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Policy-Making and Connections to Violence: A Case Study of India

Marie Olson Lounsbery
Nova Southeastern University, molson@nova.edu

Frederic S. Pearson
Wayne State University, ab3440@wayne.edu

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Abstract

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Author Bio(s)

Marie Olson Lounsbery completed her doctorate at Wayne State University (WSU) in 2003 and is a newly appointed Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution and International Studies at Nova Southeastern University (NSU), in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She has published articles in Social Science Quarterly, Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict, Journal of Peace Research, and Conflict Resolution Quarterly. Her research and teaching interests include the causes, processes, and resolution of international conflict, particularly identity-based intrastate conflict, and metropolitan conflicts.

Frederic S. Pearson is the Director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and the Detroit Council for World Affairs at WSU. A native Detroiter who spent 20 years teaching at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, Dr. Pearson is also Professor of Political Science at WSU, and received his Ph.D. in 1971 from the University of Michigan. He is a recognized authority in the fields of international military intervention, arms transfer effects on wars, and ethnic conflict analysis. He and John Sislin published Arms and Ethnic Warfare in 2001. Other recent articles include a study of mediator effectiveness in ending civil wars in the Conflict Resolution Quarterly (with Olson).

POLICY-MAKING AND CONNECTIONS TO VIOLENCE:
A CASE STUDY OF INDIA*

Marie Olson Lounsbery and Frederic S. Pearson

Abstract

This paper explores the role of identity-based, or discriminatory, policy in facilitating the outbreak of ethnopolitical violence in India. A discriminatory policy is the merging of communal group identity with the state apparatus. It is argued that as the Indian government enacts policies beneficial or discriminatory to particular identity groups within the country, other groups feel threatened. Groups who feel disadvantaged by the policy may begin to fear for their own security and political interests motivating them to rebel. When focusing on Indian policy and ethnopolitical violence during the period 1945 to 2000, the authors find that, although there are many cases of seemingly spontaneous episodes of violence, when identity-based policies do occur, they are often followed by violence and/or protest.

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the international system seemed ready to experience a new era of peace. However, the "New World Order" predicted by then US President George H. W. Bush turned out to be something quite different. Although the occurrence of interstate war diminished substantially after 1989, internal conflicts continued to rage at an alarming rate throughout the world (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1999), and to put pressure on outside powers considering possible intervention. Scholars who once focused their attention on superpower rivalry now turned to internal war, and more specifically, "ethnic conflict."[1] An explosion of efforts ensued to find out what causes these highly destructive and often intractable conflicts, how they can be managed or resolved, and ideally how to detect the conditions necessary or sufficient for ethno political violence before it breaks out, i.e., "early warning."

As researchers attempt to grapple with the complexity of intrastate warfare, we seek to contribute to our understanding of what conditions trigger violent ethno political outbreaks. We propose to test, at least in one very large and diverse state, the general hypothesis that ethno political conflict is often a reaction to governmental policy initiatives or changes. One key aspect of policy change entails what might be described as inherent discrimination, i.e., moves designed or structured to benefit one identity group in society at the expense of others. Such a policy can be viewed as incorporating group identity into state policy. It establishes one group as higher in status than others, and as a result, creates a need for disadvantaged groups to defend their status.

Clearly, all government policies are designed to provide something for someone or some group. It is proposed here though that policy providing systematic advantage to certain communities, or disadvantage to others, can be viewed as a catalyst for violence. We use the

term "catalyst" advisedly, since we suppose that other factors fully account for the violence, and indeed we examine a few of these in relation to policy change.

In constructing policy changes it has been argued that leaders might blunder in trying to alleviate social conflict through policy reform without fully considering such factors as economic inequalities, territorial dissatisfaction, the number, relation, size, and location of ethnic communities, international involvement or support, and the legacies of colonial and political history. It also has been observed that aggressive and opportunistic leaders take advantage of such conditions and the bitterness they engender to incite violence for their own political purposes (Rupesinghe, 1988; Kaufman, 1996; Williams, 1994). One expression of efforts at policy reform or of opportunism is the enactment of discriminatory measures, regulations, and legislation.

We seek to determine if, when, and by what sequences such discriminatory policy leads toward or away from violence, allowing for the fact that "discrimination" can be a subjective concept, and indeed might even have positive effects if it empowers or "liberates" previously oppressed groups (often argued in the context of American affirmative action legislation). If a consistent pattern of outcomes emerges for certain types of policies, such policy initiatives could be clear signs or signals for those interested in preventing or ameliorating social violence. However, it is not yet clear what types of policies have predictable effects and under what circumstances.

Although some studies have hinted at the idea of policy change leading to violent civil conflict (Gurr, 1996; Stavenhagen, 1996), the violence is often referred to as the by-product of other factors. Clearly conditions of domestic disruption can condition the ways policies are perceived. For example, during the American civil war in the 1860s, the effort, however reluctant, to emancipate slaves, led to reported ethnic backlash among groups recruited or conscripted to fight in the war; the war's economic and social dislocations, the high attrition rate and forced nature of the draft, may have exacerbated this pattern of ethnic and class tension, leading for example to anti-war riots among the lower classes in ethnically diverse New York City.

Ideally one would want to conduct a study of discriminatory policy over many nations and time-periods. However, the necessity of mapping a large body of policy change events and effects across time dictates a more focused initial approach to one country. India presents an excellent case for study because of its extensive ethnic diversity, encompassing different and overlapping tribal, linguistic, religious, and cultural (including caste) identities spread across a wide and varied geography, with a long history of periodic ethnic uprisings and communal violence alongside efforts at reform, collaboration and regional or national cohesion. The origin of much of this communalism in the contemporary context has been traced to forms of indirect colonial rule, pitting identity groups against each other and utilizing local traditional rulers, combined with the development of modern nationalism (Pandy, 1990; Barnett, 1976). If we can better understand the patterns by which these processes subsequently have unfolded in this large and pivotal democratic state, we can formulate propositions about ethnic violence for further testing abroad.

Identity Based Violence

Factors that contribute to interstate war have been documented and tested by many scholars in the fields of conflict studies and international relations (see Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1990; Cashman, 1993; Midlarsky, 1989). Unfortunately, quantitative or behavioral methodologists relatively neglected analysis of civil or internal wars during the Cold War period, except perhaps for the links between civil and interstate war (Maoz, 1989; Haas, 1968; Rummel, 1968; Tanter, 1966; Zinnes and Wilkenfeld, 1971; Wilkenfeld, 1972). Although this linkage research continues and has been increasingly helpful to the field in general, it does not reveal why some countries experience domestic unrest, rebellion, or uprisings and others do not.

Those scholars who focused specifically on intrastate or civil war often dealt with how these conflicts end and the success or failure of negotiated settlements (Licklider, 1993 and 1995). At a less intense level than civil wars, scholars also have looked at internal conditions of communal conflict and anti-government rebellion. Perhaps the most extensive work in this area is that of Ted Robert Gurr (1970; 1993), who argues that rebellion stems from politicized discontent, a condition he believes arises from relative deprivation.[2] Ethnopolitical conflict, therefore, is motivated by perceived discrimination, and discontent can be exacerbated by economic or social conditions and mobilized by political entrepreneurs in order for internal unrest to occur.

Gurr (1996) has taken his *Minorities at Risk* project further to develop a model for early warning of identity-based violence that he illustrates using data from 56 Asian minorities. He has identified what he believes to be risk factors for groups already engaged in serious forms of rebellion. The factors that would lead to armed violence include: collective incentives, the capacity for joint action, and external opportunities. In addition to relative deprivation, other incentives for communal uprising include a loss of collective autonomy and previous experience of repression by dominant groups, all factors that can relate to or be expressed in governmental policy.[3] The conditions that Gurr identifies as shaping regime responses to collective action are a history of elite reliance on coercion, duration and strength of the democratic experience, and the regime's domestic power and resources. These risk factors, as Gurr (1996) explains, are not to be used as predictors of violent conflict, but rather can be coded in order to provide a country with a risk score, similar to our notion of looking at policy change as a catalyst.

Beyond the important concept of relative deprivation itself, the next question is what causes *sufficient* discontent or insecurity that individuals would be willing to politicize, mobilize, and possibly fight to the death? Gurr's risk factor model is based on discontent forming from economic, political, and cultural discrimination, as well as a history of state repression or lost political autonomy. All of these factors can be viewed as some sort of group discrimination. Although Gurr acknowledges that a major change in the structure of a political regime may be a factor in violent civil conflict, his model posits that this change provides a window of opportunity for identity groups that are already experiencing discrimination.

Elaborating on the window of opportunity thesis, we speculate that governmental *policy* rather than or in conjunction with institutional change also might spark group discontent/fear and lead to violence. In a presidential address to the International Studies Association, Gurr (1994), analyzing conflicts during the 1993-94 period, developed the importance of political changes within governments as a condition present prior to war. He found that half of the conflicts occurred after "power transitions" which compromised any one of three different events: a national upheaval (as defined by Harff, 1986), revolutionary changes in power, or transitions to

democracy. In addition, these conflicts are more intense than conflicts that do not follow power transitions. Upheavals, revolutionary power shifts, and democratic transitions all may entail or relate to specific policy moves, though such moves, of course, can occur without these major institutional changes. In the Indian context the 1977 parliamentary election, ousting the Congress Party after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's authoritarian and ethnically manipulative policies, is often seen as a key turning point in the sustenance of Indian democracy (Weiner, 1978). Thus it may not be so much the revolutionary changes in power or institutions *per se* as the policies and measures officially adopted before or after the political transition that makes the situation volatile.

This study, therefore, is designed to determine which of these various types of factors has the greatest impact on subsequent identity based violence. It seems clear from Gurr's research that internal power dynamics are a significant factor, but it is not clear whether they always are a precondition of violence. Using a case study format on information provided by area specialists, Stavenhagen (1996) argues that violence may be inherent in the process of state-formation and nation building. In order to understand the roots of the conflict one has to look at how the modern state was originally established. A modern state relates to the different ethno-cultural groups within its borders through constitutional provisions, electoral systems, legislation or political culture and practice. The nation-state thus often has a dominant identity group (or related groups) and one or more subordinate identity groups. This creates a struggle by the lower status group(s) for recognition. Stavenhagen also argues that these conflicts include two competing notions of the term 'nation.' The modern state system requires that nations show a united front, yet identity groups, when asked to conform or assimilate, often feel stronger loyalty to their "identity nation." This can present grave challenges to a large union such as that of the Indian subcontinent.[4]

Although Stavenhagen does not present an early warning system as Gurr does, he argues that in order to overcome the inherently conflictive nature of the nation-state system, states must abandon their emphasis on assimilation. He further proposes that democratic states are better able to prevent these types of conflicts because they tend to de-emphasize assimilation and ethnic politics. However, as India clearly shows, democracy itself might be caught up in the turmoil of defining group rights and responsibilities and might or might not be able to quell the tendencies toward violence in specific instances. Thus, Sisk (1996) argues that despite the attractiveness of democracy as a form of government, it might not always be more peaceful, particularly in multicultural societies. Democracy, according to Sisk, will create a security threat when a win at the polls means a physical threat to the minority; this has been seen in recent years, for example, in fears of an emerging democratically elected Islamic state in Algeria. In countries where hostilities between competing identity groups are high, the will of the majority may mean policies of assimilation or extinction. As a result, he discusses the benefits of consociational approaches (i.e. power sharing) to identity-based conflicts at the national level.

States such as India have experimented with these approaches, in the form of office-holding and educational quotas, with varied and not always peaceful outcomes. Such quotas, reserved places, and related set-aside policies themselves can become causes of contention, conflict, or riotous violence. India's long struggle with policies toward the "scheduled" classes— "Untouchable" castes—illustrates these outcomes, with other castes periodically refusing to cooperate in the system (Joshi, 1982). In addition, India has evolved complex and subtle norms related to assimilation, reflecting a tension between those who went through the independence struggle for the united homeland and those in regional areas who were then

expected to submerge their local identities to the national myth.[5] One expression of this tension is in the area of language law, where a system evolved to recognize Hindi as the nominal national language, but to allow local languages to flourish and to revert to English at times as a *lingua franca*. One student of Indian democracy has noted that ethnic separatist movements, as seen among the Tamils, Sikhs, and Muslims across the years, are to be expected as expressions of self-determination in multicultural democracies, and that they can be accommodated depending upon how well the central authority is institutionalized and upon the willingness of leaders, central authorities, and ruling groups to share power and resources with the mobilized protesters (Kohli, 1997). Thus a combination of institutional capability and policy reform is seen as the key to stability.[6]

As with assimilation, resource distribution can become a crucial bone of contention in post-colonial societies,[7] but how governmental leaders legislate that distribution, again the expression of or reaction to inequality *via policy*, is crucial to understanding the causes of violent civil conflict. Either mass-led or elite-led policy demands can lead to violence despite their vastly different motivations.

In sum, those who have examined the history of ethnic relations in India have noted many accommodations and norms aimed at managing tensions even apart from governmental policy, often quite successfully. Manor (1996, pp.461-462) shows how four different strands of ethnic identity—religious, language, tribal/caste, and regional tribal—cross-cut in the Indian context and how Indians tend to give priority to different levels of identity as circumstances change, thus blurring or diminishing permanent conflict fault lines. The Japanese also have displayed the ability to combine ethno-cultural traits, for example adopting multiple religious practices.

> Because Indian society is so heterogeneous, and because the country and its population are so large, people. . .have a wide array of identities available to them. These include at least three different kinds of caste identities. . ., religious identities. . .,and identifications with clans and lineages—as well as linguistic, class, party, urban/rural, national, regional, subregional and local identities, and sometimes varying types of 'tribal' identities too. The crucial point is that Indians tend not to fix on any one of these identities fiercely and permanently, as groups in places like Sri Lanka have done. (p. 463)

Discriminatory Policy Change

While cross-cutting identities are reassuring for Indian democratic stability, periodic scenes of frenzied communal killing, raids, and counter raids still leave us with the question of when the pattern of live and let live breaks down, when the cross-cutting buffers lose their cushion, and when polarization becomes more acute. One suspects again that policy moves have something to do with this timing, along with exogenous or systemic pressures such as economic change or institutional breakdown.[8] Of course as Manor (1996, p. 465) notes, because of the diversity of ethnic cues, such as Hinduism's multiple gods and texts, even when politicians try to enforce disruptive or polarizing policy changes, as in the efforts by the Hindu right to make the god Ram the pre-eminent deity across all India, there is considerable natural resistance.

Those who have studied Indian ethnic and particularly religious violence present a pattern of episodic ups and downs (Manor, 1996, pp. 467-468). "These marked fluctuations in levels of religious violence are intimately connected to the fluidity with which people in India

shift their preoccupations from one identity to another (p. 467)." But they also at times are related to policy irritants such as Indira Gandhi's machinations to weaken ethnic opponents by dividing them and pitting potential opponents against each other in an overall pattern of power centralization (Manor, 1996, pp. 471-472).[9]

Generally, then, this view opens the whole question of the state's role in fomenting or diminishing inter-group tensions and violence. This is illustrated in the history of Indian language policy. As with Manor's contention about crosscutting identities, it has been argued that language diversity both within and between Indian states precludes a forced homogenization and reinforces pluralism. Fearing the possible breakup of the state in the 1950s, Jawaharlal Nehru resisted Congress pressures to redraw state boundary lines to conform to language differences; he hoped to avoid secessionist movements by intermixing language groups throughout. Thus in a sense non-policy change represented a forceful policy to preserve the newly independent Indian Union. Still, boundaries were occasionally redrawn along linguistic lines, though according to Manor (1996, p. 466), the other dividing traits among common language speakers held sway and prevented any single Indian state from moving forcefully for separation. Group based secessionist movements have formed in the Northeast, Punjab during the 1980s, and Kashmir, and the state authorities have alternated between sometimes clumsy repression and halting efforts at reform, sometimes compounding problems as in recent ideas about enforcing a national identity card system to stifle cross-border tribal infiltration, without definitively resolving the discontent.

After reviewing the literature, it seems reasonable that certain types of policy change may in fact be a key to understanding violent civil conflict. Olzak and Tsutsui (1998) link non-violent protest and violent uprisings to three sets of variables reflecting: world system influences, national civil rights policies, and the state's international networks. They predict for example that declining levels of internal inequality might intensify ethnic mobilization and strife as threatened groups or classes dig in their heels (they predict this to be the case more in states of the economic "core" of world politics than in the disadvantaged "periphery"), and that countries granting more civil liberties might suffer higher levels of ethno political violence, though perhaps lower levels of non-violent protest, because of the loosening of restraints and repression (up to a point of satisfaction with greatly expanded rights). Inequality and human rights, of course, are both subject to policy reforms and allocations. Findings from this multi-national study (pp. 706-712), though, cast doubt on the hypothesized relationships about effects of inequality and freedom in the world's core and periphery, although violence levels in the core were higher than often predicted by those who merely assume that poverty breeds protest and rebellion.

This evidence leads us to hypothesize that shifts in governmental policy that either benefit or threaten a dominant group in a society solidify group reaction; dominant groups fearing lost ground or subordinate groups fearing extinction and suppression are motivated to acquire countervailing power, territory, security, etc. (Horowitz, 1985).

Polarization through state policy making can occur in two ways, as we have seen in the literature: (1) by pretending that group differences do not exist or are unimportant, thereby seeking to homogenize the society; or (2) by first recognizing different identity groups but then incorporating those differences into policy in a way which systematically discriminates against certain groups. In either case, intra-group bonds are strengthened and inter-group bonds are weakened. The group, or groups, that expect or experience policy discrimination begin to distance themselves from the dominant group that is seen as benefiting unduly. With distance,

there tends to be a lack of communication; therefore, barriers are created that make resolving tensions difficult (Lake and Rothchild, 1996). In societal polarization, groups do not maintain the crosscutting ties or allegiances that limit conflict potential (Ross, 1993) and have been shown to be so important for India.

Depending upon circumstances, the supposed advantages provided the dominant group might cause a fear of extinction or a fear of assimilation in the others. In an analysis of Bolivia, Albó (1994) argues that society was organized *as if* everyone belonged to the dominant group; this created the potential for violent Bolivian conflict by denying the relevance of those who did not belong to the Hispanic culture. This again is a pattern reminiscent of feared ethnocide and is a stronger form of fear than that perhaps picked up by Olzak and Tsutsui's measures. Some countries, such as Turkey, do not readily recognize the multi-cultural characteristic of their nation; therefore, policies designed to homogenize the state create fear of fatal assimilation, as among Kurds and Armenians. Other states' policies, as in Rwanda and Burundi, are designed specifically to rid the country, or parts thereof, of one or more identity groups. This obviously generates a fear of extinction. The two types of fear are not mutually exclusive. Forced assimilation can also be viewed as a form of extinction. The "bottom line" is that such policies generate fear that certain identity groups will not be able to survive or thrive within their homeland (Rothman, 1997).

It is interesting to note that although inter-group violence is still prevalent in India—indeed in incidents such as the widespread Hindu attacks on Muslims in Gujarat state in the summer of 2002 as a response to perceived Muslim terror on railroads and in Kashmir and New Delhi—the general trend appears to have been toward expression of such fears and resentments mainly in violence directed at the state.

> "Diverse groups do not simply vent their anger at the state but often also hold it responsible for the injustices they seek to address. Hindu nationalists allege that the central government appeases the Muslim minority; the upper-caste youths who
> immolated themselves in 1990 accused the government of discriminating against the so-called forward castes. . .; and regional movements demanding greater rights to self-determination have accused the national government of discriminatory allocation of resources and undue political interference at the state level." (Basu and Kohli, 1997, p. 321).[10]

Thus, the central government has come to be seen, accurately or not, increasingly as the repository of policymaking (either direct or indirect) that for better or worse, can affect the balance among ethnic communities. In the case of rioting against caste emancipation policy, for example:

> ". . .all of these seemingly diverse examples of conflict—over urban jobs and education, land, and the ritual purity of the village well—do indeed prove to have much in common. Each in its own way is a dispute over the Indian "social contract" and the state's role in enforcing that contract. The issue in these cases is not so much 'law and order' as 'whose law, whose order.' (Joshi, 1982, p. 682).
> In India as well, the situation is complicated in that,
> Many 'communal' riots have indeed been precipitated by discord between provincial and central governments and between local and national administrators. In other instances. . .community leaders and state representatives

have worked together to prevent or contain violence. (Basu and Kohli, 1997, p. 322).[11]

Discriminatory policies might consist of one specific measure or a series or repetition of enforcement actions, decisions, laws, rules or regulations. Of course as noted, the mere *proposal* of such policies might also have its effects. Discussion or adoption of the discriminatory policy is volatile because of what it symbolizes to the potentially disadvantaged group or groups; therefore the actual number of policies adopted is not necessarily a factor in predicting violence, but their sequence and timing might be.

Relative deprivation, economic disparities and hardships, rising expectations and discontent play a role in magnifying the effects of discriminatory policy change. The key question is whether the proposed or enacted policy keeps certain members of a society from obtaining their "rightful" capabilities and aspirations. It is not even necessary that policy reflects the intent of discrimination for violence to follow; if the policy symbolizes discrimination for the dominant or subordinate, the group may respond based on *threat perception* alone. Groups which are being discriminated against in reference to others or which have been advantaged in the past but now find their status threatened by social trends or more pointedly by governmental reforms are more likely to rebel violently than groups that previously had not hoped for or experienced advancement.

General discontent results from all of these processes particularly when newly discriminating measures are adopted.[12] Such changes will tend to shake up the *status quo,* affording or seeming to afford new and special status to some groups; others will experience threats (physical or existential) and hostility.[13] Indian policies aimed at emancipating the "Untouchables" for example are seen by many traditional elites as threatening the underpinnings of the entire social system and therefore are strongly resisted even as they are passed into law by a concerned national parliament and a party system that might depend on a massive vote among the poor (Joshi, 1982, p.682). Thus, policies that threaten the *status quo* might be the most likely to breed not just protest but outright violence, and reactions to such "threatening" policies can breed strange alliances, as between richer and poorer higher caste Indians.

Obviously, not all ethnically related policy decisions will result in civil violence. Certain variables would seem to be crucial, especially when incorporated into official policy. As noted, discriminatory policy changes are those that could systematically advantage one group within a society and disadvantage another. The key policies likely to have this effect are related to language, religion, educational, economic (e.g., job access), and political status (such as land holding and citizenship rights). These variables are not mutually exclusive; a group might feel that language policy would also disadvantage them politically and economically, for example. Clearly, policies can involve more than one type of reform at once and do not happen in a vacuum. Numerous factors might contribute to the adoption of a discriminatory policy or deter such a policy from adoption. Other factors could either dampen or magnify a policy's likelihood of provoking violence. For purposes of comparison, in this analysis we also record non-discriminatory or non-identity policy changes, both proposed and enacted.

In our analysis we also allow for the possibility that various types of identity-based policy can have either destructive or constructive effects, and that they can be seen subjectively as either harmful or beneficial. Therefore, we introduce the concept of "positive discriminatory policy," which is taken to mean a tendency to benefit or protect the minority or traditionally disadvantaged against the majority or traditionally advantaged population in a given

circumstance. "Negative discriminatory policy" would have the converse effect of protecting or benefiting the majority or advantaged. We wish to see whether it matters if discrimination is positive or negative in predicting the probability of violent or non-violent reaction.

Some studies have shown that moves in certain policy domains might breed more tendencies to violent reaction. Among these, for example, language policy has been cited as potentially volatile in a state like India. Below we review expectations regarding some of these domains.

- *Language.* Often states do not recognize the importance of linguistic differences in maintaining domestic peace. For example, in countries such as Latvia and Moldova after the cold war ended, state language reform disadvantaged those, such as Russians, that did not speak the primary national language or did not consider it their first language. In a multiethnic society such as India's with several prevalent languages, national or regional language legislation and policy carries great portent. Horowitz (1985, p. 219) argues that when a particular language is provided an exclusive official status it becomes a symbol of domination and thus presumably a great cause of bitterness and resentment of the type that can spur violence. Cultural fear of domination may, in fact, play a large role in contributing to group level rebellion, since group members feel they might lose control of their way of life (Donnelly, 1996). In a study of India and Northern Ireland, Bostock (1997) identified "language grief" (the anticipation of or reaction to language loss or extinction) as a major contributor to conflict. On the other hand, Laitin (1993) finds the potential for fighting over language, especially in India and he would argue, controversially, Sri Lanka, to be muted because this issue almost automatically leads to a bargained outcome**.** It is hypothesized here, for purposes of study, that because of India's linguistic diversity and the dampening of linguistic polarization across Indian states, language policy reform will be less volatile than other forms of perceived policy discrimination.

- *Religion.* The processes involving religion and violent civil conflict are similar to those of language. The same sense of domination and discrimination occurs. With the end of the Cold War, and the increased interdependent nature of the international system, it seemed likely that economic concerns would take priority over religious differences. However, some scholars argue that the societal importance of religion is growing despite increased global economic interdependence (Bangura, 1994; Haynes, 1995). Reinforcing the salience of religion in conflict, Reynal-Querol (2002) tested the notion that religiously diverse multicultural states will be more violence prone than linguistically diverse states, with findings that religious polarization and anamist diversity (number of followers of anamist culture) do in fact explain incidence of civil war better than linguistic polarization. It follows from her work (2001) that consociational policies protecting minorities work better than majoritarian democracy to keep ethnic cleavages at bay.

Both the aforementioned caste controversy and the Sikh and Kashmir disputes in India show how aspects of religion and religious practice, as in the controversy and violence surrounding the sanctity of the Golden Temple of Amritsar, become politicized as forms of nationalism leading to violence. It is often difficult to determine exactly when a religious movement becomes a political movement. One must look for various forms of organized resistance, campaigns or uprisings, the use of sanctuaries, and note the counter tendencies of government to enforce policies on religious groups. Thus it is hypothesized here that religious policy, because of its increasing politicization, will be the area of Indian political life most subject to violent ethnic outbreaks.

- *Economic and Political Status.* Gurr (1994) has measured economic and political discrimination as variables that he considers important in studying disadvantaged minorities. Groups unable to satisfy their needs within the system will seek satisfaction in some other way. When governmental policy is seen as the source of discrimination, or is blamed for failing to solve economic ills in a context where scapegoating of other ethnicities is possible, the result can be inter-ethnic or anti-government violence. Economic and political policies would include regulations and legislation dictating land and resource rights, employment and educational opportunities, as well as affecting citizenship or denying autonomy rights.

Various significant political events were included in the study for exploratory purposes. Because of the economic stresses in a country of India's size and the still unresolved rights of minorities in some regions (such as the Northeast), it is hypothesized that economic and political reforms will follow religion as India's next most destabilizing policy domain.

It is argued here that discriminatory policies are neither necessary nor sufficient "causes" of ethno political violence. When seeking to explain such a complex phenomenon, it is important to recognize that no one factor alone could claim responsibility. Certainly the policy environment is important to keep in mind when assessing actual policy impact. As a result, the current study incorporates two policy environmental factors as contextual variables: executive party shift and economic fluctuation.

Several studies have identified the importance of regime change as a precipitant of civil violence. As noted earlier, Gurr (1994) included "power transitions" as a strong predictor of such violence. It seems feasible that such situations might open the door to possible identity-based policy changes as indicated earlier. Similarly, other scholars have focused specifically on democratization, finding positive correlation between semi-democratic regimes and violence (Hegre, et al., 2001; Henderson and Singer, 2000; Ellingsen, 2000). India, however, has remained strongly democratic, for the most part, according to Gurr (1997) and the *Polity IV* democracy project. On the other hand, party shifts have occurred. As a result, the policy-to-violence linkage will be explored in relation to executive leadership changes.

In addition, several scholars have identified economic factors, and particularly downturns as important in explaining the incidence of civil violence. Stringent economic conditions exacerbate inter-group tensions and governmental resentments over scarce employment opportunities. Indeed, Kaufman (1996) has argued that one cannot motivate economically satisfied people to rebel. Logically, as state resources become scarce, the threat of ethno political violence is more probable. Further, we might expect governments to enact more discriminatory policies during economic down cycles as individuals within government seek to secure constricting resources for their own identity group. As a result, the policy-to-violence linkage will also be analyzed in relation to India's economic fluctuations.

Research Methodology

Ethno political violence among groups and by and against the government constitutes the dependent variable in this study. Incidents of civil violence as well as various discriminatory policy changes in India were culled from US State Department country reports, as well as from the *Political Handbook of the World*, and *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* Online. We chose to combine sources in order to reduce single source bias in scholarship and media reports and to maximize reported events through triangulation.   However, we recognize that these all three are Western sources and as such potentially might miss or distort the extent or subtext of Asian events.   However, *Keesing's*, the source that produced the largest number of accounts, has through the years tended to specialize in Afro-Asian politics, and presents unusually detailed and thorough reports.[14]

Our data collection approach involved searching sources for any incident of ethnically related economic, social or political policy change and/or incidents of political violence within the state; thus the units of analysis for this study entail event sequences. Once identified, the sequence of events surrounding the episode of violence or policy change (or both if they occurred as predicted) was coded. For comparative purposes, we also coded sequence of events surrounding mass-based political protest. For example, if a report in *Keesing's* relayed the information that violent riots had occurred as a result of protests showing opposition to a recently enacted language law, the sequence coded would be a discriminatory policy change followed by protest and ethno political violence. As one can imagine, there are many event sequence possibilities in such a project. These possibilities include cases where a discriminatory policy change did not involve violence, where ethno political violence occurred without policy change, as well as cases where the two occurred in sequence.[15]

Reports surrounding such events for three months time were then coded to reveal sequences whereby policy initiatives, protests, and violence either did or did not follow each other.[16] Thus it was possible to specify policies that were preceded or followed by protest or rebellion or state repression and those that were not. Likewise we identified acts of protest or violence (e.g., assassinations or hate crimes) that were or were not related to ethnic policy moves. If ethno-cultural violence or protest were not preceded by a detectable policy move, the case would be coded as 'no political event' followed by identity-based violence in the form of riot, etc. Thus we were able to specify violence that did not appear to stem from governmental policy moves as well as that which did. The goal of such coding methods is to eliminate spurious coding association. Admittedly, the sequence determinations are based upon second hand reports typically from journalists in the field. Such reports may be subject to bias or misinformation. It can be argued, however, that the benefit of the closer association coding mechanisms employed here outweigh the threat of bias or misinformation.

Record was made of all reported mass-based acts of civil violence, identity-based policy changes, and political protests, organized strikes, or demonstrations between the period 1947 and 2000. We also recorded major economic crises or downturns as a contextual variable when noted in the sources identified above. In dealing with violence, we were not concerned with any particular casualty threshold, but rather with violent reaction or outbursts that could entail riots, bombings, armed attacks, acts of terrorism, etc.

The label "discriminatory" is used if a policy, regulation, or official governmental act affects ethno-cultural status, as in language, religion, culture and culturally-based political rights, economic and resource allocations. Thus measures regarding the status of language, religion,

citizenship, employment, political participation and cultural/regional autonomy can be considered as positively or negatively discriminating. As noted we coded for proposed as well as implemented policies. For heuristic purposes, then, a national policy that declared Hindi the state language would be coded negatively (i.e. from the viewpoint of the minority). On the other hand, a policy that provided autonomy for a certain minority group, or which allowed for multiple language use would, in most circumstances, be coded positively. Both, however, are examples of discriminatory policy changes and could result in violence, either by the disadvantaged minority or by the embittered or insecure majority or by the government. Therefore, we will analyze cases where either negative or positive policy changes, or both, might have set off violence.[17]

Coding episodes of violence in India over more than 50 years is challenging. For example, violence of a certain type can recur several times. Certain regions of the country, such as Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast, also can be viewed as having episodes of violence repeatedly and nearly continuously for years at a time. In such cases, the outbreak of violence or a renewed outbreak after a lull was considered a new event to be coded. On the other hand, ongoing or repeated battles in these areas were not coded as separate new events.[18] Finally, as noted, we recorded cases with non-violent outcomes if we found a prior ethno-political policy or protest. We assume that any other non-violence outcome, say following no policy moves, is not pertinent to this study.

Contextual variables included in the study are executive leadership change and economic fluctuation. Executive leadership change is considered to have occurred when there was a change in the position of prime minister. This information is available through the Indian Embassy at www.indiaembassy.org. In order to assess the proposed policy-to-violence relationship and leadership change, a series of figures are utilized identifying when discriminatory policies occurred in relation to leadership change. In order to identify a possible connection between *party* shift and the policy-to-violence linkage, the figures included below also make the distinction between a party shift versus a prime minister shift when they are different.

Economic fluctuation is analyzed in a similar fashion. In order to effectively identify the ups and downs of India's economy, we measure percent change in gross domestic product from previous year. These figures are derived from *International Financial Statistics*.[19] This variable is analyzed with the more reliable policy change data for the years 1960-2000.

Findings

Project data collection resulted in 200 cases of significant political events (or related events in a series) or episodes of violence.[20] During the 1947-2000 period, we found 79 instances (outbreaks or renewals) of ethno political violence in India, where violence came either as the first incident or as a direct result (specified or indicated in the accounts) of a policy or a single precipitating event. We found an additional 25 cases where violence came as the end result of a long chain of events, including ethnic policies or protests, constituting what we called "subsequent violence." Twenty of these latter cases were identity-based violence, and five were non-identity based.

Contrary to the study's basic hypothesis of a firm link between discriminatory policy moves and violence, of the 79 original violent incidents, 48 (61%) were preceded by 'no event,' meaning they could be associated directly with no particular policy change or political

event, ethnic or not. Many of these seemingly spontaneous incidents appeared to be related to general patterns of violence within the country. For example, there were several entries related to Hindu-Muslim fighting that might have originated because of friction in the streets or over issues such as disrespect of religious holy places (especially mosques). Another source of such episodes dealt with violence against lower social group or caste members, particularly the Harijans or Untouchables.

In some instances such vengeful fighting or communal attacks could have related to prior objectionable policies. Some disputes regarding the use or building of religious institutions, for example, could relate to older prevailing governmental policies and regulations or to the *lack* of policy reform, regulation, or enforcement to protect the religious community's interests. However, if we could not identify a specific proximate policy initiative, we did not code for the relevance of such older policies and practices or for policy failures or omissions.

Of the 31 initial identity-based violent incidents preceded by detectable policy moves, only eight (26%) were preceded by discriminatory policy changes, either positive or negative. An additional three events of ethno political violence were preceded by *proposed* discriminatory policies that were not yet adopted. Thus, in all less than 40% of original violent mass based incidents had discriminatory policy antecedents. Interestingly, nine (29%) of the identity-based violence episodes were first protests or demonstrations that then became violent, so that protests seemed about as likely as policy changes to lead to or warn of violence. Obviously, factors such as police responses to such demonstrations can affect the turn to violence. Various other events, such as a reported arrest, death or assassination, as well as migration patterns preceded the remainder of initial violent incidents.

Looking at the 25 cases of "subsequent violence," i.e., violence coming after a longer sequence of events, we found that eight (32%) were preceded by some form of identity policy initiative (whether positive, negative, or "neutral"). Nine resulted from prior governmental repression, while 11 (44%) were preceded by some form of identity protest. Of course since these are sequences, a given act of violence could have been related to a combination of the above factors. The most common such sequence (four cases) was for discriminatory policy to lead to subsequent protest and then to violent outbreaks.

Thus, on the whole and looked at from the standpoint of violence, discriminatory policy changes preceded the outbreaks in only about one third to two-fifths of the cases. Looked at from the standpoint of discriminatory policy, however, there was a higher frequency of subsequent violence. In all there were 40 cases of discriminatory policy in the data, both negative and positive (one case neutral) in India during the years under study. Interestingly and perhaps indicating India's democratic tendencies, the majority of those cases were of the positive variety (28 cases or 70%). It seems apparent that the Indian national or state governments have repeatedly attempted to alleviate identity-based tension via various sorts of positive discriminatory policies or reforms. For example, there were many examples of devolution, such as providing full statehood for Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya in 1970, as well as examples of policy designed to recognize languages other than Hindi at the state level.

Recall our assumption that positive discrimination will have more salutary effects on violence than negative discrimination. Of the 28 cases of positive discriminatory policy, the majority (17 or 61%) was not followed by violence or protest. Positive discrimination led to identity-based protest in eight cases (29%) and to identity violence in only three instances (11%). In three more cases a sequence beginning with positive discrimination led through

several subsequent events to violence. However, as seen in Table 1, the fact then that some 40% of the time angry mass response appears likely even after "positive" policy reforms should give decision-makers pause.

Table 1
Positive Discriminatory Policy Change

28 of 40 (70%) discriminatory policy changes were positive in nature
8 of 28 (29%) positive policies were followed by identity-based protest
3 of 28 (11%) positive policies were followed by ethno political violence

Negative policy discrimination had somewhat more destabilizing effects. Twelve of the discriminatory policies were coded as negative,[21] and unlike positive discrimination nearly two-thirds of these instances were followed either by ethno political violence or political protest. Indeed violence occurred in five instances (42%) with protest coming in three more (25%) cases. Thus violence was a relatively more frequent outcome for negative than for positive discrimination. While a variety of factors might contribute to ethno political violence, it seems clear (Table 2) that when negative policy discrimination does occur, it tends to be followed rather predictably (two-thirds of the Indian cases) by violence and/or protest. Indeed the violent effects were rather immediate in the case of negative discrimination, not going through long sequences or chains of events.

Table 2
Negative Discriminatory Policy Change

12 of 40 (30%) discriminatory policies were negative in nature
3 of 12 (25%) of negative policies were followed by identity-based protest
5 of 12 (42%) of negative policies were followed by ethno political violence

Several conflicts theorists (Sisk, 1996; Horowitz, 1985) have discussed the possibility of devolution and federalism as a means of effectively dealing with such heterogeneous societies as India. The fact that India has made serious efforts to localize government for that reason, and yet still experienced high levels of identity-based violence raises questions about the assumed benefits of devolution, or about whether the correct policies were engaged. Devolution generally would be considered positive in our categorization, and as such perhaps did not often lead directly to violence, but it also did not preclude violence arising from negative policies in the realm. Even when the national government provided local control and went through the pains of creating separate linguistic states, such as those in the Punjab Reorganization Bill of 1966, violence continued to be seen (e.g., in Punjab and New Delhi). It seems that devolutionary policies can have the effect of creating "minorities within minorities" or even generating majorities who perhaps do not see the need to accommodate yet another linguistic community. Yet in other circumstances, the subdivision of states into still smaller autonomous units might well relieve some of these tensions.

Further research is, therefore, needed focusing specifically on the benefits and drawbacks of devolution, decentralization, of power sharing in diverse populations. Although positive

discriminatory policies did in some cases lead to violence, they appeared to do so less frequently than their negative counterparts. There were eight cases of *proposed* discriminatory policies, with seven of them of the 'positive' variety. Five of the eight (63%) resulted in eventual violence and an additional two in identity-based protest. Proposed events thus appear to be even more volatile than their enacted counterparts, perhaps because groups become alarmed and take the occasion to campaign against adoption through violent means.

On four occasions discriminatory policy actually *followed* rather than preceded violence or protest. For example, in Assam, 1960 linguistic riots led to a decision to make Assamese the official language of the state. In two other instances previously objectionable policy was reversed after protests. This type of sequence, however, was less prevalent than one might have assumed, and therefore indicates that the relationship between policy and violence tends to be uni-directional, i.e., to lead from policy to violence or protest. Indian authorities may have proven less responsive in policy terms to popular outcry or uprising than democratic theory might predict. Over time and given repeated incidents of communal violence, local or national governments might revert to old "learned" responses, might become less open to reform, or might adopt new approaches to policing or enforcement.

We must note that "governmental policy" in India implies either national or regional (state) policies. We might wonder whether one or the other is more prone to produce violent reaction or opposition, especially in light of the devolution hypothesis. Therefore, we separated out our discriminatory policies according to their regional content, listing regionally based policies, national policies with regional content, and national policies.[22] In Table 3 we show quite clearly that regionally oriented identity policies, whether passed by states or national authorities, are more likely to generate violence than are national policies. It could be that such regional policies are meant to deal with more intractable difficulties and more entrenched violence to begin with, and therefore are more violence prone, or that they are in and of themselves more controversial and threatening to minorities. Further study of this question will be required.

Table 3
Sources and Focus of Discriminatory Policies

	Total	Led to Violence	Led to Protest
Regional Policies	17	7	3
National Policies with Regional Content	10	2	3
National Policies	16	1	6

Chi-square = 15.50, significant < .01

During the data collection and analysis it became apparent that language policy has been a volatile issue in Indian history, but our hypothesis was that it would not be the most volatile of the policy domains. There were 27 event sequences having to do with language issues, including 12 linguistic discriminatory policy changes and five proposed discriminatory policy changes. Of those policies enacted (Table 4), 10 were positive in nature with seven of those followed by ethno political violence and an additional three by identity-based protest. This illustrates the

numerous governmental attempts in India to give representation to the many linguistic groups within the country, and the fact that positive policy changes produced markedly less linguistic violence than proposed or negative changes. In fact, there were only two cases of negative linguistic policy with both experiencing ethno political violence in their aftermath. Further, there were five proposed linguistic policies with three followed by violence.

Table 4
Linguistic Discriminatory Policy Change

	Positive Linguistic DPC	Negative Linguistic DPC	Proposed Linguistic DPC
Followed by ethno political violence	4 (40%)	2 (100%)	3 (60%)
Total DPC	10	2	5

By comparison, there were seven cases of religious discriminatory policy changes (three negative and four positive in nature). Only two cases (one negative) were followed by ethno political violence, and another two (one negative) by protest. Surprisingly not only are religious policies apparently less frequent in India, but they are also seemingly less volatile than their linguistic counterparts.

The majority of the identity-based policies identified in the study were considered economic and/or political in nature (although there was some overlap where a particular policy might be considered both economic/political and either linguistic or religious if the policy legislated several benefits). There were a total of 30 economic/political discriminatory policies. Of those, 22 were positive in nature. These policies were the least volatile (Table 5), with only three leading to ethno political violence and five leading to protest. On the other hand, four of seven negative economic/political policies were followed by ethno political violence. An additional negative economic/political policy was followed by protest.

Table 5
Economic/Political Discriminatory Policies

|	Positive Economic/Political DPC	Negative Economic/Political DPC
Followed by ethno political violence	3 (13.6%)	4 (57%)
Followed by protest	5 (22.7%)	1 (14%)
Total DPC	22	7

All discriminatory policy types, and particularly the "negative" ones, have been shown to result in ethno political violence at least some of the time. On the other hand, despite our initial expectations for India, linguistic policies appear more volatile than their religious or economic/political counterparts.

It has been hypothesized that resource disparities play a significant role in accelerating ethno political conflict. When focusing on discriminatory policy changes, this variable seems theoretically relevant. When resources are scarce, identity groups may feel the need to secure them for their group more so than when the economy is prosperous and healthy. Data collection indicates 12 cases of events considered to entail economic downturns as reported by project sources. Four (33%) of those were related to non-identity protest—for example, the left-wing trade union strike in 1967 protesting rising prices and unemployment—and three (25%) were related to non-identity violence (i.e. food riots). Some cases of ethno political violence occurred during the same year as these economic declines, however we were unable to establish direct relations between the two event types.[23] These findings do not, however, provide a systematic analysis of the relationship between economic fluctuation and the policy change-to-violence linkage as proposed earlier.

In order to better make this assessment, Figure 1 is presented for the years after 1960, and identifies policy changes that were and were not followed by ethno political violence. These changes were graphed in relation to percent change in GDP from previous year (the first year had no reference point). In addition, the graph also indicates these changes and economic cycles in relation to party and prime minister shifts.

Figure 1

Leadership Change, Economic Fluctuation, and Discriminatory Policies
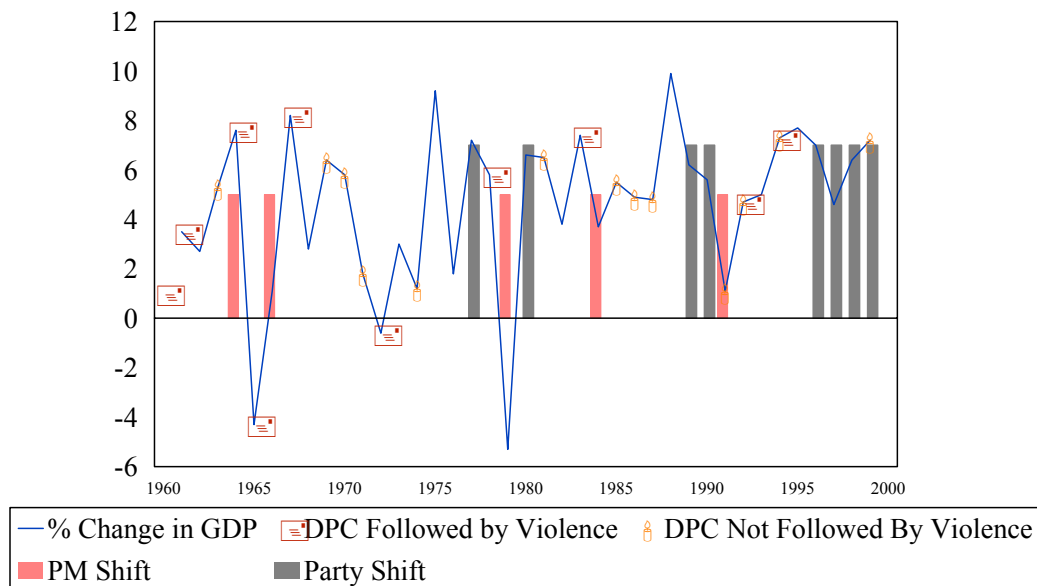
Intriguingly, incidents of discriminatory policy change (DPC) which were followed by violence seemed to come at relatively extreme points of economic change, i.e., either upward

economic shifts of over four percent, or downward shifts. However, contrary to expectations, the upward shifts appeared more subject to such policy linkage to violent outbreaks than the downward shifts were (note that violence occurred in India nearly every year, so that the indicators are for the policy-violence *sequence*, and not for all occurrences of violence). All instances of policy change NOT followed by violence during this period also occurred in the better economic times, with some of the non-violent outcomes coming coincidentally in the same year as the violent ones. Overall, then, one is hard pressed to conclude that economics made much difference. Bad economic times did seem, however, to correspond to the possibility of violence following discriminatory moves, and not to the policy-non-violent outcomes.

As for political changes, the first two prime ministerial changes and the first party shift were followed rather closely by ethno political policies and subsequent violence. However, this pattern was not as clear for later governmental shifts, either of party or leadership, and it could have been that in the early years the nation's first ethno political policies were being enunciated and coincidentally that prime ministers finally changed (after the long Nehru reign). During the more conservative shift of the 1980s and 1990s, there may indeed have been a great deal of "ethnic politics" going in, especially with Hindu nationalist revival. Yet these evidently did not necessarily translate predictably into policy moves followed by near term violence. Fears of ethnic repression or intimidation, however, might have led to an atmosphere leading to communal fighting, whether associated with specific policies or not.

Implications

It seems clear that discriminatory policy changes in India are not the only source or trigger of ethno political violence. In fact, the majority of such violent acts seem to occur rather spontaneously as the result of a street-level disagreement in a pattern of continuing conflict and vengeance. Future research is required to shed light on these episodes to assist in reducing the tension and atmosphere that makes spontaneous violence possible. We also have not distinguished between ethnic violence directed at other groups and at the state, so that we would want to know more about what triggers one form versus the other.

It is also clear, however, that discriminatory policies, when they do occur, often lead to violence or identity-based protest, with negative discriminatory and proposed policies proving considerably more volatile than the positive variety, although opposition to positive policies, particularly from groups which stand to lose some of their previous advantages or status, can become violent as well. The potential of violent outbreaks as a result of discriminatory policy seems to be related to the focus and location of that policy. India's attempts to strike a balance with some devolved ethno-related powers and a still strong central government seem to have created a system in which regional discriminatory policies are more likely to lead to violence than those adopted at the national level.

Future research comparing Indian policy with other more or less centralized countries might provide useful insight into this issue and the adequacy of the balance. We have only been able to highlight what appears to be an interesting difference in central and regional policy effects. Indian democracy has generated a distinctive and somewhat successful pattern of positive policy initiatives to deal with the challenges of heterogeneity. Indeed Das Gupta (1988, p.165) argues cogently from the Assamese example that ethnic struggles are frequently over who will control the country's resources and that given enlightened policies at the center "ethnic regionalism and secular nationalism are not necessarily competing values."

        Project results illustrate the problematic nature of dealing with a diverse linguistic population via linguistic policy, especially in comparison to religious discrimination *per se*. Such policies and demands often are associated with violence, indicating the sensitive nature of language and the importance of language recognition. Again, cross-country comparative analyses are necessary to explore methods of appeasing several linguistic groups without the problem of creating a "within minority."

        If discriminatory policy is a catalyst of violence, it is evidently not as intertwined with other factors as one might have assumed. For example, one factor commonly linked to ethnic violence, economic downturns, seemed at least as likely to be related to *non-identity* based policies, demonstrations, and violence. The sequences whereby discriminatory policy led to violence, at least in our data, generally were not very long, with the most common sequence being policy leading to protest leading to violence. However, negative policy *per se* seemed quite capable of directly generating violent uprisings. Therefore, such policy, whether proposed or implemented, bears watching by those interested in early warning or amelioration of ethnic violence. Again, one would want to see the patterns in other states, but India affords an important initial validation, especially as regards the incendiary potential of linguistic policies.

Endnotes

[1] We use the term "ethnic" or "ethnopolitical" conflict and violence in this paper to denote fighting over issues related to cultural identity. This can encompass disputes regarding group identity, nationalism, language, religion, citizenship and other aspects of culture such as myths, traditions, and norms. It overlaps with but is treated as distinct from disputes over other issues such as ideology, territorial control and power that might not have an ethnicity component.

[2] The idea of relative deprivation, translated from the individual to the group level, is seen as a discrepancy between a group's value expectations and what the group is actually able to achieve.

[3] Factors in a group's capacity for sustained collective action are the strength of the group's identity and group mobilization. Factors affording a group the opportunity to initiate ethnopolitical rebellion include recent major changes in the structure of the political regime and support from kindred groups in neighboring countries. Where Gurr focuses on the interaction of many structural and institutional factors in assessing risk of internal civil conflict and Stavenhagen looks at the nation-state system, Stuart J. Kaufman (1996) argues that hostile masses, belligerent leaders, and inter-ethnic security dilemmas drive internal ethnic warfare. "They reinforce each other in a spiral of increasing conflict: belligerent leaders stoke mass hostility; hostile masses support belligerent leaders; and both together threaten other groups, creating a security dilemma which in turn encourages even more mass hostility and leadership belligerence" (Kaufman, 1996: 109). Kaufman also makes a distinction between wars initiated by dominant groups, which he terms 'popular chauvinism' (mass-led) and 'government jingoism' (elite-led), and those initiated by subordinate groups, or 'mass insurgencies' (mass-led) and 'elite conspiracy' (elite-led).

[4] While they may pose challenges for multi-ethnic states, Barnett and other scholars of India note that separatist movements need not be incompatible with national integration, providing that integration is not seen as synonymous with homogenization and that cultural pluralism is genuinely accepted (Brass, 1981, p. 452).

[5] One area of inter-ethnic coexistence in the religious domain is the general Indian pattern of tolerance in return for acceding to the basically Hindu social order. Hindus have come to expect this in relation to the ancient absorption of Buddhism, and it created difficulties relative to the Sikhs in the 1980s (Mahmood, 1989).

[6] Horowitz (1985) and Kaufman (1996) join scholars such as Merton (1957) and Gagnon (1995) in enunciating what has been termed the "instrumentalist" view of civil violence, in which national elites are seen to exploit group antagonisms for concrete political or territorial gains. An alternative conception is the so called "primordialist" view that most ethnopolitical conflicts are rooted either in human nature as deep-seated tribal hatreds (Huntington, 1996) or long evolving cultural suspicions and rivalries. For example, Barber (1995) argues that "tribes" who are at war with each other are trying to redraw boundaries in order to further divide the international system. Despite assumptions about tribal hatreds, however, ethnic differences appear to play a relatively small role in the onset and resolution of violent international disputes (Huth, 1995). Singer (1993) has begun to explore the validity of the primordialist view on *intrastate* conflict, and finds that "cultural difference does not necessitate conflict; rather, it only makes it easier for elites to move their societies closer to hostility and rivalry" (Henderson, 1997). Singer (1996) also argues that to dismiss these intrastate conflicts as tribal hatreds is dangerous if not patronizing, and prematurely assumes that we already know what the conflicts are about. Such conflicts are complex processes about real issues that need further analysis, as seen in Subrate K. Mitra's (1995) critique of Asghar Engineer's (1994) thesis that "ethnicity derives its strength from primordial identity," while in India Muslims have made relatively successful political alliances with former Hindu untouchables. By contrast, Dutt's (1976) instrumentalist and pro-Congress analysis of the Indian constitutional crisis blamed political and opposition agitators for combining anti-democratic themes with ethnic hatred to gain power for themselves and bring down both the government and democratic structures.

[7]The added dimension of economic dislocation and modernization as well as class-based politics inevitably comes into discussions of ethnic or identity conflict. Based on case studies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, Horowitz (1985) generates a theory of group entitlement and inter-group comparison, arguing that differential modernization based on ethnicity is an important factor for understanding the collective psychology of identity conflicts. He argues that the "modernization gap" and elite ambitions taking advantage of accompanying psychological tensions have resulted in post-colonial states where elites have the ability to turn group fears and resentment into mass antagonism and war. Modernization theory entails the belief that ethnic groups modernize at differential rates, and as a result, there is inter-group competition for benefits. The uneven distribution of economic and educational resources, according to Horowitz, is an important source of group tensions. One might also speculate that economic hardships, and their differential effects on various dominant or subordinate groups, can hasten the resort to force.

[8] Indeed one type of institutional arrangement militating against inter-ethnic violence might be the form of "civic engagement" in crosscutting associations and groups that tend to break down

polarization. This has been seen among Hindu's and Muslims in cities where violence has been minimized or abated (Varshney, 2001, noting that most Indian civil violence takes place in cities rather than in India's myriad of villages). However, there are conditions where these consultative networks and associations might not suffice, as in the former Yugoslavia, either because the associations are not prominent, large, and well enough organized or because they are overtaken by events.

[9] Citing a study by Oldenburg (1993) Manor notes that Indian communal (religious) incidents peaked in the mid 1960s, and despite a general rise in the 1980s did not approach those levels again up to 1990. Others have noted a marked increase again in the 1990s, however.

[10] Indeed Basu and Kohli note the irony that this trend has coincided with the "deinstitutionalization" of the Indian state, i.e., the fall of previous pillars such as secularism, socialism, and Congress Party democracy and the deterioration of civil and political bureaucracies. The electorate has multiplied and competition over resources distributed by the state has intensified along with inter-party competition and grassroots democracy. They further note that state policy can be either direct and intended or indirect and unintended in its impact on subsequent protest and violence. Indeed state *inaction* in key situations can also be a form of policy by default.

[11] These authors also note (pp. 323-324) that ethno cultural identities themselves change and transform over time, especially as transformed into political movements that wax and wane. Again the role of the state and political leaders is considered crucial in negotiating such changes.

[12]We presume that although mere *proposals* for adoption might also spark violence, crowds and groups react more vehemently to actual regulations in place than to plans and proposals, since discussion of various approaches is always taking place and policy does not become really "serious" until it is approved and on the way to implementation.

[13]In cases where there is a complete state breakdown, where no policies could be made, presumably the discriminatory policy change could have occurred prior to the breakdown and may have served as a catalyst to that fact.

[14] Since *Keesings Contemporary* Archives Online was only available from 1960-2000, for the earlier years we supplemented the data with the *Political Handbook of the World* (1998). However, since the latter is not as comprehensive as *Keesings*, the findings before 1960 must be treated as reliable but less authoritative than for the 1960-2000 period. Separate analyses were completed for the latter period for comparison with the entire period, 1947-2000, but the findings did not change substantially.

[15] While one would also want to account for the outcome "no policy reform-no violence" the event data approach we utilize at present does not afford that as a practical measurement since those are essentially "non-events." One could alternatively deal with "country or event years" and code zeros for years with no such activity, but the effort here was to go to the event level itself in order to see sequences by which action and reaction in the policy-violence nexus actually occur. At the initial stage of investigation it is important to look closely at these sequences in order to induce theoretical propositions for further systematic testing.

[16] If outcomes and effects were noted beyond three months, and were clearly related in the account to policy initiatives, they were coded as well.

[17] Obviously groups can interpret a policy in widely contrasting ways, and a certain subjectivity is inherent in such coding. Language laws may validate one community and invalidate its

neighbors; U.S. affirmative action is seen as just in some quarters and discriminatory in others. However we treated such policies as negative if their effects were highly unbalanced or unfavorable to minorities.

[18] The reasoning for such a decision is two-fold: first, reports of specific violent regional episodes tend to be sporadic and rarely detailed (for example, a report of 'continued violence in Kashmir' provides very little insight into the level of violence or its circumstances), and secondly, the project is concerned with identifying potential causes of violent *outbreaks* (hence its potential usefulness in "early warning") as opposed to continuous episodes. As a result, initial and renewed (after a distinct lull of at least a year in reports) instances of violence were the focus of data collection. There is one particular exception. Hindu/Muslim communal violence is a recurring Indian problem, and can take a number of forms. The difficulty in identifying this violence as 'continual' is that it rarely occurs only in a specific region, so that one does not know whether reports of violence in various regions is part of a single conflict or indicative of several conflicts. Therefore, if we did not know enough about the particular circumstances to say it was or was not a continuation of prior local fighting, this type of violence was coded as a new event whenever it was reported.

[19] Volume 2001 was used to identify percent change in GDP from previous year for the years 1971-2000. Volume 1971 was used for the years 1960-1970.

[20] Data analyzed in the study are available by contacting the authors.

[21] An example of such a policy was the 1965 Official Language Bill, replacing English as the official language in India with Hindi. Although the bill also required regulation to ensure that the change would not cause any hardship to those who did not speak Hindi, the action nonetheless sparked a series of riots in several Indian states by those opposed to the bill who viewed it as a threat, as well as those who supported the bill and viewed its opponents as a threat.

[22] Due to the nature of the reports used for coding, it was not always possible to determine whether a policy was passed by the state or national government, but it was possible to determine whether it applied locally or nationally. We assume that many of the local policy moves were passed by state authorities, and we were further able to distinguish clear national policies that affected only a state (such as the Bombay reorganization bill of 1960 which created two separate states). Thus, our analysis distinguishes local from national policy.

[23] A second analysis was completed using Gross National Product (GNP) as the economic indicator for the years 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, and 1995. These were compared to the outbreak of violence grouped in

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