Veterans and ethnic cleansing in the Partition of India

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Abstract

The partition of ethnically-diverse regions into homogeneous 'homelands' has been often mooted as a solution to civil war and ethnic conflict. However, the Partition of India in 1947, in which an estimated 3.4 million people went missing, looms large as a cautionary example. Yet, despite its iconic importance, systematic evidence assessing the political and economic determinants of ethnic cleansing during the Partition has hitherto been lacking.

Using novel data, this paper assesses the determinants of minority outflows from Indian districts between 1931 and 1951 and documents that districts that raised army units that were arbitrarily assigned to experience longer combat experience in the Second World War also experienced greater "ethnic cleansing"– greater religious homogenisation both through outflows of the minority population and inflows of co-religionist refugees. The effect of combat experience increases in areas that were initially more mixed. The paper interprets these results as reflecting the role of war-time military experiences in providing human capital– enhanced skills at both organisation and at perpetrating violence– that become particularly important in polarised societies in transition.

Keywords: Veterans, Partition, Post-conflict reconstruction, Ethnic cleansing, Institutional change

1 Introduction

> Soldiers are seldom held in high honour when peace and the rule of law prevail. . . - Philip Mason (1974)(pg.206)

The partition of ethnically-diverse regions into homogeneous 'homelands' has been often mooted as a solution to the most pressing conflicts around the world. While there is some debate on whether partitions actually correlate with subsequent reductions in civil

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war in cross-country analyses (Sambanis 2000, Chapman and Roeder 2007, Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009), the logic of simply separating ethnic groups across national boundaries continues to have appeal in both policy and academic circles.[1]

The Partition of India on religious grounds in August, 1947, looms large as a cautionary tale to advocates of partition as a means for peace. India's partition led to one of the largest forced migrations in world history, with an estimated 17.9 million people leaving their homes (Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian 2008a, Aiyar 1998). Estimates of the dead during Partition-related violence between March 1947 and January 1948 range from one hundred and eighty thousand to one million. 3.4 million members of religious minority groups– Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, and Muslims in independent India– went "missing" by 1951 (Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian 2008a). Areas which experienced the worst violence during the Partition of India continue to have tiny minority populations more than 50 years later (Census of India 2001). Pakistan acquired a subgroup of disproportionately literate immigrants who played an important role in its subsequent politics, while forced migration appears to have led India's immigrants to switch to non-agricultural professions that may have played a role in accelerating the process of its industrialisation (Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian 2008b).

Yet, despite its importance, both in terms of human cost and its subsequent impact on a subcontinent housing more than a fifth of the world's population, most of the substantial body of work seeking to fathom the determinants of Partition violence has been qualitative, and almost exclusively regional in scope.[2] There has hitherto been little systematic quantitative evidence about the political and economic determinants of the patterns of ethnic cleansing around the country that led a political compromise to devolve

[1]See Kaufmann (1996),(1998). On the benefits of partition in Iraq, see O'Hanlon and Joseph (2007), and in the Holy Land, see Downes (2001). For a dissenting policy perspective, see Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein (2008). Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009) provides a useful overview of the academic literature on Partition.

[2]A number of valuable qualitative works have highlight a variety of factors that 'caused' the violence in 1947. Some emphasise a general state breakdown of the colonial state in 1946-47, which fatally reduced the state's coercive capacity and manpower at just the moment it was most needed to keep order during the division of the state (Kamtekar 1988). Others have pointed to the high levels of political polarization that existed in some states in 1946-47 to explain why violence was used: to destabilize rival governments as in NWFP or Punjab, or to demonstrate that a group was capable of vetoing a political settlement. Some authors focus on the particular position of the Sikhs, frozen out of the larger political settlement, who took action to try to prevent their community being partitioned and cleansed. Others point to the security dilemma that existed in Punjab and NWFP in 1947 (though they do not use that International Relations term), and the spiral of violence that took place when each of the three main groups, worried about its own security, acted preemptively to defend itself or to change the facts on the ground (Copland 2002). Still others have provided a rich picture of partition violence through local lenses: the prior agrarian struggles of rural Bihar and Bharatpur, for instance, created powerful incentives for local politicians and landlords to use the crisis of partition to get rid of troublesome tenants and subjects (Damodaran 1992, Copland 1988).

into a human disaster (Brass 2003). Exceptions include a series of important recent works examining the changes in demographic patterns that occurred during the Partition using the Censuses of India and Pakistan (Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian 2008a, Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian 2008b, Hill, Seltzer, Leaning, Malik, and Russell 2008) We will build explicitly upon the data and estimates in these works in what follows.[3]

The broad lack of systematic quantitative analysis has meant that many of the excellent qualitative works on Partition have been limited in their ability to draw broader conclusions on the determinants of the violence beyond highlighting distinctive features of the areas, particularly the Punjab, where the violence was most severe. Yet a key feature of India's experience was that the violence and ethnic cleansing that occurred during Partition was far from uniform across the country, and actually was much less severe in a number of the ethnically-mixed districts relatively close to the border than both a casual application of "security dilemma" theory and officials at the time would predict (see Figures 1 and 2).[4]

Was the catastrophe at the Partition of India inevitable? Could the most vulnerable areas and populations have been predicted more accurately? What lessons can we draw from India's experience for ethnically mixed regions elsewhere? This paper seeks to address these questions using a newly assembled set of district-level data drawn from across undivided India. In particular, the paper assesses the determinants of religious homogenisation and minority outflows in Indian districts between 1931 and 1951, and highlights the role played by combat veterans in these outflows. During the Second World War, united India mustered an army of 2.5 million that fought the Axis in Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia. This was the largest volunteer army in the history of the world. While recruitment into this volunteer army was clearly not random, the paper exploits the arbitrary nature of assignment of army units to different campaigns and periods of time at the frontline in World War II to instead examine the role of human capital gained in combat on ethnic cleansing during the subsequent Partition of India.

Consistent with substantial qualitative evidence pointing to the random nature of

[3]The estimates of Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian (2008a), using the 1931 and 1951 censuses are broadly consistent with work by Hill, Seltzer, Leaning, Malik, and Russell (2008) using the more controversial war-time 1942 census.

[4]For example, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army predicted in Nov. 1945 that "The principal danger areas are likely to lie in the United Provinces, Bihar and Bengal ..." (Mansergh 1976):VI,(pp.576-78) Similarly, in mid-1946, the Governor of U.P., Sir F. Wylie warned the Viceroy Lord Wavell that his state was at communal breaking point, and "any slightest incident could send the whole thing up." (Mansergh 1976):VIII,(pp.343-44). In May 1947, Liaquat Ali Khan felt that the Muslims of western U.P. were in as much trouble as those in the adjacent Punjab district of Gurgaon, and he wrote directly to Mountbatten to urge him to intervene to prevent the massacre of both groups (Mansergh 1976)X, pp.1033-34.

World War II combat assignments by British staff officers who took pride in the combat-readiness and inter-changeable nature of their battalions, the paper shows that, conditional on the district supplying any troops, there was no relation between the number of months army battalions raised from a district spent in combat roles and other district characteristics that have been deemed relevant for determining minority outflows during the Partition. However, districts that raised army units that happened to experience greater frontline combat in the Second World War than the army units raised by other districts engaged in significantly greater "cleansing" of their minority populations. These districts had smaller religious minorities in 1951, experienced greater minority "outflows"– reductions due to killing, conversion or migration– and greater inflows of co-religionist refugees. These areas also appear to have experienced a greater number of violent deaths. The effects of raising units with increased combat experience was particularly pronounced in districts that were initially more religiously mixed.

These results are robust to controlling for other factors that have been plausibly associated with Partition violence and ethnic cleansing, including proximity to the new border, the minority ratio, literacy rates and wealth, rule by partisan native rulers, historical factors that might affect religious tolerance such as the presence of pilgrimage centres, political patronage centres and medieval overseas ports, as well as looking within and across provinces and native states of India. The results are also robust to controlling for the British policy of disproportionately raising regiments from certain ethnic groups that they termed "martial races". The results also survive a "placebo" test: districts that raised units with greater wartime combat experience do not exhibit greater pre-war religious violence.

The paper interprets these results as reflecting the role of war-time military experiences in providing human capital– enhanced skills at organising and perpetrating violence– that become particularly important in diverse societies at moments of transition and state weakness.

Beyond the natural links to the literature on partitions, both internationally and in India, this paper relates to important literatures on ethnic diversity and conflict, on the role of veterans and war-time experiences in institutional change and post-conflict recovery and the "security dilemma" in international relations and "strategic ambiguity" in economics.

A large and growing body of evidence has examined the relationships between ethnic diversity and civil conflict, both internationally and within India.[5] Cross-country evi-

[5]See Blattman and Miguel (forthcoming) for a useful overview, and of course Horowitz (1985). On religious conflict in India in particular, see (Field, Levinson, Pande, and Visaria 2008, Esteban and Ray 2008, Jha 2008, Wilkinson 2004, Varshney 2002)

dence suggests that societies with heightened "polarisation", which is maximised when there are two roughly equal sized groups, appear to experience more conflict (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005). Further, the degree of polarisation may be more likely to result in conflict when the winning group chooses "public" allocations that affect all, rather than when the contest is over private goods (Esteban and Ray 2009). In the context of Partition, two competing hypotheses for Partition ethnic cleansing can be examined: whether the ethnic cleansing was largely expropriative– to cleanse the minority to seize either their goods or to displace them from lucrative economic roles that would benefit private individuals– or whether ethnic cleansing served a "public" purpose– to reduce economic competition for a group or to ensure the majority's control of politics. We will provide evidence for the public nature of ethnic cleansing in India's partition, and the heightened role that combat experience played in more polarised districts.

Beyond research into the determinants of civil conflict, post-war reconstruction has become an important focus of development policy (see for example, the 2011 World Development Report on conflict). An important series of studies have conducted retrospective surveys of the veterans of conflicts in Sierra Leone and Uganda to understand how they differ from non-veterans in their political behaviours (Humphreys and Weinstein 2007, Bellows and Miguel 2008, Blattman 2009). While the psychology evidence on whether conflict leads to trauma or "growth" is mixed (McCouch 2009, Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004), empirical studies of the effect of being a veteran of such wars appears remarkably benign. For example, Bellows and Miguel (2008) compare households that were targeted with more violence during the Sierra Leonese civil war to others from within the same village and find that members of the targeted households were more likely to vote and engage in community organisations. Similarly, Blattman (2009) compares child abductees who were abducted because they matched the desired age profile of the Lord's Resistance Army to those who were just outside that profile and find that abductees report themselves more likely to vote and be community organisers. Blattman (2009) provides intriguing correlations that suggest that the greatest differences in behaviour appear to be among those who reported greatest exposure to violence.

The benign effects found in these works resonate with Angrist (1990)'s study using the conscription lottery to assess the effect of being a Vietnam veteran on lifetime earnings. He finds that while there are sustained losses to earnings, these losses can be explained by the lost human capital that veterans would have received had they gone to school rather than to war.

This study complements these works in a number of ways. First, while the works above plausibly identify the effect of recruitment into the army on subsequent behaviour,

we focus instead on identifying the separate effect of violent combat experience. Second, it is important to note that surveys of veterans of conflicts, by their nature, tend to focus upon an extremely important but still select set of environments- those where conflicts have ceased or where reconstruction is already beginning, and thus relatively benign effects are more likely to be seen. This paper augments this research by examining the role of combat experiences in a time of crisis. It is our contention that while war-time experiences may result in a relative lack "traditional" human capital that may enable soldiers to compete in labour markets in peacetime, such experiences provide a form of human capital that is particularly important in periods of crisis, or when there is a weakened external authority, when the ability for individuals to organise violence may become more valuable.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents the identification strategy and provides qualitative and quantitative evidence to support that individuals, once recruited into an infantry regiment, were arbitrarily assigned to different combat roles. Section 3 presents the main results. Section 4 assesses the differences between measures of ethnic cleansing and violence, while Section 5 draws on qualitative historical evidence to highlight the mechanisms through which army experience may have played a role in the Partition of India. Section 6 concludes.

2 Empirical Strategy

We seek to estimate the effect of combat experience by soldiers during World War II on the ethnic cleansing that occurred in their home districts during the Partition of India in 1947. Our benchmark specification will be to estimate cross-sectional regressions of the following form at the district level i:

$$Outflows_{51-31i} = \beta \cdot Frontline_{39-45i} + \gamma \cdot casualties_{39-45i} + \mu \cdot minorityratio_{31i} + X_i B + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

The benchmark outcome variable, $Outflows_i$ is the preferred measure of outflows developed by Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian (2008a),(henceforth BKM 2008). This is the difference between the expected religious minority population in the district in 1951 in the absence of Partition (where minorities, following BKM 2008, are defined as Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistani districts, Muslims in post-Partition Indian districts) and the actual number of minorities found in those districts in 1951. The expected minority growth rate in their measure between 1931-1951 is calculated by multiplying the non-minority population growth rate between 1931 and 1951 and the ratio of minority and

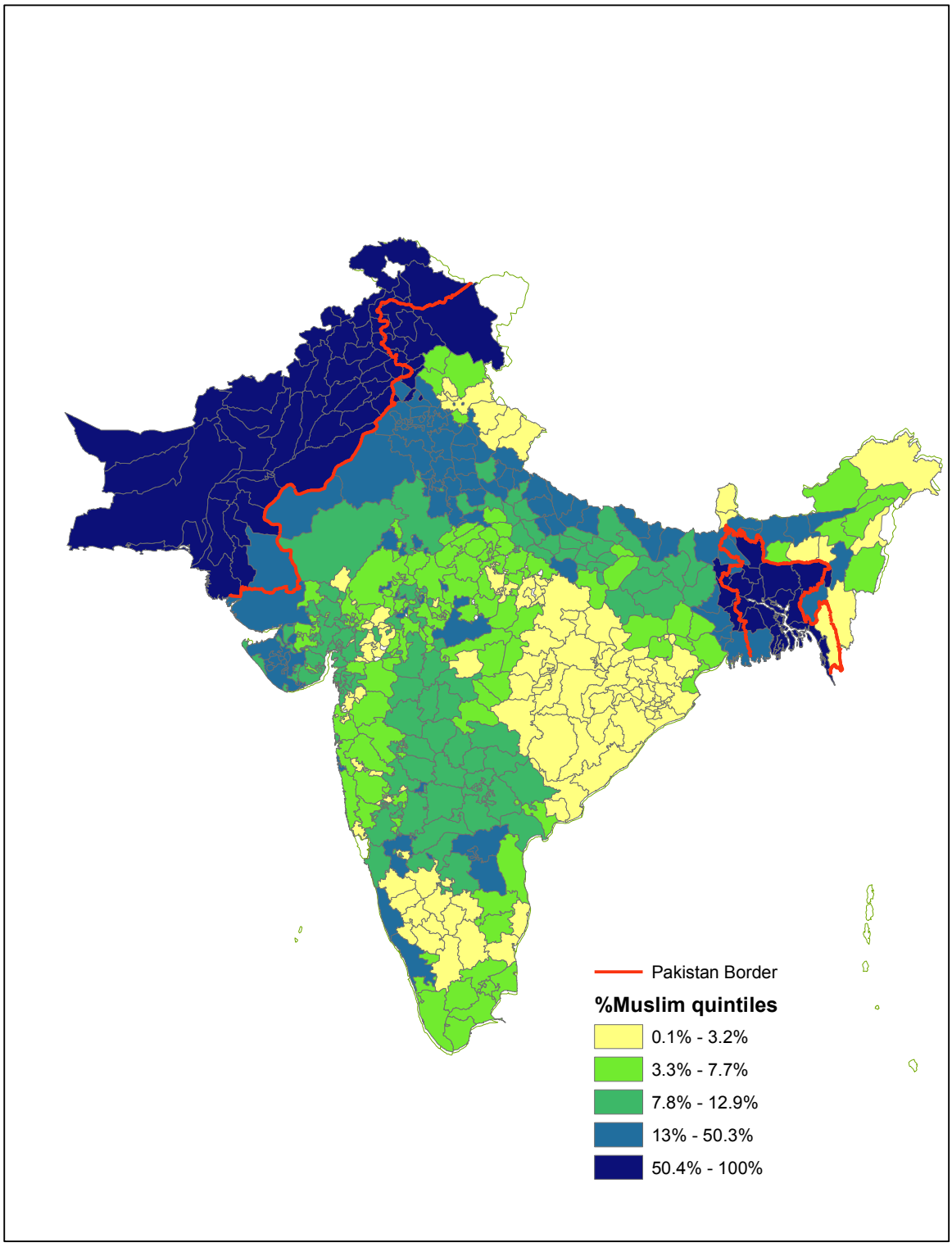

Figure 1: **Partition and religious composition in India**
source: Census of India 1941

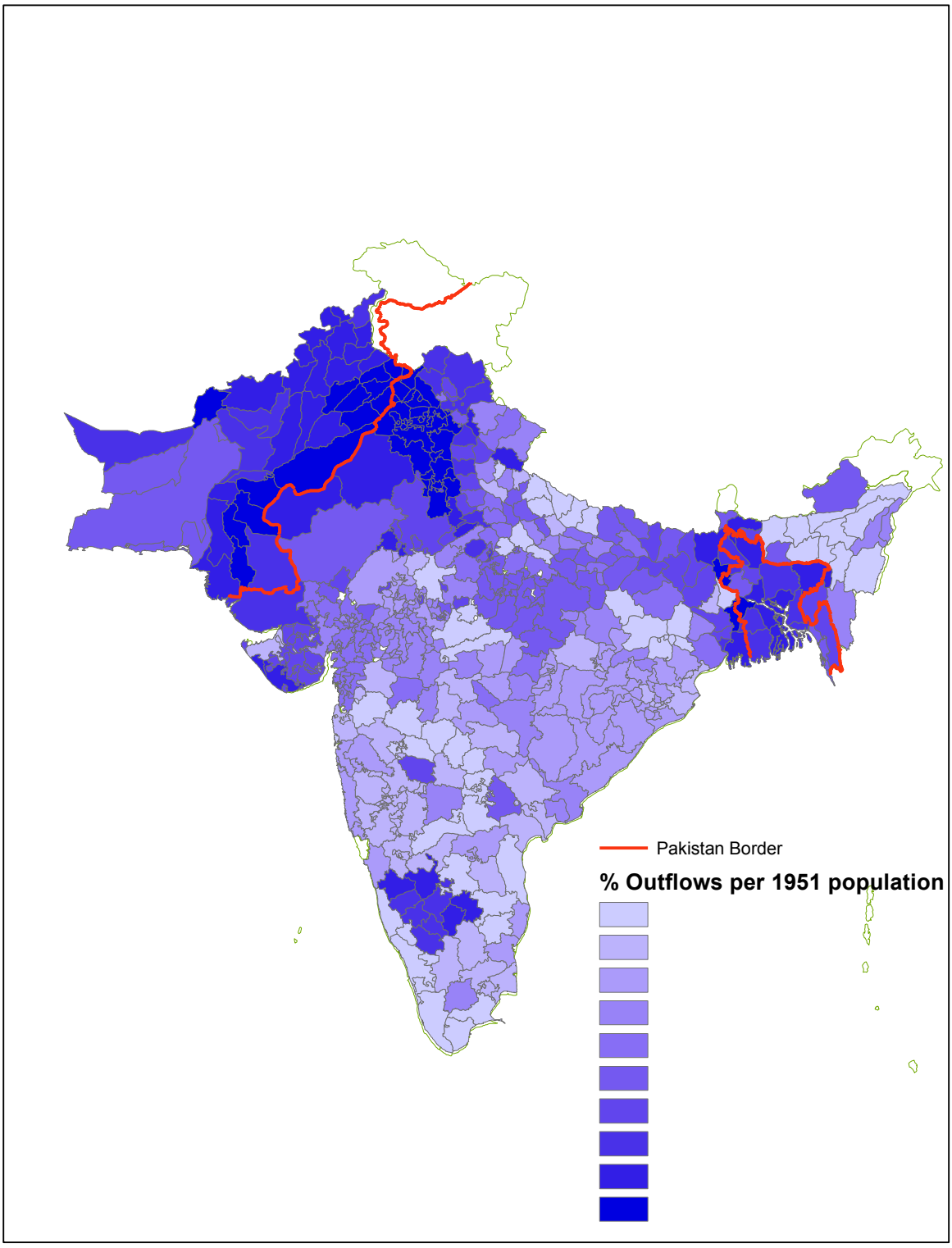

Figure 2: **Minority outflows per 1951 population (deciles)**
source:BKM 2008 based upon 1951 and 1931 censuses of India and Pakistan

resident majority growth rates in 1911-1931. This measure is preferred as the majority growth rate directly adjusts for population shocks such as the Bengal famine that affected some districts more severely than others during the period 1931-1951 (please see BKM 2008 for details). This variable thus includes all minorities who fled from a district, were forceably converted as well as the estimated 3.4 million "missing". While probably not a good direct estimate of district level Partition violence, as individuals may have left a district during Partition due a fear of future violence rather than in response to actual incidents, we will show that the outflows measure does appear to be strongly correlated with the most reliable, though still inadequate, statistics available on the distribution of Partition deaths. However, in and of itself, this measure is arguably a good measure of "ethnic cleansing"-the departure, removal, forced conversion or killing of individuals from a target ethnic minority during this period.

$Frontline_{39-45i}$ is our variable of interest. It is the average number of months that battalions that were raised from each district spent in frontline combat in World War II, weighted by the number of casualties from each battalion in that district (Please see the Data Appendix for details of the variable construction procedure). $Casualties_{39-45i}$ is the number of military casualties from each district during World War II as recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The $minorityratio_{31i}$ is the percentage of Muslims in post-Partition India and proportion of Sikhs and Hindus in post-Partition Pakistan in the 1931 population in each district. In the base-line specification, we also include a vector of controls such as distance to the new border, the literacy rates of both the religious minority and majority in the district in 1931, and controls for historical and jurisdictional factors that might also influence Partition violence.

Table 1 provides the summary statistics for these variables from the sample of districts that incurred at least one army casualty during the Second World War.[6] Notice that on average, districts of India and Pakistan became considerably more homogeneous between 1931 and 1951. While on average, religious minorities represented 13% of each district in 1931, by 1951, the minority share had fallen to 9%. In fact, Indian districts lost 5.3% of their minority populations in this period, relative to the proportion 'expected' based upon scaling native growth rates. However, this number masks a range of experiences from the tribal mountains of Assam and the Northeast which actually experienced a 5% rise in their minority population over expectations, to the Sikh native state of Kapurthala which experienced a 93% outflow of its minority population. As Figure 2 suggests, areas closer to the new border were most badly hit, particularly Punjab, but there are some anomalies.

[6]This excludes a small number of tiny Princely States that did not supply any troops to the British Army.

Table 1: **Summary Statistics**

Variable	Mean	SD
% Outflows per 1951 population (using native growth rates)	5.902	16.460
% Inflows per 1951 population	3.412	7.526
% Religious minority, 1951	8.953	9.639
WWII casualties in district, 100s	1.438	3.203
Average months at frontline	1.656	1.471
Land revenue, Rs. lakhs	1.043	1.221
Log. distance to Indo-Pak border	5.004	1.098
% Majority literacy, 1931	6.259	4.358
% Minority literacy, 1931	10.312	6.861
% Religious minorities, 1931	13.097	12.208
Big City Dummy	0.140	0.348
Population 1931 (lakhs)	14.738	25.498
Religious pilgrimage site in district	0.047	0.212
Medieval port in district	0.081	0.273
Muslim founded city/ capital in district	0.643	0.480
``Martial Race" casualties from district:		
Baluch regiments	3.238	17.273
Gurkha regiments	0.557	3.501
Jat regiments	1.681	9.031
Sikh regiments	3.255	16.127
Frontier regiments	6.421	29.646
Punjab regiments	18.272	80.849
Dogra regiments	3.494	36.421
Garhwal regiments	5.464	71.781
Mahratta regiments	3.443	23.040
Rajputana regiments	3.919	24.643
Rajput regiments	1.809	4.847
Kumaon regiments	0.460	5.187
Mahar regiments	0.447	2.280

Border areas in Pakistani Sind and Gujarat seem less affected, as indeed is much of Bengal and Bangladesh. Western Uttar Pradesh, despite having a sizeable Muslim population (see Figure 1), experienced relatively fewer outflows (as indeed apparently much less violence). As we shall discuss in future work, Western Uttar Pradesh, despite being at the geographic centre for political agitation for Pakistan (Kamtekar 1988), ceased to be a major recruiting area for the Indian army following Mutiny of 1857.

Our identification of the effect of frontline experience is based on the arbitrary assignment of Indian army units, conditional on recruitment, to different fronts and to different periods of time at the front during the Second World War. Once a soldier was recruited, the length of assignment to the frontline, we argue, was unrelated to the home district characteristics of soldiers. Going through the official histories of every unit during

the Second World War allows us to assess this assumption, using both qualitative and quantitative evidence.

It is clear that recruitment to different army units tended to be regionally focused and village-based.[7] After the 'Mutiny' of Indian troops in the East India Company armies in 1857, for security reasons, most battalions were reconstituted to contain a mixture of ethnically homogeneous companies, mainly drawing from what the British termed "the martial races"; ironically these were mainly groups that did not rebel against the British in 1857 (Wilkinson 2010). However the companies themselves continued to be recruited from within clans and villages.[8]

However, once a soldier was recruited into an infantry battalion within a particular "martial race" regiment that formed the bulk of the Indian infantry, the assignment of that battalion to the frontline appears to have been arbitrary. Table 2 reveals the deployment of a single Punjab regiment, the 1st Punjab, during the Second World War. Notice the remarkable diversity of assignments within a single regiment raised among a single "martial race". While the 3rd Battalion served in East Africa, North Africa and Italy, spending a remarkable 21 cumulative months at the frontline, the 2nd Battalion served eight months at the front, mainly in the battle for Burma, while the 4th Battalion of that same regiment spent no time in a frontline capacity at all.

Table 3 shows determinants of our average frontline months measure as a function of observable factors that have also been associated with Partition violence (e.g. (Bharadwaj,

[7] As the Joint Secretary to the Defense Department, Philip Mason (1974), writes:

> Commanding officers ... usually tended to specialize in a particular class of recruit– a personal liking being reinforced by the convenience of having, at least in one company, men who ate the same kind of food and would eat it together. And the easiest, and in some ways the best, way to recruit was simply to let men go to their villages on leave and bring back their sons and cousins. The result would be a unit closely knit by bonds of blood, region, speech, religion and caste. When the men were well led and contented, it made for valour and fidelity, for pride in the regiment and its good name. But if the men were badly led or treated in a way that they felt was slighting, it might also mean that they were united in resentment, and if, if the worst came to the worst, in mutiny. It made for a close-knit permanent unit, highly professional, in which men made their careers.... (22)

[8] Again, quoting Mason (Mason 1974)(pg 24):

> The new army [after 1857] was built on the caste or class *company*. There were notable exceptions- class *battalions* of Sikhs, Marathas, Dogras and Garhwalis– but the most general pattern was the mixed battalion, with one or two companies of Punjabi Muslims, one or two companies of Sikhs, and perhaps a company of Rajputs and one of Dogras, Pathans or Baluchis. Thus the company, not the battalion, became a family affair and it was in the company that a man hoped his son would find a future. Uniformity in the company made for convenience in administration and recruiting; diversity in the battalion sprang from mistrust after the Mutiny.

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Table 2: **The campaigns of different units of the 1st Punjab Regiment**

Battalion	Regiment	First Campaign	Second Campaign	Third Campaign	Fourth Campaign	Months at the frontline
1	1 Punjab	Burma March 1944-July 1945				8
2	1 Punjab	The Arakan Operations 1942-1945	Burma March 1944-July 1945			8
3	1 Punjab	September 1940 - May 1941 East African Campaign	North Africa 1941	Italy 1943	Italy 1944	21
4	1 Punjab					0
5	1 Punjab	The Retreat from Burma 1941-1942	The Arakan Operations 1942-1945	Burma May 1945	Japan July 1945-November 1947	8
6	1 Punjab	South-east Asia				1

Khwaja, and Mian 2008a)), examining the variation both between and within Indian provinces and native states, and controlling for whether districts sent recruits to army units that experienced casualties and to different martial race regiments. Notice that the average frontline experience of units does appears somewhat higher in more populous districts, this relationship does not survive the addition of province and native state fixed effects, and in general, there appears to be no more relationship between observables that are considered potentially central for minority outflows, such as the minority ratio, the distance to the Indo-Pakistan border, land revenue or literacy levels than chance might suggest with the average number of months spent at the frontline for units raised in a district. This is also true looking within provinces and native states and with and without controlling for the degree to which any soldiers or martial race regiments in particular suffered casualties that were from that district, that can be seen as a reasonable proxy for the extent of recruitment into combat units (see Appendix). These results are consistent with our identifying assumption that, once recruited into the army, soldiers from different districts appear to have been assigned to combat roles in a way that appears unrelated to the home districts that they happened to be from.

The lack of a relationship between frontline combat assignment and district charac-

Table 3: **Regression: determinants of frontline experience**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
WWII casualties in district, 100s		0.204***	0.022	0.104	-0.068
		[0.049]	[0.080]	[0.066]	[0.072]
Land revenue, Rs. Lakhs, 1901	0.082	0.024	-0.057	-0.019	-0.039
	[0.082]	[0.068]	[0.088]	[0.066]	[0.070]
Log. distance to Indo-Pak border	-0.151	-0.099	0.085	-0.190	0.132
	[0.125]	[0.108]	[0.097]	[0.279]	[0.192]
% Majority literacy, 1931	-0.014	-0.023	-0.025	0.030	0.023
	[0.028]	[0.026]	[0.025]	[0.032]	[0.026]
% Minority literacy, 1931	0.000	0.008	0.012	-0.034*	-0.039**
	[0.039]	[0.036]	[0.033]	[0.018]	[0.019]
% religious minorities, 1931	0.011	0.010	0.023**	-0.007	0.005
	[0.016]	[0.015]	[0.011]	[0.011]	[0.008]
Big City Dummy	0.085	0.204	-0.317	-0.088	-0.207
	[0.346]	[0.319]	[0.196]	[0.248]	[0.224]
Population 1931 (lakhs)	-0.006***	-0.005**	-0.004**	-0.022	-0.002
	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.018]	[0.015]
Religious pilgrimage site in district	-0.435	-0.519**	-0.235	-0.125	-0.150
	[0.297]	[0.207]	[0.230]	[0.194]	[0.101]
Medieval port in district	-0.257	-0.298	-0.044	0.103	0.166
	[0.293]	[0.273]	[0.204]	[0.203]	[0.145]
Muslim founded city/ capital in district	0.426	0.275	0.278	0.001	-0.012
	[0.284]	[0.238]	[0.200]	[0.277]	[0.236]
Controls for martial race regimental casualtie	no	no	yes	no	yes
Native State/ Province FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Observations	221	221	221	221	221
R-squared	0.08	0.21	0.40	0.50	0.64

Robust standard errors in brackets, clustered at province / native state level. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; + Martial race regiments include: Sikh, Kumaon, Mahratta, Garhwal, Dogra, Punjab, Frontier Force and Gurkha

teristics in Table 3, conditional on districts raising units that experience casualties, also appears consistent with the historical record. First, there is no evidence that different units were specifically requested for particular roles during the war based upon ethnic composition. The seventeen weighty volumes of the official army history of World War II, based as they were on internal army correspondence, make no mention of Sikhs being sent to a particular place versus Gurkhas, Punjabi Muslims or some other group, based on some particular martial characteristic (Prasad 1954).[9]

Second, the transfer patterns of units from one theater from another, to replace groups taken out of the line, or because of pressing needs somewhere else, also seem to indicate that particular group or regional identity was not a factor, because groups of one community were often replaced by very different groups, sometimes at very short notice, with no indication that the unit's specific identity was a key concern. There are many cases where units of one ethnicity were transferred at short notice to frontline roles formerly occupied by units of another ethnicity, without this being mentioned as in any way remarkable in secret army correspondence of the time or in post-war memoirs.[10]

Instead, internal army correspondence seems to take a special pride in the *ex ante* interchangeability of units, and the fact that units from many different groups were fighting alongside each other. All regular Army units were "armed and equipped to the same scale and standard" (Reorganization Committee 1945)(p404). In war-time, recruits could and were reallocated to different battalions of a regiment on the basis of the casualties incurred.[11] In fact, within each regiment, all battalions aimed at the same ethnic composition, because it was argued that since each unit had similar chances of sustaining high casualties, it was the best way to assure that particular ethnicities were not relatively harder hit (Reorganization Committee 1945). In 1923, the Indianization Committee Report argued that "that the army in India had been reduced to an absolute minimum and that every unit must therefore be highly efficient. No risks must be taken and *every unit must be interchangeable and fit for war.*"[12]

[9]In fact there are only two cases in which generals requested particular "racial" units– both of these were Gurkhas from the Kingdom of Nepal, so outside our sample, and the rationale for the request was based upon the past experiences they had with these particular units rather than their ethnicity per se. The 2 exceptions we have found are Orde Wingate's 1943 request for 7,500 Gurkhas to join his LRP 'Chindit' force (Connell, 1959, 742), and Gen. Francis Tuker's 1942 request for Gurkhas (his own former regiment) for service with the 5th Division in Africa (Chevenix-Trench, 175).

[10]For example, the Central Indian Horse, which was generally part of the 4th Indian Division but which was lent to another Division in mid 1944 before returning to the 4th in August. Dharm Pal, *The Campaign in Italy 1943-54* (Orient, 1960), p.344. Similarly, the 4/11 Sikhs were transferred from the 25th Brigade to the 10th Brigade 17 Dec 1944, ibid p.555.

[11]This movement between units following recruitment would lead to an underestimate of our effects on home district ethnic cleansing.

[12]Our italics. *"Committee ... on the Progress of the Indianization of the Indian Army (June 1923)*

3 Results

To assess whether the human capital that accrues within military units in a combat environment has an effect on ethnic cleansing, our approach is to compare the rise of religious homogenisation and minority outflows in districts that raised army units that happened to be assigned to longer periods in frontline combat relative to otherwise similar recruitment districts. As discussed above, we thus choose the set of districts from which recruitment of at least one casualty in World War II occurred. We also directly match along a range of characteristics that may influence both the costs of minoritites to migrate (distance to the border, minority literacy rates), and the incentives to engage in ethnic cleansing.

Table 4 examines the determinants of changes in the proportion of religious minorities in 1951, controlling for the 1931 minority ratio. As Table 4 reveals, districts that raised units with an extra month of average combat experience in the Second World War reduced the proportion of religious minorities in their population in 1951 by above 1 percentage point, looking across the country, and close to 0.7 percentage points on average, comparing districts within the same provinces and native states. Given that the average minority population in 1951 was around 9 percentage points, these are considerable effects. In fact, as Columns 2-5 suggest, the interaction with the minority population is also negative, suggesting that the effect of frontline experience leads to greater decreases in the minority ratio in districts that had an *ex ante* more mixed population. A range of contest and polarisation models predict greater violence with an increasing minority ratio, particularly if the "spoils" are public in nature (Esteban and Ray 2009). Thus this is consistent with our interpretation of frontline experience providing a form of human capital that becomes more effective in environments where violence is more likely to occur, and that the violence in the Indian partition may have been more for political control than for local private expropriation and gain.

It may be the case that the effect we are measuring of frontline experience is really of army recruitment– the effect of the "uniform" and military training rather than actual combat experience. Furthermore, as we have discussed, India's army was the largest volunteer army in the world. One possibility then is that the effect of frontline experience

(IOL Mil. Dept Temp. No. 309); See also Mason (1974)(pg457). *Reorganization of the Army and Air Forces in India, Report of a Committee set up by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India Volume One-Text (Secret, Copy No.67)* 1945, National Archives of India (New Delhi), Group XXII S. Nos 1-161 Part 1.The Indian army leadership did however, occasionally think about the ethnic composition of troops when deploying them domestically within India, for instance during the 1947 transition. For example, Gurkhas from Nepal and Madrassis from the south were used to protect Muslims during the September 1947 violence in Delhi.

may be instead due to poor soldiers being disproportionately recruited and then used as "cannon fodder", with poor areas also being more likely to also be net senders of economic migrants. As we have seen, however, there appears to be no relationship between frontline experience and agricultural wealth (as measured by land revenue) or a range of other district characteristics. Furthermore, the effect of the frontline is robust to comparing areas with similar agricultural wealth, which also seems to have no independent effect.

Further, knowing the number of casualties in a districts both gives us a reasonable proxy to control for the recruitment of combat troops (see Appendix) and allows us to control for the possibility that troops with higher combat exposure had more casualties, and thus it is the loss of wealth (or increased concentration of wealth) due to the lost personnel, rather than human capital, that encourages violence and thus an increase in "missing" minorities. However, the effect is robust to controlling for the number of casualties lost by each district in the War.

It could also be that, rather than being arbitrarily assigned to frontline roles, frontline troops were disproportionately drawn from those groups that did not mutiny in 1857, that the British subsequently regarded as "martial" races, and it is the pre-existing "martial" traits of individuals from particular districts, rather than acquired human capital from combat experience, that might explain the increased religious homogenisation. A variant of this argument might credit particular states, such as Punjab or NWFP, as being disproportionately "martial". However, as Columns 3 and 5 reveal, the effect of frontline experience is robust to including controls for the extent to which "martial race" regiments were raised in each district, as proxied by the casualties from each martial race in each district. Furthermore, the effect is also robust to comparing districts within the same province or native state.

Another possibility is that frontline troops are being disproportionately drawn from big cities or from historic urban areas where Hindus and Muslims have historically been competitors for patronage, or disproportionately not being drawn from medieval ports, where Hindus and Muslims enjoyed historic complementarities (Jha 2008).[13] It may also be the case that frontline troops are coming from pilgrimage areas, with long traditions of organised religiosity. However, the effect is robust to adding such controls.

Following the war, it could have been the case that soldiers did not return to their home districts, but having become more mobile, went to other districts instead. Since

[13]Indeed, while the signs and point estimates across our results are consistent with reduced ethnic cleansing and outflows in districts that possess medieval ports, these effects are weak and not estimated with precision. This may be due to the rural nature of much of the ethnic cleansing and violence during Partition, compared to at other times, when religious riots have been mainly an urban phenomenon (see also Table 7 for a comparison).

recruitment was village-based, and most soldiers were recruited from rural areas with relatively more geographically concentrated networks and assets, such as land, this is less likely to be an issue in this context. Indeed, contemporary bureaucrats from recruitment districts were convinced that most soldiers would return to their native villages.[14] However to the extent that such mobility did occur, it would lead to a downward bias in our estimates, and thus our estimates can be considered a lower bound on the effect of frontline experience.

Tables 5 and 6 attempt to unpack the changes in the 1951 minority ratio, by decomposing such changes in minority outflows and the inflows of co-religionists. As Table 5 reveals a very consistent analogue to Table 4– an additional month that units drawn from a district experienced at the frontline is associated with an increased outflow of around 20,000 members of that district's religious minority. Once again, the effect is greater in areas that were ex ante more mixed.

A separate question is whether the ethnic cleansing perpetrated against a district's religious minority was to seize economic assets or instead for sectarian social objectives[15] If the former was the case, then we might expect that districts with more experienced veterans might organise to block entry by co-religionist refugees so that there would be more fixed assets, such as land, for incumbents to enjoy. If, on the other hand, the objective of ethnic cleansing is instead to ensure political dominance or security for a particular religious group in an area, then we might instead expect that more organised districts will welcome and attract co-religionist inflows relative to other districts. As Table 6 suggests, districts that raised more experienced soldiers were also more likely to attract greater inflows, suggesting that political or security concerns may have been more important than expropriative violence in these areas.[16]

Despite the lack of a relationship between average combat experience and observable home district characteristics, a lingering concern may be that average combat experience is capturing some unobserved feature of the home district that is also correlated with religious tension and violence. If such an unobserved feature did exist, it would suggest that our wartime combat experience variable should also predict the incidence of Hindu-Muslim riots in the district prior to wartime demobilisation in or after World

[14]See J.G. Acheson, ICS Post-War Employment on the North-West Frontier, Marked 'Confidential' (Peshawar: NWFP Government Press, 1944), where Acheson discusses the resettlement problems in each district given the large number of veterans likely to return after the war

[15]See Weinstein (2007) on the importance of the distinction between economic objectives and social objectives among cohesive units in the context of the insurgency in Sierra Leone.

[16]These results resonate with but suggest a different interpretation of Bharadwaj, Khwaja, and Mian (2008a)'s finding of a "replacement" effect– areas that had the greatest outflows, also tended to attract the greatest inflows.

Table 4: **Regression: % Religious minorities in post-Partition districts, 1951**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
WWII casualties in district, 100s	-0.742***	-0.657***	-0.424	-0.147	0.35
	[0.225]	[0.152]	[0.381]	[0.091]	[0.211]
Average months at frontline	-1.724***	-1.051***	-1.364***	-0.675***	-0.683**
	[0.629]	[0.371]	[0.411]	[0.232]	[0.335]
Frontline months x % minority		-0.205***	-0.176***	-0.149***	-0.155***
		[0.027]	[0.034]	[0.024]	[0.031]
Land revenue, Rs. lakhs	0.174	-0.016	-0.085	-0.138	0.2
	[0.404]	[0.363]	[0.394]	[0.371]	[0.377]
Log. distance to Indo-Pak border	1.676	2.204***	2.050**	3.235***	3.376***
	[1.031]	[0.758]	[0.822]	[0.498]	[0.515]
% Majority literacy, 1931	0.283*	0.275*	0.254	0.03	-0.012
	[0.143]	[0.157]	[0.164]	[0.119]	[0.122]
% Minority literacy, 1931	-0.298**	-0.320***	-0.325***	-0.142**	-0.149***
	[0.124]	[0.104]	[0.104]	[0.054]	[0.053]
% religious minorities, 1931	0.591***	1.008***	0.983***	1.000***	1.011***
	[0.124]	[0.065]	[0.067]	[0.048]	[0.049]
Big City Dummy	-1.149	-2.321*	-2.677**	-1.740**	-1.517**
	[1.464]	[1.171]	[1.285]	[0.746]	[0.725]
Population 1931 (lakhs)	0.007	-0.003	-0.002	-0.088	-0.11
	[0.012]	[0.011]	[0.011]	[0.071]	[0.079]
Religious pilgrimage site in district	0.656	0.439	-0.738	0.137	0.116
	[1.772]	[1.684]	[1.467]	[0.642]	[0.545]
Medieval port in district	2.201	0.632	0.417	1.707	1.417
	[2.123]	[1.709]	[1.752]	[1.606]	[1.706]
Muslim founded city/ capital in district	0.441	0.019	0.18	0.472	0.206
	[1.321]	[1.003]	[1.062]	[0.746]	[0.730]
Controls for martial race regimental casualties[+]	no	no	yes	no	yes
Native State/ Province FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Observations	220	220	220	220	220
R-squared	0.59	0.77	0.79	0.91	0.93

Robust standard errors in brackets, clustered at province / native state level. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; + Martial race regiments include: Sikh, Kumaon, Mahratta, Garhwal, Dogra, Punjab, Frontier Force and Gurkha

Table 5: **Regression: Minority outflows (1931-51) using scaled native growth rates, 10,000s**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
WWII casualties in district, 100s	1.198***	1.105***	1.325	0.465**	-1.026*
	[0.416]	[0.371]	[1.052]	[0.200]	[0.605]
Average months at frontline	2.680**	1.95	2.567**	0.859***	0.914***
	[1.313]	[1.170]	[1.117]	[0.309]	[0.316]
Frontline months x % minority		0.222***	0.124**	0.122*	0.077
		[0.059]	[0.048]	[0.070]	[0.059]
Land revenue, Rs. lakhs	0.29	0.495	0.041	0.231	-0.897
	[0.620]	[0.511]	[0.759]	[1.106]	[1.102]
Log. distance to Indo-Pak border	-3.338**	-3.910***	-3.638***	-5.320*	-5.405*
	[1.550]	[1.431]	[1.288]	[2.785]	[2.796]
% Majority literacy, 1931	-0.606**	-0.598**	-0.604**	-0.236	-0.276
	[0.224]	[0.224]	[0.260]	[0.232]	[0.219]
% Minority literacy, 1931	0.417	0.442	0.496*	0.248	0.337
	[0.276]	[0.307]	[0.263]	[0.279]	[0.286]
% religious minorities, 1931	0.494***	0.042	0.132	0.083	0.146
	[0.120]	[0.116]	[0.119]	[0.172]	[0.181]
Big City Dummy	4.74	6.010*	7.732**	8.342*	8.043
	[3.662]	[3.454]	[3.757]	[4.558]	[4.767]
Population 1931 (lakhs)	0.002	0.013	0.009	0.535*	0.535
	[0.024]	[0.024]	[0.024]	[0.295]	[0.326]
Religious pilgrimage site in district	-1.826	-1.591	0.339	-2.054	-1.761
	[2.636]	[2.446]	[2.115]	[1.803]	[1.934]
Medieval port in district	-2.935	-1.235	-0.951	-3.418	-1.741
	[4.068]	[3.755]	[4.376]	[3.793]	[3.935]
Muslim founded city/ capital in district	-0.295	0.162	0.626	-0.341	-0.47
	[2.691]	[2.273]	[1.988]	[1.693]	[1.923]
Controls for martial race regimental casualties[+]	no	no	yes	no	yes
Native State/ Province FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Observations	220	220	220	220	220
R-squared	0.43	0.49	0.58	0.69	0.74

Robust standard errors in brackets, clustered at province / native state level. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; + Martial race regiments include: Sikh, Kumaon, Mahratta, Garhwal, Dogra, Punjab, Frontier Force and Gurkha

Table 6: **Regression: Majority inflows per 1951 population**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
WWII casualties in district, 100s	0.141	0.105	-0.159	-0.385*	0.029
	[0.109]	[0.093]	[0.278]	[0.220]	[0.278]
Average months at frontline	0.992*	0.902**	0.936*	0.631**	0.499
	[0.563]	[0.411]	[0.554]	[0.250]	[0.361]
Frontline months x % minority		0.105***	0.097***	0.068**	0.070**
		[0.031]	[0.035]	[0.026]	[0.032]
Land revenue, Rs. lakhs	0.316	0.377	0.547	0.159	0.338
	[0.252]	[0.303]	[0.352]	[0.290]	[0.353]
Log. distance to Indo-Pak border	-1.943**	-2.021**	-1.957**	-2.359**	-2.239*
	[0.856]	[0.796]	[0.885]	[1.087]	[1.270]
% Majority literacy, 1931	-0.024	-0.027	-0.042	0.299***	0.295**
	[0.168]	[0.172]	[0.191]	[0.092]	[0.111]
% Minority literacy, 1931	0.175*	0.188*	0.170*	0.009	-0.060
	[0.098]	[0.101]	[0.100]	[0.068]	[0.086]
% religious minorities, 1931	0.270***	0.079	0.073	0.052	0.031
	[0.073]	[0.061]	[0.068]	[0.067]	[0.081]
Big City Dummy	2.060	2.266	2.370	1.174	1.402
	[1.803]	[1.818]	[1.992]	[1.714]	[1.906]
Population 1931 (lakhs)	-0.016	-0.015	-0.016	0.003	-0.028
	[0.012]	[0.011]	[0.011]	[0.061]	[0.056]
Religious pilgrimage site in district	-1.664**	-1.979*	-2.081*	-0.690	-1.261
	[0.738]	[0.994]	[1.120]	[0.898]	[1.355]
Medieval port in district	-2.684	-1.962	-1.859	-1.434	-2.104
	[2.236]	[1.985]	[1.945]	[1.321]	[1.484]
Muslim founded city/ capital in district	0.158	0.566	0.691	0.378	0.719
	[0.819]	[0.747]	[0.869]	[0.650]	[0.599]
Controls for martial race regimental casualties[+]	no	no	yes	no	yes
Native State/ Province FE	no	no	no	yes	yes
Observations	235	235	235	235	235
R-squared	0.49	0.56	0.59	0.78	0.80

Robust standard errors in brackets, clustered at province / native state level. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; + Martial race regiments include: Sikh, Kumaon, Mahratta, Garhwal, Dogra, Punjab, Frontier Force and Gurkha

War II. Table 7 presents the results from this "placebo" test, predicting the number of Hindu-Muslim riots reported by newspapers in towns within a district from 1850-1942 (Wilkinson 2005). As the results suggest, while other factors, such as the presence of medieval Muslim patronage centres, pilgrimage sites and medieval ports in a district do predict how the number of riots experienced by towns in a district prior to 1942, as expected, World War II combat experience has no predictive power on the number of riots.[17]

4 Combat experience and ethnic cleansing: qualitative evidence

One strength of our empirical approach is that, unlike most of the qualitative literature, we not only look at areas were violence was pervasive during Partition but also areas that were relatively peaceful, despite possessing polarised populations. The latter areas naturally are those where the "dog did not bark" and thus qualitative evidence on why peace persisted in these areas during the Partition is relatively hard to find. However, it is useful to compare the experience of the Indian police in the ethnically-mixed United Provinces, which was seen as a potential centre for Partition violence, during the large-scale rural rebellion that occurred during the 'Quit India' movement of 1942. The violence of the 'Quit India' movement was most severe in the United Provinces, with the government losing administrative control of several districts. However, the traditional police approach of restoring authority– charging at protestors with batons, called *lathis*– remained successful at dispersing mobs of over five hundred people. Armed mainly with nineteenth century muskets, 62 policemen at the Madhuban station held off a mob of 4000 that sought to kill them (Government of the United Provinces 1943). These areas remained relatively peaceful in 1947. In common with other episodes of civil tension and ethnic riots, the willingness to use force by the authorities appeared to have been sufficient at deterring violence (Horowitz 2003).

In contrast, in 1947, the Punjab Boundary Force "found a countryside not easily intimidated even by seasoned and heavily armed troops like themselves. They encountered resistance and counterattacks in many places. What seems to have been happening was that the army was being challenged by experts, by people who had formerly served within

[17]In fact, there is no relationship with the cumulative riots extending the data to 1950 as well. As discussed below, this data is subject to weaknesses during the Partition period due to censorship, and due to the rural nature of much Partition violence.

Table 7: **Placebo Regression:Number of Hindu-Muslim Riots in district, 1850-1942**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
WWII casualties in district, 100s	-0.051	-0.051	0.052	0.008	-0.034	0.197
	[0.034]	[0.034]	[0.178]	[0.255]	[0.065]	[0.218]
Average months at frontline	0.076	0.077	0.079	0.055	-0.008	0.011
	[0.086]	[0.079]	[0.087]	[0.143]	[0.083]	[0.166]
Frontline months x % minority		-0.001	-0.001	0.002		0.001
		[0.007]	[0.009]	[0.005]		[0.011]
Land revenue, Rs. lakhs	0.279	0.279	0.257	0.254	0.439	0.377
	[0.288]	[0.288]	[0.306]	[0.215]	[0.347]	[0.354]
Log. distance to Indo-Pak border	0.410	0.411	0.364	0.105	0.123	-0.168
	[0.261]	[0.270]	[0.319]	[0.430]	[0.309]	[0.861]
% Majority literacy, 1931	-0.002	-0.002	-0.001	0.110	0.003	0.076
	[0.067]	[0.066]	[0.075]	[0.109]	[0.059]	[0.093]
% Minority literacy, 1931	-0.011	-0.011	-0.006	-0.018	-0.018	0.005
	[0.020]	[0.020]	[0.020]	[0.026]	[0.021]	[0.040]
% religious minorities, 1931	0.060*	0.061	0.053	0.014	0.031	0.021
	[0.030]	[0.037]	[0.037]	[0.034]	[0.028]	[0.057]
Big City Dummy	0.936	0.935	1.152	1.679*	1.347*	2.508**
	[0.780]	[0.782]	[0.776]	[0.876]	[0.791]	[1.181]
Population 1931 (lakhs)	-0.011*	-0.011*	-0.010	0.038**	-0.006	0.056
	[0.006]	[0.006]	[0.006]	[0.017]	[0.006]	[0.052]
Religious pilgrimage site in district	3.649**	3.650**	3.829**	3.695*	3.435**	3.202*
	[1.523]	[1.528]	[1.749]	[2.091]	[1.484]	[1.894]
Medieval port in district	-1.392***	-1.396***	-1.362***	-0.017	-1.646**	-0.404
	[0.463]	[0.476]	[0.461]	[0.523]	[0.612]	[0.525]
Muslim founded city/ capital in district	1.461***	1.459***	1.457***	0.515*	1.679***	1.034*
	[0.401]	[0.398]	[0.393]	[0.268]	[0.351]	[0.581]
Controls for martial race regimental ca	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Native State/ Province FE	no	no	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	228	228	228	228	234	234
R-squared	0.25	0.25	0.27	0.47	0.23	0.43

[illegible] significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%; + Martial race regiments include: Sikh, Kumaon, Mahratta, Garhwal, Dogra, Punjab, Frontier Force and Gurkha. (1-4) include riots from 1850-1942, (5) and (6) include riots from 1850-1950.

its ranks . . . "[18]

Those areas that did bear much of the human cost of partition provide numerous accounts of the role of soldiers with combat experience that suggest some of the mechanisms through which this experience translated into ethnic cleansing. These appear to include, in particular, an enhanced ability to kill through the use of modern weapons, to organise violence and the defense and mobility of large refugee groups, and to offset or eliminate the defensive capability of the target group.

Contemporary accounts highlight the importance of specific weapon and tactical skills used by the perpetrators of violence. One account of an attack on a refugee train described how the Sikh attackers, in army-style sections of twelve led by men in blue uniforms,"advanced and retired in military formation" when met with gunfire, and waited for darkness before renewing their attacks on the train (*The Times*, Monday Aug 25 1947 p.5). Blacksmiths with military training forged and reproduced modern weaponry, even fashioning artillery (Kamtekar 1988), even while reports document Sikhs in Amritsar using "mortars, Bren and sten guns," all of which required military experience (Khosla 1951). Officers attached to the Punjab Boundary Force near Amritsar reported that Sikhs were:

> operating in armed bands of considerable strength and carrying out raids against Muslim villages, or mainly Muslim villages, or the Muslim parts of larger villages–three or four raids nightly. These bands were well organized and often included mounted men for reconnaissance purposes.... Although there were Muslim bands in the same area doing the same sort of thing, these were generally smaller and not so well organized. The Army had had successful encounters with all those bands.... In certain cases the bands had fought back using such weapons as mortars and light machine guns.[19]

The Joint Defence Council in late August noted that "there are definite signs that the trouble now is the work of well organized gangs working under some centralized control," and "as the gangs wear uniform there is the risk that they may be mistaken for troops by the population."[20]

These units were well organized and used military flanking and flushing out tactics, which were valuable in attacking columns of refugees, trains and villages with protecting

[18]Kamtekar (1988), citing the Rees Report.

[19]Informal Minutes of the Joint Defence Council meeting held at 11.45 a.m. on Saturday, 16th August, 1947 pp.347-48

[20]4th Meeting of the provisional joint defence council 25th August 1947 (Nehru, C-in-C, Rees, Pakistan HC and others in attendance)

forces of small units of soldiers or a few armed ex-soldiers (Aiyar 1998, Kamtekar 1988). Several accounts also mention the skilled use of military flares to light targets, and the initial use of guns to knock out the few armed opponents so that the bulk of the killing could be done by less heavily armed men. Ian Morrison, perhaps the most intrepid of the journalists who covered the killings in Punjab, reported how:

> The Sikhs attack scientifically. A first wave armed with firearms fires to bring the Muslims off their roofs. A second wave lobs grenades over the walls. In the ensuing confusion a third wave goes in with *kirpans* and spears, and the serious killing begins. A last wave consists of older men, often army pensioners with long white beards, who carry torches and specialize in arson. Mounted outriders with *kirpans* cut down those trying to flee." *The Times*, Monday, Aug 25 1947 p.5

There is also good reason to believe that military organization facilitated defense and mobility by minority groups as well as violence. Ian Morrison reports how the movement of Sikhs out of Lyallpur district in western Punjab was:

> . . . orderly and well organized. The Sikhs moved in blocks of 40,000 to 60,000 and cover about 20 miles a day. It is an unforgettable sight to see one of these columns on the move. The organization is mainly entrusted to ex-service men and soldiers on leave who have been caught by the disturbances. Men on horseback, armed with spears or swords, provide guards in front, behind, and on the flanks. There is a regular system of bugle calls. At night a halt is called near some village where water is available, watch fires are lit, and pickets are posted." "200,000 on the move," *The Times* Sept 19, 1947

While the qualitative historical evidence from India's partition points to the role of combat experience in enhancing skills at organising violence, enhancing defensive mobility, and offsetting others' defensive capabilities, this does not mean that harder to observe psychological changes that reduce the costs of organising violence were not also present. Even before the war, land settlement officers in the Punjab canal colonies, in which large numbers of veterans from World War I were settled in the 1920s, noticed that soldiers "displayed an assertiveness and a willingness to complain that stood in marked contrast to the more resigned attitude of their civilian counterparts. (Ali 1988)(pg.118-119)" Similarly, it is possible that lengthy combat experience could have had an inuring effect on soldiers.

5 Does "ethnic cleansing" reflect violence?

We have chosen to focus our empirical analysis on religious homogenisation, minority outflows and co-religionist majority inflows, as we feel these are good gauges of the processes of ethnic cleansing that took place during the Partition of India. Yet a natural question that remains is whether the patterns of ethnic cleansing actually also reflects the violence that took place during the Partition as well.

Data on partition violence are unreliable and biased for a variety of reasons. Official government records become increasingly unreliable in mid-1947 because of the breakdown of the police and local administration in the worst-affected areas, as well as political pressures for officials not to record crimes committed by politically powerful individuals, especially individuals who officials feared would be their superiors after the country's independence in August (Punjab Governor's Reports 1947).[21]

Press records are also unreliable for the partition period, preventing detailed press-coding of violence such as that by Varshney and Wilkinson (2004). There were obvious difficulties for journalists in getting accurate news about mass violence in rural areas, at a time when rail road and communications were often uncertain. But the main reason for this unreliability is that there was very heavy provincial press censorship in India in this period, for instance in Bengal, Delhi and Punjab, in an effort to prevent violence from spreading.[22] British press reports of the time make it clear that people in some parts of India had very little accurate information on the extent of violence in other regions.

[21]The U.P. Governor, for instance, complained in August 1947 about the

> decline in the number of cases instituted under the preventive sections of the CPC [Criminal Penal Code]. There are a number of reasons for this ... The most important of them, however, and the most deadly to morale, is that the Police Station officer is afraid to run in bad hats under these sections or, when he does so, finds his efforts to get convictions stultified by the interference of small local Congressmen.– UP Governor's last letter to Viceroy, August 2nd 1947 /PJ/5/276 United Provinces Governor's Reports Jan-August 1947.

The same situation prevailed in Muslim League controlled provinces. See e.g. Suranjan Das' discussion of the Calcutta riots in Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905-1947* (Delhi: OUP, 1993), pp.177-181, and Richard Lambert's discussion of the same riots in "Hindu-Muslim Riots in India," U.Penn Ph.D 1951

[22]For details of the Punjab press restrictions, see The Pioneer, May 11, 1947, The Times, May 19, 1947. For similar restrictions in Delhi, see The Pioneer, March 25, 1947.

Colin Reid, the Daily Telegraph correspondent estimated that 10,000 had died in Punjab by late August, but he acknowledged that this was a guess because, "a censorship, in force on both sides of the affected locality, the serious interruption of communications and the Indian Press Agreement under which news of communal disorders receives special treatment are all factors combining to conceal the true state of affairs, particularly around Lahore, Amritsar and Jullundur."– Colin Reid, "10,000 believed dead in Punjab Disorders," Daily Telegraph, August 25th 1947. See also "Riot reports complaint," Daily Telegraph, Monday Sep 15th 1947, p.1, and "India demand to Foreign Press," Daily Telegraph, Tuesday September 23, 1947.

For instance a British major who narrowly escaped death on a refugee train in Punjab complained afterwards that he had scheduled his rail trip from Calcutta to a new job in Pakistan with no idea from reading the Calcutta papers that there was a serious risk of violence.[23]

There were three attempts soon after partition to document the extent of violence, collected by Indian civil servant G.D. Khosla (1951), Sikh activist S. Gurcharan Singh Talib (1950) and by the Government of West Punjab, (Pakistan). But each of these efforts is arguably partisan, designed to show the extent of the damage done to the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, respectively, by the other side. The Government of West Punjab (in Pakistan), for instance, makes its views that the violence was caused by Hindu militants (the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) and the Sikhs clear through its book titles: *The RSSS*, *Note on The Sikh Plan* and *The Sikhs in Action*.[24] Talib's book is a direct response to what he terms these "scurrilous pamphlets" and he is dedicated to "rehabilitate the Sikh name" and showing that the violence was "a war unleashed by the Muslim population of the Punjab to cow down Sikhs, and as a means to that, to carry on among them a total campaign of murder, arson, loot and abduction of women." These three studies, even if we could control for their reporting biases, are also geographically concentrated on the Punjab, and therefore are likely underestimate the level of violence in other regions, such as Bengal, Bihar, and Sind.

Figure 3 shows the relationship between the preferred outflows measure of ethnic cleansing and district data on deaths listed by the ICS officer, GD Khosla and that listed by the religious leader, G.S. Talib. Notice that there is a reassuringly strong correlation between outflows and Khosla's arguably less biased measure, though correlation is not perfect ($\rho = 0.64$). As we have discussed, beyond actual killing, the ethnic cleansing during the Partition appears to have taken many forms, including forced and voluntary migration and conversion.

6 Discussion

> We have no desire to increase our army more than may be absolutely necessary for the occasions of the moment.It was calculated, that after the overthrow of Tipoo Saib and the Mahrattas, not fewer than 500,000 persons, belonging to

[23]"Britons save Moslems as Sikhs ambush train," Daily Telegraph, Monday August 25th 1947, p.1,6

[24]For anti-Muslim violence, see the following reports compiled in Lahore, Pakistan in 1948 by the West Punjab Government Press: *Note on the Sikh Plan*, *RSSS (Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh) in the Punjab*,*The Sikhs in Action*, *Intelligence Reports concerning the Tribal Repercussions to the Events in the Punjab, Kashmir and India* and *Kashmir Before Accession*. For anti-Sikh and anti-Hindu violence see Khosla (1951) and Talib (1950)

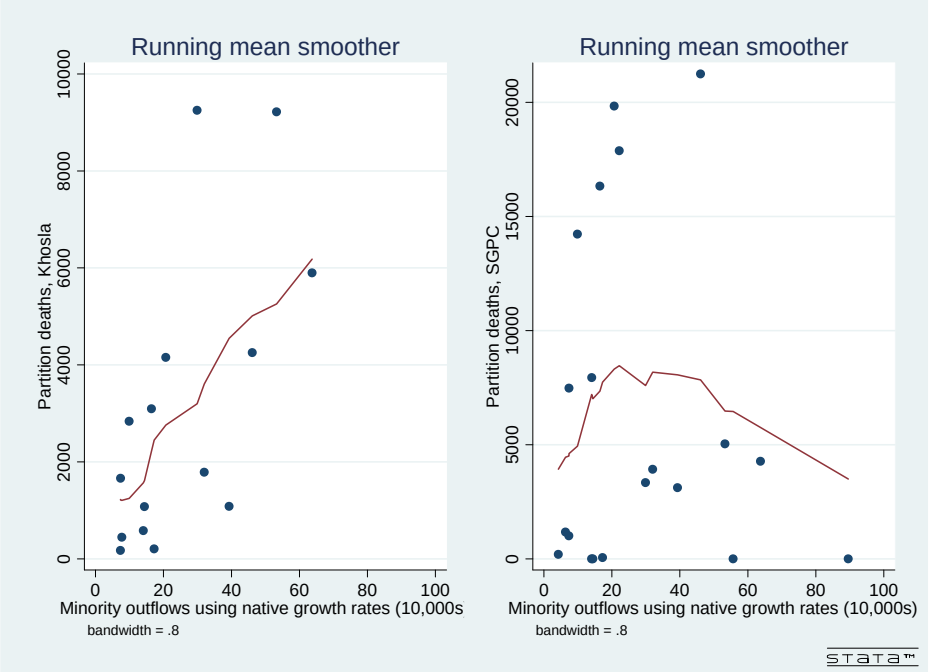

Figure 3: **Outflows and deaths in the Punjab**
source: see Appendix

> the military classes alone, became vagabonds and plunderers. And we need not tell such of our readers as concern themselves with that aspect of public affairs in the Punjab, that the whole face of that province is covered, at this moment, with men who, having no settled occupation, are ripe for anything that may occur ...-"The Indian Army," Edinburgh Review, 97: 197 (1853: Jan), pp.183-220

The problems for public order posed by large number of veterans were well understood by 19th century scholars, soldiers and politicians. The Indian government ultimately solved the problem of what to do with large numbers of laid-off soldiers after the 1840s defeat of the Sikh Kingdom in Punjab by recruiting large by recruiting them into irregular forces that ultimately helped defeat the Indian rebellion in 1857. Recruiting from the armies of the defeated to minimize potential security threats was a tactic adopted by the British, the French and the Dutch in their colonial empires.[25]

Back home in Britain the government was less adept, and the 332,000 soldiers demobilized after the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 created substantial public order

[25]Menezes, *Fidelity and Honour* (2001) says that "It had been the practice of the Presidency Armies to raise regiments from those they had defeated..." and gives examples of Sikhs, Gurkhas, French and Dutch.p.76

problems over the next decade, being heavily involved in the East Anglian riots of 1816 and the Pentridge rising of 1817. Fears over the role of veterans prompted the government to ban all military drilling and training in 1819 (Gash, 1977). These soldiers, and the abilities that they developed in war, may have played a pivotal role in bringing about the major extension of the franchise that would occur in the Great Reform Act of 1832 (Jha and Wilkinson, in progress).[26]

More recently, the destabilizing effects of reintroducing large numbers of veterans to a country without thought of how to address the public order implications has received much less attention. Yet, the de-Baathification of the Iraqi regime after the invasion, which resulted in the demobilization and unemployment of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, many of whom went straight to the Sunni insurgencies, demonstrates that the problem is one with clear contemporary relevance.[27]

This paper contrasts with much of the literature on veterans in post-conflict environments by focusing less upon the skills they failed to gain by going to war and their effects in peace, but rather the importance of the skills that combat veterans do acquire and their effects in crisis. Combat experience and military training appear to provide individuals with human capital, both to engage in and to organise violence. We have sought to demonstrate that this human capital was particularly important in ethnically polarised districts of India on the brink of partition. By doing so, we hope that we can move a step closer to understanding the conditions under which partitions bring peace or catastrophe to ethnically-mixed societies.

The identification approach we have used can be applied to a range of settings where military selection and training render soldiers interchangeable: serial numbers rather than names. This may be particularly useful since the human capital both to engage in violence and to organise groups also may lend itself readily to engendering broad institutional change. From the role of French veterans of America's Revolution in engendering Revolution at home (McDonald, 1941) to English soldiers agitating for enfranchisement and "Decembrist" veterans demanding the end of Russian serfdom, combat veterans may have played an important role in the institutional development of nations (Jha and

[26]Up until World War I, the United States too explicitly provided "bonuses" to demobbed veterans to compensate for their lost earnings and training. These bonuses were significantly reduced following World War I and a demonstration by 17,000 protesting veterans in the "Bonus Army" violently suppressed during the Depression in 1932. The GI Bill may be therefore seen as a resurrection of long-standing US policy.

[27]Jon Lee Anderson, "Letter from Iraq: Out on the Street," The New Yorker, November 15th 2004. There was some perception of the gravity of these decisions at the time. As Lt General David McKiernan, Commander of the Ground Forces in Iraq, cautioned just after the decision to disband the Iraqi Army by the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003,"There are a large number of Iraqi soldiers now unemployed. That is a huge concern." (Chandrasekaran 2006)[pg87]

Wilkinson 2010). Understanding the value of veterans and how best to mobilise the distribution of skills they acquired in war, even if these are not as valued in times of peace, may be vital for policies aimed at both maintaining political stability and engendering institutional change.

7 Data Appendix

Our approach is to collect data on veterans and their experiences in all the administrative districts in India in 1947, as well as in the 'princely states'– nominally self-governing states that in practice had varying degrees of autonomy from the Crown. Using administrative districts offers the huge advantage that the main demographic and socio-economic control variables are available for this level.

7.1 District level recruitment and frontline experience

To measure the frontline experience of units raised in each district and the casualties incurred in war, we use a unique dataset from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), an quasi-governmental organization responsible for military burials and cemeteries for soldiers from the former British Empire. The CWGC has records on the approximately 86,000 dead Indian soldiers from WW2. The CWGC database contains information, for each buried soldier, of the name, unit, rank, and home town, village and province, as well as information on the campaign and date of death (see an example of an entry in Figure 5). As discussed above, recruitment into companies of the Indian army was regional and mainly village-based. Thus, if we see a casualty in a particular military unit who was from a particular district, we can infer that the unit was raised at least in part from villages in that district.

While we can use casualties to gauge whether a frontline unit was raised in part from villages in a particular district, it would be useful, if we thought military experience, as opposed to frontline experience was important, to assess whether casualties also serve as a good gauge of military recruitment. Unfortunately, the surviving archival and published Indian Army data from this period records recruitment data by province, army unit and by the "class" (ethnic group) of recruits, rather than by the district from which recruits came. The original army recruitment cards which list village, district and unit data are now lost. The only exceptions to this dearth of data that we have been able to find are three provincial-level reports from 1944-1948, written for different purposes, which use card file data to estimate WW2 recruitment by district for the three provinces of Madras, NWFP, and Punjab.[28] These make it possible to compare the casualty data described below with broader recruitment data for those three provinces.

[28] J.G. Acheson, ICS Post-War Employment on the North-West Frontier, Marked 'Confidential' (Peshawar: NWFP Government Press, 1944); Appendix C Recruiting 1939-45, in Lt. Col. E.G. Phythian-Adams, The Madras Soldier 1746-1946 (Madras, Government Press, 1948); Table 1 in Subhasish Ray "The Sikhs of Punjab and the Tragedy of 1947," drawing on data from Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh, File 14446/175/259.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of recruits and casualties as a proportion of each in Punjab and the Northwest Frontier Province. As the Figure suggests, casualties seem to be broadly reflective of relative recruitment, though areas with relatively few or relatively many recruits to the total number in these districts appear to experience greater proportions of casualties than areas that contribute moderate numbers. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test suggests XXX

7.2 District Data on Frontline experience

To assess the average district wartime frontline experience we need to match unit experiences during WWII with the district data on numbers of veterans and the units from which they came. To measure the wartime experience of each unit we turn to the nine specific campaign volumes in the *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War* (Prasad 1954).[29] These volumes, compiled by the Indian Army's Historical Section shortly after the War, using original unit war diaries from each unit as well as government operational files that are still unavailable, provide a full history of the Indian Army's involvement in each campaign, including detailed Orders of Battle (which list all the army units involved) and a detailed day-by-day and month-by-month description of the fighting in East Africa, North Africa, Italy, India and South East Asia. A couple of paragraphs from one of these volumes, on a brief counter-offensive attempt during the allied retreat from Burma in 1942, will give a sense of the raw data these volumes contain:

> On 10th March [1942] the 7th Battalion Burma Rifles established a bridgehead at Waing, and at 0300 hours the next morning the 5th Battalion 1st Punjab Regiment crossed the river on rafts constructed by the divisional Engineers. The Battalion then marched five miles across rough country to the Shwegyin-Papun Road where it was joined by F.F.3. Turning south the force moved slowly on Shwegyin, halting near the town at milestone 2 at 0700 hours. It then waited for the air-bombing of the town. But no aircraft appeared. Nevertheless, it was decided to proceed with the attack.
>
> The Japanese were in position astride the road outside Shwegyin. The 5th Battalion 1st Punjab Regiment attacked with one company on each side of the road and drove the Japanese before it into the town. Strong resistance was encountered there, and two mortar detachments went into action to support the advance. At the same time the officer commanding the Battalion ordered one column of F.F.3 to work round the right flank. The advance soon continued, the troops keeping excellent communication during the street fighting by their cries of 'Sat Sri Akal' and 'Ya Ali.' Finally, the hostile force fled across the Shwegyin Chaung at the south end of the town, may being killed in the stream by light machine-gun fire. By 1000 hours the town was free.

[29]The specific volumes we code are: East Africa; Northern Africa 1940-43; Italy 1943-45; West Asia; The Retreat from Burma 1941-42; Campaigns in South-East Asia 1941-42; Reconquest of Burma Vol.1 June 42-June 44 (1958); Reconquest of Burma Vol. 2 June 44-July 1945; The Arakan Operations 1942-45 (1954); Post-WW2 deployments in SEA;

> Forty hostile Burmans were captured and at least fifty had been killed. They were dressed in civilian clothes, and were well armed with light machine-gins, Thompson Sub-machine carbines, rifles and grenades. The casualties on this side were four killed and seventeen wounded.[30]

For each of these volumes we record all the units that participated in each campaign and then, for each unit, we construct a monthly variable that measures whether that unit was involved in an exchange of fire with the enemy in that particular month. On the basis of the above paragraph, for instance, we would code the 5/1 Punjab Regiment and the 3rd Frontier Force [FF3] as both "1", being involved in an exchange of fire with the enemy in March 1942. This fact seems to be very reliably recorded, and facilitates clear coding, whereas other aspects of a unit's frontline experience, such as the relative intensity of the fighting, or the specific casualties of an engagement, are much less consistently reported. For each unit, we can therefore determine the level of its frontline experience during the war.

To calculate the wartime experience of units raised in a particular district, we again turn to the CWGC data. To create an average gauge of frontline experience for units raised in each district, we weigh the frontline experience of units raised in that district by the number of casualties from that district in each unit.

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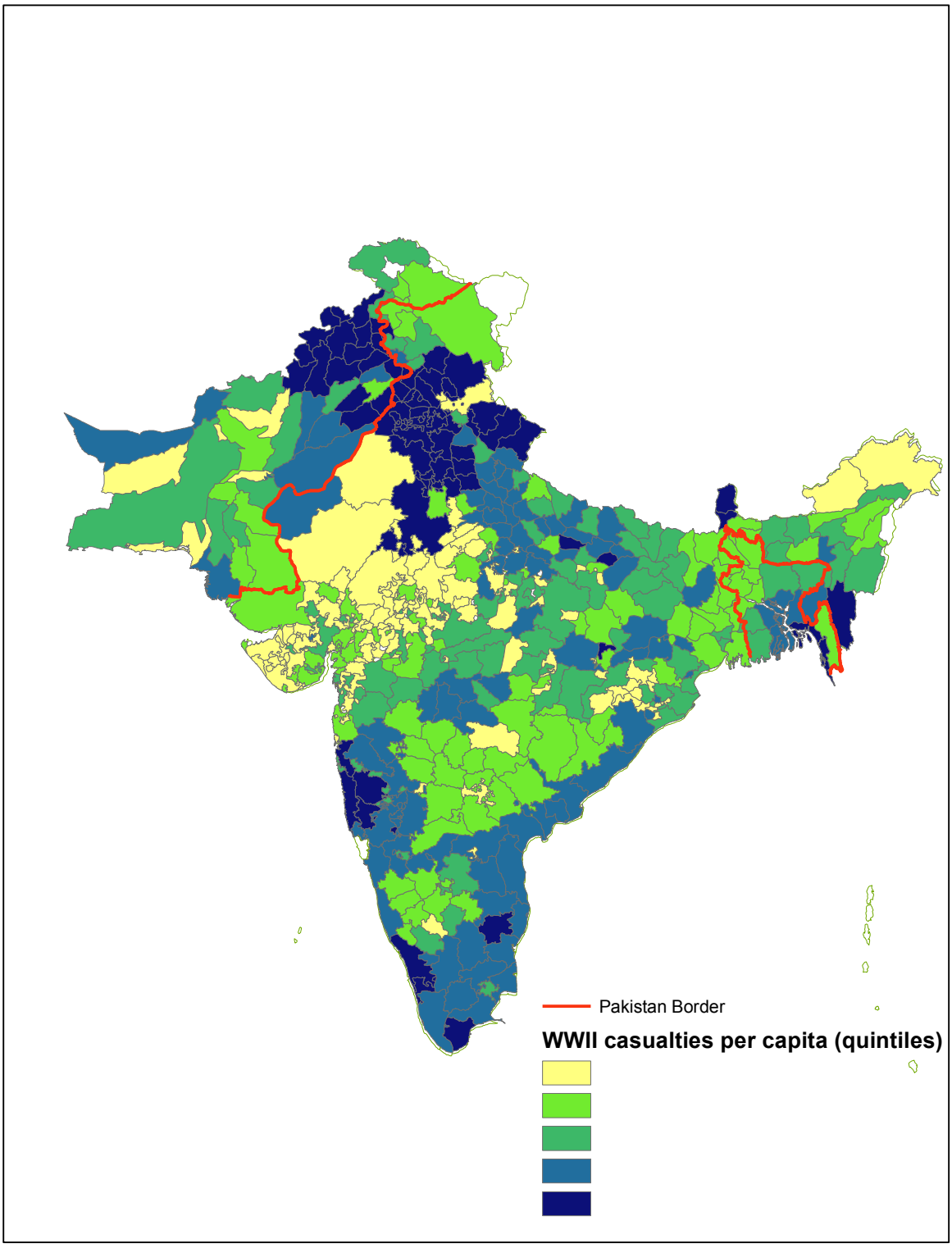

Figure 4: **Casualties per population**
source: derived from Commonwealth War Graves Commission figures

Casualty Details	
Name	Khan Mir
Rank	Havildar
Regiment/Service	15th Punjab Regiment
Unit Text.	3rd Bn.
Date of Death	01/12/1944
Service No:	Son of Habib Khan and Bhura Khatoon, of Mari Indus, Mianwali, Pakistan; husband of Allah Jawai, of Mari Indus.
Casualty Type	Commonwealth War Dead
Grave/Memorial reference	VII. B.1
Cemetery	Ravenna War Cemetery

Figure 5: **An entry in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission memorial**

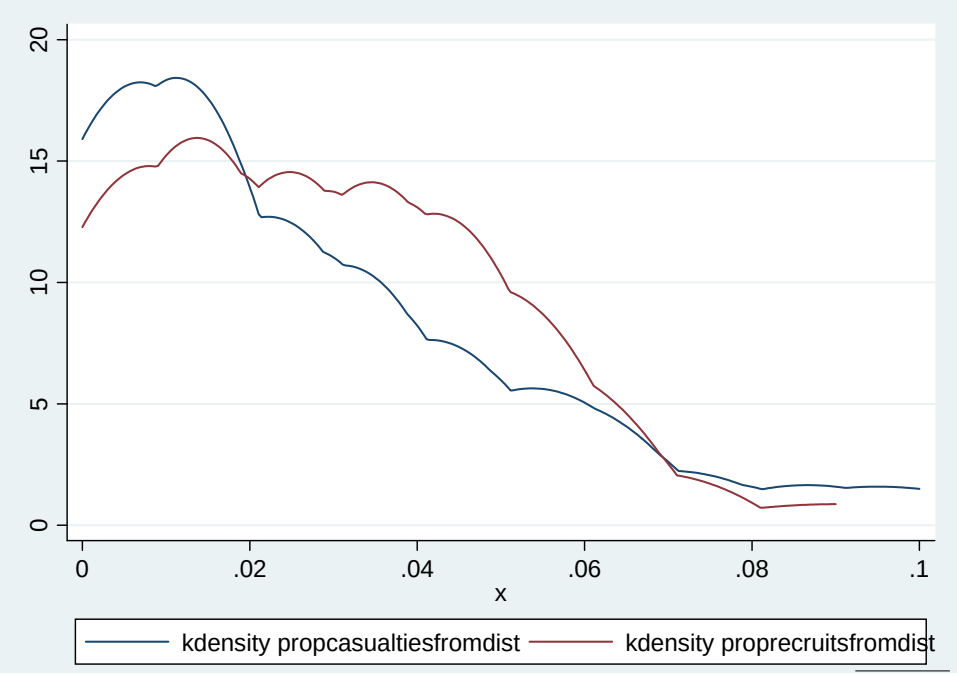

Figure 6: **Proportion of casualties vs recruits in districts of NWFP and Punjab**
source: see Appendix