

Political representation and ethnic conflict in new democracies

SONIA ALONSO¹ & RUBÉN RUIZ-RUFINO²

¹*Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Germany;*

²*Centre for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Juan March Institute, Spain*

Abstract. This article is an exploratory analysis of the efficacy of parliamentary representation as a means to moderate ethnic conflict in new democracies. The authors agree with many others that the interests of a minority ethnic group are better protected when the group has access to decision makers, can block harmful government policies and veto potentially damaging decisions. Parliamentary representation, however, does not always allow for an effective representation of those who are not in government. Seats in the legislature may be of little use in a parliament where the executive dominates the policy process at all stages. This article focuses on the new democracies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union between 1990 and 2000. The authors use the number of parliamentary seats obtained by minority ethnic parties as their main independent variable and the MAR ethnic protest and rebellion scores as their dependent variables. In addition, they employ the system of government (i.e., parliamentary versus presidential) as a proxy indicator of the degree of influence that parliamentary parties have over decision making. A cross-section-time-series regression analysis shows that the ameliorative effect of parliamentary representation over ethnic conflict is stronger in those legislatures where the ethnic group has effective influence over decision making. It is also shown that representation within national parliaments has no ameliorative effects over violent secessionist conflicts. When the ethnic minority's demands are too radical, parliamentary representation is simply an inadequate instrument.

Introduction

Democratization, by definition, entails devolution of power from the state to society. As such it opens a window of opportunity for the expression and mobilization of old and new grievances, among them ethnic ones. Democratization and ethnic conflict are in fact empirically correlated phenomena. The window of opportunity unleashed by the beginning of a democratization process is usually accompanied by an increase in the levels of ethnic conflict¹ (Horowitz 1985; Roeder 1991, 1999; Skalnik Leff 1999; Snyder 2000). Managing ethnic conflict is therefore a fundamental aspect of a successful transition to democracy and a subject of heated academic debate.

This article is an exploratory analysis of the efficacy of parliamentary representation as a strategy to moderate ethnic conflict in new democracies.² A

widely made argument in the literature holds that an appropriate way to deal with ethnic conflict is to make institutions more accessible to ethnic groups. There are many ways of making a political system more accessible. One route is facilitating the presence of political parties representing ethnic minorities in national parliaments. The proponents of this view argue that parliamentary representation gives ethnic minorities a voice in decision-making processes. This allows their participation in the political game and, as a consequence, offers the ethnic minorities' organizations incentives to abandon extra-institutional action strategies. Higher levels of representation 'endear [ethnic minorities] sufficiently to the regime to prevent them from using extreme measures to resist the ethnic status quo' (Cohen 1997: 613).

Having a voice within the system (Hirschman 1970) does not imply direct participation in decision making. Is voice a good enough access strategy to moderate ethnic conflict? Clearly, obtaining representation in parliament falls short of the power-sharing arrangements defended by authors such as Lijphart (1977, 1984), based on the establishment of inclusive and partitioned decision-making mechanisms such as consociationalism and federalism.³ Our aim is therefore a modest one. We focus our analysis on the parliamentary representation of minority ethnic parties. We will not discuss power-sharing institutional arrangements, which are qualitatively different in the sense that they provide for the direct participation of ethnic organizations in decision making.

Allegedly, the most direct way to make parliaments more accessible to ethnic minorities and their political organizations is to establish proportional electoral systems. This maximizes the ethnic organizations' probability of obtaining parliamentary seats. The recipe is straightforward: the establishment of proportional electoral systems will contribute to the moderation of ethnic organizations' action strategies by allowing increased access to the political system. We believe that the case for proportional electoral systems has been overstated for two reasons. First, proportionality does not necessarily lead to higher levels of representation of minority ethnic parties. Second, higher levels of representation in parliament do not automatically lead to a moderation of ethnic conflict. We agree that the interests of a minority ethnic group are better protected when the ethnic minority's organizations have access to decision makers, when these organizations can block harmful government policies and veto potentially damaging decisions (Saideman et al. 2002: 106). Parliamentary representation, however, does not always allow for an effective representation of those who are not in government. In other words, being in parliament is no guarantee that the minority ethnic parties will really have a say in decision making. The argument needs to take into account how much influence on policy making different legislatures allow for.

This article focuses on the new democracies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. There are two reasons for this. First, this region has been a laboratory of institutional designs after the demise of communist regimes. This provides us with a large measure of variation in institutions. This variation facilitates the exploration of political representation's impact on ethnic conflict. Second, this is a region with a high incidence of ethnic conflict during the democratization process, which started in 1989–1990, where outcomes differed dramatically. In the first section of the article we discuss critically the existing quantitative studies that have analyzed the effects of institutional arrangements on ethnic conflict. In the second and third sections we present our hypotheses and describe the measurement of the variables used in our analysis. The empirical results are put forward and discussed in the fourth and fifth sections. Finally, we present the conclusions that flow from this analysis.

The effects of institutions on ethnic conflict

Parliamentary representation is attractive for ethnic groups⁴ because it allows them to have a voice within the political system. This is particularly important in the case of demographic minorities that suffer discrimination relative to other groups or that are disadvantaged from past discrimination.⁵ When minority ethnic groups have no chances of obtaining representation in parliament, they may show hostility towards the rules of the game. This hostility may, in turn, lead to the group's withdrawal from the electoral competition and engaging in confrontational action strategies against the government and the state (Goati 2000: 66). Ethnic conflict erupts when disgruntled members of the ethnic minority engage in extra-institutional action strategies, mobilizing other group members to press the government and the state in favor of their demands (Gurr 1993: 349).

The thesis according to which the presence of ethnic minorities in national parliaments has a moderating effect on the levels of ethnic conflict has a relatively long tradition in political science. It is embedded in the debate about the institutional mechanisms to prevent ethnic conflict and promote political stability in ethnically divided democracies. Beginning in the 1970s with the works of McRae (1974), Lijphart (1977) and others, the consociational approach has defended the virtues of proportional representation to integrate ethnic minorities in the political system. Recent quantitative studies have found empirical evidence that confirms the beneficial effects of proportional electoral systems for the management of ethnic conflict (Cohen 1997; Ishiyama 2000, 2001; Saideman et al. 2002, Reynal-Querol 2002). Most of these studies use the type of electoral system as their independent variable to find an empirical

pattern: proportional electoral systems are related to lower levels of ethnic conflict. In order to explain this result, the authors of these studies assume that proportional systems are synonymous of higher levels of parliamentary representation or, at least, of a higher probability of obtaining such representation.⁶ By incorporating such an assumption, these authors explain their empirical result as follows: under proportional systems minority ethnic groups are more likely to get representation in parliament and this, in turn, moderates their extra-institutional actions.⁷ The policy recommendation for multi-ethnic democratizing countries is clear: if they want to see less conflict, they should establish a proportional representation (PR) electoral system. Eastern European countries, however, do not seem to have paid much attention to this recommendation. If PR really has such beneficial effects over ethnic conflict, we wonder why a majority of countries in the region have chosen a mixed electoral system, combining PR with single-member districts. Some argue that the reason is that this combination gives everybody a fairer chance to compete and therefore maximizes the political inclusiveness of the system (Birch 2004).

There are two reasons for questioning the moderating effects of PR on ethnic conflict. First, it is not true that under PR systems minority ethnic groups are always better off. One example suffices to see why. An ethnic minority that is geographically concentrated in one region and clustered around one ethnic party will be better off if the electoral system is majoritarian. The group's chances of obtaining seats will then be enhanced. It is therefore not correct to assume that PR systems always bring about higher levels of representation. We will not use the electoral system as a proxy indicator for the level of representation. A superior indicator is simply the number of parliamentary seats obtained by ethnic parties in each legislature.⁸ It could be argued that by focusing on the number of parliamentary seats actually obtained by the ethnic party, we are unable to analyze the effects of the *possibility* of obtaining seats on the levels of ethnic conflict. Is it the *possibility* of obtaining seats or is it the number of seats actually obtained that reduces the levels of conflict? It is hard to believe that it is just the *possibility* of obtaining seats that moderates ethnic groups. After all, one only believes in the quality of a certain institutional design if it lives up to its expectations. The introduction of the electoral system as a variable in our analysis will enable us to assess this point.

Second, according to the studies mentioned above, parliamentary representation is attractive for ethnic groups because it allows them to have a voice within the system. This explanatory mechanism rests on two assumptions that are, at best, doubtful. First, it assumes that parliamentary representation always gives the minority ethnic group effective influence over decision-making processes. Second, it takes as given that ethnic groups are internally homogeneous and that the moderation of the few is the moderation of the

entire group. In other words, the ethnic groups' organizations, demands, action strategies and internal dynamics are considered unimportant in the analysis of the institutional effects over ethnic conflict.

Seats in parliament are not always an effective way of influencing political decision making. Imagine that a minority ethnic party obtains representation in the national parliament. If the party is in the opposition, seats will be of little use in a parliament where the executive dominates the policy process at all stages. In this situation, only participation in government would allow for, though by no means guarantee, participation in decision-making processes. However, when minority ethnic parties in the legislature have a real chance of influencing decision making and of forcing the executive to bargain and to pull back when necessary, the moderating effect of representation over ethnic conflict seems more plausible.

The influence of the opposition in decision making is in part derived from the constitutional definition of government formation: under presidentialism there is a clear, definitional, separation of powers between the executive and the legislative. It is a system of mutual independence, in contrast to parliamentarism, where the legislative and the executive are mutually dependent. In principle, therefore, only presidentialism allows the parliament to be autonomous from the executive, and even to legislate against the executive's (the president's) will.⁹ According to Horowitz (1985: 784), presidentialism moderates ethnic conflict because the division of powers in presidential systems automatically guarantees a non-winner-take-all result that prevents the monopoly of power by one group over another. Ishiyama (2000) and Saideman et al. (2002) have tested Horowitz's hypothesis and have found confirmatory evidence in the countries of Eastern Europe. However, the application of Horowitz's hypothesis to Eastern Europe is a mistake. It takes for granted that all presidential systems, including the post-communist ones, are based on a clear separation of powers.¹⁰ Shugart and Carey (1992) long ago showed that there are important differences among presidential systems. These differences are based on the powers constitutionally granted to the president. They are right to note that strong presidents may render parliaments powerless to influence, or veto, the executive. There are many instances of presidents endowed with the capacity to initiate legislation and with the exclusive right to initiate legislation in some areas. Moreover, some presidents also have decree power. This means that they are constitutionally able to unilaterally alter the status quo. In such an institutional context, no group in the legislature, not even the majority, can 'close the gates' to a presidential initiative made by decree (Cheibub & Limongi, 2002). In the most extreme cases, the legislative powers of the parliament may be usurped by the president (Shugart & Carey 1992: 2). Russia would be an example among the post-communist countries. This is what

leads Shugart and Carey (1992: 2) to conclude that minority representation in presidential systems is more symbolic than in parliamentary ones because of the dominance of presidents over the nomination process and dealings with the rest of the cabinet.

At the same time, there is also variation among parliamentary regimes. First, there are many instances of parties being forced to form coalition governments in order to get a parliamentary majority to back a particular government. Single-party majorities are not an intrinsic feature of parliamentary systems. Second, even under conditions of single-party majority governments, legislative committees may have considerable powers in parliamentary assemblies and may erect barriers to the executive agenda. Parliamentarism is not necessarily synonymous with executive-imposed legislation (Cheibub & Limongi 2002).

Our main hypothesis is that ethnic conflict is more likely to be moderated through political representation in those cases where the minority ethnic parties in the legislature have a real chance of influencing decision making. In other words, minority ethnic parties in parliament should have access to decision makers and should be able to block harmful government policies and veto potentially damaging decisions. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it is possible to use the presidential-parliamentary distinction as a proxy for ineffective versus effective influence on decision making. Presidential systems in the region are not pure systems. There is no real separation of powers between the executive and the legislative, as is the case of American presidentialism.¹¹ Presidents have the capacity to initiate legislation and even to govern by decree. This often renders parliaments powerless to counteract the executive. On the other hand, legislative committees across the region's parliamentary systems are remarkably strong. According to Gungor (2004: 21), they have developed into important independent sources of information and are active participants in the legislative process possessing the ability to introduce new bills with remarkable high success rates. In Gungor's (2004: 22) words: '[T]he ability of the opposition to block the executive through participation in the internal control mechanisms of the parliament . . . is the norm in central and eastern European [parliamentary] democracies.' Therefore, we will assume that, for this region, parliamentary systems allow for effective representation while semi-presidential regimes do not.

The type of demands advanced by minority ethnic parties is also a relevant factor in order to assess the moderating capacity of representation. What kind of access to the political system are ethnic political organizations claiming: access to participate in decision-making processes at the center or access to be able to run the minority group's affairs independently? When the former is the case, the moderation of conflict through parliamentary representation is plau-

sible. When it is the latter, representation in parliament makes little difference to the levels of conflict. Demands for greater autonomy or outright secession are not likely to be moderated with seats in the national parliament. In many cases, the secessionist organizations refuse to participate in elections until their demands are met. Boycotting elections is a confrontational strategy that shows complete rejection of the political status quo. As a matter of fact, the cases of prolonged or bitterly hostile violent conflict in the region are those where the political organizations representing minority ethnic groups have systematically boycotted parliamentary elections: Russians from the Transdnistrian region in Moldova, Kosovo-Albanians from Serbia in Yugoslavia, Chechens in Russia, and Abkhazians and Ossetians in Georgia. Here, the absence of representation is not so much the result of institutional barriers, but of a consciously designed strategy by the ethnic minority's organizations. We expect that, in the presence of secessionist demands, there is little that parliamentary representation can do in order to moderate ethnic conflict.

Furthermore, are minorities actively seeking access? There are minority ethnic groups that do not act extra-institutionally despite the fact that they have no presence in the national parliament, as is the case of the Roma minority in some Eastern European countries.¹² The different political organizations representing these minorities hardly use any form of protest or rebellion. This is probably related to their weak organizational resources and capacity for group action. Here, again, the absence of representation is not the result of institutional barriers as much as it is the result of collective action problems. In fact, if we look at the ethnic groups in the region, we find that most of them have not obtained parliamentary representation and yet they do not engage in protest or rebellion against the state. The absence of representation is accompanied by high levels of protest and rebellion in only a few cases (see Appendix). The absence of parliamentary representation is thus the effect of collective action problems and not the cause of increased conflict levels.

Finally, ethnic minorities are not unitary actors. There is always more than one political organization claiming to speak on behalf of the minority ethnic group. It is not uncommon to find these political organizations separated into a radical and a moderate faction. Parliamentary representation may then be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it convinces the moderate faction (or factions) to defend the minorities' interests from within the system. On the other hand, it further radicalizes the extremist faction (or factions) in its attempt to differentiate itself from the moderates.

To sum up, the moderating effect of parliamentary representation on ethnic conflict seems plausible, but only under certain conditions. First, parliamentary representation will not give ethnic parties effective influence over decision-making processes unless the parliament is strong relative to the executive.

Only then it is reasonable to expect a moderating effect of representation on conflict. Second, before parliamentary representation can have any effect on ethnic conflict, ethnic groups and the organizations representing them must actively seek participation and influence in decision making. This may not be the case for one of two reasons: either the minority ethnic group has not solved its collective action problems or it has organized around radical demands including a change of the status quo and the use of violence.

Hypotheses

This article focuses on the effects that the parliamentary presence (or absence) of minority ethnic parties has on the levels of ethnic conflict. Three important considerations follow from this research question. First, ethnic conflict breaks out when the minority ethnic group decides to take its demands outside the realm of institutions and into the streets in order to force the government and the state to respond.¹³ In the course of its development, ethnic conflict can take two distinct forms: protest and rebellion. Ethnic protest is any action designed to mobilize enough popular support to force government officials to take action favorable to the ethnic group. Ethnic rebellion is any action that aims at mobilizing enough coercive power, or causes sufficient disruption, to force the government to change the political status quo (Gurr 2000: 29).¹⁴ Ethnic protest is peaceful; ethnic rebellion is violent. Protest and rebellion are therefore qualitatively different in terms of demands – governmental positive action *versus* change in the political status quo, and strategies – peaceful popular mobilizations *versus* organized violence against the state. Second, we are interested in those minority ethnic groups that are potential candidates to engage in ethnic conflict – and not on all the existing ethnic groups. In other words, we are focusing our research on ethnic *minorities at risk* (Gurr 1993, 1994, 2000).¹⁵ We want to see whether these minorities at risk moderate their action strategies once they obtain representation in parliament. Third, ethnic conflict is the action of *mobilized* ethnic groups. The mobilization of minority ethnic groups is carried about by political entrepreneurs, movements and organizations claiming to represent the minority ethnic group and speaking on its behalf. Therefore, this article focuses on the organizations representing the minority ethnic groups rather than the ethnic groups *per se*. We consider these political organizations to be the actors of ethnic conflict.

Our first hypothesis is that the effect of parliamentary representation on ethnic *protest* is conditional on the power of the legislature relative to the executive. In those countries where political parties in parliament have an impact on decision making through, for example, participation in legislative

committees, we expect to find a reduction of ethnic protest when the level of representation increases. Otherwise, we do not expect to find an ameliorative effect of representation on ethnic protest. Our second hypothesis is that the electoral system has no effect on the level of ethnic conflict. Different electoral systems might be better for ethnic minorities in different circumstances. Therefore, we do not expect to find that a proportional assignation of seats reduces the levels of ethnic conflict. We think it actually has no direct effect, be it positive or negative, on conflict. Third, we expect representation to moderate ethnic *protest* but not ethnic *rebellion*. This is so because ethnic rebellion is driven by demands to change the status quo and turn it into a new distribution of state power. As we explained before, when the ethnic organizations' demands are too radical, parliamentary representation is simply too little.

Among the democratizing countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the level of political freedom achieved through time has varied widely. It is likely that this will affect the levels of ethnic conflict. As political freedom increases and the protection of individuals' and groups' political rights are enhanced, we should see less conflict. When the chances to defend the groups' interests from within the system are larger, only the most radical or uncompromising factions within the ethnic group would then continue with their actions against the government and the state. Finally, in order to regain their status, those ethnic groups that enjoyed an autonomous political status in the past are more likely to engage in conflict with the state once democratization begins, than are those ethnic groups that have never enjoyed autonomous (or even independent) rule.

Measuring the variables

Ethnic conflict is measured through two different indexes: the protest index and the rebellion index (*Minorities at Risk* dataset, Phase III).¹⁶ The protest index offers an annual measurement of the degree of participation in demonstrations and acts of protest by members of the minority ethnic group. This index is graded on a scale that ranges from 0, indicating no protest at all, to 5, indicating generalized demonstrations.¹⁷ The rebellion index offers an annual measurement of the degree to which ethnic groups' organizations oppose the existing *status quo* and press their demands through confrontations with the state. It therefore reflects the use of violence and armed conflict. The scale ranges from 0, indicating no violent acts, to 7, indicating civil war.¹⁸

The dataset has a cross-section-time-series structure.¹⁹ The cross-section variable is the minority ethnic group and the time variable is the electoral

period. There are 44 cross-sections, belonging to 16 Eastern European countries.²⁰ There are as many electoral periods as national elections between 1990 and 2000 (this number is usually between 4 and 5, depending on the country). The protest and rebellion scores in the dataset are the average for each minority and each electoral period. Ethnic protest has been much more common than rebellion in Eastern Europe between 1990 and 2000. In 85 per cent of all observations, the ethnic minorities engaged in protest, as opposed to only 19 per cent of all observations engaging in rebellion. Table 1 offers summary statistics for these variables.

Our independent variables are all centered on institutional and political indicators. Our main independent variable is the number of parliamentary seats obtained by minority ethnic parties in each legislature since 1990. We are not interested in all the existing forms of representation that minority ethnic groups enjoy in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, such as consociational arrangements, local assemblies, inter-ministerial bodies, government commissions and so forth. We are focused exclusively on *parliamentary representation*. This is so because we want to evaluate the virtues of proportional electoral systems and parliamentary representation is their most immediate effect. There are two possible ways to measure the representation of minority ethnic groups in parliament. First, one can code representation as the number of seats obtained by co-ethnic representatives. These can be elected as independent deputies or as members of a political party that may or may not be an ethnic party. Second, one can code representation as the number of seats obtained by minority ethnic parties, ignoring those deputies that, being members of the ethnic minority, belong to other parties. We believe that the deputies' *ethnic partisanship* is a better measure of representation than the deputies' *ethnic affiliation* for several reasons. First, ethnic parties have become very prominent over the last ten years in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Therefore, most ethnic representation in the region takes place through ethnic parties. It is mainly ethnic parties that organize and mobilize ethnic minority voters around a clear ethnic agenda. Second, a particular ethnic affiliation does not necessarily mean the defense of an ethnic political agenda. The fact that a parliamentary deputy belongs to a particular ethnic

Table 1. Summary statistics of ethnic conflict and parliamentary representation

	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N
Protest	1.8	1.1	0	5	141
Rebellion	0.5	1.4	0	7	141
Percentage of seats	2.02	5.1	0	27.5	157

group does not mean that he or she is going to represent the interests of his or her ethnic group, especially if they belong to a non-ethnic party.²¹ In the region under analysis, only ethnic parties present a policy program whose main *raison d'être* is the representation and defense of the ethnic minority's interests. We therefore consider that to focus on the ethnic affiliation of deputies instead of on their party affiliation would be misleading. We are fully aware that these considerations would be inadequate for other regions and countries. Summary statistics for this variable are presented in Table 1.

The number of seats is measured as the percentage of the total number of parliamentary seats for each minority and each electoral period²² (see Appendix). Whenever one ethnic group achieves parliamentary representation through more than one political party, we group the seats obtained by these parties. For example, if Albanians in Macedonia are represented in parliament by party A, with 7 seats, and by party B, with 2 seats, the value for the Albanians in Macedonia will be 9 seats (1.5 per cent of all seats in parliament). Those ethnic groups that have boycotted elections appear in the dataset as having 0 seats. Our definition of ethnic party does not depend on the constitutional status that these parties have within a particular country. The presence of a constitutional ban on ethnic parties in Bulgaria does not make the Turkish party Movement of Rights and Freedoms (DPS) a non-ethnic party. In fact, it is commonly accepted that both the Greek minority in Albania and the Turkish minority in Bulgaria have formed ethnic parties that have obtained seats in parliament despite the constitutional ban on their existence. Consequently, we have included these parties in our dataset.²³

The system of government is represented by a dummy variable with value 1 for parliamentary systems, and 0 otherwise. As detailed above, we assume that parliamentary systems in this context are a good proxy for effective representation. Moreover, there are hardly any cases of single-party majority governments in the region; there are only four between 1990 and 2000. Of the four cases, only one managed to last more than one year in office.²⁴ This form of parliamentarism enhances the representation of all the parliamentary parties (not just the government parties) and therefore the role of the legislature.²⁵

For electoral system, we employ a dummy variable that has a value of 1 for PR systems and 0 otherwise. The reason for this is that we are mainly interested in the effect that proportionality has on ethnic conflict. Capturing the degree of political freedom is the Freedom House political rights index that measures to what extent the system offers voters the opportunity to choose freely from among candidates and to what extent the candidates are chosen independently of the state. It captures the evolution of the *process* of protecting and enhancing political rights. This index ranges from 1 to 7 (1 represents the highest degree of political freedom and 7 the lowest).²⁶ Finally, those

minority ethnic groups that have had political autonomy in the past are coded as 1 (0 otherwise).

Results

In order to see the effect of parliamentary representation on ethnic conflict depending on the system of government, we use a model that introduces a multiplicative term in our regression equation (for a defense of interaction terms in multiple regression equations, see Friedrich 1982). This term is the product of the percentage of seats in parliament and the system of government. The implication is that the regression coefficients that we obtain describe the relationships between the variables as conditional relationships rather than general relationships, as is the case with the additive model. The main equation that incorporates the conditional effect of parliamentary representation on ethnic conflict is as follows:

$$EC_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Seats_{i,t} + \beta_2 Parl_{j,t} + \beta_3 Seats_{i,t} * Parl_{j,t} + \beta_4 PR_{j,t} + \beta_5 Fhpol_{j,t} + \beta_6 Auton_{i,t} + EG_{i,t} + e$$

where:

$EC_{i,t}$ = Ethnic conflict index (Protest, Rebellion) for Group i at Period t .

$Seats_{i,t}$ = Percentage of seats in parliament for Group i at Period t .

$Parl_{j,t}$ = Parliamentary system in Country j at Period t .

$PR_{j,t}$ = Proportional electoral system in Country j at Period t .

$Fhpol_{j,t}$ = Freedom House political rights index in Country j at Period t .

$Auton_{i,t}$ = Autonomy status for Group i at Period t .

$EG_{i,t}$ = Ethnic Group i at Period t .

i = Ethnic group.

j = Country.

t = Time period (i.e., legislative period).

We use a panel data model. Aside from the percentage of seats in parliament and the Freedom House political rights index, the other independent variables in the model, which capture institutional traits, vary very little across time. The presence of the latter along with the fixed effects units (ethnic group dummies) poses an estimation problem. As some analysts have pointed out (Beck & Katz 1995; Kittel & Winner 2003), the inclusion of fixed effects ‘throws out the baby with the bath water’ because of the correlation between the time-invariant variables and the fixed effects. In other words, including fixed effects means that any theoretically interesting independent variable that

does not vary temporally cannot be used as an explanatory variable. In our case, most independent variables are institutional variables and therefore time-invariant (or nearly time-invariant). In order to avoid this problem, we use a solution proposed by Plümper and Troeger (2004). This is the fixed-effects-vector-decomposition (*xtfevd*) estimating procedure. This procedure is preferable to the standard fixed effects model when the within variance (the variation across time) is small and the between variance significantly larger,²⁷ which is the case with our data. According to Plümper and Troeger, the *xtfevd* model is reliable when the coefficients obtained with fixed effects and with *xtfevd* are similar but the standard errors differ (they should be smaller with the *xtfevd* estimation procedure) (see Plümper & Troeger 2004: 17–18). Results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Regression results of the conditional effects of parliamentary representation on ethnic conflict

	Protest		Rebellion	
	xtfevd ^a	fixed effects	xtfevd	fixed effects
seats	–0.037** (0.016)	–0.037 (0.036)	0.019 (0.016)	0.019 (0.036)
parl	0.293 (0.200)	–0.300 (0.458)	–0.474** (0.189)	–2.258*** (0.449)
seats*parl	–0.131*** (0.032)	–0.131* (0.068)	–0.024 (0.027)	–0.024 (0.067)
PR	0.421** (0.170)	0.370 (0.335)	0.143 (0.166)	0.451 (0.329)
fhpol	0.230*** (0.061)	0.383*** (0.111)	0.222*** (0.060)	0.022 (0.109)
auton	–0.151 (0.180)	dropped	0.020 (0.176)	dropped
eta	1.000*** (0.098)		1.000*** (0.061)	
constant	1.022*** (0.258)	0.732* (0.409)	–0.042 (0.253)	1.156*** (0.401)
Observations	117	117	117	117
R ²	0.65	0.03	0.82	0.06
Adjusted R ²	0.63	–0.678	0.80	–0.626
F Statistic	7.11***	4.89***	32***	5.22***

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. ^a Fixed effects vector decomposition (Plümper & Troeger 2004). * significant at 10 per cent; ** significant at 5 per cent; *** significant at 1 per cent.

Although Table 2 reproduces the results for both the standard fixed effects and the *xtfevd* estimation techniques, we describe only the latter. As expected, representation in parliament moderates ethnic protest, but not ethnic rebellion. As the number of seats in parliament increases, the level of ethnic protest is reduced – that is, there is supportive evidence for the moderating effects of representation on ethnic protest regardless of the parliamentary or presidential nature of the system, although the effect is very small. If we look at the interaction term, we see that an increase in the level of representation reduces the level of ethnic protest more in parliamentary systems than in semi-presidential ones. Therefore, the ameliorative effect of representation over conflict is stronger in parliamentary systems. In parliamentary systems, an increase of 5 per cent in the level of representation would reduce conflict by 0.84. In semi-presidential systems, an increase of 5 per cent in the level of representation would reduce conflict by a much smaller amount (0.18).²⁸ As the estimated coefficient for the *Fhpol* term indicates, higher levels of political freedom clearly reduce ethnic protest and rebellion.²⁹ Therefore, the higher the level of protection of individuals' and groups' political rights, the lower the levels of ethnic conflict. When the chances to defend the minorities' interests within the institutional system are sufficiently high, ethnic groups tend to abandon extra-institutional action strategies.

Contrary to expectation, proportionality has a positive significant effect on the level of ethnic protest.³⁰ As a matter of fact, the average number of seats obtained by ethnic groups under the majority electoral system doubles that of the proportional system in the region, despite the fact that the groups are larger in countries with PR (see Table 3).³¹ The proportional system also fares worse if compared with the mixed system, which combines PR with single-majority seats. The mixed system allows proportionally for higher levels of

Table 3. Electoral systems and ethnic conflict

	Minority size (percentage over total population)	Percentage of seats in parliament	Protest score	Rebellion score
Electoral system	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Majority	9.38**	4.63*	1.80	0.06
Proportional	11.88**	2.60*	1.96	0.52
Mixed	4.00**	1.58*	1.56	0.72

Notes: * difference of means test is statistically significant at 5 per cent; ** statistically significant at 1 per cent.

representation than the PR system. Moreover, the mean protest scores are higher among PR electoral systems, although the difference is not statistically significant.

Partisan representation of ethnic minorities in parliament has no significant effect on the level of ethnic rebellion, even when taking into account the difference between parliamentary and semi-presidential systems.³² Parliamentarism, however, does have a relevant effect. Rebellion is remarkably lower among parliamentary regimes, regardless of the number of seats obtained in the legislature (see Table 4). This confirms our expectation that post-communist semi-presidential systems do not possess the virtues that Horowitz attributes to pure presidential systems. However, the results do not seem consistent. If having a parliamentary system contributes to moderate ethnic rebellion, having representation in parliament should also have an ameliorative effect on the levels of ethnic violence, but it does not. The explanation behind this inconsistency may well be the endogeneity of institutions. Admittedly, in some cases, the absence of parliamentary representation is the effect of a rebellious outbreak rather than the cause of it. In other words, ethnic groups are not represented in parliament because they have boycotted elections as part of their strategy to oppose the status quo. We tried to control for this problem by introducing the 'past autonomy' variable, but the endogeneity problem may still be there.

To sum up, ethnic protest aims at persuading the government to redress the minority groups' grievances by means of popular mobilizations. In those countries where the legislature offers minority ethnic parties effective influence over decision making, higher levels of representation are associated with lower levels of ethnic protest. As the number of seats in parliament increases, there are more chances to get effective influence over decision making and, therefore, less need for extra-institutional action strategies. At the same time,

Table 4. Ethnic conflict and political rights in parliamentary and presidential systems

	Parliamentary systems			(Semi)Presidential systems		
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Rebellion	0.1	0.0	2.5	0.7	0.0	7.0
Political rights (FH)	2.7	1.0	7.0	3.7	1.0	6.0
Minority group size (% of total population)	8.6	1.7	34.4	5.7	0.05	33.9

exercising effective influence over policies can make the difference between radical violent conflict and non-violent popular mobilizations. According to the data, parliamentary regimes endure less rebellion than semi-presidential ones. Had minority ethnic parties been given the power to veto decisions that run against the group's interests, rebellion might have been reduced.

The institutional management of ethnic rebellion

According to previous research findings, post-communist presidential systems endure lower levels of ethnic *rebellion* than parliamentary ones (e.g., Saide-man et al. 2002).³³ The way the authors of these studies explain their findings is highly unsatisfactory. They argue that ethnic minorities feel threatened by the majoritarian tendencies inherent to parliamentarism and this, in turn, gives these minorities incentives to engage in (or increase the level of) ethnic conflict. The problem with this explanation is that post-communist systems are not what these authors consider them to be. Post-communist semi-presidential systems do not allow for the separation of powers so typical of American-style presidentialism.³⁴ Clearly, post-communist semi-presidential systems have not offered disgruntled ethnic minorities incentives to abandon extra-institutional action strategies and pursue the defense of their interests through institutional means. Similarly, post-communist parliamentary systems have not shown the majoritarian tendencies so typical of Westminster-type parliamentarism. On the contrary, post-communist parliamentary regimes have given ethnic minorities more institutional opportunities for effective institutional participation. This is consistent with our finding according to which parliamentary systems experience less ethnic rebellion than semi-presidential ones. The 'threat argument' should rather be applied to post-communist semi-presidential regimes. Even then, however, institutional factors alone would not be able to explain many cases of ethnic rebellion. Let us illustrate this with some examples.

It is useful to start with the language and citizenship laws that were enacted in Moldova and Estonia at the beginning of their democratization process in 1989 and 1991, respectively. These laws were threatening for their ethnic minorities. Many authors have concluded that the violent confrontation between the Russian minority in Transdnistria and the Moldovan state was sparked by the passage of what the Russians considered a threatening language law. However, in the case of Estonia, a rebellion by its Russian minority never broke out despite the approval of a citizenship law that was considerably more threatening for the minority than the Moldovan language law (Kolsto & Malgin 1998; Crowther 1998; Chinn & Roper 1998). The Estonian citizenship

law of 1991 excluded a large part of its Russian minority from the political community and included provisions that truly threatened the existence of Russian as a language (Laitin 1998). Moldova, on the contrary, granted citizenship to all those who lived in the country and who wished to apply for it, whereas its language law was fairly moderate and generous with its deadlines. The law supported education in a variety of languages and even acknowledged the pre-eminence of the minority language over Moldovan in those regions where the minorities were concentrated (Kirschke 2001). According to Chinn and Roper (1998: 317), the government that took power in Moldova in 1991 was among the most accommodative to minorities in general, and to the Russian minority in particular, in the former Soviet Union, despite being dominated by the titular nationality.³⁵

In 1990, when the Russians in Transdnistria were at the height of their rebellion, they held a large number of seats in the Moldovan parliament. Of the 380 seats, 64 were elected in Transdnistria. These seats were later boycotted in favor of violent confrontation with the state. Between 1992 and 1994, Russian and Gagauz leaders boycotted the Moldovan parliament. Approximately 30 per cent of all Slavs in Moldova³⁶ are concentrated in Transdnistria, the region that witnessed the outbreak of armed conflict against the state. The remaining 70 per cent of the Slavs live in Western Moldova and have never felt threatened by the Moldovan state since it gained its independence from the Soviet Union. This majority of Slavs in Western Moldova is overwhelmingly in favor of the territorial integrity of the country and of the reallocation of Transdnistria into Moldova (Waters 2001). This is telling evidence that the levels of threat are viewed differently by separate groups belonging to the same minority ethnic group. Here we find a radicalized minority of Russians engaging in armed conflict against the Moldovan state alongside a moderate majority of Slavs that does not feel threatened and does not demand secession. Surprisingly, the Russians that engaged in violent conflict are a *minority within a minority* since they represent only 25 per cent of the population (Waters 2001: 94), and still they managed to achieve armed control of the Transdnistrian region. The reason for this is obviously that they had the backing of the 14th Russian Army. This fact alone may well alter the way threat is defined in this context. The Russians in Moldova were more of a threat to the Moldovan state than the opposite. In fact, the Russians have set up an authoritarian political regime in Transdnistria. This regime is at present very threatening for the other ethnic groups in this region that, despite the threat, have not rebelled against the Russians.

We cannot resort to the fact of the geographical dispersion of Russians in Estonia in order to account for the absence of rebellion in this country. Quite the contrary, the Russian minority in Estonia was both highly concentrated in one region and demographically larger than the Russian minority in Moldova.

Nor can we say that it was subject to collective action problems. The Russians in Estonia were mobilized and radicalized with regard to objectives and strategies; the Russians in Narva and Sillamae managed to organize a referendum on regional independence in July 1993. However, violence did not break out and the Russians in Estonia, contrary to their counterparts in Moldova, stepped back. The reason is probably that the Russians in Estonia did not have the Russian Army backing them, as the Russians in Moldova did.

Both Estonia and Moldova are semi-presidential systems, but the levels of threat varied considerably from one to another. Rebellion took place where the level of threat for the Russian minority was lower (i.e., in Moldova). The presidencies in both countries, however, played different roles. In Estonia, the president was instrumental in forcing the parliamentary majority to step back with yet another threatening piece of legislation drafted in the summer of 1993. The president vetoed a draft law on aliens approved by the Estonian legislature elected in 1992 and with no representatives from the Russian minority. The president sent the law back to parliament to be revised in order to bring it 'to accordance with European principles'. The amendments included guarantees on social security rights for ethnic Russians and removed the obligation of Russians to reapply for residency permits every five years.³⁷ On the contrary, the Moldovan president between 1991 and 1996 was not seen as friendly to Moldova's minorities.

Let us now take the example of Macedonia, where the Albanian minority has been part of successive Macedonian governments between 1992 and 2000. One would think that, given their continuous participation in government, the Albanians in Macedonia would not feel as threatened as minorities elsewhere. However, the Albanians have registered mid-level rebellion scores during all these years. In January 1992, Albanians organized a referendum on autonomy. They were highly dissatisfied with the new Macedonian Constitution that had been approved in November 1991. A few months later, the Albanian party PDP-NDP was invited to take part in the government coalition. As a result of its participation in government, the PDP-NDP split into a moderate and a radical faction in the winter of 1994. The former was determined to work within the system and achieve ethnic Albanian demands through compromise. The NDP has been part of Albania's coalition governments ever since. The radical faction, on the contrary, was committed to a change in the status quo. An increase in the level of ethnic rebellion took place soon after the Albanian minority had doubled its number of seats in parliament between 1994 and 1998. This high level of representation together with the fact that they were part of the coalition government did not prevent the violence that broke out in the region during the year 2000. The reason lies in internal group dynamics more than anything else. Albanians in Macedonia are not a homogenous

group. Representation in parliament has therefore helped to co-opt one part of the group, but not the group as a whole.

Russia is a semi-presidential system in which the president is constitutionally very strong and has decree power. In this case, according to our hypotheses, we would not expect to see a moderating effect of parliamentary representation on ethnic conflict. In fact, representation (or non-representation) in the national parliament does not seem to have played any role in the evolution of ethnic conflict within the state's borders. The moderation of potentially explosive conflicts in those ethnic republics that claimed autonomy or even independence from the federal state was actually achieved in all cases, except Chechnya, through bilateral negotiations between the presidential administration and the political leaders of the different republics. Thus agreements over the distribution of power were reached that were satisfactory for the ethnic minorities. It was, therefore, the Russian president's resort to the bilateral treaties that moderated the attitude of the ethnic republics. These minorities had no interest in being represented within the Duma, but in being given autonomy to run their affairs without interference from Moscow. However, by far the most violent conflict occurred between Moscow and Chechnya and the bilateral treaty strategy could not prevent it.³⁸ Whether a parliamentary regime would have led to a different result is a moot question. However, it could be argued that the first Chechen War broke out much as a consequence of the clash between the Russian and the Chechen presidents, with no other institutional power being able to veto their decisions. In fact, the federal parliament of Russia and the republican parliament of Chechnya were blocked from involvement with the executive's decisions about the conflict.

In the post-communist semi-presidential systems, the actual relationship between the president and the legislature varies as a consequence of political factors and this variation explains, in part, the different rebellion outcomes in countries that are institutionally similar. In both parliamentary and semi-presidential systems, ethnic groups can be internally divided between moderates and radicals. When this is the case, the prospects for the moderation of ethnic rebellion through parliamentary representation will depend, partly, on the political dynamics internal to the group.

Conclusions

It is generally acknowledged that those ethnic minorities that achieve representation in national parliaments are less likely to engage in conflict with the state. Parliamentary representation gives them a say in decision making and, as a consequence, ethnic groups have institutional incentives to abandon extra-institutional action strategies. There are reasons to believe that increased levels

of influence over decision making are likely to reduce the levels of ethnic conflict. However, we question whether having a voice in parliament is enough to convince ethnic minorities to give up extra-institutional action strategies and act according to the rules of the game. Just how effective is parliamentary representation as a strategy to reduce ethnic conflict? We have argued that parliamentary representation is more effective under certain circumstances: the ethnic group is moderate in its demands and action strategies, the ethnic group speaks with one voice, and the legislature offers minority groups effective influence over policy making.

Concerning the nature of the ethnic group's demands, we have shown that representation within national parliaments has no ameliorative effects over violent secessionist conflicts. Demands for outright secession are not likely to be moderated with seats in the national parliament. In many cases, the secessionist group refuses to participate in elections until the group's demands are met. When the ethnic minority's demands are too radical, parliamentary representation is simply too little.

With respect to the strength of the legislature, being in parliament is no guarantee that the parties outside government will be able to access decision makers, block government policies and veto decisions that go against their minority interests. Clearly, as Powell (2000: 97; emphasis added) has put it: 'Seats in the legislature are not enough. In contrast to the large literature on the measurement and explanation of legislative representation, there has been little systematic and comparative work on *effective representation* in policy making.' As a matter of fact, we have shown that the effect of parliamentary representation over the levels of ethnic conflict depends on the strength of the legislature relative to the executive. The ameliorative effect of parliamentary representation over conflict is stronger in those legislatures where the ethnic group has effective influence over decision making and therefore less need for extra-institutional action strategies. According to our results, the ethnic groups of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have more chances to influence policy making in parliamentary systems than in semi-presidential ones. Thus, parliamentary representation as an instrument to reduce ethnic conflict is more effective in parliamentary systems. However, this need not be the case elsewhere. The parliamentary-presidential distinction is a good proxy indicator for effective versus ineffective influence in this region. Most likely, it could not be used as such in other countries. Westminster-type parliamentarism certainly does not allow for effective representation of minority parties in the assembly. American-style presidentialism, on the other hand, gives presidents much less legislative powers than post-communist semi-presidential systems do and has a real separation of powers between the legislative and the executive when compared to post-communist semi-presidential regimes.

Effective influence over decision-making processes depends greatly on the internal organization of the legislative assembly. The chances individual legislators have to influence agenda setting and have a say in decision making depends upon the legislative rights granted to them by the internal rules of their assembly. Hence, 'legislative organization affects the structure of the decision-making process and the weight of legislators in policy decisions' (Cheibub & Limongi 2002: 18). The same applies to parliamentary political parties, not just individual legislators. In Powell's (2000: 97) words, 'the nature of the committee system in the legislature and other special features of the policy process can involve various levels of decentralization and autonomy that enhance the possible bargaining power of each party'. However, the structure of the committee system and the internal rules of the assembly is not all that matters. It is also necessary to look at the political strength of the government. Representation in the assembly can be more or less effective in different periods, depending on whether the government is a majority or a minority one, a coalition or a single-party government. This is an exploratory article. In order to be able to extend the analysis to other countries and regions, it would be necessary to measure the degree of *effective representation* in policy making (to use Powell's expression) in a systematic comparative way. This should be done by looking at the internal rules and committee structure of each national assembly as well as at the political strength of each government.³⁹

Finally, the process of democratization in itself influences outcomes. Most of the violent clashes involving an ethnic group and the state in our sample broke out during the early stages of the communist regimes' collapse. During this period of regime collapse, institutions were changing, constitutions were being drafted, new distributions of political power were taking shape and outcomes were uncertain. Under these circumstances, ethnic minorities may believe that their interests are being threatened while, simultaneously, they have enhanced opportunities to fight politically to defend their interests. It is therefore difficult to disentangle the effect of parliamentary representation over ethnic conflict from the effects of democratization per se. We need to compare the new democracies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with old democracies in order to see whether there is a difference in the way that parliamentary representation moderates ethnic conflict.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Thomas Cusack, José María Maravall, James Fearon, Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, Abel Escribá, José Fernández and Ignacio Lago for their comments and suggestions. They are not responsible for any mistakes this article may contain.

Appendix. Average percentage of seats and protest and rebellion scores

Country	Minority	Size (percentage over total population)	Average percentage of seats (1990–2000)	Average protest (1990–1998)	Average rebellion (1990–1998)
Albania	Greeks	3.97	2.02	1.6	0.2
Bulgaria	Turks	8.73	7.49	2.3	0.0
	Roma	7.41	0.00	1.2	0.0
Croatia	Serbs	8.35	4.73	1.4	4.7
	Roma	2.78	0.00	1.0	0.0
Czech Republic	Roma	2.30	0.62	1.6	0.0
	Slovaks	15.70	0.00	1.3	0.0
Estonia	Russians	29.85	9.39	2.8	0.0
Georgia	Abkhazians	1.73	0.00(Boycott)	2.2	3.7
	Adzhars	5.80	6.94	0.9	0.0
	Ossetians	3.20	0.00(Boycott)	2.3	2.9
	Russians	4.79	0.0	2.4	3.2
Hungary	Roma	5.66	0.0	1.8	0.0
Latvia	Russians	34.03	0.0	2.2	0.0
Lithuania	Poles	7.00	1.42	1.7	0.0
	Russians	8.78	1.06	1.7	0.1
Macedonia	Albanians	16.00	18.29	2.4	0.6
	Serbs	3.54	0.00	1.9	0.0
	Roma	8.78	0.83	0.0	0.0
Moldova	Gagauz	3.50	2.53	2.1	2.0
	Slavs	26.78	0.00(Boycott)	2.1	3.3
Romania	Hungarians	8.44	7.77	2.6	0.0
	Roma	7.80	0.28	1.6	0.0

Russia	Chechens	0.46	0.00	2.6	3.8
	Tartars	3.16	0.00	2.0	0.0
	Karachay	0.08	0.00	1.4	0.0
	Roma	0.15	0.00	0.0	0.0
	Avars	0.36	0.00	1.3	0.3
	Ingush	0.14	0.00	2.4	0.9
	Lezgins	1.00	0.00	2.9	0.0
	Buryats	0.24	0.00	1.3	0.0
	Kumyks	0.17	0.00	2.2	0.0
	Tuvinians	0.14	0.00	1.0	0.0
	Yakut	0.24	0.00	1.4	0.0
	Hungarians	7.75	10.22	2.4	0.00
	Roma	8.96	0.00	1.6	0.00
	Russians	21.48	27.16	1.3	0.00
	Crimean Tartars	0.50	0.00	2.6	0.00
	Crimean Russians	3.29	0.00(Boycott)	2.3	0.00
Yugoslavia	Kosovo Albanians	11.14	0.00(Boycott)	3.8	1.1
	Hungarians	5.82	3.39	2.6	0.00
	Sandzak Muslims	1.84	0.76	2.6	0.00
	Roma Croats	2.78 1.32	0.00 0.00(Boycott)	0.4 1.1	0.00 0.00

Notes

1. We refer here to the very initial phase of political change. This window of opportunity is analytically distinct from the *process* of democratization itself, which goes on for years or decades, allowing institutional change to take root and become routinized.
2. 'New democracies' are those regimes that have recently moved from dictatorship to democracy – that is, to a regime in which the political leadership is chosen through competitive elections. We do not intend to enter the academic debate about consolidated versus unconsolidated democracies or to discuss the unsolved question of when a democracy can be considered a consolidated democracy. The term 'new' simply emphasizes the time dimension – the fact that these are recently established democracies (in most cases, less than 15 years old). Therefore, all of them have gone through no more than five electoral and legislative periods and the process of institutionalization is still in its early stages, despite the considerable differences between countries in this respect.
3. There is no agreement, however, about the efficacy of power-sharing arrangements to solve ethnic conflict. Many researchers believe that these arrangements institutionalize conflict and, by so doing, get it worse, not better (Roeder 1999; Snyder 2000; Ross 2000; Bunce 1999; Skalnik Leff 1999; Brubaker 1996).
4. An 'ethnic group' is 'a group larger than a family, for which membership is reckoned primarily by descent, is conceptually autonomous, and has a conventionally recognized "natural history" as a group' (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 20).
5. This is what Ted R. Gurr calls a 'minority at risk' (Gurr 1993, 1994, 2000).
6. In this respect, Ishiyama's work would be an exception.
7. 'Proportional type institutions are more effective than majority type institutions as democratic instruments in overcoming ethnic conflict' (Cohen 1997: 629). 'Democracies with proportional representation systems have much fewer ethnic conflicts of both types [rebellion and protest]' (Saideman et al. 2002: 17). 'The doctrine emphasizes almost in unison that in societies which are nationally, culturally and ideologically heterogeneous, the proportional principle is the best option' (Goati 2000: 66). 'It so happens that the proportional system has a lesser probability of rebellion than the majority system. . . . The level of representation of the population is a key element in preventing ethnic civil war' (Reynal-Querol 2002: 35). One of the weaknesses of these studies is that they do not explicitly distinguish between the *moderation* of a conflict that already exists and the *prevention* of conflict before it breaks out. However, the institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention are not necessarily the same as those for moderation or those for solution. As a consequence, conclusions are unclear. From measures of prevention these authors derive conclusions about moderation and, inversely, from measures of moderation they extract conclusions about prevention. This article is focused on the *moderation* of ethnic conflict through time, unless otherwise explicitly stated. We are neither talking about conflict prevention nor about conflict solution.
8. We only know of one study that uses the number of seats obtained by political forces in national parliaments as the measure of representation (Ishiyama 2000).
9. The consequences of this for government and regime stability need not concern us here. It is the consequences for ethnic conflict that is of interest.
10. In contrast, some authors think presidentialism in post-communist countries is so unlike the pure presidential systems of the West that cannot be considered to be presidential at all. As Mazo (2004: 13) has put it: '[T]he literature on democratization and comparative constitutionalism had mistakenly asserted that most of the post-Soviet constitutions are

presidential. In fact, few of them are presidential at all.' Others have referred to this type of system as 'super-presidential' (Holmes 1993/1994; Fish 2001).

11. In fact, many analysts classify them as semi-presidential systems in order to differentiate them from pure presidential systems.
12. The debate about whether the Roma conflict is ethnic or social in nature is clearly beyond the scope of this article. Given our definition of ethnic group (*minority at risk*), the inclusion of the Roma in our analysis is perfectly justified. The Roma fit in at least two of the four criteria for inclusion as a *minority at risk*: the group suffers discrimination relative to other groups in the country, and the group is disadvantaged from past discrimination. In some cases, it even fits a third criterion: the group is mobilized.
13. Following Gurr (1993: 349), we understand ethnic conflict as any extra-institutional action by which groups that define themselves through ethnic criteria make claims against the government, or other political agents, on behalf of their group interests.
14. Fearon and Laitin (2002: 2), after conducting several checks on the way the variable 'rebellion' has been coded in the MAR dataset, have concluded that 'rebellion is a reasonable proxy for levels of ethnic violence'.
15. The MAR dataset presents a selection bias problem. As Fearon and Laitin (2002) put it: 'To be included in the MAR sample at all, a group must . . . be judged "at risk", by which Gurr et al. mean that the group is either "mobilized", subject to discrimination, or at a major economic disadvantage.' In other words, the cases in the dataset have been selected partially according to their value on the dependent variables: ethnic protest and ethnic rebellion. This selection bias is not necessarily a problem for the arguments made in this article. We are not explaining the outbreak of conflict, but rather the moderation of conflict that is already there, if it is at all. We share Ishiyama's (2000: 55) position in this respect.
16. The Minorities at Risk database can be downloaded from: www.cidcm.umd.edu/insc/mar/data.htm
17. Specifically, 0 represents no protests at all; 1 represents a verbal type of opposition such as putting up posters; 2, symbolic resistance such as blocking roads; 3, demonstrations of up to 10,000 persons; 4, demonstrations of up to 100,000 persons; 5, demonstrations with over 100,000 participants. Thus measured, the protest index depends on the size of the minority. The larger the group, the more likely that the number of participants in demonstrations will be large. In order to answer to prospective criticisms in this respect we have replicated the regression analysis with a re-codified protest variable in which we have merged the last three index scores (3, 4 and 5) into one single score (3), accounting for mass street demonstrations (with no reference to the number of participants). The regression results are nearly the same. On the other hand, the inclusion of ethnic group size in the regression analysis does not contribute to improve the simpler model without the size variable. Its coefficient is not significant, while the other coefficients remain more or less the same.
18. On the Rebellion scale, 0 represents no violent action at all; 1, occasional terrorist acts; 2, terrorist campaigns; 3, the existence of rebellions at a local level; 4, small scale guerrilla activity; 5, guerrilla activity on a medium scale; 6, on a large scale; 7, civil war.
19. Our dataset is available on request.
20. Our dataset only covers those countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union where legislative elections have been held periodically since 1990 or the fall of the authoritarian regime. Here we are following the criteria used by Przeworski et al. (2000)

- to differentiate between democratic and dictatorial regimes. This restriction excludes countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.
21. There is no denying that some deputies belonging to an ethnic minority have found a home in a non-ethnic party. An obvious example is that of the Roma in several countries of Eastern Europe such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. However, close attention to the cases shows that usually these deputies do not manage to push their ethnic agendas inside the non-ethnic party. As a consequence, the non-ethnic party does not place the defense of the ethnic group as a top priority in its policy program.
 22. In those countries where there is bicameralism, the data collected only corresponds to the lower chamber of parliament.
 23. The consequence of a constitutional ban for the formation of ethnic parties depends fundamentally on the ethnic group's internal cohesion and level of organization. As the case of Bulgaria shows, two ethnic groups of similar size but different levels of internal cohesion may achieve opposite results within the same institutional context. A cohesive and well-organized group, such as the Turks, has managed to form a very successful ethnic party despite the constitutional ban. Meanwhile, the Roma, internally divided into several small and opposing organizations, have not been able to do the same. The Roma's failure to obtain parliamentary representation is in no small part due to the fragmentation of Roma political forces and their inability to cooperate with each other in order to overcome the 4 per cent barrier to representation.
 24. In 1991, Albania elected a majority government led by the APL that only managed to survive one month. A majority government came into power again in 1996, and this time it lasted just eight months. In Bulgaria, the BSP achieved a majority government in 1990 that only survived three months, and the same situation occurred in 1991 under a UDF government that lasted 13 months. Therefore, the only case that managed to last for a whole year, which is the time unit that we are going to use in this investigation, is Bulgaria in 1991.
 25. The parliamentary systems in our sample are the following: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia after 1994, Macedonia and Slovakia. Following Shugart (1996), we consider Bulgaria and Macedonia as having parliamentary systems because they have presidents that are directly elected but have very limited powers. Unlike Shugart (1996), Metcalf (2000) believes that there are semi-presidential regimes in these two countries.
 26. All the existing measures of political freedom are unsatisfactory and, in a way, rough. However, we believe that the Freedom House scale is not particularly lacking in comparison with other existing measures. In fact, the statistical correlation between the different existing indices of democracy such as the Coppedge-Reinicke Polyarchy scale, the Gurr scales of Democracy and Autocracy and the Bollen scale is very high (see Przeworski & Limongi 1997: 179). We have chosen the Freedom House scale because it measures independently civil liberties and political rights and we are interested only in the latter.
 27. The within standard deviation of an explanatory variable must be below 0.8 and the between-within variation ratio larger than 2.5 (Plümper & Troeger 2004: 14).
 28. In parliamentary systems, the coefficient of the effect of seats on protest is -0.168 ; in non-parliamentary systems, it is -0.037 . As we explained above, in an interactive model the coefficients in the regression describe conditional relationships, not general ones.
 29. The political rights index goes from 1 (highest political freedom) to 7 (lowest political freedom). Therefore, a positive coefficient means that ethnic conflict increases when political freedoms decrease.

30. This result seems to go in the same direction of Ishiyama's (2000: 62) conclusion that 'general proportionality in the party system by the electoral system does not [dampen ethnic political protest]'.
31. This result is in part due to the fact that the majority electoral system, the least common in our dataset, is only found in countries with geographically concentrated minorities, and they always benefit more from the majoritarian assignation of seats than dispersed minorities.
32. In parliamentary systems, the coefficient of the effect of seats on rebellion is -0.005 ; in non-parliamentary systems, it is -0.019 . In parliamentary regimes an increase of 5 per cent in representation would reduce rebellion by 0.12; in semi-presidential regimes, it would reduce it by 0.095. These coefficients are not statistically significant.
33. Ishiyama (2000: 62) obtains the same result with respect to ethnic *protest*. According to his analysis, the stronger the presidential power the lower the level of ethnic protest. Our results seem to move in the same direction with respect to ethnic protest (although not with respect to ethnic rebellion, which Ishiyama does not analyze). As shown in Table 2, the coefficient for the dummy variable 'parliamentarism' is positive – in other words, a parliamentary regime increases the levels of ethnic protest. This coefficient, however, is not statistically significant and for this reason we do not discuss it in detail.
34. In some cases, the transition to democratic rule has been plagued by conflicts between the legislative and the president over the definition of their respective powers. The outcome has generally been a presidential victory over parliament, except in Moldova, where the powers of the president have been reduced.
35. However, then they do concede that 'the Popular Front's initial rhetoric was indeed anti-Russian. While an accommodative policy towards non-Romanians quickly developed and became policy, it could not undo the fear of Romanization on the part of the Russians in Transdnistria that, combined with their nostalgia for the Soviet system, led to the separatist movement' (Chinn & Roper 1998: 317). Perhaps the most significant point here is to distinguish between two very different political moments: before Moldova was an independent state, when it was still a Soviet republic, the Moldavian national elite wanted to expel the CPSU from power, and so they emphasized anti-Russian rhetoric in order to achieve this. After independence, however, the Moldovan elite had managed to take power and they then needed to achieve just the opposite (i.e., to appease the minorities by means of moderate laws).
36. According to Gurr's Minorities at Risk (MAR) database, Slavs represent 26.76 per cent of the total population.
37. In this case, it was the possibility of EU accession that partly explains the decision of the Estonian president to send the law back to the legislature and force parliament to reconsider the most threatening aspects of the legislation being passed. The explanation of why was the president more willing to satisfy EU criteria than the parliament lies probably in the distribution of political forces within the legislative.
38. It could be argued that it was precisely the example set by the Chechen conflict that convinced the Russian president and the rest of the ethnic Republics of the necessity to avoid further violent clashes between the centre and the ethnic minorities.
39. Powell (2000: 104) himself proposes a way to measure effective representation that he then applies to several Western democracies. An attempt to measure the power of the parliament relative to the executive in Eastern Europe can be found in Harfst (2001). Although for the purpose of this research we are more interested in the effective representation of all political forces in parliament, we have replicated the regression

analysis using Harfst's scores of parliamentary strength in Eastern Europe. These scores correlate highly with our parliamentary/semi-presidential dichotomy. The regression results are similar, emphasizing even more the relevance of the interaction term and rendering irrelevant the percentage of seats and the parliamentary/semi-presidential dichotomy variables outside the interaction. The other coefficients remain the same. (Harfst's analysis, however, does not provide scores for all the countries in our dataset.)

References

- Beck, N. & Katz, J.N. (1995). What to do (and not to do) with times-series cross-section data. *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 634–647.
- Birch, S. (2004). *Electoral systems and political transformation in post-communist Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bunce, V. (1999). *Subversive institutions: The design and the destruction of socialism and the state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheibub, J.A. & Limongi, F. (2002). Modes of Government Formation and the Survival of Democratic Regimes: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco.
- Chinn, J. & Roper, S.D. (1998). Territorial autonomy in Gagauzia. *Nationalities Papers* 26(1): 87–101.
- Cohen, F.S. (1997). Proportional versus majoritarian ethnic conflict management in democracies. *Comparative Political Studies* 35(5): 607–630.
- Crowther, W. (1998). Ethnic politics and the post-communist transition in Moldova. *Nationalities Papers* 26(1): 147–165.
- Fearon, J. & Laitin, D.D. (2000). Ordinary Language and External Validity: Specifying Concepts in the Study of Ethnicity. Paper presented at the LiCEP meetings, University of Pennsylvania, 20–22 October.
- Fearon, J. & Laitin, D.D. (2002). Group Concentration and Civil War. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- Fish, S. (2001). The dynamics of democratic erosion. In R.D. Anderson et al. (eds), *Postcommunism and the theory of democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Friedrich, R. (1982). In defense of multiplicative terms in multiple regression equations. *American Journal of Political Science* 26: 797–833.
- Goati, V. (2000). *Elections in FRY from 1990 to 1998: Will of people or electoral manipulation?* Beograd: Centre for Free Elections and Democracy.
- Gungor, G. (2004). The Institutional Integration of an Expanded EU. Paper presented at the ECPR Second Pan-European Conference.
- Gurr, R.T. (1993). *Minorities at risk: A global view of ethnopolitical conflicts*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Gurr, R.T. (1994). Peoples against states: Ethnopolitical conflict and the changing world system. *International Studies Quarterly* 38(3): 347–377.
- Gurr, R.T. (2000). *People versus states: Ethnopolitical conflict and accommodation at the end of the twentieth century*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

- Harfst, P. (2001). *Regierungsstabilität in Osteuropa. Der Einfluss von Parlamenten und Parteien* (WZB Discussion Paper, FS III 01-204). Berlin: WZB.
- Hirschman, A.O. (1970). *Exit, voice and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations and states*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Holmes, S. (1993/1994). Superpresidentialism and its problems. *East European Constitutional Review* 2: 123–126.
- Horowitz, D.L. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ishiyama, J. (2000). Institutions and ethnopolitical conflict in post-communist politics. *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 6(3): 51–67.
- Ishiyama, J. (2001). Ethnopolitical parties and democratic consolidation in post-communist Eastern Europe. *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 7(3): 25–45.
- Kirschke, L. (2001). Explaining Separatist Violence in Post-Soviet States. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- Kittel, B. & Winner, H. (2003). *How reliable is pooled analysis in political economy? The globalization-welfare state nexus revisited* (Discussion Paper 3/2003). Cologne: Max-Planck Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung.
- Kolsto, P. & Malgin, A. (1998). The Transnistrian Republic: A case of politicized regionalism. *Nationalities Papers* 26(1): 103–127.
- Laitin, D.D. (1998). *Identity in formation*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies: Patterns of majoritarian and consensus government in twenty-one countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Mazo, E. (2004). Post-Communist Paradox: How the Rise of Parliamentarism Coincided with the Demise of Pluralism in Moldova (Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law Working Paper Series 17). Stanford: Stanford Institute for International Studies.
- McRae, K. (1974). *Consociational democracy: Political accommodation in segmented societies*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Metcalf, L.K. (2000). Measuring presidential power. *Comparative Political Studies* 33(5): 660–685.
- Powell, G.B. (2000). *Elections as instruments of democracy: Majoritarian and proportional visions*. New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press.
- Plümper, T. & Troeger, V.E. (2004). Efficient Estimation of Rarely Changing Variables in Fixed Effects Models. Unpublished manuscript.
- Przeworski, A. & Limongi, F. (1997). Modernization: Theories and facts. *World Politics* 49: 155–183.
- Przeworski, A. et al. (2000). *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roeder, P.G. (1991). Soviet federalism and ethnic mobilization. *World Politics* 43(2): 196–232.
- Reynal-Querol, M. (2002). Ethnicity, political systems and civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1): 29–54.
- Roeder, P.G. (1999). Peoples and states after 1989: The political costs of incomplete national revolutions. *Slavic Review* 58(4): 854–882.
- Ross, C. (2000). Federalism and democratization in Russia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33: 403–420.
- Saideman, S.M. et al. (2002). Democratization, political institutions and ethnic conflict. A pooled time-series analysis, 1985–1998. *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 103–129.

- Skalnik Leff, C. (1999). Democratization and disintegration in multinational states. *World Politics* 51: 205–235.
- Shugart, M.S. (1996). Executive-legislative relations in post-communist Europe. *Transition* 13: 6–11.
- Shugart, M.S. & Carey, J.M. (1992). *Presidents and assemblies: Constitutional design and electoral dynamics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Snyder, J. (2000). *From voting to violence: Democratization and nationalist conflict*. New York/London: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Waters, T.R.W. (2001). Security concerns in post-Soviet Moldova. Shrivenham: *Conflict Studies Research Centre*.

Further reading

- Ágh, A. (1998). Changing parliamentary committees in changing East-Central Europe: Parliamentary committees as central sites of policy making. *Journal of Legislative Studies* 4(1): 85–100.
- Auer, S. (2000). Nationalism in Central Europe: A chance or a threat for the emerging liberal democratic order? *East European Politics and Societies* 14(2): 213–245.
- Bojczun, M. (1995). The Ukrainian Parliament elections in March–April 1994. *Europe-Asia Studies* 47(2): 229–249.
- Carey, J.M. & Shugart, M.S. (1998). *Executive decree authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheibub, J.A., Przeworski, A. & Saiegh, S.M. (2004). Government coalitions and legislative success under presidentialism and parliamentarism. *British Journal of Political Science* 34: 565–587.
- Chinn, J. & Roper, S.D. (1995). Ethnic mobilisation and reactive nationalism: The case of Moldova. *Nationalities Papers* 23(2): 291–325.
- Dorff, R.H. (1994). Federalism in Eastern Europe: Part of the solution or part of the problem? *Journal of Federalism* 24: 99–113.
- Frye, T. (1992). Ethnicity, sovereignty and transitions from non-democratic rule. *Journal of International Affairs* 45(2): 598–623.
- Frye, T. (1997). A politics of institutional choice. *Comparative Political Studies* 30(5): 523–552.
- Horowitz, D.L. (1993). Democracy in divided societies. *Journal of Democracy* 4(4): 18–38.
- Kubicek, P. (1994). Delegative democracy in Russia and Ukraine. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 27(4): 423–441.
- Laitin, D.D. (2001). Secessionist rebellion in the former Soviet Union. *Comparative Political Studies* 34(8): 839–861.
- Lijphart, A. (1991). Constitutional choices for new democracies. *Journal of Democracy* 2(1): 72–84.
- Lijphart, A. (1994). *Electoral systems and party systems: A study of twenty-seven democracies, 1945–1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Olson, D.M. (2002). Institutionalization of Parliamentary Committees: The Experience of Post-Communist Democracies. Paper presented at the ECPR Congress Workshop 16.
- Pirie, P.S. (1996). National identity and politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine. *Europe-Asia Studies* 48(7): 1079–1104.

- Shugart, M.S. & Mainwaring, S. (1997). Presidentialism and democracy in Latin America: Rethinking the terms of the debate. In *Presidentialism and democracy in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, G. & Wilson, A. (1997). Rethinking Russia's post-Soviet diaspora: The potential for political mobilisation in Eastern Ukraine and North-East Estonia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 49(5): 845–864.
- Wilson, A. (1995). Parties and presidents in Ukraine and Crimea, 1994. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transitions Politics* 11(4): 362–371.

Address for correspondence: Sonia Alonso, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Reichpietschufer 50, D-10785 Berlin, Germany. E-mail: alonso@wz-berlin.de