When State Responses Fail: Religion and Secessionism in India 1952–2002

Giovanni Capoccia University of Oxford
Lawrence Sáez School of Oriental and African Studies, London
Eline de Rooij University of Oxford

Why are some challenges to the territorial unity of democratic states more tractable than others? The literature has focused on numerous explanatory factors, including the impact of institutional reforms and government policies implemented in response to subnational mobilization and the ethnic identity of subnational groups. Building on the insights of a large literature on the political consequences of religious mobilization, this article analyzes a new dataset on the trajectory of 181 subnational political organizations active in India between 1952 and 2002. The article shows that demands for autonomy or secession put forward by religious organizations are likely to prove much more resilient over time than identical demands advanced by nonreligious organizations. The analysis has important implications for the study of secessionism and ethnic politics in general.

Why are some challenges to the territorial unity of democratic states more tractable than others? The extensive literature on ethnic politics has not addressed this specific question directly, while the literature on secessionism and state responses to secessionist demands has not offered consistent answers. Studies on the consequences of political mobilization under religious banners have hypothesized that demands framed in religious terms may be less tractable than similar demands framed in nonreligious terms. Although this issue has mainly been analyzed in relation to the causes of political violence, in this article we provide an empirical test of this hypothesis in relation to *territorial demands*. We analyze the trajectory of demands for secessionism or autonomy posed by subnational political actors in the case of India after independence, and we find the hypothesis strongly confirmed by the data. For this analysis, we use a new dataset tracing the political trajectories of 181 regional political actors that sought secession or territorial autonomy in India between 1952 and 2002. Controlling for important covariates, territorial demands put forward by religious political actors (mainly Muslim or Sikh) have been significantly more intransigent in the face of state responses (be these repressive or accommodative) than identical demands posed by regional political actors operating under nonreligious worldviews.[1]

This finding has important theoretical implications. First and foremost, it points to the possibility that state responses to secessionism may have rather different effects on the strategies of subnational political actors posing territorial demands depending on whether these actors abide by a religious worldview or not. Furthermore, our focus on *political organizations* as carriers of secessionist tendencies—rather than single individuals, whole ethnic groups, or entire regions—concentrates attention on the nature and political consequences of *organizational worldviews*, rather than individual identities. Any political organization, whether party or association, has to abide by and promote a *public worldview* (defined as a system of values that constitutes the organization's public identity), in order to be able to rally militants and aggregate disparate interests in a single platform. The implication for analyses of secessionism and for constructivist analyses of ethnic politics is that, even though the facet of ethnic identity that is politically mobilized may

[1]An online appendix with a detailed discussion of operationalizations and data sources for our variables, as well as alternative specifications of our models and supplementary analyses is available at http://journals.cambridge.org/jop. Data for replication will be made available upon publication on the authors' websites using the dataverse network system (http://thedata.org/).

The Journal of Politics, Vol. 74, No. 4, October 2012, Pp. 1010–1022 doi:10.1017/S0022381612000564
© Southern Political Science Association, 2012
ISSN 0022-3816

depend on external circumstances and on the action of political entrepreneurs, organizational worldviews are not malleable at will. Thus, political entrepreneurs aiming to mobilize individuals along religious lines (although the same can apply to other kinds of organizational worldviews as well) will often have to refer to preexisting religious doctrines, which are likely to carry with them long-standing characteristics and to be reasonably stable over time. These characteristics may have independent effects on the organization's capability to compromise with other organizations or with public authorities. For example, an important literature, which we discuss below, has maintained that some "fundamentalist" religious doctrines (including Islam and Sikhism) have characteristics that may make demands framed in their terms less negotiable. Even though we do not claim that our findings are necessarily driven by the *doctrinal* characteristics of the actors analyzed, the insight that ideational legacies (religious or otherwise) may make organizational worldviews less malleable encourages an empirical strategy aimed at testing the impact of different facets of ethnicity *separately*, rather than together.

Finally, it is important to note the limits of the analysis. The article establishes a strong empirical association between the religious worldview of subnational political actors and the hardening of territorial demands in the important case of India over half a century. While the empirical results are robust, we stress that these findings constitute only a first step in this line of research and should not be interpreted as justifying an "essentialist" view of certain religious doctrines, as sometimes the fundamentalism literature seems to imply. In the Conclusion we point to possibilities for future research in which the plausibility of the psychological mechanisms associated with the hardening of demands postulated by the fundamentalism literature could be tested against alternative mechanisms.

The article is organized as follows: To begin, we outline our argument against the backdrop of the relevant literature; we next discuss our research strategy, motivate our case selection, and present our data and variables. In the empirical analysis, we test the impact of religious worldviews on the trajectory of territorial demands posed by regional political actors, and we show that religious worldviews have a strong effect in making territorial demands resilient over time. Furthermore, considering the argument in the literature that intransigence and intractability (hence demand resilience) may be fueled by selective repression on the part of the Indian authorities against religious grievances, we analyze the impact of repression on religious mobilization and find no evidence in support of the "selective repression" argument. In the conclusion, we summarize our findings, discuss the implications of the analysis, and point to avenues of future research.

The Argument: Religion and Resilience of Territorial Demands

What causes the *persistence* of secessionist threats within a democratic state remains an understudied issue. Secessionist movements may succeed, thus leading to the creation of new sovereign polities, or fail, and be either appeased with partial concessions or repressed by the national government (Siroky 2011). A further outcome, however, is also possible: in democratic regimes, some secessionist or autonomist movements may prove resilient to repressive state responses, and impervious to accommodative ones, and thus continue to exist and operate publicly. What explains this variation?

The argument advanced in this article is that a strong predictor of this variation is the ideational framing of territorial grievances by secessionist parties and movements. Such framing depends on the official worldview of these political actors. In particular, *religious* political parties and nonparty groups, if they are regionally concentrated and if they harbor territorial grievances, will frame such grievances in the religious language that characterizes their public identity. This has important consequences for their resilience in the face of state responses: an important literature maintains that political grievances framed in religious terms tend to be less tractable than similar grievances framed in different terms. Thus, religious political actors advancing territorial grievances will not be easily appeased by partial concessions, and even if the central government uses repression to disband them, new organizations are likely to emerge and put forward the same territorial grievances in the name of the same doctrinal principles.

Our emphasis on religion as an important factor in hardening political demands builds on a large body of theoretical and empirical literature, which has grown exponentially in the recent decades. Important contributions have emphasized the opposition of religious movements to the spread of Western culture (e.g., Huntington 1996), the laity of the state (Tibi 1998), democracy (Kepel 1997), and more generally their attempt to reassert the public role of religion (Juergensmeyer 1993). Most authors in this tradition

have emphasized that religious beliefs tend to harden political demands and to make political controversies less tractable (e.g., Fox 2004; Hassner 2009). Many have linked these beliefs to a higher propensity to political violence on the part of these movements. As a student of these issues has put it, "... religious frameworks ... are an essential element in the psyche of their adherents ... Accordingly, if a religious framework is challenged in any way ... this challenge constitutes a challenge to the inner souls of that religion's adherents. It is not hard to argue that such a challenge is very likely to ... provoke a defensive reaction among these adherents and that this defensive reaction is likely to be conflictive in nature" (Fox 2000, 2; see also Enloe 1980, 359; Fox 2004, 20–22; Fox and Sandler 2006, 107; Fox and Squires 2001, 96; Hassner 2009; Horowitz 1985, 51; Hoffman 1995, 272–73; Reynal-Querol 2002, 42). More specifically, Fox argues that religion "when combined with self-determination, can significantly increase the level of violence" (2004, 233).

The present analysis is not concerned with the determinants of political violence, but other authors have maintained that specific religious value systems can make political demands more generally less tractable, without necessarily leading to violence. This view is particularly prominent in the literature on religious fundamentalism. In their seminal work, Marty and Appleby and their collaborators (Marty and Appleby 1991a, 1993, 1995) have proposed a definition of religious fundamentalist worldviews that provides quite detailed insights into how and why such worldviews are likely to harden political demands. In their view, fundamentalist movements generally abide by a moral Manichaeism, dividing the world between a "pure" internal world (internal to the religious group) and an "impure" external one, which includes both outright infidels and members of the same religions that have compromised with lay authorities or secular values. As such, fundamentalist religious groups believe in the inerrancy of the sacred texts (or sacred institutional figures) and reject any adaptation of traditional principles to the changing reality (Almond, Sivan, and Appleby 1995, 405–07). Finally, religious fundamentalist worldviews tend to include "messianic" and "millennial" beliefs in the inevitable triumph of good over bad; these beliefs inspire both the identity and the actions of fundamentalist groups (Marty and Appleby 1991b, 819). These characteristics, typical of groups belonging to the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and Sikh traditions, make demands framed in fundamentalist language less negotiable than they would otherwise be (Almond, Sivan, and Appleby 1995, 419).

Alternative Explanations

Our emphasis on the importance of the ideational framing of territorial grievances must be tested against alternative explanations. The literature has proposed a variety of causes of secessionism, ranging from globalization to economic inequalities, to geographic and demographic conditions (e.g., Hechter and Okamoto 2001; Lustick, Miodownik, and Eidelson 2004). However, two sets of causal factors have emerged with particular prominence: state responses (institutions and policies), on the one hand, and group characteristics and identities, on the other.[2]

Which *institutions* are most effective in stymieing secessionist challenges is contested. A popular view is that accommodation and inclusion—mainly in the form of decentralization and subsequent institutionalized empowerment of potentially secessionist groups—appeases separatist demands, thus reducing the likelihood of secession and preserving territorial integrity (e.g., Bermeo 2002, 105; Sambanis 2001). Others, however, have argued exactly the opposite position, namely that the devolution of institutional power to the periphery might make secession more likely by giving more resources to potentially secessionist minorities and thus emboldening rather than appeasing them (e.g., Cornell 2002; Hale 2000; Roeder 1991; for a nuanced position on the issue, see Brancati 2009). Similarly, the effectiveness of *repressive policies* by the central government in stymieing secessionism is also contested. Although some have argued that repression can have the effect of reducing the impact of secessionist threats (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Lustick 1980), others have instead argued that state repression is more likely to lead to escalation of demands (e.g., Kohli 1997, 326–30).

A second important thread in the literature focuses on the role of ethnic identities in explaining why certain territorial challenges persist and others are reabsorbed after concessions or stymied by repression. A recent study, for example, finds that 95% of the secessionist conflicts in 155 states between 1946 and 2005 have been based on ethnic differences (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009, 327). Authors in this tradition, however, generally adopt a comprehensive conception of ethnicity, including religious as well as racial, linguistic, and other (sectarian, caste-based, etc.) characteristics (e.g., Doyle and Sambanis 2000, 789; Gurr 1993, 163; Sambanis 2001, 269; Varshney

[2]A further strand in the literature emphasizes the impact of external actors in the dynamics of secessionism (e.g., Jenne 2007). We control for the impact of geopolitical factors in our analysis.

2001, 365), often expressed in quantitative measures of ethnic fractionalization (e.g., Mauro 1995; Vanhanen 1999). Scholars, however, have come to contrasting results on the effects of so-conceived ethnic fractionalization on important phenomena as interethnic violence (e.g., Sambanis 2001, 280; cf. Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 588) or peace building (Doyle and Sambanis 2000, 789).

The Stability of Organizational Worldviews

As insightful as these studies are, we propose that they could be usefully complemented by analyses that consider the impact of different facets of ethnicity *separately*. In particular, the literature on religious mobilization and on fundamentalism discussed above offers solid theoretical ground to analyze the impact of religion on the hardening of territorial demands separately from that of other ascriptive characteristics of subnational groups, as a potentially alternative explanation to those focused on the impact of state responses. Overall, however, the extent of cross-fertilization between the literature on religion and empirical analyses of ethnic conflict has remained limited, not only because of the "lumping" of religion with other characteristics of ethnicity adopted by some scholars, but also because of the predominance in the field of constructivist conceptions of ethnicity, which see ethnic (including religious) identities as endogenous and malleable. In this view, which convincingly undermines older "primordialist" conceptions of ethnic identities as fixed and exogenous, individuals choose their ethnic identities in response to external conditions, and different identities can be mobilized politically for the achievement of specific goals (e.g., Chandra 2001, 2004; Laitin 1998). This literature has important implications for testing the impact of religious worldviews on territorial (and in general political) demands (e.g., Chandra and Wilkinson 2008). One of these implications would question the plausibility of considering a malleable factor such as religious identity as having a *durable* impact on the trajectory of territorial demands. How can that be, if religion itself (or more precisely, the political activation of religious identities) is to be conceived as shifting and flexible?[3]

To address this potential objection, we emphasize that our claim is about the characteristics of territorial demands posed by religious *political organizations*, not by individuals. As Wimmer, Cederman, and Min aptly put it, "ethnic conflicts are not the outcome of everyday encounters between individuals; they are the results of interactions between the state and ethnopolitical movements that challenge state authority" (2009, 318). This has important consequences for empirical analysis: while *individual identities* may be shifting (we certainly do not imply that individual identities are fixed) and different facets of ethnicity may be activated in politics depending on external conditions, *organizational worldviews*, as public expressions of the collective identity of a political actor, are generally more stable.

The stability of organizational worldviews is supported by a vast amount of empirical evidence. A large literature in sociology and political science demonstrates how radical changes in a political organization's official ideology are extremely rare for at least two reasons. First, the militants of the organization are likely to stop such change (Robertson 1976). Second, the public credibility of the leaders largely depends on fostering and constantly referring to the goals and values stated in the organization's official worldview—even though that reference may be a merely ritual one (Panebianco 1988, 26). Thus, once a regional political organization has framed its demands in religious terms, these act like a "brand," becoming an important part of the organization's identity and "public face" (e.g., Clegg and Dunkerley 1977). The language of the organization's documents will be infused with these terms; leaders will evoke them in their public interventions; members and supporters—especially those who are closest to ideal-type "believers," present to some extent in every political organization—will mobilize around them; political entrepreneurs who want to ascend to positions of power within the organization are likely to abide by them and to not challenge their core (Selznick [1957] 1984). Thus, while the goals of a political organization are constantly specified and adjusted at the margins to adapt to the contingencies of the organization's environment, an organization's "core" goals and values change extremely rarely and typically only when an abrupt shift in the political environment makes such change necessary for the organization's very survival (Panebianco 1988, 25–30; 240). On these bases, it is possible to study the effect of religious organizational worldviews on the trajectory of territorial demands. An analytical focus on political organizations (rather than on individuals) does not contradict but rather integrates constructivist analyses of ethnic politics.

[3]Another implication is the necessity to test for the endogeneity of religious mobilization to important external conditions (e.g., Chandra 2001). We conduct one such test in the analysis.

Research Strategy

To sum up at this stage, our argument is that the territorial demands for autonomy or secession posed by a regional political organization will be more resilient if the organization in question abides by a religious worldview than otherwise. This claim resonates with important literatures on the effects of religion on political demands and extends those insights to the analysis of secessionist tendencies in democratic states. At the same time, this claim is alternative to analyses that see different types of state responses as key predictors of the persistence or disappearance of secessionist challenges.

The difficulties of testing this claim against alternative explanations with a cross-country design are apparent: such a design would require extensive comparative data on the characteristics of regional political parties and groups demanding autonomy or secession; on government policies and the institutional framework (and institutional reforms); and on socioeconomic and geopolitical control variables. The problem of retrieving adequate comparative data is compounded by the need to extend the analysis back in history to account for the impact of religious worldviews on the *trajectory* of territorial demands and the variation over time of important covariates. As a stepping stone towards broader comparisons, we opt for a single-country design, focusing on India after independence.

Postindependence India constitutes an ideal terrain for an initial test of our claim, given the extensive within-case variation, both cross-time and cross-space, that it displays on key variables. Regarding variation in the characteristics of regional political actors, for example, India (although predominantly Hindu) is a highly heterogeneous country with a large number of religious cleavages as well as nonreligious (linguistic, regional, caste, tribal) divisions, which have fueled a number of subnational territorial challenges since the country became independent. Only to mention a few instances, the demand for a separate nation of Dravidistan enjoyed popular support until the 1960s (Kohli 1997); India's northeastern region, particularly in Assam and Meghalaya, has witnessed a multiplicity of territorial challenges by separatist groups (Baruah 2005); from the 1960s until the 1980s, demands by Sikh groups for a separate nation of Khalistan contributed to severe violent protests and the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (Singh 2000); finally, demands for greater autonomy linked to separatist violence have occurred in Jammu and Kashmir (Bose 2003). Thus, the Indian government has had a long history of facing demands for territorial reorganization or secession coming from different areas of the country and being put forward by regional political actors with both religious and nonreligious worldviews, and using violent or nonviolent strategies. Furthermore, most religious actors posing territorial demands belong to religious traditions (such as the Islamic and the Sikh one) that leading scholarship on fundamentalism discussed above classify as most likely to include groups that abide by fundamentalist doctrines, and the most likely, in the view of those scholars, to be associated with intractability of political demands.

The relevant institutional and policy variables also display significant within-case variation. Although of course the analysis of a single case of a federal state such as India does not allow testing claims on the effect of federalism per se on secessionist demands, reorganizations of the internal territorial boundaries of the Indian Union have been relatively frequent after independence and have often been undertaken exactly in response to territorial demands arising from the periphery. In addition to these and other accommodative responses, in several occasions the national government has also responded with repressive policies to territorial demands for autonomy or separation. Finally, important structural and cultural control variables display enormous variation across India's territory.

Data and Variables

Our analysis covers the half century between 1952 and 2002. In this period, 363 regionally based political parties and nonparty groups were active in India. Of the 310 parties and groups on which full information is available, 181 posed territorial demands at some point during their life span. These constitute the object of our analysis, as our interest is in the trajectories of demands. Territorial demands can be of different intensity: the most intense involve secession, i.e., the creation of a new sovereign polity out of the territory of the preexisting state. Less intense territorial demands refer instead to increased forms of autonomy for specific regions within the existing polity. In the Indian context, this has generally meant demanding the creation of a new federated state within the Union—a quite demanding request both politically and bureaucratically.[4]

[4]Other demands (the creation of a "Union Territory," or of an "autonomous council" in a state, or the endowment of a state with special competencies) have been much rarer. Our key findings are robust to alternative specifications of the dependent variable (see the appendix).

Our outcome of interest refers to the *temporal dynamics* of such demands, namely if and how these demands change over time. In order to make such temporal dynamics statistically tractable, we construct a three-item scale of demand intensity, including secessionist demands as the most intense, "less-than-secessionist" demands (in most cases consisting of the demand for a new federated state) as the middle item, and "no demands" as the bottom of the scale. We record demand intensity for every regional political actor in each year of its existence and use these observations to construct our dependent variable, *demand moderation*. Demand moderation is a dichotomous variable that measures any move downward along the "demand intensity scale," indicating whether in a given year an actor reduced the intensity of its territorial demand (1), or not (0).

Our explanatory variable of interest is the worldview of the political actor posing territorial demands. Following our main hypothesis, the variable *religious actor* is a dummy variable that takes the value (1) if the regional political actor has a religious identity and (0) if not. To code a regional political organization as "religious," we refer to its self-definition as it emerges from the organization's own sources, or to unquestioned descriptions in the secondary literature: the party or group explicitly adheres to a given religious doctrine, defines itself and refers to itself as a religious political force, and adopts a religious discourse in its internal and external political communication (Almond, Sivan, and Appleby 1995, 408).[5] Often religious ideas are evoked in the party's or the group's name. Furthermore, its membership is normally exclusivist, i.e., not open to individuals who do not share the same religious identity.[6] Seventy-one regional actors of the 181 that posed any territorial demands in India between 1952 and 2002 fall in this category.[7] Of these, 60 are Muslim, nine are Sikh, and two Hindu.

We use three sets of controls. The first set includes additional characteristics of regional political actors. First, since more intense demands may be more difficult to moderate (e.g., Gurr 1993), we code *initial demand intensity*, as a dummy variable, scoring more intense (i.e., secessionist) initial demands posed by a regional political actors at the beginning of its existence as 1 and less intense (for a new federated state or lesser forms of autonomy) initial demands as 0. Second, we control for the *size* of a group or party and distinguish between small (coded 0) and large (coded 1).[8] Third, the variable *violence* measures whether an actor used violence in a given year (1) or not (0).

A second set of controls includes policy and institutional responses to territorial challenges. First, opening up the electoral process at the local level to extremist organizations is often considered a way of accommodating their demands and inducing moderation (e.g., McGarry and O'Leary 1994; Noyon 2003). Therefore political parties, which participate in the electoral process at the regional or national level, should be more amenable than nonparty groups to moderating their territorial demands. The dummy variable *organization* codes a regional political actor as 1 if it is a party and 0 if it is a nonparty group. Second, in order to capture the effect of the frequent redesign of the policy competencies of federated states, the variable *territory change* measures whether the territory in which a regional actor operated was accorded (a higher level of) autonomy (1) or not (0) in a given year. The expectation is that if regional actors see their territorial grievances met with decentralizing reforms, they are more likely to moderate their demands. Third, the variable *State or U.T.* captures the possible impact on demand resilience of the existing level of autonomy of the territorial unit where a political actor operates, in particular whether it operates in a State (coded 0) or a Union Territory (coded 1). Fourth, we construct two measures to capture the effects of repressive policies against secessionism enacted by the central government: *presidential rule* measures whether presidential rule was applied because of insurgent activities and/or movements posing territorial demands in a given state in a given year (1) or not (0).[9] When presidential rule is declared the national government takes over the state government for the period deemed necessary to solve an emergency (all actors in a state are coded (1) for that

[5]For a defense of coding organizations on the basis of their political goals, see Wimmer, Cederman, and Min (2009) and the literature quoted therein.

[6]To be sure, many political organizations appeal to *several* (religious, linguistic, economic, regional) collective identities. In general though, the organization's public face is mainly targeted to *one* of these identities. For example, the German Social Democratic Party has traditionally attracted a significant amount of Protestant voters (i.e., a religiously defined constituency), but its official worldview remains class-based.

[7]This variable varies over time. Only two actors changed their worldview in the period analyzed.

[8]A party is "large" if it obtained on average at least 20% of the votes in all the state legislative elections where it participated. A nonparty group is "large" if it has more than 10,000 members.

[9]We do not consider cases in which Presidential rule has been applied for reasons unrelated to demands for secession or autonomy.

period). A more fine-grained variable, *state repression,* measures whether a *specific* regional party or group was an object of state repression (coded 1) or not (0) in a given year.

A final set of controls includes broadly defined "structural" variables. First, we control for the geographical location of the territory in which a regional political actor operates. Following the insights of both theoretical and comparative (e.g., Jenne 2007; Siroky 2011; Van Houten 1998), as well as India-specific (e.g., Ganguly 1997; Manor 1996; Wallace 2006) literature, we include a dummy variable *enemy border state* indicating whether the state in which a regional political actor operates borders with an enemy foreign country at that point in time (1)—thus making it easier for an external actor to intervene in support of secessionist kin groups—or borders with a friendly foreign country, or with no country (0). Furthermore, even in nonborder states, geographical distance from the central government site may have an important effect: Wimmer, Cederman, and Min (2009, 323), for example, maintain that certain forms of secessionist conflict are more likely in large states, since these are less likely than small states to have penetrated the outer reaches of their territory. Thus, we include the variable *distance to capital*, measured per 1,000 kilometer. Second, economic inequality is conventionally expected to make conflict resolution more difficult (e.g., Hegre and Sambanis 2006). Systematic data on intergroup inequality do not exist, however (e.g., Lijphart 1996, 263), and we use the available data to measure another type of inequality, that between states, which has also been seen in the literature as influencing the emergence of secessionist tendencies (e.g., Bates 1974; Zarkovic Bookman 1993). *State Relative Income* (SRI) measures the relative poverty of the state in which a regional political actor operates vis-à-vis the rest of India in each given year. The measure is obtained by dividing the state per capita income in each year of existence of a regional political actor by the national per capita income in the same year. Finally, since the relative standing of religious minorities in a state is often evoked in the literature on communal violence in India (e.g., Varshney 2001, 373–74; Varshney 2002, Wilkinson 2004), the variable *minority state religion* is aimed at controlling for the potential effect on territorial demands of the relative position of the different religions within a state.[10]

[10]We distinguish "no minority," "Muslim minority" (more than 25% Muslim), "Christian minority" (more than 25% Christian), and "other minority" (more than 25% Sikh or Buddhist) states.

Explaining Resilience of Territorial Demands in India

Of the 181 regional political actors that posed territorial demands between 1952 and 2002, 49 shifted their demands from more to less intense at some point during their existence. The impact of the religious worldview of a regional political actor on the likelihood of moderating its territorial demands is obvious from a first look at the data. A simple cross-tabulation shows that most religious actors do not moderate their territorial demands (see Table 1).[11]

To estimate the causal impact of our explanatory variable with the controls discussed above, we run a Cox proportional hazard model. In order to select the covariates to be included in the model, we ran a preliminary log-rank test of equality across strata and a simple significance test of the coefficient in a univariate Cox model (Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 2004; results in the appendix). Our measure of interregional inequality SRI proved to have no effect on our dependent variable, and we therefore excluded it. We also excluded *presidential rule* since no demands were moderated during years in which Presidential Rule was applied to react to secessionist insurgencies. For *initial demand*, *territory change*, and *enemy border state*, the assumption at the basis of Cox's model that the hazard is proportional was violated. To correct for this, we included interactions between these covariates and the natural logarithm of survival time (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001). The results are shown in Table 2.

The analysis confirms that, even when controlling for the factors identified in the literature, the religious worldview of a regional political actor has a strong negative effect on the hazard of moderating its territorial demands. More precisely, religious actors are 99.8% less likely to drop their territorial demand than nonreligious actors. Figure 1 graphs the survival functions for nonreligious and religious actors and shows that—holding all other covariates constant at 0—after about 50 years, virtually no religious actors are estimated to have moderated their territorial demands, whereas around 45% of the nonreligious actors are estimated to have done so.

[11]The table shows that only one regional political actor (the main Sikh regional political actor Shiromani Akali Dal—SAD) moderated its territorial demands. The other eight Sikh actors in our dataset are the radical factions of the SAD and other radical Khalistani groups that, even though no longer militarily operational against the state, unlike the SAD did not moderate their territorial demands after the Punjab Accord.

TABLE 1 Percentage of Nonreligious and Religious Actors by Demand Moderation

	Worldview		
Demand Moderation	Nonreligious	Religious	Total
No moderation	56 (62)	99 (70)	73 (132)
Moderation	44 (48)	1 (1)	27 (49)
Total	100 (110)	100 (71)	100 (181)

Note: Number of cases in brackets.

The territorial demands put forward by religious actors therefore are resilient to any type of state responses, repressive or accommodative. In general, the analysis paints a mixed picture of how effective state responses are in thwarting territorial challenges in democracies. On the one hand, accommodation and inclusion seem to have no significant effect on demand moderation. Once we control for an actor's size, for example, being included in the electoral process (as a political party) has no effect on the hazard rate. In a year in which a territory changes status, actors are not significantly more likely to drop their territorial demands than in other years (although the effect on the hazard increases rapidly as actors exist longer). On the other hand, when a regional actor encounters repression, it is more than four times as likely to moderate its territorial demands.

Be that as it may, state responses have a decidedly different impact on religious and nonreligious actors. Figure 2 shows the survival functions for religious and nonreligious actors that have or have not experienced repressive or accommodative state responses. The first panel shows that religious actors, regardless of whether they experienced state repression, are consistently more resilient in their demands than nonreligious actors: religious actors who have experienced repression are far less resilient in their demands than nonreligious actors—even if the latter have *not* experienced repression. The second panel shows that, although inclusion in the electoral process itself does not significantly affect the resilience of demands for each type of actor, religious actors are consistently more resilient in their demands than nonreligious actors.

"Selective Repression?" State Repression and Resilience of Religiously Framed Territorial Demands

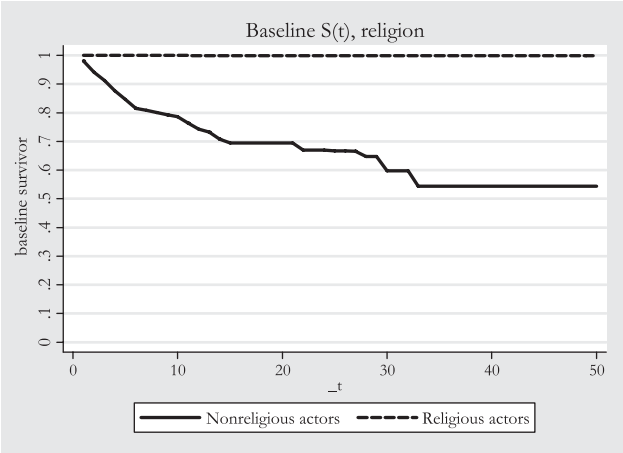
The lesser tractability of religiously framed conflict in India has been underscored by several authors

TABLE 2 Cox Proportional Hazard Model for Predicting Demand Moderation

	Coefficient	Robust S.E.	P-value	Hazard Ratio
Religious (ref.: nonreligious)	-6.14	1.18	0.000	0.00
Initial demand (ref.: federated state)	-2.06	0.96	0.032	0.13
Size (ref.: small)	1.15	0.41	0.006	3.15
Violence used by actor	-2.07	0.64	0.001	0.13
Organization (ref.: group)	-0.16	0.41	0.696	0.85
Territory change	0.60	1.60	0.709	1.82
State repression	1.45	0.62	0.018	4.27
Enemy border state	-6.49	2.37	0.006	0.00
Distance to capital (in 1,000km)	0.28	0.36	0.445	1.32
State or U.T (ref.: state)	-0.53	0.62	0.396	0.59
Minority state religion (ref.: no minority)				
Muslim minority	0.37	0.48	0.441	1.45
Christian minority	0.45	0.53	0.389	1.58
Other minority	3.71	1.27	0.004	40.73
Initial demand x ln(year)	0.87	0.43	0.042	2.39
Territory change x ln(year)	1.21	0.68	0.074	3.36
Enemy border state x ln(year)	2.66	0.85	0.002	14.25
Number of actors	181			
Log pseudolikelihood (df)	-149.63	(16)		
AIC	331.27			

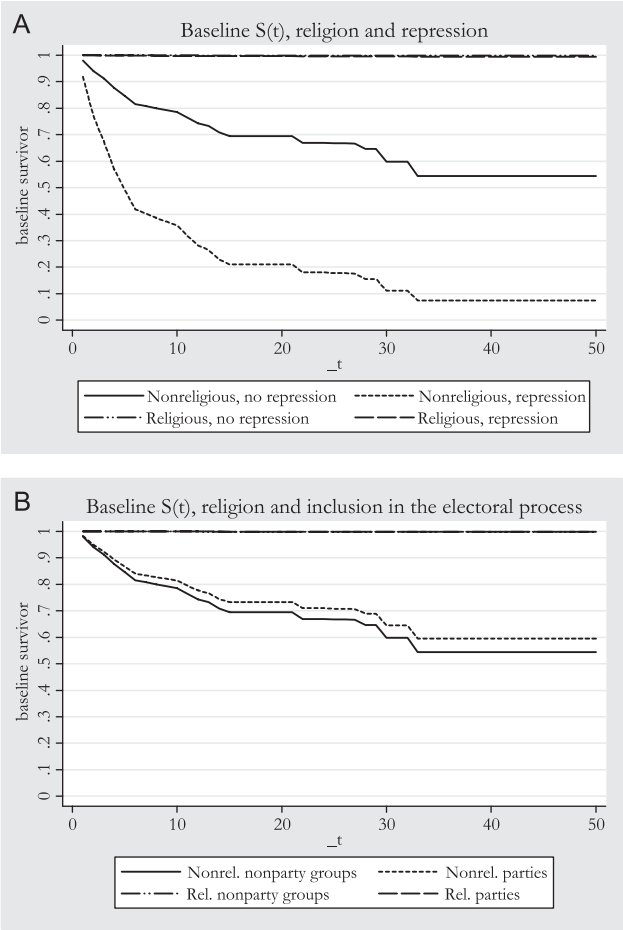
Note: Standard errors clustered by actor and log-time interactions for nonproportionality of some covariates.

FIGURE 1 Estimated Survival Functions for Nonreligious and Religious Actors



Note: All other covariates held constant at 0.

FIGURE 2 Estimated Survival Functions for Nonreligious and Religious Actors by Type of State Responses



Note: All other covariates held constant at 0.

(e.g., Chadda 1997; Juergensmeyer 1993). Wilkinson, for example, shows that in India religious mobilization has typically led to more violence than mobilization around nonreligious identities such as caste, region, or language. This of course has important implications for explaining the resilience of territorial demands advanced by religious groups. Consistent with broader claims on the effects of "institutionalized ethnicity" (Lieberman and Singh 2011; see also Laitin 1986), Wilkinson sees the initial cause of this outcome in the British census policies that categorized the population in religious groups (Wilkinson 2008). This, in the Indian case, also reflected a tendency of the central state to be less accommodating towards religious grievances (Brass 1974; Pandey 1992). In this view, the mechanism connecting the census's religious categorization of the population, mobilization along religious lines, and the resilience of territorial demands, is *selective repression*. In other words, the emphasis on religious differences in institutional categorizations may have encouraged both the formation of political organizations with a religious worldview and the disproportionally repressive attitude of the Indian state, which in turn may have led to hardening of demands.

In the analysis above, we found little evidence that different forms of repression harden territorial demands. As shown in Figure 2, religious actors do not moderate their territorial demands irrespective of whether they are subject to repression or not. In this section, given the importance of this argument in the literature on India, we look at the relationship between state repression, religious worldview of subnational actors, and resilience of territorial demands from a slightly different angle. Since an actor's religious worldview and resilience of its territorial demands are strictly empirically associated, as shown above, we ask whether state repression leads to the *emergence* of subnational political actors with a religious worldview. The implications of this dynamics could be wide-ranging: for example, political leaders with more intransigent views on the desirability of territorial secession could overproportionally "select" into mobilizing along religious lines—thus leading to rigidity of the territorial demands posed by the actors that they lead—because pragmatic leaders would see mobilization along religious lines as an ineffective strategy to obtain territorial concessions.

To assess the empirical validity of the "selective repression" argument, we model the number of religious actors posing territorial demands in each State or Union Territory and for each year by fitting

TABLE 3 Dynamic Panel-Data Model Predicting the Number of Religious Groups and Parties in a State in Each Year, 1950–2002

	Coefficient	Robust S.E.	P-value
Constant	0.04	0.02	0.066
Lag (Number of religious parties and groups)	1.04	0.03	0.000
Lag (Number of years of successive repression)	-0.09	0.10	0.361
Number of observations	891		
Number of states	19		
Arellano-Bond test first-order serial correlation	z = -1.33	Pr>z = 0.183	
Arellano-Bond test second-order serial correlation	z = -0.35	Pr>z = 0.729	
Wald test	Chi^2 (2) = 4.7e+06	Pr>chi^2 = 0.000	

Note: Arellano-Bond estimator (Arellano and Bond 1991) is used to estimate the model. See the online appendix for details on the tests reported in the table.

a dynamic panel-data model. As well as using as a predictor the number of successive years in which repression was exerted in a state,[12] we include a lagged dependent variable (the number of religious parties and groups posing territorial demands in the previous year) to control for the potential omitted variable bias that would occur if the number of religious parties and groups in the previous year was a predictor of (previous) repression. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 show that after controlling for the number of religious parties and groups in the previous year, the number of successive years of repression in a state in the previous year has no significant impact on the number of religious parties and groups in that state (and the coefficient has a negative sign). Thus, this further analysis shows that state repression and its institutional determinants are not the cause of the emergence of subnational religious actors with rigid territorial demands. This obviously does not exclude that other mechanisms rather than the doctrinal ones postulated by fundamentalism research could be at the root of this outcome. We discuss these avenues for further research in the conclusion.

Conclusion: Implications of the Analysis and Directions of Further Research

The main finding of this study is that demands for autonomy or secession made by religious political actors are less likely to be tractable than identical grievances put forward by nonreligious political actors, irrespective of the responses of the central state. The evidence coming from India offers preliminary support for the view, put forward by a large body of research on religious fundamentalism, that this negative effect on demand tractability is typical of certain religious traditions, which include Islam and Sikhism. Islamic and Sikh groups constitute the quasi-totality of Indian religious subnational actors that have posed territorial demands in the period analyzed here.

The analysis has three important implications for future research on both secessionism and ethnic politics. First, we argue for considering the impact of different facets of ethnic identity, such as race, language, and in particular religion, *separately*. An important (although by no means unanimous) tendency in the literature on ethnic conflict has instead been to "lump" together different facets of ethnicity in single indicators. Second, while we agree broadly with the constructivist insight that ethnic individual identities are fluid and malleable, we also emphasize that *organization* makes the political impact of specific identities more stable over time. When values related to a specific identity (linguistic, religious, tribal) become core traits of the public worldview of a political organization, they are likely to have more durable effects on political outcomes. Political organizations are far from passive intermediaries between social instances and political outcomes—they have an impact that may at times be significantly independent of their social constituency. Third, it is important to underscore that our findings by no means justify "essentialist" views of specific religions and their detrimental effect on political compromise and peaceful coexistence—an important concern for many scholars (e.g., Fish 2002), which we fully share.

Indeed, this analysis should be seen as a first step towards a more systematic exploration of the

[12]Repression occurs when *either* Presidential Rule is applied in a state for reasons connected to quelling secessionist challenges *or* when at least one of the religious actors in a state is repressed. Using an alternative operationalization does not substantially change the results (see the appendix).

multifaceted connection between religion and the tractability of political demands, recognizing both its doctrinal and its sociological components. The literature on fundamentalism discussed earlier suggests that the impact of religious ideas and beliefs on political outcomes is worthy of further empirical study. In this context, it is important to emphasize that the very leading scholars on religious fundamentalism argue that the Islamic and Sikh (as well as Christian and Jewish) traditions *are likely to include* groups with a fundamentalist worldview, but *not all* groups (even less so all believers) in those traditions are necessarily fundamentalist (Almond, Sivan, and Appleby 1995). Our analysis uncovers a strong empirical association between religious subnational mobilization in the Islamic and Sikh traditions and resilience of territorial demands in an important case, but one of its limitations is that it cannot differentiate between political actors *within* each tradition and their particular interpretation of the teachings of their religion. A great deal more research is necessary to reconstruct the exact mechanisms that connect interpretive traditions of Islamism and Sikhism to demand resilience in order to establish that connection firmly (Fish 2002).

Furthermore, future research should examine the role played by other sociological factors on the link between religion and demand intractability. Some such factors have been mentioned in the discussion above. One good candidate is ''religious bridging,'' which, as Putnam and Campbell (2010) have recently suggested, may be a powerful mechanism to increase inter-religious tolerance and compromise in settings of strong religious diversity. In particular, following Allport's (1954) ''intergroup contact theory,'' they demonstrate that the analysis of the *conditions* in which interreligious contact takes place is crucial. In the United States, where large numbers of individuals are in contact with members of different faiths through close circles of friends and families, interreligious contact happens in propitious conditions to increase interreligious tolerance and compromise (Putnam and Campbell 2010, 532–33).[13] In India, historical data on the conditions under which interreligious contact has happened are scarce, but the limited evidence available shows that interreligious contact within families is extremely limited. A 2006 survey, for example, shows that a majority of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs interviewed are opposed to intercaste and interreligious marriage.[14] A research agenda focused on establishing the relative importance of ideational and sociological factors in hardening political-territorial demands, in India and elsewhere, seems to be a promising one.

Acknowledgments

We thank Katharine Adeney, Michael Bernhard, Jake Bowers, Richard Breen, Evan Lieberman, Mark Pickup, Daniel Posner, Nicolas Sambanis, Prerna Singh, David Siroky, Laura Stoker, Steven Wilkinson, Christopher Zorn, the participants to the panel ''Institutions, Identities and Ethnic Conflict'' at the 2010 APSA Convention, and four anonymous reviewers for their comments and criticisms. The usual disclaimer applies.

References

Almond, Gabriel, Emmanuel Sivan, and Scott Appleby. 1995. ''Explaining Fundamentalisms.'' In *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, ed. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 425–44.

Allport, Gordon W. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Arellano, Manuel, and Stephen Bond. 1991. ''Some Tests of Specification for Panel Data: Monte Carlo Evidence and an Application to Employment Equations.'' *Review of Economic Studies* 58: 277–297.

Baruah, Sanjib. 2005. *Durable Disorders*. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Bates, Robert. 1974. ''Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa.'' *Comparative Political Studies* 6 (4): 457–84.

Bermeo, Nancy. 2002. ''The Import of Institutions.'' *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 96–110.

Bose, Sumantra. 2003. *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet, and Bradford Jones. 2004. *Event History Modeling: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet, and Christopher Zorn. 2001 ''Duration Models and Proportional Hazards in Political Science.'' *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (4): 972–88.

[13]Interreligious contact increases tolerance when: members of the groups coming in contact in a certain situation have equal status within the situation; share common goals; cooperate to achieve these goals; and intergroup contact is positively sanctioned by the law, the authorities or custom. Absent these conditions, intergroup contact may increase *intolerance* (Pettigrew 1998).

[14]In an August 2006 survey, 59.6% of Hindus, 65.6% of Muslims, and 52.2% of Sikhs agreed that ''Marriage must take place within own caste-community.'' ''Community'' here refers to religion. CSDS/Lokniti, *State of the Nation Survey*, August 2006. Accessed September 20, 2010. Data obtained from CSDS (instructions at http://www.csds.in/dataunit_accessing_data.html).

Brancati, Dawn. 2009. *Peace by Design*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Brass, Paul. 1974. *Language, Religion, and Politics in Northern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chadda, Maya. 1997. *Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2001. "Introduction: Constructivist Findings and Their Non-Incorporation." Symposium on the Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics, *APSA-CP*, 7–11.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2004. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chandra, Kanchan, and Steven Wilkinson. 2008. "Measuring the Effect of 'Ethnicity'." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4/5): 5415–63.

Clegg Stewart, and David Dunkerley, ed. 1977. *Critical Issues in Organizations*. London: Routledge.

Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4): 563–95.

Cornell, Svante. 2002. "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict." *World Politics* 54 (2): 245–76.

Doyle, Michael, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2000. "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 94 (4):779–801.

Enloe, Cynthia. 1980. "Religion and Ethnicity." In *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, ed. P. F. Sugar. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 347–71.

Fearon, James, and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1): 75–90.

Fish, Steven. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics* 55 (1): 4–37.

Fox, Jonathan, and Josephine Squires. 2001. "Threats to Primal Identities" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 (1): 87–102.

Fox, Jonathan. 2000. "The Effects of Religious Discrimination on Ethno-Religious Protest and Rebellion." *Journal of Conflict Studies* 20 (1): 1–20.

Fox, Jonathan, 2004. *Religion, Civilization, and Civil War: 1945 through the Millennium*. Oxford, UK: Lexington.

Fox, Jonathan, and Shmuel Sandler. 2006. *Bringing Religion into International Relations*. New York: Palgrave.

Ganguly, Sumit. 1997. *The Crisis in Kashmir*. New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Gurr, Ted Robert. 1993. "Why Minorities Rebel: A Global Analysis of Communal Mobilization and Conflict since 1945." *International Political Science Review* 14 (2): 161–201.

Hale, Henry. 2000. "The Parade of Sovereignties." *British Journal of Political Science* 30 (1): 31–56.

Hassner, Ron. 2009, *War on Sacred Grounds*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Hechter, Michael, and Dina Okamoto. 2001. "Political Consequences of Minority Group Formation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 96 (4): 189–215.

Hegre, Havard, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2006. "Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50 (4): 508–35.

Hoffman, Bruce. 1995. "'Holy Terror': The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by a Religious Imperative." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 18 (4): 271–84.

Horowitz, Donald. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Huntington, Samuel. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Jenne, Erin. 2007. *Ethnic Bargaining*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. 1993. *The New Cold War?* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Kepel, Gilles. 1997. *Allah in the West*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kohli, Atul. 1997. "Can Democracies Accommodate Ethnic Nationalism? The Rise and Decline of Self-Determination Movements in India." *Journal of Asian Studies* 56 (2): 325–44.

Laitin, David. 1986. *Hegemony and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Laitin, David. 1998. *Identity in Formation*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Lijphart, Arend. 1996. "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation." *American Political Science Review* 90 (2): 258–68.

Lieberman, Evan, and Prerna Singh, 2011. "Institutionalized Ethnicity and Civil War." *Comparative Politics.* Forthcoming.

Lustick, Ian. 1980. *Arabs in the Jewish State*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Lustick, Ian, Dan Miodownik, and Roy Eidelson. 2004. "Secessionism in Multicultural States: Does Sharing Power Prevent or Encourage It?" *American Political Science Review* 98 (2): 209–30.

Manor, James. 1996. "'Ethnicity' and Politics in India." *International Affairs* 72 (3): 459–75.

Marty, Martin, and Scott Appleby, ed. 1991a. *Fundamentalism Observed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marty, Martin, and Scott Appleby. 1991b. "Conclusion" In *Fundamentalism Observed*, ed. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 814–42.

Marty, Martin, and Scott Appleby, ed. 1993. *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marty Martin, and Scott Appleby, ed. 1995. *Fundamentalism Comprehended*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mauro, Paolo. 1995. "Corruption and Growth." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110 (3): 681–711.

McGarry, John, and Brendan O'Leary. 1994. "Introduction." In *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, ed. John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary. London: Routledge, 1–40.

Noyon, Jennifer. 2003. *Islam, Politics and Pluralism*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Pandey, Gyanendra. 1992. *The Construction of Communalism in Communal North India*. Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Panebianco, Angelo. 1988. *Political Parties*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pettigrew, Thomas. 1998. "Intergroup Contact Theory." *Annual Review of Psychology* 49: 65–85.

Putnam, Robert, and David Campbell. 2010. *American Grace*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Reynal-Querol, Marta. 2002. "Ethnicity, Political Systems, and Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (1): 29–54.

Robertson, David. 1976. *A Theory of Party Competition*. London: Wiley.

Roeder, Philip. 1991. "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization." *World Politics* 43 (3): 196–232.

Sambanis, Nicholas. 2001. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Enquiry." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (3): 259–82.

Selznick, Philip. [1957] 1984. *Leadership in Administration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Singh, Gurharpal. 2000. *Ethnic Conflict in India: A Case-Study of the Punjab*. New York: Palgrave.

Siroky, David S. 2011. ''Explaining Secession.'' In *Ashgate Research Companion on Secession*, ed. Aleksandar Pavkovic and Peter Radan. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

Tibi, Bassam. 1998. *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vanhanen, Tatu. 1999. ''Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis.'' *Journal of Peace Research* 36 (5): 55–73.

Van Houten, Pieter. 1998. ''The Role of a Minority's Reference State in Ethnic Relations.'' *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 38 (1): 110–46.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2001. ''Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society.'' *World Politics* 53 (3): 362–98.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wallace, Paul. 2006. ''Countering Terrorist Movements in India: Kashmir and Khalistan.'' In *Democracy and Counterterrorism*, ed. Robert Art and Louise Richardson, Washington, DC: USIP Press, 425–82.

Wilkinson, Steven. 2004. *Votes and Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkinson, Steven. 2008. ''Which Group Identities Lead to Most Violence?'' In *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, ed. Stathis Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro, and Tarek Masoud, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 271–300.

Wimmer, Andreas, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Brian Min. 2009. ''Ethnic Politics and Armed Conflict'' *American Sociological Review* 74 (2): 316–47.

Zarkovic Bookman, Milica. 1993. *The Economics of Secession*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Giovanni Capoccia is Professor of Comparative Politics in the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX1 3UQ, U.K.

Lawrence Sáez is Professor in the Political Economy of Asia in the Department of Politics, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, WC1H 0XG, U.K.

Eline de Rooij is Postdoctoral Prize Research Fellow at Nuffield College, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX1 1NF, U.K.