Electoral systems, ethnic diversity and party systems in developing democracies

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ABSTRACT

Party system nationalization is often viewed as critical to national unity, the production of public goods, and may have implications for democratic success. This paper assesses the impact of ethnic diversity and electoral rules in 74 economically developing democracies. Contrary to past studies, majoritarian electoral systems heighten the tendency of ethnic diversity to reduce nationalization while proportional representation greatly reduces its impact. Presidential systems produce higher levels of nationalization than parliamentary systems but the effect reverses as the number of presidential candidates increases. Though ethnic party bans may increase nationalization, ballot access requirements, the level of freedom, and relative prosperity have no effect.

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1. Introduction

Party system nationalization measures the level of variation in support for parties across a country's different regions. Countries with elections that revealed the same level of support for parties everywhere would have completely nationalized party systems. The more unequal the support for parties in different geographic areas, the less nationalized the party system. Ethnoregional parties, such as the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party or Sikh-oriented Akali Dal, undercut party nationalization most directly as they direct their appeals and gain support in only one part of the country. Even avowedly non-ethnic or regional parties, however, can reduce party nationalization when their electoral support base is concentrated in one portion of the country. This study examines the relationship of ethnic diversity, electoral institutions, decentralization, freedom and prosperity to party nationalization in 74 developing democracies around the globe.

Party system nationalization is more than a measure of a country's electoral landscape. Governments without a modicum of support around the country can leave key groups and regions without a voice. Denationalized party systems have real policy consequences, including the production of fewer public goods (Crisp et al,. 2012; Castañeda-Angarita, 2013; Jurado, 2014; Lago-Peñas and Lago-Peñas, 2009). In particular, countries with low levels of party nationalization are unlikely to distribute public

goods fairly because politicians with narrow constituencies prefer directing public goods towards them (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2004; Cox and McCubbins, 2001; Franzese et al., 2004; Hicken et al., 2008; Lake and Baum, 2001; Stasavage, 2005).

Denationalized party systems may threaten national unity and state survival. Countries without a strong ethnic majority are already less likely to survive (O'Leary, 2001). Dawn Brancati (2009) argues that strong regional parties can result in the dissolution of states. Though some states may dissolve peacefully, as in Czechoslovakia's "Velvet Divorce" (Innes, 2001), state breakups often result in violence, sometimes involving neighboring states (Bose, 2007; Horowitz, 1985). The threat seems particularly salient in economically developing democracies. They possess fewer state resources and smaller private economic sectors that can help ameliorate conflict in wealthier societies.

The impact of denationalization on democratic survival seems less clear. Polities with party systems that pit ethnic groups and regions against one another may find it difficult to survive as democracies. This problem seems likely to be especially severe in patronage-oriented democracies in which the state is seen as a critical source of income, jobs, and investment (Chandra, 2004; Posner, 2005), as victory by one group over another means that entire ethnic groups and regions are cut off from state resources. Rather than providing voters chance to render a verdict on the government, elections turn into a vital and bitter contest for state patronage between groups. In countries with voting tied closely to ethnicity, the majority may permanently prevent the minority from gaining access to state resources, as the "ins" do not alternate with

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the "outs" (Horowitz, 1985; O'Leary and McGarry, 1996).

On the other hand, nationalized party systems may not result in more salubrious outcomes if they exclude minority ethnicities or regions. Electoral thresholds, ethnic party bans, and ballot-access requirements may help construct a more nationalized party system. Rather than ameliorate tensions, however, such a system could exacerbate them if minority ethnicities and regions perceive institutions as exclusionary and unrepresentative. Ethnoregional parties may allow such groups not just to win representation but also to exercise power and influence through participation in the political arena (Birnir, 2007; Lublin, 2014; Madrid, 2012).

The desirability of promoting a more nationalized party system may depend upon the particular nature of the challenges facing a country. Regardless, it remains useful to know how electoral rules and political institutions tend to shape nationalization before engaging in engineering them in an effort to pursue an outcome. Though extremely valuable for advancing theories and understanding of party nationalization, past studies have focused either on advanced economies, a specific region, or are more intensive examinations of a small set of cases.

This study relies on a unique dataset with data from 74 developing countries on party nationalization along with measures of ethnic diversity, electoral system permissiveness, and other factors, such as income, decentralization, and the level of freedom, that may shape party nationalization. The large number of cases should help gain leverage on the determinants of party nationalization and create greater confidence in the models, which provide guidance on the impact of institutional design on party nationalization. Institutions may have different effects in advanced and developing economies. Often perceived as more fragile democracies, the latter are usually the center of institutional engineering efforts. Examining the effect of institutions and ethnicity in a broad cross-section of developing countries will enhance efforts to construct institutions that act as intended.

Contrary to past examinations of the impact of ethnic diversity and electoral systems on party nationalization (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Brancati, 2007; Clark and Golder, 2006; Lublin, 2015a; Mylonas and Roussias, 2008; Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 1994; Stoll, 2008), the results indicate that majoritarian electoral systems accentuate regional cleavages and produce less nationalized politics. Though proportional representation makes it easier for small parties to win representation, it results in *more* nationalized party systems. This finding seems perplexing at first glance but makes good sense for reasons discussed in the next section.

Other factors have little or a less clearcut impact on party nationalization. Ethnic and regional party bans may increase party nationalization but ballot access requirements do not. In countries with few presidential candidates, presidential systems tend to be more nationalized than parliamentary systems but the effect reverses as the number of presidential candidates increases. Controlling for other factors, highly authoritarian countries do not repress opposition parties in a manner that systematically undercuts parties with regional bases. Finally, neither prosperity nor decentralization has an impact on nationalization, though past studies suggest that decentralization spurs the growth of regional parties (Brancati, 2007; Harbers, 2010), particularly in disadvantaged peripheral regions (Hechter, 1975).

2. Explanations for variations in the level of party nationalization

Most explanations for why some countries have more nationalized party systems center on ethnic diversity and institutional design, particularly the electoral system and the decentralization of power to regions. Beyond these factors, this section also explores why scholars have also theorized that political freedom and prosperity may shape nationalization.

2.1. Ethnic diversity and electoral systems

Ethnic diversity inserts additional cleavages beyond those present in a monoethnic or less divided society that can form the basis for party organization. Similarly, more proportional electoral systems make it easier for more parties to win seats by reducing the threshold for entry into the legislature and providing greater incentives for political elites to create them.

As a result, territorially concentrated ethnic groups form a particular threat to party nationalization (Mozaffar et al., 2003). More specifically, the relationship between ethnic group size and the electoral threshold to win seats is critical (Bochsler, 2010, 2011; Lublin, 2014, 2015a; Sartori, 1994; Taagepera and Shugart, 1989: 73-4). National legal thresholds to qualify to receive mandates impede ethnic party formation if the group is smaller than the threshold. Similarly, groups must overcome the threshold indicated by district magnitude, as well as any district-level legal threshold. In countries with majoritarian electoral systems, the group must form a local majority in order to have a shot at capturing seats. In short, successful ethnic parties cannot form if their potential supporters are insufficient to win seats even if the entire group unifies behind the party.

Numerous studies have found that ethnic diversity and more permissive electoral systems promote increases in the number of parties or declines in nationalization of the party system (Amorim Neto and Cox ,1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Filippov et al., 1999; Harbers, 2010; Lublin, 2014, 2015a; Mylonas and Roussias, 2008; Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 1994; Powell, 1982; Stoll, 2008). If these studies are correct, the presence of additional ethnic groups should result in a less nationalized party system. Additionally, countries with proportional representation should possess more regional parties, as PR facilitates the politicization of additional cleavages because it requires lower levels of cohesion within ethnic groups to surpass the electoral threshold.

However, several studies find no, or only a weak or inconsistent, empirical link between more permissive electoral systems and ethnoregional party success or party nationalization (Birnir and Van Cott, 2007; Brancati, 2009; Madrid, 2012; Mozaffar, 1997; Tronconi, 2006). Other scholars even argue that majoritarian systems are more beneficial to ethnic party formation (Harmel and Robertson, 1985; Montabes Pereira et al., 2006).

That proportional representation may promote party nationalization is less perplexing than may appear at first glance. Though PR makes it easier for small, regional parties to gain support, it could increase nationalization by providing incentives for parties to seek support even in regions where their support lags significantly behind the leading party. While the winner-take-all tendency of majoritarian electoral systems would likely award such parties few or no seats, proportional representation lends them greater opportunity. As a result, parties may perceive greater reason to pursue a national strategy. Voters who live in regions outside a party's home base will also have less reason to fear that their region will have no representatives or influence in the halls of power, rendering them more likely to support a party other than the regional champion.

2.2. Ethnic party bans and ballot-access requirements

Ethnically divided societies can try to force the creation of nationalized party system through legal bars on ethnic or regional parties. Moroff and Basedau (2010: 667) define ethnic party bans as a "highly restrictive official legal sanction that aims to prohibit the existence or activity of a political party which is composed of, seeks

the support of, and acts on behalf or in the interest of a specific ethnic or particularistic identity group." Taking a broad view, one can view this definition as inclusive of regionally oriented parties. Countries enact rules banning ethnic or regional parties in their constitutions, electoral laws, political parties laws, and voluntary associations laws as well as by administrative decrees. They have been most common in, though not exclusive to, Africa, where strong ethnic ties combined with weak identification with the state threatens party system nationalization along with state cohesion and survival (Bogaards et al., 2010). Such bans should force the creation of more nationalized party systems because the elimination of ethnic parties increases nationalization. Several studies have found that many countries have not only adopted but implemented ethnic or regional party bans (Bogaards, 2007; Moroff, 2010).

Closely related to ethnic party bans are spatial requirements for parties to register or to compete. These ballot-access requirements may appear neutral but have a disproportionate impact on ethnic and regional parties, which find it impossible to gain enough signatures or recruit sufficient candidates across multiple territorial units (Birnir, 2004; Birnir and Van Cott, 2007; Lublin and Wright, 2014). But Raúl Madrid (2012: 113), contends that they cannot explain the absence of indigenous parties in Latin American countries. If ethnic party bans and spatial ballot-access requirements undercut regionally based parties and aid party nationalization, their presence should increase nationalization.

2.3. Presidential elections

Studies of both party nationalization and the effective number of parties have highlighted the impact of presidential elections (Amorim Neto and Cox,1997; Birnir and Van Cott, 2007; Bochsler, 2010; Brancati, 2009; Clark and Golder, 2006; Cox, 1997; Hicken, 2003; Hicken and Stoll, 2011; Kasuya, 2005; Lijphart, 1994; Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997; Samuels, 2002). Unlike legislative elections, which are often really numerous contests in separate regions or electoral districts, presidential contests focus attention on a single office throughout the country and may help politics and parties develop around national questions (Hicken, 2003; Kasuya, 2005; Morgenstern et al., 2009; Samuels, 2002). The resources and the media commanded by major presidential candidates further aid their parties. Ethnic and regional parties rarely can run credible presidential candidates, so find it very difficult to compete in this arena. Presidential elections should also play a greater role in shaping party systems where the president is a powerful and not merely ceremonial official (Cox, 1997; Hicken, 2003).

Nevertheless, countries with presidential elections can have low rates of party nationalization if the major cleavages are territorial rather than functional (Caramani, 2004). In countries like Kenya, where presidential voting is polarized along ethnic lines, presidential elections could help promote denationalized elections (LeBas, 2014). Nevertheless, the preponderance of the literature suggests that countries with strong presidents should have more nationalized party systems.

2.4. Decentralization

The impact of the decentralization of governmental powers to regions on party nationalization has been heavily disputed. In their study of four democracies with majoritarian electoral systems, Kollman et al (2014a,b) find less interest among political actors in organizing regionally oriented parties in countries where regional governments have little power. Other studies support this conclusion (Birnir and Van Cott, 2007; Blais and Carty, 1991; Brancati, 2007; Chhibber and Murali, 2006; Gerring, 2005; Harbers, 2010). But several studies reach contrary conclusions and suggest that

decentralization undercuts regionalized voting patterns (Jolly, 2006; Levi and Hechter, 1985), or has little impact (Caramani, 2004; Harmel and Robertson, 1985).

The potential relationship between decentralization and denationalization of the party system is clouded by the possibility that causality runs in the opposite direction or is endogenous. Pressure from regional parties may stimulate countries to decentralize (Bochsler, 2010: 62; Caramani, 2004, 292; Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Heller, 2002). The temporal relationship between the presence of strong regional parties and decentralization aids efforts to sort out the relationship. Where strong regional parties predate decentralization and do not get stronger in its wake, it is difficult to argue that decentralization caused denationalization.

Indeed, the order of the arrival on the scene of decentralized institutions and regional parties has been far from consistent (Lublin, 2012, 2014). In some countries, regional parties predated federalism. The same is true in many countries with autonomous regions, including Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Kitts and Nevis. In other federal countries, like Brazil, there is no clear relationship between decentralization and regional parties. Ethnic and regional parties have steadily declined in South Africa since the end of apartheid. On the other hand, the strength of regional parties has grown since the linguistic reorganization of states in India and the reestablishment of democracy in Argentina.

The historical order of arrival of ethnic or regional parties and federal institutions for the five federal countries included in this study but excluded from Lublin (2012, 2014)—Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and Trinidad and Tobago—does not provide clear evidence that ethnic or regional parties stem from decentralization. Malaysia has had both ethnic parties and federalism since its inception with both government and opposition parties usually forming cross-ethnic coalitions. Tobago has sometimes lent support to Tobago-based parties both prior to and after the creation of the Tobago House of Assembly in 1980.[1] Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia lack ethnic or regional parties but that may be due to ethnic party bans in Nigeria and Russia or ballot-access requirements in all three countries.

Hooghe et al. (2016) have helpfully developed a more nuanced Regional Authority Index (RAI) that goes beyond a federal versus non-federal dichotomy. In particular, they distinguish between self-rule powers that expand a regional government's control over its territory and shared-rule powers that enhance the influence of the region over the central government. Past studies indicate that shared-rule powers, particularly the selection members of the upper chamber in the national legislature by regional governments, may be more likely to stimulate regional party growth (Brancati, 2007, 2009; Lublin, 2012, 2014).

2.5. Freedom and repression

Repression may aid party nationalization by knocking out potential regional competitors. Incentives, corruption, and force may also result in more votes being cast or recorded for the ruling, nationalized party. Countries with extremely high levels of repression, like Equatorial Guinea and North Korea, take this approach to the extreme as they report almost all votes as in favor of the ruling party. But even less thoroughly illiberal regimes may still limit democratic competition, albeit to a less drastic extent. Regimes that govern countries with weak identification with the state may be especially likely to limit ethnic and regional parties that could form the nucleus of opposition to either the government or the unity of the state.

Illiberal regimes, however, may also welcome regional parties precisely because they have less chance to form a national basis for

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[1] The Tobago House of Assembly's powers have expanded since 1980.

opposition. The existence of several regional parties may help split the opposition vote and drive voters from other regions or ethnic groups to support the ruling party.

2.6. Wealth and post-material values

Once basic human needs related to nutrition, housing, jobs, and health care have been met, voters with post-material values might be more willing to express ethnic or regional identities through support for ethnoregional parties (Inglehart, 1997; but see Harmel and Robertson, 1985), so countries with higher incomes may exhibit lower levels of party nationalization. In a similar vein, ethnically distinct regions in wealthier countries possess greater resources that facilitate regional party organization and, the promotion of a sense of grievance against the central state. Ethnic movements often base these claims in resentment that their peripheral region does not benefit economically as much as the center or, on the contrary, that money unfairly flows out of their comparatively wealthy region (Hechter, 1975; Gourevitch, 1979; Jolly, 2006). However, as these arguments were developed in the context of advanced economies, they may not apply even to the wealthier emerging market and developing countries examined here.

On the other hand, scholars who study poorer countries cite the use of patronage by ethnic and regional parties to mobilize voters (Chandra, 2004; Horowitz, 1985; Posner, 2005). Consequently, low-income countries have less nationalized party systems—a finding that comports with Caramani's (2004) conclusion that West European countries did not develop enduring national-level cleavages prior to the Industrial Revolution. The dataset's exclusion of advanced economies curtails income differentiation and may limit its demonstrable effect on nationalization in models. Nevertheless, there is still great income variation among the 74 countries, and patronage may be more vital, and pack a bigger punch on nationalization, in the poorer set of developing countries.

3. Nationalization models and dataset

The dataset includes 74 developing democracies with all defined as "emerging market and developing economies" by the International Monetary Fund in October 2015. Though none fall into the upper echelon of "advanced economies," per capita incomes range from a low of $213 in Malawi in 2004 to a high of $24,212 in the Bahamas in 2002.[2] Similarly, the level of freedom varies dramatically across the 74 countries with the dataset including countries widely regarded as liberal, free democracies like Costa Rica but also less free countries like Cameroon that nevertheless hold elections. Cases span the globe, including 15 countries in Latin America, 13 in the Caribbean, 22 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 11 in South and Southeast Asia, and 11 post-Communist East and East-Central European countries along with Samoa and Turkey. The election years available for each country vary with elections years ranging from as early as 1945 through 2015.

3.1. Measuring nationalization

Bochsler's (2010) standardized and weighted Party System Nationalization Score PSNS_{SW} is utilized as the dependent variable. PSNS_{SW} has useful advantages. As Boschler (2010: 48—52) explains, PSNS_{SW} corrects for the unequal sizes of units within countries and unequal numbers of units across countries—the latter being especially crucial for cross-national analyses.

Values of PSNS_{SW} are frequently from the Constituency-Level Election Archive (CLEA) Party Nationalization Dataset (Kollman

et al., 2014a). I calculated values for many additional countries utilizing STATA code provided by Ken Kollman and election data from CLEA (Kollman et al., 2014b), Election Passport (Lublin, 2015b), and the Global Elections Database (Brancati, 2015).

The treatment of parties within alliances is occasionally a tricky question, as different approaches drastically alter party nationalization scores. For Chile and Malaysia, alliances are treated as single parties.[3] In both countries, parties within alliances decide how to allocate candidacies within constituencies, so that parties often do not run candidates in many constituencies. Additionally, the major two alliances in both countries are relatively consistent. Treating alliances as parties increases party nationalization scores substantially in both countries. Indeed, Chile and Malaysia have the eighth and ninth most nationalized party systems based on average PSNS_{SW} for elections included in the dataset, as shown in Fig. 1.

Across the entire set of 74 countries, mean PSNS_{SW} varies from a minimum of 0.48 to a maximum of 0.96. The mean country has an average PSNS_{SW} of 0.78 while the median country has an average PSNS_{SW} of 0.81. Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables appear in Table 1. Note that the table presents statistics for means within each country. As the number of elections available for each country varies, treating each election in a country separately would skew the statistics towards countries with more elections included in the data.

3.2. Statistical model

Cross-sectional time series generalized least squares (GLS) models with clustered standard errors were used to model PSNS_{SW}. This approach treats each country as a separate panel and the standard errors reflect that the elections within each panel are not truly separate observations. This conservative approach increases confidence in the solidity of any statistically significant relationships between independent variables and PSNS_{SW}.

3.3. Independent variables

The *effective number of ethnic groups (EFEG)* measures ethnic diversity. EFEG equals $1/\sum p_i^2$ where p equals the proportion of the country's citizen population in group i. Online Appendix A contains specific information on the ethnic groups in each country, their share of the population and sources for the data.[4]

ln*(exclusion magnitude)* gauges electoral system permissiveness. Grounded in Taagepera and Shugart, 1989 work, it takes into account legal thresholds as well as district magnitudes, and provides an accurate mirror of the expectations generated by electoral systems. The exclusion magnitude transforms the exclusion threshold—the maximum percentage of the vote required to gain a seat in the assembly based on constituency magnitudes, legal thresholds or other factors—to express the same idea in terms of constituency size: Exclusion Magnitude equals [100/(Threshold of Exclusion)] − 1.[5] The natural logarithm is used to reflect that the marginal growth in the impact of the threshold declines as its size increases. The

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[2] Per capita income as reported by the World Bank in 2005 constant dollars.

[3] Parties in India are treated are treated separately.

[4] In the models, I subtract one from EFEG so that it has a base of zero and is the equivalent of the effective number of ethnic minority groups.

[5] The exclusion threshold is usually the higher of the district magnitude or national legal threshold. Some countries, however, have legal thresholds at the district level that are higher than the district magnitude threshold in some constituencies but not others. In these cases, the district legal threshold replaces district magnitude threshold for computation of the national exclusion threshold according to the method outlined in Taagepera and Shugart, 1989. Online Appendix B presents the district magnitude, legal and exclusion thresholds for each election year for all countries included in this study.
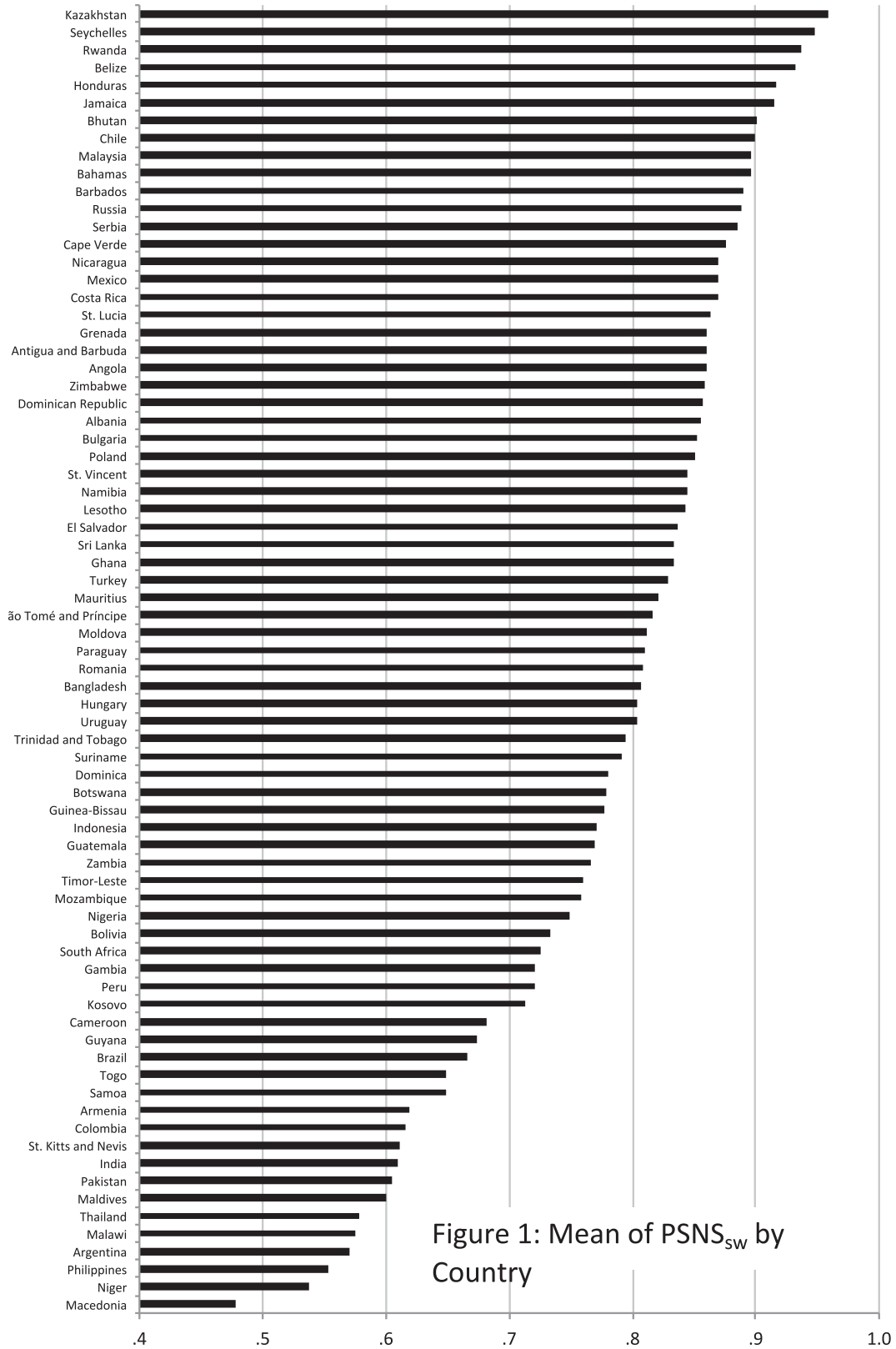
Fig. 1. Mean of PSNSsw by country.

Figure 1: Mean of PSNS_{sw} by Country

model also includes an *interaction between EFEG and* ln*(exclusion magnitude)* to test for whether the impact of ethnic diversity on nationalization increases with electoral system permissiveness.

Ethnic party ban and *ballot access requirements* are coded 1 for countries with the appropriate restriction and 0 otherwise. Both should have a positive impact if they increase party nationalization.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
PSNSsw (Party Nationalization)	0.48	0.96	0.78	0.81
Effective Number of Ethnic Groups (EFEG)	1.00	8.82	2.29	1.41
Exclusion Magnitude	1	400	19.87	5.31
ln (Exclusion Magnitude)	0.00	5.99	2.99	1.67
Ethnic Party Ban	0	1	0.30	0.00
Ballot-Access Requirements	0	1	0.32	0.00
Polity Scores	−6.00	10.00	5.93	7.00
Strong, Directly Elected President	0	1	0.53	1.00
Effective Number of Presidential Candidates[a]	1.13	4.95	2.75	2.52
Per Capita Income in $2005 Dollars	236	21,951	3529	2622
ln (Per Capita Income in $2005 Dollars)	5.47	10.00	8.17	7.87

[a] Includes only countries with direct elections for strong presidents. As this is a cross-sectional time series and the number of years within each panel varies, the table presents statistics for the averages within each of the 74 countries to give a better sense of the data across countries.

Twenty-three countries have ethnic party bans, while 24 have ballot access requirements. Fourteen have both.[6]

Polity IV scores control for the level of individual liberties and political freedom on a scale that ranges from −10 to 10 with less free countries awarded lower scores. Among the 74 countries in the dataset, scores ranged from −6 to 10 with the median at 7 and the mean at 5.93. If more freedom stimulates regional parties, then the coefficient on *Polity Score* should be positive.

Three different measures test for the impact of presidential elections. *Strong directly elected president* is coded 1 for countries with directly elected presidents that carry out more than ceremonial functions and are also viewed as more powerful than any prime minister; other countries are coded 0. *Legislative vote linked to presidential vote*, controls for countries where the presidential vote is utilized to allocate legislative seats. Past work predicts that both should increase nationalization. The *effective number of presidential candidates* is a measure equivalent to the effective number of parties but for presidential candidates.[7] If the presence of more presidential candidates leads to less nationalized party systems, then it should have a negative coefficient.

Finally, ln*(per capita income)* controls for the impact of relative affluence on party nationalization. The data are from the World Bank and in 2005 constant U.S. dollars. As the impact of wealth should decline as income increases, the natural logarithm is used here.

4. Results

Table 2 displays coefficients and standard errors for eight models of party nationalization as measured by PSNS$_{sw}$. As Brambor, Clark and Golder (2006) explain, the statistical significance of interaction terms cannot be assessed directly through the statistical significance of coefficients and is more easily seen through graphs of confidence intervals around the marginal impact of each term. Fig. 2 reveals the predicted marginal impact of EFEG with 95 percent confidence intervals as ln (exclusion magnitude) varies based on model 1 in Table 2. Majoritarian systems have a ln (exclusion magnitude) equal to zero with the value rising to a maximum of 6 for the country with the most proportional electoral system (South Africa).

4.1. Ethnicity and electoral systems

Fig. 2 indicates that the marginal impact of EFEG on nationalization as measured by PSNS$_{sw}$ is strongest for majoritarian systems and shrinks as ln (exclusion magnitude) increases and the electoral system becomes more proportional. In majoritarian systems, nationalization falls by an estimated 0.07 with the additional of each ethnic group. The magnitude of the negative impact of ethnic diversity on nationalization declines gradually to near zero when ln (exclusion magnitude) equals six, equivalent to a proportional system in a single national constituency with 400 mandates. But EFEG ceases to have a statistically significant impact on nationalization once ln (exclusion magnitude) passes 5.1, equivalent to a constituency with 170 seats.

These results from a broad array of 74 developing democracies are totally at odds with studies that indicate that proportional representation reduces party nationalization (Bochsler, 2010; Brancati, 2007; Lublin, 2014) or increases the impact of ethnic diversity on the number of parties (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Harbers, 2010; Lublin, 2015a; Mylonas and Roussias, 2008; Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 1994; Stoll, 2008). Instead, PR minimizes the impact of ethnic diversity on party nationalization. Majoritarian systems, in contrast, exacerbate the negative effect of ethnoregional diversity on party nationalization.

What accounts for this striking and unexpected finding? Model specification issues could produce inaccurate findings. The models do not control for the geographic concentration of ethnic minority groups, a factor frequently related to the success of ethnic and regional parties (Mozaffar et al., 2003; Mylonas and Roussias, 2008; Lublin, 2015a,b). However, models that include the impact of geographic concentration, as measured by the share of EFEG above the exclusion threshold, do not indicate that changes in geographic concentration levels result in statistically significant differences

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[6] Angola, Bhutan, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russia, Rwanda, Togo and Turkey have both an ethnic party ban and ballot access requirements. Albania, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Seychelles have just a ban. Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste have just ballot access requirements.

[7] The inclusion of this variable in the model is somewhat problematic as the same factors that influence party nationalization in legislative elections may also be expected to predict party nationalization in presidential elections. Nevertheless, it is included here, as it has often been used in models that predict the effective number of parties (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Clark and Golder, 2006; Lublin, 2015a).

Table 2
Models of party nationalization in 71 developing democracies.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Effective Number of Ethnic Groups (EFEG)	-0.035*** (0.010)	-0.039*** (0.010)	-0.035*** (0.010)	-0.034** (0.011)	-0.026** (0.009)	-0.035*** (0.010)	-0.055* (0.026)	-0.058* (0.026)
ln (Exclusion Magnitude)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.009 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.003 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.016 (0.014)	-0.018 (0.014)
EFEG * ln (Exclusion Magnitude)	0.005^ (0.003)	0.006^ (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	0.009 (0.012)	0.012 (0.013)
Strong Directly Elected President	0.107** (0.039)	0.096* (0.039)	0.107** (0.039)	0.110** (0.040)	0.131** (0.042)	0.107** (0.039)	0.093^ (0.049)	0.096^ (0.052)
Effective Number of Presidential Candidates	-0.040** (0.013)	-0.036** (0.013)	-0.040** (0.013)	-0.041** (0.013)	-0.045*** (0.014)	-0.040** (0.013)	-0.029* (0.013)	-0.029* (0.013)
Ethnic Party Ban		0.041^ (0.021)						
Ballot Access Requirements			0.005 (0.026)					
Polity Score				0.001 (0.003)				
ln (Per Capita Income) in 2005 Dollars					0.017 (0.012)			
Legislative Vote Linked to Presidential Vote						0.000 (0.031)		
Regional Authority Index (RAI)							-0.005 (0.004)	
RAI Self Rule Index								-0.004 (0.003)
RAI Shared Rule Index								-0.009 (0.013)
Constant	0.830*** (0.021)	0.828*** (0.021)	0.829*** (0.021)	0.821*** (0.028)	0.674*** (0.070)	0.830*** (0.021)	0.887*** (0.022)	0.888*** (0.021)
Number of Observations	435	435	435	435	415	435	254	254
Panels	74	74	74	74	74	74	37	37
R-squared	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.26	0.11

Notes: ^ $p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. All models are cross-sectional time series generalized least squares (GLS) models with clustered standard errors.
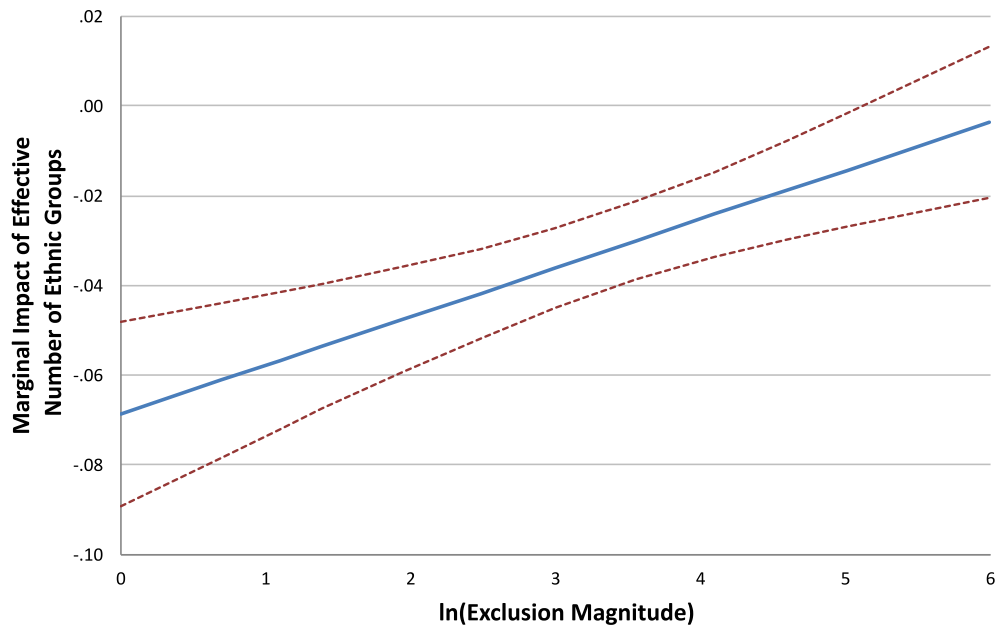

Fig. 2. Exclusion threshold and the impact of ethnicity.

(p < 0.05) in the effect of ethnic diversity.[8]

Bochsler's (2010) detailed analysis of nationalization provides other clues as to why the results may be off the mark. First, ln (exclusion magnitude) treats single-member districts as one end of a continuum, essentially as proportional representation with a very high exclusion threshold. Bochsler (2010), however, notes rightly that it may be much easier for a regionally concentrated minority to win seats under a single-member plurality electoral system than a proportional system with a national legal threshold. An ethnic minority party may be too small to overcome a threshold, even if all group members vote for it, but still able to form local winning majorities. As a result, Bochsler (2010) distinguishes between systems with single-member districts and proportional systems. He concludes that both single-member districts and low national legal thresholds in PR systems tend to reduce party system nationalization. Tests of these ideas for developing countries confirm, as in the original model, that ethnic diversity reduces nationalization in countries with majoritarian systems but provide no support for the conclusion that either low district magnitudes or high legal thresholds reduce nationalization in countries with proportional representation.[9]

Rather than due to poor methodological choices in the construction of the model, these results more likely stem from fundamental differences in the operation of ethnicity and electoral systems in developing democracies. Majoritarian systems disincentivize support for any non-regionally dominant party. Single-member districts often award parties disproportionately few or no seats in regions where their supporters are outvoted. Beyond giving legislatures a strong ethnoregional cast, they undercut motivations for both elites and ordinary voters to support the party that is not the first choice of their group or region. Party elites see little reason to reach out or waste scarce government patronage on members of out-groups or regions where the party will likely receive few benefits in terms of seats for any increase in votes. The premium patronage democracies place on being on the winning side in order to gain access to the spoils of the state similarly gives voters a powerful incentive to support regionally based parties that reduce nationalization (Chandra, 2004; Posner, 2005).

In contrast, while majoritarian systems offer no prize for second place, PR systems enable second place parties to win seats—and thus local voters and elites to gain access to patronage as part of the winning coalition. Proportional systems also make it harder to win a majority with seats from one region, increasing incentives to reach out to other groups. Governments may require the formation of coalition governments that pull in MPs from different regions. In short, the payoff for both elites and voters is greater under PR than majoritarian systems, as they often permit parties non-regionally dominant parties to win mandates.

4.2. Other institutions, freedom, and income

Contrary to previous work suggesting that ballot access requirements succeed where ethnic party bans fail to undercut ethnoregional parties in free democracies (Lublin and Wright, 2014), model 3 indicates that ballot access requirements have no impact. Model 2 indicates that ethnic party bans increase nationalization in developing democracies by 0.04, though the certainty about that conclusion does not meet conventional standards for statistical significance (p = 0.06). Ethnic party bans may have an effect because developing countries are more willing to enforce them (Becher and Basedau, 2008; Hartmann and Kemmerzell, 2010; Moroff and Basedau, 2010; Niesen, 2010). The ineffectiveness of ballot access requirements may stem from a lack of capacity to enforce them.
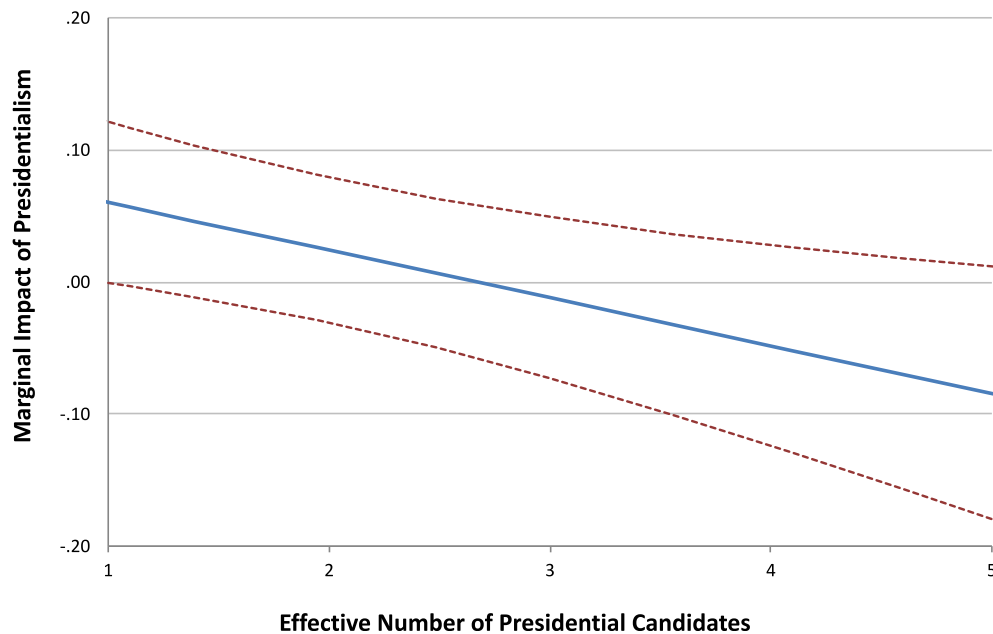
Freedom levels, as indicated by Polity IV scores, do not shape nationalization levels. Authoritarian regimes appear no more likely to suppress regional political forces than more liberal ones, perhaps because ethnic divisions can aid their efforts to unify other groups. Alternatively, the freedom to articulate regional goals within the democratic process may alleviate ethnic and regional grievances.

Though Caramani (2004) found that parties became more nationalized as countries developed in Western Europe, model 5 reveals no statistically significant relationship between per capita income and party nationalization. The difference may reflect differences between past development patterns in Western Europe and developing countries today. For example, developing countries now exhibit much higher levels of urbanization than Western European countries did when they had comparable income levels.

Surprisingly, model 6 indicates that linking presidential and legislative votes does not alter party nationalization levels. Indeed, there only tepid evidence that presidentialism influences party nationalization more than parliamentarism. Fig. 3 shows how the impact of strong presidentialism varies with the effective number of presidential candidates based on the model 1. While not statistically significant at conventional levels (p < 0.05), the results suggest that strong presidentialism increases nationalization but that the effect reverses once the effective number of candidates exceeds 2.7. Moreover, the median number of presidential candidates is 2.5—close to where presidential elections have very little impact on nationalization.

Models 7 and 8 contain fewer cases because the Regional Authority Index used to measure decentralization is unavailable for many countries. Neither the overall RAI index nor the shared-rule and self-rule indices have any significant impact on party nationalization in developing countries. Apparently, centralized countries are just as likely to have denationalized party systems as countries that empower regions through decentralization.[10]

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[8] Column 1 in the table in online Appendix C shows the result for a model including EFEG, geographic concentration (i.e. percent of EFEG above the exclusion threshold) and ln(exclusion magnitude) as well as interactions between all three terms. Appendix C Fig. 1 reveals how geographic concentration and ln(exclusion magnitude) shape the impact of ethnic diversity on nationalization at three different levels of geographic concentration (10%, 50% and 100%). Dashed lines indicate where the results are not statistically distinct from 0.

The 95% confidence intervals (not shown in the figure) around the predicted values for all three geographic concentration levels overlap, so one should interpret differences in the impact of geographic concentration extremely cautiously as they are not statistically significant at conventional levels. Contrary to theories that suggest majoritarian systems punish parties with weakly concentrated support bases more than PR systems, the figure indicates that low or levels of geographic concentration reduce nationalization only in majoritarian or extremely non-permissive PR systems. High levels of geographic concentration reduce the impact of nationalization gently but only in less restrictive PR systems.

[9] Column 2 of the table in Appendix C presents the same model as in column 1 of Table 2 but for only countries with majoritarian electoral systems. The estimated coefficients and standard errors conform closely to the results for all countries.

Column 3 of the table in Appendix C includes only countries that utilize PR. In place of ln(exclusion magnitude) and its interaction with EFEG, this model includes ln(district magnitude threshold) and ln(legal threshold) along with interactions of each with EFEG. This alternative model provides no indication that higher thresholds increase nationalization. The coefficients on ln(district magnitude threshold) and its interaction with EFEG are very close to 0, suggesting that this factor does not shape nationalization. Appendix C Figure 2 shows the relationship between ln(legal threshold) and the impact of ethnic diversity on nationalization. Contrary to expectations, low legal thresholds *increase* nationalization. The relationship is not statistically significant at conventional levels (p < .05) once ln(legal threshold) exceeds 0.8, equivalent to a legal threshold of 2.2%.

[10] Separate models not shown here reveal that the individual components of the RAI index also do not predict nationalization.

Figure 3: The Impact of Presidential Elections

Fig. 3. The impact of presidential elections.

5. Conclusion

Majoritarian electoral systems result in notably less nationalized party systems based on the models of electoral outcomes in 74 developing democracies. Unlike past work that suggests that proportional representation heightens regional cleavages (Bochsler, 2010; Lublin, 2014, 2015a; Mozaffaret al., 2003; Mylonas and Roussias, 2008), highly proportional systems have little impact on the manifestation of ethnic diversity within the party system according to the models. Tests of alternative models indicate that these findings reflect the underlying data and are not a quirk of model design. Much effort is put in many developing countries to design institutions in the hope of shaping the party system in manner that promotes state survival and democratic stability along with governmental responsiveness to regions and groups across the country. Even if debates continue about whether nationalized party systems are necessary or the best way to achieve these goals, institutional designers need to know that the effect of electoral institutions appears quite different in developing countries. While proportional representation aids the proliferation of ethnic and regional parties in countries with advanced economies, it incentivizes parties to compete in more regions in developing countries—likely because it offers opportunities to win seats where they would otherwise be shut out under majoritarian systems.

Other factors beyond the electoral system and ethnic diversity appear to have little impact on nationalization or the link is tentative. Ethnic party bans may help spur more nationalized party systems, though ballot access requirements do not. Presidential systems may produce more nationalized party systems than parliamentary systems when there are few candidates, but the effect declines rapidly and then reverses as the number of candidates increases. Accordingly, evidence for a positive impact of presidential elections on nationalization is far more muted than past findings (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Bochsler, 2010; Brancati, 2009; Hicken, 2003; Hicken and Stoll, 2011; Kasuya, 2005; Lijphart, 1994; Lublin, 2014, 2015a; Mainwaring and Shugart, 1997; Samuels, 2002), at least in developing democracies. Moreover, as

for ethnic party bans, certainty falls below conventional levels of statistical significance (p < 0.05). Neither decentralization, authoritarianism or income appear to shape nationalization levels.

The broad array of 74 developing democracies included in this study should lend its findings greater breadth and confidence. The results indicate that correlates of nationalization differ greatly for advanced and developing economies. Specifically, the link between proportionality and greater nationalization runs flatly counter to expectations and past studies. Institutional designers must take these differences into account when designing institutions. Beyond being misguided, direct copying of electoral rules and institutions from advanced economics often have the opposite effect on party systems as intended.

Appendices. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.11.012.

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