

How governments shape the risk of civil violence: India's federal reorganization, 1950–56

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Abstract

Governments are absent from empirical studies of civil violence, except as static sources of grievance. The influence that government policy accommodations and threats of repression have on internal violence is difficult to verify without a means to identify potential militancy that did not happen. I use a within-country research design to address this problem. During India's reorganization as a linguistic federation, every language group could have sought a state. I show that representation in the ruling party conditioned the likelihood of a violent statehood movement. Pro-statehood groups that were politically advantaged over the interests opposed to them were peacefully accommodated. Statehood movements similar in political importance to their opponents used violence. Very politically-disadvantaged groups refrained from mobilization, anticipating repression. These results call into question the search for a monotonic relationship between grievances and violence and the omission of domestic politics from prominent theories of civil conflict.

Keywords: Civil conflict; Ethnic violence; India; Language conflict; federalism; borders

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Between 1946 and 2012, more than half of all countries experienced a civil war.¹ Almost all countries have been subject to less organized or less deadly internal political violence. Alongside these realized challenges to civil order, governments also prevent violence through the threat of repression or by resolving grievances. Decisions as consequential and diverse as agricultural policies in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bates, 1981), democratization in Latin America (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Collier and Collier, 1991), and the growth of the Western welfare state (Luebbert, 1991; Piven and Cloward, 1977) have been explained as government attempts to influence the risk of civil violence.

Although policy presumably shapes the probability of internal conflict, governments are conspicuously absent from the empirical literature on civil violence. At least since Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) provocative dichotomization of "greed" and "grievance," cross-national study of civil conflicts overwhelmingly focuses on incentives for rebellion.² Micro-level and qualitative research on civil violence has become organized around the same dichotomy.³ In such work, governments are treated as an exogenous source of grievances rather than actors using accommodations and/or threats of repression to respond to internal challenge.

Showing how accommodation and the threat of repression incentivize civil violence is difficult because cross-national datasets cannot distinguish whether internal peace is due to the resolution of grievance or the promise of repression. Distinguishing accommodation and deterrence cross-nationally would require specifying all possible violent grievances worldwide and the corresponding accommodations that might have resolved them. Instead, studies of government responses to civil threats condition on mobilization or violence (e.g., Cunningham, 2006; Mason and Fett, 1996; Thyne, 2012; Urlacher, 2011; Walter, 2006, 2009b).

I use India's reorganization as a language-based federation in the 1950s to examine how governments shape civil violence. This federal overhaul is an unusual instance of a single government responding to many analogous policy demands simultaneously. During reorganization, any linguistically-defined territory could have become a state. Within this universe of possible states

there is variation in terms of where violence occurred and where statehood was granted. Thus, it is possible to observe peaceful accommodation of statehood proponents; accommodation of statehood proponents after violence; and to specify the potential states where no militancy occurred and no state was created.

My argument is that violence during India's state reorganization is explained by the central ruling party's ties to the competing interests in each potential state. When the statehood proponents were heavily favored by the ruling India National Congress (INC), violence was rare and yet statehood was often granted. Violence was typical of areas where the pro-statehood movement was on equal footing or moderately politically disadvantaged relative to the opponents of its demands. Where the opponents of statehood were very important to Congress, pro-statehood groups were deterred from mobilization, expecting government repression. I also show that, controlling for groups' political standing, violence is positively correlated with winning a state.

These findings contrast with prominent theories of civil violence that do not reference government's domestic political incentives. I also go beyond the hunt for a monotonic relationship between political grievances and civil violence. Because the threat of state repression plays a substantial role in civil order, populations with acute grievances may remain unmobilized.

The within-country research design allows more unit homogeneity than is possible in most global studies of civil conflict:⁴ potentially-violent movements are defined by the same (linguistic) criteria, observed in the same country and time period, sought the same policy accommodation, and had recourse to comparable technologies of violence. A major measurement problem is also resolved by the within-country design: a colonial linguistic survey provides a catalog of languages that is prior to the politics of reorganization. Finally, the research design holds constant country-level factors such as regime type and international environment.

At the same time, India has many of the characteristics typical of countries with high levels of civil violence (Hegre and Sambanis, 2006). It has a very large population and limited infrastructure penetration. India has low national income and a very low historic rate of economic growth. It has

troubled relationships with its neighbors. In the 1950s, India was newly independent and emerging from a civil conflict, the Partition of India and Pakistan. Its most anomalous characteristics—democracy, a Hindu majority, and extraordinary ethnic diversity—are regime and demographic factors that are poor predictors of civil strife cross-nationally. Therefore, India in the 1950s had many traits typical of conflict-prone countries.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section describes the theoretical literature on internal violence and proposes a more domestic politics-driven account, using two case studies from India's reorganization to illustrate. After the case studies, I introduce original data on language in India and reorganization violence and present analysis of this data.

Bringing the government back in

The most prominent theories of the origins of civil violence may or may not incorporate a state; they almost never incorporate a government, in the sense of an executive with domestic political considerations. For example, literature on security dilemmas portrays civil war as stateless anarchy (Posen, 1993; Walter, 1997; Walter and Snyder, 1999). Other theories conceptualize civil war as resource extraction. Citizens choose between production and predation; there may also be a state choosing between taxation and predation (Bates, 2008; Esteban et al., 2012; Grossman, 1991). Violence is a function of the economic returns to war; there are neither policies nor political offices at stake. Third, and most prominently, theorists adapt bargaining models of interstate war to the civil context (Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Walter, 2009a), arguing that civil violence reflects information problems (Findley and Rudloff, 2012; Walter, 2009b) or commitment problems (Fearon, 2007; Hale, 2008; Walter, 1997).

Domestic politics is more prominent in the literatures on social movements, revolution, and regime change, which stress “political opportunity” for mobilization (Higley and Burton, 1989; Linz and Stepan, 1996; McAdam et al., 2001; Skocpol, 1994; Tarrow, 1994). However, indica-

tors of political opportunity are often features of countries or the international system that cannot explain subnational variation: regime division and regime type (Goodwin, 2001; Kitschelt, 1986; Wickham-Crowley, 1993), strength of state institutions (Huntington, 1968; Tarrow, 1994), and international crisis (Gamson, 1975; Skocpol, 1979). Also, these literatures have focused more on explaining the success and failure of movements underway than showing how political opportunity influences the incidence of violence.

Domestic politics and security choices

My argument begins with a government that is trying to maintain office. Its preferences over policy depend on the political importance of the social interests on either side of a policy question. (By political importance, I mean influence over the executive's tenure in office.) Left to its own devices, the government implements policies supported by the most politically important interests. The government also represses militant challenges to the most politically important interests. However, if the gap in political importance between interests for and against a policy is not too large, militancy can sway government decisions.

Two episodes from India's state reorganization illustrate the connection between the government's domestic political considerations and the probability of violence: the Bombay City controversy and the movement to split Bihar. The interests at odds over Bombay City—Marathis and Gujaratis—were both important voting blocs. New Delhi initially backed the demands of Gujaratis, a somewhat stronger Congress constituency. However, it reversed course when Marathi violence created national outcry. By contrast, tribals seeking to leave Bihar were much weaker within Congress than Biharis. Tribals were discouraged from mobilization by pessimism regarding the central government's likely response.

For the purposes of presenting the case studies, it is necessary to stipulate that, first, being the linguistic majority in an Indian state is desirable; second, being a linguistic minority is not; and, third, state majorities never want less territory. Later sections explain India's federal political

economy, justifying these claims.

Bombay City

After Indian independence, Bombay City became the capital of Bombay State. The state and the city were both plurality Marathi. Gujarati was the state's second largest language and Kannada the third. From early on in the state reorganization process, there was an expectation that Kannada areas would depart the state (States Reorganisation Commission, 1955, 90). Bombay State would become majority Marathi, depending on what areas were transferred there from neighboring states. Bombay City's minority population—including 600,000 Gujaratis—did not relish the prospect of being included in a Marathi-majority state.

The Congress Party's historic strength in Bombay was with Gujaratis. Congress fared better in 1951 parliament and state assembly races in Gujarati areas than in Marathi areas (Table 1). Total party membership was similar among Gujaratis and Marathis but Gujaratis had much higher rates of active INC membership.

In November 1955, the national Congress Working Committee (CWC) announced that it would support the formation of Gujarati, Marathi, and Kannada-majority states but that Bombay City would be a separate, centrally-controlled entity. The plan was greeted mostly positively by Gujaratis and mostly negatively by Marathis. Politicians of the time explained the CWC policy as the result of Congress' strength among Gujaratis. The Gujarati Chief Minister of Bombay declared that "so long as Congress is alive Maharastrians [Marathis] will not get Bombay" (Parliament of India, 1955, 294–298). Parliamentarian Shankarrao Shantaram More explained Congress support for a separate Bombay City:

Take the seats in the Cabinet. Take the Congress Working Committee. Who has the greatest domination? The Gujaratis have the greatest domination, not only in the Working Committee but even in the Cabinet (Parliament of India, 1955, 1349).

Thus, Congress' initial policy choices were interpreted as being primarily motivated by domestic political considerations.

[Table 1 about here.]

In response, Marathi leftist parties organized protests and general strikes in Bombay City that metastasized into rioting. After the Bombay police crushed the rioting, Marathi demonstrators began civil disobedience. Over 31,000 protestors were arrested in spring 1956 (Times of India News Service, 1956b). Inside the Bombay state legislature, 111 of 118 Congress Marathi representatives submitted their resignations. Congress seemed likely to suffer a landslide defeat with Marathis at the next election (Windmiller, 1956).

Despite political losses among Marathis, the national Congress leadership would probably have stood firm if not for pressure to restore order from outside Bombay. In July 1956, the government sent its final draft of the state reorganization bill to the parliament, including the provision for a separate Bombay City. On August 2, eleven MPs presented an amendment for a majority-Marathi state including Bombay City. The amendment was greeted by a wave of enthusiasm from the Lok Sabha, the lower house of India's parliament.⁵ On August 3, 180 Lok Sabha members presented a petition to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in favor of the plan—all but eleven signatories came from outside of Bombay. Nehru later admitted that the amendment was a “complete surprise” to him (Times of India News Service, 1956a, 1). However, he was unable to resist the tide. In a Congress Working Committee meeting on August 5th:

Mr. Nehru, on his side, is understood to have told the Committee that it would be extremely difficult for the Government to reject the [amendment] since a majority of the Congress Parliamentary Party and a majority of the entire Lok Sabha had expressed themselves in favour of it (Times of India News Service, 1956c, 1,7).

On August 7 the government accepted the amendment to include Bombay City in a majority-Marathi state.

In sum, on the issue of Bombay City, the Congress Party initially sided with Gujarati interests, which were a more important Congress constituency than Marathis. Policy changed because Marathi violence created national calls for order, tipping the scales between Gujarati and Marathi interests.

Jharkhand

Alongside the Indo-Aryan civilization of north India and the Dravidian culture of the south is a minority *adivasi*, or “tribal,” population descended from earlier inhabitants of South Asia. In the 1950s, southern Bihar was heavily tribal, with a plurality of the population from the Santali tribe. Even before independence, tribal activists in southern Bihar called for a separate state, Jharkhand.⁶

From the standpoint of grievance and opportunity, the Jharkhand movement should have been more militant than Marathis in Bombay City. Tribals were more marginalized than Marathis, living as a minority in Bihar rather than enjoying a plurality in an existing state. Bihar tribal areas had supported a militant organization, the Adivasi Mahasabha, between 1938 and 1947. Unlike Marathi activists, the tribals also had a political party, the Jharkhand Party (JHP). The JHP won 32 seats in state assembly elections in 1951, making it the largest opposition party in Bihar. In tribal areas, it won 44% of the vote, compared to 32% for Congress. Yet, the tribals ended up without a state:

[The JHP] displayed remarkable unity, laid down the law in the tribal region, could mobilise thousands of people and take out mammoth processions at short notice. However, the States Reorganisation Commission ... turned down the plea for a separate Jharkhand State (Singh, 1982, 6).

Just as strikingly, after the national Congress said it would not support Jharkhand, the JHP arranged no mass mobilization in protest of that decision; there was also no violence by Jharkhand proponents in this period (EPW, 1979, 648).

Congress' political incentives favored Biharis, who asked that the state remain intact, over tribals calling for Jharkhand. Biharis were much more numerous than Santalis or even the total tribal population of Bihar. Biharis supported Congress more heavily than tribals did in both the parliamentary and state elections of 1951 (Table 2). The Congress organization was also weak in tribal Bihar. Neither the Adivasi Mahasabha nor the JHP had supported the Congress' anti-British campaigns (Weiner, 1978, 188–89). The first Congress Bihar state government had no ministers of tribal descent (Parliament of India, 1955, 1207). Of eight Bihar Pradesh Congress Executive Committees between 1934 and 1962, just one had a tribal member (Roy, 1968). These are all indicators that Congress was politically-aligned with Bihari interests over tribal interests. Not surprisingly, given these political incentives, Congress was not eager to divide Bihar.

[Table 2 about here.]

The JHP did not press its claims through militancy; Biharis' political strength in Congress may have convinced the JHP that militancy could not extract statehood. Three pieces of evidence suggest that the JHP could have reasonably anticipated pro-Jharkhand mobilization would be repressed. First, the Bihar government had already leveraged its influence to undermine the Jharkhand demand. Corbridge (2002) recounts the successful efforts of the Bihar state government to have some tribes reclassified as Bihari-speaking castes in the 1951 census. In the resulting figures, southern Bihar was not majority tribal, a fact stressed by the government in its refusal to create Jharkhand (States Reorganisation Commission, 1955). Second, the Bihar government successfully used repression in a border dispute with its neighboring state, Orissa, around the same time:

When on 7th February 1954 a meeting was organised by the Oriyas at Sareikela, the Bihar Government brought goondas [goons] by lorries from Jamshedpur, who assaulted the people in the meeting . . . An enquiry was pressed but [Bihar chief minister] Sri Krishna Sinha made a statement exonerating the Government of Bihar (Parliament of India, 1955, 1212).

New Delhi did not push the Bihari government on the matter and Sareikela remained in Bihar. Third, pro-Jharkhand demonstrations in the 1970s and 1980s were fired on by state police, resulting in civilian casualties (Das, 1992, 128–145; Mahato, 2010, 53); similar coercive power was available to the Bihar government in the 1950s.

Expected patterns

The Bombay City and Jharkhand case studies suggest two insights. First, Congress set policy based in part on which constituencies were most politically valuable to it. Second, the possibility of violence changing policy depended on the relative political importance of the interests at stake. Marathis were politically disadvantaged relative to Gujaratis, but not so severely that the center was insensitive to the combination of lost popularity in Marathi areas and national pressure for order. By contrast, tribes in Bihar were at a much more extreme political disadvantage relative to Biharis. The JHP's failure to use violence likely reflected a belief that the odds of success were low because of Bihari political advantages.

More generally, I expect a non-monotonic relationship between the relative political importance of competing interests and the likelihood of violence during reorganization (Table 3). Peaceful statehood was most likely when statehood proponents were strongly favored by Congress over statehood opponents. If the proponents and opponents of a statehood demand were of similar political importance, the group seeking statehood was more likely to use violence. This violence might extract accommodation. Finally, a pro-statehood group that was very politically disadvantaged relative to statehood opponents would be unlikely to obtain a state during reorganization. Such a group was also unlikely to be militant. Instead, elites anticipated that violence would be rebuffed or repressed.⁷ Thus, the *threat* of state violence to enforce the status quo is crucial to explaining the non-mobilization of the least politically well-off groups.

[Table 3 about here.]

The arguments above imply violence was positively correlated with statehood. However, the difference in rates of statehood between violent and non-violent groups is expected to be most pronounced for politically disadvantaged groups. Politically favored pro-statehood groups often obtained statehood peacefully. By contrast, for pro-statehood groups without a substantial political advantage, the probability of peaceful statehood was near zero. Therefore, violence should be positively correlated with statehood among these disadvantaged groups.

Caveats

I emphasize government's office-seeking incentives. However, holding office is just one aspect of domestic politics. For example, my argument depicts a government with no policy goals apart from maintaining power. In reality, extreme civil violence has been undertaken by governments with visions of social reinvention, "rationalization" (Duffield, 2007; Geertz, 1963; Hull, 2003; Migdal, 2001; Scott, 1998), or "purification" (Harff, 2003; Kiernan, 2003; Ron, 2003). Second, I have set aside state officials' concern for personal enrichment, which may incentivize violence (Bates, 2008; Keen, 2012). Finally, I do not explain *why* some interests are more politically important than others. I do not intend to suggest that political importance is a primordial causal variable. Political importance is a function of historical cleavages,⁸ nationalist projects and ethnic affinity,⁹ electoral arithmetic and/or formal institutions,¹⁰ capacity for collective action,¹¹ and clientilistic networks.¹² However, even covariation in violence, peaceful accommodation, and relative political importance is a pattern that is not suggested by prominent apolitical theories of civil violence. The expectation of a non-linear relationship between violence and relative political importance is also quite different from empirical literature trying to show that grievance and violence are monotonically related.

A dataset on the reorganization of India

India's first federation maintained the multilingual sub-units of British India. India's constitution gives the center the power to reorganize or abolish a state by a regular act of parliament.¹³ However, Congress was reluctant to modify the state system for fear of turmoil and out of a belief that large states were beneficial to socialist economic development. Therefore, the first constitution redesignated the colonial units as A, B, and C states (Figure 1a). The larger states—As and Bs—were based on British provinces and princely states, respectively. Class C states were small and controlled by central administrators. The Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA), Jammu and Kashmir, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were, in theory, governed by the Ministry of External Affairs. In practice, these areas were partially or completely outside of New Delhi's control. While the center was nervously hoping the status quo in the heartland would hold, in the periphery it was subduing people previously outside its ambit. These areas were not included in the 1956 reorganization; they are also excluded from my analysis.

[Figure 1 about here.]

[Figure 1 (cont.) about here.]

Rioting in south India in 1952 forced the government to begin reorganization. In 1953 a States Reorganisation Commission made a fact-finding tour and in 1956 the States Reorganisation Act passed.¹⁴ The Act did away with the three-tier state system in favor of largely unilingual states and a few “union territories,” the latter without elected sub-national governments (Figure 1b).

Studies of Indian federalism

To my knowledge, there are no studies of the variation in violence during India's state reorganization.¹⁵ Brass (1974) argues that New Delhi historically perceived language demands as legitimate

and religious demands as illegitimate. Wilkinson (2008) builds on that point, contrasting the success of linguistic reorganization with continued religious conflict. King (1997), Kohli (1997), and Stepan et al. (2011) agree that state reorganization was successful in stabilizing multiethnic India and offer explanations for subsequent violence. Chadda (2002), Majeed (2003), and Mawdsley (2002) ask why India's national parties now support smaller states in contrast to the historic opposition to reorganization by both Congress and the Hindu right. Other recent scholarship points out that language has declined as a mobilizing cry for new states (Kumar, 2000; Singh, 2008). Thus, scholars have compared language conflict in the 1950s to other policy domains or periods rather than explaining the variation in violence during reorganization.

The next sections prepare for a statistical analysis of Indian state reorganization. I begin by clarifying what was at stake in the reshaping of India's internal borders.

Stakes of reorganization

Being in the linguistic majority at the state-level in India is clearly desirable. Each Indian state sets its own official language(s) for secondary and higher education, the civil service, and government-owned industries, giving substantial advantages to the majority language group (Weiner, 1962).

State linguistic majorities also benefit from having as populous a state as possible, assuming they maintain majority status. The majority even benefits from having relatively poor populations in the state; that incentive contrasts with redistribution-driven theories of boundaries in which rich areas try to separate from poorer areas.¹⁶ Indian states do little taxation or redistribution. Instead, states receive their budget from the center, mostly on a per capita basis (Rao and Singh, 2005). A linguistic majority can use language to restrict access to these resources. A larger population therefore increases the per capita allocation of resources to the majority.

Indians have little to gain or lose from how states in other regions of the country are reshuffled. A new state has negligible effects on India's parliament, which is apportioned by population. Therefore, the politics of state reorganization is local, unless violence forces an issue on to the

national stage, as in the case of Bombay City.

Identifying potential states

Language was privileged above other ethnic cleavages during the reorganization, making it possible to define all possible states. Brass (1974) argues that the central government feared that the Partition of India and Pakistan had set a precedent for division of India on religious lines. As a result, the center implicitly required that demands for territorial reorganization be presented in terms of language. Thus, calls for statehood were usually justified on language grounds (States Reorganisation Commission, 1955), even when there might be an equally plausible religious, tribal, or regional basis for a state. Some mass mobilizations stressed non-linguistic differences as well; for example, the rhetoric of the JHP emphasized tribal identity over language. Remarkably, however, every mass mobilization for statehood in the 1950s and every state created in 1956 corresponds to an *ex ante* identifiable linguistic region.

Of course, determining what constitutes a language is not trivial. In India, compiling statistics on ethnicity is controversial and often violent (States Reorganisation Commission, 1955; Times of India News Service, 1951a,b,c). Tens of millions of respondents to the Indian census provide a name for their language that is thrown out in favor of an official classification, reflecting the political dominance of some dialects over others. Thus, official language statistics reflect prior political mobilization.

To circumvent the role of post-independence politics, I use the colonial *Linguistic Survey of India (LSI)* (Grierson, 1903) to identify languages and their district-level population shares, and to distinguish languages from dialects.¹⁷ The *LSI* was conducted prior to the British introduction of electoral institutions to India and without any popular participation. The *LSI* was politically influential once published; however, languages in the *LSI* all share the political advantage of having been recognized there.

Using colonial data to define potential states prevents selection on mobilization or on political

relevance. Avoiding such selection is important if mobilization is predicated on expectations about the government's likely response. Some languages may have been unmobilized because of a belief that the government would not make concessions to them. Others may have been unmobilized because they were important enough to dictate policy as a matter of course, akin to the lack of explicit mobilization around whiteness in the United States (Frankenberg, 1997). A source of language data that conditions on political activity misses such cases.

[Table 4 about here.]

A comparison of the *LSI* to the entries for India in the cross-national Minorities at Risk (MAR) (Minorities at Risk Project, 2009) and Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) datasets (Wimmer et al., 2009) shows the advantages of not conditioning on observed political relevance. The left column of Table 4 lists one type of omission: languages in the *LSI* that were given a state in the 1950s despite a lack of popular mobilization.¹⁸ Thus, the *LSI* identifies languages that did not need popular movements to ensure statehood.

There are also languages in the *LSI* that neither won states nor used violence in the 1950s. Were these languages simply too obscure to matter politically or were they deterred from mobilization by the expectation of an unfavorable government response? Evidence for the latter interpretation comes from the fact that some of these groups mobilized subsequently. The second column in Table 4 notes groups that are not in MAR/EPR that, after the 1950s, won a state (e.g., Khasis) or launched a violent statehood movement (e.g., Nepali speakers in West Bengal).¹⁹ Such cases suggest that it is important to explain why some languages were politically inactive in the 1950s, rather than to assume unmobilized identities were not salient.

Coding opposed interests

Having used the *LSI* to estimate the language composition of Indian districts, the next step is to decide which geographic areas could have been made into language-based states. I define language

enclaves as (i) one or more contiguous districts, (ii) in the same state, and (iii) with the same plurality language.²⁰ The result of the coding is 63 language enclaves.

The unit of analysis in the dataset is the language enclave; the key independent variable is the relative political importance of the interests on opposing sides of the question of statehood for that enclave. In each enclave, I define the proponents of statehood as the plurality language there. The opponents of statehood are the state majority language (if any) or the largest enclave-level minority—that is, the largest language that would become a linguistic minority in case of statehood.²¹

Measuring political importance

The literature on parliamentary government suggests two measurement strategies for capturing political importance to the executive. The first determines which legislative factions could be in an ideologically-connected ruling coalition (Axelrod, 1970; de Swaan, 1973); political importance depends on both seat shares and ideology. The second measurement strategy considers only seat shares (Ansolabehere et al., 2005; Browne and Franklin, 1973; Gamson, 1961; Laver and Schofeld, 1990; Snyder et al., 2005), arguing that defecting legislators are equally costly to replace. I adopt the second measurement strategy because the issue of state reorganization was more similar to logrolling over spoils than an ideological spectrum.

I measure political importance in terms of seats in the ruling party. The Congress representation of the largest language in an enclave is calculated as follows. For each seat in the Lok Sabha that was won by Congress in 1951 (ECI, 2012), I multiply the language's share of the constituency population by the number of seats in the constituency. The sum of these weighted Congress seats across all constituencies in the enclave is the political importance of the group.²² The political importance of the language group opposed to statehood—the state majority or the largest enclave-level minority—is calculated in a similar manner.²³

Relative INC representation is the ratio of the Congress representation of the opponents of

statehood to the Congress representation of proponents.²⁴ A ratio of one corresponds to equal representation. Values greater than one occur if the opponents of statehood had more Congress representation than the proponents. Values less than one indicate that the proponents of statehood had more Congress representation. Relative political importance is logged in the statistical analysis (*Ln relative INC representation*).

Referring back to Table 3, the expected relationships between relative INC representation, violence, and accommodation are as follows. Low scores on relative INC representation imply that anti-statehood groups were much less politically important to Congress than statehood proponents. In such cases, the pro-statehood group is expected to win statehood peacefully. When relative INC representation is close to one, the political importance of pro- and anti-statehood groups is similar. Violence is expected in such cases. A high value of relative INC representation implies the opponents of statehood were much better represented in Congress than the proponents. Enclaves where relative representation is high are not expected to experience violence or to gain statehood. I now turn to a description of the data on violence and accommodation.

New data on violence

Using the Bombay edition of the *Times of India* I record incidents of reorganization-related violence that resulted in injuries or deaths between January 26, 1950, when the Indian constitution came into effect, and November 1, 1956, when the State Reorganisation Act came into effect.²⁵ To determine the linguistic nature of violence, I followed the *Times of India*, which in turn relied on statements by political parties and lobbying organizations. In many cases, violence involved reorganization-related pressure organizations, such as the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (United Maharashtra Committee). One or more violent incidents were recorded in 16 enclaves (25%); this information is coded into a dummy variable, *Violence*.

A typical instance of violence began as a mass protest. The mildest violence targeted infrastructure: tearing up railroad tracks, diverting irrigation works, and looting or burning government

buildings. In several cases, police stations were torched or bombed. Civilian government officials and legislators were targeted as well. Violence against non-government targets took the form of vandalism, altercations between rival processions or rallies, or attacks on non-coethnics or coethnics not observing a general strike. In many cases, there is ambiguity as to whether civilians or police bear responsibility for the escalation of violence. However, all of the incidents reflect a tactical decision by elites to mobilize for political activities that had a substantial probability of resulting in violence.

Accommodation, peaceful and otherwise

Accommodation is defined as an enclave becoming a state (or part of a state) where the enclave's largest language is also the state's majority language.²⁶ This outcome variable is called *Statehood*. Statehood could mean an enclave was simply deemed a state. More often, an enclave was combined with another state or part of another state, which is considered accommodation if the plurality language in the enclave was in the majority in the new state. Likewise, non-accommodation (*Statehood*= 0) might mean the enclave remained in a state where the enclave's plurality language was not in the majority or joined a state where the enclave's plurality language was not in the majority. Of 63 enclaves in the data, 16 (25%) gained statehood. In 9 of 16 such cases there were no reports of prior violence; these are cases of *Peaceful statehood*. 38 enclaves in the dataset (60%) neither gained statehood nor experienced violence.

Controls for polarization

The most serious potential confound for the analysis below is distinguishing relative political importance and relative population. Similarly sized ethnic groups are thought to be more likely to clash (Buhaug et al., 2008; Horowitz, 1985; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2005; Reynal-Querol,

2002) and are also likely to be similar in political importance. I control for:

$$\text{Demographic polarization} = n_i^2 n_j + n_i n_j^2 \quad (1)$$

where n_i and n_j are the population shares of the plurality group in the enclave and the group opposed to statehood, respectively.²⁷ Esteban et al. (2012) argue that cultural distance exacerbates the effects of polarization. I calculate cultural polarization as suggested by Fearon (2003):

$$\text{Cultural polarization} = (n_i^2 n_j + n_i n_j^2) d_{ij} \quad (2)$$

where d_{ij} is the linguistic distance between the enclave plurality and the opposing language group, normalized to fall between zero and one.²⁸

Additional confounds

Other confounds are variables that may influence political importance to the Congress and violence. If grievances caused groups to both vote against the Congress and use violence, relative INC representation might be correlated with violence by virtue of proxying for dissatisfaction. Therefore, I control for the absolute level of Congress representation of statehood proponents (*Ln enclave plurality group's INC rep.*). Other likely correlates of violence plausibly related to political importance are population (*Ln enclave plurality group's population*); economic development, measured as the share of the workforce in agriculture (*Agricultural labor share in enclave*); and distance to the capital (*Ln km to New Delhi*).²⁹

Regional inequalities were of limited salience during reorganization because states levy few taxes. However, states do have authority to tax and redistribute agricultural holdings. Demand for land reform may be an important control, therefore. *Landless rate in enclave* is the share of the agricultural workforce that is landless.

Finally, I also measure enclaves' Hindu population share (*Hindu share in enclave*). Wilkinson (2008) and Capoccia et al. (2012) suggest that religious disputes in India have been particularly violent. Brass (1974) argues that Partition made New Delhi wary of territorial demands construed in religious terms. Since religion and voting patterns are also correlated, religion is a potential confound.

Statistical results

In this section, I show that relative representation in the Congress party is a strong correlate of peaceful statehood and violence. Then I demonstrate that relative INC representation conditions the relationship between violence and statehood.

Analysis of violence and peaceful accommodation

Table 5 displays the results of multinomial logistic regressions of peaceful statehood and violence during India's state reorganization. The omitted, reference outcome is an enclave where violence did not occur and the plurality group in the enclave did not win statehood.

In Table 5, the linear and squared terms for relative INC representation are statistically significant correlates of both reorganization outcomes. Figure 2 plots the predicted probability of peaceful statehood and violence over relative INC representation.³⁰ Note that the x-axis is labeled with unlogged values of relative Congress representation, for ease of interpretation. As expected, the enclaves where the plurality group was peacefully accommodated have the lowest scores on relative Congress representation, implying that the pro-statehood group had the political advantage. The maximum predicted probability of peaceful statehood in Figure 2 is about 27% and occurs when relative INC representation is about 0.1, meaning the opponents of reorganization had about one-tenth the representation in Congress that the pro-statehood group had. At relative INC representation of one—i.e., the opponents and proponents of reorganization were equally represented in

Congress—the predicted probability of peaceful statehood is less than 1%, by contrast.

Violence is predicted in a middle range of relative INC representation. At the 5th percentile of relative representation (0.04) the predicted probability of violence is 0.7%. At parity between opponents and proponents of reorganization, the probability of violence is dramatically larger: 67%. The predicted probability of violence is highest (73%) at relative representation of 2.4 and then declines. However, the decline in violence in the right tail of Figure 2 does not reflect a lack of grievance: there is virtually no probability of peaceful statehood at high levels of relative INC representation.

[Table 5 about here.]

[Figure 2 about here.]

Logistic regression analysis of statehood

Next, I investigate the correlation between violence and statehood. Table 6 shows logistic regressions for the incidence of statehood, a dependent variable combining groups that won a state peacefully with groups that gained a state after militancy. The key independent variables are violence and the interaction of violence with relative INC representation. The expectation is that, first, violence is positively correlated with statehood. Second, the interaction term between relative INC representation and violence will have a positive sign, so that the correlation between violence and accommodation is larger when relative INC representation is at a middling or high value. I control for polarization, the enclave plurality group's INC representation, and population, all variables that might be proxied by relative INC representation. Also, the literature suggests that New Delhi was least accommodating of religious minorities and movements posing a separatist threat; therefore, I control for religious composition and distance to New Delhi.

[Table 6 about here.]

In Models 3 and 4, both violence and the interaction term between violence and relative representation have positive coefficients. Figure 3 plots the difference between the predicted probability of statehood conditional on violence and the predicted probability of statehood conditional on no violence with 90% confidence intervals.³¹ The y-axis is the difference in probabilities and the x-axis is relative INC representation. Finally, there are dots along the bottom of the plot that indicate the levels of relative INC representation at which violence is observed in the data.

At very low levels of relative INC representation, the difference in probabilities is below zero: statehood was actually slightly more frequent in the absence of violence. That result is consistent with politically privileged statehood movements being accommodated through the normal political process. As relative INC representation increases, the difference in the predicted probability of statehood becomes positive: statehood movements at middling and high levels of relative INC representation had higher rates of accommodation if they were militant than otherwise. For example, at relative representation of one, the predicted probability of statehood without violence is 23%, while the predicted probability with violence is 62%.

Note that the difference in predicted probabilities is strictly increasing because I have estimated the interaction of violence with only a linear term for relative representation. It is likely that violence by very politically disadvantaged groups is less effective than violence by groups at a moderate disadvantage. However, there is so little violence observed at large values of relative INC representation that this contention cannot be tested here.

In sum, there were different routes to statehood during India's reorganization: a peaceful route for politically privileged statehood movements and a violent route for statehood movements opposed by more politically formidable interests.

[Figure 3 about here.]

Robustness

The supporting information for this paper confirms the robustness of the results in Tables 5 and 6. I introduce alternative operationalizations of polarization, including a measure distinguishing whether proponents of statehood were more or less populous than opponents. Second, I code differential treatment by the colonial state. Third, state-level controls are introduced: polarization, fractionalization, the total number of statehood claims in a state, economic development, inequality, and state-level political variables. To control for movements that posed a separatist threat, I record cultural distance, international borders, and electoral support for regionalist political parties. Finally, data on the location of daily newspapers addresses uneven reporting in the *Times of India*.

In addition to robustness checks, the supporting information provides a map of India's language enclaves; the complete scoring of the dependent variables; and analysis showing that the *LSI* data and the 1951 Indian census are similar for three states where these sources' language categories correspond.

Conclusion

This paper uses a within-country study focused on a particular grievance—groups seeking statehood during India's state reorganization—to address the question of how government accommodation and repression shape civil conflict. During reorganization New Delhi incentivized some statehood movements to use violence. It also deterred some movements and preempted others' grievances with accommodations. This variation is explained by Congress' political weighting of the interests at odds in each potential state.

I expect that the basic logic introduced here to connect domestic politics and violence should hold outside India and beyond the realms of ethnic or territorial conflict. The probability that a government will use accommodation to defuse militancy likely depends on the political impor-

tance of the opposed interests. I also expect that many groups are deterred from violence because the political strength of opposed interests makes repression likely. The search for a linear relationship between objective measures of grievance and militancy is therefore thwarted by governments' credible threat of repression against the most marginal, aggrieved interests. These are contentions to be tested. However, it is noteworthy that many features of 1950s India are typical of places at high risk of civil violence: recent independence, recent civil conflict, poverty, and fraught geopolitics.

My findings imply a particular need for research on how governments shape ethnic conflict. For example, the known correlation between ethnic groups' relative population and conflict may be due to similar political importance, rather than a balance of demographic power. My results also suggest that defining ethnicity using revealed salience obscures the role of the government in deterring some identities from mobilization. On the other hand, India's ethnic terrain may have unique features that limit the generalizability of my arguments, for example the lack of a national majority language group or the large total number of languages.

If the findings in this article are generalizable, the proximate dynamics leading to civil violence have been mischaracterized. The literature's emphasis on economic returns to war or strategic problems like security dilemmas should give way to attention to competing domestic political pressures. Theories of civil violence need to bring the government back in.

Notes

¹See Gleditsch et al. (2002) and Harbom and Wallensteen (2010).

²See Besaçon (2005); Birnir (2007); Bohara et al. (2006); Boix (2008); Buhaug (2006); Buhaug et al. (2008); Buhaug and Rød (2006); Cederman et al. (2011); de Soysa (2002); de Soysa and Fjelde (2010); Djankov and Reynal-Querol (2010); Fearon and Laitin (2003); Gleditsch and Ruggeri (2010); Goldstone et al. (2010); Hendrix (2011); Humphreys (2005); Miguel et al. (2004); Nieman (2011); Regan and Norton (2005); Reynal-Querol (2005); Selway (2011); Sirin (2011); Sobek and Payne (2010); Sorens (2011); Taydas and Peksen (2012); Weidmann (2009); Wimmer et al. (2009). On the robustness of these findings see Dixon (2009) and Hegre and Sambanis (2006).

³Arnson and Zartman (2005); Aspinall (2007); Bai and Kung (2011); Ballentine and Sherman (2003); Berdal and Malone (2000); Berman (2009); Berman et al. (2011); Call (2010); Guitiérrez Sanín (2008); Hegre et al. (2009); Humphreys and Weinstein (2008); Korf (2005); Lemarchand, René (2009); Muldoon et al. (2008); Murshed and Gates (2003); Oyefusi (2008); Ross (2004); Shafiq and Sinno (2010); Vinci (2006); Weinstein (2007); Wood (2003); Zhukov (2012).

⁴On this methodological point see Rosenbaum (1999) and Snyder (2001).

⁵The ceremonial upper house is not directly elected.

⁶Jharkhand was formed in 2000. Jharkhand mobilization did not emphasize language but rather adivasi and regional identities (Jha, 1968; Munda and Mullick, 2003; Shah, 2010; Sharma, 1976; Vidyarthi, 1967).

⁷In India, the threat of repression is more completely described as the threat of centrally-sanctioned repression conducted by state governments. The police are national civil servants but under day-to-day state control. Repression often means the center giving state governments a free hand.

⁸Laitin (1986); Lipset and Rokkan (1967); Rogowski (1987).

⁹Franck and Rainer (2012); Posner and Kramon (2013); Wimmer et al. (2009).

¹⁰Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005); Chandra (2004); Cox (1999); Dixit and Londregan (1996); Horowitz (1985); Lijphart (1977); Posner (2005); Wilkinson (2004).

¹¹Gamson (1975); Jenkins (1983); McCarthy and Zald (1977); Olson (1965); Popkin (1979); Tarrow (1988).

¹²Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2003); Green (2011); Kasara (2007); Kopecký (2011).

¹³The legislature of the concerned state(s) only has a chance to register an opinion on reorganization plans.

¹⁴State reorganization encompasses several smaller acts as well: the Andhra State Act, 1953; Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur (New State) Act 1954; and Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act 1956.

¹⁵Scholarship on language conflict in India has focused on controversy over Hindi as a national language (Geertz, 1963; King, 1994).

- ¹⁶Reviewed in Oates (1999). Also see Alesina and Spolare (2003).
- ¹⁷The mapping of *LSI* districts to districts in the 1950s is based on Census Commissioner (2004).
- ¹⁸Table 4 is not exhaustive. Bihari and Rajasthani are often referred to as “Hindi” although that designation is linguistically inaccurate (Shapiro, 2003). Linguists debate whether the main languages of Bihar and eastern UP (Magahi, Bhojpuri, and Maithili) are a language family (“Bihari”) or not.
- ¹⁹The Khasis are a scheduled tribe and therefore make up a small percentage of EPR’s category of “Scheduled castes and tribes” and MAR’s “Scheduled tribes.” Nepali speakers are not a subset of any of the groups in EPR or MAR.
- ²⁰I allowed non-contiguity that was the result of the state’s non-contiguity.
- ²¹State majorities are counted as the opponents of statehood only in Class A states. Most Class B and C states were broken up or merged elsewhere during reorganization; the complexity of these changes means that the incentives of majorities there are hard to characterize.
- ²²Constituency-to-district mappings from ECI (1951).
- ²³A state majority’s political importance is the sum of its Congress representation across all constituencies in the state; an enclave minority’s political importance is the sum of its Congress representation across all constituencies in the enclave.
- ²⁴If neither of the competing languages is represented in Congress, the ratio of their political importance is one. There are no instances in the data of the opponents of reorganization having INC representation greater than zero and the proponents having INC representation of zero.
- ²⁵Partition and accession-related violence had terminated by this point, except in peripheral areas excluded from the data. The Maoist (Naxal) rebellion had not yet begun. Like Varshney and Wilkinson (2006), I code violence from newspapers. However, they record Hindu-Muslim riots, rather than language-related events.
- ²⁶The majority languages of the union territories are coded as unaccommodated.
- ²⁷If the opposition to a statehood claim was the state majority, n_i is the enclave plurality group’s state population share and n_j is the state majority’s state population share.
- ²⁸ $d_{ij} = 1 - s_{ij}^\delta$, where $\delta = 0.5$ and s_{ij} is the number of common branches in a universal table of language genealogy (Lewis, 2009), divided by the maximum possible number of such branches, 15.
- ²⁹Data on population, sector of employment, landholdings, and religion from Census of India (1951).
- ³⁰All predicted probabilities calculated with other variables at their median value.
- ³¹Confidence intervals calculated using Clarify (King et al., 2000). Code to generate figure is based on replication data for Berry et al. (2010).

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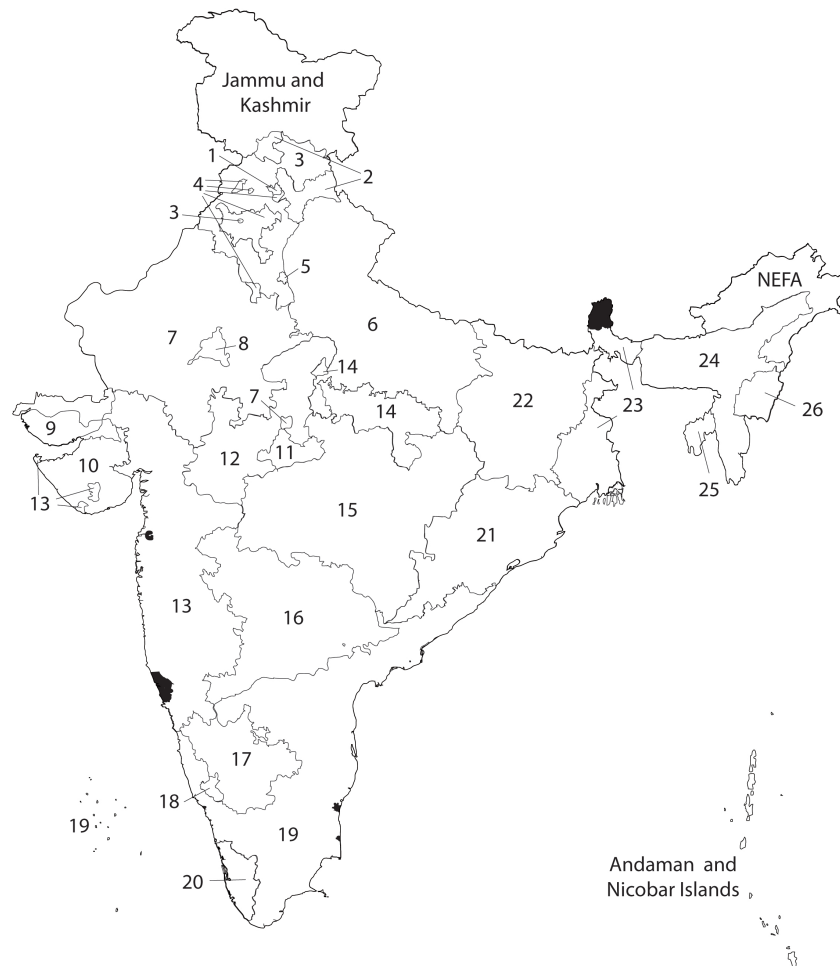
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Figure 1: Changes to the Indian federation, 1950–56

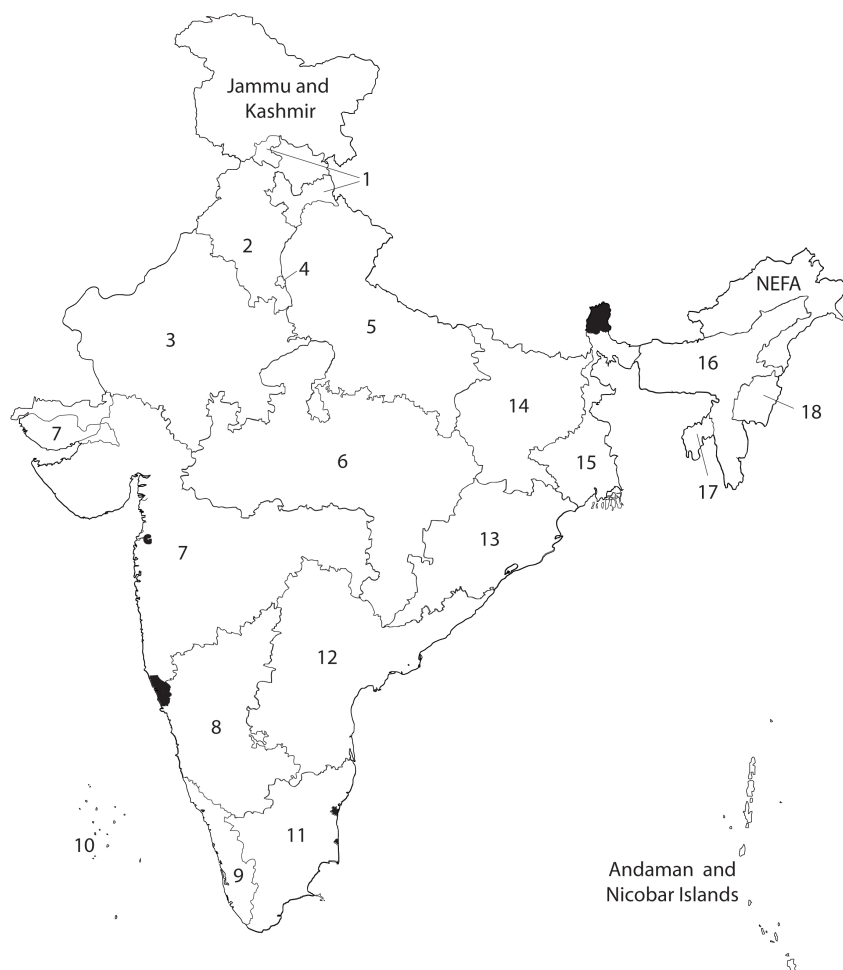
(a) A, B, and C States in 1950



Type A States	Type B States	Type C States
Assam - 24	Hyderabad - 16	Ajmer - 8
Bihar - 22	Madhya Bharat - 12	Bhopal - 11
Bombay - 13	Mysore - 17	Bilaspur - 1
Madhya Pradesh - 15	Patiala and East Punjab	Coorg - 18
Madras - 19	States Union - 4	Delhi - 5
Orissa - 21	Rajasthan - 7	Himachal Pradesh - 2
Punjab - 3	Saurashtra - 10	Kutch - 9
Uttar Pradesh - 6	Travancore-Cochin - 20	Manipur - 26
West Bengal - 23	Vindhya Pradesh - 14	Tripura - 25

Figure 1: Changes to the Indian federation, 1950–56 (Continued)

(b) States and union territories in 1957



States		Union Territories
Andhra Pradesh - 12	Mysore - 8	Delhi - 4
Assam - 16	Orissa - 13	Himachal Pradesh - 1
Bihar - 14	Punjab - 2	Laccadive, Minicoy, and
Bombay - 7	Rajasthan - 3	Amindivi Islands - 10
Kerala - 9	Uttar Pradesh - 5	Manipur - 18
Madhya Pradesh - 6	West Bengal - 15	Tripura - 17
Madras - 11		

Figure 2: Predicted probability of peaceful statehood and violence (Based on Table 5, Model 1)

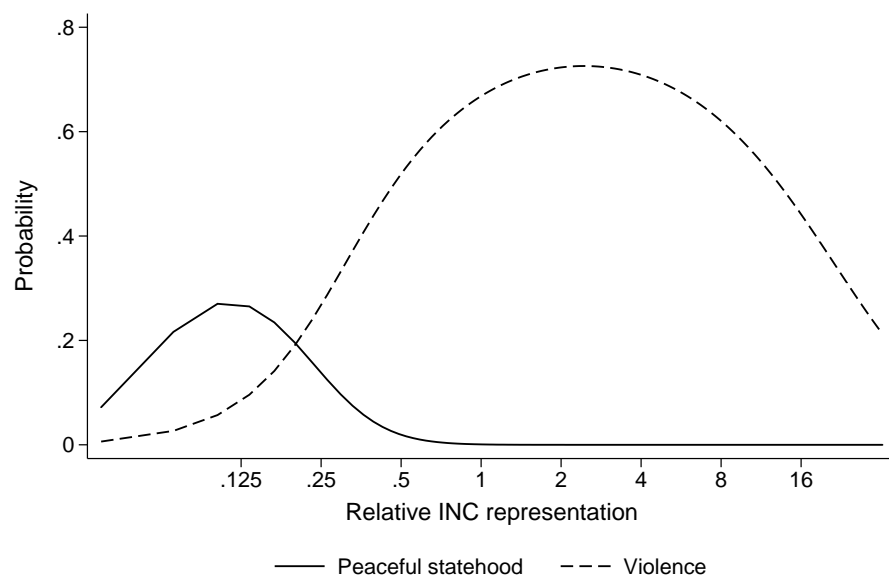


Figure 3: Difference in the predicted probabilities of statehood with and without violence (Based on Table 6, Model 3)

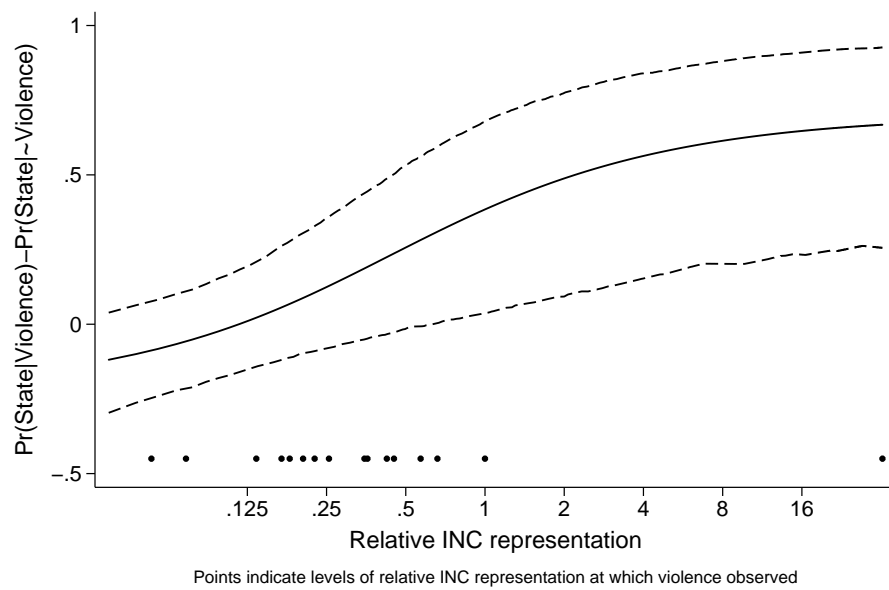


Table 1: Congress Party strength in Gujarati and Marathi majority areas of Bombay state

Language	Population in millions	Vote share in 1951 parliament	Vote share in 1951 state assembly	Members per 100K people	Active members per 100K people
Gujarati	16	57.5%	54.9%	1,400	28
Marathi	26	46.2%	45.2%	1,500	17

Adapted from Weiner (1967, 55–56). Party membership figures for 1955.

Table 2: Congress Party strength in Bihari and Santali majority areas of Bihar

Language	Population in millions	Vote share in 1951 races for parliament state assembly	
Santali	5.7	34.9%	31.7%
Bihari	23	36.6%	44.2%

Author's calculations.

Table 3: Expected relationships between relative political importance, violence, and statehood

Political importance of anti-statehood group relative to pro-statehood group	Expected outcome
Much less	Peaceful statehood
About equal	Violence, possibly followed by statehood
Much more	No violence, no statehood

Table 4: Examples of languages in the *Linguistic Survey of India* but not in the Ethnic Power Relations and Minorities at Risk datasets

Peaceful statehood in 1950s	Mobilized after 1950s
Bihari	Garo
Rajasthani	Karbi
	Khasi
	Nepali
	Pahari
	Santali

Table 5: Multinomial logistic regressions of peaceful statehood and violence

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Peaceful statehood	Violence	Peaceful statehood	Violence
Ln relative INC representation	-4.9* (2.3)	0.61* (0.25)	-4.6* (2.2)	0.66* (0.28)
Ln relative INC representation sq.	-1.2* (0.49)	-0.34* (0.10)	-1.1* (0.46)	-0.37* (0.11)
Demographic polarization	12 (8.2)	15 (14)		
Cultural polarization			22 (16)	11 (19)
Ln enclave plurality group's INC rep.	-0.87 (0.95)	-1.7* (0.58)	-0.72 (0.93)	-1.5* (0.49)
Ln enclave plurality group's population	1.1 (1.1)	3.3* (0.61)	0.99 (1.0)	3.2* (0.59)
Agricultural labor share in enclave	-6.2* (2.2)	-3.0 (3.8)	-6.1* (2.2)	-3.0 (3.5)
Landless rate in enclave	12* (4.3)	-7.4* (4.1)	11* (4.2)	-7.4* (3.9)
Hindu share in enclave	3.6 (2.8)	-2.4 (1.5)	3.1 (2.6)	-2.8 (1.9)
Ln km to New Delhi	0.58* (0.35)	2.0* (0.50)	0.52* (0.30)	1.6* (0.43)
Constant	-26* (15)	-54* (11)	-23* (14)	-49* (11)
Observations	63		63	
Ln likelihood	-35		-35	
Test IIA peaceful statehood χ^2	7.86		6.49	
Test IIA violence χ^2	6.71		6.94	

* $p < 0.10$. Standard errors, clustered by state, in parentheses.

Table 6: Logistic regressions of statehood

	Model 3	Model 4
	Statehood	Statehood
Violence * Ln relative INC rep.	0.86* (0.39)	0.73* (0.31)
Violence	1.8* (1.0)	1.6* (0.87)
Ln relative INC representation	0.00033 (0.16)	-0.028 (0.17)
Demographic polarization	-6.8 (9.3)	
Cultural polarization		0.056 (13)
Ln enclave plurality group's INC rep.	0.35 (0.53)	0.27 (0.53)
Ln enclave plurality group's population	0.65 (0.76)	0.64 (0.78)
Hindu share in enclave	1.2 (2.1)	1.9 (1.7)
Ln km to New Delhi	0.96 (0.59)	1.1* (0.57)
Constant	-18 (13)	-20 (13)
Observations	63	63
Ln likelihood	-25	-25

* $p < 0.10$. Standard errors, clustered by state, in parentheses.