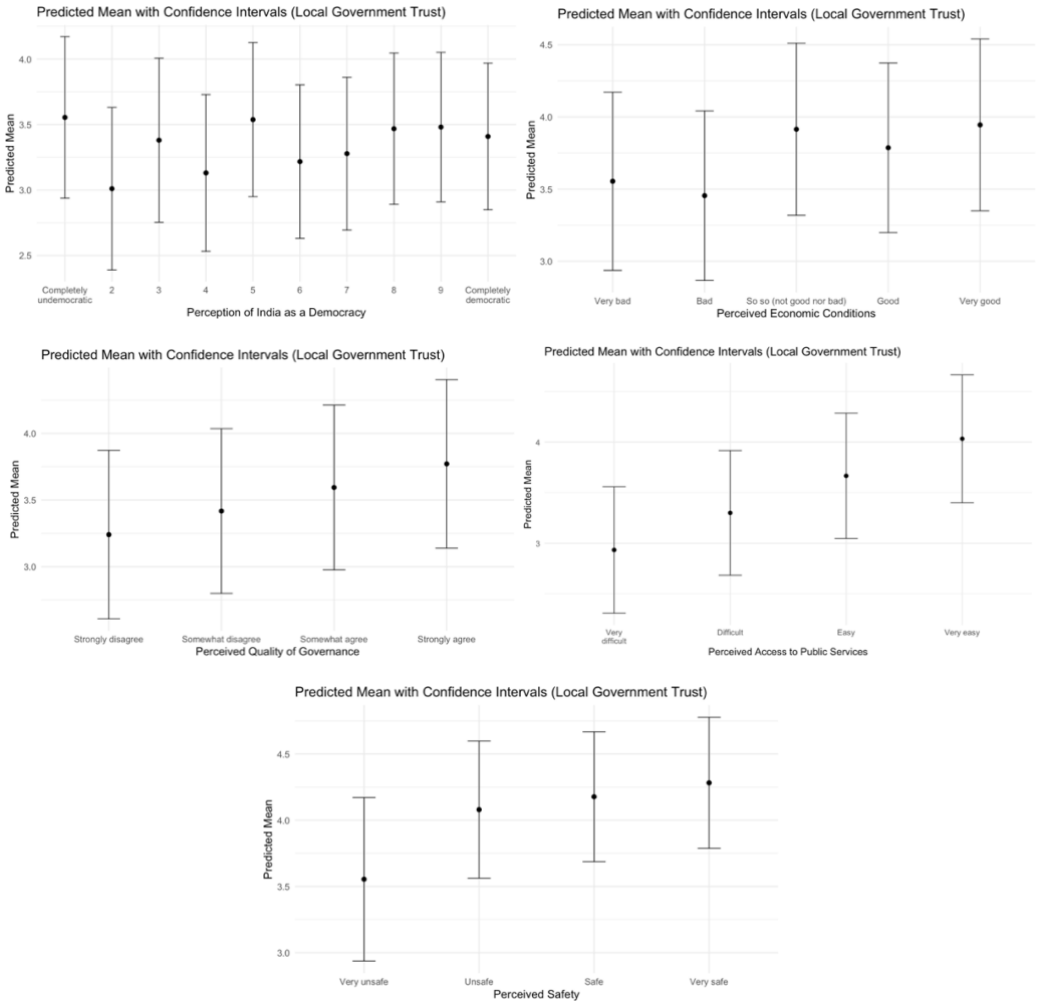
The omnibus results from the Brant test were also significant (<.05), so the parallel regressions assumption was violated in this model. It was also violated for the variables of perceived safety, perceived economic conditions, perceived democracy, perceived social status, and perceived social mobility. To deal with this, I converted these variables into factor type to reduce their significance in the Brant test results. The AIC value for this ordered logit model is 6290.145, which is lower than its value for the OLS model (9564.782). Thus, the ordered logit model is a better fit to the data. However, the graphs of predicted mean with confidence intervals were generated using the OLS version of the models to ensure clarity of interpretation, and since the coefficients were similar.

Referring to the table of results for this model (See Appendix A), holding other variables constant and compared to respondents who believe India's economic conditions to be very bad, those who thought it was neither good nor bad were significantly more likely to trust the local government (0.422 logged odds). The same holds true for those who believe India's economic conditions are very good (0.434 logged odds). As with trust in the national government, respondents who reported an easier access to public services were significantly more likely to trust the local government (0.503 logged odds). Holding other variables constant, there was a statistically significant increase in trust in the local government with higher perceived safety levels. Those who perceived their area to be unsafe (0.647 logged odds), safe (0.77 logged odds),

and very safe (0.934 logged odds) were significantly more likely to trust their local government than those who believed their area to be very unsafe. Respondents who agreed that India's governance quality was good were significantly more likely to trust the local government as well (0.278 logged odds). Lastly, perceived democracy level was significant at three of its ten factored levels for trust in the local government. Respondents who rated India's democracy level at 2 (-0.831 logged odds), 4 (-0.582 logged odds), and 6 (-0.485 logged odds) were significantly less likely to trust in their local government compared to those who rated it as 1.

Figure 3

Predicted Mean with Confidence Intervals for Factors affecting Local Government Trust (OLS Models)



Unlike the first model, all of the independent variables do not have a completely linear relationship with trust in the local government. The first graph looks at the ten levels of the perceived democracy variable. It's interesting that respondents who reported that India was 'completely undemocratic' had the highest mean trust in the local government. This is followed by a sharp decrease in mean trust for those who rated India as 2 on the perceived democracy scale. This finding could possibly be because of respondents misinterpreting the first point on the scale to mean the highest democracy level. The mean trust values vary up and down between values 1-5 with increasing perceived democracy. This result relates back to Lehane's (2022) finding that democracy preference and institutional trust did not vary in a linear fashion. Following this, a steady increase is observed going from values 6-9, with another dip for the value of 'completely democratic.'

Besides a slight dip going from 'Very bad' to 'Bad' and 'So so' to 'Good', increasing perceived economic conditions translated into increasing trust in the local government. There was a substantial increase in mean trust going from 'Bad' to 'So so.' This finding supports the hypothesis that more positive perceptions of the economy translates into greater trust in the government. The relationship between quality of governance and trust in the local government is largely linear. Hence, with increasing agreement that India has a good quality of governance, mean trust in the local government increased as well.

There exists a similar relationship between perceived access to public services and local government trust, since those who perceive an easier access to public services tended to also trust the local government more. Mean trust in the local government trends in the positive direction for perceived safety levels too, with those who perceive their area to be very unsafe to have a much lower trust in their local government. This could be because respondents hold their local government responsible for the safety of their local environment to a greater extent than the national government. It must be noted that all of these graphs' error bars are quite large suggesting a large variance in responses. Overall, these results partially support the hypotheses, since not all levels of perceived democracy were significant. All of the variables are positively related to the dependent variable as expected.

Multilevel Models

Since local governments varying state by state, a multilevel model could clarify any differences between states for both trust in the national and local government. This section interprets the results of two varying intercepts-varying slopes models, one with trust in the national government as the dependent variable and the other with trust in the local government. In terms of data cleaning, only complete cases were used.

National Government Trust

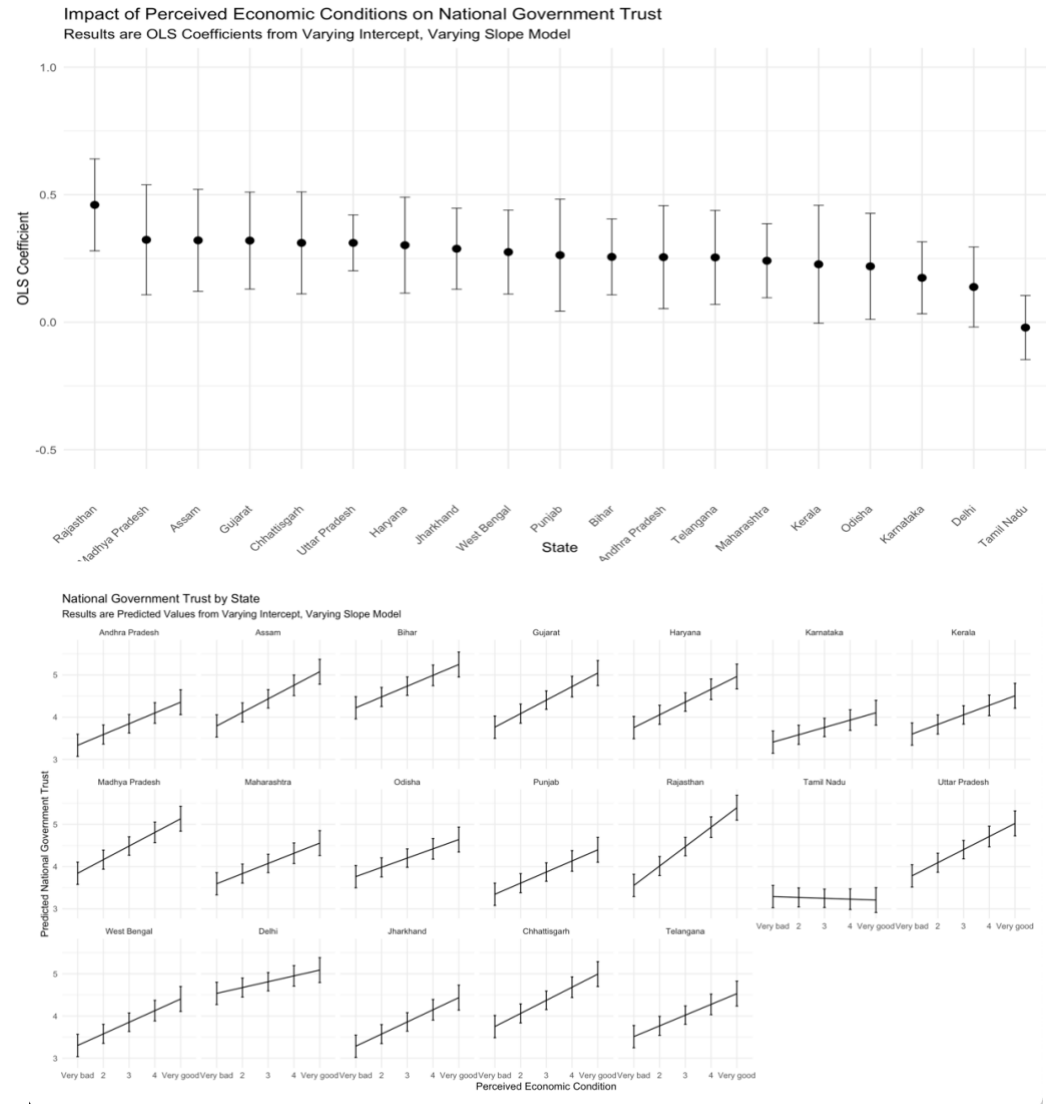
There were slight variations in results with changing intercepts across the five primary independent variables (See Appendix B). The AIC value for the model with perceived governance quality as the varying intercepts is the lowest (9146.2), suggesting that this model fits the data best. Five models with each of the five primary independent variables as the varying intercept are described and interpreted below.

- Perceived Economic Conditions

First, with perceived economic conditions as the varying intercept, the t-values of perceived economic conditions (5.797), perceived public service access (3.474), perceived safety (3.059), perceived governance quality (5.035) and perceived democracy (2.223) were significant and found to have a positive impact on trust in the national government. These results were achieved by controlling for biological sex, age group, education, religiosity, perceived social status, and perceived social mobility. Of these control variables, perceived social status (2.66) and social mobility (-2.16) were significant, while biological sex (0.353), age group (30-39 = 0.721, 40-49 = 0.711, 50-64 = 1.023, 65+ = 0.189), education (-1.25), and religiosity (1.005) were not significant. The average estimates for all variables in the model are as follows: perceived economic conditions (0.259), perceived public service access (0.149), perceived safety (0.14), perceived governance quality (0.242), perceived democracy level (0.027), biological sex (0.02), age group 30-39 (0.053), age group 40-49 (0.058), age group 50-64 (0.09), age group 65+ (0.025), education (-0.035), religiosity (0.035), perceived social status (0.051), and perceived social mobility (-0.042). By region, perceived economic conditions matter the most in Rajasthan (0.2) and the least in Tamil Nadu (-0.28) in determining trust in the national government.

Figure 4

Impact of Perceived Economic Conditions on National Government Trust by State



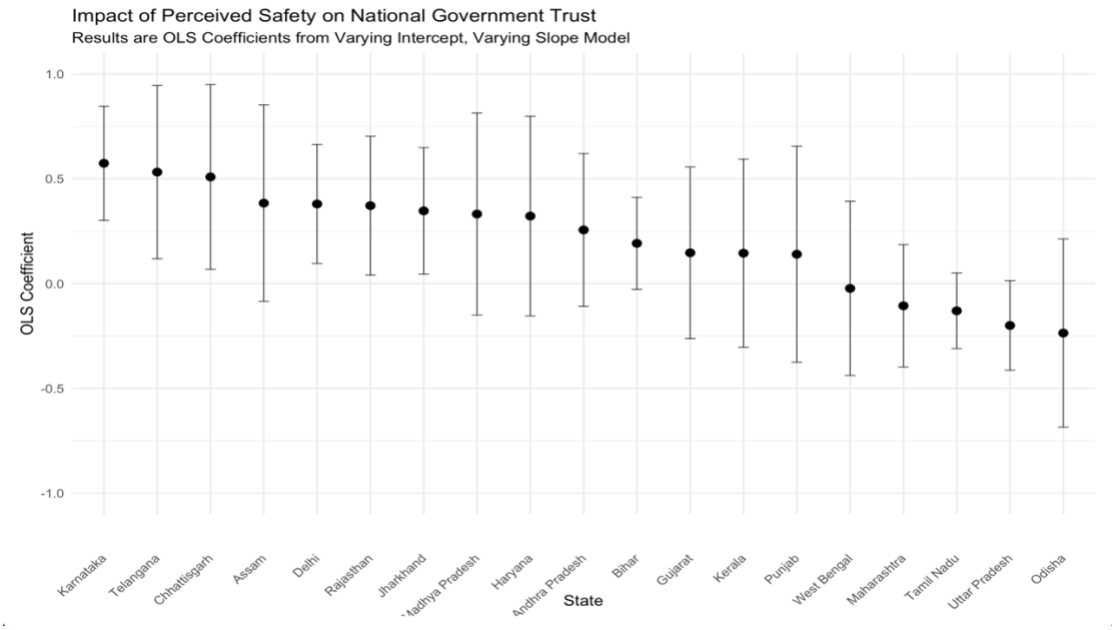
From the first graph above, Rajasthan has the highest OLS coefficient while Tamil Nadu has the lowest. A lot of the northern Indian states seem to high OLS coefficients, suggesting that the condition of the economy matters a lot more in this region. In the second graph, it is clear that in most of the states, as perceptions of the economy improves, the more trust people tend to have in their national government. On the other hand, for Tamil Nadu, there seems to be a slight decline in trust in the national government with improving economic perceptions.

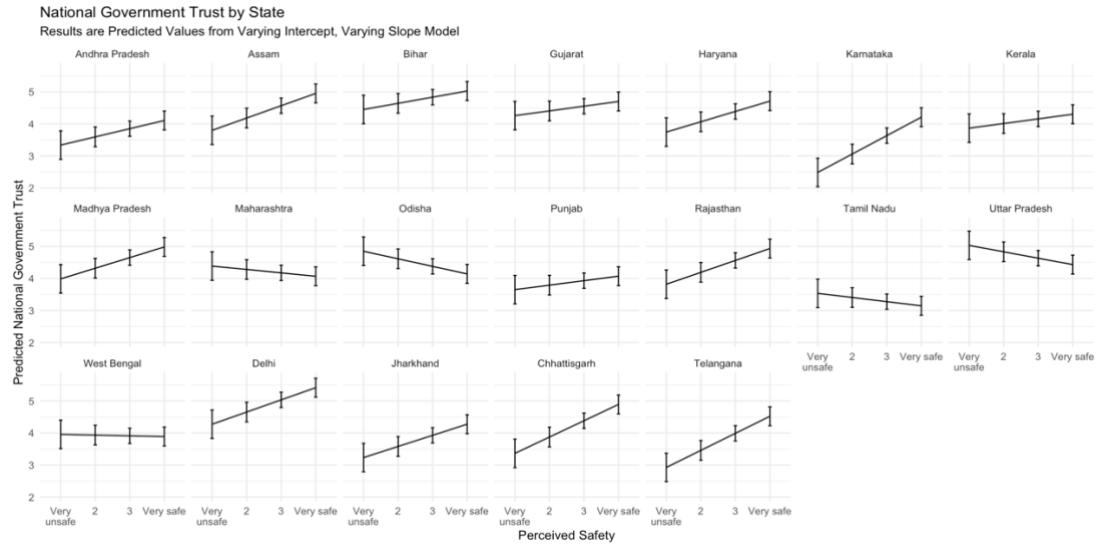
- Perceived Safety

In the next model, perceived safety is taken as the varying intercept. The t-values for all of the primary independent variables are significant in the positive direction: perceived economic conditions (8.51), perceived service access (3.731), perceived safety (2.23), perceived governance quality (5.286), and perceived democracy (2.785). In this model as well, besides perceived social status (2.547) and social mobility (-2.326), none of the control variables were significant. The average estimates for all variables in the model are as follows: perceived economic conditions (0.242), perceived public service access (0.159), perceived safety (0.2), perceived governance quality (0.253), perceived democracy level (0.03), biological sex (0.013), age group 30-39 (0.038), age group 40-49 (0.058), age group 50-64 (0.095), age group 65+ (0.028), education (-0.053), religiosity (0.035), perceived social status (0.049), and perceived social mobility (-0.045). By region, perceived safety matters the most in Karnataka (0.367) and the least in Odisha (-0.443) in determining trust in the national government.

Figure 5

Impact of Perceived Safety on National Government Trust by State





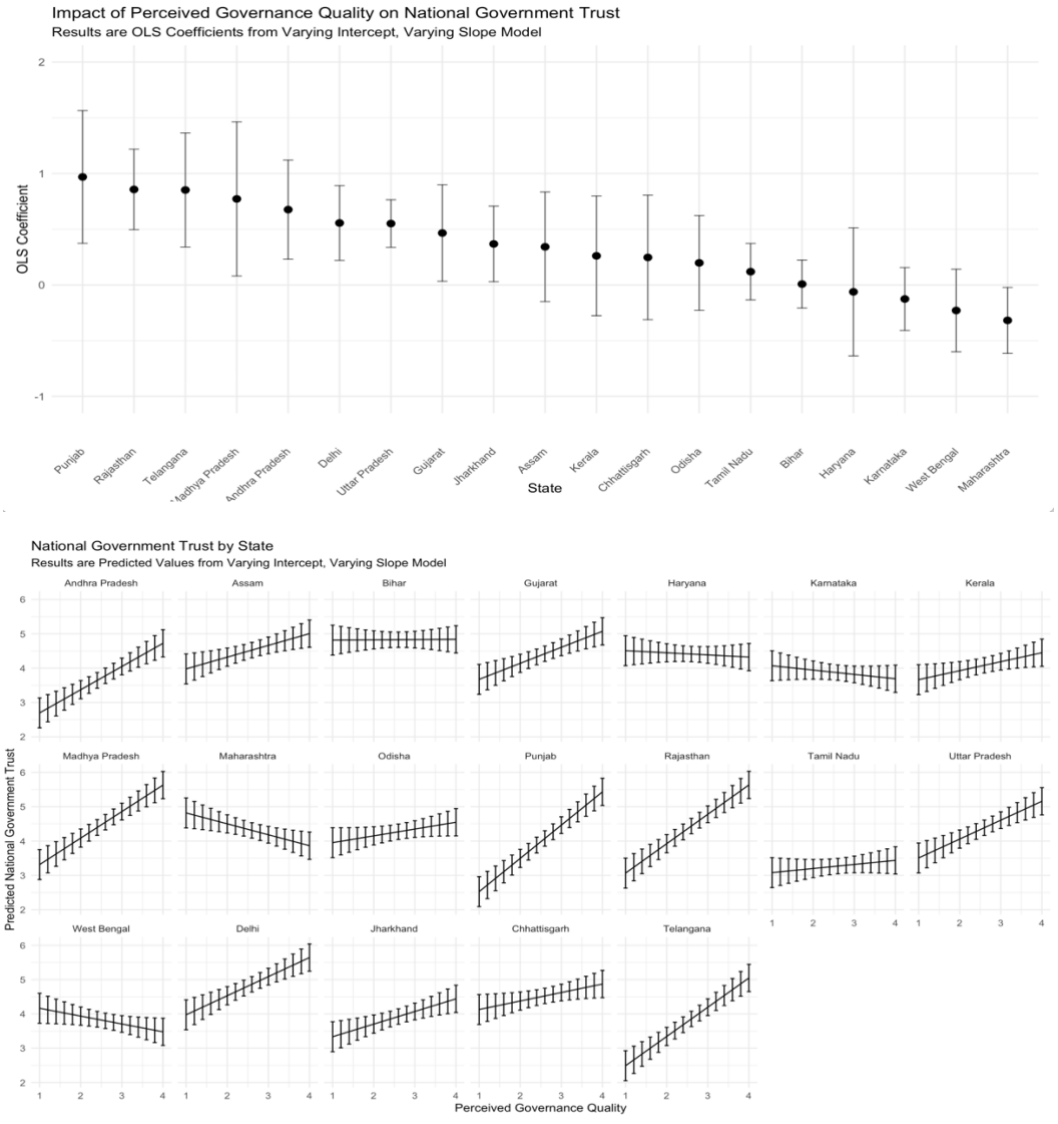
From the first graph above, Karnataka has the highest OLS coefficient while Odisha has the lowest. In the second graph, a steep increase in trust is noticed with increasing perceived safety. Notably, trust declines with increasing perceived safety in Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh.

- Perceived Governance Quality

Taking perceived governance quality as the varying intercept and controlling for age, biological sex, educational attainment, religiosity, perceived social status, and social mobility, the t-values for all of the primary independent variables are significant in the positive direction once again: perceived economic conditions (7.472), perceived service access (3.31), perceived safety (2.868), perceived governance quality (2.874), perceived democracy (2.329). Besides perceived social status (2.803), none of the control variables are significant. The average estimates of the variables are as follows: perceived economic conditions (0.212), perceived service access (0.143), perceived safety (0.131), perceived governance quality (0.343), perceived democracy (0.028), biological sex (0.02), age group 30-39 (0.037), age group 40-49 (0.07), age group 50-64 (0.089), age group 65+ (0.043), education (-0.04), religiosity (0.042), perceived social status (0.054), and perceived social mobility (-0.035). By region, governance quality matters the most in Punjab (0.627) and the least in Maharashtra (-0.661).

Figure 6

Impact of Perceived Governance Quality on National Government Trust by State



In the first graph above, Punjab has the highest coefficient and Maharashtra has the lowest. In the second one, a slight decline in national government is observed in West Bengal, Haryana, Karnataka, and Maharashtra with increasing perceived governance quality. Bihar remains stable in its trust across the scale of governance quality.

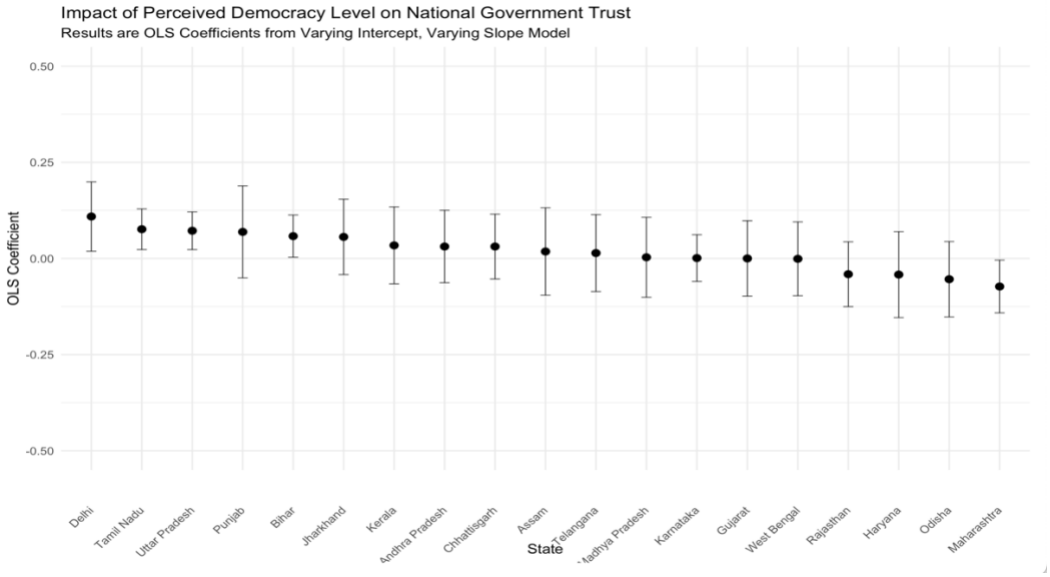
- Perceived Democracy Level

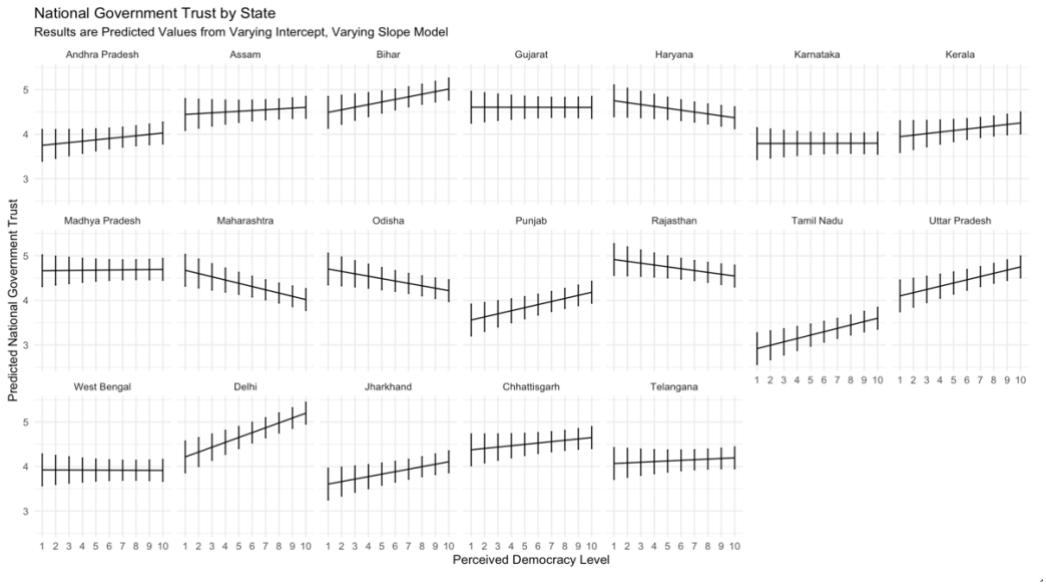
Using perceived democracy level as the varying intercept and using relevant control variables, the t-values of perceptions of economy (8.187), public service access (3.935), safety (2.661), governance quality (4.71) are significant in the positive direction. Unlike previous

models, perceived democracy level is not significant. Of the control variables, only perceived social status (2.84) and perceived social mobility (-2.035) are significant. The average estimates of the variables in this model are: perceived economic conditions (0.234), perceived public service access (0.169), perceived safety (0.121), governance quality (0.227), perceived democracy (0.019), biological sex (0.019), age group 30-39 (0.042), age group 40-49 (0.066), age group 50-64 (0.101), age group 65+ (0.025), education (-0.038), religiosity (0.033), perceived social status (0.055), and perceived social mobility (-0.04). Delhi regards perceived democracy level as the most important among the states in the sample (0.09), while Maharashtra sees it as least important (-0.092). Delhi is the capital of India, so this result is consistent with the political prominence of the state.

Figure 7

Impact of Perceived Democracy Level on National Government Trust by State





The first graph shows that Delhi has the highest OLS coefficient in this model and Maharashtra has the lowest. At the same time, the range of the coefficients is pretty narrow. The second one displays how trust in the national government declines in Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan with increasing perceived democracy.

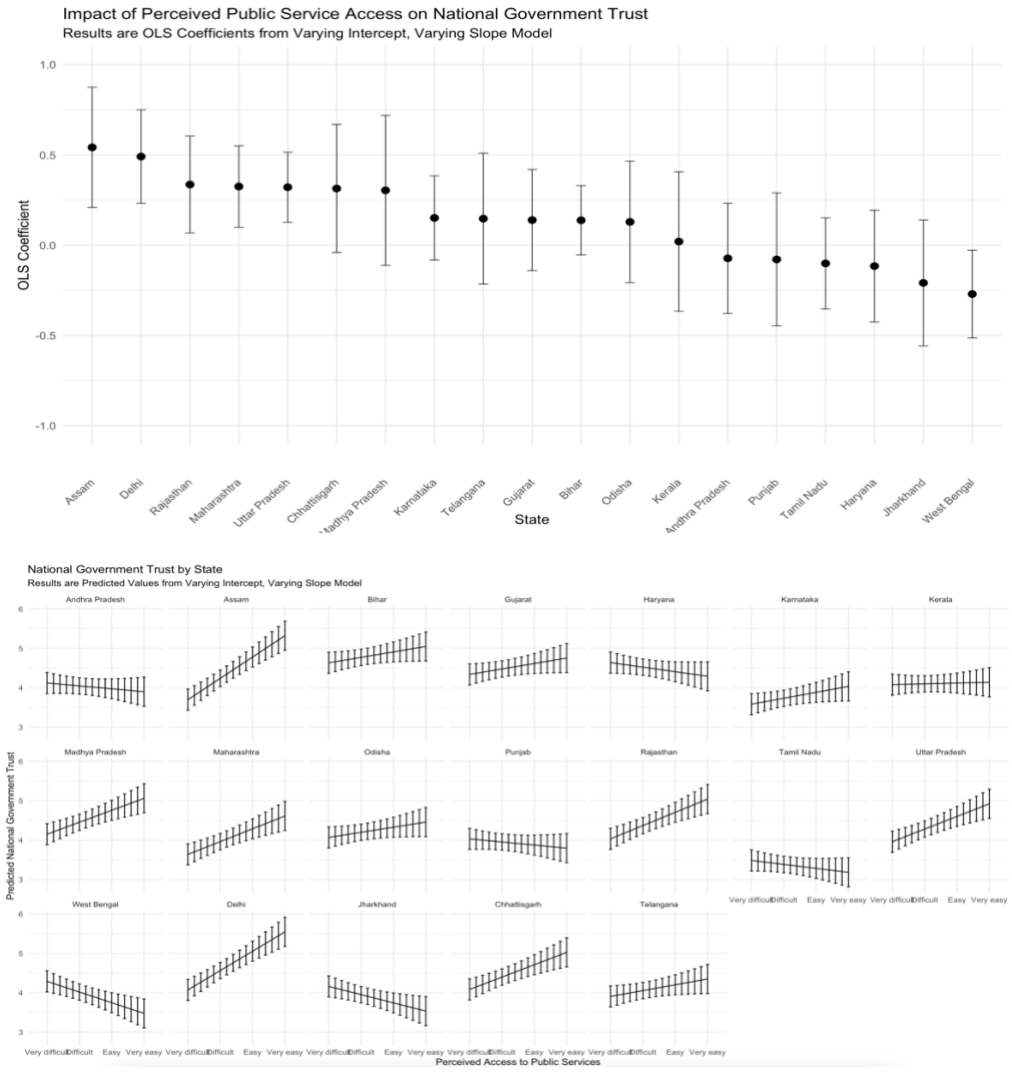
- Perceived Access to Public Services

The final multilevel model for trust in the national government used perceived access to public services as the varying intercept. Controlling for age, biological sex, education, religiosity, perceived social status and social mobility, the t-values for perceived economic conditions (7.389), perceived safety (2.869), perceived governance quality (5.132), and perceived democracy level (2.897) are significant in the positive direction. Perceived public service access was not significant in determining national government trust. As in most of the previous models, only perceived social status (2.707) and perceived social mobility (-2.355) are significant control variables in this model. The average estimates for the variables are: perceived economic conditions (0.21), perceived service access (0.132), perceived safety (0.13), perceived governance quality (0.248), perceived democracy (0.035), biological sex (0.021), age group 30-39 (0.035), age group 40-49 (0.063), age group 50-64 (0.097), age group 65+ (0.02), education (-0.04), religiosity (0.057), perceived social status (0.052), and perceived social mobility (-0.045). Of the 19 regions, Assam considers public service access as the most important (0.41), while

West Bengal (-0.403) considers it to be the least important in determining national government trust.

Figure 8

Impact of Perceived Access to Public Services on National Government Trust by State



The first graph shows that Assam has the highest OLS coefficient and West Bengal has the lowest. From the second one, it is evident that trust in the national government declines with increasing perceived public service access in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

Local Government Trust

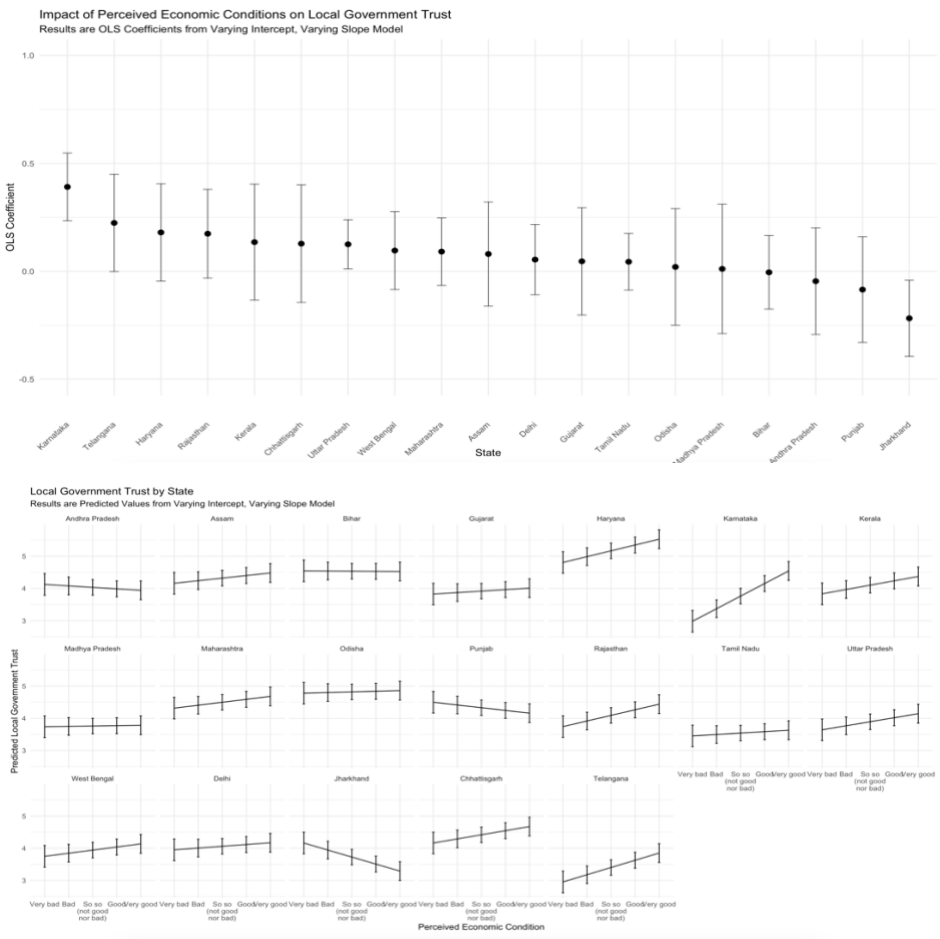
There were slight variations in results with changing intercepts across the five primary independent variables (See Appendix C). The AIC value for the model with perceived democracy level as the varying intercept was the lowest from the five models generated below (9046.4). Hence, this model best fits the data structure. Five models with each of the five primary independent variables as the varying intercept are described and interpreted below.

- Perceived Economic Conditions

With perceived economic conditions as the varying intercept and accounting for control variables, the t-values for perceived public service access (9.427), perceived safety (3.788), perceived governance quality (4.905) were significant and positive, indicating that trust in the local government increases with better perceptions of service access, safety, and governance quality. Perceived economic conditions (1.474) and democracy level (0.229) were not significant. Of the control variables, only education (-2.587) and religiosity (2.17) were significant. Hence, people with higher education levels tended to trust the local government less, and those who were more religious trusted it more. The average estimates of this model's variables are: economic conditions (0.076), service access (0.396), perceived safety (0.169), governance quality (0.23), perceived democracy (0.003), biological sex (0.064), age group 30-39 (-0.025), age group 40-49 (-0.102), age group 50-64 (-0.042), age group 65+ (-0.041), education level (-0.07), religiosity (0.075), perceived social status (-0.029), perceived social mobility (0.032). By region, Karnataka views economic conditions as the most important in determining local government trust (0.315), while Jharkhand sees it as least important (-0.294).

Figure 9

Impact of Perceived Economic Conditions on Local Government Trust by State



The first graph shows how the OLS coefficient for Karnataka is much higher than those for the other states, and how Jharkhand is the lowest. The second one displays how most of the graphs trend in the positive direction, that is, people across states have highest local government trust with better economic perceptions. This is not observed for Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab.

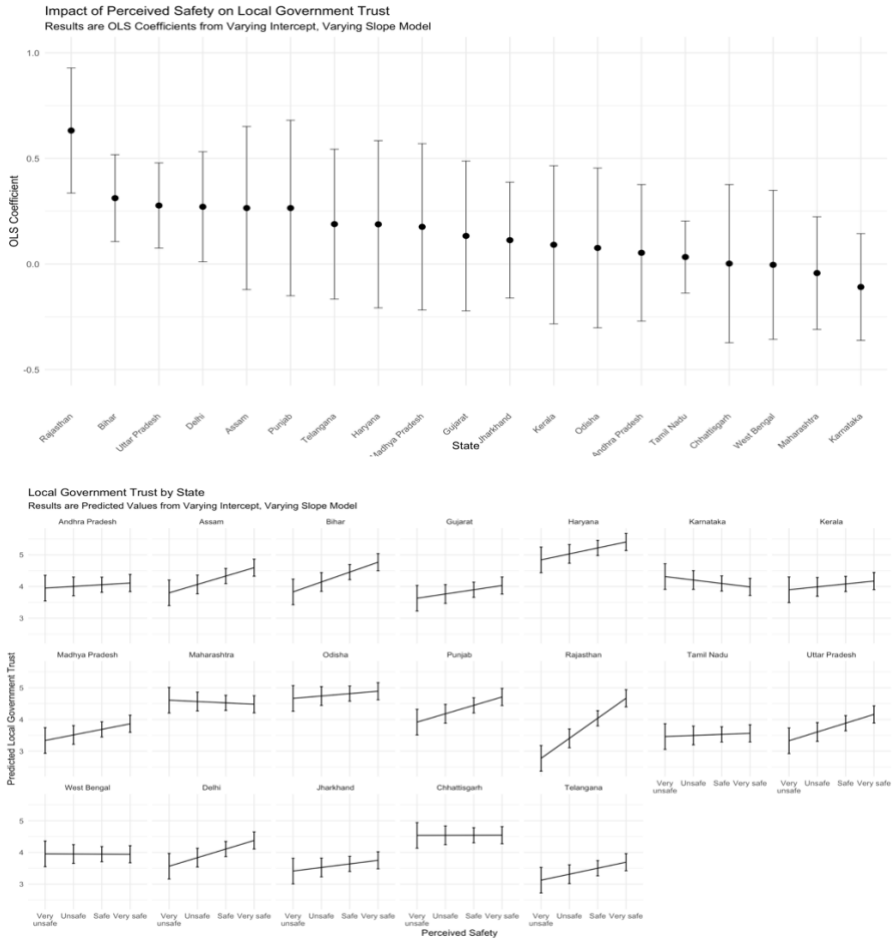
- Perceived Safety

With perceived safety as the varying intercept and relevant control variables, the t-values for four of the primary independent variables are significant and positive: perceived economic conditions (3.298), perceived public service access (9.419), perceived safety (1.991), and governance quality (4.891). Hence, trust in the local government increased with better perceptions of economic conditions, public service access, safety, and governance quality. Perceived democracy level was not significant (0.551). Of the control variables, education (-2.321) and religiosity (2.182) are once again significant in the same directions as the previous

model. The average estimates for each variable are: economic conditions (0.092), service access (0.394), perceived safety (0.154), governance quality (0.23), perceived democracy (0.006), biological sex (0.061), age group 30-39 (-0.02), age group 40-49 (-0.106), age group 50-64 (-0.035), age group 65+ (-0.012), education (-0.063), religiosity (0.076), perceived social status (-0.029), perceived social mobility (0.031). By region, Rajasthan values safety the most in determining local government trust (0.478), while Karnataka values it the least (-0.263).

Figure 10

Impact of Perceived Safety on Local Government Trust by State



The first graph shows how the OLS coefficient for Rajasthan is much higher than that of the other states, emphasizing its importance in building trust with the local government. A lot of the states with high OLS coefficients are in the northern region of India, where safety is a much bigger problem. The second graph shows that except for Karnataka, all of the states show increasing local government trust with greater perceived safety. This result could be because

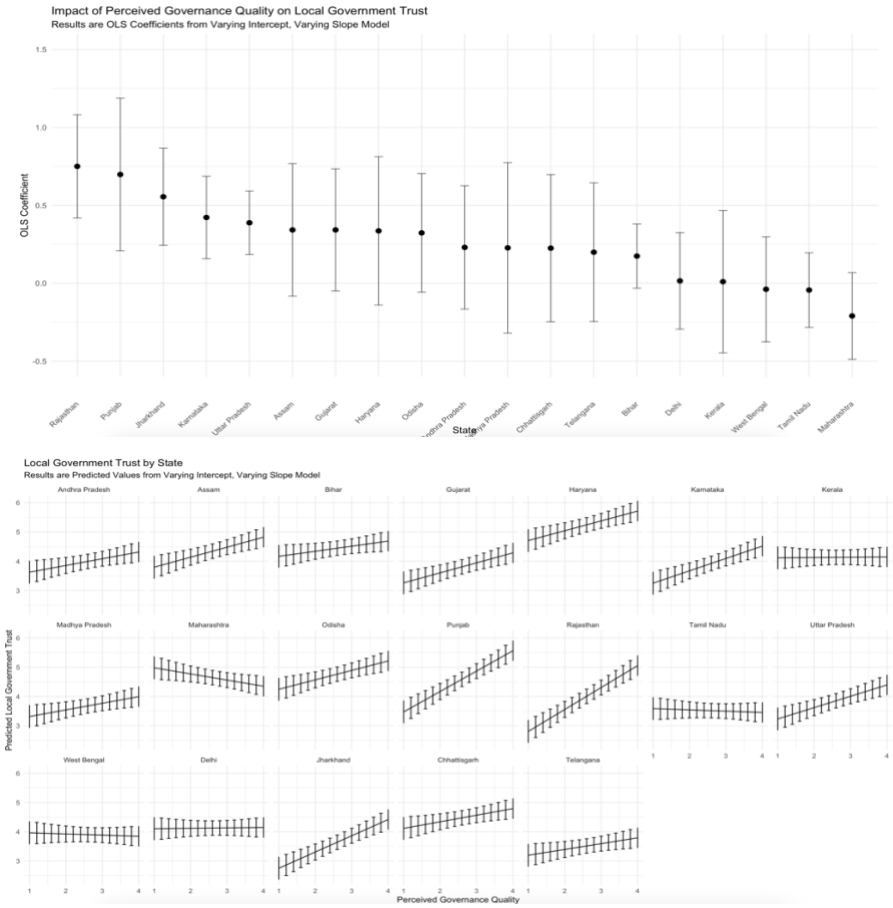
there are other factors that are more important to the population of Karnataka in building local government trust.

- Perceived Governance Quality

With perceived governance quality as the varying intercept and controlling for age, biological sex, education, religiosity, perceived social status, and perceived social mobility, the t-values for four of the primary independent variables were significant and positive: economic conditions (3.179), service access (9.403), perceived safety (3.822), perceived governance quality (2.797). Perceived democracy was not significant in this model as well. Of the control variables, education (-2.441) and religiosity (2.083) were significant. The average estimates for each variables were: economic conditions (0.089), service access (0.397), perceived safety (0.171), governance quality (0.26), perceived democracy (0.004), biological sex (0.067), age group 30-39 (-0.03), age group 40-49 (-0.116), age group 50-64 (-0.05), age group 65+ (-0.018), education (-0.066), religiosity (0.072), perceived social status (-0.024), and social mobility (0.03). By region, Rajasthan values governance quality the most in determining local government trust (0.49) while Maharashtra the least (-0.47).

Figure 11

Impact of Perceived Governance Quality on Local Government Trust by State



The first graph shows how Rajasthan has the highest OLS coefficient, while Maharashtra has the lowest. Except for Karnataka, a lot of the states with high coefficients are in the northern part of India.

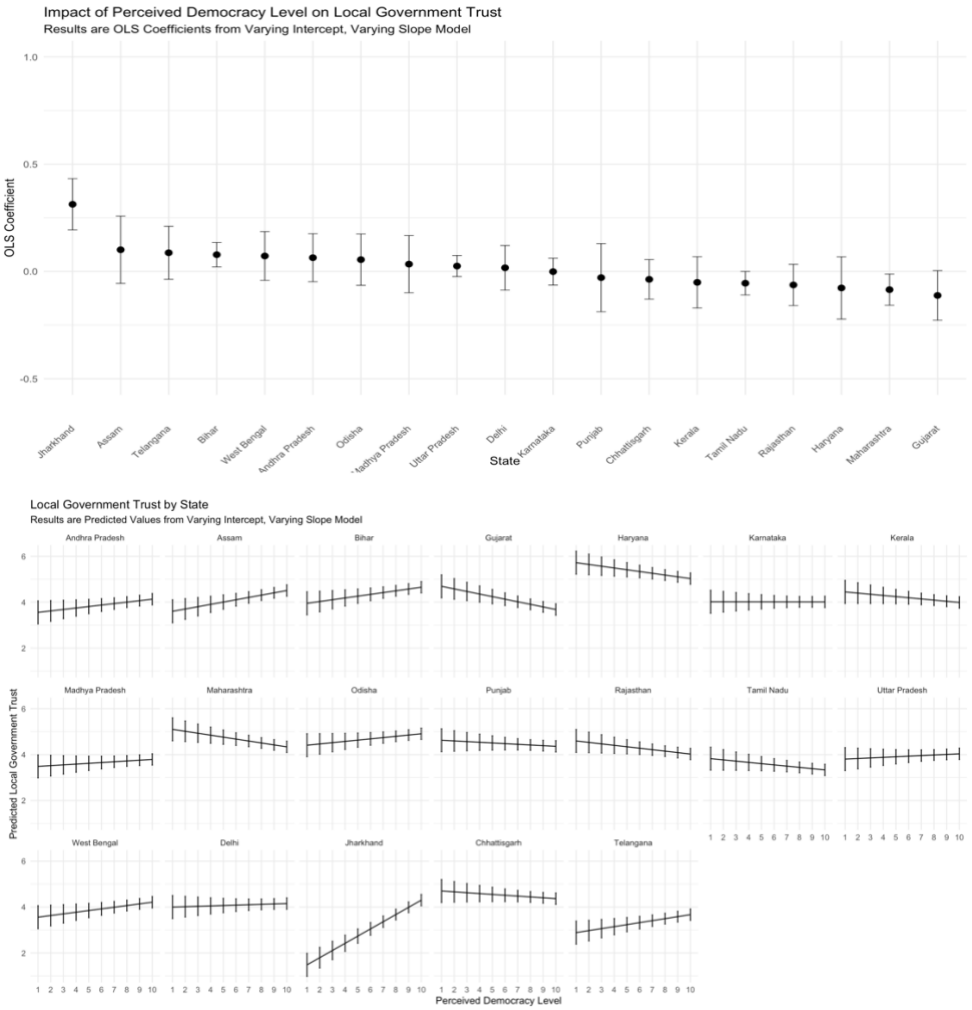
- Perceived Democracy Level

With perceived democracy level as the varying intercept and with appropriate controls, all independent variables except for perceived democracy are significant and positive in effecting local government trust: economic conditions (3.669), service access (9.416), perceived safety (3.131), and governance quality (4.148). Of the control variables, only education was significant and negative (-2.662), suggesting that more educated people trusted the local government less. The average estimates for each variable were: economic conditions (0.102), service access (0.395), perceived safety (0.139), governance quality (0.195), perceived democracy (0.018), biological sex (0.069), age group 30-39 (-0.015), age group 40-49 (-0.085), age group 50-64 (-0.029), age group 65+ (-0.024), education (-0.071), religiosity (0.058), perceived social status (-

0.012), perceived social mobility (0.024). By region, Jharkhand sees democracy level as highly influential on their trust in the local government (0.295), while Gujarat sees it as least influential among the 19 states (-0.13).

Figure 12

Impact of Perceived Democracy Level on Local Government Trust by State



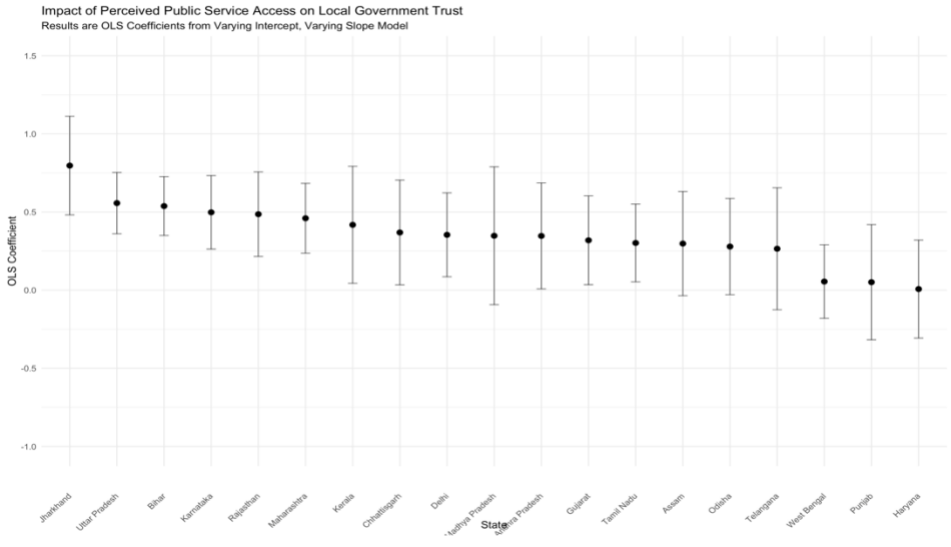
The first graph shows how Jharkhand has the highest OLS coefficient and Gujarat has the lowest. Compared to other graphs, the error bars here are relatively tighter and inference may be more accurate. In the second graph, across the scale, the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh exhibit declining local government trust with increased perceptions of India as a democracy.

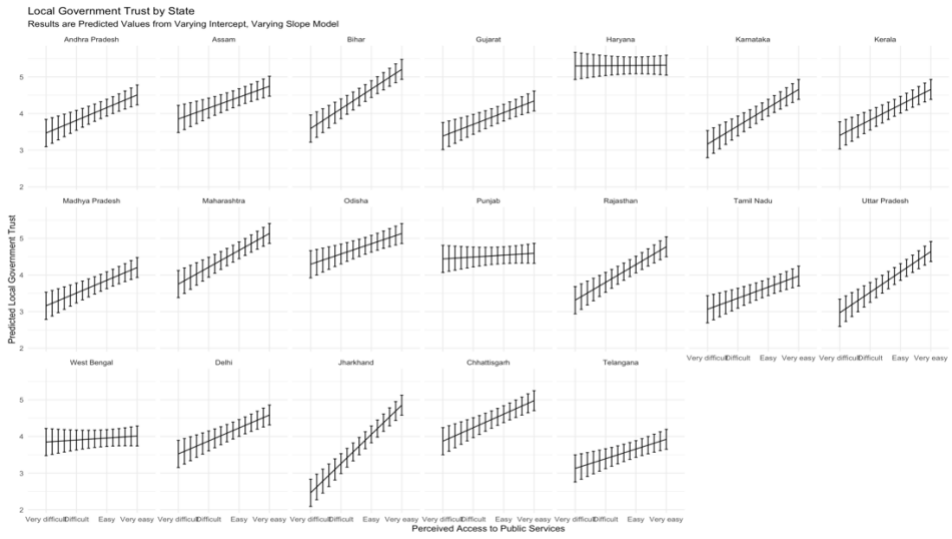
- Perceived Access to Public Services

This final model uses perceived public service access as a varying intercept and controls for age, biological sex, age, education, religiosity, social status, and social mobility. Here, the t-values for economic conditions (3.253), service access (4.764), safety (3.35), and governance quality (5.119) were significant. Perceived democracy level was not significant. The control variables of education (-2.481) and religiosity (2.172) were significant. The average estimates in this model were: economic conditions (0.091), service access (0.355), perceived safety (0.149), perceived governance quality (0.243), democracy level (0.007), biological sex (0.062), age group 30-39 (-0.037), age group 40-49 (-0.107), age group 50-64 (-0.032), age group 65+ (-0.015), education (-0.068), religiosity (0.076), perceived social status (-0.025), and social mobility (0.03). Jharkhand values access to public services the most in determining local government trust (0.442), while Haryana values it the least (-0.349).

Figure 13

Impact of Perceived Access to Public Services on Local Government Trust by State





The first graph shows how Jharkhand has the highest OLS coefficient and Haryana the lowest. Haryana may see it as lesser important because they have sufficient access to public services such as good roads and running water. In the second graph, it is observed that with increasing access to public services, trust in the local government increases in all of the states. This could be because the local government is usually held responsible for maintaining access to transport, healthcare, and so on.

Conclusions

This project aimed to determine the factors that affect Indians' trust in their national and local government in the context of the upcoming 2024 elections in the country. Since both of the dependent variables had a natural order to their responses, the ordered logit model was used to best fit the data structure. The multilevel model, particularly the varying intercepts-varying slopes model, was the second analytical strategy used to model differences in trust in the two dependent variables and the varying importance of factors across states included in the dataset. Overall, the hypotheses were partially supported by the results, with most of the independent variables being positively and significantly related to trust in the national and local government. The northern states of India seem to value safety and economic conditions more in decided whether to trust the government, which could be due to these states not being as safe or economically well-off as the southern Indian states.

Notably, the effect of the primary independent variables differed at the national and local levels. Perceived democracy level seemed to be more relevant at the national level, which could

be explained by the people regarding it to be the duty of the national government rather than the local government to maintain democracy. Social status and mobility were more important control variables at the national government level, possibly due to people trusting politicians from their own communities (caste, class, religion) more than others as identified in the literature review. Religiosity level and educational attainment levels were more important at the local government level, which could allude to the complex religious politics present in India's increasingly polarized political environment.

Overall, this project showcases how multifaceted public trust is and the importance of fostering it to ensure smooth governance. Also, it exemplifies how trust varies so vastly across Indian states, and how trust cannot be generalized to all populations. The results described about delineate how important it is to understand trust deficits as linked to people's experiences with the government and community status, and that "governments should devise policies to foster trust within communities, particularly focusing on assimilating minorities" (Mahmud et al., 2014). In particular, social status and social mobility seem to be extremely important in deciding whether to trust the government over traditional controls such as biological sex and age. This finding could be explained by the wealth disparity in India and its collectivistic culture which emphasizes people's purpose as placed in a social context rather than being individualized like most Western countries.

Future research could include political involvement as a variable, since "people who voted for the government in power are, on average almost twice as likely to say that they trust the government than people who did not vote for the current government" (OECD, 2022). Also, it could be more insightful to consider religious affiliation rather than level of religiosity, because in the context of India, Hindus have been found to view their religious and Indian national identities as being closely intertwined (O'Reilly, 2022). Furthermore, future studies could work with survey data from all 28 states of India to allow the results to be more generalizable.

References

Alliance of Democracies. (2023). *Democracy Perception Index 2023*. Retrieved December 12, 2023, from https://6389062.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/6389062/Canva%20images/Democracy%20Perception%20Index%202023.pdf.

Analysing Economic Performance of Indian States. Confederation of Indian Industry. (2023, October 17). https://www.ciiblog.in/analysing-economic-performance-of-indian-states/.

Asian Barometer. (n.d.a). Survey Timetable. Asian Barometer. https://www.asianbarometer.org/survey.jsp?page=s10.

Asian Barometer. (n.d.b). The History of our Program. Asian Barometer. https://www.asianbarometer.org/brief.html?page=b20.

Devlin, K. (2019, March 25). A Sampling of Public Opinion in India. Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/03/25/a- sampling-of-public-opinion-in-india/.

Indians' trust increases in Govt and business, dips in Media, ngos, says survey. The Economic Times. (2023, January 18). https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/indians-trust-increases-in-govt-and- business-dips-in-media-ngos-says-survey/articleshow/97093307.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst.

Jalan, J., & Sen, A. (2020). Containing a pandemic with public actions and Public Trust: The kerala story. *Indian Economic Review*, *55*(S1), 105–124. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41775-020-00087-1.

Kumar, D., Pratap, B., & Aggarwal, A. (2020). Public Trust in state governments in India: Who are more confident and what makes them confident about the government? Asian Journal of Comparative Politics, 6(2), 154–174.https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891119898763.

Lehane, C. (2022, June 22). *Polls: Democracy remains important to people but trust erodes*. Democracy Without Borders. https://www.democracywithoutborders.org/23058/polls-democracy-remains-important-to-people-but-trust-erodes.

Mahmud, M., Moitra, P., & Neelim, A. (2014, September 30). *Religion, minority status and trust in India*. International Growth Centre. https://www.theigc.org/blogs/religion-minority-status-and-trust-india.

OECD. (2022). *Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions*. OECD. Retrieved December 12, 2023, from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/184914ff-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/184914ff-en#:~:text=People%20with%20lower%20levels%20of,points%20higher%20trust%20in%20government..

O'Reilly, D. (2022, March 3). *Exploring Religion and Identity Politics in India*. Pew Trusts. https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/trust/archive/winter-2022/exploring-religion-and-identity-politics-in-india.

Trust in public institutions: Trends and implications for economic security. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2021, July 20). https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2021/07/trust-public-institutions/.

Wikimedia Foundation. (2023, December 11). *List of states and union territories of India by crime rate*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_states_and_union_territories_of_India_by_crime_rate#:~:text=Among%20states%2C%20Kerala%20has%20the,National%20Capital%20Region%20(India).

Appendix A

Comparison of Ordered Logit Model Results of National and Local Government Trust

	Dependent variable:	
	Trust in National Government	Trust in Local Government
	(1)	(2)
Perceived Economic Conditions	0.339***	
	(0.036)	
Perceived Economic Conditions: Bad		-0.114
		(0.174)
Perceived Economic Conditions: So so (not good nor bad)		0.422**
		(0.166)
Perceived Economic Conditions: Good		0.259
		(0.159)
Perceived Economic Conditions: Very good		0.434**
		(0.181)
Perceived Public Service Access	0.233***	0.503***
	(0.057)	(0.058)
Perceived Safety	0.162***	
	(0.059)	
Perceived Safety: Unsafe		0.647**
		(0.283)
Perceived Safety: Safe		0.770***
		(0.263)
Perceived Safety: Very safe		0.934***
		(0.271)
Governance Quality	0.376***	0.278***
	(0.063)	(0.065)
Perceived Democracy	0.087***	
	(0.016)	
Perceived Democracy: 2		-0.831***
		(0.296)
Perceived Democracy: 3		-0.275
		(0.285)
Perceived Democracy: 4		-0.582**
		(0.272)
Perceived Democracy: 5		0.025
		(0.248)
Perceived Democracy: 6		-0.485**
		(0.245)
Perceived Democracy: 7		-0.334
		(0.235)
Perceived Democracy: 8		-0.150
		(0.230)
Perceived Democracy: 9		-0.117
		(0.231)
Perceived Democracy: Completely democratic		-0.178
		(0.225)
Female	-0.076	0.037
	(0.075)	(0.076)
Age Group: 30-39	0.059	-0.002
	(0.098)	(0.098)
Age Group: 40-49	0.107	-0.143
	(0.110)	(0.110)
Age Group: 50-64	0.143	-0.032
	(0.116)	(0.116)
Age Group: 65+	0.120	-0.011
	(0.175)	(0.179)
Education Level	-0.095***	-0.136***
	(0.036)	(0.036)
Perceived Religiosity	0.026	0.073
	(0.046)	(0.046)
Perceived Social Status	0.145***	
	(0.026)	
Perceived Social Mobility	-0.114***	
	(0.026)	
Perceived Social Status: 2		0.433
		(0.337)

Perceived Social Status: 3		-0.155
		(0.311)
Perceived Social Status: 4		-0.102
		(0.286)
Perceived Social Status: 5		-0.191
		(0.274)
Perceived Social Status: 6		-0.030
		(0.275)
Perceived Social Status: 7		-0.073
		(0.282)
Perceived Social Status: 8		0.138
		(0.296)
Perceived Social Status: 9		-0.138
		(0.346)
Perceived Social Status: Highest status		0.463
		(0.369)
Perceived Social Mobility: 2		0.024
		(0.289)
Perceived Social Mobility: 3		0.058
		(0.277)
Perceived Social Mobility: 4		0.004
		(0.262)
Perceived Social Mobility: 5		-0.066
		(0.252)
Perceived Social Mobility: 6		-0.131
		(0.256)
Perceived Social Mobility: 7		-0.075
		(0.263)
Perceived Social Mobility: 8		0.013
		(0.285)
Perceived Social Mobility: 9		0.034
		(0.336)
Perceived Social Mobility: Richest		0.313
		(0.412)
Observations	2,567	2,585
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix B

Comparison of Multilevel Models for Trust in the National Government

Varying Intercepts-Varying Slopes Model Results for Trust in National Government

	VIVS (Perceived Economic Conditions)	VIVS (Perceived Safety)	VIVS (Governance Quality)	VIVS (Perceived Democracy)	VIVS (Perceived Public Service Access)
(Intercept)	1.562	1.385	1.424	1.754	1.682
	(0.288)	(0.375)	(0.397)	(0.310)	(0.302)
Perceived Economic Conditions	0.259	0.242	0.212	0.234	0.210
	(0.045)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.028)
Perceived Public Service Access	0.149	0.159	0.143	0.169	0.132
	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.081)
Perceived Safety	0.140	0.207	0.131	0.121	0.130
	(0.046)	(0.093)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.045)
Perceived Governance Quality	0.242	0.253	0.343	0.227	0.248
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.119)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Perceived Democracy Level	0.027	0.033	0.028	0.019	0.035
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.022)	(0.012)
Female	0.020	0.013	0.021	0.019	0.021
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Age Group (30-39)	0.053	0.038	0.037	0.042	0.035
	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.073)	(0.073)
Age Group (40-49)	0.058	0.058	0.070	0.066	0.063
	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.082)
Age Group (50-64)	0.090	0.095	0.089	0.101	0.097
	(0.088)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.088)	(0.088)
Age Group (65+)	0.025	0.028	0.043	0.025	0.020
	(0.135)	(0.134)	(0.134)	(0.135)	(0.135)
Educational Attainment	-0.035	-0.053	-0.040	-0.038	-0.040
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Perceived Religiosity Level	0.035	0.035	0.042	0.033	0.057
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Perceived Social Status Level	0.051	0.049	0.054	0.055	0.052
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Perceived Social Mobility Level	-0.042	-0.045	-0.035	-0.040	-0.045
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
State RE Intercept SD	0.469	1.047	1.218	0.668	0.606
State RE Perceived Economic Conditions SD	0.133				
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Economic Conditions	-0.558				
State RE Perceived Safety SD		0.316			
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Safety		-0.894			
State RE Perceived Governance Quality SD			0.446		
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Governance Quality			-0.935		
State RE Perceived Democracy Level SD				0.067	
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Democracy Level				-0.767	
State RE Perceived Public Service Access SD					0.280
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Public Service Access					-0.805
SD (Observations)	1.374	1.367	1.361	1.373	1.370
Num.Obs.	2580	2580	2580	2580	2580
R2 Marg.	0.086	0.092	0.086	0.076	0.073
R2 Cond.	0.178	0.206	0.205	0.170	0.178
AIC	9176.2	9163.0	9146.2	9177.8	9168.3
BIC	9287.5	9274.3	9257.4	9289.0	9279.5
ICC	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
RMSE	1.38	1.37	1.36	1.38	1.37

Appendix C

Comparison of Multilevel Models for Trust in the Local Government

Varying Intercepts-Varying Slopes Model Results for Trust in Local Government

	VIVS (Perceived Economic Conditions)	VIVS (Perceived Safety)	VIVS (Governance Quality)	VIVS (Perceived Democracy)	VIVS (Perceived Public Service Access)
(Intercept)	1.467	1.448	1.327	1.438	1.532
	(0.314)	(0.342)	(0.352)	(0.365)	(0.337)
Perceived Economic Conditions	0.076	0.092	0.089	0.102	0.091
	(0.052)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Perceived Public Service Access	0.396	0.394	0.397	0.395	0.355
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.075)
Perceived Safety	0.169	0.154	0.171	0.139	0.149
	(0.045)	(0.077)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.045)
Perceived Governance Quality	0.230	0.230	0.260	0.195	0.243
	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.093)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Perceived Democracy Level	0.003	0.006	0.004	0.018	0.007
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.030)	(0.012)
Female	0.064	0.061	0.067	0.069	0.062
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)
Age Group (30-39)	-0.025	-0.020	-0.030	-0.015	-0.037
	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.072)
Age Group (40-49)	-0.102	-0.106	-0.116	-0.085	-0.107
	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.080)	(0.080)
Age Group (50-64)	-0.042	-0.035	-0.050	-0.029	-0.032
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.086)
Age Group (65+)	-0.041	-0.012	-0.018	-0.024	-0.015
	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.131)	(0.132)
Educational Attainment	-0.070	-0.063	-0.066	-0.071	-0.068
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Perceived Religiosity Level	0.075	0.076	0.072	0.058	0.076
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Perceived Social Status Level	-0.029	-0.029	-0.024	-0.012	-0.025
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Perceived Social Mobility Level	0.032	0.031	0.030	0.024	0.030
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
State RE Intercept SD	0.724	0.873	0.963	1.092	0.907
State RE Perceived Economic Conditions SD	0.170				
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Economic Conditions	-0.762				
State RE Perceived Safety SD		0.237			
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Safety		-0.842			
State RE Perceived Governance Quality SD			0.317		
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Governance Quality			-0.860		
State RE Perceived Democracy Level SD				0.112	
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Democracy Level				-0.911	
State RE Perceived Public Service Access SD					0.246
Correlation RE Int & Perceived Public Service Access					-0.873
SD (Observations)	1.340	1.342	1.338	1.335	1.341
Num.Obs.	2580	2580	2580	2580	2580
R2 Marg.	0.082	0.082	0.087	0.077	0.077
R2 Cond.	0.196	0.193	0.213	0.216	0.186
AIC	9057.4	9063.5	9052.7	9046.4	9061.0
BIC	9168.7	9174.7	9163.9	9157.7	9172.3
ICC	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
RMSE	1.35	1.35	1.34	1.34	1.35