

Ethnicity and Conflict Recurrence: An Analysis on the Deterioration of Peace

by

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## ABSTRACT

Civil conflicts with ethnic motivating factors are more likely to experience recurrence than nonethnic conflicts. In this paper, I conduct a survival analysis on a group of 175 conflict episodes from 1946-2005. I argue that grievances based on religion, race, culture, language, and/or history are difficult to resolve due to the concept of indivisibility that makes compromise on ethnic issues unpopular. Along with Clausewitz's theory on the influence of passion, chance, and reason in war, I also argue the importance of following clear objectives. When goals change over time, strategy becomes confounded and conflict recurrence increases. Utilizing the Cox Proportional Hazards model, the hazard rate is found to be significantly higher for ethnic conflicts than nonethnic conflicts. They also face shorter periods of peace. To highlight how ethnic mechanisms effect similar conflict scenarios, a case study of the first Indo-Pakistani and Chinese Civil War is made. I find that in the absence of ethnic grievances through China's cultural assimilation campaigns, they were able to effectively curb violent disputes while India could not.

## DEDICATION

For my father and mother, who worked tirelessly and silently to provide me the opportunities they never had. Thank you for teaching me the value of education and the true meaning of perseverance. *Cảm ơn cha mẹ rất nhiều.*

For my friend Shay, the first person to believe in my potential completely and without any wavering doubt. I owe my confidence to pursue distant aspirations from your continual encouragement.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

73 years, six months, two weeks, and five days. Since gaining independence after WWII, Myanmar has been at war with itself for over seven decades. Major ethnic conflicts on five separate fronts (Kachin, Kayin, Kayah, Rakhine, and Shan state) have decimated the young country's political, economic, and social structures (HRW 2019). Despite years of negotiation, ethnic minorities still face political and economic inequality. Persistent instability has left civilians in a constant state of fear and has induced calls for self-determination. Explaining conflict recurrence has proven to be one of the most demanding tasks scholars and politicians alike have faced in modern history. A central puzzle in recurrence is why governments feel the need to deny compromise towards ethnic grievances. Conversely, why do ethnic groups continue to fight when victory seems impossible? These questions continue to plague Myanmar and other states experiencing ethnic conflicts. Additionally, academic research and "trial and error" policy proposals have yet to find an adequate solution to erase causal mechanisms underlying violent recurrence.

Many explanations of conflict recurrence have gained traction at the turn of the 21st century. General studies on recurrence provide critical frameworks to understanding which motives actors are willing to go through repeated wars for. These could be necessary assets like oil or water. The presence of an existential security threat might persuade a state to counter until the threat is mitigated (Wagner 2000). Even so, not all conflict recurrence can be explained by the logic of safety or necessity. Ethnic conflicts tend to recur outside the scope of objective reasoning. Literature on identity politics associated with ethnicity details



the intensely personal nature of grievances held by ethnic groups. Their motives are those built through generations, and they rely on symbolic value over observable value a state might place on theirs. Rationally, all major ethnic groups could live peacefully in autonomous regions within a Burmese state, but calls for self-determination, despite extremely low odds, prevent any compromise from being achieved. The literature identifies persisting historical grievances, non-negotiability in peace talks, and high salience of identity as main factors differentiating ethnic conflict from other kinds of conflict that recur.

This paper aims to utilize previous research on conflict recurrence and ethnic studies to address a shift in warfare. I address the question of whether ethnic conflicts are more likely to recur than other types of conflict. Since the majority of indecisive conflict terminations in the UCDP dataset are from ethnic-based conflicts, this research hypothesizes they are at a greater risk of recurrence than nonethnic conflicts. The UCDP Conflict Termination dataset provides the start and end dates of armed conflict. It also classifies the means of termination. While the dataset documents both interstate and intrastate warfare, Kreutz's (2010) study on conflict recurrence focuses on civil conflict. Since my research relies on Kreutz's work, the analysis will only be relevant to civil wars. A look at the dataset confirms an increase in alternative means of conflict resolution independent from peace agreements, ceasefires, and victory. My research begins by arguing that the "other outcomes" category of the UCDP dataset reflects ongoing conflicts that have fallen below the threshold of battle deaths necessary to be seen as an active war. Subsequently, the term "resolution" creates a misconception that these conflicts have ended. In practice, it only marks low activity levels within a given year. Interestingly, an initial

analysis of the other outcomes category reflects a large percentage of ethnic conflicts constituting the list.

Using survival analysis, I implement a Cox Proportional Hazards Model to compare 175 conflict episodes from the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset. The Ethnic Armed Conflict (EAC) dataset was merged to identify which conflicts were fought for ethnic motivations. Motives include religious, cultural, racial, linguistic, and historical differences. This variable is labeled as “group,” with zero indicating a nonethnic conflict and one indicating an ethnic conflict. The unit of analysis is the conflict episode. A conflict is said to have multiple episodes if the same actors are involved, but the episode begins in a different, noncontinuous year. Merging of the UCDP and EAC datasets was made possible because they both used the same conflict IDs. The latter was formed from the UCDP dataset but differs in the fact that it measures ethnic motivations while the former does not. Other variables thought to have influence in these conflicts are incorporated into the analysis. Specifically, variables indicating secession, democracy, and ethnic fractionalization are included. The resulting regression provides interesting data suggesting that ethnicity is a significant determinant on whether the conflict will recur. These findings are important for understanding the role ethnicity plays in war. Recognizing the substantial consequences that come with fighting ethnic conflicts (i.e., resource drain, prolonged wars, low likelihood of achieving objectives), actors can avoid opening a Pandora’s Box by making informed decisions from the outset.

My thesis first presents a literature review that assesses current theories at the forefront of conflict recurrence studies. They are sectioned into three categories: the

bargaining theory, territorial disputes, and grievance resolution. Afterwards, two theoretical frameworks help to understand why conflict recurrence has become so prevalent in modern history. Following a brief explanation on the topic inspiration for this research, ethnicity is discussed as an “enhancing” variable that intensifies violent disputes. Ethnicity leads to conflict recurrence through the absence of grievance alleviation and issue indivisibility. The second theory introduced relies on military strategy as an alternative means to contemporary academic research on war recurrence.

Clausewitz’s (1984) emphasis on the “Trinity” describes how psychological factors influence ordinary citizens, governments, and militaries to interact in ways that have adverse effects on outcomes in war. When one part of the Trinity -- passion -- is out of balance, it can instigate and intensify grounds for war. Finally, Clausewitz’s theory of absolute and limited war introduces the importance of selecting clear objectives to fight for. When goals are confounded, wars are prolonged and at a greater risk of recurring as actors are left unsatisfied with current circumstances.

Directly following the theory section, the research design outlines the specific details in constructing the dataset used for analysis. The Cox Proportional Hazards model is discussed before results are reported. The study finds that an ethnic variable measuring the inclusion of a racial, religious, linguistic, historical, or cultural factor significantly increases the hazard of a conflict. The survival rate (i.e., likelihood of a conflict *not* experiencing recurrence) significantly decreases when ethnicity is involved. To illustrate these mechanisms at work, a case study on the first Indo-Pakistani war and the Chinese Civil War is made. India and China have survived similar imperial legacies as colonies of the British

Empire. While certain parts of their histories are parallel in meaningful ways, their developments have been unique from one another. India's war will serve as the ethnic case. China's assimilation campaigns toward ethnic groups, paired with their low numbers of political representation, have suppressed ethnic violence and recurrence. The paper will end with parting thoughts on the realities of this research, and the consequences of inaction.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous literature has contributed to explanations on conflict recurrence. Individual findings on the bargaining theory, territorial disputes, and grievance resolution intersect in meaningful ways. They outline a convincing, multidimensional approach as to why ethnic conflict is especially costly. Diving into the bargaining theory, its concept revolves around the economic model of evaluating opportunity costs. Whether it is on an individual, state, or international level, actors tend to make decisions based on which conclusion will reap the most benefits. When faced with enticing options, relative costs are compared to minimize losses. When applied to armed conflict, the parties involved strive for favorable outcomes. Whether this will be a complete victory, or a negotiated settlement depends on the resources and strategies used. A success could mean forcing the actors to come to the table and discuss resolutions (Clausewitz 1984). This assertion warrants a very important question: under what circumstances is victory *and* negotiation unlikely?

In peace and conflict studies, ethnicity continues to be the driving force behind the most brutal and unrelenting wars history has ever seen. This is in part due to the

pervasiveness of ethnic identity in society. Groups with commonalities like language, religion, history, and culture create exclusive communities around ethnonationalism that are not easily forsaken (Hale 2004, Muller 2008). When ethnic violence initiates, leaders are less willing to compromise because they see any settlement less than a 100% victory as unacceptable (Denny and Walter 2014). As Wagner (2000) defines it, “if a war is to end by a negotiated settlement, both [parties] must prefer the terms of the settlement to the expected value of continuing the war.” In relation to a secessionist movement, war will continue if the state shuts out the possibility of ethnic autonomy and the ethnic group refuses to make concessions. Therefore, the opportunity cost as evaluated by the opposing sides are both too high of a risk for either to meet halfway. If most ethnic conflicts behave with a similar mentality, it is plausible that ethnic conflict will not only be more difficult to resolve, but that when they *do* end it is unlikely to be through a negotiated means (Wagner 2007). These include peace agreements and ceasefires (Kreutz 2010).

Supported by the bargaining theory, Wucherpfennig (2012) has analyzed the relationship between ethnicity and duration of civil conflict. He finds that exclusionary policies against an ethnic group by the state increases the length of war in comparison to wars where groups are included. The state is less likely to condone settlements if past discriminatory policies were in place. Inversely, bad policies that reaffirm ethnic grievances will motivate actors to continue pushing back against the government. Since the prospect of favorable future payouts and political opportunities are enticing, wars can be long due to the will to continue fighting. Inherently, ethnicity is not a component of conflict duration, rather it is ethnopolitical legislation that fuels subsequent reactions. His research is useful in

understanding why ethnic civil wars are so difficult to resolve. This research also provides crucial findings that supplement studies on war recurrence. If the longevity of war is directly connected to exclusionary state policies, failure to mitigate these grievances overtime can lead to recurring episodes of violence.

To continue, Senese and Vasquez's (2005) study on territorial disputes is pivotal in understanding the longevity of ethnic conflict. If territory is such a contentious topic for both states and ethnic groups, engaging in violent combat over contested land has serious implications that can lead to repeated clashes throughout decades. Territories that are "strategically important, economically significant, or psychologically valuable" (Walter 2006) are particularly dangerous. Fruitful negotiations are unlikely when both parties find equal merit in continuing to fight. To illustrate, present-day Kurdistan extends through parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The sheer size of the territory and of its near 50 million inhabitants raises the question as to why they are not considered sovereign. The problem lies with the four aforementioned states finding strategic value in the Kurd areas. Whether that is to separate from hostile neighbors along the borders, or the need for resources found within the territory, no state wants to give up something that is beneficial to them.

Additionally, Hensel and Mitchell (2005) introduce the concept of "intangibility," adding yet another layer to the complex study of territorial conflicts. The authors find that territorial claims are both "frequent and bloody," but the most dangerous ones are those that have an intangible aspect to it. Tangible objectives have concrete reasons for animosity, like the removal of an unwanted leader. Intangible by contrast is categorized by the inherent value something has to offer. Ethnic conflicts tend to have intangible characteristics,

commonly seen with territorial disputes over sacred locations like Jerusalem. Ethnic issues, as a non-negotiable, extend wars and lead to the high likelihood of repeated conflict when actors refuse to compromise. Since concrete resolutions are rarely accepted, large numbers of ethnic conflicts remain unresolved.

The final branch of literature addressing conflict recurrence is the absence of restitution. Relapse can occur if initial grievances remain unaddressed or the situation becomes worse (Wagner 2007). Walter (2004) highlights two situations where war could break out again. The first is a “severe dissatisfaction with one’s current situation,” and the second is the “absence of nonviolent means for change.” The consequences of a previous war, paired with a disillusioned populace after, will motivate them to seek change once again. The lack of a nonviolent means for change is key here. Oftentimes wars break out because there are no effective institutional means for a group to have their grievances addressed. Assuming the state cares very little about giving political representation to excluded ethnicities that challenged their legitimacy, ethnic groups have no choice but to resort back to violence. When political and economic incentives are given, rebellion significantly decreases. Additionally, if instability and human costs have created psychological barriers during previous violence, groups might be unwilling to negotiate. Coggins (2011) also finds that negotiated resolutions are more likely to relapse into violence. Since definitive victory clarifies the balance of power, it is less likely others will rise against the government again. These findings support Kreutz’s (2010) analysis of the UCDP dataset.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORY

#### **3.1 Traditional Theories**

Ethnic grievances have long since been considered drivers of conflict. Through the intersection of literature on ethnicity and war longevity, key assertions on the prevalence of recurrence in ethnic conflicts can be made. This study formed from an initial observation of the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset that analyzes the years between 1946-2005.

Preliminary research revealed that most conflict episodes in the dataset are reflecting ongoing wars. In Kreutz's (2010) article, he finds there is an increase in indecisive conflict termination (i.e., other outcomes) from 38% before the Cold War to nearly 50% afterwards. Other methods of resolution include peace agreements, victories, and ceasefires. This intriguing statistic spurred the question of what exactly changed in the years following the end of the post-WWII Great Power competition. I argue that the latter half of the 21st century saw the final fall of great empires. As state lines were redrawn (i.e., Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union), ethnonationalism spurred movement by the millions. Ethnic groups were continually pushed to the outskirts of state lines, and constant regrouping would eventually create new nation-states. The breakdown of empires stirred unrest largely due to the fact that subjugated groups pushed to establish sovereign states of their own.

The basis for this research hypothesizes that an increase in civil wars fought with an ethnicity component leads to an exponential increase in indecisive conflict termination. Following the logic on empires above, the 1989 fall of the Soviet Union was used as a benchmark to create two initial samples of the "other outcomes" category. The results found



that conflicts with ethnic dimensions increased. Compared to the earlier sample that yielded 4/10 ethnic conflicts, the second sample ranging from 1989-2005 scored a 9/10. After confirming initial suspicions that the “other outcomes” category indeed reflects a large account of ethnic wars, attention turned to why so many conflicts had multiple episodes. Conflict episodes are bursts of activity that can be classified as recurrence in a larger war. Subsequently, this study argues that ethnicity is key to the concept of conflict recurrence and why it happens. Since ethnic conflicts are difficult to resolve, they also have a high chance of relapsing into violence after periods of peace. This is especially true after the Cold War since ethnic conflicts have increased. The literature review explained the most prevalent studies on ethnic conflict resolution, but generally, difficulty in concluding these wars stem from identity salience and the insistence that grievances are non-negotiable. Nonethnic conflicts lack the intense resolve that sustains war for decades at a time. With these assumptions in place, this paper argues the following:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Ethnic conflicts are more likely than nonethnic conflicts to experience recurrence.

Research on conflict recurrence has generally focused on four categories (Karlen, 2017). These include state attributes (i.e., weak states), the character and dynamics of a previous conflict (i.e., duration, intensity, goals of combatants), conflict termination method, and the post-conflict environment. Although the literature thus far contributes immensely to the study of recurrence, the literature inadequately addresses ethnicity as a distinct contributor to all the previous arguments. The research alone is convincing, but

ethnicity enhances the effect. Essentially, ethnic conflicts exacerbate the intensity and willingness for war, thus leading to recurrence. Ethnicity as an “enhancing” variable has three key causal mechanisms. The first results from actions taken by ethnic groups when their grievances go unaddressed. Equally important, the second mechanism stems from the strategic value a state gains by *not* alleviating those grievances. Finally, ethnicity as a concept is given intrinsic value through what is known as “indivisibility” and “intangibility.” These psychological forces have a powerful impact on mobilizing actors for war.

Ethnic conflicts tend to have the longest wars and end in negotiations. The UCDP dataset illustrates that negotiated settlements lead to recurrence more often than when a decisive victory is achieved. When a concise resolution is not achieved, there is no incentive for political restructuring to address ethnic grievances. Wucherpfennig’s (2012) empirical analysis finds that longevity of war is directly connected to exclusionary state policies. Failure to mitigate these grievances overtime can lead to recurring episodes of violence. From the state perspective, there is also a cost-benefit analysis to be done when factoring in future complications (Walter 2006). The decision to engage in war against rebel groups depends on the strategic value of doing so. For instance, states who are populated with a wide range of ethnicities might reconsider accepting negotiations with a secessionist if it will embolden others to do the same. Whereas war might be an unpopular option, considering future challenges could motivate the state to squash dissent at its root.

The last causal mechanism for ethnic conflict is the concept of “indivisibility.”

Indivisibility is the case when one state sees a territory as an extension of itself, and as a result, cannot be negotiated (Goddard 2006, Hensel and Mitchell 2005). Many actors use the salience of identity politics to their advantage. Capitalizing on “issue indivisibility,” actors legitimize their claim to a territory by constantly reinforcing it through reminders in everyday life (Goddard 2006). This socially constructed legitimization can be seen with Jerusalem and the Israelis. Before WWII, it would be unlikely that the Jewish people could claim so powerfully their monopoly over a holy land of so many distinct religious groups. Through the installation of a national mindset, they have made the city a part of their own indispensable culture. This highlights a two-step process that begins with legitimization and subsequent culturalization. Intangible issues like identity have a personal nature that objective ones do not. Tangible issues lack the psychological depth and cultural importance of its counterpart, meaning that the conflicts are usually easier to settle and shorter in length. As a result, intangible issues are also more likely to be militarized and severe in their consequences.

### **3.1 Clausewitz’s Trinity and Theories on War**

Since this study is a theory on war, it is also guided by military strategy literature. In academic research, ethnic studies are framed through the lens of a historian looking at pieces after the dust has already settled. Yet, history has proven to be faulty and erased when it doesn’t fit an intended narrative. The following theory adds a dimension to traditional academic literature by introducing a perspective of conflict resolution through the lens of a soldier in the Napoleonic Wars. Perhaps the most famous military strategist

since Sun Tzu, Clausewitz's (1984) thoughts have heavily influenced the inception of this paper. Although his theories were written under the assumptions of interstate warfare prevalent at the time, Clausewitz's focus on the individual makes it easily translatable to civil conflict. Particularly, his emphasis on passion, chance, and reason are undertones weaved through each argument. Clausewitz refers to these forces as the Trinity. Ethnicity as a driving force for conflict relies on the passion of a populace, the luck (or capabilities) of an army, and the reason of a government (both absence and inclusion). Without balance between these forces, war changes. It becomes unorganized, prone to strategic failures, and inevitably repeats. Unfortunately, reason tends to be the most difficult to control. The third causal mechanism of recurrence in ethnic wars described above is issue indivisibility. Clausewitz's Trinity illustrates this mechanism when passion overwhelms chance and reason. Identity politics cloud judgment and passion fuels wars that rationality could prevent. Supported by the bargaining theory, conflict recurrence is due to failed negotiations. When ethnicity is involved, compromises are far less likely to succeed since ethnic grievances are framed as non-negotiable issues. Passion replaces reason.

Clausewitz's (1984) theory on absolute and limited war is also useful in understanding conflict recurrence. Absolute and limited wars are often defined by their brutality, but objectives are also a distinguishing factor. Different actions are necessary to achieve certain goals, and when objectives are lost, conflict can continue indefinitely. It is critical to understand the motives behind actors involved, as well as the leadership writing the agenda. Absolute war aims to completely decimate the enemy and obtain total victory. In contrast, limited wars frequently end at the negotiation table with an understanding that

no further violence will benefit either side. Their *objectives* differ.

Confusing these types of wars and their goals have the detrimental effect of decreasing the chances of a decisive resolution being found. For instance, the United States' prolonged conflict in Afghanistan could be attributed to its confusion of absolute and limited war. The U.S. has practiced limited war tactics, but oppositely has utilized absolute war rhetoric. Politicians frequently demand “destruction of the enemy” and “unconditional surrender” in regards to the Taliban, while completely unaware that the game they are playing is one that ends in negotiation. Not only has the post-WWII “New World Order” replaced absolute wars with limited ones, ethnic wars in particular tend to end in negotiation (Kreutz 2010). This dissonance between rhetoric and action has the perverse effect of increasing conflict recurrence. The methods do not match the objectives.

Clausewitz's theory is relevant to this paper because of the consequences that have formed from the most recent shift from absolute to limited war. His emphasis on objectives in war relate to the second causal mechanism of recurrence: strategic value. States fight wars for their own benefit or because it's the best option they have left.

Unfortunately, limited wars in the 21st century have had the adverse effect of creating proxy conflicts with ill-defined objectives. Great Power competition through these means has seen numerous extended wars in the realm of ethnic conflicts. As more time passes, actors involved lose sight of initial goals. Since most contemporary wars have had an ethnic component to them, the negative effects of proxy wars coupled with the difficulty of resolving them has only exacerbated the number of intense and ongoing ethnic conflicts.

Additionally, international mediation in ethnic civil wars can introduce confounding

objectives not aligned with the original goals (Wolford and Ritter, 2016). Since multiple parties fight for differing reasons, a successful strategy cannot be implemented, and war continues inevitably. Whereas organizations like the UN intervene under the pretense of Human Rights Violations, states rarely participate in foreign wars without some beneficial outcome in mind. Whether it is through military or financial aid, research has shown that their involvement is overall ineffective. Conflicts drag on longer as more actors become involved and a clash of interests form. Reuter (2017) states, “opportunistic interventions to gain military, economic, or political benefits take advantage of conflict-affected states and contribute to the conflict.” For example, if the state actor and a rebel group choose to negotiate, a third-party actor might reject the offer because it is unlikely they will receive anything from it. Bring in another state and it is difficult to imagine all sides will have their interests fulfilled.

The unwillingness of third parties to concede after investing time, effort, and resources to the cause could be a primary factor in why ethnic conflicts particularly have a long lifespan and recur. This can be seen in the Yemeni and Libyan civil wars, with Russian and American interests impeding resolution for quite some time. The international community frequently involves itself in these types of wars, and in doing so have the unintentional effect of allowing it to persist longer than it would have.

International intervention is useless if state conditions aren't physically changed (Kauffman 1996). If intervention is to be successful, the weak political and social structures that led to war in the first place must be reconstructed. Therefore, intervention *could* be extremely helpful, only if the third-party state is willing to engage until the very end, and more so to

stay afterwards and partake in recovery and rebuilding efforts. Unfortunately, many states are unwilling to take on that responsibility. Proxy wars and ethnic conflicts separately have high probabilities of war longevity and recurrence. In an era where both proxy wars and ethnic conflicts are the norm, global stability might be out of reach until underlying issues of warfare are addressed.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### **4.1 A Mixed Methods Approach**

I will test whether ethnic conflicts are more likely to recur than nonethnic conflicts through a mixed methods approach. For the quantitative analysis, I utilize a survival model. The Cox Proportional Hazards model assesses the expected duration of time before a failure event occurs. This method is commonly seen in medical research to investigate the effectiveness of treatment, with relapse as the failure event. When applied to conflict recurrence, it is useful for testing how certain predictor variables like ethnicity prevent or catalyze war. The regression also provides a hazard rate that is typically “more informative about the underlying mechanism of failure than the other representations of a lifetime distribution” (Cleves 2016). To examine the ethnic mechanism in a real-world context, a case study of the Chinese Civil War and first Indo-Pakistani War is made. These conflicts were chosen due to their similarities with British colonial rule and the separation of Taiwan and Pakistan from their original states. India’s ethnic diversity is directly linked to its

hostile developments with Pakistan. In the absence of ethnic grievances through both luck and strategy, I argue conflict recurrence between China and Taiwan was mitigated.

## **4.2 Constructing the Dataset**

This research merged the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset's "other outcomes" category with the Ethnic Armed Conflict (EAC) dataset (Kreutz 2010, Cederman 2010). Since my research focuses on indecisive conflict terminations, I selected my sample from the "other outcomes" group due to the fact that these conflicts failed to reach a concrete resolution. Some resolution methods include peace agreements, ceasefires, and victory. Actors involved tend to know the results of the conflict through mutual agreement – or in the case of victories there is a clear "winner" that eliminates the opposing actor's fighting capability. Conflicts that are inconclusive could be due to long stalemates or the number of casualties falling below the 1000 battle deaths threshold to be included in the dataset. All episodes in the other outcomes category were included in my analysis. Furthermore, the EAC codes for ethnic versus nonethnic conflicts, as well as secession. To match them as closely as possible, some information had to be excluded. Since the EAC dataset only included conflicts for those that reached the 1000 battle deaths threshold, all conflicts that did not reach that level in the UCDP dataset were excluded. This was easy to achieve as the original UCDP dataset had a separate coding, labeled "IntensityLevel," correlating with conflicts above 1000 deaths. Additionally, the UCDP dataset ranges from 1946-2015, while the EAC dataset reflects the years between 1946-2005. Due to these differences, the years 2006- 2015 were not incorporated into the new dataset. Furthermore, the coding for



“StartDate” in the original UCDP data could be confusing and misleading. At a closer glance, these dates reflect the start date of the overall conflict, rather than the beginning of an episode. For instance, a war in Afghanistan that began in 1975 with multiple recurring conflicts will all have a start date of 1975. In practice, The UCDP’s “Year” classification represents the beginning of an episode. As a result, the “Year” category will be used to match the start year (“startyr”) found in the EAC dataset.

As for end dates, the missing years were matched in the UCDP dataset with those found in the EAC dataset, coding it as “EndYear.” The remaining missing information was coded after research of historical records in an aim to close knowledge gaps. The new dataset measures distinct breaks between conflicts with the same ID. If an ID of “1- 10” was continuous from 1946-1954, it would be inputted as one row. If the conflict then had a gap where years passed in between, yet fighting resumed between the same actors in 1982, it’d be listed as a second row. This would indicate a conflict recurrence. The original model was not discrete, but by converting the episodes there is no longer a reliance on exact dates.

Finally, the datasets represent intrastate conflict. The datasets were rearranged from the earliest start date to the latest. When both sets mirrored each other, the ethnicity variable was captured utilizing the EAC’s definition of what constitutes an ethnic conflict. Ethnicity implies shared history, culture, language, and/or religion. An ethnic conflict is interpreted as violence for widespread political, economic, or social representation. The binary variable, “group,” categorized as 0 corresponds to “nonethnic” and 1 to “ethnic.” Further elaboration on the standards is described below:

Ethnic/nonethnic conflicts are distinguished by the aims of the armed organizations and their recruitment alliance structures, in line with other ongoing coding projects (Sambanis 2009). Ethnic wars typically involve conflicts over ethnonational self-determination, the ethnic balance of power in government, ethnoregional autonomy, ethnic and racial discrimination (whether alleged or real), and language and other cultural rights. We define all other war aims as nonethnic.

Other variables include secession, democracy, and ethnic fractionalization. The democracy variable is categorized using historical records from the Polity IV data. This dataset examines “concomitant qualities of democratic and autocratic authority in governing institutions, rather than discrete and mutually exclusive forms of governance” (Marshall 2010). By evaluating democracy as part of a spectrum, the polity score differentiates full democracies and autocracies from those that have characteristics of both. This distinction is important for understanding state instability (and subsequent violence) as a country draws closer towards autocracy. Regarding the ethnic fractionalization variable, I utilize the Historic Index of Ethnic Fractionalization (HEIF) to describe ethnic diversity within a state. The HEIF assesses 165 countries in the years between 1945-2013. A 0 in the index indicates “no ethnic fractionalization in the country and all individuals are members of the same ethnic group” (Drazanova 2019). A score of 1 would indicate heterogeneity, where each individual belongs to a separate ethnic group.

#### **4.3 Cox Proportional Hazards Model**

After the dataset was created, I analyzed it using a survival analysis model. The time variable represents the length of time between an initial episode’s end year and the start of the next; known as the recurrence year. 2005 was the final year under observation for the

purposes of this research. If a period of violence did not occur after the first episode, or the recurrence episode began after 2005, the observation was right-censored. For example, the U.S. war in Afghanistan officially concluded with the withdrawal of all troops in 2021. The invasion of Afghanistan began in 2001, but since the end year is outside the scope of the study, it will be right-censored.

To test for outliers, I used the Difference in Beta test (DFBETA). Five conflicts were found to skew the data and exert influence on the rest. Removing them provided results more significant than the original model with outliers. The ethnic variable (group) was significant at the  $p > 0.000$  level, and ethnic fractionalization and secession were significant at the  $p > 0.100$  level. Ethnic fractionalization almost reached significance at the 5% level, scoring  $p > 0.067$ . While these results support the initial hypothesis, it was decided that the outliers would not be removed. This research aims to find how ethnicity affects the probability of continued violence. Violent recurrence is in itself part of the extremes of war. Removing the conflicts that experienced the worst cases – or at times, the best of them – separates the unpredictable dynamic of war that leads to recurrence.

For example, the Colombian conflict (id = 192) recurred four times and is described as an outlier. This is an ongoing war between the Colombian government and paramilitary groups, crime syndicates, and guerilla groups. These episodes shouldn't be excluded because they illustrate precisely the tactics that have come to define war. Particularly, ethnic groups often must deploy asymmetrical warfare against a central government. The state likely has more resources and military power, so utilizing nontraditional strategies proves effective. Of course, "effectiveness" in violent conflicts can lead to multiple recurrences

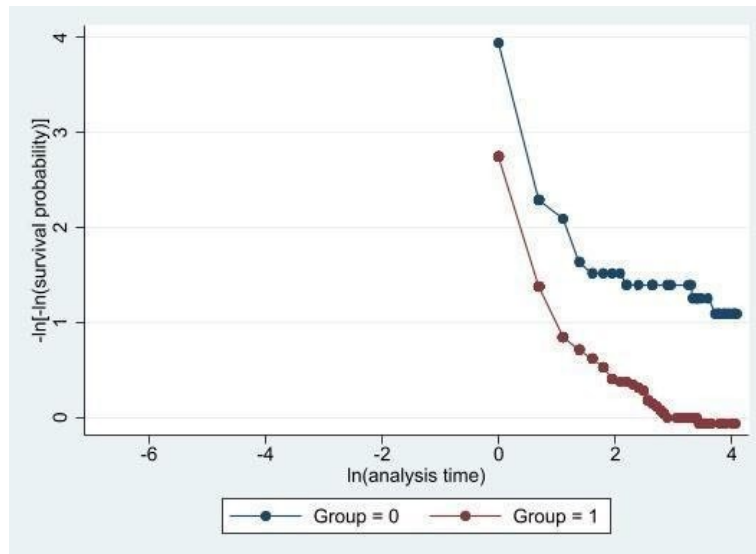
when neither side is capable of grasping definitive victory. The case of Colombia's prolonged war is an interesting addition to the data that shows an important spectrum of conflict recurrence. For these reasons, the outliers were included in the analysis.

The Cox Proportional Hazards Model was then applied to test whether ethnic conflicts are more likely to recur than nonethnic conflicts. A Cox Regression is commonly used to measure the effect covariates have on the hazard rate, or rate of failure. In this case, the failure event would be recurrence and ethnicity would be the independent variable. Another goal was to assess the Rate of Decay (survival time) between the two groups. Comparing the observations in each group that experienced recurrence, how long did the duration of peaceful years last on average? The literature supports the notion that wars fought over ethnic divides are likely to persist longer, but does the salience of ethnic disputes spur shorter time frames of stability?

To test whether the model is specified correctly, a link test is performed. The link test "looks for a specific type of specification error called a link error, wherein a dependent variable needs to be transformed (linked) to accurately relate to an independent variable" (Reed 2021). Additional variables are added to the analysis to test significance. According to Cleves, et al (2016), if the model is specified correctly then "these added variables will add little or no explanatory power." A model without a link error will have a nonsignificant t-test versus the unsquared version. After testing every covariate in my model, all were specified correctly. Another diagnostic test utilized a graphical method. To test the proportionality of hazards and confirm that the model specifications were correct, a proportional hazards plot was employed. Under the

proportional hazards assumption, the plotted curves should be parallel. Graph A indicates that the group variable is roughly parallel and thus is fitted well. The regression analysis proceeded when it was confirmed that the model specifications were adequate.

Graph A



## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

The Cox Regression model was run with the group, secession, democracy, and ethnic fractionalization variables. A test for correlation between the variables showed that all coefficient outputs were less than 0.5, indicating low correlation between them. The results utilized 175 subjects with 79 failures. The chi2 test produced a p-value of 0.0001 that indicates the model is highly significant at the 0.01% level. The regression shows that secession and democracy are not significant, while ethnic fractionalization is at

the 10% level. The group variable produced a p-value of 0.002, indicating significance at the 0.2% level. This finding follows the initial hypothesis and Table 1 summarizes the statistics. Some might have concerns about the validity of these results since outliers were not removed. Therefore, a second model tests the data without outliers. The model emphasizes that the results hold true even in their absence. When these events are taken out, group and ethnic fractionalization actually *increases* in significance, and secession becomes significant at the 10% level. The second model is also reported in Table 1.

Interestingly, secession is not significant even though literature suggests most secession movements are due to ethnic grievances. One explanation for this discrepancy could be an over-representation of a particular country's ethnic conflict that recurred often but was not secession-based. For example, between 1953-1961, Indonesia experienced three conflict recurrences. All were coded as ethnic, but none were secession movements. If this pattern has the highest amount of recurrence in the data, the results will not yield significance for secession, but would continue to do so for the group variable.

Table 1

Model 1		Model 2	
VARIABLES	<u>t</u>	VARIABLES	<u>t</u>
Group	0.002*** (0.845)	Group	0.000*** (0.285)
Secession	0.174 (0.329)	Secession	0.100* (0.381)
Democracy	0.450 (0.215)	Democracy	0.680 (0.244)
EthnoFrac	0.100* (0.850)	EthnoFrac	0.067* (1.060)
Observations	175	Observations	169

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Turning to the hazard ratio, this statistic is the probability that an individual who is under observation at a time  $t$  has an event at that specific time. The hazard ratio here measures how likely a particular conflict is to recur at a given moment. Graph B below represents a smoothed hazard estimate comparing the likelihood of failure between Group 0 and Group 1. The latter not only starts at a hazard rate more than double Group 0's, but it also continuously stays higher and never intersects. The data shows that nonethnic conflicts experience a relatively stable rate of failure with no sharp decreases at any given time. The group variable scored a 2.643 hazard ratio, indicating that with every one-unit increase, the hazard increases by 164%. The hazard ratio is an exponentiated coefficient. If the resulting coefficient is equal to one, then there is no increase or decrease in the hazard percentage. Anything above one indicates an increase equivalent to the percentage value of the

coefficient, and a negative value indicates vice versa. For example, if the hazard ratio for the variable “one\_if\_female” is 1.05, then females face a hazard 5% greater than males (Cleaves, et al, 2016). If the Cox Regression is run solely with the group variable, the hazard increases to 3.194 at a p-value of 0.000. The results are shown in Table 2 below.

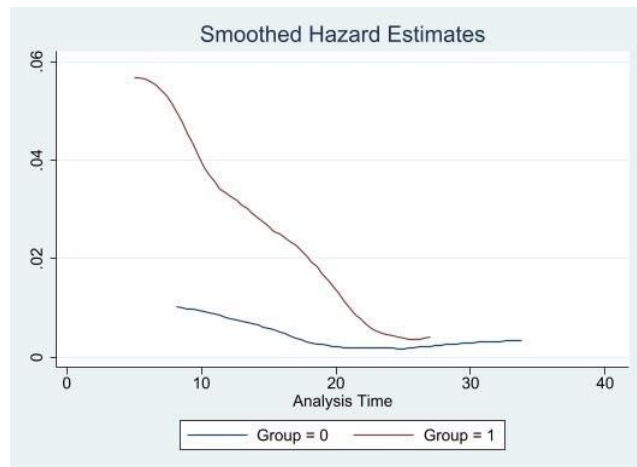
The introduction of other variables decreased the likelihood of recurrence slightly. When analyzed with the group variable, secession increased 38% for every unit increase in the former and ethnic fractionalization increased 100%. Democracy is the only variable below a ratio of one, sitting at 0.821. Interpreted a different way, while ethnicity tends to increase the chances of recurrence, democracy *decreases* the more conflict recurs. Although intuitive, this dynamic exhibits the influence of war on the deterioration of political systems in a state.

Table 2

VARIABLES	_t
Group	0.000*** (0.980)
Observations	175

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Graph B



Using the hazard ratio, an analysis of the baseline cumulative hazard is made. The model estimates the hazard rate of the null hypothesis. The control is then compared with



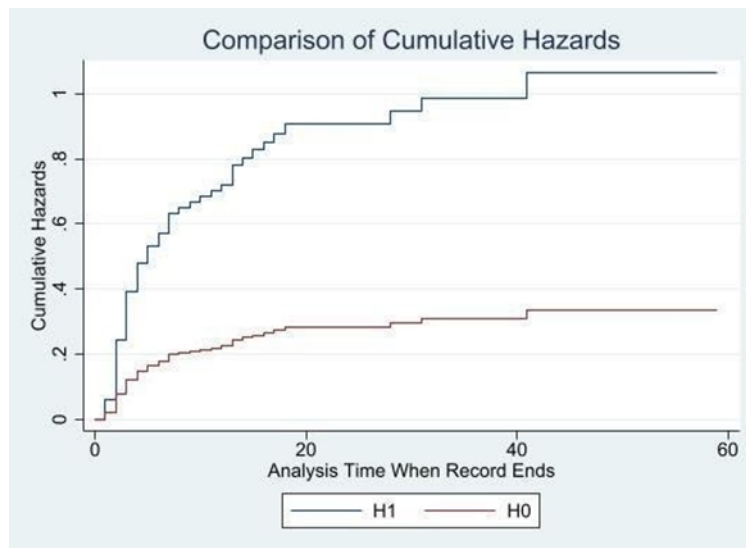
the cumulative hazard found when the group variable is included. For the conflicts that are ethnic based, the equation is  $H(t) = 3.194H_0(t)$ . 3.194 is the hazard ratio when the Cox Regression is run only with the covariate, Group. Graph C compares the treatment versus the control. The red line shown assumes “group” is equal to zero, meaning the conflicts observed are nonethnic. When ethnicity is introduced, the cumulative hazard steeply increases from the beginning of the analysis time. Towards the end of the analysis time frame, whereas the null hypothesis has a hazard settling at about 30%, the hazard after factoring in ethnicity is well over 100% for the same year.

Furthermore, other results show that ethnic conflicts have shorter periods of peace before the recurrence begins. To elaborate, an interstate war over resources might experience two episodes with a 20-year period between the end and the start of the next. Overwhelmingly, ethnic wars find little relief. Civil or political unrest makes the peace period short-lived and armed conflict continues between opposing actors. Interestingly, temporary reprieves explain Clausewitz’s (1984) principle of war as politics by other means. Stalemates and inconclusive conflicts lead to a timeframe of regrouping, rest, and eventual recurrence of war. In comparison to nonethnic wars which have times of order, the salience of ethnic issues does not allow for long periods of stability.

A summary of the Cox Regression shows that Group 0 has 53 subjects and Group 1 has 122. In other words, the majority of conflicts that took place between 1946 and 2005 had an ethnic component as the catalyst. In addition, Group 1 had five times more failures than Group 0 (66 failures compared to 13 failures). Running an Equality of Survivor Functions Log-Rank test, the expected failures for Groups 0 and 1 were 30 and 49,

respectively. These estimates overvalued Group 0 and did not predict the weight that ethnicity played on the event.

Graph C



To continue, Group 0's survival mean is 26.7 years. The median is also about 27 years and the maximum survived until the very last year of analysis. Group 1 on the other hand only had a survival average of 11.4 years, despite a larger sample size. The median drops sharply and sits at 5 years. The maximum did not reach the last year of analysis but ended a year before. Halfway through the 59 years of analysis, over 85% of Group 1's observations had already failed in contrast to Group 0's 53%. The stark contrast of these statistics underscores the complexities of ethnicity and the salience of those issues that ultimately lead to such violent measures being taken.

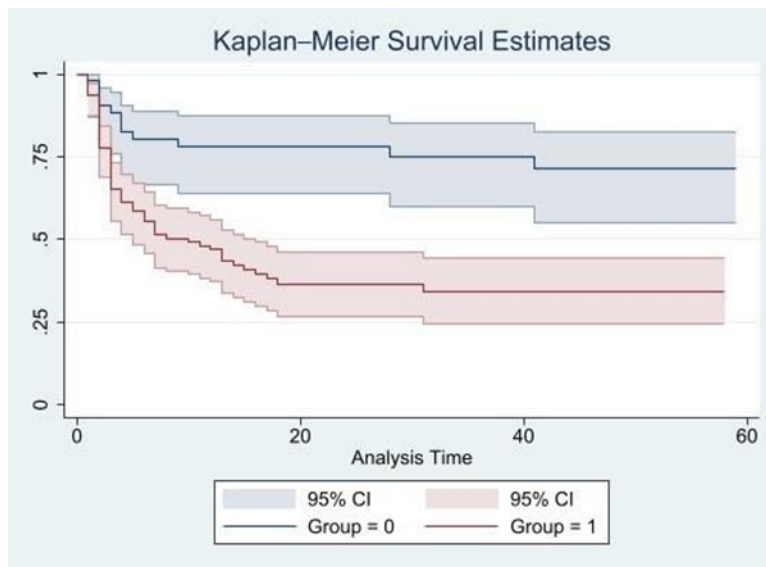
After the initial analysis, there was an assessment of the Kaplan-Meier Survival Estimate. This model illustrates the survival function that describes the probability of an observation surviving from the time of origin (i.e., end year of initial conflict) to the end of

analysis. The analysis time is in years leading up to 2005 and percentiles indicate survival rates at every quarter. Isolating for group, Graph D shows a sharp decline of the survival rate for ethnic conflicts. About 75% of nonethnic conflicts survived the entirety of the 60 years under analysis. In comparison, only about 37.5% of all ethnic conflicts survived until the end, meaning 63.5% of them failed between 1946-2005. The results are staggering when translated into very real possibilities. Such high percentiles suggest the majority of conflicts fueled by ethnic components will not end with the first bout. Actors are likely locked into violent upheavals for far longer than they imagined. The consequences could be seen through social, economic, and political decimation, as well as mental fatigue from civilians grappling with surviving in a constant state of violence.

Another finding shows that the biggest decrease in survival rates is in the first 20 years, regardless of group. For Group 0, it is closer to 10 years. After the initial decline, there are steady drops for the next 40 years until the analysis time ends. This seems to indicate that war recurrence happens quickly. Logically, the trend is expected since the appetite for war is generally largest when emotions are high and causal factors are salient. Regardless of the sample size, as more time passes the probability of recurrence decreases. Most nonethnic conflicts stay above the 75th percentile, only dropping under the line – albeit slightly – towards the end. In the ethnic group analysis, the line drops sharply below the 75th percentile within the first five years. At 50%, it continues to decline at a rapid rate until steadying out around 30%. The notion that recurrence happens quickly after an initial conflict is also supported by the fact that out of 79 failures, 66 were ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, the most failures occurred within the first five years. There were 22 failures in

the second year and 15 in the next. 18 years after the start of the analysis, only about 50% of observations at risk survive.

Graph D



The results found within my survival analysis highlight the interesting interplay between ethnicity and conflict recurrence. Through the Cox Proportional Hazards model, the presence of an ethnic variable denoting grievance with a religion, race, language, culture, or history aspect significantly increases the chance of repeated conflict episodes. It is found that ethnicity alone has a hazard rate of 3.194 and a p-value of  $p > 0.000$ .

Therefore, ethnic conflicts are 219% more likely to experience recurrence than nonethnic disputes. This was reflected by the regression, with 66 ethnic conflicts failing while only 13 nonethnic conflicts failed. In comparison to the 75% of nonethnic conflicts that survived until the final year of analysis, only 37.5% of ethnic conflicts did. Democracy also decreases on the political front and ethnic fractionalization increases. Paired with shorter periods of peace, states destabilized by ethnic wars enter a dangerous cycle of violence that

could take decades of time, money, and resources to resolve.

## CHAPTER 6

### CASE STUDY

#### **6.1 The Case of India and China**

To illustrate some differences between wars fought with – or lacking thereof – an ethnic component, a case study of British rule in India and China is made. Britain has had a long history of colonial rule in Asia. During the mid-nineteenth century the kingdom had economic and political control over India and China. The British looked to expand their trade, gathering rare spices, teas, and textile products through these routes (Luscombe 2015). Britain enforced favorable policies for the Empire, while loosely allowing day to day operations to transpire through local rule (Cohn 2015). Of course, governors were always trustworthy British nobles who lived in the colonies and overlooked the territories. In a sense, colonial rule spanning across the entirety of the British Empire followed a blueprint. Small adjustments to deal with population differences, but the same methods, nonetheless. For these reasons, and the timeline similarities of British rule, the wars fought by India and China can be analyzed with a certain degree of control of situational disparities.

Although many wars were fought between Great Britain against India and China, this comparative-historical analysis leans towards the conflicts directly following WWII. This period marked the beginning of the decline of the British Empire, as one by one colonies declared independence. The case study follows the partitioning of India into two states (India and Pakistan) and serves as the ethnic-based conflict in the analysis.

While the country finally gained independence, an arbitrary line split large regions of Muslim and Hindu minorities already experiencing decades of internal conflict. This led to the first Indo-Pakistani war of 1947 that is the focus of the study. Further comparisons will be made with the Chinese Civil War that began in 1927 and ended in 1949. Although different in many regards, these wars occurred during a time when the creation of a national identity became a form of retaliation against British authority (McDermott 2015). The Indian Hindus and Muslims, as well as the Chinese Nationalists and Communists, had to learn how to rebuild an identity lost through over a hundred years of occupation.

Pakistan and Taiwan's split from their original states have shifted the focus of their subsequent conflicts from intrastate to interstate. Although this change could highlight important consequences for my study on civil wars, they are included because their initial conflicts stem from internal ethnic disputes. The initial conflict episodes analyzed are civil wars and argue that recurrence (or lack of recurrence) happens because of hundreds of years of underlying grievances formed while the nations were whole. The state conditions manifested that led to recurrence were direct results from previous civil disputes. For example, the second and third Indo-Pakistani wars are not the focus of this study, rather seen as an inevitable consequence of the first war that began with news of Britain's plan to partition India. In actuality, if the interstate war mechanism had an impact on recurrence between India and Pakistan, they should have *less* recurrence than China and Taiwan because civil wars are more prone to conflict recurrence than interstate wars (Kreutz 2010). In reality, the reverse is true and Taiwan (as an unrecognized state and therefore still a civil war) never experienced war recurrence with China.

Furthermore, some may point to geographic differences as an indication of why so little conflict has been seen between China and Taiwan. While India and Pakistan share direct borders, China and Taiwan have an ocean barrier. Although I do not take into account these differences and further research should strive to do so, I believe it will have little overall impact. The shortest distance from Taiwan to China is 1300 miles – an incredibly short distance for hostile neighbors. China has one of the strongest and largest navies in the world. If they wanted a fight, Taiwan could do little to stop them. This question also recalls factors like size of a state. If we are accounting for geographic differences, who is to say the most significant one would not be land mass and subsequent resource availability? China is a continent in comparison to Taiwan and being a small island nation leaves them vulnerable to surrounding attacks. Therefore, I do not believe geographical differences particularly played a role in their conflict.

After an introduction of the similar colonial history in India and China, I argue that following the initial split between Taiwan and Mainland China, they did not experience conflict recurrence because there were no ethnic grievances between the two. Ethnic wars frame conflict as an existential threat that justifies violence for the sake of state survival. Pakistan's perceived threat of Indian encroachment along its borders is seen as a challenge against the sovereignty of a nation for Muslims (Jinnah 1947). India is also referred to as Hindustan, or the land of Hindus (Jinnah 1947). Therefore, war is depicted as a necessary effort to protect the very foundation of the state. Since grievances between China and Taiwan are based on legitimacy concerns, when Taiwan no longer claimed rights to the mainland, half of the reason for animosity was lost. The territorial split between China and

Taiwan was also not ethnically motivated while India and Pakistan's was. Additionally, I argue that Chinese ethnic groups before the split were already culturally assimilated in comparison to those in India. By ensuring that ethnic representation was absorbed into the greater Chinese identity (and isolating the rest into their own communities), the PRC was able to stop ethnic groups from gathering enough resources to effectively rebel against the state. While the minority in China only make up eight percent of the entire population, India's minority population settles around 20 percent (Kramer 2021). Paired with meaningful political representation, dissenting voices in India are given platforms to rally against the state.

## **6.2 A Tale of Two Countries**

India and China are states with some of the richest histories in the world. Dating back thousands of years, both experienced cultural transformations as they interacted with different ethnic groups within the region. Even China, known to be predominantly Han Chinese, was incredibly diverse. In fact, the Qing dynasty was established by a Manchurian minority. A blending of peoples reshaped contemporary Chinese language and culture, right down to the modern cuisine popularly associated with the region. India and China both took influence from Muslim populations as well as the Mongols at the peak of their conquests (Collingham 2006). They are also two of the largest countries in the world, with a population of over one billion each. Both had rural economies with isolated communities scattered throughout (Osterhammel 1999). Finally, they are considered a continent and subcontinent in sheer size alone. Centered in Asia, there are rarely two other nations



comparable to such a degree.

It is important to note that while the British completely left India (now including what is known as Pakistan and Bangladesh), they still had a footprint in China until the official transfer of Hong Kong's sovereignty in 1997. Nevertheless, empires quickly became unpopular at the turn of the 20th century. Colonial rule fell like dominos and Hong Kong was no exception (Osterhammel 1999). At the Second Convention of Peking in 1898, Hong Kong was leased to the British for 99 years until it would return to China. This formally initiated the end of British presence in China. Meanwhile, the pretense for war between Mao Zedong's Communist Party and Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang Nationalists was already in full swing. Clearly, the case of India and China have immense differences. Yet, the key point to understand is that the British colonial rule of these countries would have lasting and profound effects for generations to come. Had Britain governed differently, strategic failures leading to civil wars in both territories may have been avoided.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Nationalist government ceased *violent* conflict decades ago. Of course, this does not presume that all issues have been resolved. The Kuomintang leaders controlling China in the early 1900s were forced to retreat and regroup in what is now known as Taiwan. Ever since, it has been a battle for the CCP to assert dominance over the small island. The government has always considered Taiwan a part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), even as generations of living as separate entities has essentially created two independent countries. This notion is highly contested by the PRC and is one of the few reasons the typically cautious state has promised to take action against. This is clearly not an ethnic issue, rather a legitimacy concern for the CCP.

The ongoing tensions between Taiwan and Mainland China could seemingly boil over at any given time. Yet, ever since 1947 there has not been a single incident of violent war recurrence. As of 2021, it has been 87 years since the two armies clashed. While the PRC has increasingly taken aggressive stances in the South China Sea, they have yet to act in a violent capacity. This is in part due to the United States' presence in the Indo-Pacific serving as a deterrent. Although the PRC encroachment into Hong Kong (despite the "One Country, Two Systems" agreement) could signal the beginning of a more confident China, for now, any aggressive stances fall short of war.

The story of India and Pakistan has been far less diplomatic. For this study, "Pakistan" will not include what is now considered Bangladesh after they separated from the state in 1971. India's Hindu population has had a thousand years of intermixing with Pakistan's Muslim majority (Collingham 2006). "India" was only made a concept after the British arrived and coined the term. Before then, the region was led by princely states that were only concerned with their immediate neighbors (Bose and Jalal 2003). Lack of transportation meant that intermixing of cultures was done at a local level. When railway and telecommunication infrastructure were built under the British Raj, exchanges between Muslims and Hindus expanded for many years as a common ground against colonial rule. This was culminated in the Lucknow Pact of 1916, where India's Muslim League (led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah) and the Hindu-majority Indian National Congress (led by Mahatma Gandhi) vowed to work together to achieve national independence (Sinha 2015). Eventually, as it became clear that Muslims would live marginalized in a predominantly Hindu state, Jinnah campaigned for a sovereign nation for Muslims separate from India.

Power sharing had been difficult and when the time came for independence, decades of preparation left India ripe for clashes (McDermott 2015).

Perhaps the most significant, singular event that would shape Pakistan and India's continual distrust with one another was the Partition of 1947. Chaos erupted as a mass exodus of Muslims from India and Hindus from Pakistan befell the region. During this timeframe, it is estimated that 10-20 million people were displaced, and up to two million killed in the resulting violence (Kosinski and Khondkar, 1985). How did such fierce disorder come about? After WWII and the resulting international distaste for empires, Britain was essentially forced to leave India. Although reluctant, they tried to exit as quickly as possible. Almost parallel to Britain's hasty territorial allocations in Israel and Palestine, the British Viceroy and his representatives carved the India-Pakistan borders without much thought to ethnic cleavages. In just five weeks, the Radcliffe Line was drawn right through population centers with an equal number of Muslims and Hindus (BBC 2017). Locals had rural assets divided and many were unwillingly relocated. The immense repercussions were left to the young and illy prepared governments, while Britain never turned back to measure the impact of their actions.

Unfortunately, there has yet to be a cessation of violent conflict. Since independence, there have been three Indo-Pakistani wars in 1947, 1965, and 1971; the latter leading to the formation of Bangladesh. Additionally, an unofficial war known as the Kargil Conflict was fought in 1999. During this brief war, Pakistani troops occupied parts of the Indian Kargil District and several thousand soldiers were killed (CFR 2021). Tensions between the two nations have also led to a nuclear arms race, despite international

condemnation of proliferation (India 2021). Numerous skirmishes and “incidents” have marked the turn of the 21st century. Internal disagreements led to a military coup in Pakistan to depose a peace-seeking Prime Minister (Hashim, 2019). In 2001, an attack on the Kashmiri Assembly, and subsequently the Indian Parliament in New Delhi, left dozens dead and threatened full-scale war once more (UCA 2021). These political issues have adversely affected civilians. Multiple terrorist attacks stemming from the conflict continue to this day.

### **6.3 Post-Colonial Development**

India and China entered turbulent times after the end of WWII. Both states experienced daunting changes to their political, social, and economic structures. Under Mao Zedong, China went through a Communist reformation. History was reshaped, new rules were enforced, and the economy transitioned to self-reliance under a socialist system. India was finally given the reins of governance and was busy juggling its state- building responsibilities with preventing violence in its streets. Today, India and China are considered developing nations that are industrializing at a rapid rate. China is the largest growing economy in the world, second only to the United States. In 2020, its GDP hit almost \$15 trillion (Global 2020). While India is growing and currently ranked sixth in the world for GDP, the discrepancies between the two are clear. India’s GDP sits at roughly \$2.6 trillion. Pakistan and Taiwan are two nations that formed resulting from war and breaking apart from a larger whole. Their GDPs stand at roughly \$264 billion and \$575 billion, respectively. Perhaps a measure of per capita income would better reflect the

economic situations of a regular civilian. According to the World Bank data of 2020, China's average income sits at \$17,312 whereas Taiwan's is a whopping \$55,078 (World Bank 2021). On the other hand, India's is \$6,454 and Pakistan's is not far off at \$4,877. Economically, it is abundantly transparent that China and Taiwan have been better off since their initial conflicts ended.

Of course, numbers are important, but what about the standard of living in regard to crime and safety? The Global Peace Index reports the most dangerous countries in the world based on 23 indicators ranging from political terror, deaths from internal conflict, and murder rate. Pakistan ranks an alarming 11th, while India ranks 23rd, China 54th, and Taiwan being the safest at 126th (Global Peace Index 2021). It is noteworthy to mention that according to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for Preventing Genocide, Pakistan ranks first in countries at risk of onset of mass killings (Early 2021).

Objectively, it seems living in either China or Taiwan would bring more security. These differences come from a variety of reasons. As decades pass, it is easy to attribute the state of a nation by factors that stem from larger problems. For instance, Pakistan and India's poverty can be ascribed to local political corruption and low education rates. Yet, these contemporary reasons completely ignore the lasting conditions Britain created that encouraged economic disparities throughout the countries (Khipple 1947). These conditions are important for understanding that after the British left, India and China did not begin reconstruction in the same position. India had a far less favorable starting point than China, and the conditions they faced have directly affected their capability to handle conflict in an effective way that prevents recurrence.

## 6.4 State Conditions

The first condition explaining India's disparate developments from China is that Britain left India hastily, while they gave China time to prepare. Immediately after WWII the British explored options to leave India as quickly as possible. Colonial rule was extremely unpopular, and leaders concluded that it might be dangerous for British nationals to stay. Their withdrawal exhibited the dynamics of decolonization at play, as well as fear for a changing era. Looking at China in the case of Hong Kong, negotiations started almost 100 years prior to the official turnover of the peninsula back to the Chinese government. After the initial lease of Hong Kong to Great Britain, further negotiations went on for years. In 1984, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher formally signed a pact stating Hong Kong's return to be complete in 1997 (History 2010). The extensive nature of these negotiations deeply contrasts the handling of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. China was given time to prepare for the large changes that would occur with Hong Kong's eventual return. They could develop and implement a restructuring plan. Quite possibly the most important factor, the civilians in the territory were made aware of the imminent changes they'd face. This allowed for a peaceful transfer, while Indian Hindus and Muslims were essentially told to uproot their lives and leave.

The second condition would be the presence of *real* consequences undertaken for violent actions. Without an incentive, actors have no reason to be peaceful. China knows very well the implications of attacking Taiwan. Although only 15 states currently recognize Taiwan as the Republic of China, the U.S. maintains unofficial bilateral relations with the

island. The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) serves as the de-facto embassy of the United States. The “security alliance” also holds strong, with the recent news that the U.S. Special Forces conducted military exercises with Taiwanese troops (Chen, 2021). Furthermore, in 2020 alone arms sales to Taiwan reached \$5.1 billion (Reuters, 2020). Perhaps the most consequential, the Taiwan Relations Act strongly suggests the U.S. military commitment to defend Taiwan in the event that the PRC takes war-like actions. Not only is the U.S. the most well-equipped military in the world, but U.S. security alliances also threaten a global war. No matter the importance of Taiwan to the PRC’s agenda, the opportunity costs are too high and effectively deters war recurrence between China and Taiwan.

Pakistan and India have no such discouragement. The international community has been far more hands-off with their disputes. While there has been condemnation of violence between the two states, influential measures are scarce. Regarding the most contentious conflict, there have been multiple UN resolutions addressing Kashmir. Practically all have failed, and violent recurrence plagues the region. UN measures are famous for formulating non-binding agreements rather than punishable actions. The lack of consequences could be giving both parties confidence to break their promises. Additionally, resolutions in the 20th century were frequently rejected by Pakistan when the language seemed to indicate them as the aggressor (Korbel 1953). Conversely, India rejected the resolutions when Pakistan was put on equal footing. In this case, failed compromise has led to the breakdown of negotiations and the continuance of aggression. If governments took more hardline approaches to India-Pakistan relations like they’ve done with China-Taiwan, it could prove

to settle issues in the meantime.

The conditions outlined above are important in describing the different challenges India and China faced after their respective wars and territorial losses. Although they had similar colonial backgrounds, their developments afterward were greatly influenced by factors not in their control. China was fortunate to have time to plan how they would deal with changes after colonial rule while India did not. Also, India did not have the benefit of meaningful international intervention to discourage conflict recurrence. Nevertheless, supposing that China experienced the same conditions as India (i.e., Britain does not negotiate a return deal, the United States does not back Taiwan), they still would not end up like India and Pakistan.

### **6.5 Strategy or Luck? China's Eradication of Pretenses for War**

The first reason why China has not experienced conflict recurrence is that besides legitimacy concerns, Taiwan's existence does not create further grievances. Particularly, China's concern towards Taiwan is a political matter rather than a social one. The India and Pakistan conflict has a backing from civilian groups because it directly affects their everyday lives. Indians have divided their identity along religious lines. When certain policies or events happen against their interests, more ethnic grievances are added to a long list of historical ones that have yet to be mitigated. Essentially, without a personal stake in conflict, recurrence is less likely since civilians are unwilling to expend resources for something they deem as insignificant.

Ethnic grievances tend to be a deeply personal issue because they are framed as



existential threats to the community. India's claim to Kashmir is seen by the Muslim population as an effort by the Hindu majority to assert control over them. The same can be said vice versa. Since the dispute is seen through the lens of passion rather than reason, it is prone to armed conflict recurrence (Clausewitz 1984). In comparison, China and Taiwan have spent decades in isolation without any tangible issues between the two. The nations were able to grow without interference from the other and civilian daily life is not affected by the PRC's claim to Taiwan. Additionally, Taiwan no longer claims to be the legitimate government of Mainland China. They simply want recognition of the territory they currently hold. While the Kashmir dispute is an active contestation of India and Pakistan's authority over the region, Taiwan does not have a reason to continue its dispute with China. In the absence of an ethnic component to drive initiatives for war, appetite for further conflict ended as time passed.

The second reason China has not experienced recurrence is because they have launched extensive campaigns to assimilate their ethnic groups. The research conducted throughout this paper concludes that ethnic conflicts are far more likely than other conflicts to experience violent recurrence. An analysis of the data shows that the conflicts that experienced the most recurrence all had sizable minorities that were capable of retaliating against the central government. The Indian Hindus and Muslims have the resources, while Chinese ethnic groups do not. China's minority population is already smaller by an incredible margin. The Manchurians who ruled the last dynasty willingly integrated with the Han population. The central and western minority groups are small, constituting about eight percent of the total Chinese demographic (Hays 2019).

Through the Cultural Revolution, the PRC forced the entire Chinese population to assimilate to new social practices irregardless of ethnic identity. Their assimilation efforts continue with evidence of “re-education” camps designed to strip Uyghur Muslims of their language and culture (Maizland 2021). By stripping the young generation of their ethnic identity, the Uyghur ethnicity is gradually lost over time. Furthermore, the presence of persistent poverty in regions where ethnic minorities live force migration to population centers to find work (Duncan 2017). As more and more minority groups leave their homes for better opportunities, they also leave behind traditions kept for generations. As ethnic representation continues to be absorbed into the greater Chinese identity, already small ethnic groups lose the ability to gather resources to effectively retaliate against the state.

Lastly, political censorship following assimilation in China ensures that grievances never receive a platform. In both India and China, minority groups occupy a small number of seats within their legislative bodies. Chinese ethnic minorities currently hold about 14.5% of seats in the National People’s Congress (NPC) (Zheng 2021). In comparison, Indian Muslims only hold 5% of seats in the Indian Parliament (Buchholz and Richter 2019). These statistics might seem to indicate that representation for Chinese ethnic groups is better than India’s, but the difference in political regimes points to the opposite. India’s parliamentary system allows for coalition building between larger and smaller groups. Minority group political representation holds more weight in India than China. While India must take into consideration the interests of minority parties, China does not have these concerns under the one-party system. There is no division within the NPC and ethnic groups are barred from talking about contentious issues (i.e., Xinjiang). Representation is only in

numbers. Although political representation is a common grievance in ethnic conflicts, China's assimilation of ethnic groups (and its isolation of the rest) effectively curbs recurrence by eliminating grievances at the root. India allows for meaningful political representation in its government. Ironically, contentious ethnic issues are given a platform and there are constant reminders of these grievances. Until they are addressed, they will likely persist and sustain the probability of conflict recurrence.

In conclusion, the two theories I have developed throughout this paper explain how ethnicity is an enhancing variable. The concept of indivisibility makes ethnic grievances highly salient to identity. Therefore, when ethnic grievances are not appeased, the likelihood of conflict recurrence increases. Secondly, Clausewitz's Trinity details that too much passion will cloud judgment and lead to decisions that spur conflict. The best, most rational strategy, is forsaken for impassioned ones based on emotion. Taiwan knows it can no longer stand up to the PRC. Its focus has shifted to survival and recognition as a sovereign nation in the eyes of the international community. It made a rational decision to move on. Clausewitz also explains the need for clear objectives. With Taiwan's decision to forgo its original goal of re-establishing itself as the legitimate China, it has lost its drive for war. Violence is unlikely when half the actors involved do not wish it. The background information presented throughout this case study has served to illustrate the many factors that led to India and China's immense differences. This includes China's early assimilation of ethnic groups and its political system that discourages dialogue on ethnic identity. Conflict between China and Taiwan did not recur because there were no ethnic grievances left; or that the ones which do exist do not have the platform necessary to express them.

Since India and Pakistan are divided by ethnic lines between Hindus and Muslims, and because dialogue on ethnic tensions continues to persist, they are far more likely to experience conflict recurrence.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

One timeless question has troubled scholars, politicians, and military strategists for centuries: how do you end war? As violent conflict continues to manifest in novel ways, ethnicity has proven to be at the forefront. Ethnic conflicts have lasting impact far beyond the realm of traditional warfare. While tangible goals like resource acquisition can be motivators in ethnic conflicts, identity politics introduces a psychological, subjective component to the battle. These additions have profound consequences on war longevity, acceptable conflict resolution methods, and eventually, conflict recurrence. In my research I argue that ethnic conflicts are more likely to recur than nonethnic conflicts. Due to the “indivisibility” of ethnic identity, actors are less likely to accept compromise on grievances. Since grievances are seen as non-negotiable, ethnic groups tend to experience multiple episodes of war through years, or even decades. While other types of wars over tangible objectives might lose the will to fight overtime, ethnic conflicts have an inherent drive. Whether the goal is autonomy within a state or complete sovereignty, motivations are passed down through generations. It is also argued that ethnic conflicts have shorter periods of nonviolence than other types of conflicts. A comparison of the group binary variable shows that nonethnic conflicts have far longer peace spells than their counterpart. While

many recurrences tend to be years or decades apart in the former, the latter, on average, fails within the first three years.

While much research has described the causes underlying ethnic conflicts, this study analyzes the *effects* those mechanisms have on future episodes. Through the Cox Proportional Hazards model, the data shows a significant increase in conflict recurrence when an initial episode is ethnic based. The group variable denoting whether the conflict had an ethnic component or not received a p-value of  $p > 0.002$ . The hazard ratio also describes a hazard increase of 164% with the introduction of ethnicity. Simply, as a conflict becomes more reliant on ethnic motives, it is exponentially more at risk for a recurrence than other types of conflicts absent of that component. The implications of these findings are alarming. With the continual shift from interstate warfare to intrastate ethnic wars, the world might have already opened a Pandora's Box where violent disputes see no end. Until the realities of ethnic warfare are brought front and center, actors will carry on fighting wars they do not see the long-term consequences of. As the case study of India and China has illustrated, societies constantly destabilized by ethnic tensions lead to consequences not limited to civil unrest, lower standards of living, and even terrorism. If multiethnic states desire peace within their borders, more must be done to prevent ethnic grievances from arising.

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