



# DEMOCRATIZATION, POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

## PRESENTATION

**MVZ489 Causes of Political Violence**

**Lucie Sitarová**

**April 2016**

- Saideman, S., Lanoue, D., Campenni, M., Stanton, S. (2002): “Democratization, Political institutions, and Ethnic Conflict. A pooled-Time Series Analysis, 1985-1998”, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 35, No 1., pp: 103-129.



# STRUCTURE

- Democracy and conflict
- Core assumptions
- Ethnic security dilemma
- Political institutions and conflict
- Research design
- Hypothesis and results



# DEMOCRACY AND CONFLICT

- 3rd wave of democratization - increase in the number of ethnic groups in conflict
- Questions:
- If political competition exacerbates communal tensions, do increases in ethnic tensions coincide with democratization?
- Are the differences in ethnic unrest among democracies due to variations in political institutions?
- Are presidential systems more prone to ethnic conflict than parliamentary democracies?
- Does the electoral system matter?
- Does federalism cause more problems than it solves?



# SHOULD WE PRESCRIBE DEMOCRACY?



# CORE ASSUMPTIONS AND QUESTION

- Groups can be perceived as unitary actors
- Institutions matter because they can favor or deter organized groups and their dissent
- Q: what conditions are associated with greater or less ethnic dissent, both peaceful and violent?
- Ethnic protest X ethnic rebellion
  - Protest – „making an appeal to government leaders for redress of grievances“
  - Rebellion – „conscious attempt to destabilize (and in some cases overthrow) the government itself“
  - Important distinction, because some institutions favor protest to prevent violent rebellion



# ETHNIC SECURITY DILEMMA

- Application of the international concept to domestic politics
  - Posen – collapse of an empire creates anarchy → security dilemma
- Saideman – revises the concept to make it broadly applicable:
- government of any state is the greatest potential threat to any groups inside (it usually takes a state's resources to commit genocide)
- → groups try to control the state (or secede if the state's neutrality cannot be assured)
- → security dilemma
- Q: what institutions might matter and what are their likely effects?



# POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONFLICT

- nature of the executive
- type of electoral system
- distribution of power between central government and subunits
  
- How much power is held by the winners and what can do the losers
  
- presidentialism vs parliamentarism - what is better?





# RESEARCH

- Minorities at risk dataset
- Group/years
- Both democratic and authoritarian regimes



## DEMOCRACY

- Hypothesis 1: Ethnic protests and rebellion are more likely in democracies than in authoritarian regimes.
- Competition for the control of government
- Costs of protesting are less and the perceived benefits are greater
- Ethnic outbidding



## DEMOCRACY

- Hypothesis 1: Ethnic protests and rebellion are more likely in democracies than in authoritarian regimes.
- Competition for the control of government
- Costs of protesting are less and the perceived benefits are greater
- Ethnic outbidding



## REGIME AGE

- Hypothesis 2: Ethnic protests and rebellion are more likely in states with younger political institutions.
- State is more vulnerable to capture by one group at the expense of others during transitions
- Older regimes are more likely to have „worked things out“



# REGIME AGE

- Hypothesis 2: Ethnic protests and rebellion are more likely in states with younger political institutions.
- State is more vulnerable to capture by one group at the expense of others during transitions
- Older regimes are more likely to have „worked things out“
- older - more violence, not significantly more protest
  - the fact of establishing a new dem is often a part of grievance-management



# YOUNG DEMOCRACIES

- Hypothesis 3: Young democracies are less likely to experience severe ethnic strife.
- The mere fact of the transitions to a democracy is an act of addressing grievances
- Groups might try to use the system first



# YOUNG DEMOCRACIES

- Hypothesis 3: Young democracies are less likely to experience severe ethnic strife.
- The mere fact of the transitions to a democracy is an act of addressing grievances
- Groups might try to use the system first



# FIRST ELECTION

- Hypothesis 4: When a country undergoes its first election under the current political system, ethnic protests and rebellion are more likely
- More dissent during a first election, because this is often the first opportunity to make clear what a group desires
- Increases uncertainty about who will rule
- They don't necessarily lead to democracy





# FIRST ELECTION

- Hypothesis 4: When a country undergoes its first election under the current political system, ethnic protests and rebellion are more likely
- More dissent during a first election, because this is often the first opportunity to make clear what a group desires
- Increases uncertainty about who will rule
- They don't necessarily lead to democracy
- No significant influence



# ELECTORAL SYSTEM

- Hypothesis 6: Ethnic conflict is more likely in systems characterized by plurality than those with proportional representation
- Plurality systems - exaggerate the power of the strongest parties
- Proportional representation —a distribution of seats proportional to the votes received



# ELECTORAL SYSTEM

- Hypothesis 6: Ethnic conflict is more likely in systems characterized by plurality than those with proportional representation
- Plurality systems - exaggerate the power of the strongest parties
- Proportional representation —a distribution of seats proportional to the votes received
- neither large-scale demonstrations nor violence is required for groups to have some say over their destinies



# FEDERALISM

- Hypothesis 7a: Ethnic protest is more likely in systems characterized by federalism.  
Hypothesis 7b: Ethnic rebellion is less likely in systems characterized by federalism.
- Facilitates collective action
- Many groups have more control over the government of their territory
- Put smaller minorities at risk



# FEDERALISM

- Hypothesis 7a: Ethnic protest is more likely in systems characterized by federalism.  
Hypothesis 7b: Ethnic rebellion is less likely in systems characterized by federalism.
- Facilitates collective action
- Many groups have more control over the government of their territory
- Put smaller minorities at risk



# OTHER ACTORS

## ○ Wealth

- level of development matters more than how well it has been doing lately - groups in richer countries engage in less violence

## ○ Cultural differences

- culturally distinct or politically disadvantaged groups engage in more dissent (peaceful and violent)

## ○ Concentration

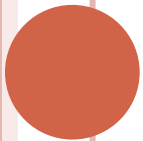
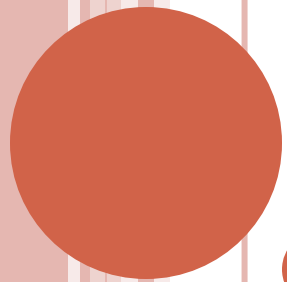
- positive relationship with both protest and rebellion



# CONCLUSION

- no need to fear democratization





**THANK YOU**