



The Sikh Separatist Insurgency in India: Political Leadership and Ethnonationalist Movements

Jugdep S Chima

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The "Punjab crisis," a two-decade long armed insurgency that emerged as a violent ethnonationalist movement in the 1980s and gradually transformed into a secessionist struggle, resulted in an estimated 25,000 casualties in Punjab. This ethnonationalist movement, on one hand, ended the perceived notion of looking at Punjab as the model of political stability in independent India and, on the other, raised several lingering socio-political questions which have great effect on Indian politics for decades to come, including the prospects of recurring ethnic insurrections.

The Sikh Separatist Insurgency in India: Political Leadership and Ethnonationalist Movements provides an authoritative political history of the Sikh separatist insurgency in Punjab by focussing on "patterns of political leadership", a previously unexplored explanatory variable. It describes in detail the trends which led to the emergence of the "Punjab crisis", the various dynamics through which the movement sustained itself and the changing nature of "patterns of political leadership" which eventually resulted in its decline in the mid-1990s.

Providing a microhistorical analysis of the "Punjab crisis," this book argues that the trajectories of ethnonationalist movements are largely determined by the interaction between self-interested ethnic and state political elites, who not only react to the structural choices they face, but whose purposeful actions and decisions ultimately affect the course of ethnic group—state relations. It consolidates this theoretical preposition through a comparative analysis of four contemporary global ethnonationalist movements—those occurring in Chechnya, Northern Ireland, Kashmir, and Assam.

This book will be of interest to students and academics studying political science and history, especially those working on South Asia and the Sikhs, and also for public policy practitioners in multi-ethnic societies. It remains invaluable reading for those interested in the phenomenon of ethnonationalism.



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