

## Unedited Transcript

### **Bruce Stokes launches the latest Pew Research Survey on Indian attitudes and public opinion**

Thank you very much for the kind invitation to share this with you and I appreciate all of you coming up today and I look forward today for our conversation when I get out of this is your questions, your interpretations on what's going on because you certainly know India better than I do and I think it is very useful to have public opinions studies like these because we do all live in bubbles. You wouldn't be here unless you are part of the elite and the elite tends to have an opinion of the world and it's always good to remind ourselves that maybe the rest of the world sees it slightly differently, or not, I mean it depends on the result of the question. Dhruva, I would thank you again. It is always a pleasure to work with you.

I have a confession to make the title of this survey, "The Honeymoon Continues", was changed at the last minute. The title used to be, "No Bloom of the Lotus", which I thought was funny a funny play of the words No Bloom off the World; until two of the young researchers at the Pew Research Centre said what does this mean? I said lotus is an Indian flower, they said, "No, we don't understand the underlying illusion". I said, "Have you never heard the expression 'the bloom is off the rose'?" And they hadn't.

This survey was done in April and May of this year in 15 of the 17 Indian states. It is done as, Dhruva said, face to face. And is a part of an ongoing series of surveys that we do all over the world, every year. We survey in India every year in eight languages. Our goal is to provide a snapshot of public opinion on a series of public policy issues in wide numbers of countries around the world, in a hope that that will further the public debate about those issues and will inform them that in a way is useful both to the public and policy makers.

We are funded by the Pew Trust which is one of the wonderful American foundations that's based in Philadelphia, and the people at the Pew Charitable Trust have this very quaint idea that good public policy flows from good information. I said quaint because much of our public debates tend to not be based on information. But the Pew Charitable Trust believes and invests in us to provide data. We are non-partisan, non-advocacy, as I like to joke, I can tell you we discovered  $1+1+1$  but I can't you it equals three.

Basically this survey was done by adults 18 and over, face to face, door to door. Margin of error is about 3%, which is standard.

What we found was that roughly 8 in 10 Indians have a favourable view of Prime Minister Modi, that has not changed dramatically in the last year; it's down 6%, but frankly any politician in the world who has 8 on 10 citizens on his side will be much happy. He's more popular than Merkel in Germany, than Obama in the United States. And probably part of that is because the Indian public is feeling better and better about the development of their country and better and better about the economy. Most of these tend to drive each other.

The sample is only 2500 people and your first question would be how can you have a survey of 2500 people in a country of 25 billion people. I will tell you when it is about methodology, methodology, methodology. It is about how you design the sample. The whole methodology is on our website if you want to look into this. I would point out to you that before the election that PM Modi won we predicted that he was going to win in a landslide. No other Indian poster got that right. We did. Now, that doesn't mean that we are going to be right always. I'm just telling you that it's all about methodology. It would seem that if you did more people you'd be more accurate. If you had the methodology right, then you could have more people to answer and analyse them but it's about how you design the survey.

One of the things that we found in the survey, one of the key takeaways is that even though PM Modi is very very popular, when asked about his governance style, his leadership style, when asked how is he doing with problems, not only is there a partisan difference in how people judge that, but the partisan difference is widening. So it's not an unadulteratedly positive thing for the Prime Minister. Clearly there are some partisan gaps that exist and are widening.

This survey was the first survey that we have ever been done where we ask the Indian public how do they feel about India's role in the world. And we did that because we have asked this question to Americans now for the last 20 years periodically. And now we decided to ask Europeans how they feel about their country's role in the world, the Chinese about their role in the world, the Japanese, the Indians. This is so because in the era of globalisation we could begin to get the sense of how do average people see the role of their country in this increasingly global society.

What was interesting is that as you can see, 68% of Indians said that they think that India is more powerful today than it was 10 years ago. Frankly, I will leave it up to you but it is probably objectively true.

It compares well with how Germans feel about their role in this world—62% Germans think that Germany is more powerful than it was a decade ago. Again, that is also probably objectively defensible. I can point out to you, only 21% of Americans think the United States is more powerful than it was 10 years ago. If you want a single explanation of part of the Trump phenomena and why the American Great Again has some appeal to some American, it's only because only 21% of the United States thinks it is more powerful today than it was 10 years ago.

What's interesting is that if you compare how Indians feel about their place in the world to how Europeans... the media in Europe and United States on the same question, you get some differences. Currently Indians are far more upbeat about India's role than the average European or American. They are actually more supportive of increasing defence spending, we can get into that later. Views in India are often comparable to the views in Europe.

What we mean by that is the question was "how committed are you to multilateralism". I would be the first one to say that wording these questions is very difficult. You know the way that you think that the average person can understand them. The wordings to these questions is something we have tested in the United States for years, for trend reasons you want to use the same wording if you can.

Basically Indians not only feel good about the economy, they feel good about the future. Basically 7 in 10 Indians say they think their children will be in a better economy than they are. I did have one Indian official to say to me, only 7 on 10? Why isn't it 9 on 10? \*laughs\* But I think the reality is there are some people who are not going to think it.

I can tell you in Europe and in the United States, people don't believe that their kids are going to be better off than they are and this is historically an aberration. For the most part, Europeans and Americans have always believed that their kids will be better off than they are but they don't believe that any more. Whereas Indians believe it. I'll tell you, the Chinese believe it. So it really just depends on how the economy is doing or how people feel the direction of the country is doing.

We asked people about what are the problems facing their country. One of the dirty little secrets of public opinion research is if you ask people about problems, they will tell you everything is a problem. This is a perfect example where we ask people. This is a 4 part answer: is it a very big problem, is it somewhat of a big, it is a small problem, is it no problem at all. I can tell you the Indians are no different than anybody else in this world. You ask them if something is a problem, not only do they see it as a problem, they think it is a very big problem. It's almost as if you give people an opportunity to vent their frustration. In some countries we've asked people what do you think about inflation and they say oh, it's a huge problem, and we're like, wait a minute, there is no inflation in this country! \*laughs\* Also bear in mind, we gave people some options, it wasn't an open-ended question because that's impossible to code. We could have picked other problems obviously. And this is not a ranking, because that's again impossible to implement in a survey. What's important is the relative answer. This is the answer to the very big problem. So they think everything is a very big problem. But they are less worried about communal relations or even air pollution than they are about crime or employment. So I think that's the value of this battery of questions.

Now this is on the international side. We asked people, is this a major threat to India? One of the limitations of this question is we wanted to ask about the world, so the things here are like tensions with Russia, which I'm not sure why 28% have said yes it's a major threat to India, I'm not sure what the tensions are with Russia. But it's kind of interesting.

I think what's interesting is that climate change is a major concern. ISIS... and the question was terrorist groups like ISIS... so probably what Indians were hearing was not the word "ISIS" but the word "terrorist groups".

I can tell you that the concern about climate change is down from last year, the concern about terrorism is up from last year. You would know better than I would why that is. My guess is the concern about climate change is less because there's less about it in the press, the climate change conference is now past.

We also ask about Prime Minister Modi, as I said. And we ask about other leading political figure in India. As you can see, roughly 6 in 10, almost 2/3rds, have a favourable view about both Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. I can tell you the favorability of the 2 Gandhis has actually gone up. Sonia Gandhi's has gone up from 58% to 68% this year, Rahul Gandhi's though hasn't really changed.

The support for Arvind has gone down to 60% to 50%. The BJP's support has gone down from 87 to 80 but again I won't make a whole lot of that because it's just beyond margin of error and it's still huge.  
\*unclear\*

Support for the Congress party has gone up by 6 percentage points from last year. The support for AAP has gone down by 11 points. Yes, that's a more significant change.

What is interesting to my mind about the favorability of Prime Minister Modi, is again people give in 4-point option—do you have a very favourable view, somewhat favourable view, somewhat unfavourable view, very unfavourable. And I can tell you that when you give people a four-part choice, they tend to cluster in the middle. We are talking about average people here that maybe haven't thought much about this and they tend to say, "oh yea somewhat favourable". That's where people tend to go. Not in this case. A majority of the population in almost every demographic category have a very favourable view of Prime Minister Modi. So that to my mind is a remarkably strong public support for the Prime Minister compared to the kind of answer you'd get about other leaders in other countries.

And noticed if even if you group together somewhat favourable and very favourable, a majority people who identify with the Congress party also have a favourable view of the Prime Minister. The intensity of that support is less, but it is still fairly strong.

We asked about the Prime Minister's leadership style: does he care about people like me? Does he stand up for what he believes? Is he able to get things done? Does he bring people together? These are kind of standard measures that we use about politicians in many countries and again it doesn't require a lot of knowledge, it is more kind of, how you feel about this guy, can you relate to him? And as you can see that basically half or more of the population basically have a positive view of his leadership style and all of these indicators. If you look about the demographics on "does he care about me?" for example, again, you see a very strong support for him across the demographic categories, with men slightly more supportive than women, young people more than old people, better educated people more than less educated people. But still in all categories it's positive.

We ask people about the Prime Minister's handling of various problems facing society. Again, we could have asked about other problems, so we wanted to get a variety of questions in the survey. Basically, they think he is doing a good job in all these things, at least majority believe that. His lowest scores are in handling communal relations and air pollution. His best scores are in helping the poor and unemployment. Most of these are unchanged from last year. People's views of this hasn't changed that much. Again, if you look at the demographic breakdown, for example, better educated people are much more likely to say that he is doing the good job helping the poor and handling terrorism, corruption...

Finally, we asked people for the first time ever, how do they feel about India's role in the world, as you can see, 2/3 of the public, and by 4 to 1, Indians think that India plays a big role in the world than 10 years ago. So Indians are pretty proud of India right now in terms of its place on the world stage.

This is a question where we asked about involvement in the global economy; half the Indians and by 2 to 1 Indians say that involvement in the world economy is good for India because it provides new markets

and opportunities for growth. I will tell you one little secret of polling, if you ask people a more principled question, if you just ask them what we've asked in the past, do you think trains are good for the country. Full stop. No price tag attached to it, no benefit attached to it. You get a higher number. When you begin to attach a price tag to it, you tend to drive down the numbers and fact that it's still over half, it seems to me an interesting sign that even though you reminded people that there might be a cost to this they basically by two to one still supported. I can tell you that's a higher number than in the United States and higher than it is in parts of Europe.

Again we asked people about... this is a question where we tried to get an isolationist sentiment: how inward looking are populations. I can confess to you, we have asked this in 4 different ways in the United States all the hard. None of these questions really work very well. It's really hard to get at that because... correct me if you ask me that question myself, and I'm a committed internationalist. I'd probably say yeah, we have to deal with our own problems first. Let's be honest with ourselves. Only 23% of Indians say we should help other countries deal with their problems first. Well I think that's probably understandable.

No I misspoke. The implication is equal to how do you deal with your own problems. And what we found is.. I can tell you, Americans answered the same things Indians do, most Europeans answered the same things Indians do. So we're still struggling, I must confess, to come up with a question.. we all suspect there's some isolationist sentiment but it's hard to judge that because it's probably natural for most people to say no, we should first tend to our own knitting. I can tell you the question that works the best but it won't work in other countries as it's a colloquial American expression. We have asked this question in the US in the past, "should we mind our own business?" \*laughs\* And as you can well imagine it probably doesn't work in most other languages. It is a wonderful measure of isolationism in the United States. It shot up after the Vietnam war in 1973, it shot up again after the Iraq invasion. So we are still trying to get at how to measure isolationist sentiment.

We asked people about other countries and their attitudes about other countries, as you can see 56% of Indians have a favourable view of the United States. I can tell you that it was 70% last year, but before people run to the exit and say oh my god, there's rising anti-Americanism in India, in 2014 it was 55% and 2015 was 56%. It would appear that the long term trend in India is about 55, 54, 56%. Last year was an aberration. Remember, we were in the field right after the President of the United States came to India in January. So I think that was a blip. It might suggest that you can rent goodwill but you can't buy it. But it would appear that Indians have a favourable view of the United States; this is a higher number than you see in Germany today, so it's all relative. It's higher than China, for example.

Notice, and it won't come as a surprise here that 73% of India have an unfavourable unfair view for Pakistan and this was obviously taken before the incident of Uri attack. Basically and what's I think is a reminder to us, notice that about half the Indian population has no opinion about South Korea. Do you remember that we were surveying the entire country. So you go in knock into the door of some Rajasthan farmer and you ask them about South Korea, he is likely to say, I don't know what you are talking about \*laughs\* and frankly that's a reminder that questions that test knowledge I would submit to you are often not the best public opinion questions. What you want to test is emotion. With all due

respect, all of you are overly rational, including me \*laughs\*. We want rational explanations for rational problems. The reality is the average person doesn't lie awake at nights thinking if somebody comes to me and asks me about South Korea and how do I feel? They can't find south Korea on a map and they don't understand the relevance to their lives. They may have an emotional feeling to Pakistan; they may have an emotional feeling about the United States, and that's what's probably best to pick up because the reality is people vote for emotional reasons. There's no difference.

We asked that how do they thought about Prime Minister Modi's handling of various countries. As you can see, they feel pretty good about his handling of the United States. It was higher last year but then again he got the President of the United States to come in in January so maybe that's why they thought he was doing a better job at handling the United States. But it's still not bad, up there at 54%. Notice that 50% don't like his handling of Pakistan. I can tell you that it's the BJP supporters than the Congress supporters. That's probably interesting. And notice that people are divided on his handling of China; there's slightly more favourable than the unfavourables but a lot of "don't knows" in that category.

Speaking of China though, I thought it'd be interesting to see how the Indian people feel about China because there is rising economic competition with China; there's also a sense of growing military competition with China. In fact, when I am in India and I talk to elites and they talk a lot more about China these days than Pakistan. What was interesting is what I showed you: people are kind of divided about China whether they're favourable or unfavourable towards China. But when you give them options about the various issues relating to China: is this is a very big problem, or somewhat serious, or not serious at all. Basically, a polarity believes that everything with China is a very serious problem. I submit to you that maybe this is more of a reflection of their feelings about China than it is about the underlying problem. Because notice that all the responses are almost exactly the same. And one of the things you realise about these researches is that when you ask your respondent a question you don't know what they're hearing. They hear China and they hear problem. China and economy or anything, that's not the issue. The issue is China. But we don't know. What George Gallup, the founder of Gallup Public Opinion Poll, used to say years ago you ask people a question and they give you an answer and your job is to report the answer and basically their answer is we think that everything related to china is a serious problem.

If you look at how that breaks down politically, it is BJP supporters who are more worried about China than Congress supporters on all these issues.

This is a question we asked all over the world, from Europe to the United States, China: "How you best want to deal with terrorism?" Do you want to see your government use overwhelming military force? Or relying too much on overwhelming military force can only create only more hatred and as a result more terrorists. I can tell you that American public is divided on this issue, 47 to 47. But Indians almost 3 to 1 say, no, we actually we believe the best way to deal with terrorism is overwhelming military force.

What was interesting was that in Europe, people say, no, it'll create too many terrorists (the Poles don't say that). But the Indians aren't divided at all. The Chinese aren't divided on that either. They're with you on this.

Finally, we ask people about military spending all over the world. Do you want to increase military spending? There's strong support in India, 3 to 1, to increase military spending. I think you spend about 1.9% of GDP on defence. I can tell you only 35% of Americans want to increase defence spending. We obviously spend a lot more than you, and 35% doesn't sound like a lot but it's highest percentage for increased defence spending since 9/11, so it is on a rise. Again, in the United States there's this huge partisan divide: Republicans want to increase defence spending and Democrats don't.

So all of this material and much more is available on the website, it is free, but I would say more importantly it is searchable. We have data here on India going back years, we have data on public opinion around the world going back to one and a half decades. Data on the United State public opinion going back two decades, and a range of data availed on global attitudes surveys but also we do more public opinion surveys on Hispanics in the United States than anybody else. We do far from public opinion surveys on religion around the world than anybody else. We increasingly do surveys about attitudes around science, technology.

**Dhruva Jaishankar:** I was also quite surprised by the high negative ratings of the Aam Admi Party and Kejriwal. For a new party, you'd expect a very large number of "don't know". The Aam Admi Party only governs one state, that is Delhi and yet it has higher negative approval rating than I recall for the BJP or Congress, which is very striking. The one area, and this is less surprising but more notice worthy, where there's overwhelming criticism for Modi's policies is on Pakistan. And I imagine that that's only increased the intervening time since June, Pakistan's position on Kashmir protests and more recently the attack in Uri.

Two other quick things, one, the strong bipartisan divisions on China. That is certainly something I found very interesting and somewhat unexpected but that there was clearly a pattern there. And finally this contradiction in Indian public opinion about its role in the world. On the one hand Indians want greater defense spending, a bigger role in the global economy which is a good thing for the country overall since it creates opportunity, and yet they also don't want to do much to help others. So in the sense, it's perhaps indicative of a rising power and maybe you can go into this a little bit on how it compares to, say, China, who also want a bigger role in the world economy.

**Ambassador Yogesh Kumar:** It's very impressive what you have showed us, but what is really very impressive is that you are taking a very small population sample to produce such kind of a picture about the state of the Indian public opinion. I was wondering about your methodology which obviously appears much better and more accurate. Maybe you can give us some comments about your methodology and compare it to some of the other opinion polls. Also, this picture that you draw of Modi, I wonder what is the practical use of it for policy making purposes or policy debate purposes. One question that people have is that a lot of these surveys, of say popularity of a leader or a party are useful, short of a national election. The common belief in India is that the electorate behave differently at the time of national elections. My sense is that the kind of popularity that Modi enjoys among the public, it may be helpful for him to draw on it during elections.

**Gaurav:** I am Gaurav and I do some media research and I have just a couple of questions. One is that it was interesting for me to see that Russia didn't figure in the list of countries for which you asked for people's perceptions, so can you throw some light on that? Secondly, the question that was posed to the people with regard to international challenges, what were the responses towards Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad versus ISIS?

**Bruce Stokes:** Because the same question was asked all over the world for comparability purposes, we mentioned ISIS but we did not mention local or regional terrorist groups. It is one of the shortcomings of trying to do surveys across countries, we have to ask the same question and compare them. That can get you in trouble because my guess is that when Indians hear terrorist groups, they aren't thinking about ISIS, no matter what the questionnaire says. So what we are picking up is the worry about terrorism as people hear it and define it in India and not this generalized threat from ISIS. On the other question, obviously BJP has not benefitted in some of the state elections from PM Modi's overwhelming popularity across the country. I did notice just in passing an article in the paper yesterday, that in one of the upcoming state elections, the BJP said in essence that we are going to lead with his image, wrap ourselves around him. So they are trying to do what you say but whether it works or not we don't know. The broader question about the value of these things, I think that's up to the consumer. Clearly we know only when people actually go to the voting booth and vote. I dare say that any politician would like to go to an election with this kind of favorability. But one shouldn't over interpret that. Because people might like somebody and still want a change. They may like somebody but like another guy better. Since this is a parliamentary system, they might like their own Lok Sabha candidate in their district even though not affiliated with PM Modi directly. So it gets complex. But I do think that it is good to take a pulse of the public and since we have some longitudinal data, we can look back and see how that compares to other politicians. I can tell you frankly that Manmohan Singh, by the time he left office, was not very popular. And in terms of methodology, I would refer you to the explanation of our methodology on our website. As a layman I would say yes, more people the better. There are financial limitations on how many people you can survey, especially in a face to face survey. But again it seems to me that the test of the methodology is in the accuracy over time. And that is the best test.

**Shamika:** The question is really a response to another question. As economists, we do a lot of statistical sampling and what Bruce has very well shown is that a sample which is nationally representative need not necessarily be representative at the state level.

**Bruce Stokes:** Frankly, if we could do 25000 people instead of 2500, I would prefer that. Because then we could do analysis at the state level. The limitation of our survey is that I can't tell you how he (PM Modi) is doing in Gujrat vs how he is doing in Bengal.

**Shamika:** But someone has to pay for it. Surveys are very expensive. A slightly bigger concern, going back to being an economist, is that sometimes some of these statistics are very intriguing. The minute I try to delve deeper into what the summary tells me, for instance why the BJP is necessarily more worried about the rise of China as compared to the Congress, I don't know what to make out of it because the sample is sort of small.

**Bruce Stokes:** I agree completely. One of the frustrations is depth. We are all overly rational people. We are asking for a rational explanation for what maybe a totally irrational emotion. I don't mean it in a negative way. It's like you go and talk to some guy in rural Rajasthan and ask what you think about China. He would probably say, I don't like it! If you sat down with him and talk him through it, he would still say I don't know, I haven't thought of it before. I don't like China. And I think we have to accept the fact that most people have lives to live. And many of these things don't factor into the daily life. One of the reasons why we ask these questions on China was because I was in rural Rajasthan recently in a rural village. I was talking to people and met a woman who was making mugs. She said "I used to make shoes but market for shoes wasn't good, so I am now making mugs and that those cheap Chinese imports are undercutting my market. This woman lives in middle of nowhere but she feels threatened by cheap Chinese imports. She probably couldn't find China on a map and has probably never see a map in her life but the point is she knew what was threatening her livelihood. That is probably about the level which you can expect from an average person on some of these issues. What is interesting is that you get a high number of "don't knows" on these international questions. But about things like for example, does PM Modi understand people like me, people will have an emotional response to that. They say either yes he does or no he doesn't but that doesn't take a lot of thought. It's a gut reaction.

**Dhruva Jaishankar:** On that note, we did an event here on August 1 on U.S. elections and what it means for India, and I tried to find survey results of how Indians viewed the candidates. For both Hillary and Donald Trump the largest said "I don't know". Obama was very high. Most people knew Obama and had a view about him.

**Sanjeev:** My name is Sanjeev Shrivastav. I am from IDSA. In your survey, did you find a sense of vision for India itself by the people who you surveyed? For example, when you ask people about India's role in the world, it is very heartening to see 68% people wanting India to play a bigger role. But what is the vision that they have for themselves or India. Is it possible to find out?

**Bruce Stokes:** The short answer is no. We didn't ask those questions. I mean if you ask an open ended question then you get a million different answers. You get 2500 different answers. If you give them a kind of vision, you have to be guessing maybe what their vision was and then give them a choice. That is one of the challenges in countries like India but also China to an extent. Europe for example has a legacy of colonialism, imperialism and for centuries they have talked about this and their role in the world. Without a history of a big role, at least in the modern world, Indians haven't really done that. The Chinese haven't done that either. So I think it would be harder for the average person to articulate what that should be. Except that they want to be important. Clearly they think they are important and are proud of that.

**Kira:** You mentioned during the presentation about how we can't assume that the public out there are likely to be intellectual elites and are rational. You could debate that.

**Bruce Stokes:** Let me correct that, I am not saying that they are irrational but that they operate more on emotions because they do not have the same degree of knowledge that elites have. But that doesn't mean that their emotions are less important. In fact I think we elites have to understand is that they operate an emotion, demonstrate on streets on emotion, or vote on an emotion. The tendency of all of us, that

includes me and I used to be a journalist for 30 years, is to want a rational explanation for this. Since I have worked with public opinion I have come to realize that it is not useful. But it is useful to try to understand their emotion. I absolutely don't mean to criticize people as irrational. I just think that what is useful in public opinion research is to try to craft a question which gets an emotion. Because that will probably be a more useful finding. For example, at the time President Obama was trying to decide about the red line in Syria and should we bomb Syrians because they are using chemical weapons or not, only 20% of the American public could find Syria on the map. But they were really clear in our surveys that we don't want to do this. Because they didn't want to have another war in the Middle East. They didn't have to know where Syria was on map to have that emotion.

**Kira:** These questions have also been asked abroad, so there is similar data for different countries. I was wondering if there is anything in the methodology that controls for how much people know factually and how that correlates with differences in opinions in India and India compared to the rest of the world.

**Bruce Stokes:** I think on many of these issues there are fewer 'don't knows' in advanced industrial economies than in developing economies. I guess that's to be expected with the higher educational level etc. and history about maybe thinking about the world. In terms of controlling for that, we have never tried it. I can tell you, and I mean this only half-jokingly, that if you assume knowledge on the part of the public, you are going to have your heart broken. We do occasionally ask knowledge questions, just to test this and it breaks your heart, because you know these are important issues. And here is the U.S. trying to decide whether it should go to war in Syria and only 20% of population can find Syria on a map when it's been in the news. I do remember that Joe Ford when he was running for re-election claimed that Poland wasn't controlled by Soviet Union. So I do think that there is a desperate need for more education of the public on these issues because these issues affect their lives.

One of the challenges you face during a survey is that how you word the question can influence the answer. You try desperately to write a balanced question so it doesn't put your finger on the scale one way or the other. I have seen surveys in Europe which say "how much do you love the European Union" That already kind of creates a bias in the answer. Then there is the challenge of doing this survey in 48 countries in 68 languages or so and making sure that the words we use in English are translatable. We write the questions in English, translate and then back-translate into English again and we try to get at accurate language.

**Dhruva Jaishankar:** There is a specific case that I can think of where they were asking about attitudes towards race in a survey. According to the results India was one of the most racist countries in the world. On going through the actual data and the survey language, the word they had used in Hindi for race translated into caste. So of course you had a very different response. And it was lost in translation at some point.

**Bruce Stokes:** You have got to be terribly scrupulous about this and I would be the first person to say sometimes we get it wrong. Hopefully you catch it when the translator comes back to you and says there is no word for this in this language; and then you need to come up with a different concept. The other thing is, when I started working on this many years ago I thought you just have to block out an afternoon,

write a questionnaire and it's not hard. But it takes months. You write, rewrite and research it multiple times, debate over it and even then every year, when we get answers back we wonder why we asked the question this way. Because we don't know what it means. You thought that it was a great question and that it would elucidate something. But you get the result and you have no idea what the answer means. So it's a process of trial and error. It is in many ways an art and not a science. It is a science in the way you design the survey, and you apply the survey rigorously. But how you write the questions and how you interpret the answers can be an art. This is difficult especially if you are doing it across a bunch of different countries. The whole point of the exercise is to compare attitudes in one country to another and you have to ask the same question.

**Anupam Khanna:** The presentation was very good. PEW is the gold standard and you were meticulous in not over stretching the interpretation. I think in terms of the statistics, one of the most surprising things always when you study survey methods is how small a sample can give you a very reliable result as long as you don't stretch it. I think there is no doubt about it. I found for example almost all the results quite believable sort of believe and not just that, they fit my narrative which integrates everything. The negative side of it is, is there anything new in terms of insights? So my first question is, what did you find the most surprising in this? To me the only part which I would quibble about was the part about the Congress party, because you know the political constellation has changed dramatically in India in last few years. But other than that I found nothing surprising. My second question to you is related to this language and culture thing you talked about yesterday. What do you do to check that the translation and retranslating back stays relevant over time? You can do cross sections surveys and all those. But you are doing it longitudinally also and that is the great thing about PEW. You are tracking it. So are there particular challenges you find in India to look at the regional diversity and then maintain the challenge, given that the structure of economy and polity is changing too.

**Bruce Stokes:** I don't have an answer to that, it is a fascinating question. Are you suggesting that literally the meaning of the words may change over time to the average respondent? The connotation is what you are talking about I think. I will frankly need to take it up with my colleagues. I don't know how you would correct for it. I think it's a valid question as to could the connotation of words change over time, especially since we have been surveying since 2002 and at some point will be talking about decades of using the same words. The simple answer would be, you can't compare it.

**Dhruva Jaishankar:** So the word secularism for example has very different and loaded connotations for people in India. When you see the longitudinal data in the US, it is interesting to see the word 'liberal' and how the connotations have changed over time.

**Bruce Stokes:** How things are brought up frame a discussion. I am aware of a recent survey that shows that 60% of republicans believe that the unemployment rate has gone up under President Obama and 56% believe the stock market has gone down under Obama and is just the opposite. So if that is how you hear the framing of the discussion about the economy, why would you not be upset with Obama? It just happens to be factually incorrect. How these things are discussed and what media people pay attention to is important. We know certainly in the United States that the segmentation of people's media use on political lines is fairly high, and the ability, because of modern technology, to only get information that

reaffirms what you already believe rather than the challenge of new information, is pretty easy. What that means going forward is a huge challenge.

**Audience:** I just wonder what the relevance is of all this when you have a basis of incredible ignorance. For example, one is that you motioned earlier about your presidential candidates. If you are expected to make a rational decision as opposed to one based on emotions, how do we tackle the problem where you are already coming from a basis of very inadequate knowledge of what you are talking about? Secondly, I think we should really be looking at the world in a more planetary mode. It's already globalizing. It's no longer parochial. We need to look in a much wider manner.

**Bruce Stokes:** I guess my short answer to you is that we all live in democracies and people get to vote and whether they vote for 'rational reasons' based on knowledge or whether they vote on the fact that they believe the stock market went down under Barack Obama, their vote still counts. They could determine who is going to be the next president of the U.S. or Prime Minister of India. At the very least, we have to understand that. I would be the first person to say that we should all try to raise the knowledge level, especially on international issues, of the general public. Because you are right, whether the public likes it or not, the world increasingly impacts their lives. I grew up in an America where the rest of the world was kind of irrelevant. Yes, we had the Soviet Union and we had to worry about nuclear warfare so I practiced having to hide under my desk at school for a civil defense exercise, but I certainly didn't have to worry about India as an economic challenge. Or China as an economic challenge or even Germany. So my generation had to learn that and accommodate to that and there is obviously a certain segment of American people who really don't like the fact that it's happened. Our domestic surveys show that's mostly old white men whose lives were adversely affected by globalization, probably more than any other subset of our demography. They will therefore vote for Trump probably. So it is important to understand their emotions, whether they are based on facts and knowledge or just emotions. The other part is that people might not know why they are upset, but they have good reason to be upset. If I were a manufacturing worker in the U.S. and my income had actually declined in real terms in my lifetime, I probably would have a really good reason to be upset with globalization. It would not be clear to me why this would be good for me. Even though I might not be able to articulate it in facts and figures, my life experience would have been pretty negative. I can tell you that we have asked people all over the world, for example, about trade. People in developing economies or emerging markets say it's good since it raises wages, creates jobs. Why wouldn't they say that in Vietnam or China because it has (raised wages, created jobs). In the U.S. people don't believe trade has created jobs or raised wages and they are correct, it hasn't. People might not know the facts and figures but they kind of have a feeling and the feeling might actually reflect reality. They might just not be able to articulate it that way.

**Madhu:** I am Madhu from the High Commission of Canada. You raised a question on the major problems afflicting India and I am a bit surprised that crime comes out ahead of unemployment and corruption. What I wanted to know was whether just the word 'crime' was used or was there a detailed explanation? And were you surprised by it?

**Bruce Stokes:** I can't say I was surprised because one of the limitations that you don't know what the respondent was thinking, is it petty thievery; is it that women can't walk the streets at night. The question

on 'crime' wasn't more specific than that. The reality is that people think every problem is a big problem. I wouldn't want to make too huge of a distinction there other than it would appear that air pollution is a lower concern; communal relations are a lower concern than crime or unemployment. This is not the case in India but I can tell you that last year we asked in a number of countries about corruption and we asked people who they blamed for corruption. In most countries, people claimed government officials but one of the other options was business people. What was ironic to me was that for there to be a corrupt relationship, there are two sides in the equation. It's the government official who takes the bribe and the business leader who gives the bribe. The public just blamed the government officials but they didn't blame the business community. It was fascinating that people criticized one part of the equation and forget the other side.

**Audience:** I notice that in other PEW research, particularly in the US, you identify respondents based on their backgrounds or religion or demography.

**Bruce Stokes:** One of the shortcomings of our survey is that it is not big enough. If we had 25000 people, you can slice it and dice it more. That is what I constantly find a frustration. I would love to be able to slice it by state. I would love to be able to get more specific about the income or education. The biggest frustration for me in dealing with India is that we don't have enough confidence in the breadth of our Muslim respondents to actually give you what certain religious groups think. This is in part because we can't survey in Kerala for reasons I don't understand. We can't survey in Kashmir which I totally understand. So we don't feel like the Muslim populations are a representative sample of the Muslim population in India. My goal has been to get to fix this problem. Because I do think that in the Indian context, it is terribly important. For example, that question about communal relations, wouldn't you love to know how Muslims feel about that versus how Hindus feel about that? That seems to me a very fundamental question to ask. I can't promise but I am going to keep trying to figure out a way to improve that. It can be controversial in India but it is a challenge and I accept that.

**Dhruva Jaishankar:** Thank you Bruce for being really honest and a great discussion on polling and survey methodology. Thanks to all of you for coming. I hope you will all come back for future events. Thank you very much.