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Ethnic violence and substantive representation of minorities in parliament

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Abstract

This study seeks to explain why, to what extent, and in what ways ethnic party representatives remain active on the parliamentary floor when the political representation of minority groups takes place alongside ethnic conflict. To test hypotheses related to these questions, we utilize an original dataset of 14,000 parliamentary questions and speeches and background characteristics of 372 representatives in Turkey. The dataset spans many episodes of the Kurdish conflict over six legislative terms (1991–2015). Our empirical analyses show that the parliamentary behavior of ethnic party representatives is directly linked to the intensity of violence between the state and the insurgent group. We specifically demonstrate that ethnic party representatives, compared to other representatives in conflict-ridden provinces, are more active on the floor and focus more heavily on civil rights and identity issues. These findings contribute to our understanding of various linkages between identity and the substantive representation of minorities during violent conflict.

Keywords

Ethnic conflict, Kurdish conflict, parliamentary behavior, representation, Turkish parliament

Introduction

This study explores how the substantive representation of minorities is affected by enduring violence in an ongoing ethnic conflict. Specifically, it aims to understand why, to what extent, and in what ways the members of ethnic political parties remain active on the parliamentary floor when ethnic representation[1] takes place in tandem with violence. Our analysis is focused upon the long-lasting Kurdish conflict in Turkey. We explore the linkages between the number of insurgent

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deaths on the ground and the activities of representatives on the parliamentary floor. We use a novel dataset that includes both the frequency and content of parliamentary questions (PQs) and floor speeches as instruments of ethnic representation to provide an empirical account of the association between ethnic violence and parliamentary behavior.

While a large number of studies have examined how political institutions prevent or moderate ethnic conflict (Alonso and Ruiz-Rufino, 2007; Coakley, 2003; Ghai, 2000; Hanni, 2016; Lijphart, 1977; Shugart, 1992), we have scant knowledge of how violence during an ongoing ethnic conflict influences the substantive representation of an ethnic minority in the democratic political arena. Our study is one of the first attempts to close this theoretical gap. By focusing on the parliamentary behavior of minority representatives, the analysis provides insights about the mechanisms engendering substantive representation of minority groups in ethnic conflicts.

When positioned between a violent insurgent organization and a hostile nationalist elite representing the majority ethnic group, we contend that minority representatives will engage in a game of parliamentary behavior that takes into account the advantages and risks stemming from the preferences of these different actors. Ethnic party representatives will remain disproportionately active on the parliamentary floor compared to colleagues from other parties insofar as they find instrumental value in using parliamentary activities to appeal to their base. Ethnic party representatives will frequently engage in parliamentary activities geared toward expressions of ethnic identity as well as toward propagation of the ethnic group's political and cultural rights as violence intensifies.

We also theorize that minority representatives will use parliamentary floor procedures selectively to maximize their time on the floor, increase visibility of ethnic demands, or to criticize government policies. In summary, we argue that the intensity of violence will condition the nature and extent of parliamentary behavior either by engendering frequent engagement of minority representatives or by influencing the substantive focus of such engagement on the floor. Our explanation does not exclude a re-election goal or ideology as determinants of parliamentary behavior. Rather, it emphasizes the role that continuing violence in ethnic conflict settings has in explaining the parliamentary behavior of minority representatives.

The study takes advantage of the opportunities presented by the Turkish case that has had an oscillating record of ethnic political representation against a backdrop of ongoing violence in Kurdish-majority provinces since the 1980s. We use an original dataset, the Ethnic Parliamentary Activities Dataset (EPAD), that includes information about all the PQs and speeches of members of the Turkish parliament, elected from districts located in conflict zones over six legislative terms (1991–2015). We run a series of negative binomial regression estimations to test hypotheses about the parliamentary behavior of minority representatives.

The results of our analysis reveal that the intensity of violence significantly increases the engagement of minority representatives on the parliamentary floor. As violent tactics become prevalent, ethnic party representatives from conflict-ridden zones particularly target civil rights and identity-related issues in the elected assembly. Among the different types of activities that are available to them, they make frequent use of PQs. These findings imply that violence exerts a significant conditional effect on the parliamentary behavior of minority representatives.

Ethnic conflict and representation

Participation in debates in parliament constitutes a significant portion of legislators' workload because such debates are key instruments of democratic representation (Bäck and Debus, 2016; Proksch and Slapin, 2012). Though scholars have yet to reach a consensus over the factors that motivate representatives to participate in parliamentary activities, much of the literature takes the

electoral and reputational incentives of representatives to engage in personalized debates as a point of departure (Eggers and Spirling, 2014; Louwerse and Otjes, 2016; Mayhew, 1974; Searing, 1994; Shomer, 2009). Specifically, representatives across the globe have been hypothesized to take to the parliamentary floor to influence the political agenda of government (Green-Pedersen, 2010; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010), to increase their likelihood of re-nomination and re-election (Eggers and Spirling, 2014; Yildirim et al., 2017), to avoid lagging behind other representatives in parliamentary performance (Louwerse and Otjes, 2016), and for position-taking and credit-claiming (Maltzman and Sigelman, 1996).

Ethnic group consciousness as the driving force behind participation in parliament, however, has received much less academic attention (Minta, 2009). Once elected, minority representatives combine two rather distinct goals, re-election and substantive representation of minority groups, to inform the scope and content of their parliamentary activities (Aydemir and Vliegenthart, 2015; Saalfeld, 2011; Saalfeld and Bischof, 2013). Ethnic party members may remain active in parliament to gain the electoral support of ethnic group voters in competition with other representatives in an outbidding process (Gunther and Diamond, 2003; Horowitz, 1985; Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972). Such behavior is especially likely when continued use of violence by the insurgent group increases the salience of the political representation of the ethnic group. Engagement by ethnic party members on the floor becomes a viable political strategy insofar as it provides opportunities for the representation of group interests through floor speeches, PQs, or committee assignments.

In ethnically heterogeneous societies, some tension may arise between a nationalist elite representing the dominant ethnic group and minority representatives. When either quotas or electoral procedures facilitate the descriptive representation of minority groups, elected assemblies may become an arena displaying this tension. This issue is well noted by Pitkin (1967) in reference to majority and minority group representation. In an empirical study, Kibris (2011) notes that exposure to ethnic violence increases the vote for far-right nationalist parties in a prolonged ethnic conflict. As a result, representatives from nationalist parties may become hostile toward ethnic party members on the parliamentary floor in an effort to please their support base.

Such tension may become intense especially during violent episodes of ethnic conflict. Inadvertently, hostile political tactics by the majority nationalist elite in the parliament, in reaction to ongoing violence, may invoke a right of response for ethnic party representatives to give them extra time on the floor. This dynamic will be particularly relevant when ethnic representatives are viewed as the 'mouthpieces' of the insurgent organization (Watts, 1999) or when all manifestations of an ethnic group identity are deemed illegitimate by the state.

Hypothesis 1a: Ethnic party representatives will be more active than members of parliament from other parties.

Hypothesis 1b: The intensity of violent conflict will increase the extent of parliamentary activities of ethnic party representatives.

During violent campaigns, ethnic identity gains salience thanks to increased group mobilization (Sambanis and Shayo, 2013). Identity politics, thus, is likely to take the lion's share of ethnic party members' time on the floor. This effect, however, is neither automatic nor smooth. In prolonged violent campaigns 'a small but sufficiently potent group of ethnic radicals [can] derail a peaceful equilibrium' (Sambanis and Shayo, 2013, 294). In their study of ethnic conflict in Turkey, Aydin and Emrence (2015: 12) found that due to its organizational and ideological rigidity, the insurgent

group failed to mobilize and prevent divisions among the ethnic group. In such cases insurgent campaigns may not increase the perceived value of ethnic group identity vis-à-vis the 'national' identity and hence may not lead to increased propagation of minority rights in elected assemblies. However, all else being equal, one can reasonably argue that minority representatives will still find value in participating in identity-related debates on the parliamentary floor. In addition to the increased salience of ethnic political mobilization during violent episodes, re-election motives and belief in the importance of the substantive representation of ethnic group interests will drive the engagement of ethnic party representatives in the elected assembly.

Ethnic exclusion and repression might also indirectly increase the political value of identity and civil rights politics on the parliamentary floor. The strategic use of violence by an insurgent organization is likely to trigger repression (of political identity) and ethnic exclusion (Tezcur and Gurses, 2017; Wimmer et al., 2009). This opens up a window of opportunity for the leaders of the ethnic movement (insurgents or parliamentary representatives) who wish to expand their influence on multiple fronts including the conflict zones and the legal-political arena. While repression of ethnic identity and exclusion has far-reaching implications outside the elected assemblies, representation in the parliament provides an additional opportunity for voicing the demands about group identity and civil rights. We propose the following hypotheses based on the discussion above:

Hypothesis 2a: Ethnic party representatives will be more likely than representatives from other parties to emphasize civil rights and ethnic group identity in the parliament.

Hypothesis 2b: The intensity of violent conflict will increase parliamentary activities invoking identity and civil rights issues by ethnic party representatives.

The case of the Kurdish conflict

The Turkish case presents several opportunities for studying parliamentary behavior and ethnic group representation in an enduring ethnic conflict. The struggle between the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK) and the Turkish state has continued for more than 30 years. It peaked in the1990s with several attempts to achieve a lasting peace since then (Gurses, 2015). Alongside violent tactics, the leaders of the Kurdish ethno-political movement have also utilized the channels of political representation under highly adverse conditions since the 1990s. The first significant instance of Kurdish representation took place in 1991 when candidates from the pro-minority People's Labor Party (HEP) secured 18 seats under the banner of the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP). This electoral success triggered a series of reactions by state elites including the closures of parties, arrests, and political bans for ethnic party members. The Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP) managed to win enough seats to form a parliamentary group ($>$ 20 per the rules of procedure) in each of the 3 tense elections since 2015. This descriptive representation occurred against the backdrop of a referendum, an all-out war in several southeastern provinces, a state of emergency following a coup attempt in 2016, and imprisonment of Kurdish representatives and politicians.

The history of the Turkish Parliament as a central institution in the evolution of Turkish democracy (Ciftci et al., 2008; Turan et al., 2005) provides an important opportunity for examining parliamentary behavior in times of violent conflict. The Turkish case is also suitable for analysis of the subject thanks to the presence of various institutional, contextual, and international factors. Some of these include the unusually large electoral threshold in the proportional representation system (10%), the influence of external actors (i.e. European Union (EU)) on democratizing reforms and ethnic group rights, and an active ethnic party in the parliament despite the presence of an insurgent group locked in conflict with the state.

Table 1. Mean scores for parliamentary activities.

	Obs.	Total PQ	Civil PQ	Total speech	Civil speech
Party group					
Justice and Development	91	40.98	8.67	9.63	0.47
Ethnic parties	77	116.47	23.55	14.23	0.90
Center-right parties	85	7.53	N/A	7.40	0.05
Center-left parties	40	50.43	6.88	20.95	0.88
Islamist parties	59	21.88	0.03	12.32	0.12
Nationalist parties	20	48.16	7.00	13.37	0.32
Terms with ethnic representation					
No ethnic party present	217	25.40	11.25	3.75	0.29
Ethnic party present	155	78.23	12.84	14.27	0.65
Legislative term					
1991–1995 (19th)	30	47.03	10.33	0.03	0.10
1995–1999 (20th)	82	3.20	6.26	N/A	0.11
1999–2002 (21st)	83	14.31	14.05	0.02	0.10
2002–2007 (22nd)	52	78.12	14.67	15.62	0.90
2007–2011 (23rd)	49	78.88	18.43	14.24	0.61
2011–2015 (24th)	76	90.29	10.20	19.99	0.89

PQ: Parliamentary questions. Obs: Observations

Note: Ethnic parties include all parties formed since 1990 and the independently elected MPs; center-right parties include True Path Party (DYP) and Motherland Party (ANAP); center-left parties include Republican People's Party (CHP), Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) and Democratic Left Party (DSP); Islamist parties include Welfare Party (RP) and Virtue Party (FP), and the nationalist parties includes the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

Data, variables, and methods

The Ethnic Parliamentary Activities Dataset (EPAD) includes information about the frequency and the content of speeches and PQs in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) from 1991 to 2015. In coding this large amount of information, we followed the classification of policy areas specified by the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP), which consists of 21 major and over 200 subtopic categories. We compiled the number of speeches and PQs in these major topic areas for a sample of MPs elected from conflict-ridden provinces since 1991. Some examples include civil rights, macroeconomics, health, education, agriculture, immigration, and defense.[2] Two researchers participated in the coding process of the dataset after completing intensive training. The intercoder reliability is over 93% for the content-analytic variables included in the EPAD.

Our sample includes a total of 372 representatives elected during 6 election cycles (1991–2015) from the 19 provinces with sizable Kurdish population.[3] Of these, 77 are ethnic party members. In selecting representatives across different parties, we used party-list order in the same provinces for each election cycle. For example, if province A had four representatives from three different parties with one of them being an ethnic party member, we chose the first elected name in each party list. This strategy has its limitations, but it allows us partially to control for intra-party dynamics related to candidate selection and for the factors pertaining to local party politics. Other parties include center-right, center-left, nationalist, and Islamist parties that have been competing in the Turkish party system since the 1990s (see Table 1).

We work with a sub-sample of data for two reasons. First, since we focus on the effect of violence on parliamentary behavior, we used our limited resources to collect data pertaining only to conflict-ridden provinces. Second, our sample of provinces meets various conditions that are vital

to our analysis, namely, the presence of both ethnic and non-ethnic party representatives, ethnic conflict, and a considerable Kurdish population, allowing us to observe how the parliamentary behavior of representatives varies with ethnic party membership while holding contextual factors (district features, violence intensity, party list etc.) constant.[4] Although not ideal, the data in hand provides a focused analysis of different types of parliamentary engagement given ethnic conflict conditions.

The same MP may appear more than once in the dataset if he or she is re-elected at least once. An examination of seniority across party lines demonstrates that ethnic party members have medium levels of seniority in parliament (online supplemental file, Table S6). For example, 33% of 77 MPs from the ethnic party were elected twice, while the same figure stands at 11% for AKP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), 46% for the center-right and Islamist parties, and 18% for the center-left parties. Ethnic parties are more likely to elect female candidates (29%) compared to other parties with a range of 10% (MHP) to a mere 2% (center-right parties) during the election cycles included in our analysis.

Variables

Dependent variables

PQs and speeches allow researchers to observe the behavior of representatives in action (Bäck and Debus, 2016; Ciftci and Yildirim, 2019; Eggers and Spirling, 2014; Martin, 2011; Saalfeld, 2011; Saalfeld and Bischof, 2013;). According to the rules of procedure in the Turkish parliament, each parliamentary party as a group and individual members are given the right to speak on the floor. In the Turkish parliament, speeches are highly televised events and give MPs a chance to discuss controversial issues (Yildirim, 2019). Asking PQs is not as time-intensive, but it nonetheless requires preparation and the evaluation of government policies.

We use four different measures of parliamentary activism. *Total activity* is the total number of speeches made and PQs asked (in 21 policy areas) in a given legislative term by each member. It measures the overall level of engagement for a given MP. *Civil total* is the total number of civil rights-related PQs and speeches in a given legislative term by each MP. *Civil speeches* and *civil PQs* provide a breakdown of the second variable. PQs are a proxy for measuring the type of floor engagement that targets government policies and presumably show minority representatives' desire to address cabinet officials. Speeches, on the other hand are good proxies for measuring substantive representation since they provide more floor time. They may also help with re-nomination and re-election goals through increased visibility (Yildirim et al., 2017). Finally, since the representation of ethnic identity and pursuit of political rights gain salience during intense periods of violence, we included civil rights-related measures. In Table 1, we present the mean scores for these parliamentary activities for 372 MPs included in our dataset.

On average, MPs from ethnic parties ask more questions, especially about civil rights issues, than representatives from the Islamist, nationalist, and center-left/-right parties. Ethnic party representatives also utilize general and civil rights related speeches more frequently than other members except center-left party representatives. This result implies that ethnic party members strategically use the parliamentary floor to gain more visibility and, presumably, to help their re-election goals. MPs engage more frequently in parliamentary activities during the legislative terms when an ethnic party is present in the assembly. Members of the nationalist MHP also engage more frequently than the average MP despite their party's non-continual presence on the floor. This result provides preliminary support for our expectation that hostility toward ethnic group demands by nationalist representatives is likely to trigger the parliamentary engagement of minority representatives.

The average number of activities in the four areas reported here are somehow higher during the 22nd term (2002–2007), a period during which the Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party (AKP) was in government and made significant strides toward democratization. The differences between these various classifications are statistically significant according to the difference of means test (online supplemental file, Table S5). Based on these descriptive findings, we can show that representatives from ethnic parties are much more active on the floor than their colleagues elected from the same districts. The presence of an ethnic party in parliament increases the level of engagement for all MPs from the conflict-ridden provinces. However, we cannot present analysis comparing the behavior of MPs from conflict zones to these from other districts, because the data are not available.

Independent variables

Ethnic party identification is a dichotomous measure of ethnic party membership (1 if affiliated with the ethnic political party). All ethnic party representatives who were elected from the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) lists in 1991 later joined the ethnic People's Labor Party (HEP). In the 23rd term, all ethnic representatives competed as independent candidates, but once elected they joined the ethnic Democratic Society Party (BDP). For the 24th term, we included all parliamentary members of the People's Democracy Party (HDP) as ethnic party representatives.[5]

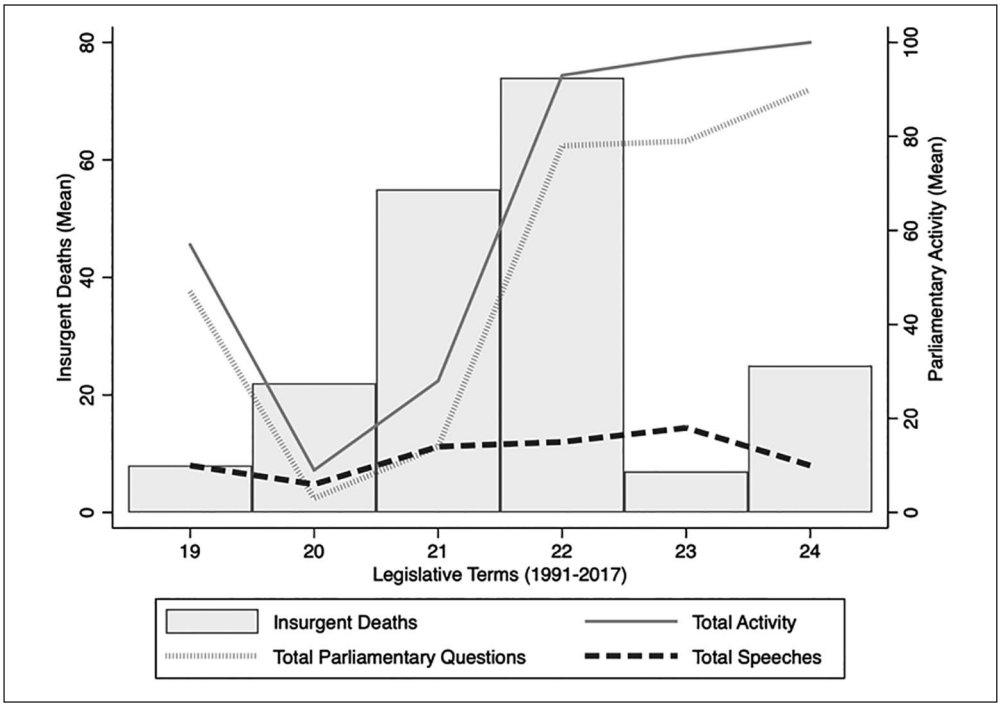
Our second independent variable, *ethnic party representation*, is a dichotomous variable differentiating 3 legislative terms with ethnic party presence (19, 23, and 24) from the terms with no ethnic party presence in the parliament (20, 21, 22, or the period between 1995 and 2007). This variable captures the effect of ethnic descriptive representation on parliamentary activities during the time frame of this study.

To test the conditional effect of violence on parliamentary behavior, we use the log-transformed number of insurgent deaths occurring in the legislative term preceding the current term in each province (*conflict intensity*). We obtained this measure from the Kurdish Insurgency Militants (KIM) dataset (Tezcur, 2016). Following the convention of previous research, we do not use the government security personnel deaths (Tezcur and Gurses, 2017). Figure 1 shows the average number of insurgent deaths occurring during the election cycles preceding each of the six legislative terms under investigation (*bars*) along with the extent of different parliamentary activities (*lines*). Not surprisingly, most insurgent deaths occurred at the height of the conflict in the 1990s. On average, we see an increase in the extent of total parliamentary activities over time. Most of this trend can be attributed to the use of PQs (dashed line) with average frequency of speech lagging behind. The largest increase in the extent of parliamentary activities takes place from the 21st to the 22nd term (1999–2007). Overall, Figure 1 shows that representation and violence are not alternative strategies and that conflict intensity can be high during periods of ethnic descriptive representation.[6]

Kurdish vote and *Kurdish population* variables report the vote share of the ethnic party and Kurdish population for each electoral district respectively.[7] We calculate the '*Kurdish vote/Kurdish population*' ratio for each district to account for the effect of ethnic voting on parliamentary activities. By doing so, we account for the extent to which increased ethnic mobilization in electoral provinces (higher *Kurdish vote/Kurdish population* ratio) affects MPs' parliamentary behavior.

Finally, *Female* is a dichotomous measure of gender, where 32 out of 372 representatives (8.6%) are female. We control for district-level economic development by using provincial GDP per capita as reported by the Turkish Economic and Political Research Foundation (TEPAV).

Figure 1. Ethnic violence and the extent of parliamentary behavior in Turkey.



The bars represent the average number of insurgent deaths during the election cycle preceding each legislative term (source: KIM dataset (Tezcur, 2016)). The lines represent the mean values for total activities, total parliamentary questions, and total speeches during each legislative term (source: Ethnic Parliamentary Activities Dataset (EPAD)).

Statistical model

We use negative binomial regression (NBR) for statistical estimations. NBR belongs to the count models family. Count models are generalized linear models assuming that the outcome variable follows a poisson distribution (Hilbe, 2011). Poisson regression, however, is restrictive, because it assumes that the mean and variance of the outcome variable are equal. In the EPAD, the distribution of our dependent variables is highly overdispersed. Therefore, we prefer NBR over poisson regression in statistical estimations, where we utilize clustered standard errors by province. Clustering by the individual representatives is not a feasible option for two reasons. First, ethnic party representatives were not always present in parliament during the six consecutive terms and when they were elected the number of incumbents was quite small. Second, a significant party system change was observed in Turkey in the 2002 elections; hence a substantial MP turnover was observed in 2002 and 2007.

Results

Table 2 presents the results of the NBR estimations for all legislative terms with the sample of all representatives included in our dataset (372 members).These results show that both descriptive representation (*ethnic representation*) and *ethnic party identification* are positively related to the extent of parliamentary engagement ($p < 0.05$). Controlling for individual and contextual factors, the likelihood of making speeches and asking PQs is consistently higher among ethnic party

Table 2. Negative binomial regression on total parliamentary activities and activities regarding civil rights.

	Total activity		Total civil		(Speech) civil		(PQ) civil	
Ethnic party identification		1.205*** (0.276)		1.428** (0.568)		1.070** (0.443)		1.475** (0.658)
Ethnic party representation	1.219*** (0.293)	0.694** (0.332)	1.639** (0.644)	0.585 (0.794)	1.484*** (0.432)	0.966** (0.434)	1.651** (0.695)	0.489 (0.913)
Kurdish vote	−0.0222 (0.0213)	−0.0360 (0.0279)	0.0109 (0.0494)	0.0265 (0.0534)	−0.0125 (0.0194)	−0.0138 (0.0178)	0.00441 (0.0580)	0.0222 (0.0597)
Kurdish population	0.00130 (0.0191)	0.00305 (0.0219)	0.000128 (0.0328)	−0.0129 (0.0346)	−0.0212 (0.0149)	−0.0252 (0.0159)	0.0129 (0.0480)	−0.00185 (0.0443)
Vote/population ratio	1.345 (0.949)	1.542 (1.001)	3.056 (2.049)	2.006 (1.962)	1.440* (0.810)	1.483* (0.849)	3.835 (3.022)	2.575 (2.634)
Female	0.267 (0.180)	−0.0504 (0.257)	0.379 (0.565)	0.176 (0.672)	0.320 (0.369)	−0.161 (0.478)	0.385 (0.624)	0.227 (0.750)
Conflict intensity (log)	0.268*** (0.0916)	0.319*** (0.113)	0.195 (0.219)	0.165 (0.228)	0.642*** (0.169)	0.648*** (0.176)	0.138 (0.241)	0.0980 (0.244)
GDP (log)	0.0411 (0.125)	0.0651 (0.130)	0.201 (0.237)	0.299 (0.203)	0.00764 (0.139)	0.0516 (0.157)	0.284 (0.323)	0.383 (0.252)
Constant	2.179 (1.857)	1.996 (1.984)	−3.188 (3.559)	−2.896 (3.126)	−2.796 (1.875)	−2.925 (2.061)	−4.729 (5.313)	−4.235 (4.175)
LnAlpha	1.091*** (0.0559)	1.058*** (0.0564)	2.502*** (0.128)	2.471*** (0.129)	1.743*** (0.206)	1.683*** (0.220)	2.864*** (0.168)	2.835*** (0.171)
Log pseudolikelihood	−1651.9	−631.7	−266.8	−552.6	−1644.2	−629.3	−264.3	−551
Observations	372	372	371	371	371	371	372	372

PQ: parliamentary questions; GDP: gross domestic product.
Standard errors (clustered by province) in parentheses, $^{*}p < 0.1$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{***}p < 0.01$.

representatives than other MPs from the same provinces. While the presence of an ethnic party in the parliament (*descriptive representation*) increases the level of parliamentary activities for all MPs, the statistical significance of this effect disappears once we control for ethnic party identification in the models predicting civil rights-related activities (speech and PQ).

Thus, we can be quite specific and point to an independent effect associated with the activities of ethnic party representatives (that is, ethnic party identification) beyond the mere presence of an ethnic party (descriptive representation). Ethnic party membership, thus, matters for the substantive representation of minorities in elected assemblies.

PQs and speeches are different floor activities, but ethnic party representatives choose to utilize the former more frequently than the latter (Tables 2 and 3). PQs are instruments of representation that allow MPs to inquire about government policies by asking questions to cabinet ministers on a daily basis. This could be part of an agenda-setting strategy or the desire to gain visibility on the floor by the ethnic party representatives, but it does not necessarily indicate policy influence since the ministers are not likely to change policy based on requests outlined in PQs.

MPs from provinces with higher levels of electoral mobilization (share of Kurdish party votes) are more likely to engage with civil rights issues on the floor. Finally, conflict intensity increases the number of total parliamentary activities and civil rights-related engagement on the floor. According to these results, we can argue that representatives from districts with increased ethnic voting might be emphasizing civil rights issues for re-election goals.

Table 3. Negative binomial regression on total parliamentary activities and activities regarding civil rights (19th, 23rd, and 24th legislative terms only).

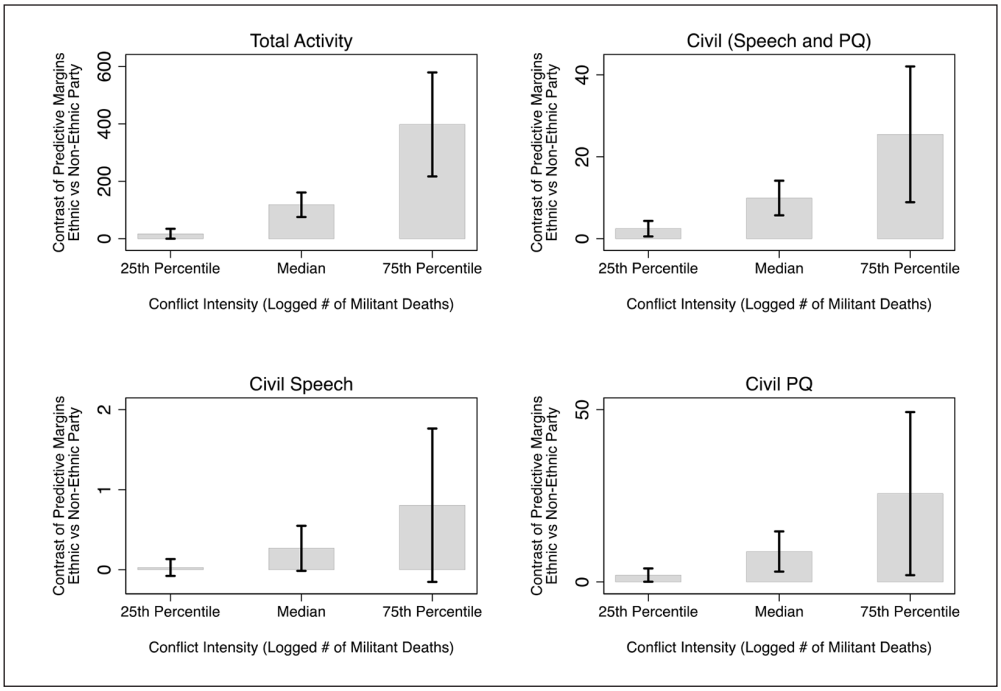
	Total activity		Total civil		(Speech) civil		(PQ) civil	
Ethnic party identification	1.996*** (0.308)	0.860* (0.478)	2.418*** (0.623)	1.390*** (0.532)	1.146*** (0.368)	0.506 (0.347)	3.321*** (0.658)	2.040*** (0.617)
Kurdish vote	−0.0954*** (0.0274)	−0.111*** (0.0262)	−0.0511** (0.0207)	−0.0766*** (0.0215)	−0.0154 (0.0374)	−0.0139 (0.0367)	−0.0641*** (0.0238)	−0.100*** (0.0247)
Kurdish population	0.0237 (0.0214)	0.0381 (0.0246)	0.00975 (0.0244)	0.0342 (0.0252)	−0.0399 (0.0287)	−0.0399 (0.0281)	0.0140 (0.0291)	0.0482 (0.0294)
Vote/population ratio	3.519*** (0.998)	3.841*** (1.058)	2.705*** (0.939)	3.872*** (0.941)	0.431 (1.318)	0.315 (1.262)	3.414** (1.332)	4.937*** (1.208)
Female	−0.315 (0.261)	−0.415 (0.260)	0.235 (0.451)	0.0644 (0.410)	−0.689** (0.327)	−0.532 (0.329)	0.191 (0.475)	−0.0223 (0.431)
Conflict intensity (log)	0.566*** (0.140)	0.234 (0.173)	0.397* (0.216)	0.0874 (0.209)	0.487** (0.223)	0.303 (0.200)	0.419* (0.244)	0.0768 (0.257)
Ethnic × clash intensity		0.576*** (0.159)		0.556*** (0.144)		0.286* (0.151)		0.684*** (0.139)
GDP (log)	0.0256 (0.144)	0.0296 (0.160)	0.154 (0.168)	0.258* (0.136)	−0.306* (0.165)	−0.333** (0.167)	0.211 (0.223)	0.379** (0.173)
23rd term	0.932*** (0.360)	1.103*** (0.365)	5.214*** (1.072)	5.288*** (1.142)	1.820* (0.990)	1.814* (0.976)	7.535*** (0.717)	7.568*** (0.816)
24th term	−0.341 (0.387)	−0.252 (0.345)	3.757*** (0.908)	3.700*** (1.067)	1.568** (0.682)	1.559** (0.682)	5.403*** (0.852)	5.320*** (1.011)
Constant	1.569 (2.165)	1.530 (2.382)	−5.727*** (2.084)	−7.304*** (1.954)	1.297 (2.938)	1.864 (2.863)	−8.918*** (2.836)	−11.37*** (2.302)
LnAlpha	0.958*** (0.0751)	0.915*** (0.0827)	1.442*** (0.177)	1.391*** (0.203)	1.046*** (0.242)	1.001*** (0.266)	1.537*** (0.186)	1.481*** (0.210)
Log pseudolikelihood	−746.2	−742	−388.5	−386.3	−139.2	−138.6	−364.2	−361.5
Observations	155	155	154	154	154	154	155	155

Standard errors (clustered by province) in parentheses, *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.
GDP: gross domestic product.

Table 3 presents the results testing the effect of *ethnic party identification* on parliamentary behavior conditional on *conflict intensity*. These models exclude the legislative terms without ethnic party presence (1996–2007) but include representatives from both ethnic and other parties. According to the results, ethnic party representatives, in comparison to members of other parties from the same districts, are significantly more likely to be active on the parliamentary floor in general and regarding civil rights issues in particular when their election to parliament is preceded by intense episodes of violence. We can be statistically confident that violence preceding representation drives both the extent and the focus of ethnic party representatives' parliamentary behavior. The *Kurdish vote/Kurdish population* ratio achieves high statistical significance in all models except 'Speech (civil)' models. This indicates that electoral imperatives such as the prevalence of ethnic voting forces ethnic party members to engage in parliamentary activities, and especially to ask civil rights-related PQs. Thus, in addition to violence, electoral incentives may play a role in engagement on the parliamentary floor.

The statistically significant interaction term between *conflict intensity* and *ethnic party identification* shows that ethnic party members increasingly diverge from non-ethnic party members in

Figure 2. Substantive effects of the conflict intensity on parliamentary behavior.



their parliamentary behavior (i.e. the number and type of floor activities) in response to intensified violence in their electoral district. Finally, the positive and statistically significant effects for the legislative term dummies show that MPs have gradually become more likely to pursue civil rights issues on the floor relative to the 19th legislative term (1991–1995). This could be due to a 'learning curve' or increased mobilization accompanying insurgent operations. These results could also be related to the effect of the EU's pressure for democratization after Turkey obtained candidate status in 2004. EU conditionality requiring democratic reforms (Schimmelfennig et al., 2003) may have facilitated the increased engagement of ethnic party representatives in the parliament.

To further probe the role of violence, we calculated the average effect of ethnic party membership on the extent of parliamentary activities conditional on conflict intensity. In Figure 2, we illustrate the contrast of predictive margins (i.e. difference) for ethnic and non-ethnic representatives for the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentile values of the insurgent deaths given the highly right-skewed distribution of this variable.[8]

Ethnic party representatives diverge significantly from other MPs in their parliamentary activities as *conflict intensity* increases in their districts. This difference is particularly strong for the effect of *conflict intensity* on the extent of overall parliamentary activities, PQs and speeches about civil rights (combined), and for PQs regarding civil rights issues. In 'speech-only' models we do not detect significant differences between the parliamentary activism of minority and other representatives, perhaps due to the small number of speeches concerning civil rights. While speeches are visible to other members of parliament and the larger public, ethnic party representatives may prefer to ask PQs which have the added advantage of transmitting ethnic group demands to cabinet ministers. Another explanation could be related to the willingness of hostile MPs to speak on the floor about civil rights issues when conflict intensity increases. This dynamic may remove any

statistical difference in engagement through speeches between ethnic and non-ethnic party representatives on the floor. By and large, our empirical findings strongly support the hypotheses regarding the linkages between ethnic party affiliation, conflict intensity, and engagement (H1a, H1b) as well as the civil rights focus on the floor (H2a, H2b).

These results are significant for understanding how violent insurgency shapes parliamentary behavior geared toward the representation of ethnic groups. When a violent insurgent campaign takes place in tandem with democratic representation, minority representatives are likely to play a complex game of engagement in the parliament. Their activities will generally focus on identity and civil rights issues, but they may also exploit floor opportunities to enhance the prospect of re-election. We find that parliamentary behavior at times of intense violence is not simply characterized by a significant increase in floor activities. Rather, ethnic party representatives utilize specific parliamentary procedures such as PQs to voice ethnic identity and civil rights issues in parliament. We discuss the implications of these results for ethnic violence, representation, and democratization below.

Robustness analysis

For robustness checks, we ran a series of additional models that use different dependent and independent variables. The EPAD includes information about defense-related PQs and speeches for the 372 members of parliament included in the analysis. Defense-related speeches and PQs include many references to the Kurdish insurgency and the state's counter-insurgency operations. The results with these alternative measures remain very similar to the main results (online supplemental file, Tables S3 and S4). In these additional models, *ethnic party identification* does not always reach statistical significance, especially for speechmaking. We suspect that the lack of statistical significance for this variable is due to the willingness of non-ethnic party representatives to talk about national security issues from a nationalist perspective, a motive that makes them as active as ethnic party members on the floor (hence removing any statistical difference between the two groups).

We also estimated several models replacing the number of militant deaths with extrajudicial killings as an alternative measure of conflict intensity (Tezcur, 2016). In these models, ethnic party identification does not reach statistical significance, but an increase in extrajudicial killings increases the extent of floor activities (online supplemental file, Table S2). We interpret these results with a grain of salt, because the data for extrajudicial killings are limited and available for only the 19th and 23rd legislative terms.

The models presented above include some variables with high levels of correlation, including Kurdish population and Kurdish vote (a correlation of 0.74). To deal with this problem, we alternated these variables in various model specifications. These results can be found in the online supplemental file (Tables S9–S12). By and large, we can be quite confident that the substantive results about the effect of ethnic party membership and the conditional effect of violence on parliamentary engagement are robust. The only difference concerns the main effect of *conflict intensity* that loses its statistical significance in some models.

Discussion and conclusions

This study supports the contention that the substantive representation of ethnic minorities can occur simultaneously with violent ethnic conflict. The analysis moves beyond the utility of *descriptive representation* to demonstrate the ways in which ethnic party representatives engage in *substantive representation* utilizing the parliamentary podium under the shadow of arms. The floor of

parliament may become a space facilitating the promotion of ethnic identity and civil rights issues. Minority representatives, in fact, do exploit different opportunities in parliament including speeches and PQs toward that end. At the same time, they especially use PQs to direct the government's attention toward the demands of their constituents. While asking PQs does not necessarily lead to policy change, it serves the goals of minority representatives—directed toward either re-election or ideology—by giving visibility to themselves and their group interests.

The use of parliamentary activities concerning identity and civil rights issues is arguably tied to the increasing salience of group identity, presumably due to ethnic mobilization following political repression or the operations of a potent insurgent organization. Our data is not conducive to making a causal claim about this link and our explanation does not propose that members from ethnic parties are solely responding to insurgent group tactics. Ethnic party members, once elected, may be developing their own political strategies within a complex game shaped by pressures from the insurgent group, voters, the nationalist elite representing the majority group, and international actors. Given these constraints and ongoing violence, we believe that minority representatives will find it prudent to utilize legal-political avenues to voice ethnic group demands when presented with the opportunity. While their engagement on the floor will take into account the preferences of these different actors, they will remain disproportionally active on the floor regardless. Due to data limitations, we were unable to provide an in-depth analysis of interactions between ethnic party representatives and the insurgent leadership, nationalist elite, or international actors. It would be of great interest to investigate such interactions among these actors for a complete explanation of the 'ethnic conflict–parliamentary behavior' nexus.

Conflict resolution requires democratization and political inclusion of ethnic group elites. Opening parliamentary space to minority representatives provides an opportunity for voicing ethnic group demands such as preferences for autonomy, cultural rights, and recognition of ethnic identity. Such openings, however, are often unacceptable to the nationalist elite representing the majority ethnic group. Our findings imply that continued violence and visible parliamentary activism concerning group rights will create a backlash from the nationalist elite. Eventually, the nationalist elite representing the dominant ethnic group may choose to repress all manifestations of ethnic identity and close the formal representative space to ethnic party members. Incidentally, in the Turkish context, such closure strategies have been implemented since 1991. The latest incidence facilitating such political closures is the new constitutional design (2017) assigning sweeping powers to a president at the expense of the powers of the parliament.

Beyond the Turkish case, these results could help us explain the parliamentary behavior of minority representatives in cases like Colombia, Sri Lanka, and other ethnically heterogeneous societies. Several conditions that shape the parliamentary behavior of ethnic party representatives in Turkey may be informative for understanding minority representation in these other cases. For example, the 10% national electoral threshold for parties within the proportional representation system forces the ethnic party to engage in vigorous campaigning and to participate in elections with independent candidates. The case of Columbia is comparable insofar as the institutionalization of a two-party system despite the proportional representation electoral design has recently led many challengers to field independent candidates.

In Turkey, the ethnic political cleavage pits a dominant nationalist majority in parliament against ethnic party representatives and sets the stage for a hostile environment against the latter. Inspired by theories of representation, we argue that this dynamic may inadvertently motivate increased engagement of ethnic party members on the floor. Such clear delineation in strategy may be replaced with highly complex calculations in parliament when various cross-cutting and reinforcing cleavages along the ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines define the ethnic politics. In Sri Lanka, for example, a large majority of Sinhalese exist with several minority groups, but there are also

religious divisions that cross-cut these ethnic cleavages. In such contexts, parliamentary politics will lead to multi-layered, complex calculations and bargaining between the majority and minority representatives as well as violent and peaceful ethnic organizations.

International factors may also play an important role in shaping parliamentary behavior. EU conditionality (Schimmelfennig et al., 2003)[9] and the resulting international pressure for democratization in Turkey encouraged the increased engagement of ethnic party representatives in parliament. Most ethnic conflicts are prone to the involvement of international actors. The involvement of international actors may not always end with democratization or substantive representation of minorities as has been observed in Turkey.

The study of parliamentary behavior under enduring violence is likely to reveal different mechanisms about minority representation in other cases of ethnic conflict. This study, nonetheless, provides the first insights about the substantive representation of minority groups and the nature of parliamentary behavior when representation takes place in tandem with violent ethnic conflict. It is our hope that future research will build on these initial findings and investigate the mechanisms underlying the substantive representation of minority groups under different contextual and international conditions. While the Turkish case provides excellent opportunities for studying the effect of violence on parliamentary behavior, a comparative focus on other cases will increase our understanding of the link between conflict and ethnic representation.

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Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. We define ethnic representation as parliamentary activities of members of parliament (MPs) aiming to advance political and cultural rights of an ethnic group. Our inquiry focuses on members of an ethnic party specifically described as ‘a party that is the champion of the particular interests of one ethnic category or set of categories’ (Chandra, 2011: 155). In this paper, we use the terms ‘ethnic party members’ and ‘minority representatives’ interchangeably.
2. These areas are listed in Table S16 in the online supplemental file. Information about CAP coding process can also be found at www.comparativeagendas.net.
3. Most of these provinces are located in Southeastern Turkey and have majority or significant proportions of Kurdish population. These provinces are Adana, Adiyaman, Agri, Bingol, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Istanbul, Kars, Mardin, Mersin, Mus, Siirt, Van, Sirnak, Batman, Tunceli, Sanliurfa, Igdir, and Van.
4. The cost of collecting data across six legislative terms for all MPs is substantial. We hope to collect these data and make it freely available to scholars of comparative legislative politics in the long run. We present some descriptive tables in the online supplemental file (see Table S15) to show parliamentary engagement of all MPs in Turkey using a preliminary sub-sample of full data. We follow the advice of

Simmons et al. (2011) and report the limitations, decisions to add or remove the data, and coding procedures in the text. We thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

5. We replicated the analysis by using a continuous variable measuring the number of seats for the ethnic party. The results work in our favor, but we prefer to use the dummy variable approach for ease of interpretation. See Table S14 in the online supplemental file.
6. Significant variation exists across provinces in the number of insurgent deaths as shown in the statistical analysis below. We present province level distribution of insurgent deaths in the online supplemental file (Figure S1).
7. Ethnic voting data are extracted from the Turkish Statistical Agency (TUIK). Kurdish vote figures are obtained from Mutlu (1996) and Kibris (2011).
8. The predictive margins for continuous distributions show that the difference between ethnic and non-ethnic party members is most visible at the high end of the continuum. These results are available upon request.
9. Our use of term dummies in the models partially accounts for EU conditionality, but we cannot draw a decisive conclusion about its effect on parliamentary behavior.

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