may have been lacking in Quebec, and that consequently issues of
wealth generation may not have been fully debated. International
changes may encourage the growth of understanding and trust among
the members of the actor constellation. In the World Trade Organiza-
tion negotiations on agriculture, environmental standards will be a cen-
tral issue. Reflecting on this prospect, a Quebec producers' representa-
tive concluded: "our responsibilities in the area of environmental
protection can only prepare us well for the forthcoming challenges fac-
ing world agriculture." If coupled with a similar openness from those
concerned with the environment, such an attitude by farmers might
produce the positive co-ordination needed to balance the demands for a
clean and healthy environment and a productive, growing, agricultural
economy.

Appendix: Major Organizations and Programmes in the
Agro-Environmental Policy Communities of Ontario
and Quebec Cited in This Study

Ontario
CFFO Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
CURB Clean Up Rural Beaches
EFP Environmental Farm Plan Program
NFU National Farmers Union
OFEC Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition
OMEE Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Energy
OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
OFA Ontario Federation of Agriculture
OSCA Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Quebec
MAM Ministère des Affaires municipales
MAPAQ Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation
MEF Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune
PAGEF Programme d’aide à la gestion des fumiers (latterly, Programme d’aide à l'investissement en agroenvironnement)
UPA Union des producteurs agricoles

65 Interview, April 3, 1997.

Ethnicity and Pluralism: An Exploration
with Reference to Indian Cases*

NARENDRA SUBRAMANIAN  McGill University

The growth of ethnic mobilization in many regions of the world has
raised problems for the maintenance of tolerance and democracy, prob-
lems which states have in many cases been unable or unwilling to
solve. This article considers under what conditions high levels of eth-
nic mobilization may co-exist in stable fashion with social pluralism.
The term "social pluralism" is used here to mean the existence of
many active associations significantly autonomous of the state and of
each other. It does not denote ethnic diversity, although pluralism
would enable citizens to affirm ethnic difference. The central question
is addressed through a comparison of aspects of the paths taken by four
of India’s major ethnic movements and parties: Hindu revivalism, the
Sikh movement, Kashmiri nationalism and Dravidianism.

“Organizational pluralism” denotes the extent of autonomy and
flexibility characterizing both transactions between organizations (for
our purposes, ethnic movements and parties) and society, and relations
within organizations. It refers to features of both intra-party and party-
society relations, as political organizations are rooted in society and their
characteristic features are formed and changed through interaction with
society. I argue that the emergence of pluralism within influential organi-
izations aids social pluralism. Such internal pluralism can reorient ethnic
movements and parties towards tolerance even if these organizations
began with exclusionary visions. On the other hand, its absence can
cause movements whose initial visions have ambiguous consequences
for social pluralism towards strategies that impair social pluralism.

* Field research for this project was funded by the American Institute of Indian
Studies and the Social Science Research Council. The author thanks Minakshi
Menon, Philip Oshorn, Crawford Young and the journal's referees for their
useful suggestions.
The presence or absence of internal pluralism shapes the responses of ethnic movements and parties to the incentives embedded in the polities within which they function—both incentives resulting from features of polity structure, such as constitutional provisions and electoral laws, and those resulting from particular policies and changing patterns of party competition. It influences the way such organizations define (and perhaps redefine) the political community they aim to represent, and the strategies they adopt to gain this community recognition and further its interests.

This analysis departs from the instrumentalist approach which dominates studies of ethnic politics, while drawing on some of its features. Defined by the work of scholars like Donald Horowitz and Arend Lijphart, instrumentalism traces the conceptions of identity that ethnic mobilizers uphold and the strategies they adopt to the incentives they face in particular contexts. It presumes that ethnic mobilizers (and, in the more sophisticated analyses, their supporters too) choose identities and strategies with a view to maximizing access to power and resources. In some variants of the instrumentalist tradition, governing elites are said to be driven by a similar instrumental rationality in devising cultural policies and conflict management strategies. Based on these assumptions, instrumentalists regard arrangements to share power and to ration resources among ethnic groups as crucial to defusing ethnic conflict. They claim that such a key role was played by the consociational institutions seen in Lebanon, Cyprus, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, the federal systems in Canada and India, those that once existed in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the preferential policies instituted in the United States and Malaysia. Thus, instrumentalists prescribe similar arrangements during the transition to majority rule in South Africa.

However, power-sharing arrangements existed very briefly in Cyprus and South Africa, collapsed after some time in Lebanon, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union (leading to the redrawing of state boundaries in the last three cases), evoked strong opposition in Canada, suffered erosion through the 1980s and 1990s in India, and are beset with much uncertainty in Lebanon (where power-sharing returned in an altered form in 1989). They have endured only in countries like Belgium and Switzerland where ethnic tensions were relatively weak before power-sharing was institutionalized, or in those like Malaysia where political competition was abridged and the political dominance of the ethnic majority enshrined in the constitution. Instrumentalists attribute the decline of accommodative institutions in such cases to certain features of these institutions: for example, their inappropriateness in particular instances to defuse conflict (the federal structure of Nigeria’s first republic) or their inflexibility in the face of ongoing social changes (Lebanon’s grand coalition of 1943-1975). Alternatively, they point to choices made by governing elites to weaken these institutions (India since the 1970s) or unprompted initial conditions (the unbalanced ethnic ratio and the lack of strong commitment to accommodation in Cyprus).

While these claims (offered by way of a defence of instrumentalism) are partly true, they beg many important questions raised by the fragility of state-crafted power-sharing mechanisms under conditions of growing ethnic mobilization. If some power-sharing arrangements were inappropriate even initially, why were they chosen by state and ethnic elites presumed to be instrumentally rational? Why do some arrangements that were once viable prove inflexible in the face of

---


5 Horowitz provides a sophisticated account along these lines (Ethnic Groups in Conflict).
ongoing social change, while others are effectively reformed? What encourages governing elites to weaken accommodative arrangements despite the discontent that usually emerges in the wake of such moves? If governing elites are unable or unwilling to sustain institutions that accommodate cultural diversity, what alternatives do citizens have who wish to increase tolerance and social pluralism? This article focuses on some problems that the decline of power-sharing arrangements in many societies indicates about instrumentalist analysis, and outlines an alternative approach.

Many political mobilizers undoubtedly take existing incentives into account in shaping their tactics, and those that fail to do so lose organizational strength or popular support. However, incentives may not define the ultimate goals of mobilizers and their supporters. Political organizations may respond in different ways to a given structure of incentives. For instance, they may respond to threats of repression either by moderating their ultimate goals or by resorting to heightened militancy in pursuit of their initial goals. The extent to which leaders of political organizations are open to reorienting their strategies in view of experience, and the degree of autonomy enjoyed by cadre and supporters crucially influences strategic responses to existing incentives. The concept "organizational pluralism" is meant to capture these features of political organizations. It helps us understand why ethnic and other organizations respond differently in similar contexts; specifically, whether they reinforce or undermine social pluralism. This, in turn, helps account for the decline of some arrangements to accommodate cultural diversity and the sustained viability of others.

The Indian experience provides a good empirical basis on which to consider the central questions considered here. India's success in maintaining a stable democracy in the midst of deep ethnic cleavages was ascribed to the astute accommodation of ethnic demands. Accommodative institutions eroded in the 1980s and 1990s, and ethnic alternatives to the official posture of secular pan-Indian nationalism grew in popularity. Although these alternatives functioned within the same political community and how tolerant they were of out-groups and of leaders' role in their vision of political community are deemed "pan-Indian," and others "ethnic." Table I shows the electoral dominance of these parties through the early postcolonial decades.) Such explanations do not explain the periodic explosions of ethnic violence in many parts of India in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

1. State Policies and India's Ethnic Upsurge

India was considered a signal success case in the containment of conflict and the preservation of tolerance amidst considerable cultural diversity. The dominant instrumentalist accounts attributed this success to the state's adoption of effective mechanisms for conflict management. In this regard, the following were deemed crucial: the threat to repression; the rejection of the claims of religious groups to political rights (for example, separate electorates), justified with reference to secularism; the adoption of federalism, with state boundaries corresponding to lines of language use; and the introduction of preferential quotas in education and government jobs for groups (largely castes) deemed underprivileged. These policies are considered to have channeled mobilizing social forces into "pan-Indian" parties, thus ensuring stability.6 (In this study, parties giving all inhabitants of India an equal role in their vision of political community are deemed "pan-Indian," and others "ethnic." Table 1 shows the electoral dominance of these parties through the early postcolonial decades.) Such explanations do not explain the periodic explosions of ethnic violence in many parts of India in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

TABLE 1

PAN-INDIAN AND ETHNIC PARTIES' RELATIVE SHARES OF VALID VOTE IN INDIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS (as percentages) 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pan-Indian</th>
<th>Ethnic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Figures are omitted for the 1977 and 1980 elections as the biggest ethnic party (the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, later the BJP) and pan-Indianist Congress offshoots were part of the Janata party through this period, making the vote shares of pan-Indianist and ethnic parties indistinguishable.


Despite the official ideology and practice of secularism, exclusionary religious revivalism has grown rapidly through the 1980s and 1990s. The growth of Hindu revivalism, the strongest of these forces, was dramatized by the destruction in 1992 of the Babri masjid (a medieval mosque) after decade-long agitation to build a Hindu temple on its site, the nearly nation-wide riots which arose in its aftermath and the formation of a government led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1998. Further, the accommodative bargains which the Indian state struck with ethnic elites unravelled in Punjab and Kashmir. The creation of a state for Punjabi speakers and the added autonomy given to Jammu and Kashmir failed to satisfy ethnic mobilizers, partly because the systematic rigging of elections in Kashmir made autonomy a farce and the government reneged on some promises in Punjab. Besides, a new generation of ethnic militants outflanked old leaders and launched armed separatist movements that abated only in the face of brutal state repression. Other ethnic mobilizers have also asserted their demands stridently, especially in northeastern India.

Instrumentalists have attributed the growth of ethnic conflict in India to the state’s gradual abandonment of accommodative secularism since the early 1970s because of the growing inclination of leaders to centralize power. Leaders (particularly Indira Gandhi) are said to have weakened party institutions to ensure their own pre-eminence, leading many groups to pursue their demands through channels other than the pan-Indianist parties. It is also argued that centralizing ambitions led the national government to infringe on the autonomy of state politics, undermine moderate ethnic elites by refusing to accommodate them (engaging periodically with ethnic extremists instead), and respond to the resulting tide of ethnic militancy with repression which has augmented the disintegrative consequences.

While policies and institutions changed along the lines these accounts indicate, and opposition and conflict increased, such arguments fail to explain why conflict often assumed an ethnic form in the 1980s and 1990s. They discuss factional struggles within ethnic parties, but largely ignore how the formation of ethnic movement subcultures influences strategic choices and the fortunes of factions oriented to different strategies.

The dominant analyses also ignore important dimensions of the Indian state’s approach to social control. Following the creation of Pakistan, India’s governing elites were more concerned about balkanization than with building a tolerant society. They inferred from the formation of Pakistan that the greatest threats to India’s territorial integrity were likely to come from religious groups, particularly Muslims, and groups seeking considerable regional autonomy. The state’s resistance to granting religious demands was more a product of its desire to forestall secession than of its commitment to secularism. For instance, the government introduced distinct personal laws for religious groups, but was averse to recognizing religious groups as distinct political communities as it only considered the latter a likely springboard for secession. Indeed, since the 1950s, the state has used more repression against Kashmiri nationalists ambivalent about being part of India than against Hindu revivalists, although the former (unlike the latter) rejected a politics of religious identity, built coalitions across religious lines, and did not incite systematic violence against out-groups until the late 1980s. This was because Hindu revivalists, unlike Kashmiri nationalists, were determined foes of secession.

These choices of the Indian state were made in the 1940s and 1950s, well before the centralizing tendencies of the 1970s. They show that the state has considered territorial integrity more important than secularism and tolerance since independence. This strategy has been ill-attuned to a multicultural society characterized by growing social mobilization, and its limitations have contributed to the growth of ethnic forces which reject some of its elements. Besides, the tendency...
towards centralization was partly offset by the emergence of national coalition and minority governments in the 1990s, but this did not lead to a decline in ethnic mobilization and conflict.

Party-society interactions offer a better key to understanding the crisis of Indian nation-building than do policy changes associated with the state’s centralizing drive. Despite the electoral dominance of the pan-Indianist parties through the early postcolonial decades, widespread and deeply felt attachments did not develop to pan-Indian nationalism because pan-Indianist parties built shallow subcultures in all but a few pockets through this period, transacting distantly with the lower and intermediate strata. Secularism, which influenced official discourse even while it was sometimes given short shrift in policy making, also contributed to the alienation of many from official notions of Indian citizenship, which were kept culturally thin so as to be beyond the suspicion of association with specific religious traditions. The limited economic gains of many from these strata through the early postcolonial decades compounded these problems. Nevertheless, these years witnessed relative stability due to the limited levels of political participation (see Table 2) and social mobilization, and the judicious distribution of patronage through the bureaucracy and social elites.

### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout Rates in Elections to Indian Parliament and Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly (percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


b Compiled from data disks supplied by the Tamil Nadu Election Commission; Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Secretariat, *Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Who’s Who* (Madras: Tamil Nadu Government Press, 1992), xii-xvi.

c 1952-1996: All elections to the Indian Parliament and the Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly conducted since 1952.


2. Divergent Trajectories of India’s Ethnic Forces

The interactions of ethnic forces with society and the limits of official secular nationalism explain many important features of India’s ethnic upsurge better than does the state’s centralizing drive. Crucially, these factors better explain differences in movement impact on social pluralism, and the nature and timing of changes in movement strategies.

#### Kashmiri Nationalism

The insistent demands for a plebiscite in Kashmir within a few years of decolonization and the apparent accommodation of Kashmiri nationalism between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s accord poorly with the timing of the Indian government’s centralizing efforts, which began around the late 1960s. Pakistan, which was created as a homeland for South Asia’s Muslims, disputed the accession of Kashmir, with its Muslim majority, to India, leading India and Pakistan to wage war and divide the region in 1948. The major political forces in Jammu and Kashmir (the portion occupied by India) accepted this accession initially, disagreeing only on the extent of autonomy the state should enjoy and on the conduct of a plebiscite to determine its future as part
of India, part of Pakistan or as a distinct nation-state. Indeed, Kashmiri nationalists even helped the Indian army take on Pakistani forces during the 1948 and 1965 wars.

As both the Indian and Pakistani states failed to conduct a plebiscite, the leaders of the National Conference (the major Kashmiri nationalist party of the time) pressed for a plebiscite, considered secession and tentatively sought Western help for this purpose in the early 1950s. The Indian government repressed the pro-plebiscite forces, which did not unambiguously favour secession, and repeatedly rigged state elections until the 1970s to ensure that loyal forces ruled the state. The abridgement of political competition and the autonomy of state politics, which predated such trends in other parts of India, were not results of centralization, but of conflicts with Pakistan, the entanglement of these conflicts in Cold War rivalries, and the pressure exerted by Hindu revivalists who, along with some avowedly secular Congress party leaders, saw Kashmiri nationalism as a Muslim, and thus a pro-Pakistani phenomenon, despite evidence to the contrary.

The Indian state failed to foster support for Kashmir's accession to India, despite initial favourable inclinations among many Kashmiris, as Kashmiris who co-operated with the repressive government only lost respect thereby. This was particularly true of the faction of the National Conference which allied itself with the national government, was propped up in power, and later merged with the Congress party. The strategy of the Plebiscite Front, the umbrella under which most Kashmiri nationalists gathered from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, was not defined by that of the state. Not only were its protests largely peaceful, it opposed amalgamation with Pakistan and had the support of a significant minority of the Hindus of Jammu and Kashmir, especially peasants in the Jammu valley, who had benefited from the land reforms implemented by the National Conference government in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Kashmiri wounds appeared to be healing when Sheikh Abdullah, the patriarch of Kashmiri nationalism, reached a compromise with the Indian government in 1975 after spending much of the previous two decades in prison. Sheikh Abdullah abandoned the plebiscite demand and accepted Jammu and Kashmir's permanent accession to India in return for regaining control over the state government, initially as part of the pact and later by winning the state's first open elections.

Had the Indian government brought its approach to Kashmir in tune with its national strategy, thus resulting in successful accommodation? The timing and substance of the bargain indicate otherwise. The mid-1970s were not a time when the Indian government was correcting its violations of democratic norms. Rather, it was then that the national government followed its earlier centralizing moves by introducing a phase of authoritarian rule throughout India. The price the government demanded of Kashmiri nationalists—acceptance of permanent accession—had not changed since the mid-1950s. What had changed were its anxieties regarding Kashmir, less influenced by Indo-Pakistan rivalries after Bangladesh was formed, and Sheikh Abdullah's inclinations—by then greater autonomy within India seemed to him the best feasible outcome, and he was fatigued by prolonged incarceration.

Abdullah's climbdown did not mean the accommodation of Kashmiri nationalism. Kashmiri nationalism had nurtured itself through repression on the image of a leader imprisoned for the cause, who therefore had considerable leeway to initiate strategic shifts. However, the earlier subversion of democracy had shaped the sentiments of many Kashmiri nationalists in such a way that they had misgivings about the Sheikh's acquiescence, which they temporarily accepted in view of his authority, and responded militantly when the Indian government returned to its old ways in the mid-1980s, after Abdullah's death. Kashmiri nationalists rallied around the Sheikh's son and successor, Farooq Abdullah, after his government was toppled, forced the Indian government to hold new elections, and ensured a National Conference victory. When Farooq Abdullah, who lacked his father's stature, allied himself with the Congress party and colluded in the rigging of the next elections in 1987, many took to arms, seeking either an independent Kashmir or accession to Pakistan. Although Pakistani support gave Islamist militias added influence, the Kashmiri nationalist militias remained the most popular forces until sustained repression led to their fragmentation and organizational decline. The Indian government's intervention was equally blatant by the 1980s in many other states, but insurgencies erupted in response only in places like Kashmir and Punjab and parts of northeastern India, where the government had for years rejected the bases of ethnic movements.

Sikh Revivalism

Sikh revivalism of the late colonial and early postcolonial periods had ambiguous implications for social pluralism. On the one hand, it created elected committees to manage Sikh temples, which serve as fora for community activities and welfare provision, and factions competed vigorously at times for control over these committees. On the other, it associated Sikh identity exclusively with Tat Khalsa nationalism, a version of the tenets of the sect owing allegiance to the last Sikh Guru, which had farmer (mainly Jat) and artisanal/mercantile (mainly Khatri) castes at its core, and viewed the Sikhs as an embattled com-

---

12 Support for the Muslim Conference, which alone favoured amalgamation with Pakistan, was concentrated in Azad Kashmir (the portion occupied by Pakistan) after 1948.
community opposed to other religious groups. It drew sharp lines (previously blurred) between Sikhs and Hindus, gained official recognition for such a definition of Sikh identity, and marginalized other sects, including those claiming links to both Sikh and Hindu identities. The considerable community resources controlled by the umbrella organization for the temple management committees, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), were used to deter opponents of the Shiromani Akali Dal, the major Sikh party closely linked to the SGPC. Nevertheless, the Congress party attracted many Sikhs (especially the lower castes) as well as Punjabi Hindus. Leaders and activists pushed the Sikh movement alternately towards co-operation with pan-Indian parties and the Indian government, or towards ethnic exclusivism to meet the Congress challenge. The variety of Sikh revivalist organizations gave them room to manoeuvre in either direction.14

Agitations for a state for Sikhs erupted through the 1950s and 1960s. Given the Sikh movement’s ambiguities, the formation of a state with a Sikh majority within the Indian union could have resulted either in pluralism or intolerance. Anxious about the secessionist and intolerant potential of non-Hindu religious mobilization, the Indian government ignored the former possibility and rejected the agitators’ demand. However, it was willing to concede autonomy to Punjab, where Sikhs were concentrated, provided the demand was made on behalf of a language group. Some Sikh leaders tactically exchanged the banner of religion for one of language, and attained their initial goal of a Sikh-majority state in 1966, although it remained clear to activists and supporters that even the moderate faction of the period was focused on Sikh identity.15 The Indian government responded differently to autonomism in Punjab and Kashmir as Pakistan claimed only the latter region.

The formation of the Punjab state meant neither government acceptance of Sikh identity politics nor the abandonment of such a vision by the Akali Dal. Since the 1970s, the many Sikh movement factions shared the claim that Sikhs were a distinct political community, which the government continued to reject, even while conceding some religious demands raised by Sikh agitators in the 1980s. As the Sikh movement was always focused on religious identity, a recognition of this in some significant form was necessary for the state to accommodate the movement durably and steer it towards pluralism. The Indian government had some scope to do so as the movement had ambiguous implications for social pluralism from the 1920s until the 1970s. However, its secularist strategy predisposed it against such recognition. The

14 Oberoi, The Construction of Religious Boundaries; Brass, Ethnicity and Nationalism, 167-87; and Singh, “Punjab since 1984.”
15 Brass, Ethnicity and Nationalism, 174-76, 182-83.

Ethnicity and Pluralism

state’s sustained opposition to the bases of Sikh revivalism, even through periods of co-operation with some Sikh movement factions, helped secessionist militants urge supporters to see the government’s non-fulfilment of some promises to Sikh leaders as evidence of sustained indifference towards Sikhs. The militants were able to use the fluidity of voter alignments throughout India in the early 1980s to become dominant in Sikh politics because of the failures of long-term government strategy towards Sikh revivalism. The encouragement that the Congress party briefly gave the militants’ revered hero, Sant Bhindranwale, to undercut moderate Akali Dal leaders was far less important in the growth of the Sikh militancy.

Hindu Revivalism

Hindu revivalism has constructed visions of Hindu tradition by appropriating epics and scriptures partly in light of the norms of the landholding and mercantile castes of northern and western India, its core supporters. It regards as truly Hindu/Indian (the distinction being blurred) only those who accord Indian soil sacred significance, regardless of people’s citizenship, religious practices and how the census records their religious affiliations. Other Indians are said to lack a cultural bond with the nation, making their patriotism unreliable. This has justified the demonization of adherents of religions of foreign advent, particularly Muslims, throughout the movement’s history.16 Attachment to sacred geography made Hindu revivalists staunch foes of secession and autonomism, and thus more acceptable to governing elites, some of whom accepted elements of Hindu revivalist ideology. The electoral incentives resulting from Hindus comprising 83 per cent of the population reinforced the disinclination of Congress party leaders to repress Hindu revivalists, even when the latter launched extensive attacks against non-Hindus and other opponents.17

The dramatic improvement in Hindu revivalist electoral performance in the 1990s (see Table 3) cannot be attributed to changes in policy towards Hindu revivalists. Such changes have been limited, although Hindu revivalists participated in a national government in the late 1970s, led one in 1998-1999, and ruled many states in the 1980s and 1990s. Although more direct Hindu revivalist influence has changed some policies, this has been a result, rather than a cause, of movement success. The causes lie in the decline of the Congress party,

17 The banning of some Hindu revivalist organizations after the assassination of Gandhi and after the destruction of the Babri Masjid was not backed by systematic crackdowns.
associated with the failures of the state’s strategies of development and social control, the concomitant decline in support for official conceptions of nationhood, and the greater attraction this has given the Hindu revivalists’ culturally thick alternative. Hindu revivalists have utilized this opportunity well by adopting idioms and methods of mobilization calculated to attract a wider range of people.  

### TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>North/Westa</th>
<th>South/Easta</th>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a “North/West” includes the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. “South/East” includes the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh and the union territories of Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Source: See sources for Table 1 as well as the note regarding the elections of 1977 and 1980.

As Hindu revivalism has been more consistently intolerant, its support more widespread and its activities less hampered by the state, it has damaged social pluralism more than has either the Sikh or the Kashmiri movement. Encouraged by their popularity, Hindu revivalists have increased attacks against non-Hindus and their places of worship, rival trade unions, student unions, theatre troupes, artists and textbook publishers. They also disbanded official commissions to protect religious minorities and attempted to disband a commission established to probe the causes of major riots with which they were associated. State repression, being less in Hindu revivalist strongholds (much of northern and western India) than in Kashmir and Punjab, has undermined social pluralism less in the former regions.

### Dravidianism

While ethnic mobilization undermined pluralism in Punjab, Kashmir and Hindu revivalist bases, it had the opposite impact in Tamil Nadu, the locus of the Dravidian movement. This movement not only provoked little violent conflict, it also promoted the growth of political participation, autonomous associational activity and the representation of emergent groups. Further, the success of its appeals, based mainly on language and caste, inhibited the growth of religious revivalism. Notably, Hindu revivalism is weakest in Tamil Nadu (see Table 3) which has seen the least violence when religious riots have erupted periodically in India from the 1970s onwards.

Dravidianism initially appealed to South Indians (primarily Tamil speakers) other than those of the upper Brahmin caste, claiming that this imprecisely defined group was descended from a Dravidian race, distinct from the Aryans from whom North Indians and South Indian Brahmins were said to have been descended. Two parties emerged from Dravidianism, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1949 and the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK, later renamed the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) in 1972, which have dominated Tamil Nadu politics since 1967. While the DMK’s share of the popular vote increased from 12.8 to 40.6 per cent between 1957 and 1967, voter participation increased from 49.3 to 76.6 per cent, and has remained higher since then in Tamil Nadu than in India as a whole (see Tables 2 and 4). The Dravidian parties promoted literary and debating societies; reading rooms and film fan clubs. Caste associations, farmers’ associations and some white-collar unions grew stronger during Dravidianist rule, and effectively opposed some of the state government’s policies. Dravidianist regimes created new entitlements for emergent groups, notably quotas for the lower and intermediate castes in college education and government jobs (which are as high as 69 per cent in Tamil Nadu), and a free lunch scheme for school children and the elderly which has fed over one fifth of the state’s population since 1983.  

If Dravidianism became an ally of pluralism, unlike the other three movements, this was not due to the nature of initial movement appeals. The initial Dravidianist organization (the Self Respect Associ-

---

TABLE 4
TAMIL NADU STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: SHARE OF VALID VOTE (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADMK</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMK</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Indian</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Indian</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Indian</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Indian</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures understate the electoral strength of ethnic parties since 1980, during which period pan-Indian parties benefitted from electoral alliances with the Dravidian parties. The reported vote share of ADMK for 1989 is the sum of the votes polled by two ADMK actions.*

Social pluralism grew in Tamil Nadu with ethnic mobilization, unlike in the other cases, mainly due to the different ways in which the relevant ethnic parties engaged with society, specifically their levels of organizational pluralism.

3. Organizational Pluralism and Social Pluralism

Organizational pluralism has three components—leadership flexibility, cadre autonomy and supporter autonomy. Leadership flexibility refers to the extent to which leaders modify their goals and strategies in light of the interests and outlook of key supporters and those of non-supporters they wish to court. It is considered to exist only if it extends to longer-term strategy and goals (including, crucially, the organization’s vision of the political community), rather than being merely tactical. Tactical flexibility involves appealing to different groups in idioms suitable to attract them or changing the way a party presents itself to everyone according to leaders’ perception of the general mood. This need not significantly increase the power that activists or supporters are able to use even if it exists, but it does increase the likelihood that leaders will accommodate their demands, at least to some extent. Leaders and activists may pursue these strategies through associations affiliated with the party, which may exist not only for the purpose of raising funds but also for the purpose of providing a forum for discussion and the exchange of ideas. These associations may be used to challenge party policies and to bring about changes in the organization’s leadership.

Cadre autonomy is the autonomy which local party units, party factions and party-affiliated associations enjoy from the party leadership. It exists if leaders are disregarded on some crucial issues, and alternative commands, issued by members of constituent or affiliated units, are followed by significant numbers who are loyal to them or share their outlook. Supporter autonomy is the scope supporters have to appropriate movement appeals in ways different from leaders’ explicit promises and preferred programmes. If it exists, supporters may use the party banner in ways not clearly authorized by leaders, or pursue demands through associations affiliated with the party. (“Autonomy” refers to both kinds of autonomy.) The presence of considerable autonomy implies that a variety of (usually related) visions of self, society and a preferred future co-exist within the organization. So, the presence of organizational pluralism implies the existence of a degree of discursive pluralism within the movement subculture. A diversity of visions within the subculture reinforces leadership flexibility.

Pluralism within influential political organizations aids social pluralism because the tolerance of significant differences within these organizations often fosters social tolerance among members; and the ongoing negotiation of intra-organizational differences often builds an institutional culture open to negotiation and compromise with other political forces. This happens if leaders and activists differ significantly on strategy and goals, and there are significant differences in the social background and personal culture of leaders, members and core sup-

22 A different view, which provides no suggestions for promoting pluralism in regions where it is weak, is advanced by Robert Putnam (Making Democracies Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993]).
ing alliances with pan-Indian parties and reconfiguring their vision of the political community to include groups that the movement had earlier deemed outsiders. Flexibility and autonomy reinforced each other, aided the preservation of tolerance and contestation, and helped improve the representation of emergent groups while the Dravidianists rose to dominance in Tamil Nadu. They enabled two crucial strategic shifts associated with major splits in movement organizations, that aided the pluralist outcomes: a turn towards populism, associated with the formation of the DMK, and the emergence of diverse populisms, associated with the formation of the ADMK.

The strategic changes the DMK and the ADMK initiated made Dravidianist constructions of political community more inclusive. The DMK adopted a populist discourse which distinguished a “popular Tamil/Dravidian community” from an “elite,” with reference to both ethnic and other social categories. Populist movements, parties and regimes deploy distinctions between the “people,” said to have limited access to various spheres of privilege, and an elite, considered dominant in these spheres and culturally distinct from the “people.” Populists claim to represent the will of the “people” to overcome their subordination.21 The concept “populism” is analytically useful if applied only to cases in which such notions of the people and the elite significantly shape movement strategy and organization, mass response, the composition of support and policies pursued. Populists have distinguished plebeian from patrician with reference to language and dialect use, pigmentation, occupation, levels of education, types of education (colonial/traditional), patterns of worship and so forth.

The DMK deployed ethnic notions composed of many partially overlapping layers: for example, caste and dialect use (“non-Brahmin”), language use (Tamil rather than other Indian languages or English), occupation (non-landlord, non-professional).24 Dravidian identity indicated affinity with the DMK subculture, predominantly composed of groups marginal to state-society links before Dravidianist rule, rather than being given the racial significance it was in some ear-


27 For other typologies of populism, see Ionescu and Gellner, Populism, and J. B. Allcock, “Populism: A Brief Biography,” Sociologie 5 (1971), 371-87. Arun Swamy misleadingly claims to have initially conceptualized the kind of typology I adopt. See Arun R. Swamy, “Parties, Political Identities and the Absence of Main Political Violence in South India,” in Atul Kohli and Amrita Basu, eds., The State and Community Conflicts in India (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 109 (note 1). This typology was introduced in Narendra Subramanian, “Ethnicity, Populism and Pluralist Democracy: Mobilization and Representation in South India” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, MIT, 1993) and figured in by discussion of the “moral economy” and “sons of the soil” outlooks in
tionally distinct with the formation of the ADMK. The DMK has been associated primarily with assertive populism and the ADMK with paternalist populism. Assertive populism urges supporters towards militant action to open up hitherto restricted spheres; and creates entitlements to education, jobs, loans, subsidized producer goods and sometimes small pieces of property. Due to the scarcity of such goods, they are usually rationed (perhaps through preferential policies) but not granted freely to all. Groups with some social power, albeit modest, are best able to compete for these entitlements, and are the movement’s key supporters. This is especially true of the petty intelligentsia—actual or aspiring white-collar workers drawn from groups with a limited history of Western education—which gains most from the preferential policies assertive populists institute.

The changes assertive populism introduces in power and status are attributed to the cadre’s self-willed activity. This legitimizes the distribution of patronage among activists and key supporters, and enables cadre and supporter autonomy. Links with the petty intelligentsia incline assertive populism towards ethnic militancy. The petty intelligentsia has been at the forefront of religious revivalist and language politics in colonial and postcolonial contexts, opposing religions of recent advent, secularization and elite intellectuals more conversant with the privileged language of the former colonizers. The Bulgarian Agrarian Union, the Greek PASOK, Sinhala Buddhist revivalist and the DMK paired assertive populism with ethnic militancy.

Paternalist populism promises that a benevolent leader, party or state will provide the poor and powerless with subsidized wage goods and protection from repressive elites. The lower strata and women, often unable to assert themselves independently or compete for the more substantial benefits assertive populism provides, are its main supporters. As supporters are encouraged to assume an attitude of reverence towards the party and its leader, paternalist populism does not strike directly at social deference. The centrality of a charismatic leader implies a weak party organization with limited cadre autonomy.

The charisma of paternalist leaders is, however, contingent on supporters viewing them as exemplars of paternalist populism, which requires the continued distribution of benefits, to which supporters develop a sense of being entitled. This may give supporters some autonomy if they present their initiatives as part of the paternalist agenda. Pre-existing conditions of dense associational activity may also force paternalist leaders to transact with autonomous associations. Although not given to ethnic militancy, paternalist populist leaders may use ethnic notions to highlight their affinity with the lower strata (for example, Sanchez Cerro in Peru and Peron in Argentina) or augment the prestige of the patron-state (for example, Mexico’s Partido Revolucionario Institucional).

The DMK’s roots among the intermediate strata, especially the petty intelligentsia, the party’s focus on policies appealing to these groups such as the intermediate caste quotas, and its militant language and autonomist demands identify it as assertive populist. In keeping with this characterization, the DMK has had a strong party organization, leaders were unable to designate their successors, and cadre and supporters used their significant autonomy to effect two significant splits.

Groups occupying the apex of DMK subcultures often oriented the initiatives of the local party unit. In the Tamil plains, whose historically loose stratification permitted many from intermediate castes to acquire significant power, the DMK became a vehicle for these groups. In some valleys, where society was more polarized and some intermediate castes shared with the lower castes a condition of ritual exclusion, the party initially associated itself with the efforts of these groups to overcome their social marginality.

The DMK’s promises of protection for women and the poor, the party’s focus on policies like the free lunch scheme to fulfil these promises, and the massive support the party got from women and the poor identify the ADMK as paternalist populist. The ADMK’s aban-
donment of caste appeals, and militant language and autonomist demands, the leader’s control over a rather weak party, the effective transfer of his charisma to his lover after his death and the inability of dissidents to effect significant splits, are consonant with this understanding.

High levels of prior associational activity forced ADMK leaders to grant concessions to independent caste and farmers’ associations, and gave supporters some autonomy in local contentions. Popular pressure urged the ADMK to abandon efforts to modify the basis of the preferential quotas, and traditional fisher men used the party’s banner in conflicts with motorized boat owners, as did urban squatter groups to deter police bulldozers.

Organizational pluralism crucially aided the two major changes in movement trajectory. Cadre autonomy enabled the growth of party factions with alternative strategic orientations prior to the two major splits. Supporter autonomy helped these factions gain popularity, which won them the tolerance of flexible party leaders. A populist faction developed within the DK fold and dominated the party’s youth wing. Factional leaders aired their alternative perspectives in journals they edited, and had sufficient clout to force the DK leader to formalize party organization. Similarly, a paternalist populist subculture developed within the DMK fold and was a major source of electoral support for the party. Based on adulation for MGR who later founded the ADMK, it took the organizational form of MGR’s fan clubs, which were loosely affiliated with the DMK and became havens of intra-party dissent. In both cases, the emergence of factions and party-affiliated associations with alternative perspectives within the parent party provided the new parties with a sound organizational base at the outset.

While cadre autonomy and flexibility enabled the formation of new parties, supporter autonomy and the adoption of a new strategy helped these parties become popular soon after they were formed. The DMK took with it the lion’s share of the DK’s former members and supporters when it was formed in 1949, and grew rapidly enough to assume power in the state 18 years later. Although the ADMK initially attracted only about 10 per cent of former DMK members, it immediately gained massive support from the DMK’s former paternalist populist supporters and those disenchanted with the declining pan-Indian parties, and has won four of the six elections held to the state legislature since its formation.

While both strategic changes tempered ethnic antagonisms, the emergence of paternalist populism reduced conflicts with the national government. These changes were highlighted by the failure of the nativist calls DMK leaders raised in the early to mid-1970s to discredit MGR in view of his non-Tamil origins.33 Nativism evoked little support even among core DMK supporters as they had become oriented to the revaluation of popular Tamil culture, in which MGR was a major figure. So far had the DMK’s populism shifted the focus of supporters away from policing ethnic boundaries that the DMK leaders could not themselves draw on ethnic antagonisms when they wanted. The failure of the DMK’s nativist gamble deterred any such future efforts, and the ADMK provided an alternative for those with strong attachments to both Tamil and pan-Indian identities. Not even the growth of a Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka in the 1980s revived opposition to out-groups in Tamil Nadu, although it generated some support and strengthened autonomist sentiments. Indeed, MGR’s lover and successor led the ADMK to power in the 1990s, despite being a Brahmin.

While the two changes in movement trajectory tempered ethnic animosities, they did not undermine the ability of Dravidianism to “immunize” Tamil society against Hindu revivalism. This was because this immunization effect was not based on widespread opposition to Hinduism or North Indians. Rather, assertive Dravidianism inhibited Hindu revivalist growth because it gave non-Hindus an important role in its vision of community and valorized norms diametrically opposed to those upheld by the Hindu revivalists—the culture of the intermediate rather than the upper castes; and notions of Tamil cultural specificity and pride, rather than of Indian cultural homogeneity. This was also because solidarity remained strong within its subculture, which transcended religious boundaries, even after the DMK’s ethnic militancy declined.

The existence of two variants of Dravidian populism, embodied in two competing parties with different but partly overlapping social bases, put greater pressure on both parties to deliver on their promises and respond to the ways in which autonomous supporters interpreted these promises. This increased accountability and reconciled Dravidianist dominance with vigorous contestation.

The Trajectories of the Other Movements

High levels of organizational pluralism enabled Dravidianist cadre and supporters to appropriate ethnic appeals with exclusionary overtones in a tolerant manner. The lower levels of both autonomy and flexibility in the other three cases limited to varying degrees the scope for the containment of the exclusionary features of these movements.

33 MGR was a non-Brahmin Malayali and thus within the scope of the broader definition of the Dravidian as a non-Brahmin South Indian, but this construction of ethnicity did not find broad acceptance.
Two conditions—the existence of a democratic regime accommodative (however selectively) of ethnic demands at the national level and high levels of social pluralism prior to the growth of the Dravidian parties—reinforced organizational and thus social pluralism in the Dravidianist case. But, neither these conditions nor social conditions, like levels of industrialization, determined either the extent of internal pluralism in India’s ethnic movements or the impact of ethnic mobilization on social pluralism. The nature of the national-level regime and policy framework did not prevent the decline of pluralism in Kashmir, Punjab and regions of Hindu revivalist strength. Further, exclusionary movements with little internal pluralism emerged in regions of high social pluralism and industrialization, and proceeded to undermine social pluralism, notably in the Hindu revivalist strongholds of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Maharashtra was the birthplace of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which informally leads the network of Hindu revivalist organizations, and the Shiva Sena, the most violent and intolerant of them. Hindu revivalist activities have undermined functional associations and relations between Hindus and non-Hindus in both Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Although a variety of Hindu and Sikh revivalist and Kashmiri nationalist organizations emerged, their internal pluralism was limited in different ways. Hindu revivalist organizations have had the least autonomy and flexibility throughout their history. While there was some autonomy in the Sikh and Kashmiri movements, their flexibility was diminished at crucial junctures because the Indian government rejected the bases of their autonomist demands. Hindu revivalist organizations are hierarchical. Leaders are nominated rather than elected at all levels, and cadre and core supporters are rigidly socialized into the movement’s world view. As a result, factions committed to different strategies have not emerged, and the various Hindu revivalist organizations have not differed significantly in their visions of political community or competed significantly amongst themselves for cadre or popular support. Rather, these organizations have formed an interlinked network, referred to as a family, and played complementary roles. While the Vishwa Hindu Parishad spearheads violent agitations, the BJP contests elections and the RSS trains leaders of the other organizations and loosely co-ordinates their activities. The formation of the Hindu revivalist subculture along these lines has impeded the emergence of tolerant movement offshoots, although such organizations would have drawn significant support, especially when existing movement organizations were in disrepute even among some of their usual supporters (for example, after a Hindu revivalist assassinated Gandhi in 1948).

Debates have arisen within Hindu revivalist organizations, especially the BJP, over how these organizations should present themselves. As a result, the BJP has, at times, presented itself as a moderate cultural nationalist force, and aimed to attract groups from which it has historically drawn limited support by adopting some of their demands or idioms. Thus, the party has sometimes claimed to be inspired by Gandhian socialism, supported demands for intermediate caste quotas and claimed eastern Indian religious reformers as forebears. There have been disagreements over the relationship between the different major Hindu revivalist organizations, and these relationships have changed marginally. However, these debates and resulting shifts in orientation have only been over tactics, not over long-term goals. The BJP has been closely linked all along with the more overtly Hindu revivalist non-electoral organizations, and its activists have participated in most major instances of Hindu revivalist violence. Even when taking up the demands of intermediate castes, the party has given these groups only limited representation in its leadership. The attempts of Hindu revivalist organizations to present themselves in the cultural idioms of eastern and southern India have not led to a deviation from a focus on the variants of Hindu belief and practice common among the upper and upper-middle castes of northern and western India. Thus, the debates within Hindu revivalist organizations and tactical shifts resulting from them have not meant that these organizations have changed their vision of political community or their propensity to oppose non-Hindus. The different emphases of these organizations in their appeals and activities have not meant that the more moderate among them, such as the BJP, have pursued a distinct, and more inclusive, strategy.

The Sikh revivalist subculture is less tightly knit than the Hindu revivalist one, and much disagreement has existed within it at various stages about bargaining with the Indian government, using violence and tolerating heterodox Sikhs. But, the extent of organizational pluralism has been limited—all Sikh revivalist organizations have agreed that Sikh identity politics was their focus and have not sought Hindu support, although the Akali Dal has periodically made tactical electoral alliances with the BJP. Besides, all these organizations have been deeply shaped by the way Sikh identity and the Sikh revivalist subculture were formed from the late nineteenth century onwards in terms of *Tat Khalsa* nationalism. These organizations differed only regarding how best to pursue a politics expressing this dominant definition of Sikh identity.

The tactical claim that the major Akali Dal faction made in the 1960s, that its autonomism was based on language use, did not represent flexibility as it served to placate the state, but did not change the sense among supporters and others that the movement was focused on Sikh identity. So, this move did not, and was not meant to, address the
concerns or gain the support of Punjabi-speaking Hindus. The Indian state’s consistent rejection of the notion of a Sikh political community shaped the sentiments of cadre and supporters, and made it likely that their autonomy would push Sikh politics in an exclusionary and violent direction. When this happened (especially in the early 1980s, but also subsequently), Sikh movement factions that were open to negotiation with the Indian government, or inclined to adopt a more tolerant attitude towards Hindus and heterodox Sikhs, found they had limited scope to pursue these options if they were to retain legitimacy as representatives of Sikh interests.

The inability of the Akali Dal to dominate state politics no doubt played a role in its demand in the 1950s and 1960s for a smaller state in which the Sikh share of the population would be greater, and the willingness of many of its leaders to collude tacitly or openly with Sikh organizations that engaged in violence to demand secession in the 1980s and 1990s. This, in turn, strengthened the influence of militants over Sikh politics at various points. The Congress party’s uncertain electoral fortunes in Punjab reinforced the disinclination of Congress-led national governments to recognize Sikh identity politics as legitimate, as this might have strengthened the Akali Dal.

However, both parties could have responded in other ways to their electoral predicaments. The choices they made were influenced, on the one hand, by the vision around which the Sikh revivalist subculture was formed and the lack of room to refashion this vision; and, on the other, by the broad outlines of the Congress party’s strategy for managing ethnic conflict. The Akali Dal could have given lower-caste Sikhs and heterodox Sikhs sects from which it drew limited support, a more central place in its vision of political community. Moreover, it could have used its demands for Punjab to be given a greater share in river waters and government budget transfers to gain some support among discontented Punjabi Hindus. The Akali Dal did neither because its long-term orientation was based on the way the Sikh revivalist subculture had been formed with reference to Tat Khalsa nationalism, both through phases during which the party focused on agitation and phases when it focused on electoral politics, and this orientation militated against such choices. The Congress party could have recognized the legitimacy of Sikh identity politics in order to make serious inroads into the Akali Dal’s support base among better-off orthodox Sikh groups, but its secularist conflict management strategy was incompatible with such a choice.

Electoral incentives were even less relevant in shaping Kashmiri nationalism than the other movements as most elections have not been free and fair in Jammu and Kashmir. Under conditions of repression from the mid-1950s to mid-1970s (repression that was nevertheless mild by the standards that the Indian government was to set later), Kashmiri nationalist organizations had considerable autonomy in day-to-day activities, coupled with dependence on the leader to initiate major strategic shifts. The dependence of cadre and supporters on Sheikh Abdullah reinforced their adherence to Kashmiri, rather than Muslim, nationalism, and enabled the leader to strike a bargain with a state that had imprisoned him and blatantly undermined democratic norms. Their dependence did not, however, extend to the Sheikh’s successors. The long experience of the subversion of democracy and autonomism in Kashmir predisposed Kashmiri nationalists to use the autonomy within the subculture to reject the deals Abdullah’s successors made with the state, leading to insurgency.

The greater autonomy within the Sikh and Kashmiri movements than within Hindu revivalism has given factions of the former two movements the scope to strike bargains with the state, even after periods of repression, if supporters grew tired of violence and the government was willing to increase regional autonomy. Hindu revivalists, on the other hand, have responded with intransigence to the milder repression they have faced. These differences are likely to persist unless movement subcultures undergo major changes. Hindu revivalists are least likely to accept social pluralism although the Kashmiri and Sikh movements have faced much more state repression, and despite the greater electoral success that Hindu revivalists have achieved, as this success has not been primarily based on moderating ethnic appeals. Due to the overall outlook binding the Hindu revivalist subculture and the accompanying inflexibility of strategy, the prospect of augmenting electoral gains by moderating ultimate goals has not reoriented Hindu revivalism, and is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future.

5. Some Lessons

Organizational pluralism not only made Dravidianism an ally of social pluralism, it helped it gain greater support within its target community than the other three movements did. As the ADMK’s appeals differed significantly from the DMK’s, it gained considerable support outside the initial Dravidianist niche, the intermediate strata of northern and central Tamil Nadu. So, the two major Dravidianist parties have dominated the support of the Tamil Nadu electorate from the mid-1970s onwards, contrary to the limited support that Table 3 indicates for Hindu revivalists in southern and eastern India, where Hindus are in the majority, as in most other parts of India. The Dravidianist experience is also in contrast with the limited support enjoyed by the Akali Dal among lower-caste Sikhs since decolonization, and by Kashmiri nationalism among Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, especially since the late 1980s.
The relative electoral success of the Dravidianists indicates that incentives exist for ethnic mobilizers to adopt flexible strategies and promote the growth of subcultures with autonomy. Activists with pluralistic inclinations can use these incentives to urge ongoing ethnic movements towards tolerance. The lower levels of ethnic conflict in Tamil Nadu than in most regions dominated by pan-Indianist parties show that such interventions in ongoing ethnic movements are more effective than pan-ethnic appeals in maintaining social pluralism under conditions of high ethnic mobilization. If institutions that promoted inter-ethnic co-operation break down in the face of ethnic mobilization, the emergence of internal pluralism within ethnic movement subcultures, and the consequent reorientation of these movements in a tolerant direction, are preconditions for the emergence of states and ethnic elites which have the authority and inclination to build pluralistic institutions appropriate for the changed circumstances.

Note

L’impact mécanique du vote alternatif au Canada : une simulation des élections de 1997*

ANTOINE BILODEAU Université de Montréal

Le mode de scrutin uninominal à un tour n’est plus à la mode. C’est du moins ce que paraît révéler l’état d’esprit autant intellectuel que populaire des pays où ce système est en vigueur. Que ce soit au Québec (suite aux élections générales de 1998), au Canada ou même aux Royaume-Uni (bastion du scrutin uninominal à un tour), on peut constater partout les distorsions occasionnées par ce système et on s’interroge de plus en plus sur les alternatives possibles. Au Royaume-Uni, la Commission sur la réforme électorale a récemment tranché1: le système actuel devrait être remplacé par le vote alternatif (VA)2 assorti d’un mécanisme de correction. Au Canada, malgré les tentatives d’amorce d’un débat de fond, aucune proposition concrète n’émerge des discussions. Pourquoi ne pas s’inspirer des conclusions du rapport Jenkins et envisager l’adoption du VA au Canada? Selon Tom Flana-

* L’auteur remercie André Blais sans qui ce texte et beaucoup d’autres choses n’auraient pas été possibles ces dernières années, et aussi André-J Bélanger. L’auteur tient à remercier le Fonds FCAR pour son soutien financier.

2 Ce mode de scrutin oblige l’électeur à ranger les candidats présents dans sa circonscription suivant un ordre de préférences. En l’absence d’une majorité absolue dans l’expression des premières préférences, les deuxième et troisièmes choix des électeurs du candidat le plus faible sont redistribués aux autres candidats en lice. Le processus de redistribution se poursuit jusqu’à ce que l’un des candidats obtienne la majorité absolue.

Antoine Bilodeau, 95 High Park Ave., Apt. 714, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2R8. Adresse électronique : bilodeau@chass.utoronto.ca

Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique
XXXII 4 (December/Decembre 1999) 785-81
© 1999 Canadian Political Science Association (l’Association canadienne de science politique) and/et la Société québécoise de science politique