Votes and Violence

Why does ethnic violence break out in some places and not others? More important, why do some governments try to prevent antiminority riots while others do nothing, or even actively encourage attacks? This book answers these questions through a detailed study of Hindu-Muslim riots in India, as well as case studies of Ireland, Malaysia, and Romania. It shows how electoral incentives at two levels interact to explain both where violence breaks out and, more importantly, why some states decide to prevent mass violence and others do not. While developing this electoral incentives model, the author shows why several alternative explanations for ethnic violence – focusing on town-level social and economic factors, the weak capacity of the Indian state, or India's alleged lack of “consociational power sharing” – cannot explain the observed variation in Hindu-Muslim riots.

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Votes and Violence

ELECTORAL COMPETITION AND ETHNIC RIOTS IN INDIA

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Acknowledgments

This study owes a great deal to my advisor at MIT, the late and much missed Myron Weiner, who along with Donald Horowitz and Stephen Van Evera urged me to test ideas I had developed on the basis of a study of Uttar Pradesh in a much wider comparative study.

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to present large portions of the book to very smart members of two cross-disciplinary groups, whose constructive comments have helped me to identify areas where the argument or evidence needed more work. Members of the Laboratory in Comparative Ethnic Processes (LiCEP) have read several drafts of the main argument over several years, though they cannot be blamed, of course, for my inability or unwillingness to incorporate all their suggestions. I thank all the current and former members of this terrific group for their help: Arun Agrawal, Bob Bates, Kanchan Chandra, Christian Davenport, Jim Fearon, Karen Ferree, Elise Giuliano, Michael Hechter, Macartan Humphries, Stathis Kalyvas, Nelson Kasfir, Pauline Jones Luong, David Laitin, Ian Lustick, Dan Posner, Nicholas Sambanis, Smita Singh, Pieter van Houten, and Ashutosh Varshney. Several members of the group – Kanchan Chandra, Jim Fearon, Dan Posner, Nic Sambanis, and Elisabeth Wood – gave me so many additional detailed comments and suggestions that I should give them my special thanks. The second group that has read my work, the recently formed Network on South Asian Politics and Political Economy (Netsappe), commented on an earlier version of my main chapters at a conference at the University of Michigan in July 2002, and participants provided feedback that reflected both the theoretical and area expertise of the group. I thank all the members of Netsappe for giving me extremely detailed and insightful comments on the two chapters I presented. Special
Acknowledgments

thanks must go to Yogendra Yadav for his comments on how I could revise some key portions of Chapters 2 and 5.

This book has been written at Duke, and while all of my colleagues here have helped in various ways I would like to single out a few for special thanks. My colleague Donald Horowitz first got me interested in the study of ethnic politics when I was a graduate student. Since then he has provided invaluable encouragement, advice, and, when needed, criticism of the theoretical arguments I make. I am grateful to him for his continuing mentorship. Special thanks must also go to Herbert Kitschelt, who helped me clarify my central argument about the relationship between party competition and violence at low levels of party competition. Were it not for our conversations together, the key diagrams in which I work out the relationship between party fractionalization and government response to anti-minority violence would be one “branch” short. Herbert and John Aldrich also encouraged me to present several key chapters to the party politics course they co-teach, from which I received additional valuable feedback. Others whose help went above and beyond the call of duty include John Transue, Scott de Marchi, and Meg McKean. Lastly, I should like to thank Mike Munger, not for his friendly nagging about whether I would ever get this book finished (though that too was appreciated, at least most of the time), but for his interest in my work and steady encouragement over the past five years.

In India, many people have helped me at various points in my research. In Delhi, Sunil and Anjali Kumar and their family have given me their friendship and encouragement – and often food and shelter as well – since my first visit to India in 1989. They make my trips to India seem like coming home. Others who provided hospitality and encouragement include Tejbir and Mala Singh in Delhi, Gyan and Jayati Chaturvedi in Agra, and S. K. Gupta in Varanasi. Many police officers and civil servants offered to share their expertise with me, and I would especially like to note the help I received from the late Ashok Priyadarshi, N. S. Saksena, and A. K. Dass.

Others who have helped along the way include Neil Carlson, who was a huge help in solving data management and aggregation issues, Charles Franklin, who offered advice on the statistical model to use, and David Cline and Carrie Young, whose work on the regional database was invaluable. Paul Brass, whose own work on ethnic conflict is central to the field, read and commented on approximately half the manuscript. I am sure that we still do not agree, but I thank him for taking the time to offer his incisive and constructive comments. Devesh Kapur also deserves thanks for his
Acknowledgments

continuing willingness to pick up the phone when I want to try out a new idea, and then tell me how my argument could be made better.

I would like to thank my editor at Cambridge University Press, Lew Bateman, for his help and encouragement throughout the process of getting this book published, and also Margaret Levi, for agreeing to include the book in the comparative politics series. I would also like to thank Brian MacDonald, my production editor at Cambridge, and Joe Grant, who checked the accuracy of my references and gave much help besides.

Lastly, on a personal note, I would like to thank my parents, Maurice and Janette Wilkinson for their patience and encouragement over the years. My wife Elizabeth has provided so much love, support, and encouragement over the past decade and a half that I can truly say that I would have produced very little without her. To her, and to our sons Alex and Nicholas, I offer my profound thanks.

Parts of Chapter 4 were originally published as “India, Consociational Theory and Ethnic Violence,” Asian Survey 40, no. 5 (October 2000), pp. 767–91.