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Ethnic Group Representation in a Cross-National Comparison

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This paper compares the levels of ethnic group representation in parliament in 95 democracies. The analyses are comparative in nature, breaking with the literature where single country studies are the norm. Considering both electoral and cultural variables, the results cast doubt on whether the role of the electoral system in shaping political representation is dominant. In contrast to what much of the literature suggests, once controlling for the ethnic make-up of society and cultural attitudes, electoral aspects seem of little significance. Levels of ethnic group representation are best explained with cultural variables, in particular liberal attitudes towards marginalised groups in society.

Keywords: *political representation; ethnicity; comparative; cultural attitudes*.

Introduction

The representation of citizens in their parliament is at the core of liberal democracy. The argument is that all citizens are of equal status and worth, and consequently all groups of society have the same right to a presence in parliament. Despite advances in the last century, ideas of equality and inclusiveness are far from accomplished. In some places ethnic minority groups remain systematically marginalised. This article examines how differences in the levels of ethnic group representation can be explained. Whilst there are many contributions to political representation focusing on the representation of women, there is surprisingly little on ethnic minority groups.

In this article, the influence of electoral and cultural factors on ethnic group representation is examined. The focus is on the macro level, and the analyses are comparative in order to tease out significant patterns. The existence of a clear link between the representation of ethnic groups and the representation of views particular to minority groups is contested, but having ethnic minorities present in parliament is usually sought in the name of justice and legitimacy (Milne 1981, Van Cott 2005). What is more, higher levels of ethnic group representation are also linked to better integration: where levels of representation are higher, fewer members of ethnic minorities feel alienated by the political system (Pantoja and Segura 2003). Whether true or not, many members of ethnic minorities seem to think that their interests can only be appropriately represented by another group member (Ross 1943, Schwartz 1988, Phillips 1993, Williams 1995). Reynolds (2006) follows a similar line of thought, arguing that only

where minority communities are properly included can ethnic conflict be avoided. Minorities in many places are systematically excluded from significant decisions, such as electoral reform, government, or the drafting of a new constitution. It is argued that where certain ethnic groups are excluded, such as the Roma in many European countries, the potential for future conflict remains (Horowitz 1985, Ramet 1997).

In the literature on ethnic group representation single-country studies are the norm (Messina 1989, Anwar 1994, Ramet 1997, Geissner 1997, Johnson 1998, Saggar 2000, Pantoja and Segura 2003). Bird (2005) goes further by comparing three developed countries, but she steers clear of a numerical analysis. Reynolds (2006) provides a cross-national perspective, but only addresses individual ethnic groups whilst focusing on the electoral system. In single-nation studies, the focus is often on a specific ethnic minority group, or the ethnic minority population lumped together as opposed to the majority population. Reynolds suggests the electoral system as a factor that can foster cooperation between members of different ethnic groups at the national level: working towards a stable and peaceful democracy. The electoral system and its key institutions are also mentioned in other studies (Horowitz 1985, Welch 1990, Saggar 2000, Spirova 2004, Bochsler 2006).

Many single-country studies focus on representation at the local level (Engstrom and McDonald 1982, Welch 1990, Saggar and Geddes 2000, Garbaye 2000, Bousetta 2001, Togeby 2005). Highlighting the complex interplay of class and ethnicity, Saggar (2000) warns of attributing all difference to ethnicity. In Britain, it is argued, higher levels of representation at the local level do not lead to reduced alienation from the system overall. Also with a focus on Britain, Anwar (1994) highlights the geographical concentration of ethnic groups in many cases. This means that within certain districts, the importance of ethnic minorities as voters is increased; they may even form the majority locally. In such cases, political parties often actively woo votes from ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, at the national level ethnic minorities remain grossly under-represented in parliament (Anwar 1994, Bogaards 2004, Togeby 2005).

Political parties also feature in Bird's (2005) account of visible minorities in France, Denmark, and Canada. The argument is that historically minority groups tend to be under-represented in almost all countries, which includes ethnic minorities. Bird outlines how parties utilise ethnic minority candidates in areas where this is strategically successful, where parties actively promote an alternative to the 'traditional' white candidate. Messina (1989), focusing on the British case, argues that racial difference is still largely absent in the mainstream political discourse, despite increasing demands for inclusion. This is echoed by Saggar and Geddes (2000).

Socio-economic constraints are another factor sometimes cited (Geissner 1997, Chaney and Fevre 2002), whereas cultural factors are often implied, such as when historical under-representation and discrimination – intentional or not – are touched upon (Geissner 1997, Saggar and Geddes 2000, Bird 2005).

Johnson (1998), for instance, examines the role of black Brazilians in their national parliament. Most studies ignore ethnic divisions, since society is not perceived as primarily divided along this line. In Brazil, the initial concentration of black candidates in radical left parties meant another hurdle towards representation. What is more, attitudes that regard non-Whites as less suited for public office seem still commonplace (Johnson 1998). Such discrimination may inhibit ethnic representation (Yashar 1997, Johnson 1998, Saggar and Geddes 2000).

Empirically, the effects of cultural attitudes on levels of ethnic representation have not been tested before. In much of the literature the role of attitudes is touched upon, sometimes implicitly. Like Saggar (2000), Banda and Chinkin (2004) highlight the complexity of the issue, with different minority statuses often interlocking. A member of an ethnic minority may at the same time also be disadvantaged because of his or her particular class or gender, for instance. Discrimination on the basis of racial differences is a familiar theme in the literature (Geissner 1997, Darity and Mason 1998, Murji 2002). However, such forms of discrimination are not always visible (Murji 2002), and not normally part of the mainstream discourse (Saggar and Geddes 2000).

What unites all studies on ethnic group representation is their finding that members of ethnic minorities are significantly under-represented in positions of power, but Alba and Moore (1982) note that the popular view of complete exclusion of ethnic minorities is sometimes exaggerated. Geissner (1997) highlights that, despite much talk of an ethnification of the world, the integration of ethnic minority groups is incomplete: rhetoric and reality do not seem to match. In France this is reflected in the low level of Algerians and Muslims in local councils (Geissner 1997). As in most studies on ethnic representation, the representation of ethnic minority groups in the national parliament does not feature highly in this particular study, perhaps because this seems blatantly out of reach. Saggar (2000) equally focuses on representation at the local level, possibly a more realistic short-term goal. Assuming geographical concentration, local representation also stands for a certain degree of local autonomy (Saggar 2000). Whilst local representation is important (Welch 1990, Saggar and Geddes 2000, Garbaye 2000, Bousetta 2001), it might be argued that inclusion in the national parliament is a better reflection of the status of ethnic groups in society overall.

Hypotheses

In terms of electoral factors, large influences can be expected to be related to the proportionality of the electoral system, the efficiency of the system, as well as the presence of quotas or reserved seats. The proportionality between votes cast and seats gained is a key feature of electoral systems, a factor highlighted amongst others by Reynolds (2006). Assuming that most voters cast a sincere vote expressing their preferences, the disproportionality of electoral systems may lead to misrepresentation in parliament. Therefore *it can be expected that more proportional systems lead to higher levels of ethnic group representation* (H1).

Linked to factors of the electoral system is the experience of working within certain parameters. All the involved actors, from voters to the élite, need some time to understand the effects of the electoral system and its key institutions (Fuchs and Klingemann 1990, Crigler 1996, Herrera 1999). What follows is that political communication – and with that the efficiency of the system – is improved in more established democracies. *Levels of ethnic group representation can thus be expected to be higher in more established democracies* (H2).

Quotas and similar measures that are sometimes introduced to address the representation of minority groups are an electoral factor that is not about the proportionality of the system. In practice, reserved seats are the preferred method for ethnic groups (Htun 2004). Whilst leaving the overall electoral system and key institutions unaffected, quotas and related measures work in parallel, with the sole intention to increase the level of representation of certain minority groups. Given their specific aim, *it can be expected that the presence of quotas or reserved seats is associated with higher levels of ethnic group representation* (H3).

Cultural aspects, in contrast, can be thought to influence both the supply and demand of candidates from ethnic minority groups. In terms of the supply of candidates, members of ethnic minorities are more likely to come forward as candidates where the environment is more supportive of their inclusion. Looking at the demand, a population more positive towards minority groups is more likely to support these for inclusion in positions of power, both within parties and at the polls. Of interest are liberal attitudes towards minority groups and marginalised groups of society in general. Several factors are thought to shape such cultural attitudes: religion, the level of development, as well as regional differences. The level of development may work on the basis of deindustrialisation and with that the rise in post-material values (Inglehart 1997). This shift is thought to increase concerns for the rights of minority groups (Schmitt 1990, Norris and Lovenduski 1995). Regional differences, in contrast, work on the basis of historical differences: access to trade routes, involvement in seafaring, or the experience of colonialism is thought to influence value patterns. The intuition here is that regular contact with other cultures and particular work settings fostered a certain degree of open-mindedness, reflected in present-day cultural attitudes (Bystydzienski 1995, Rabb and Suleiman 2003). As a result it can be expected that *in countries where attitudes towards marginalised groups in society are more positive, the level of ethnic group representation is higher* (H4).

Data and Methodology

Methods

In order to test these hypotheses, a cross-national perspective is employed, covering single or lower chambers of parliament in 95 countries. Unfortunately it was impossible to obtain data on all countries, but this article includes nearly three-quarters of the countries with free elections. The analyses in this article only

cover countries with free elections because the argument is rooted in concerns of justice. This means that countries where the competitiveness of elections is doubtful are excluded from consideration. Acknowledging that the concept of free elections is somewhat indefinite (Diamond 2002), this article is restricted to countries classified as *free* or *partially free* by Freedom House (2006). The military coup in Thailand took place in 2006 after the data were compiled, and Thailand is thus included in the data. The robustness of the reported results is tested to model specification and sample selection, as well as multicollinearity.

Variables

As one of an ethnic group the author understands a group of people with an awareness of a shared culture and ancestorship, and who are thus related through kinship. Ethnicity therefore refers to self-declared group membership (Jenkins 1997). Despite elements of choice – ethnicity being what one identifies with – ethnic identities are rather stable (Green 2005). This means that a systematic analysis of ethnic groups is possible. The self-declared ethnicity of citizens is readily recorded in surveys, and also the relevant concept when it comes to political representation: a person is more likely to feel represented by a parliamentarian if they both identify with the same ethnicity, rather than where an external authority declares one to represent the other. Depending on the country, ethnic differences can refer to different cleavages – be it culture, language, religion, or a combination of these. In each country the most salient ethnic divisions are used to calculate the representation scores. This means that in different countries different groups are used, and that the membership to any ethnic group is only fixed within a country. For example, the fact that the understanding of what constitutes *Asian* or *Black* differs between countries is therefore no longer an issue. In some instances I have also tried classifying ethnic divisions in different ways, but the overall results are never significantly affected.

The level of ethnic group representation is understood as the difference between the proportions of citizens and parliamentarians falling into certain ethnic groups. The fundamental premise is the same as in the approach used by Reynolds (2006), but the measure used here enables us to incorporate multiple ethnic groups at the same time. The ethnic representation score (ERS) is calculated as the difference between the proportion of each ethnic group in the population ($\Pi_{Z,i}$) and the same in the elected members of parliament ($\Pi_{R,i}$). The measure is thus $ERS = 1 - \frac{1}{2}\sum \left|\Pi_{Z,i} - \Pi_{R,i}\right|$. The variable i is categorical, and the subtraction from 1 is necessary to ensure that higher levels of representation are marked by higher values. The division by 2 is used to standardise values between 0 and 1, making the measure correspond to the Rose Index (Mackie and Rose 1991).

In different countries different categories are used, allowing this measure to cater for the most salient ethnic differences, rather than imposing external categories. The ethnic representation score is equally suited for countries

where there are minority groups, or where the population is divided into groups of similar size. The representation scores calculated theoretically range from 0 to 1. A value of 1 denotes a perfect match between citizens and the representatives. It is achieved where the proportions of the ethnic minority and majority groups in the population are perfectly reflected in parliament. The other end of the scale stands for perfect discrepancy.

The measure used deliberately does not account for the make-up of society. Rooted in arguments of justice, ethnic minorities should have a right to be included no matter what their size. Particularly Young's (1990) argument emphasises the need to include all groups. Bearing in mind that – apart from San Marino – every country includes ethnic minorities, values of the ethnic representation score remain meaningful. Looking at the proportion of ethnic minorities in parliament relative to their numbers in the population leads essentially to the same results as reported here. In a few cases a single group is over-represented relative to their size in the population – such as the Hungarians in Slovenia or the Chinese in Trinidad and Tobago (see also Reynolds 2006) – but most ethnic minority groups are under-represented relative to their share of the population. The proportional measure, however, is not suited to a cross-national comparison, since in each country only a single ethnic group can be considered in a meaningful manner.

For the data considered in this article, the measure of ethnic representation scores and the Gallagher Index of least squares (Gallagher 1991, 1992) lead to almost identical results ($r = 0.96$). Differences occur because the Gallagher Index is sensitive to splitting groups: the more groups that are considered, the smaller the resulting value relative to the measure used in this article. For example, if there are 80 per cent blue and 20 per cent orange in a population, but all the representatives in parliament are blue, both formulas lead to the same result (0.8). However, if we then differentiate between 10 per cent dark orange and 10 per cent light orange, the two measures lead to different values. The Gallagher Index will result in a value of 0.83, whilst the measure used in this article is unaffected (0.8). In the case of ethnic group representation, only the latter is satisfactory, but in practice the differences are insignificantly small.

As for the independent variables, the electoral formula is used to capture the effects of the electoral system in its wider sense. Reynolds (2006) in particular highlighted the role of the electoral formula. Electoral formulas were classified following Colomer (2004), with mixed systems classified as either PR or majoritarian depending on their tendency, following Shugart and Wattenberg (2003). Differentiating electoral formulas in more detail does not affect the substantive results reported. Similarly, considering the actual vote–seat proportionality instead of the electoral formula does not affect the reported findings. Because of collinearity issues, other factors such as the district magnitude or the number of parties are not included in the analysis presented, being closely related to the electoral formula. No significant differences could be found in models including such variables: electoral thresholds, the number of parties,

the presence of preferential voting, district magnitude, or vote–seat proportionality. What is more, the availability of reliable data clearly favours the use of the electoral formula, to which these other factors are closely related.

A further electoral factor is the consideration of how well a democracy is established. Both the age since democratic rule was established and the level of political rights can be considered (Freedom House 2006). The year in which democracy was established was taken from Colomer (2004). Where there are multiple such occurrences, the latest date of establishing the democracy is taken, such as after a spell of dictatorship. Following Colomer (2004) and Farrell (2001), countries where democracy was established in the 20 years before 2006 are considered new democracies. Using the age of democracy as a continuous variable, the reported effects are weakened but substantively unaffected. The Freedom House measure of political rights – a seven-point scale – is used as a control variable, although its exclusion does not affect the results significantly.

A final electoral factor is the presence of quotas for ethnic groups. Data were taken from Htun (2004) and IDEA (2006); and cross-checked against a number of other sources. Quotas were also coded into different variables whether they are reserved seats or some other form of quotas. The exact nature of such measures does not seem to affect the reported findings, where a simple binary variable is used on the presence of measures for ethnic minority groups.

Turning to cultural variables, the region of a country as well as an attitudinal variable are used. In both cases the aim is to capture liberal attitudes in general, not necessarily attitudes towards ethnic minority groups specifically. The region of each country was coded following Norris (2004). The regions recognised are: Western Europe, the US, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia as one region; Nordic countries; Eastern European countries; countries of Asia and the Pacific; the Middle East and Northern Africa; Sub-Saharan countries; and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Whilst regional variables are frequently used as a measure of cultural attitudes (see for example Paxton 1997, Kenworthy and Malami 1999, Contreras 2002, Paxton and Kunovich 2003, Nanivadekar 2006, Tripp and Kang 2007), unfortunately this approach is not perfect. Regional variables incorporate historical cultural differences, but to a small degree they also encompass electoral and economic factors. Despite this, however, regional differences are a suitable variable. Not only can all countries be classified in a relatively unambiguous nature, but also are regional differences highly associated with other cultural factors such as the predominant religion or attitudinal variables.

In order to capture attitudes towards marginalised groups in society in a more direct way, a scale was constructed using data from the World Values Study Group (2006), including questions on what kind of neighbour the respondents would not tolerate (‘On this list are various groups of people. Could you please mention any that you would not like to have as neighbors?’). One of the questions available specifically asks about people of a different race, but these

estimates appear unreliable: substantively higher values are obtained when people are asked about a specific ethnic group rather than others in general. For this reason, a ten-item scale is used, using a range of potential neighbours as the basis: people with a criminal record, people of a different race, heavy drinkers, emotionally unstable people, Muslims, immigrants or foreign workers, people with AIDS, drug addicts, homosexuals, Jews. By no means is this meant to imply that different ethnic minorities actually were criminals or otherwise deviant, but that there may be a tendency to treat them in a similar manner. As aforementioned, of interest are liberal attitudes more generally. The scale in principle ranges from 0 to 10, depending on how many kinds of people were mentioned as unacceptable neighbours (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). The scale has been inverted so that a higher score on this scale means that a respondent is more tolerant towards marginalised groups in society. The national means are used, ranging from just under two to approximately six, meaning that there is significant variance between countries.

The make-up of society, finally, is enumerated using the measure of cultural heterogeneity as outlined by Fearon (2003). This measure attempts to capture the ethnic diversity of a country by considering the ethnic groups and their proportion in the population. Fearon also includes considerations of the linguistic similarity between ethnic groups to cater for cultural differences. Even though Fearon's data are a significant step forward in estimating the significance of social cleavages, the data cannot completely disentangle salient cleavages from other cleavages (Laitin and Posner 2000, Posner 2004). Using measures that disregard cultural distance, the reported effects are weakened but not substantively different, suggesting that in this case the exact enumeration is not an issue. Further on the make-up of society, information about the geographical distribution of ethnic minorities is based on whether clustering was mentioned in the country profiles in Britannica (2006). The variable distinguishes between no clustering, a tendency of clustering, and heavy clustering.

Data

The ethnic representation scores are based on newly collected data on the ethnic distribution of representatives. These data are based on official publications by the parliaments, biographies provided by the parliaments, and information provided by parliamentary contacts as listed on the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) webpage (IPU 2006). These sources indicate the ethnicity of individual members of parliament, or quantify the proportion of members of parliament in a certain ethnic group. The data collected were complemented by data collected by Alonso and Ruiz (2007), Reynolds (2006), as well information included in country reports published by the US Department of State (2006). Alonso and Ruiz (2007) collected data for 16 countries in Eastern Europe; Reynolds (2006) covered a range of countries across the world, whereas the US Department of State reports cover most countries of the world. As with the data newly collected for 2006, the number of parliamentary seats is the basis for these data. The data

used are based on individual members of parliament and do not attempt to infer ethnicity from party membership. Rather than single estimates, Alonso and Ruiz (2007) and Reynolds (2006) use averages for multiple elections where applicable. As a result of the multiple data sources, there are two or even three data points for many of the countries, and in no case can apparent discrepancies between sources be determined. It is possible that ethnic groups might be more easily ascertained in some cases, but the fact that the different data sources agree to a high degree seems to indicate that in practice classification is not an area of concern. Whilst the data may not be perfect, they seem robust: The substantial results of the statistical calculations are not affected by substituting data sources.

The data for the population are taken from national censuses, and where unavailable from Britannica (2006), and Fearon (2003). In a few cases data had to be used on the population rather than exclusively citizens of the country for reasons of availability. No case could be determined where this difference appears significant enough to distort the reported findings.

Findings

In order to maximise the number of cases, initially regional differences are used as a measure of cultural differences, in line with many other studies. Following theoretical reasoning, cultural attitudes are addressed in a more direct manner in the latter half, using a scale based on attitudinal questions. Unfortunately by so doing the sample size is reduced significantly because of data availability, but the robustness of the findings is addressed. First, however, it will be necessary to look at the levels of ethnic group representation.

Levels of ethnic group representation vary significantly between countries. They range from 0.72 in Moldova to near perfect representation in Iceland, Poland, the Philippines, or San Marino (range 0.28). The mean representation score is 0.95, with a standard deviation of 0.06. There are many countries with relatively high levels of ethnic representation. Excluding countries where the population is ethnically relatively homogenous leads to a similar distribution, with a concentration of values towards the upper end of the scale. The observed skew does not seem to be problematic, judging by residual analyses. The representation scores for all countries can be found in the appendix.

In 75 per cent of the national parliaments, at least one member of an ethnic minority group is present. In the more heterogeneous countries, this value is closer to 95 per cent. This indicates that in most countries, members from ethnic minority groups are in one way or another present in parliament, particularly in countries where they form a more substantial part of the population.

In a first step, the modelling is designed to maximise the number of cases. This means that regional variables are used as a proxy of attitudinal differences between countries. Table 1 outlines the results of three multivariate models. In model 1, the electoral formula and other electoral factors are included, the second model controls for the heterogeneity of society, whereas model 3

Table 1: Multivariate Models of Ethnic Representation Using Regional Variables

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	p-value	B	SE	p-value	B	SE	p-value
Constant	0.94	0.02	0.000	0.98	0.02	0.000	0.96	0.02	0.000
Electoral Formula									
Mj/MMM (Base)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
PR/MMP	−0.01	0.01	0.340	−0.01	0.02	0.682	−0.01	0.01	0.947
Quotas									
No Quotas (Base)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Statutory Quotas	0.00	0.02	0.950	0.00	0.02	0.983	0.01	0.02	0.540
Political Rights	0.00	0.01	0.976	0.01	0.01	0.257	−0.00	0.01	0.705
Old Democracy	0.02	0.01	0.188	−0.00	0.02	0.935	−0.05	0.02	0.005
Heterogeneity				−0.18	0.04	0.000	−0.21	0.04	0.000
Eastern Europe (Base)							.	.	.
Western Europe							0.08	0.03	0.008
Nordic Countries							0.11	0.04	0.003
Asia and Pacific							0.09	0.03	0.002
Middle East							0.06	0.04	0.095
Sub-Saharan Africa							0.08	0.02	0.001
Latin America							0.08	0.03	0.010
R^2	0.03			0.25			0.42		

introduces regional variables to account for cultural attitudes. Model 1, to begin with, performs badly. With only electoral variables, the model fit is poor, and none of the variables appears to be a significant co-variant. On average, statutory provisions for ethnic groups seem to make no difference, but although insignificant, it might be that more established democracies come with higher levels of ethnic representation.

The second model introduces a control for the ethnic make-up of the society. Whilst this increases the model fit substantially, the other variables are not substantively affected. The premise that the age of democracy may be a significant factor, however, now looks implausible. One possible interpretation of this is that ethnic heterogeneity somehow acts as an impediment to establishing democracy (Lijphart 2004).

Adding considerations of the geographical clustering to model 2 – or any subsequent model – does not increase the model fit significantly. The variable itself is not statistically significant ($p > 0.1$). This finding contradicts a strong theoretical case, where clustering and representation are expected to go hand in hand. No significant interaction between the electoral formula and clustering can be found, and the model fit is not significantly increased by the inclusion of such an interaction term.

The final model in Table 1 introduces regional differences as a cultural factor. The difference between Eastern Europe and other countries is shown. Compared to Eastern European countries, most other regions are characterised by significantly higher levels of representation ($p < 0.05$). Perhaps the cases with the most significant levels of under-representation in other regions have not yet

made the transition to democratic rule, and are thus absent from consideration in this article. In order to test the robustness of the reported findings, the Human Development Index (UNDP 2005) may be used as an indicator of cultural differences. In this case the model fit is lower than in model 3 ($R^2 = 0.29$), but the variable is a significant correlate. Similarly, religious differences – operationalised as the predominant religion in a country (Inglehart and Norris 2003, Norris 2004) – may be used, but seem insignificant on their own.

The results outlined in Table 1 suggest that there is an association between differences in cultural attitudes and levels of ethnic group representation. Oddly enough, once considering regional differences, the age of democracy is a significant factor; although the direction of the sign is unexpected. The result suggests that levels of ethnic representation tend to be higher in newer democracies. Perhaps this is an indication that the age of democracy is in this instance an inappropriate measure of how well a political system is established. It appears that some other effect is picked up, since when using the Human Development Index as an alternative measure of cultural attitudes, the age of democracy is not a significant factor ($p > 0.1$). Indeed, in new democracies effects of international tutelage and diffusion from neighbouring countries may influence the level of ethnic group representation (Bennett 1991, Stone 2001).

In order to test the robustness of the findings further, in an additional model – not shown in Table 1 – only the age of democracy, cultural heterogeneity, and regional differences were considered. This parsimonious model performs relatively well ($R^2 = 0.40$), suggesting that cultural factors are indeed a key variable influencing levels of ethnic group representation. The fact that different measures of cultural attitudes perform slightly differently suggest that it may be worth pursuing cultural attitudes further. This is done in the remaining analyses.

Now in a second step, the nature of cultural attitudes is investigated in more detail. Assuming that attitudes towards marginalised groups in society are caused by multiple factors, it can be expected that a model incorporating a more immediate attitudinal variable should lead to a better model fit than models using regional variables. In order to do this, however, it is unfortunately necessary to reduce the number of cases considered. This is the case because the corresponding questions are not asked in all the countries covered by the World Value Survey, as well as the limited coverage of said survey: only 33 countries can be considered when including WVS data.

Table 2 presents the results for model 3 with the reduced sample. The key findings are unchanged, suggesting that the reduced sample does not differ significantly from the larger one. The electoral formula and other electoral factors appear of little significance, including quotas for ethnic minority groups which seem to have little impact on average. The age of democracy is no longer a significant factor in the reduced sample, whilst both the control for heterogeneity and the regional variables remain significant covariates ($p < 0.1$). The estimated magnitude of the cultural variables, however, is slightly reduced with the smaller sample. Purely for presentational reasons model 3 in Table 2 shows the difference

Table 2: Multivariate Models of Ethnic Representation in a Reduced Sample

	Model 3 (Reduced Sample)			Model 4		
	B	SE	p-value	B	SE	p-value
Constant	0.95	0.04	0.000	0.95	0.05	0.000
Electoral Formula, Mj/MMM (Base)	.	.	.	.	.	.
PR/MMP	−0.00	0.02	0.877	−0.03	0.02	0.270
Quotas, None (Base)	.	.	.	.	.	.
Statutory Quotas	0.01	0.03	0.779	0.01	0.03	0.813
Political Rights	−0.01	0.02	0.327	−0.02	0.01	0.156
Old Democracy	−0.04	0.03	0.199	−0.04	0.03	0.137
Heterogeneity	−0.26	0.07	0.001	−0.23	0.07	0.002
Region, Not Eastern European	0.05	0.05	0.099			
Attitudes, Marginalised Groups				0.03	0.01	0.032
R^2	0.46			0.56		

between Eastern European countries on the one hand and all other regions clustered together on the other.

Model 3 is identical to the one used in Table 1, but only includes the 33 countries also used in model 4. For presentational reasons the difference between Eastern European countries and all other countries is shown.

As outlined in Table 2, the replacement of the variable on regional differences with the more direct attitudinal counterpart leads to a better model fit. Once again, in this model the age of democracy is not a significant factor. This finding adds weight to the suggestion that the result reported initially is somewhat spurious: The age of democracy may pick up some cultural differences which are not covered in the attitudinal variable. The negative sign of the coefficient means that suggestions of international tutelage and diffusion in new democracies remain a plausible explanation.

The other variables, however, are not substantively affected: electoral factors such as the electoral formula still appear to be of little influence. The magnitude of the control for ethnic heterogeneity is similar in models 3 and 4. Whereas the coefficient for regional differences included in model 3 in Table 2 refers to a binary variable, the corresponding coefficient in model 4 stands for the average number of neighbours mentioned as unacceptable. The magnitude of the standardised estimates is similar. Adding further electoral variables to model 4 does not increase the model fit significantly, and such variables are statistically insignificant ($p > 0.1$).

Discussion

Using a cross-national approach, this article broke with previous studies where single countries are the focus, introducing a comparative perspective. By so doing, the influence of electoral and cultural factors on the level of ethnic group representation could be illuminated.

The results of the empirical analyses suggest that ethnic group representation is perhaps not just another example of descriptive representation, but that the key covariates differ to some extent from what is commonly reported for the representation of women in parliament (Rule 1987, Paxton 1997, Kenworthy and Malami 1999, Norris 2004, Leyenaar 2004). In this sense, the study of the representation of ethnic groups in parliaments merits more attention than currently found. Contrary to the expectation, none of the electoral factors seemed to be significantly associated with the level of ethnic representation. This was the case not only for the electoral formula and its related measures of proportionality, but perhaps disturbingly also for the provision of quotas.

In contrast, cultural factors proved more successful in predicting the level of ethnic group representation. In particular, significant regional differences could be identified, suggesting that different historical experience may be a significant factor for ethnic representation. However, cultural attitudes seem to be influenced by a multitude of factors, and the more directly measured variable of attitudes towards marginalised groups in society fared better still. It was this aspect of cultural attitudes that appears to dominate the picture: in places where the general population is more open towards marginalised groups, ethnic minorities are more likely to be included in national parliaments.

Unfortunately the lack of appropriate data means that this article can say little about the role of ethnic minority candidates in shaping levels of representation. For example, it is conceivable that in some places members from ethnic minorities do not come forward in sufficient numbers, and are in part for this reason under-represented. However, to a large extent, the attitudinal variable should cater for these instances.

Given that ethnic minorities make up a different proportion in different countries, controlling for the ethnic heterogeneity proved a necessary step. However, as outlined above it is the case that in some places where ethnic minorities form a considerable proportion of the population, they are included accordingly. What follows is that ethnic divisions are probably not equally salient in different places, with varying consequences for ethnic group representation, depending on the size of the minority population.

Coming back to the hypotheses, this article fails to provide evidence for the suggestion that the electoral formula and other electoral factors are significant factors (H1). This is true for all the factors tested, irrespective of the control for ethnic heterogeneity. The suggestion that the nature of the electoral system has little impact on the level of ethnic representation contradicts expectations outlined by many previous studies (Welch 1990, Saggar 2000, Birnir 2004, Spirova 2004, Reynolds 2006, Bochsler 2006). However, the lack of association in the cross-national analysis may indicate that other factors dominate the picture for ethnic group representation. It might be that the élite are to some extent able to adjust to the particular electoral setting.

Similarly, the suggestion that more established democracies are associated with higher levels of ethnic representation could not be supported (H2). At first

sight this seems to contradict suggestions that the levels of establishment and institutionalisation of the political system are significant for the representation of minority groups (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). However, the finding that levels of ethnic representation in many new democracies are on a par with more established democracies may indicate that minority representation is approached more successfully from the beginning. This might point towards more inclusive attitudes, but Yashar (2003) suggests that the particular circumstances in which a democracy is established matter in more general terms.

In terms of statutory provisions for ethnic minority groups, this article casts serious doubt on their effectiveness (H3). Whilst statutory quotas and reserved seats seem to make little difference on average, it would be inappropriate to suggest that this was necessarily the case in individual instances. Firstly, it appears that countries with statutory provisions for ethnic minority groups are able to avert the worst cases of under-representation. Secondly, it is the case that quotas often do not honour the proportion of ethnic minorities in the population, or are only applied to some minority groups in society. As a consequence, the effects of quotas are reduced – even when enforced, such as in the case of reserved seats. Looking at the aggregate level of representation, the result is that quotas and related provisions appear ineffective. This means that a diligent implementation of such measures is crucial for achieving increased levels of ethnic group representation.

Turning to the effects of cultural factors, finally, this article appears to indicate that such factors dominate in the case of ethnic group representation (H4). In line with all the literature on political culture, the causality of this factor merits some discussion (Fuchs 2007). The argument is that a small part of these cultural attitudes is shaped by the level of representation in national parliaments, with members of parliament acting as role models. However, there are a great number of other influences on the predominant attitudes in the population, including historical differences, religion, the level of development, and role models from visible public positions other than parliament (Duverger 1955, Goffman 1976, Sharpe 1976, Sunstein 1996, Chynoweth 2006, Fuchs 2007). In any case, the strength of the cultural factors probably indicates that a focus entirely on electoral aspects is misplaced when trying to explain differences in the levels of ethnic group representation.

Given that changes in the prevalent values may be slow, it seems natural that electoral changes are considered by those concerned with improving the level of representation of ethnic minority groups. However, it appears that the exact implementation of such factors is crucial. For example, enforced measures to increase the number of parliamentarians from ethnic minorities are relatively rare, indicating that the awareness of under-representation may often be low or that the political inclusion of minorities may not be considered a pressing issue. What is more, measures to increase the level of representation are invariably restricted to the political realm, meaning that the integration of ethnic minority groups in other aspects of life is not necessarily linked. It thus seems that a

strong leadership is required to ensure that measures are implemented in such a way that they are effective for all ethnic groups. As an alternative option, it can be attempted to influence the attitudes of the general public. On the one hand, such a step may be necessary to implement enforced quotas successfully – assuming that the political élite are not too detached from the voters. On the other hand, once attitudes have changed to this extent, the implementation of measures to ensure representation may no longer be so pressing.

Conclusion

For the first time the levels of ethnic group representation were studied with a multivariate cross-national perspective. Considering both electoral and cultural variables, the results in this article cast doubt on whether the role of the electoral formula and other electoral factors in shaping political representation is dominant, as often implied in single-country studies. As such, the findings suggest that ethnic group representation is perhaps not just another example of descriptive representation, and that the study of ethnic group representation deserves more attention.

Once controlling for the ethnic make-up of society and cultural attitudes, electoral aspects seem of little significance. Perhaps worryingly for proponents of electoral engineering, this on average includes quotas and related measures. However, this article has suggested that strong leadership ensuring diligent implementation of statutory interventions may be a temporary measure to improve the representation of minority groups. Cultural attitudes – particularly when measured as positive attitudes towards marginalised groups in society in general – appear to be the key driver of ethnic representation in national parliaments. This means that electoral provisions to include ethnic minorities in parliament may only be successful to reduce tensions if complemented by changes in attitudes in the wider population.

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Table A1: Ethnic Representation Score (ERS) and Ethnic Groups Identified, as of August 2006

Country	ERS	Groups Identified
Albania	0.980	Albanian, Greek
Antigua and Barbuda	0.955	Black, non-Black
Argentina	0.970	White, non-White
Armenia	0.990	Armenian, other
Australia	0.968	White, Oceania, Asian, African
Bahamas	0.974	Black, other
Bangladesh	0.995	Bengali, other
Barbados	0.950	Black, non-Black
Belgium	0.979	White, Turkish, Arab, Indian
Benin	0.896	Fon and related, Yoruba and related, Bariba and related, Somba and related
Bolivia	0.975	Quechua and Aymara, mixed or White
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.997	White, Roma
Botswana	0.916	Tswana, other
Brazil	0.967	Black, other
Bulgaria	0.914	Bulgarian, Turks, Roma
Burkina Faso	0.975	Mossi, other tribes
Canada	0.859	White, Indian, Aboriginal, Black, Arab, Chinese
Cape Verde	0.995	African and Creole, European
Central African Republic	0.961	Majority tribes, Muslim, M'boro
Chile	0.975	White and white Amerindians, Amerindians and visible minorities
Colombia	0.968	Mixed, Black, Indian
Costa Rica	0.970	White and Mestizo, other
Croatia	0.936	Croatian, Serb, Roma
Cyprus	0.958	Greek-Cypriot, other
Czech Republic	0.971	White, non-White
Denmark	0.997	Danish, Faroe, Greenland
Dominica	0.995	Black and mixed, Amerindians and other
Ecuador	0.770	Mestizo and Spanish, Amerindian and Black
El Salvador	0.995	Mestizo and White, Amerindian
Estonia	0.795	Estonian, Russian
Fiji	0.960	Fijian, Indo-Fijian
Finland	0.997	White, non-White
France	0.951	White, Arab, Polynesian, Turkish
Georgia	0.903	Georgian, Abkhazian, Adzhar, Ossetian, Russian
Germany	0.978	Whites, Northern African and Middle Eastern
Greece	0.997	Greek, Muslim
Guatemala	0.844	Mestizo and European, indigenous people
Guyana	0.927	East Indian, African, Amerindian, Mixed, Portuguese, Chinese
Honduras	0.967	Mestizo and White, Amerindian and Black
Hungary	0.943	Hungarian, Roma
Iceland	0.999	White, non-White
Ireland	0.995	White, non-White
Israel	0.864	Jewish, Arab
Italy	0.982	White, non-White
Japan	0.993	Japanese, half-Japanese and naturalised
Kiribati	0.994	Micronesian, other
Kyrgyzstan	0.905	Kyrgyz, other
Latvia	0.829	Latvian, Russian, Judaic, Karelian, Polish
Lesotho	0.993	Sotho, European and other

(*Continued*)

Table A1: Continued

Country	ERS	Groups Identified
Liechtenstein	0.989	White, non-White
Lithuania	0.867	Lithuanian, Polish, Russian
Luxembourg	0.989	White, other
Macedonia	0.885	Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian, Roma
Madagascar	0.987	Malayo-Indonesian, Cotiers, French, Indian, Creole
Malawi	0.991	Bantu, Asian
Mali	0.973	Majority peoples, Tuareg and Moor
Moldova	0.723	Moldavian, Gagauz, Slav
Monaco	0.989	White, Arab and Jewish
Mongolia	0.980	Mongol, Kazakh
Namibia	0.978	Black, White
Nauru	0.920	Nauruan, Chinese and European
Netherlands	0.895	Netherland, foreign born
New Zealand	0.856	European, Maori, Pacific, Indian
Norway	0.986	White, Asian and non-White
Palau	0.912	Palauan, Filipino and other
Panama	0.998	Mestizo and White, Amerindian
Papua New Guinea	0.976	Melanesian, non-Melanesian
Peru	0.939	Majority population, indigenous people
Philippines	1.000	Majority population, Moro
Poland	0.999	Polish, other
Portugal	0.975	Portuguese, other
Romania	0.985	Romanian, Hungarian, Roma
Samoa	0.983	Samoan, European and mixed
San Marino	1.000	White (no ethnic minorities present)
Serbia and Montenegro	0.813	Yugoslav, Albanian, Hungarian, Sndzak Muslim, Roma, Croat
Slovakia	0.910	Slovak, Hungarian, Roma
Slovenia	0.917	Slovenian, Hungarian, Italian
Solomon Islands	0.993	Melanesian, non-Melanesian
South Africa	0.793	Black African, White, Coloured, Indian
Sri Lanka	0.952	Sinhalese, other
Suriname	0.943	Majority population (Hindustani, Creole, Javanese), Maroons and other minorities
Sweden	0.976	Swedish, ethnic minority
Switzerland	0.961	White, non-White
Tanzania	0.992	Bantu, other
Thailand	0.906	Thai, other
Tonga	0.994	Polynesian, European
Trinidad and Tobago	0.849	South Asian, African, Chinese
Tuvalu	0.980	Polynesian, Micronesian
Ukraine	0.943	Ukrainian, Russian, Crimean Tartar, Crimean Russian
United Kingdom	0.948	White, ethnic minority
United States	0.828	White, African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American
Uruguay	0.985	White and Mestizo, Black
Vanuatu	0.988	Ni-Vanuatu, other
Venezuela	0.954	White and Mestizo, Black and other
Zambia	0.988	African, White, Asian

Note: In the case of Denmark, an almost identical representation score is achieved when considering Danish and migrant groups (ERS = 0.970). In the case of Japan, an almost identical representation score is achieved when considering Japanese, Korean, and Chinese (ERS = 0.994).