

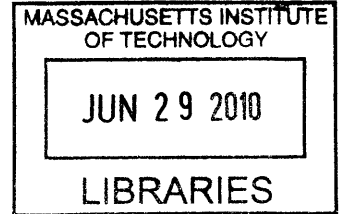
BALLOT BOX AND TINDERBOX

CAN ELECTORAL ENGINEERING SAVE MULTIETHNIC DEMOCRACY?

by

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A.B. History
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Abstract

The objective of this dissertation is to systematize the existing hypotheses in the electoral engineering literature and to test them in a set of selected case studies in order to answer a central question: does the electoral system affect the structure of political parties in ethnically divided societies and if so how? The academic debate on electoral design for divided societies has focused on the impact of institutional choices on ultimate conflict outcomes. The findings of previous studies have been generally inconclusive, while the lack of sub-national data on ethnic composition and voting patterns has made it difficult to examine mechanisms regarding the role of demographics. To approach the problem from a different angle, I propose a research design focusing on the intermediate link from electoral institutions to the ethnic structure of the party system. For the empirical portion of my work, I chose to conduct a structured historical comparison of four societies which implemented major electoral reforms: Turkey, Northern Ireland, Guyana, and Sri Lanka. Based on the study of these cases, I am arguing that politicians and voters have not responded to electoral incentives in the ways predicted by existent theories, and that no clear relationship can be observed between the electoral system's proportionality, the heterogeneity of electoral constituencies, and the number of parties or the types of ethnic appeals they make to voters. These findings indicate that the hopes placed in electoral system design for divided societies are unwarranted and that attention among political scientists and policymakers should shift to other peace-building approaches.

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BALLOT BOX AND TINDER BOX CAN ELECTORAL ENGINEERING SAVE MULTIETHNIC DEMOCRACY?

Introduction

The larger puzzle motivating this study is not new, but it is painfully persistent: can multiethnic democracy be designed? Some multiethnic societies seem to have attained an envied condition where, despite occasional tensions, democracy and diversity thrive, while other less fortunate ones are struggling with deadlock and violence. Can the latter emulate the former by copying certain political institutions, and if so, which institutions are the most critical? By the 21st century, several conflicts around the world have proven persistent and deadly enough to gain their place in a putative list of places with politics considered too divisive for democracy to easily take root. From Afghanistan and Iraq to Sub-Saharan Africa, and from the Balkans to East Timor and Fiji, every time such a conflict-ridden society makes an effort to transition or re-transition to democracy, either on its own or under international tutelage, institutional choices have to be made. A fundamental one is the selection of the electoral system.

A lively academic debate with direct policy implications revolves around the best way to devise electoral systems for divided societies. In the last two decades the international community designed the electoral systems of several countries behind closed doors and the choices it made were often criticized for their effectiveness. These debates have furthered our understanding of the problem but they have been largely inconclusive. My objective in this dissertation is to systematize the theoretical insights provided by electoral specialists and to test them in a set of selected case studies in order to answer a central question in this debate: does the electoral system affect the structure of political parties in ethnically divided societies

and if so how? The existent empirical literature on electoral engineering consists of either single or loosely structured small-n qualitative studies, or large-n quantitative studies using data sets that are not well suited for answering questions about patterns of ethnic voting. For the empirical portion of my work, I chose to conduct a structured historical comparison of four societies which implemented major electoral reforms: Turkey, Northern Ireland, Guyana, and Sri Lanka. Based on the study of these cases, I argue that politicians and voters did not respond to electoral incentives in the ways predicted by existent theories, and that no clear relationship can be observed between the electoral system's proportionality and the ethnic make-up of parties or the types of appeals they make to voters. These findings indicate that the hopes placed in electoral system design for divided societies are unwarranted and that attention among political scientists and policymakers should shift to other peace-building approaches.

More than thirty years have passed since the famous Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori called electoral systems “the most specific manipulative instruments of politics.” Donald Horowitz and Arend Lijphart, the two scholars towering the debate on institutional design for divided societies, also agreed on this common point. According to Horowitz, “the electoral system is by far the most powerful lever of constitutional engineering for accommodation and harmony in severely divided societies, as indeed it is a powerful tool for many other purposes.” According to Lijphart, choosing how the legislature and the executive will be elected are “the two most fundamental choices of the many that have to be made when new democratic constitutions are drafted.”¹ The ideas of Arend Lijphart, summarized by the concept of *consociationalism*, ultimately gained a larger following in the academic community; on electoral matters, they favored the adoption of proportional representation (PR).

Until the 1990s, constitution drafting had usually been the prerogative of national elites or, in some cases, colonial authorities. After the end of the Cold War, a wave of transitioning democracies and a proliferation of international interventions to resolve armed conflicts brought constitutional design in general, and electoral design in particular, to the forefront of policy, not just theory. Organizing a free democratic election became the

¹ All three quoted in Arend Lijphart, *Thinking about Democracy: Power Sharing and Majority Rule in Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 180.

pinnacle and metric of success for international missions, as it was expected to seal a peace agreement and vest it with popular legitimacy, marking the beginning of a new era. Benjamin Reilly, an Australian expert, notes that “‘post-war elections’ are now a feature of almost all efforts to democratize war-torn regions, with peace agreements routinely including provisions for elections to be held as part of the process of conflict termination, often with the assistance, supervision, or sometimes direct control of the international community.”² The policymakers’ decisions have reflected the prevailing climate of opinion in academia: typically some form of list PR was chosen, but in several exceptions the institutional designers opted for another alternative (see Table 1). The scorecard for these efforts is mixed. In some cases (Namibia, Mozambique, Bosnia-Herzegovina) the election led to a least some stability and a successful transition to democracy; in other cases (Cambodia, Haiti, Sierra Leone) it was an abject failure followed by a return to violence, sometimes prompting a second intervention; yet in others (Afghanistan, DR Congo, Sudan), the outcome is too close to call, or the election has not yet taken place. In many cases the international actor is still heavily involved and this is expected to continue for at least a few more years.

It is not my purpose in this dissertation to undertake a comparative evaluation of the cases on this list, for methodological reasons explained in detail in the following chapter. Briefly put, the vast majority of countries that were targeted by post-Cold War interventions were not democratic to begin with, and it is difficult to assess counterfactually how their politics would have evolved under a different electoral system. I list them here to illustrate how profoundly engaged the international community has been in the electoral engineering vocation, and to hint at how likely this is to carry on in the near future. Ethnic divisions are at the heart of the majority of conflicts on the list, and from this point on I will also limit the discussion to such cases. This is because the theoretical debate on electoral design has largely taken place within the subfield of ethnic politics. Ethnic divisions constitute “hard test” cases for theories of institutional engineering, but insights from them may carry to other types of cleavages as well.

² Benjamin Reilly, “Post-war Elections: Uncertain Turning Points of Transition,” in *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, edited by Anna K. Jarstad and Timothy D. Sisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 157.

Table 1: International electoral design interventions in the post-Cold War era³

Target Country	Time Period	Intervenor/Mediator	Formula Chosen
Namibia	1989-1990	UN	PR
Cambodia	1991-1993	UN	PR
Angola	1991-1999	UN	PR
West Bank & Gaza	1991-1996	US	BV (now PR & BV)
Mozambique	1992-1994	UN	PR
Haiti	1993-96, 2004-	US/UN/Brazil	TRS
Liberia	1993-	Nigeria/UN	PR (now SMP)
Rwanda	1993-1996	UN/France	PR
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1995-	NATO/UN/EU	PR
Albania	1997	UN/EU	SMP & PR
DR Congo	1999-	UN	PR
East Timor	1999-2005	UN/Australia	SMP & PR
Kosovo	1999-	NATO/UN	PR
Sierra Leone	1999-2005	Nigeria/UK/UN	PR
Burundi	2000-2007	AU/UN	PR
FYR Macedonia	2001	NATO/EU	PR
Afghanistan	2001-	NATO/UN	SNTV
Iraq	2003-	US/UK/UN	PR
Cote d'Ivoire	2004-	UN	SMP & PBV
Sudan	2005-	UN/AU	SMP & PR

The plan of the dissertation is the following: in the first chapter I will lay out in general terms the arguments about electoral system design that different theorists have proposed, group them into a compact list of hypotheses, and defend my choice of cases and method for evaluating them. In the four following chapters I will sketch the history of political parties and ethnic relations in each case study, making case-specific observations about the impact of electoral reform. In the final chapter I will combine the material from the case studies into a structured comparison, arguing that the theoretical hypotheses were not borne out by the empirical facts.

³ This table consists of cases where an international actor played an important role in institutional design, including overseeing the conduct of elections. In many other cases, international advisors and/or international observers were involved, without a direct intervention by a foreign government or international organization.

Abbreviations used: PR = proportional representation, SMP = single member plurality, BV = block vote, PBV = party block vote, TRS = two-round system.

Chapter I

THEORY, HYPOTHESES, AND METHODS

In this introductory chapter, I will lay out the major schools of thought that have dominated the debate on electoral system design for divided societies and provide a synoptic list of the hypotheses they put forward. I will also propose a new typology of political parties that fits these theoretical hypotheses and is better suited to collecting information on ethnic voting behavior. Next, I will review the current findings of the empirical literature examining relationships between electoral formulas and ethnic conflict, and expound upon the merits of a structured historical comparison of electoral reforms.

Ethnicity and Democracy

The relationship between ethnicity and democracy has been a major preoccupation of modern political science. Both are big concepts writ large, but the former has more widely accepted definitions than the latter, built around a set of common characteristics: the participation of a large segment—if not all members—of society in decision-making, the alternation of governors in power, meaningful competition between candidates in elections and public debates, free and independent channels of information on public affairs, non-concentration of power in one person or institution, and public oversight of all key institutions.⁴ Many theorists consider the electoral criterion a minimal one: regimes that conduct elections are not necessarily democratic, but regimes that do not cannot be conceived as democracies.

⁴Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is... and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 2 no. 3 (Summer 1991): 75-88; Robert Dahl, *On Democracy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 1998).

Ethnicity is a much more debated sociological concept than democracy. As a result, its study has been mired with problems of measurement. Which identities are ethnic may seem intuitive to people in specific social and historical contexts, but they are not as easy to generalize across space and time. The most popular definitions in current social science are descriptive, summarizing ethnic identities as ascriptive distinctions based on language, race, religion, or caste. Such definitions are reasonably encompassing, but they are analytically unsatisfying unless accompanied by a framework explaining what these types of identities have in common—or why others, like gender, are not among them. Some scholars have responded to this problem with functional definitions, understanding ethnic characteristics as human attributes acquired by rules of descent.⁵ In this framework, humans categorize each other according to some descent-based characteristic, e.g. religion, caste, dialect, skin color, and depending on the social context each category can take a number of commonly agreed values or parameters, e.g. for religion {Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic} in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or {Protestant, Catholic} in Northern Ireland. Any given ethnicity then can be viewed as *a perimeter of ethnic parameters* joined by Boolean operators. For example, Ceylon Tamils in Sri Lanka are widely understood to be the people who are speakers of Tamil AND NEITHER Muslim NOR descending from lower caste immigrants from South India in colonial times. Ethnic “identity entrepreneurs” may try to mobilize people around commonly accepted perimeters, or change the perimeter borders or construct new ones; over time, parameters may split or combine and new parameters may appear due to population flows or cultural shifts. In the short and medium term, however, ethnic attributes are ‘sticky’ i.e. costly to acquire or change. In ethnically polarized societies the perimeters often become very entrenched and their boundaries hard to cross—manifested by segregated living patterns, low rates of intermarriage, and ethnically homogeneous social networks.

This functional definition, inspired by the language of rational choice theory, forms the background of my understanding of ethnicity in this dissertation, with one caveat: I feel that it primes the ancestral direction of descent and does not sufficiently account for the process of assimilation, the role of posterity, and the shadow of the future. Like all human

⁵See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 53; Kanchan Chandra, “What is Ethnic Identity and does it Matter?” *Annual Review of Political Science* vol. 9 (2006): 397-424 and the introductory chapter in Daniel Posner's *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

organizations, ethnic groups require some intergenerational continuity in order to be salient in time. Also, assimilation (rather than ancestry) can be a focal point of controversy in many societies torn by ethnic conflict, where the issue is not the impermeability of the ethnic boundary, but rather its state-sanctioned permeability in only one direction—towards the dominant group. In many contexts, people can acquire conditional membership in a descent-based group even if they lack all the ancestral qualities, by committing to and associating with other members of the group (often through marriage, conversion, adoption, and/or participation in cultural organizations), also establishing an expectation that their offspring, if any, will be raised in accordance with the group's cultural norms. I would then define ethnic characteristics as *costly attributes that are socially bonding within and highly transferable between generations*, in a such way that the benefits or detriments accrued to someone on the basis of such attributes can be expected to extend to his or her kin.

Even though the mobilization of ethnic identifications has been associated with specific cases of violence and democratic collapse, it is not clear that ethnic diversity is by itself detrimental to democracy.⁶ Strong ethnic allegiances can become destabilizing in a democratic context under two circumstances: when they rigidly determine social preferences and create permanent majorities and minorities on key social issues, rendering public discussion and alternation of parties in power impossible or irrelevant; or when they involve fundamental disagreements about the nature and boundaries of the political community, the borders of the state, and who should or should not have the right to be a citizen and participate in decisions. The first deadlock usually leads to permanent political exclusion, the second to separatist claims. Oftentimes these two phenomena coexist.

Since some multiethnic democracies have flourished and others collapsed, political scientists for decades have been on a quest to identify those institutions and practices that can be transplanted from the successful to the unsuccessful cases. Two broad schools of thought have crystallized in academic circles. The consociational strand, arguably the dominant one among practitioners, favors maximal recognition and autonomy for groups, quotas and proportional representation, veto rights, and grand-coalition governments. The centripetalist

⁶ See Tanja Ellingsen, "Colorful Community or Ethnic Witches Brew? Multiethnicity and Domestic Conflict during and after the Cold War," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* vol. 44 no. 2 (April 2000): 228-249, and Steven Fish and Robin Brooks, "Does Diversity Hurt Democracy?" *Journal of Democracy* vol. 15 no. 1 (January 2004): 154-166.

strand favors institutions and practices that submerge ethnic distinctions and encourage cross-ethnic appeals and social integration.⁷ The two sides have conflicting recommendations about electoral regimes, within their larger programmatic frameworks for institutionally designing multiethnic democracy.

Ethnicity and Parties

If politics in divided societies are dominated by one issue dimension, and if the distribution of citizens' positions on this dimension is highly bimodal and largely determined by family descent, it follows naturally that the party system will be rigid and not genuinely competitive. Most parties will draw support only from one ethnic group, as civil society infrastructures between groups will be weak or entirely lacking. The relative importance of (and value of appealing to) citizens with ambivalent or moderate views will depend on the exact distribution of the ethnic characteristics in the electorate; but there is an ever-present danger of ethnic outbidding: losing one's voters to a more extremist party or candidate if one reaches out too much to the other groups.⁸ Socially segregated in many other ways, divided societies may also feature segmented electorates, where party competition truly happens only within ethnic groups.⁹ And yet, it is possible that parties attempting to bridge or ignore the ethnic cleavage will enter the fray. In fact, this is exactly what external peacemakers often hope to see.

Theorizing about the role of political parties under conditions of ethnic division requires typologies of ethnic structure. Donald Horowitz's tripartite categorization of parties as ethnic, multiethnic or non-ethnic has dominated the field for many years.¹⁰ Ethnic parties are thus defined as those making appeals to specific ethnicities and excluding others; multiethnic parties make ethnic appeals but equally approach all ethnicities; while non-ethnic

⁷The fundamental works in each school are respectively considered to be Arend Lijphart's *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) and Horowitz's *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁸An idea originally developed by Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle in *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory in Democratic Instability* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1972) based on their observations about Ceylon and Northern Ireland, and expanded by Donald Horowitz in *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, chapters 7-9.

⁹This is what Paul Mitchell has called a "dual party system" in the case of Northern Ireland.

¹⁰This is the typology used by Chandra in *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and in CDEI.

parties choose to emphasize issues other than ethnicity. Although this typology is established and developed, it has two analytical weaknesses. First, it is based primarily on party campaign rhetoric and perhaps cadre composition, but not electoral results, so it is quite possible that a party may be appealing to categories of voters that do not end up supporting it. For example, a party may be using leftist rhetoric on political and economic equality, making appeals to all citizens of a country, and still primarily consist of and be voted by people ascribing to one ethnic group—such is the case of the Democratic Society Party in Turkey. Second, the categorization implies that each party has one ethnic platform before each election. Some parties, however, may use different rhetoric towards different groups or in different constituencies. For instance, a leftist party may be using Marxist language towards all, but infuse it with ethnically-relevant content when appealing to specific minorities—as the Turkish Workers’ Party did in the 1960s. Also, a party may have a varied platform and a diverse voter base but attract the overwhelming majority of voters from a specific ethnic group; it may in turn function and be perceived as an ethnic party in areas of the country where ethnic divisions are strong. This has been the case for the Democrats with respect to African Americans in the US since the Civil Rights era and for the Republican People’s Party with respect to Alevis in Turkey since the appearance of the Islamic right.

To move around these problems, I propose a different typology of parties based on their electoral success among various groups along two dimensions defined at the party-level: congregation and pluralism. Congregation measures how much of one specific ethnic group’s vote is won by the party. Pluralism measures how many different ethnic groups the party is winning votes from. These two dimensions create a simple codification with four ideal types:

Table 1: A two-dimensional typology of parties in a multiethnic society

		+ Congregation -	
+	Pluralism	Magnet	Antagonist
-		Hegemon	Agonist

Hegemon parties win all or the lion's share of one ethnic group's vote and are not supported by voters of any other group. They may be parties that claim to represent only their group, or parties that tried to but failed to break out of their ethnic power base. Most hegemon parties will be in the former category, and content to maintain their dominance over the group, by virtue of which they can claim to be its sole legitimate speaker. The Unionist Party was the hegemonic party of Northern Ireland's Protestants between the 1920s and the mid-1960s, while the People's National Congress has played this role for Africans in Guyana since the early 1960s.

Agonist parties win only part of the vote of one ethnic group and do not have any substantial support outside it. They may be radical champions of an ethnic cause or moderate parties with incidental ties to a specific ethnic community. In either case, their characteristic is that they struggle to gain a larger portion of the general vote—either to capture the entire vote of their ethnic group and become hegemons or to break outside their ethnic base and become antagonists. The Federal Party and the Tamil Congress were agonists vying between them for the Ceylon Tamil vote in the 1950s and 60s. A Kurdish leftist agonist party has been contesting elections in Turkey since the 1990s.

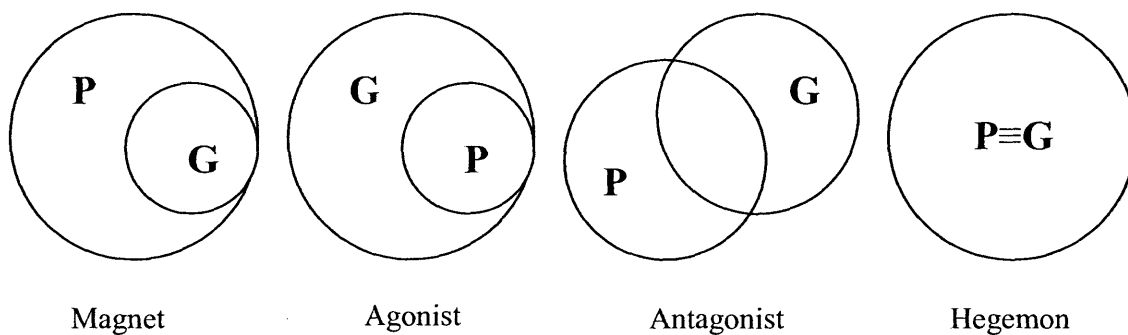
Magnet parties win votes from different ethnic groups but also win the vast majority of the vote from at least one. They may be broadly based multiethnic parties whose platform is particularly appealing to one minority group; or they may have grown out of a hegemonic ethnic party that successfully attracted voters from other groups. The former is the case for the Republican People's Party concerning Alevis in Turkey; the latter applies to the Progressive People's Party, a traditionally East Indian hegemon party in Guyana, which now also captures the larger part of the Amerindian vote.

Antagonist parties win a portion of the vote from multiple ethnic groups without commanding the vast majority of the vote of any. They may be genuine multiethnic parties trying to overcome ethnic barriers like the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland or catchall parties with populist platforms like the center-right parties in Turkey since the 1950s. Their common characteristic is that they are intrinsic antagonists of all other types of parties. Parties that contest on issues other than ethnicity and manage to mobilize voters of diverse ethnic backgrounds along a different dimension belong to this category par excellence. The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition was a short-lived example.

In principle, this codification can be applied only after an election has taken place. It tries to capture more accurately the effective party structure and the audience pressures that parties face after entering parliament. However, if cadre composition is considered, the typology can also be used for the pre-election process of party formation. In that case, the above definitions should be amended to reflect a party's attraction of potential candidates from different ethnic groups, instead of voters.

A graphic representation of this typology using Venn diagrams is given below.

Figure 1: Venn diagrams of party types; P = party's voters, G = voters of an ethnic group



Electoral Systems and Ethnic Politics

It has long been understood that different voting rules may favor or disfavor different actors in the political system, and that, in Richard Katz's words, the question of which electoral system to adopt depends on "who you are, where you are, and where you want to go."¹¹ This seemingly relativistic statement translates into a less ambiguous task for an external intervenor in a society torn by conflict: the intervenor typically has broad leeway in designing and even imposing institutions, the political system is afflicted by ethnic rifts, and the intervenor has a clear preference to overcome them, favoring or disfavoring certain local actors in the process.

¹¹Richard Katz, *Democracy and Elections* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 308.

The main lines of argument in the electoral engineering literature follow the logic

Electoral System → Party System Structure → Ethnic Conflict

The arrows of causation may arguably go in the opposite direction as well, but when external actors advocate or design an electoral system for an ethnically divided society, they are hoping to lead it down a path that follows along this line.¹² Not surprisingly, debates over what electoral formula newly democratizing states should adopt have been particularly heated.¹³ Granted, the scholars involved in these debates have not been simpletons expecting the electoral system to provide a miracle solution. Still, they have expressed considerable hope in its capacity to have an impact. In Donald Horowitz's words, "it should surprise no one that electoral reform cannot work magic on ethnic conflict... Yet it is extraordinary how much an electoral system *can* do in what seems an intractable situation."¹⁴

There are more than ten basic types of electoral systems for parliamentary elections used around the world today.¹⁵ Many more have been developed theoretically, but it is not possible to examine their effects empirically.¹⁶ Electoral systems can be categorized in various ways, but their most fundamental feature is their inherent *proportionality*, i.e. how closely the distribution of seats that they produce matches the vote shares that political parties won in the election. A second important aspect of the electoral formula is the degree of choice between candidates that it affords the voter, a concept I will call *ordinality*.¹⁷ Proportionality and ordinality are central to the consociationalist-centripetalist debate. The former favor proportional representation (PR) systems, developed in the Lower Countries and Scandinavia; the latter champion ordinal and usually less proportional systems like the

¹²For the argument for causation in the opposite direction, see Josep Colomer, "It's Parties that Choose Electoral Systems (or Duverger's Laws Upside Down)" *Political Studies* vol. 53 no. 1 (2005): 1-21.

¹³For two notable instances, see the debate between Donald Horowitz and Arend Lijphart on South Africa in *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* edited by Joseph Montville (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991), and the more recent one between Horowitz and Jon Fraenkel over Fiji in the pages of *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 35 no. 5 (June 2006).

¹⁴*Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 650-651.

¹⁵For an introductory survey see David Farrell, *Electoral Systems* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001).

¹⁶For a review, see Steven J. Brams, *Mathematics and Democracy: Designing Better Voting and Fair Division Procedures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

¹⁷For a discussion of ordinal features of electoral systems and an argument in their favor, see Lauri Karvonen, "Preferential Voting: Incidence and Effects," *International Political Science Review* vol. 25, no. 2 (April 2004): 203-226.

Alternative Vote (AV) or the Single Transferable Vote (STV), pioneered in Australia and Ireland respectively, which ask voters to rank candidates, thus motivating them to consider their lower preferences.¹⁸ PR systems are widely used around the world today, and seem to be the preferred formula in most international interventions; preferential systems, on the other hand, are touted by several political scientists but used only in a handful of countries. Plurality systems like the Anglo-American First-Past-the-Post (FPTP)—also called Single Member Plurality (SMP)—which are neither proportional nor ordinal, have the weakest following, even though they are arguably the simplest and continue to be used by some of the oldest and largest democracies in the world.¹⁹ Mixed systems combining SMP and PR have also received considerable attention after their adoption by a wave of both advanced and young post-communist democracies in the 1990s. Like preferential ones, mixed systems have seen limited use in divided society settings, and it is unclear whether they should be treated as a class of their own or simply be categorized by their overall proportionality.²⁰

Theoretical disagreements extend on both causal arrows, i.e. on what kinds of parties different electoral systems produce and on whether such parties are better or ill-suited to manage ethnic divisions. The consociationalist argument is that minority groups yearn for representation for practical and psychological reasons and disproportional systems will tend to exclude them; centripetalists fear that maximal proportionality leads to a proliferation of mono-ethnic parties, whereas lower proportionality could encourage cross-ethnic appeals. Most research so far, including quantitative and qualitative studies, has connected the first with the third link of the causal chain, i.e. explored relationships between electoral systems and levels of conflict. This is probably because datasets on electoral systems and ethnic

¹⁸ Donald Horowitz and Benjamin Reilly have specifically endorsed AV, and Reilly has also expressed some support for STV in principle. Horowitz considers STV as practiced in Ireland to be too proportional to foster adequate incentives for cross-ethnic appeals. Arend Lijphart considers STV a proportional system, and believes AV to be equivalent to TRS and equally skewed in its results with SMP.

¹⁹For a defense of plurality/majority see Guy Lardeyret, "The Problem with PR," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 2 n. 3 (Summer 1991): 30-39 and Christine Fauvelle-Aymar and Michael Lewis-Beck, "TR vs. PR: Effects of the French Double Ballot," *Electoral Studies* vol. 27 no. 3 (September 2008): 400-406. For the argument against the majoritarian double ballot, see Sarah Birch, "Two-Round Electoral Systems and Democracy," *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 79 no. 3 (April 2003): 319-344.

²⁰For a discussion of mixed systems, see Matthew Shugart, and Martin Wattenberg, *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: the Best of Both Worlds?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). A 2005 survey of electoral system experts reported that mixed systems topped respondents' preferences ahead of STV. See Shaun Bowler, David M. Farrell, and Robin T. Pettitt, "Expert Opinion on Electoral Systems: So Which Electoral System Is 'Best?'" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, vol. 15 no. 1 (April 2005): 3-19.

conflict worldwide exist, but data on the ethnic structure of political parties in various countries are scarce.²¹

The results of both qualitative and quantitative research on the relationship between electoral formula and ethnic conflict have not been conclusive either within or across methodologies. Preferential systems are very infrequent, so their study has been limited to single case studies or comparisons of the few countries that use them. Proponents of AV credit it with success in Papua New Guinea and Australia, but the experience of Fiji seems disastrous.²² STV is still used only in Malta and Ireland (north and south). Most research has therefore been on the effects of proportionality, but the picture there is no clearer. Proportionality and ethnic heterogeneity are believed to be positively correlated with the number of parties in the legislature, but their effects, if any, on the ethnic structure of parties have not been explored.²³ A medium-n study by Andrew Reynolds on the recently democratized countries of Southern Africa argued for a positive effect of PR on the quality of democracy, but the finding was confounded by differences in economic development and demographics.²⁴

Large-n studies have explored the association between proportionality and levels of protest and violence, using the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset, and proportionality and levels of voter satisfaction, relying on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)

²¹Kanchan Chandra has produced one such dataset for the year 1996. See *A Constructivist Dataset on Identity and Institutions (CDEI)*, <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/chandra/CDEI2005.pdf>

²²See Jon Fraenkel and Bernard Grofman, "Does the Alternative Vote Foster Moderation in Ethnically Divided Societies? The Case of Fiji" *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 39 no. 5 (June 2006): 623-651 and Robert Stockwell, "An Assessment of the Alternative Vote System in Fiji." *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* vol. 43 no. 3 (2005): 382-393.

²³See Ordeshook and Shvetsova, "Ethnic Heterogeneity, District Magnitude, and the Number of Parties," *American Journal of Political Science*, v. 38 no. 1 (February 1994): 100-123 and Octavio Amorim Neto and Gary Cox, "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties," *American Journal of Political Science* vol. 41 no. 1 (January 1997): 149-174. William Clark and Matt Golder in "Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory" *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 39 no. 6 (August 2006): 679-708 had weaker findings on this relationship. Gary Cox in *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) has argued that the link between district size and the number of parties is logically weak.

²⁴Andrew Reynolds, *Electoral Systems and Democratization in Southern Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Reynolds could not deny that Botswana, which uses FPTP, is also a successful democracy, although her largely mono-ethnic structure makes for a difficult comparison with neighboring South Africa and Namibia, which use PR. One cannot escape noticing that South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia are also by far the wealthiest countries in the region in addition to being the most democratic.

dataset.²⁵ Two studies based on MAR from two different time periods produced conflicting findings.²⁶ Frank Cohen found a significant negative effect of PR on rebellion but a positive one for party fragmentation for the period between 1945 and 1989. Controlling also for economic variables, Saideman et al. found a significant association of PR with lower levels of both protest and rebellion for the period 1985-1998, acknowledging that the geographic concentration of groups also had a strong impact. In her latest study with an expanded version of MAR which included information on ethnic minority support for certain parties and participation in government, Jóhanna-Kristín Birnir found that “there is not a statistically significant difference with respect to violence between plurality and proportional systems” and that there was a negative effect from mixed systems.²⁷ Finally, in a study using the World Values Survey, Pippa Norris found no strong support for the claim that PR makes ethnic minorities view the political system more positively.²⁸

The Role of Ethnic Demographics

Apart from lack of data on the ethnic structure of parties, another major impediment for electoral engineering research is the lack of information on the geographic clustering of ethnic identities in the electorate. Until recently, statistical studies relied on general country-wide measures of ethnic heterogeneity, like the ubiquitous ELF and other competing indexes without a geographic component. In the last decade, a new wave of research has drawn attention to the importance of geographic clustering for ethnic rebellion and civil war onset, and new datasets are being constructed for the spatial distribution of ethnic groups.²⁹ These

²⁵It should be noted that CSES, by its survey nature and associated data collection costs, is more limited in geographic scope to MAR, and also does not specifically focus on ethnic divisions.

²⁶Frank Cohen, “Proportional versus Majoritarian Ethnic Conflict Management in Democracies.” *Comparative Political Studies*, v. 30, n. 6 (December 1997): 607-630; Stephen Saideman et al., “**Democratization, Political Institutions, and Ethnic Conflict: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis, 1985-1998,**” *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 35 no. 1 (February 2002): 103-129.

²⁷Jóhanna-Kristín Birnir, *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 194-195.

²⁸Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²⁹Work in this field has originated mostly at Harvard University in the US and ETH in Switzerland. See Monica Toft *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Janina Matuszeki and Frank Schneider, “Patterns of Ethnic Group Segregation and Civil Conflict” Harvard-NBER unpublished paper, 2006; Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin, “Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies,” *American Political*

projects, however, are geared towards the study of civil war, not electoral behavior, and at this stage they do not collect information that can be combined with electoral constituency boundaries.

A central idea in centripetalist theory is that ethnically diverse constituencies carry a potential for cross-ethnic appeals. Donald Horowitz has argued that “the most reliable way, under conditions of democratic elections, is to make politicians reciprocally dependent on the votes of members of groups other than their own.”³⁰ And according to Benjamin Reilly, “the more heterogeneous a constituency, the more likely it is that meaningful vote pooling will take place.”³¹ When electoral constituencies are largely mono-ethnic or when the largest group constitutes an overwhelming majority, this potential evaporates. On the other hand, proponents of PR have suggested that in countries where groups are concentrated in separate ethnically homogenous areas, proportionality, with its multiplicative effect, could encourage the proliferation of parties, thereby allowing greater flexibility for brokering coalitions.³²

Conceptually, the electoral system must be considered jointly with ethnic demographics to determine the structural incentives facing politicians before an election. Within a given electoral system, the votes of two different ethnic groups of equal population size but different concentrations, if mobilized, may yield completely different seat allocations in the legislature. Of course, constituencies could be drawn arbitrarily and malapportionment could produce any imaginable result. In practice, however, most democracies do not engage in extreme gerrymandering, and the international community is unlikely to do so when devising electoral rules for one of its protectorates, lest it completely delegitimize itself. The geographic distribution of ethnic groups therefore creates limitations. Unless voters are creatively assigned to virtual mixed constituencies (a practice used in ancient Athens), unitary electoral constituencies drawn on the map are bound to have different potentials for cross-ethnic voting. The simplest way to categorize the demography is along a continuum from lowest (a) to highest (d) potential for cross-ethnic voting:

Science Review vol. 101 no. 1 (February 2007): 173-185; and Lars-Erik Cederman, Jan Ketil Rød, and Nils Weidmann, “Geo-Referencing of Ethnic Groups: Creating a New Dataset,” ETH, unpublished paper, 2007.

³⁰ Donald Horowitz, “Incentives and Behaviour in the Ethnic Politics of Sri Lanka and Malaysia,” *Third World Quarterly* vol. 11 no. 4 (October 1989): 18-35.

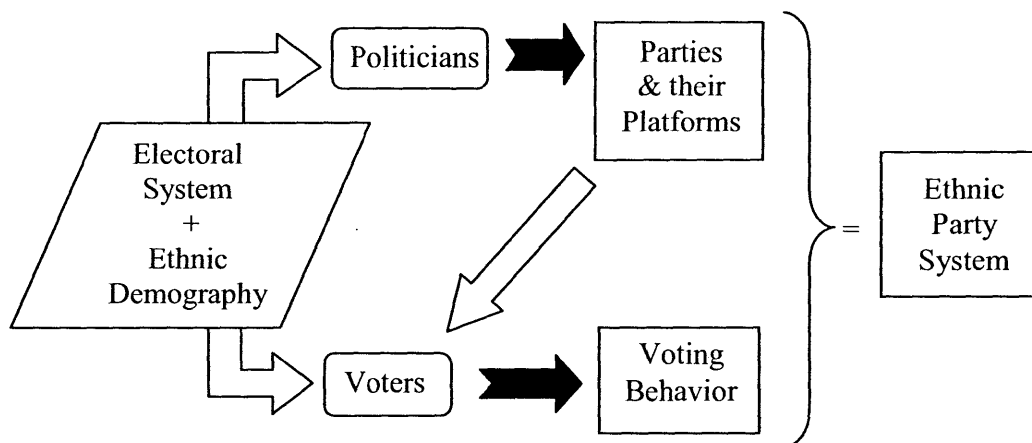
³¹ Ben Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 185.

³² Chappell Lawson, “How Best to Build Democracy: Laying the Foundation for a New Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 82 No. 4 (July/August 2003).

- (a) Clustered (ethnic groups form overwhelming majorities in different areas)
- (b) Strongly dominated (groups are mixed and one group forms a strong majority)
- (c) Weakly dominated (groups are mixed and one group forms a thin majority)
- (d) Undominated (groups are mixed and there is no majority)³³

In electoral politics, the constituency is understood to be the focus of attention for both voters and candidates. Politicians already involved in political parties and aspiring candidates desiring to join a party or form their own must take into consideration both the electoral formula and voter composition when deciding whether to appeal to certain ethnic constituencies. Similarly, voters through their social experience are expected to have a rough idea of the distribution of ethnic attributes in their constituency's population and a basic understanding of the electoral system's workings. They should therefore be able to calculate if mobilizing with others along a specific ethnic identity will pay off by electing a candidate who can then recognize them as an ethnic kin and represent them or reward them with patronage.³⁴ This interactive process is schematically presented in a box diagram below.

Figure 2: Schematic representation of the electoral process in an ethnically divided society
White arrows indicate informational input; black arrows indicate behavioral output



³³This categorization also corresponds to the group-based four-way coding of concentration used in the Minorities at Risk dataset.

³⁴This rational choice framework is borrowed from Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, and Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*.

This assumption may seem to place too high of an information requirement on voters and candidates. However, in ethnically polarized settings voters are very likely to be aware of their district's ethnic composition for many more reasons other than electoral calculation. People in divided societies are often acutely tuned to gauging ethnicity, and use their assessments to make decisions about residency, employment, social networks, and personal security in times of crisis. Similarly, candidates are likely to be aware of the ethnic breakdown of their home constituency, even if official census data are lacking. The electoral system may be poorly grasped by voters, and perhaps even by candidates at first, but if it is maintained during several elections, its effects will be observed and probably understood by most.³⁵ In theory, people have multiple identities and multiple dimensions of ethnicity can be mobilized. Electoral constituencies can have complex, matrix-like demographic breakdowns, and may be dominated by one group in some dimensions but not others. This possibility will be separately examined in the case studies, but in practice the number of ethnic attributes available for mobilization is not infinite. Certain identities are already politically activated in ethnically divided societies and they are known both to citizens and to external observers.

Given these observations about the influence of ethnic demographics on electoral incentives, the expected effects of electoral systems should be different at the two ends of the demographic continuum. In electorates characterized by clustered constituencies, there is no built-in constituency-level incentive to make cross-ethnic appeals. Proportionality, however, should affect the total number of parties entering in parliament. In electorates characterized by undominated constituencies, reductions in proportionality should create incentives for cross-ethnic appeals as envisioned by centripetalists. As for dominated constituencies, the dominant group is guaranteed representation regardless of proportionality; the dominated groups, though, may be entirely excluded if the electoral system is majoritarian. The greater the degree of demographic dominance of the large group, the smaller the potential benefit for a political party to appeal to the demographically dominated groups under a majoritarian electoral formula.

³⁵Rein Taagepera in "Designing Electoral Rules and Waiting for an Electoral System to Evolve" suggests four elections as a rule of thumb, which I follow in my case studies. See *The Architecture of Democracy*, edited by Andrew Reynolds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 248-264.

Variables and Hypotheses

The literature on electoral engineering has progressed with a frequent disconnect between programmatic battles over detailed mechanisms and empirical studies with the eye on the larger picture, i.e. the elliptic link between formula and ethnic conflict. Since the statistical findings on the nature of this link are inconclusive, it is even more important to take stock and look more carefully at the intermediate causative link, where all the theoretical controversy lies. Based on the same theories, rather than asking if the electoral formula conditions ethnic conflict, we could be asking two separate, connected questions:

- i. Does the electoral formula condition certain ethnic structures of parties? and
- ii. Do party systems with different ethnic structures accentuate or mitigate conflict?

These questions have been theorized by some works in formal modeling and case studies.³⁶ Unfortunately, the statistical analysis still lags behind due to the lack of suitable data. In some ways, the elliptical question is simpler because the categorization of electoral formulas by their proportionality is straightforward. Higher proportionality is then either associated with lower ethnic violence or it is not. Questions about the intermediate link, the ethnic structure of parties, are more complicated. In this section, I will outline these intermediate hypotheses found in the literature and separate them according to the causal link they address, (i) or (ii).

As explained, the key independent variables discussed by theorists are the formula's proportionality and the ethnic heterogeneity; both are fairly easy to measure. But there is no standard way to operationalize the intermediate variable, ethnic party systems. Based on the typology for parties I developed, I propose that the two key variables describing ethnic party systems are party fragmentation and the incidence of cross-ethnic voting (CEV). Cross-ethnic voting at the individual level is understood as voting for a candidate of an ethnic group different from one's own or for an ethnically mixed ticket. At the collective level, it can be

³⁶See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, chapters 9 and 14 for a classic approach, and Kanchan Chandra, "Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability," *Perspectives on Politics* vol. 3 no. 2 (June 2005): 235-252 for a more recent one.

approximated as the total vote share of parties that make cross-ethnic appeals and put forward multiethnic candidate rosters. Party fragmentation is often measured by the effective number of political parties (either by vote share at elections or by seat share in parliament). But in the context of multi-ethnic societies it is also conceptually important to consider the number of parties relative to the number of ethnic groups. Party fragmentation and cross-ethnic voting are the dependent variables for the first causal link. Unlike congregation and pluralism used to categorize parties, fragmentation and cross-ethnic voting are systemic, not party-level variables. To understand their correspondence with the party typology, consider what kind of parties will characterize the party system (i.e. obtain the largest vote share) for different combinations of their values.

Table 2: Correspondence between party fragmentation, cross-ethnic voting, and party types

	Parties < Groups	Parties \approx Groups	Parties > Groups
High CEV	Magnet	Magnet/Antagonist	Antagonist
Low CEV	Hegemon	Hegemon	Agonist

As show in Table 2, when cross-ethnic voting is low, the party system is bound to be dominated by hegemonic parties if there is a roughly equal ratio of parties to ethnic groups, and by agonist parties if there are many more parties than groups. A situation with low cross-ethnic voting and fewer parties than groups (lower left cell) is theoretically possible if some minorities are so alienated that they do not care to vote, and the society is run as a one-party (or cartel) ethnocracy by the dominant group(s). On the other hand, if cross-ethnic voting is high, the party system will be characterized by either magnet or antagonist parties depending on party fragmentation, with the boundary being roughly an equal ratio of parties to ethnic groups. I hope that the reader has appreciated the value added from this more complex party categorization, designed to capture both the ethnic nature of political actors (cross-ethnic vs.

mono-ethnic) and their relative number in the party system. The latter aspect is important for assessing the possible impact of proportionality on coalition-building dynamics.

The following propositions summarize the arguments that have been made about the first causal link, that between formula and party system structure. The first two propositions come from the quantitative literature on factors affecting the number of parties, and at least the first is widely accepted by consociationalists and centripetalists alike. The second two derive from centripetalist theory on cross-ethnic appeals. I attached a synoptic name to each proposition for mnemonic reference.

Proposition 1: The Multiplicative Effect

Increased electoral proportionality will tend to increase party fragmentation, and hence the average number of parties representing each ethnic group. This may mean at least one party for smaller groups and more than one party for larger groups.

Proposition 2: The Multiethnic Effect

High ethnic diversity will tend to increase party fragmentation. The more ethnic cleavages in a divided society, the more parties there will be.

Proposition 3: The Strategic Voting Hypothesis

Low proportionality increases incentives for cross-ethnic appeals and strategic cross-ethnic voting by forcing voters to consider their lower-order preferences. On the contrary, high proportionality favors voting along ethnic lines, since minority voters can easily gain representation by voting for their co-ethnic candidates.

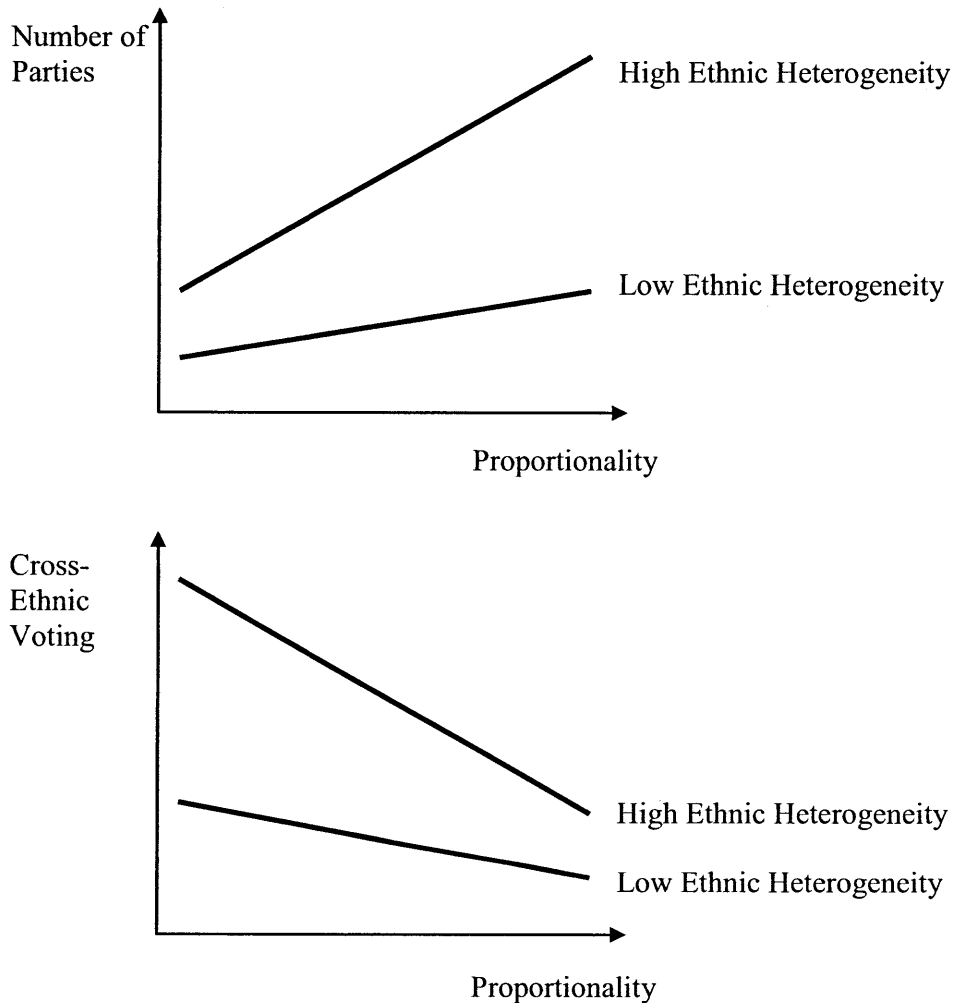
Proposition 4: The Mixed Constituency Hypothesis

The more diverse electoral constituencies are, the greater their in-built potential for cross-ethnic appeals and incentives for cross-ethnic voting.

The hypothesized combined effects of the independent on the dependent variables are symmetrically interactive: whereas they operate synergistically on party fragmentation, they are antagonistic on cross-ethnic voting. High proportionality is expected to impact the latter negatively, while ethnic heterogeneity at the constituency level should affect it positively. The following graphs visualize the relationships between the four variables by showing how

proportionality is expected to affect the number of parties and cross-ethnic voting under different demographic conditions. The interaction means greater marginal effects (a steeper slope) of a change in proportionality in more demographically diverse settings.

Figure 3: Hypothesized interactive effects of the independent on the dependent variables



To demonstrate the intuition behind propositions 3 and 4, let's imagine that we have three multiethnic constituencies and three ethnic groups, A, B, and C. The distribution of the groups is different in each constituency, ranging from a strong majority to a simple plurality for the largest group, A.

	A	B	C
Clustered	80	10	10
Dominated	60	20	20
Undominated	40	30	30

Imagine that ethnic divisions run high and that ethnicity is a strong predictor of political preferences in this society. If we could change the proportionality of the electoral formula how would this affect the calculations made by politicians and voters in each of these constituencies? First, let's consider the undominated constituency. If the electoral formula is majoritarian, group A's plurality would give it a considerable advantage. Depending on the specifics of the system, politicians appealing exclusively to group A could win most or even all seats. However, exactly because A does not have a clear majority, groups B and C have room for maneuver. If they cooperate, they can form a majority that will leave A out and win all seats, reaping the benefits of the electoral formula. To forestall this development, leaders of A may approach either B or C and offer such a deal first. Whether the electoral rule is strictly majoritarian (i.e. requires the winning candidate to garner more than half the vote) or simply plurality ultimately makes little difference strategically, since the most secure plurality is a majority. Majority/plurality formulas should therefore create incentives for cross-ethnic pacts in highly heterogeneous settings. If electoral proportionality were to increase in the undominated constituency, the incentives for cross-ethnic appeals would rapidly fade. Because groups B and C are almost as large as A, they would benefit from even a small increase in proportionality. We assume that voters prefer to elect candidates from their own group both for psychological and practical reasons, since these candidates will be closer to their preferred political positions and more likely to distribute patronage to them. The positions of any candidate or mix of candidates put forward as part of a compromise cross-ethnic deal will inevitably be closer to those of the other group. The more proportional the formula, the less interest there is in pre-election pacts.

Now let's consider the clustered constituency at the opposite end of the spectrum. A's majority there is so decisive that politicians appealing exclusively to group A would sweep the polls under plurality, majority, or even mildly proportional formulas. There is very little incentive to appeal to minority groups, and minority groups in turn have little power to affect

the electoral outcome, unless there is very strong intra-ethnic competition within group A, splitting its vote. But in an ethnically divided society we assume that inter-ethnic cleavages are strong and group A's politicians will tend to marginalize minority voters if they have good chances of winning by appealing only to their own group. Voters belonging to groups B and C will likely feel alienated and powerless. It would take a major increase in proportionality for parties appealing to them to have a realistic chance of gaining seats. Low ethnic heterogeneity makes small changes in electoral proportionality less important.

The logic is exactly the same for dominated constituencies that lies in the middle of the spectrum between the clustered and the undominated. What primarily matters is group A's margin of dominance, which determines the ease at which A's politicians can ignore the other groups in the constituency. A plurality/majority electoral formula will still benefit A; but the lower A's margin of dominance is, the more bargaining power other groups have more for intra-ethnic pacts. As A's margin approaches 50%, if groups B and C form an alliance, they will need to convince an ever smaller portion of A's members to join them in order to form a majority. This is a particularly powerful threat in winner-take-all systems, where forming a new majority yields dramatic benefits and can turn the tables on a previous one. If the electoral system is amended to become more proportional, groups B and C will be able to gain some representation by voting for parties that appeal exclusively to them, without the need to reach out to defectors from group A. With increased proportionality, group A's advantage as a majority will diminish; but so will A's need to look out for possible alliances with other groups or to fend off the threat from such alliances of rival groups.³⁷

Negotiations for interethnic electoral pacts are similar to coordination games between party bosses who control votes in a constituency. Assuming that the leadership of an ethnic group can more or less direct all the group members' votes, the question is: under which conditions of proportionality and relative group size will leaders have the greatest incentives to collaborate? A simple way to conceptualize this is by focusing on the interaction between two groups in a multiethnic constituency. If there are only two groups, the answer is trivial. The interaction between them can be represented by a line segment with endpoints at zero and one (Figure 4). The points on this line segment represent all the possible ratios between

³⁷The relative sizes of B and C matter only for minimum-winning coalitions; if C is smaller than B, then A may prefer to approach C first in order to forestall an alliance between B and C, giving C more bargaining power.

the two groups (e.g. 50:50, the most diverse configuration, lies in the middle etc.) The same points also represent all possible electoral thresholds (e.g. the middle point is the majority voting rule with a 50% electoral threshold). When only one of the two groups can pass the threshold, it wins the constituency and has no incentive to appeal to the other group that gains no representation (payoffs are one and zero respectively). When both groups can pass the threshold, they gain payoffs equal to their vote share ratio in the constituency and are indifferent to an electoral agreement. The only possibility for cooperation arises when the groups are exactly of equal size and majority voting is in effect.³⁸

Figure 4: Representation of interaction in a constituency with only two groups

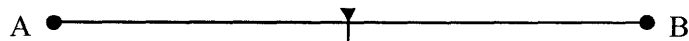
A notch marks the intergroup ratio and a wedge the electoral threshold



B crosses the electoral threshold and gains payoff 1; A is left unrepresented (payoff 0)



A and B both cross the electoral threshold and gain a payoff equal to their respective size



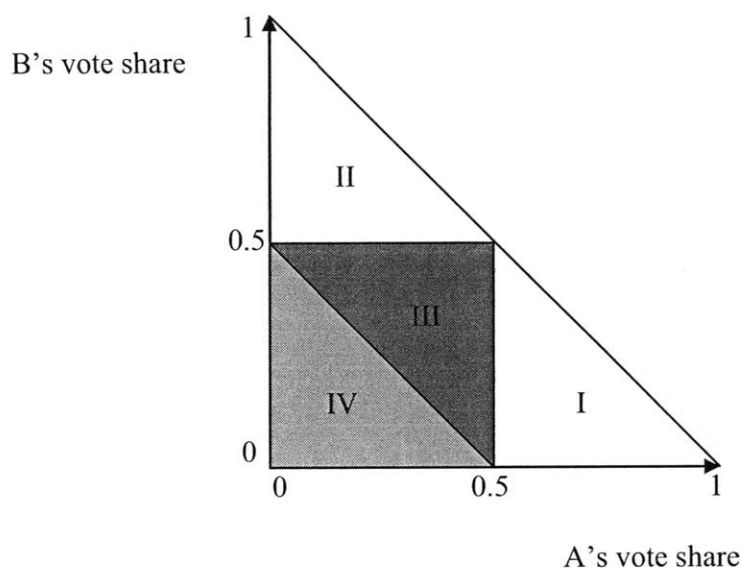
A and B are of equal size and can toss a coin or join forces to cross the majority threshold

If there are *more than two groups* the exercise becomes more interesting. Let us focus first on the interaction between any two groups in a constituency containing three or more. Let x (the horizontal axis) stand for A's vote share and y (the vertical axis) for the B's vote share, such that $x, y \in [0, 1]$. All the possible combinations of A's and B's vote shares can be graphically represented by an isosceles right triangle with a vote share constraint hypotenuse

³⁸In that case, the leaders could be indifferent between joining forces to cross the thresholds and tossing a coin to determine the victor, as their expected payoff (0.5) would be the same.

(see Figure 5). Points along this hypotenuse are equivalent to the line segment in the previous simplex example (i.e. the extreme case where all other groups have zero total vote share).

Figure 5: Graphic representation of interaction under a majoritarian formula

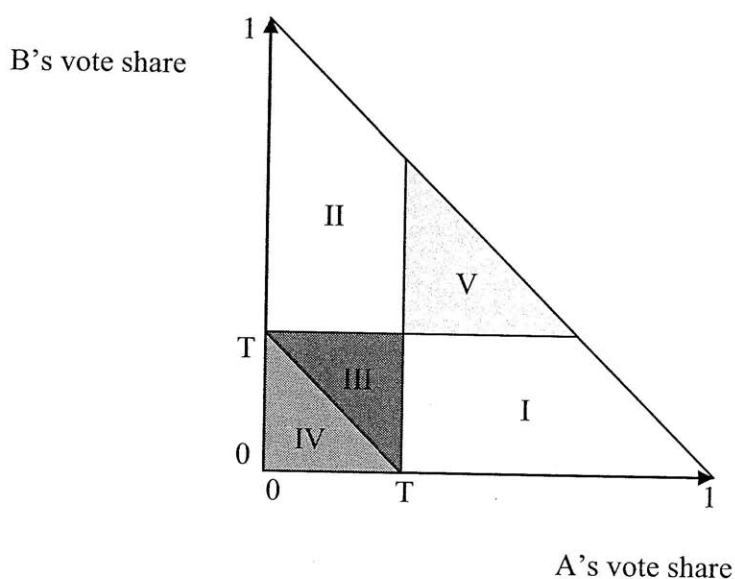


First, let's examine what happens when A and B operate under a majoritarian electoral formula. This is a winner-take-all system; if a group can win alone, it gains a payoff equal to 1 and all other groups have a payoff of 0. If two or more groups join forces and win, they will have to share the political spoils proportionally to their electoral contribution. For example, if A and B collaborate and win their payoffs will be $\frac{x}{x+y}$ and $\frac{y}{x+y}$ respectively.

In the area labeled I, A is certain to win alone and will have no incentive to cooperate with B or any other group; conversely, in area II, B can win the election alone with no need for partners. The possibilities for cooperation arise in areas III and IV. In area III, A and B can combine their vote shares to achieve the upper threshold of 0.5 and win. In area IV, A and B have insufficient joint vote share to exceed the upper threshold. If the remaining share $1 - x - y$ is controlled by a single group C, that group will certainly forfeit cooperation with A and B, since it can win alone. If the remaining vote share is controlled by multiple other groups, A and B can still win if they solicit additional partners. It is obvious that high ethnic

heterogeneity creates possibilities for alliances, whereas low heterogeneity (when either A or B or a third group C are sufficiently large) makes pacts unnecessary.

Figure 6: Graphic representation of interaction under a proportional formula



If the electoral formula were more proportional, this would push down the electoral threshold to a lower constraint (see Figure 6). This situation could be described as winners-share-all; all groups that pass the threshold T get to share the spoils of representation. A group that fails to pass the threshold still gets a zero payoff, but any group above the threshold receives a payoff equal to its vote share divided by the total vote share of groups that passed the threshold.³⁹ If $x \geq T$ is group A's vote share and $e < 1$ is the cumulative vote share of all groups that were excluded, then A's payoff will be $\frac{x}{1-e}$. As before, in area IV groups A and B cannot reach the threshold even if they cooperate, so they have to seek alternative or additional partners or else be excluded from representation. In area V, both A and B can cross the threshold alone, so they are indifferent to the prospect of a pre-election pact. Their respective payoffs will be equal to $\frac{x}{1-e}$ and $\frac{y}{1-e}$ whether they collaborate or not. In area

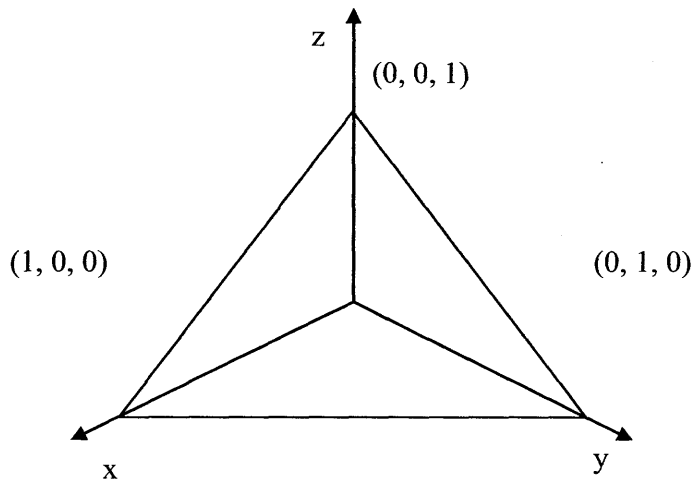
³⁹In other words, the more groups excluded by the electoral threshold the better for the larger groups that gain representation, because they can divide more of the spoils of government among them.

III, A and B can form an electoral pact that will cross the threshold, which is preferable to a zero payoff resulting from exclusion. In area I, B cannot get elected and needs to team up, but A has no incentive to offer help, since this would lower A's payoff. A can gain $\frac{x}{1-e}$ by running alone, which will be reduced to $\frac{x}{1-e+y}$ by running jointly with B. Conversely, B has no incentive to cooperate with A in area II. As the electoral threshold decreases, areas I, II, III, and IV become smaller, while area V expands. In a perfectly proportional system, V covers the entire area: A and B are indifferent to any electoral alliance for purposes of representation. They may still be open to negotiations for a post-election coalition to form a government, which will take place along the lines of Figure 3. In fact, the majoritarian rule is the special situation where if $x > 0.5$, then $e = 1 - x \Rightarrow \frac{x}{1-e} = 1$. Perfect proportionality is the special case where $e = 0 \Rightarrow \frac{x}{1-e} = x$. As demonstrated, perfect proportionality theoretically dampens incentives for cross-ethnic voting.

A slightly more complicated visualization involving three groups, A, B, and C, can be made with areal coordinates (see Figure 7).⁴⁰ All the possible demographic configurations can be represented as points on the surface of an equilateral triangle shown in the first graph. The triangle's three corners stand for the three ethnically homogeneous situations (all voters belong to group A, B, or C), the center of the triangle represents the most ethnically diverse configuration ($\frac{1}{3}$ A, $\frac{1}{3}$ B, $\frac{1}{3}$ C), etc. The electoral threshold can be depicted with lines drawn inside this space for each group. The second graph shows an example of such an electoral threshold drawn only for group C. If C's vote share is lower than the threshold T , it cannot gain any representation relying on its own voting power only; if C's vote share is higher than $1 - T$, C gains all seats and no other groups gains any; if C's vote share is between T and $1 - T$, both C and at least another group are guaranteed some representation. There are two thresholds that are special cases: for the 50% majority threshold the two lines collapse in one ($T = 1 - T$); and for the 0% threshold of perfect proportionality no lines are drawn.

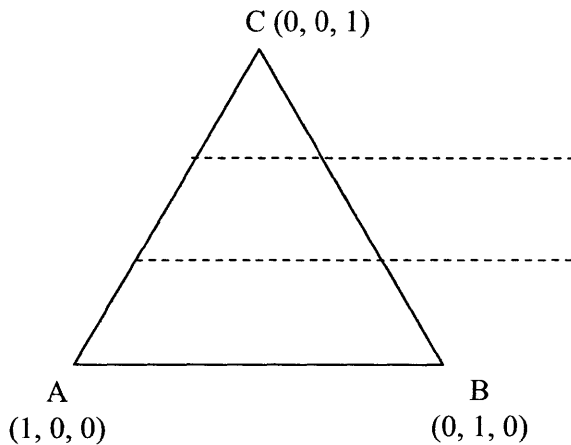
⁴⁰ See Jonathan N. Katz and Gary King, "A Statistical Model for Multi-Party Electoral Data," *American Political Science Review* vol. 93 no. 1 (March 1999): 15-32.

Figure 7: Visualization with areal coordinates and three groups, A, B, and C



Three groups A, B, and C have respective vote shares $x, y, z \in [0, 1]$. The surface of the equilateral triangle contains all possible combinations of vote shares as points defined in areal coordinates.

Electoral thresholds can be represented on this triangle by lines for each group:



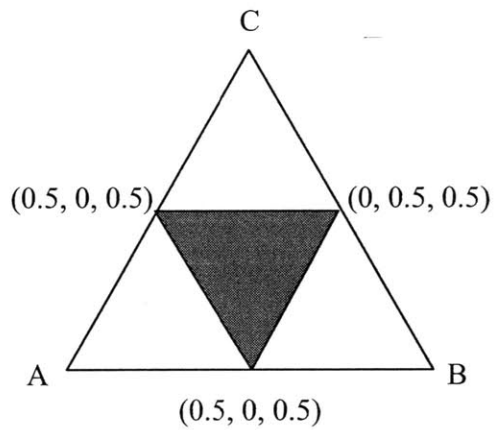
Above this line C has enough vote share to win all seats regardless of what A and B do

Between these lines C has enough vote share to win at least some seats

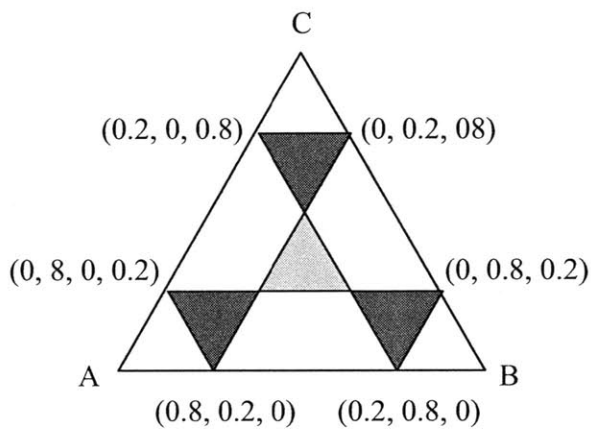
Below this line C's vote share is too low to pass the threshold

The following graphs illustrate different electoral thresholds for all three groups. White areas represent demographic configurations where there is a disincentive for cross-ethnic pacts. Dark shaded areas cover demographic configurations where there are positive incentives for such pacts because two groups can cross the threshold only by joining forces. Light shaded areas cover demographic configurations where groups are indifferent about cross-ethnic pacts because the threshold is low enough that all three of them can cross it independently.

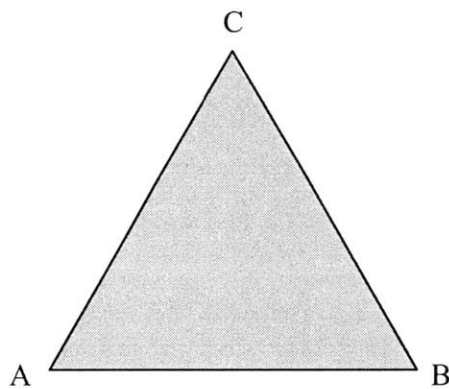
50% threshold: strong incentives for cross-ethnic pacts when no group has majority



20% threshold: some incentives for cross-ethnic pacts if two of the groups are small



0% threshold: groups are indifferent about pacts under any demographic configuration



Drawing the threshold lines for all three groups, a 50% effective threshold (the case of a majoritarian electoral formula) is shown first. Demographic configurations inside the shaded dark grey area favor cross-ethnic pacts, whereas if the vote share of any of the three groups surpasses 50% (white areas), there is no such incentive. The second example depicts a more proportional electoral system with a 20% threshold. Whenever only one or two of the three groups can pass this threshold by themselves, there is a disincentive for cooperation.⁴¹ Cooperation is expected whenever two groups can cross the threshold only by joining forces (dark grey). An area of indifference exists in the center of the triangle (light grey) where all three groups on their own can cross the threshold. In the last example, under a perfectly proportional formula, the area of indifference grows to cover the entire space. Again, this illustrates that under plurality/majority incentives for cross-ethnic voting should be different for ethnically homogeneous and heterogeneous constituencies, and that they should disappear for all demographic configurations under maximal proportionality.

These abstract illustrations made two simplifying assumptions. The first was that ethnic leaders control their entire groups' vote as a block. This can be relaxed by introducing some intra-group competition and/or the possibility that candidates from one ethnic group can attract at least a small proportion of another group's voters. The second simplification involved focusing on one electoral constituency. In practice, most countries are divided into multiple constituencies whose demographic structures may vary. Ethnic entrepreneurs at the national level then face an aggregate situation consisting of multiple constituency-level games. As long as most electoral constituencies are of the same type (clustered, weakly or strongly dominated, or undominated), the groups' leaders will follow the same strategies at the aggregate level as for any single constituency.

The last set of hypotheses relate to the second causal link, between party system structure and ethnic conflict. I have dubbed them corollaries to distinguish them from the propositions from the first causal link on which they are based. The first three follow jointly from propositions 1 and 2 (hereby abbreviated P1 and P2) and reflect opposing views on the effects of high party fragmentation; the fourth follows from P3 and P4 concerning cross-ethnic voting.

⁴¹ For the same reasons as in the example with two groups, the groups that gain representation benefit from the fact that some groups are excluded and the political 'pie' can be shared among fewer actors.

Corollary 1: Voice to the Alternative (pro-PR)

Through its multiplicative effect, PR can encourage political diversity, separating moderates from extremists within each group into different political parties, and hence creating more flexible combinations for cross-ethnic coalition governments of moderates.

Corollary 2: Voice to the Excluded (pro-PR)

Higher proportionality reduces the threshold of representation for small minorities, increasing their visibility and bargaining power. When each group receives seats proportional to its population a legitimizing sentiment of 'fairness' for the political system contributes to stability.

Corollary 3: Rewards to Extremism (anti-PR)

A lower electoral threshold will give more leverage to small extremist ethnic parties and lead to unstable coalition governments, whereas less proportional electoral systems will favor large centrist parties with moderate agendas.

Corollary 4: Rewards to Moderation (anti-PR)

Strategic voting helps multiethnic parties or ethnic parties with moderate positions, bridging ethnic divisions. Higher proportionality diminishes incentives for strategic behavior, favoring strictly ethnic voting.

To evaluate the hypothesized interactive effect of the independent variables on party fragmentation, P1 and P2 must be examined jointly; similarly P3 and P4 must be examined jointly to evaluate the hypothesized interactive effect of the independent variables on cross-ethnic voting. Corollaries 1 and 2 (abbreviated C1 and C2) extol the benefits of adopting PR, whereas C3 and C4 make negative forecasts.

Case Selection and Methodology

Ideally, the aforementioned hypotheses should be tested using data from across the world. However, as noted, such data is unfortunately unavailable today, and creating a worldwide dataset on patterns of ethnic voting is beyond the capacity of a single doctoral

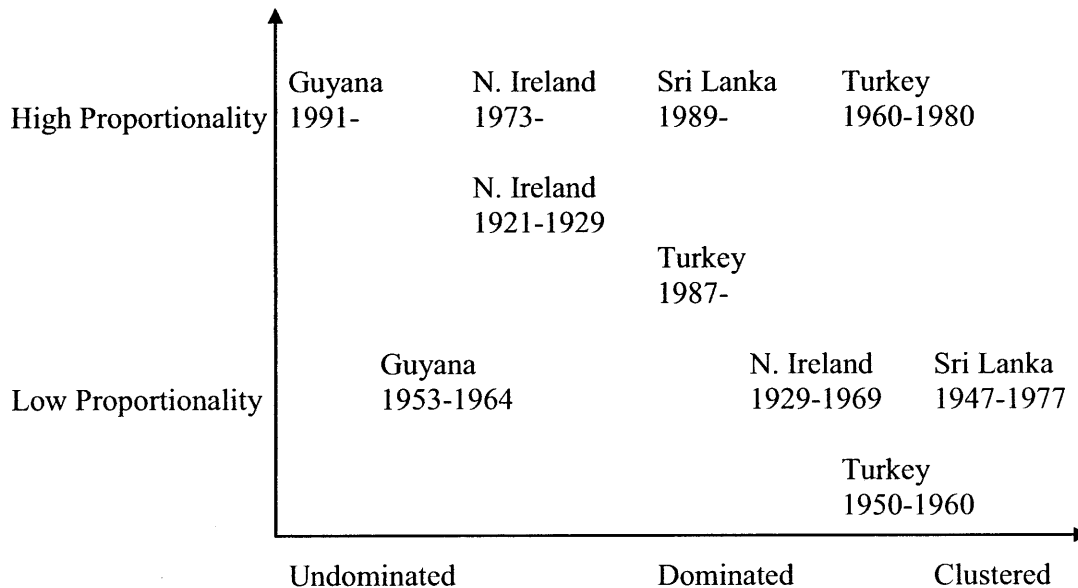
student. What I have therefore opted to do in this dissertation is test the hypotheses on a small number of carefully selected case studies, with an eye to maximizing inferential value from a small-n design. The most promising cases for such an endeavor are societies with significant and persistent ethnic divisions that implemented an electoral reform involving a major change in proportionality. Despite the fact that many countries have changed their electoral system in the last few decades, only four cases fulfill the criteria: Northern Ireland, which switched from STV to FPTP in 1929 and back to STV in 1973, Guyana which moved from FPTP to PR in 1964, Sri Lanka, which implemented a similar change in 1978 (also adopting a variation of AV for presidential elections), and Turkey, which introduced one reform from plurality to PR in 1961, and a second one to lower proportionality in 1983.⁴²

This choice of critical test cases has two benefits, one practical and one inferential. First, it simplifies the task of collecting data on ethnic demographics, mapping them on electoral constituencies, and coding parties across a historical period when electoral proportionality remained fairly constant. Second, assuming that the defining ethnic cleavage remained the same across time, the design involves a quasi-experimental set-up with a common treatment (electoral reform). Within-case comparison introduces controls for the type of ethnic cleavage, ethnic demographics (assuming no massive population movements) and general socio-economic development, which have been generally absent from previous case study approaches. The cases display good variation on proportionality and ethnic demography, the two independent variables in the first set of theoretical propositions (see Figure 8). This allows for across-case comparisons on the first causal link. Because of the range of electoral systems used, the case material speaks more to arguments about the effects of proportionality. More limited observations about ordinality can be made for Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, where preferential systems have been used. With the exception of

⁴²I am very grateful to Dr. Krister Lundell from Abo Akademi in Finland for providing me with a dataset of electoral system reforms since 1946. I rejected as potential cases those where the electoral reform was between systems within the same family of formulas (proportional vs. plurality/majority), like Fiji, or where the reform was still too recent at the time of writing, as in FYR Macedonia. France and New Zealand both implemented major shifts in proportionality, but in France the reform came before immigrants had become a large minority with citizenship rights, while New Zealand's reserved seats for Maoris rendered the reform much less relevant for minority representation. Besides, ethnic divisions in France and New Zealand are far less intense than in the four cases chosen.

Northern Ireland in the 1920s, all systems were in place for four or more elections, satisfying Rein Taagepera's rule of thumb for strategic adjustment.

Figure 8: Case study distribution by electoral proportionality and demography



Considering the second causal link, I have to be more conservative about the inferential value of this structured comparison. The levels of violence have varied in all four cases across time, but the intensities of the conflicts did not reach similar levels—with those in Sri Lanka and Turkey being much deadlier. In the wider political science literature, electoral formulas and social cleavages are seen as major determinants of party systems, but ethnic conflict is more multi-faceted and often internationalized. All four cases have experienced a fair amount of external influence and intervention.⁴³ After analyzing the evolution of the party system in each case, I will make remarks about the corollaries, and return to cross-case comparisons in the concluding chapter. I cannot claim, however, that I designed the study with certain selection criteria in mind for the party system, since determining party system structure was the main objective of my fieldwork. Nevertheless, the

⁴³Including British colonial rule, British mediation and US covert action in the 1960s, and US and CARICOM mediation in the 1990s in Guyana; British intervention and a multi-lateral peace process in Northern Ireland since the 1970s; Soviet and Syrian support for the PKK, interventions in Northern Iraq, and EU pressure on Turkey; Indian intervention and international mediation efforts in Sri Lanka.

first causal link is logically prior; the corollaries rest on the propositions, therefore it is necessary to examine first if the propositions hold.

The study employs a quasi-experimental design with a common treatment for all cases (electoral reform) that is used to examine “before-and-after” effects. Quasi-experiments are “observational studies of a phenomenon occurring in a natural setting in which an event or a choice occurs at some point in time, creating the approximation of an experimental intervention.”⁴⁴ Among the various threats to validity in quasi-experimental designs, the most relevant here are those regarding history, maturation, and testing. ‘History’ refers to the possibility that some other important variable changed more or less concurrently with the test; ‘maturation’ refers to the possibility that post-test observations are the result of a longer process with pre-test origins; and ‘testing’ refers to the situation where the nature of the test itself may have affected observations. Few quasi-experimental designs in social science can claim to be free of such confounding influences, but the researcher can recognize them and try to assess their impact on the validity and generalization of inference. In terms of history, most electoral reforms, the ‘tests’ in this study, were not isolated treatments; with the exception of the 1929 one in Northern Ireland, the rest occurred in the context of larger, multifaceted interventions (coups in Turkey, constitutional reform in Sri Lanka, the British government as an external actor in Guyana and Northern Ireland). Only two out of the six electoral reforms in my case studies (again, Northern Ireland in 1929, and Turkey in 1960) were not adopted concurrently with rising ethnic tensions. In terms of maturation, a critique of institutional reforms in societies with ethnic conflict is that they sometimes come too late to reverse a forewarned disaster.⁴⁵ Finally, in terms of testing, there is a possible weakness in sequencing: all cases except Northern Ireland started out with a plurality electoral system and then moved to a proportional one.

None of these critiques, however, invalidate the study design for purposes of policy evaluation. Electoral engineering is typically attempted in societies with manifest, unmanageable ethnic conflicts, and the actors involved rarely limit themselves to an electoral

⁴⁴Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), p. 166.

⁴⁵This critique follows Horowitz’s observation about the question of timing, sketched in *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 684, and expanded in “Incentives and Behaviour in the Ethnic Politics of Sri Lanka and Malaysia.” *Third World Quarterly* vol. 11 no. 4 (October 1989): 18-35.

intervention alone. Careful examination and close knowledge of each case can reveal if the electoral instruments had any impact by themselves or in combination with another concurrent institutional change.⁴⁶ The move from plurality to proportionality is not an anomaly but a common global experience: proportional systems were invented later and historically succeeded the older plurality ones. And the case material does not support the sequencing hypothesis that early adoption of a plurality system may have caused the high ethnic polarization.

It is true that none of these four societies have been stable democracies. All of them experienced lapses in democratic rule: Guyana in 1968-1992, Northern Ireland in 1969-1998, Turkey in 1960-1961, 1971, 1980-1983, and 1997, while Sri Lanka was in an intermittent state of civil war after 1983, which recently reached a dramatic conclusion. But imperfect democracies are exactly the kind of societies where international actors undertake electoral engineering experiments. Since the object of the study is to examine the effects of electoral proportionality on political party structure in ethnically divided states, including cases without ethnic divisions would not add any analytical or policy relevance. The electoral system changes were imposed in all cases by an international or domestic actor with a clear intent to address social conflicts. Typically some parties benefited and others lost, and fairness to all political forces was not the dominant concern of the reformers. Again, this is no different from the numerous recent cases where international actors have intervened to design a target's political institutions. In fact this is exactly what happened with Britain's role in Northern Ireland, and is also partly true with respect to India's role in Sri Lanka.

Each case involves a number of identical steps, with the aim of providing a degree of consistency that will facilitate cross-case comparison. First, I divide each case into two or three periods between reforms (two for Guyana and Sri Lanka, three for Turkey and Northern Ireland), according to the electoral system in place. I identify the salient ethnic cleavages in the population using ethnographic sources and provide background information about the nature and evolution of the conflict. Then, for each period, I describe the electoral geography, by mapping the ethnic groups onto electoral constituencies as well as I can, combining information from the national census, election and delimitation commission reports, and

⁴⁶ Such instruments considered in the case studies include mandatory power-sharing (Northern Ireland), semi-presidentialism (Guyana, Sri Lanka), and bans on political parties (Turkey).

independent demographic studies. I then code the ethnic composition of each constituency and characterize the electoral demography overall, noting whether it would be favorable or unfavorable to the mobilization of each ethnicity. For each period, I study the country's political history, using primary and secondary sources, in order to identify the ethnic composition and platforms of all significant political parties that participated in elections. I track each party's political behavior and evolution on matters related to ethnicity, including possible splits, merges, and coalition agreements with other parties. I collect constituency-level election results and analyze them with respect to patterns of ethnic voting. I use this information to code the political parties by their ethnic voter base according to the typology developed in this chapter. I describe the theoretical expectations in each period (given the electoral formula and demography) and compare them to the actual electoral record. Finally, I compare the pre- and post-reform periods in order to determine whether political party formation and voting behavior confirm or contradict the hypotheses formulated above.

Each case study involved extensive fieldwork combining archival research and interviews. The interviews were targeted at four tiers of respondents: political party officials, civil society leaders, election observers, and ordinary citizens. Interviews in the first three ('elite') tiers were eponymous and respondents were selected rigorously. In the process of selection I made separate complete lists of all major political parties (current or historical), key governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in the electoral process, and important civil society organizations representing each ethnic group. For each of these I identified one or more leading figures (e.g. party head or general secretary, election commissioner, director of election observation mission, leader of minority organization) and possible alternates, in case the top choices declined. Potential respondents were contacted in this order by telephone or e-mail with a standard communication explaining my background and the topic of my dissertation. With the exception of Sri Lanka—where my research was most hampered by the ongoing fighting as the civil war drew to a close—I was able to travel extensively within each country, to visit various electoral constituencies, and to obtain interviews with key figures from all political parties, state agencies, and civil society organizations on my list.

The general goal of the interviews was to corroborate published sources on the actual conduct and dynamic of elections in each case, to clarify details of particular historical

events, and to elucidate the interplay between candidates and voters with regards to ethnicity. The interviews were structured, following a series of questions appropriate for each tier and adjusted to the respondent's personal experience with the electoral process. Interviews with party officials specifically aimed to elicit information on parties' ethnic agendas and cadre composition, electoral strategies and ethnic appeals, negotiations and electoral pacts between parties, party attitudes towards the electoral system, and candidates' experiences with the campaign in their electoral constituencies. Interviews with election-related agencies focused on the organization's mandate and technical role in elections, challenges and possible irregularities encountered (actual or alleged), and personal assessments of the electoral system and the overall integrity of the electoral process. Interviews with leaders of ethnic organizations included questions on the organization's structure and membership, its relationship with political parties, and its general positions on issues pertaining to ethnic and electoral politics.

For the fourth tier I relied on personal acquaintances made during the course of my fieldwork, and the interviews were kept anonymous in order to protect the privacy of the respondents. For this reason, they are cited with their real names altered. The questions I asked voters revolved around their own ethnic and party affiliations, their voting behavior, their understanding of the electoral system, and their attitudes on current politics and ethnic relations. None of these questions posed a danger to the respondents, but in societies traumatized by ethnic conflict such conversations require a level of familiarity that I could not have attained in the context of a door-to-door survey. I cannot claim that the selection process for this tier was rigorous or necessarily representative since it was conditioned on personal serendipity, although I did make an effort to approach voters from all ethnic groups, both genders, and different walks of life. I would consider my entire research project highly deficient if it did not involve contact and engagement with both candidates and voters. At the end of my travels, I had learned just as much—if not more—from the latter as I had from the former.

Chapter 2

GUYANA: THE REIGNING PLURALITY

Guyana is a Caribbean society which is neither an island nor in the Caribbean. Tucked on the northern coast of South America between Venezuela and Brazil, outside the chain of the Antilles, its coasts awash with the muddy outpour of the Orinoco River, it is not naturally endowed as a conventional vacation spot, except for avid eco-tourists. Guyana is a plantation society in more than just the agricultural sense. Apart from prized sugar, its Dutch and later British colonial masters also planted it with people from other parts of the world, Africans and Asians brought in as forced labor. The same ethnic mix is found in neighboring Trinidad and Suriname; but in Guyana it gave rise to a particularly protracted socio-political conflict, which has only recently begun to subside. My fieldwork in Guyana took place in the fall of 2008, two years after the 2006 election—the first non-violent one since the country's independence. Elections, electoral systems, and accusations of electoral fraud have played a large role in Guyanese political history. The purpose of this chapter is to schematically describe them in light of electoral engineering theory.

Ethnic Identities in Guyana

Unlike the other cases in this study, the basic proxy of ethnic division in Guyana is race. Since colonial times, British Guiana was known by the motto “the land of the six races.”⁴⁷ Counts of these have differed, but most include the following: Africans or Afro-Guyanese, East Indians or Indo-Guyanese, the indigenous Amerindians, Europeans (many of them Portuguese), Asians (primarily Chinese), and people of mixed racial background. I have

⁴⁷ ‘Guiana’ was the older spelling which I retain at times in the text for historical purposes.

called race a proxy because it is often a shortcut for summarizing the other cultural attributes of each of these groups or even sometimes a convenient blanket term for merging other ethnic categories (e.g. ignoring that there are several Amerindian tribes or that initially the British did not consider the Portuguese 'white'). Nevertheless, these groupings are widely accepted in Guyanese everyday life, and replicated in official publications and in the social science literature.

Colonized by the Dutch in the 17th century and captured by the British during the Napoleonic Wars, Guyana was originally dominated by the sugar economy. Deeming the indigenous people unsuitable for hard labor (but subsequently using them as slave guards), the plantation owners imported thousands of African slaves who toiled in the sugar fields until slavery's abolition in 1834. In the mid-19th century, freed slaves tried to escape from the plantation environment and struggled to establish independent farming communities, while the plantation owners replaced them with new waves of indentured workers—at first Portuguese and Chinese, but increasingly from the late 19th century on, East Indian.⁴⁸ As poor migrants from rural India became the new agricultural working class, the Chinese and Portuguese shifted to commercial and professional activities; many Africans also moved to the towns, seeking opportunities in the urban economy and in colonial administration. Social historians of Guyana have argued that although all these ethnic groups shared a history of oppressive labor under colonial rule, they did so in separate periods or with different experiences, often in competition with each other and occupying segmented physical and cultural spaces.⁴⁹

In 1920, it was indentured labor's turn to be abolished in the British Empire. Some Indians returned to the subcontinent (as, in theory at least, they all could at the end of their contract), but most stayed in the new West Indies homeland. A budding trade unionism in the 1920s brought together people from different ethnic groups and eventually, by the 1940s, gave rise to a national independence movement. Even within trade unionism, however, ethnic distinctions were present, both in separate organizations (the League of Coloured Peoples vs.

⁴⁸ For a history of this migratory movement see K. O. Laurence, *A Question of Labor: Indentured Immigration into Trinidad and British Guiana, 1875-1917* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

⁴⁹ See Chaitram Singh, *Guyana: Politics in a Plantation Society* (New York: Praeger; Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), pp. 1-11, 26; Steve Garner, *Guyana, 1838-1985: Ethnicity, Class and Gender* (Kingston, Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2007), pp. 1-71.

the British Guiana East Indian Association) and in different specializations (with Indians concentrated in agriculture, and Africans in mining, education, and the civil service).

In 1955, after a bitter confrontation with the colonial authorities, British Guiana's national movement broke off into two factions: one led by Cheddi Jagan, a US-educated East Indian dentist, and the other by Forbes Burnham, a UK-educated African lawyer. Jagan's group kept the original name of the movement, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), while Burnham's group evolved into the People's National Congress (PNC). By the early 1960s, the PPP-PNC divide had taken an overtly racial tone, turning every election into an ethnic riot. PPP had the edge at the ballot box, but cunning maneuvering by Burnham won him British and American support, allowing him to become prime minister shortly before independence in 1966 and to subsequently establish a quasi-dictatorship. Democracy returned to Guyana at the end of the Cold War in 1992, and with it PPP regained a seemingly permanent foothold on power.

The Indo-Guyanese have been the largest ethnic group in Guyana throughout the 20th century. The second largest group, the Afro-Guyanese, maintain a reservoir of complaints against them about economic and political domination. Sherwood Lowe, Dean of Technology at the University of Guyana and an ex-deputy of PNC's moderate faction, summarizes this view: "it's sheer numbers, by a fluke of history more ships came, more Indians arrived in Guyana; why then should that give them the right to be supreme leaders?"⁵⁰ The Indo-Guyanese counter that during the 28 years of PNC rule it was they who were the victims of state discrimination. As in other divided societies, perceptions of unfairness loom larger in the public debate than actual inequalities or the hard data needed to prove discrimination. Economic studies indicate that the Africans are only marginally poorer on average than East Indians, that the most disadvantaged group are the Amerindians, and that the overall correlation between poverty and race is weak.⁵¹ On the other hand, accusations voiced by PNC and Afro-Guyanese civil society organizations that blacks are discriminated against in loans and government programs are hard to prove because no ethnic

⁵⁰ Interview with Sherwood Lowe, University of Guyana, 15/9/2008.

⁵¹ See John Gafar, "Income Distribution, Inequality, and Poverty during Economic Reforms in Guyana." *Journal of Developing Areas*, vol. 38 no. 1 (2004): 55-77.

data is collected on loans or public procurement bids.⁵² Such allegations are not hard to believe considering that Guyana has one of the most corrupt economies in the Western hemisphere.⁵³ A 2006 Americas Barometer survey, however, found no substantial difference in corruption victimization between Guyana's ethnic groups.⁵⁴

Racial segregation in Guyana is most acutely seen in trade unionism and in the armed forces. The umbrella Trade Union Congress (TUC), traditionally African-dominated and incorporating miners', teachers', and civil service unions, has for a long time been at odds with the major agricultural unions GAWU and NAACIE which represent East Indians.⁵⁵ The army and the police are overwhelmingly African, the latter since colonial times.⁵⁶ One would expect an East Indian party in power to feel threatened by this imbalance and to want to address it. PPP General Secretary Donald Ramotar claims that there is widespread hazing and harassment of non-Africans in the security forces which the government finds hard to combat. "But we have never asked the police or army to do anything political for us," he added. Indo-Guyanese opinion on the street is that whenever the PNC organizes riots around election time, the government is reluctant to ask the army to intervene.⁵⁷ As for the police, in a 2006 World Competitiveness Survey, Guyana ranked last out of 125 countries on police reliability.⁵⁸ An Indo-Guyanese professional told me privately: "even if a robber were in my back yard I would not call the police. They probably wouldn't help a black person either, but if you're Indian it's twice as bad."⁵⁹

The long duel between PPP and PNC has defined ethnic relations in Guyana for decades. Politically driven riots took place as recently as 2003, and older people have vivid memories of the violence in the 1960s, when racially mixed communities were torn apart.

⁵² See two relevant reports by the Ethnic Relations Commission: "Public Consultations on the Perceived Needs of the African Guyanese Community" (November 13-16, 2007) and Melissa Ifill, "Study to Assess Whether There Is Any Discrimination in the Award and Distribution of Economic Opportunities in Guyana" (July 24, 2007).

⁵³ Transparency International's 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (<http://www.transparency.org>) was harshly denounced by President Bharrat Jagdeo as untrue.

⁵⁴ Mark Bynoe and Talia Choy, *The Political Culture of Democracy in Guyana: 2006*, LAPOP, p. 86.

⁵⁵ Interviews with Norris Whitter and N. K. Gopaul.

⁵⁶ In 1965 the police was 73.5% African, 19.9% Indian, 4.2% mixed, 0.8% Portuguese, 0.3% European, and 1.3% other. Steve Garner, *Guyana, 1838-1985: Ethnicity, Class and Gender*, p. 62.

⁵⁷ A small Indian party, ROAR (Rise Organize and Rebuild Guyana), which won a seat in the 2001 election, campaigned against PPP on grounds that it fails to protect the lives of East Indians.

⁵⁸ Bynoe and Choy, *The Political Culture of Democracy in Guyana: 2006*, p. 93.

⁵⁹ Interviews with Donald Ramotar and Majid.

The exact numbers of deaths caused by the recurrent civil unrest is not known, but is probably only in the hundreds.⁶⁰ In recent years, organized crime has taken more lives. Guyana's underworld, however, is not race-blind, and crime is also a source of communal tension. In 2002-2006 the country was shaken by a gang war launched by Indo-Guyanese drug trafficker 'Roger' Khan against Afro-Guyanese gangs kidnapping Indo-Guyanese businessmen. Khan was eventually arrested in Suriname and his trial is pending in the US, but similar cases have stirred racial tensions since.⁶¹

More than a tenth of Guyana's population is of mixed racial background. Mixed people were identified as a separate group in British Caribbean colonies for a long time before parties and elections were introduced. The authors of the 1946 census cited the following about their classification of the "mixed race" category:

...the mixed or coloured population is predominantly a European-African mixture.... The line of demarcation between Mixed and Black is incapable of being strictly defined. If *any* admixture of European ancestry were to be the criterion and if the details of ancestry could be known, a much lower proportion than the census tables reveal would be described as African and a much higher as mixed. In practice, however, as later generations increase the African proportion, the children of mixed and Black tend to be classed as Black.⁶²

Mixed or 'colored' people in Guyana have not been as cohesive a group as Africans or Indians, with their 'own' party or special organizations. The percentage of people identifying as mixed is highest in Georgetown and in Amerindian areas, particularly the Northwestern logging region. Mixed marriages are more common in the capital's urban environment or on the jungle and savannah 'frontier'; coastal rural communities tend to be more segregated. The ethnic backgrounds of mixed couples have changed over time. In the 21st century, intermarriage between religions and without conversion is not at all unheard of and social attitudes towards it are more relaxed. But in earlier times intermarriage was more

⁶⁰ In the 1964 riots, probably the worst in history, the colonial police officially recorded 176 deaths.

⁶¹ For the 'Fineman' Rawlins case, see "Guyana Shooting Rampage Kills 11," *BBC World News* 27/1/2008; "Guyana's Crime Challenge," *BBC Caribbean* 22/22008; and "Guyana Agents Kill Massacre Suspect in Raid," *International Herald Tribune* 28/8/2008.

⁶² *West Indian Census Report 1946*, pp. 15-16.

commonly intra-religious, which explains why mixed people tended to be urban, Christian, and at least some part white or part black.

In colonial times, mixed people formed a large part of the Creole elite that maintained good relations with the British. Today, identification with one of the main racial groups is a personal choice based on social experience and the ethnic politics. Rafael Trotman, a Fletcher School graduate and co-chairman of the new interracial party Alliance for Change (AFC), knows that ancestry has definite political repercussions: “it depends what you are mixed with; if you are mixed Indian-Amerindian, you will not tend towards the PNC.” Trotman is himself of mixed black, white, and Chinese ancestry, and used to be a PNC deputy before he founded the AFC in 2005. Black voters generally perceive him as black; but whereas some blacks view him as one of their own who has tried to break away from the antiquated PNC leadership, others see him as a turncoat who split the black vote in 2006. “In Guyana,” he told me, “I am despised by some quarters of the African community because I am not black enough.”⁶³

The smaller communities, the Portuguese and Chinese, were the first to go after the British. PNC policies were bad for private business while the ethnic polarization did not leave much space for the numerically marginal others. Since the 1990s, fresh immigration from China has given the Chinese community a breath of life; but the newcomers are not yet Anglicized and they are more inward-looking than the older generation.⁶⁴ While the few remaining Portuguese are even less visible, immigration from Brazil has given rise to a new Lusophone community of guest workers along the road from Georgetown to Lethem, on the Brazilian border in the south. The 2002 census counted the foreign-born population under 10,000 but UNDP estimates the number to be many times higher in Georgetown alone.⁶⁵

Brazilian immigrants stand out as the only sizable non-Anglophone community. Most people in Guyana speak some variety of Guyanese English Creole. Like other Caribbean creoles, it constitutes a dialect continuum ranging across social classes and regions, the dialect of Berbice (the predominantly Indian northeastern area) being the most poorly

⁶³ Interviews with Rafael Trotman, Raule, Winston, Lloy, and Jason.

⁶⁴ For accounts of Chinese history in Guyana see Trev Sua-A-Quan, *Cane reapers: Chinese Indentured Immigrants in Guyana* (Vancouver: Riftwood Publications, 1999) and Laura Jane Hall, *The Chinese in Guyana: The making of a Creole community* (UC Berkeley unpublished PhD thesis, 1995).

⁶⁵ *Guyana 2002 Census of Population*, p. 19; interview with Trevor Benn, UNDP, 26/9/2008.

intelligible even to other Guyanese.⁶⁶ Educated Guyanese easily code switch between Standard English, when talking to a foreigner, and Creole, when talking to a compatriot. The speech of working class East Indians may be peppered with slang words from Hindi/Urdu, but knowledge of South Asian languages has steadily declined. Although Indian movies and sitcoms are popular, there is only limited interest in linguistic revival among younger Indo-Guyanese. The two most common indigenous languages, Makushi and Wapishana, are not standardized or taught in the educational system. Amerindians living in ethnically mixed rural areas or those who have migrated to the larger towns have typically lost contact with their linguistic heritage. Under such circumstances of gradual assimilation, language has not played an independent role in ethnic politics, except in those instances when it reinforces the racial oppositions (e.g. the infamous *apan jhaat*, “our own kind,” a slogan used by PPP propagandists to rally the Indian vote).

Guyana is very religiously diverse, and in ways that are crosscutting with race. Churches, mosques, and mandirs are seen side-by-side on public roads. Most Indo-Guyanese are Hindu, with significant minorities of Muslims and Christians, the latter often descendants of converts from the colonial period. The Afro-Guyanese are almost universally Christian—a very small minority identifies as Rastafari. Amerindian society was heavily influenced by Christian missionary activity, and the rite of passage to integration for many an Amerindian typically consisted of a missionary school education. The Catholic Church has been very active in Amerindian areas, but it is not the largest Christian denomination in Guyana; most Guyanese Christians follow various Protestant creeds (Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, and today increasingly Pentecostal). Compared to Hindus and Muslims, Christians are religiously fragmented and inter-denominational cooperation is haphazard.⁶⁷ The Hindu and Muslim communities are divided organizationally more than dogmatically. However, one organization has traditionally been the dominant one in each community.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ For a detailed treatment see John Rickford, *Dimensions of a Creole Continuum: History, Texts, and Linguistic Analysis of Guyanese Creole* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

⁶⁷ The Council of Churches, which vocally opposed the PNC dictatorship, has virtually evaporated today.

⁶⁸ The Guiana United Sad'r Islamic Anjuman (GUSIAD or Anjuman) was the main Muslim organization until the 1960s; the Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG), founded in 1979 in reaction to the divisive politicization of Anjuman by PPP and PNC, is the most important one today. See Raymond Chickrie, "Islamic Organizations in Guyana: Seventy Years of History and Politics, 1936-2006," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* vol. 27 no. 3 (2007): 401-428. Similarly for Hindus, the Hindu Maha Sabha was superseded in 1975 by

Remarkably, Muslim and Hindu leaders have so far shielded their communities from the religious strife plaguing the Indian subcontinent, and have preserved an Indo-Guyanese image of interfaith harmony. Guyana has not experienced any Hindu-Muslim violence. Relations between Christianity and these two religions are another matter. Proselytism and favoritism towards Christians were standard complaints of Hindus and Muslims against the British colonial authorities. In the 1950s and 60s, at the height of the PPP-PNC struggle, the racial division also took a religious twist. Forbes Burnham put forward Christianity as an aspect of cultural affinity between the Afro-Guyanese and the British or the West in general, casting the PPP as essentially oriental and anti-Western. The PPP's Marxist rhetoric was also seen as an atheistic threat by devout Guyanese Christians. In the 1970s, however, Christian leaders joined the opposition against the PNC, and developed a cordial relationship with PPP which carries on until today. In the last decade, religious leaders have made ad hoc efforts to meet and make interfaith pleas for calm and restraint during the outbursts of electoral violence.⁶⁹

Ethnic Demographics

Guyana's oblong territory is traversed by four rivers, from west to east: Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and Corentyne, the last marking the border with Suriname. Much of the interior is jungle or savannah. The bulk of the population is concentrated on the coastal strip, a marshy flood-prone lowland that must have made the original Dutch colonists feel closer to home. Europeans always made up a very small proportion of an already sparsely populated colony. In terms of total land mass, Guyana is the largest member of CARICOM, but its population hardly exceeds three quarters of a million, and has been stagnant since the 1970s with high rates of emigration to North America.

Guyana has not had a racial majority during its periods of democratic rule. According to census data (see Table 1), the East Indians actually became a majority only during the Burnham years, but have since declined back to a plurality. During the 1950s, blacks still

the Hindu Dharmic Sabha, led by PPP Minister Pandit Persaud. There are virtually no Shia Muslims in Guyana, but there is an Arya Samaj (reform Hindu) community.

⁶⁹ Interviews with Bishop Edgehill, Pandit Persaud, and Fazeel Farouz.

formed an electoral plurality. The figures from 1946 and 1960 overstate the electoral weight of East Indians, because a larger proportion of East Indians was below voting age due to their higher birth rate. This Indian demographic time bomb was a major preoccupation for Forbes Burnham, who managed to get the electoral system changed from SMP to PR in 1964, just in time before these adolescents reached adulthood—which would guarantee the PPP a majority of seats by the East Indian vote alone under either electoral formula. Emigration since the 1960s dramatically lowered the numbers of Chinese, Portuguese, and other small minorities, while the proportion of Amerindians and people of mixed ancestry has been on the rise.

Table 1: Race in the Guyanese census, 1946-2002

	1946	1960	1970	1980	1991	2002
East Indian	43.5%	47.8%	51.8%	51.9%	48.3%	43.4%
African	38.2%	32.8%	31.2%	30.8%	32.7%	30.2%
Amerind	4.4%	4.5%	4.9%	5.3%	6.3%	9.2%
Mixed	10%	12%	10.3%	11.2%	12.2%	16.7%
Other	3.9%	2.8%	1.7%	0.8%	0.5%	0.5%
TOTAL	375,701	560,330	699,844	759,567	718,406	751,223

Table 2: Religion in the Guyanese census, 1946-2002

	1946	1960	1970	1980	1991	2002
Christian	57.5%	56.7%	45.7%	42.4%	42.5%	57.4%
Hindu	31.9%	33.4%	37.3%	37.1%	35%	28.4%
Muslim	7.9%	8.8%	'other' 17%	8.7%	8%	7.2%
Other	2.7%	1.1%		11.8%	14.5%	7.1%
TOTAL	375,701	560,330	701,718	758,619	718,406	751,223

The religious picture is different: Guyana has consistently been a predominantly Christian society (see Table 2). The census data on religion from 1970, 1980, and 1991 are problematic because the clash between Burnham and the Guyana Council of Churches

trickled to census responses, inflating the 'none' and 'other' categories, while in 1970 Muslims were not reported as a separate group.⁷⁰ Emigration has affected all religious communities, but Evangelical missionary activity over time has more effectively targeted Hindus. As already mentioned, a great denominational diversity belies the apparent Christian majority. The largest denominations in the 2002 census were Pentecostals (17%), Catholics (8.1%), and Anglicans (7%). In 1960, the situation was much different: the three largest were Anglicans (19.6%), Catholics (14.9%), and Methodists (4.5%).⁷¹

Guyana's regional ethnic distribution during the 20th century changed only as a result of urbanization. The two main cities, Georgetown and New Amsterdam, traditionally had a strong African character and a high proportion of Europeans, Asians and people of mixed ancestry. East Indians still predominate in the agricultural areas along the Demerara and Berbice Rivers and the mouth of the Essequibo, but the community has gradually become more urban and professional, increasing its presence in Georgetown and supplanting the Chinese and the Portuguese. The interior is primarily inhabited by the Amerindian tribes, except for the mining region around Linden, which is overwhelmingly African.

The ethnic geography of Guyanese elections is difficult to pinpoint during the SMP period because the number of single-member districts changed from one election to the next and the constituency boundaries did not coincide with census enumeration districts. An important piece of information comes from a 1950 colonial report which estimated the ethnic composition of the 14 districts used in 1947, based on 1946 census data with adjustment for the estimated number of people reaching voting age by 1952 (when the next election was expected).⁷² The purpose of this report was to inform the decision of the colonial authorities on whether or not to extend universal suffrage, since the 1947 election had been conducted with strict literacy requirements. The next election actually took place in 1953 and the British drew new electoral boundaries for it; but the young PPP was still united at that time and voting did not follow racial lines. The report's estimates are particularly useful for the

⁷⁰ For the confrontation between the PNC and the Council of Churches see "Religion and Politics" in *Guyana and Belize: Country Studies*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, edited by Tim Merrill (Washington, DC: US GPO, 1993).

⁷¹ *Guyana Census of Population 2002*, p. 7; *British Guiana Populations Census 1960*, Table 6.

⁷² British Guiana, *The Electoral Districts: Race, Age, Literacy, Gainful Occupation* (Georgetown: Bureau of Public Information, 1950). Cheddi Jagan Research Center, elections file.

subsequent 1957 election, which was held with the original 14 districts; this was the defining election for Guyana's political history, as Jagan and Burnham clashed for the first time after the PPP breakup.

Table 3: Estimated ethnic composition of Guyana's single-member districts in 1952

CONSTITUENCY	East Indian	African	Amerindian	Mixed	Other
East Berbice	72%	23%	1%	3%	1%
New Amsterdam	16%	66%	0%	14%	5%
Berbice River	36%	48%	4%	11%	1%
West Berbice	39%	55%	0%	6%	1%
Eastern Demerara	51%	41%	1%	4%	3%
Central Demerara	44%	44%	0%	8%	4%
Georgetown North	10%	54%	0%	20%	16%
Georgetown Central	7%	54%	0%	22%	17%
Georgetown South	12%	63%	0%	15%	1%
Demerara River	45%	44%	1%	8%	3%
Demerara-Essequibo	67%	29%	0%	3%	2%
Essequibo River	37%	43%	4%	14%	2%
Western Essequibo	43%	37%	9%	8%	3%
Northwest District	3%	10%	62%	23%	2%
TOTAL	41%	43%	3%	9%	5%

Overall, there were three constituencies with an East Indian majority and two with an East Indian plurality; five had African majorities and three African pluralities (a paper-thin one in Central Demerara); only one had an Amerindian majority (Northwest). The districts were of unequal sizes and PPP had a good basis for screaming gerrymandering, as the largest district was the overwhelmingly Indian East Berbice, whereas the smallest districts, New Amsterdam and Berbice River (six times smaller than East Berbice), had an African majority and plurality respectively. This was clearly not an electoral landscape that favored an East Indian party. It did favor an African party, particularly if most voters of mixed race were part-black, as the 1946 census asserted. Assuming symmetric turnout, a purely East Indian

party could not gain more than six out of the fourteen seats, but an African one had a good chance of winning seven. The potential for cross-racial voting was very significant, since five (more than one third) of the constituencies had no racial majority, and they would decide the winner of the election.

For the 1961 elections, the British enlarged the legislative council to 35 seats and drew new constituencies. I was able to estimate the ethnic composition of half of them by comparing data from the 1960 census with maps provided by the Lands and Surveys Commission.⁷³ Again, the electoral demography carried significant potential for cross-ethnic voting, with several constituencies having no racial majority or only a thin one. If voting took place solely along ethnic lines, the breakdown still favored an African party, because the East Indian vote was more geographically concentrated.

Table 4: Ethnic composition of half of Guyana's single-member districts in 1961

CONSTITUENCY	East Indian	African	Amerindian	Mixed	Other
Georgetown North	16.6	41.8	0.3	26.9	14.5
Georgetown Central	15.9	40.2	0.4	27.6	15.8
Georgetown South	27.3	46.8	0.4	19.5	6.1
Werk-en-Rust	11.9	53.7	0.3	27.3	6.8
Upper Demerara River	14.4	57.3	3.5	21.5	3.3
Boerasirie	71.6	22.4	0.3	4.8	0.9
New Amsterdam	24.7	53.9	0.2	17.9	3.2
Corentyne West	85.2	11.1	0.3	2.9	0.5
Corentyne Central	69.6	25.3	0.1	4.5	0.5
Berbice West	56.7	37.1	0.1	5.6	0.5
Berbice River	37.8	38.7	5.4	17.3	0.7
Berbice East	79.1	15.2	0.1	5.1	0.5
Canals Polder	64.6	30.0	0.1	4.0	1.2
Essequibo Islands	74.1	14.7	0.6	10.3	0.3
North West	3.2	8.0	61.1	26.5	1.2
Mazaruni-Potaro	9.3	43.1	23.1	22.3	2.1
Rupununi	0.2	1.7	89.9	6.2	2.0

⁷³ I am particularly grateful to Mr. Dharam Seelochann from the Bureau of Statistics and Mr. Dennis Case from the Lands and Surveys Commission for their help.

The 1964 transitional election was conducted with national-list PR and 53 seats. The national list gives tremendous power to party chairs, because candidates' names are (since 1968) presented to voters alphabetically, not in order of priority. After seats have been apportioned by the largest remainder-Hare method, the party leaders choose which of the candidates on their party lists will fill the seats. PPP and PNC are both leader-centered parties uninterested in changing this rule.

In 1980, Burnham added another twelve seats elected indirectly by regional councils. This remained the case until 2001. In 1999 the Constitution Reform Commission debated proposals for electoral modifications, with smaller opposition parties pressing for more regional district seats.⁷⁴ The law passed for the 2001 election made only mild changes in this direction, keeping the overall size of parliament at 65 seats, but introducing direct elections for the regional seats and increasing their number from 12 to 25 (thereby decreasing the national list seats to from 53 to 40).

Table 5: Ethnic composition and seat distribution of Guyana's new regional districts

	East Indian	African	Amerind	Mixed	Other	SEATS
Region 1	1.4	2.3	62.2	33.9	0.2	2
Region 2	47.9	13.4	16.3	22.1	0.3	2
Region 3	65.5	21.2	2	11	0.3	3
Region 4	37.5	41.7	1.7	18.4	0.7	7
Region 5	57.8	32.5	2	7.6	0.1	2
Region 6	68.7	21.1	1.6	8.4	0.2	3
Region 7	8.9	11.6	41.7	37.6	0.1	2
Region 8	2.2	7	75.9	13.9	1	1
Region 9	0.5	1.2	89.2	8.9	0.2	1
Region 10	3.1	55	7.1	34.5	0.4	2
TOTAL	43.5	30.2	9.1	16.7	0.5	25

⁷⁴Interviews with Rupert Roopnaraine and Haslyn Paris.

The ethnic composition of Guyana's ten administrative regions and their corresponding number of seats is shown in Table 5.⁷⁵ The regions are very unequal in population size and the apportionment favors Amerindian districts (region 4 containing Georgetown and over 300,000 residents returns seven seats whereas region 8 with 10,000 inhabitants returns one). Most districts are dominated (1, 8, and 9 by the Amerindians, 3, 5 and 6 by the Indo-Guyanese, and the mining region 10 by the Afro-Guyanese) but the allocation allows one seat to go to the second largest ethnic group, except in the single-seat districts 8 and 9 which are in any case overwhelmingly Amerindian. Georgetown, (region 4), however, has no racial majority, nor does the country as a whole, which decides the 40 national list seats. A party relying only on the East Indian vote would fall many seats short of a majority in Guyana's parliament. Therefore the overall potential for cross-ethnic voting or post-election cross-ethnic coalitions remains high.

Electoral Systems and Political Parties in Guyana

In 1947 the British organized the first elections in Guiana with 14 single member districts and very restricted suffrage in order to introduce a consultative body for the colony. In 1948, Guyanese trade union leaders joined to form the Political Affairs Committee, which in 1950 morphed into the People's Progressive Party (PPP). Among its founding members were Cheddi Jagan and his American wife Janet (Guiana Sugar Workers Union), Ashton Chase (British Guiana Labour Union) and Forbes Burnham.⁷⁶ PPP pressed the British for greater inclusion and a commitment to decolonization.

1st Period: 1953-1963

The British Colonial Office created a constitution for Guyana and granted universal suffrage in 1953. The elections that year were contested along class lines between PPP and

⁷⁵ Source: *Explanation of Guyana's Current Electoral System* (GECOM publication) and *Guyana Census of Population 2002*, p. 28. The locations of the regions and their names are show on Map 1.

⁷⁶ The marriage of a Guyanese Indian to a Chicago Jew was fairly scandalous for 1940s standards and Janet Jagan became the object of fascination for British and American intelligence agents on grounds of her key organizational role in the party and her private life. The Jagans undoubtedly shared an ideological commitment to Marxism, which has always been mentioned in PPP's constitution.

the National Democratic Party (NDP), the political arm of the League of Coloured Peoples, which represented urban professionals and Africans working for the colonial civil service. PPP won a landslide victory and Cheddi Jagan became first minister, only to be sacked a few months later when London suspended the constitution. In the following years PPP protested and negotiated with the British, but also suffered from internal dissent. Having failed to win the party leadership in 1953, Forbes Burnham called a congress of his supporters in Georgetown in 1955, which elected him leader of a breakaway faction. The split was, on the surface, ideological, not racial. Burnham argued that he had more moderate positions than Jagan, who was a self-identified communist. The black unionist Ashton Chase remained loyal to Jagan, while prominent Indian lawyer Jai Narine Singh joined Burnham.

In 1957 the British organized new elections for a smaller legislature, with the constituencies used back in 1947. NDP's conservative voter base was divided between the predominantly black middle class United Democratic Party (UDP) and the National Labour Front (NLF), which, despite its name, was backed by business and led by Georgetown's Christian Indian mayor Sir Lionel Alfred Luckhoo. Jagan and Burnham put forward multi-ethnic candidate rosters, leading to some interesting results. The overwhelmingly black South Georgetown constituency was carried by J. N. Singh, who beat UDP leader and head of the League of Coloured People John Carter. Turnout for the elections was low, as many PPP voters had been disappointed by the party's split. Despite its protests against gerrymandering, Jagan's faction won a majority of seats and formed a government that tried to work with the British.

But Burnham's ideological opening had tactical ramifications that accelerated the racialization of Guyanese politics. In 1958 Burnham named his faction the People's National Congress (PNC), while J. N. Singh resigned, protesting the party's 'Africanization'; he was replaced as secretary by the Pan-Africanist intellectual Sydney King (who later changed his name to Eusi Kwayana). In 1959 Burnham scored a success by getting UDP to join him. Similar efforts to win over the Portuguese did not bear fruit. The business community viewed Burnham only slightly less suspiciously than it did Jagan. In 1960 the Portuguese beverage magnate Peter D'Aguiar formed the United Force (UF). D'Aguiar was involved in Catholic charities in Amerindian areas, and had resources and infrastructure to campaign in those

remote constituencies where the PPP usually didn't even field candidates. UF was blunt about its opposition to independence, its disapproval of Jagan, and its capitalist inclinations.⁷⁷

By 1961, the racial character of the three parties had been consolidated, and the election was marred by riots, looting, and arson. The electoral districts were increased to 35 to address PPP's gerrymandering complaints. The voting age, however, remained at 21, a measure which clearly favored Burnham.⁷⁸ PPP won with a very narrow margin, but the SMP system gave it a comfortable majority of 20 seats.⁷⁹ PNC began campaigning for the adoption of proportional representation, which Jagan opposed. Despite having lost most of his African support, Jagan insisted on preserving the multi-racial character of PPP. At the 1962 party congress he backed the incumbent party chairman Brindley Benn against his conservative Home Affairs Minister Balram Singh Rai. The clash with Rai became so acrimonious that Jagan dismissed him from the cabinet. Meanwhile, the US government began to play closer attention to the situation in Guyana. After Cuba, the Kennedy administration was determined not to allow a second Marxist regime in the Caribbean. The US pressured Britain to prevent Guyana from becoming independent with Jagan at the helm.⁸⁰

PR and Independence: 1963-1967

Strikes organized by TUC and outbreaks of rioting continued throughout Jagan's third tenure. The PNC relentlessly accused the PPP of racial domination.⁸¹ Having reached a deadlock in talks on the electoral formula and possible power-sharing, Jagan and Burnham

⁷⁷ As UF's 1964 manifesto declared, "the ideal state is a property owning democracy" (p. 17). Today the party website (<http://www.tufsite.com/>) commemorates Peter D'Aguiar's "vision of a free market economy led by People's Enterprise Capitalism, western democratic ideals and a belief in the Almighty."

⁷⁸ The 1961 constitution also created a senate which was not elected but appointed by the political parties.

⁷⁹ In all but one of these twenty contests PPP won by a clear majority, not just a plurality of the vote.

⁸⁰ For a detailed history of this period see Singh, *Politics in a Plantation Society*, pp. 13-38; Thomas Spinner, *A Political and Social History of Guyana, 1945-1983* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 17-112; Reynold Burrowes, *The Wild Coast: An Account of Politics in Guyana* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing, 1984), pp. 19-202; Ralph Premdas, *Ethnic Conflict and Development: the Case of Guyana* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), pp. 35-111; Garner, *Guyana, 1838-1985*, pp. 73-129; and Steven Rabe, *U.S. Intervention in British Guiana: A Cold War Story* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

⁸¹ Sydney King even petitioned foreign governments to partition Guyana into three zones (one Indian, one African, and a 'free' mixed one). When he pushed further by opposing independence for Guyana for fear of Indian domination of Africans, Burnham expelled him from PNC.

relegated the decision to British Colonial Secretary Duncan Sandys, who incorporated PR without a threshold into Guiana's 1963 constitution.

The 1964 election was the most bitterly contested until that time, with unprecedented violence that caused the racial segregation of previously mixed communities. CIA polls ahead of the election had predicted that “Indian support for the Burnham PNC party is practically non-existent” and recommended that all measures should be taken to attract Indian votes away from Jagan.⁸² Financial and organizational support was offered to PNC and UF, and two parties specifically appealing to Indian voters made a disappointing debut: the Guyana United Muslim Party (GUMP) and the Justice Party (JP) led by Balram Singh Rai and Jai Narine Singh, who argued that the PPP was communist, hence anti-Hindu. These US-funded efforts were to no avail, as PPP still received the highest number of votes and seats. But PR cost PPP its legislative majority. In a glaring display of partiality, the colonial governor Sir Richard Luyt bypassed Jagan and invited Burnham, who had announced a coalition with UF, to form a government. With a more pro-Western government in power, the British kept true to their promise and granted independence in 1966.

Faced with strikes and sugar cane burning by GAWU, Burnham declared a state of emergency. His next move was to split his coalition partner by getting some UF deputies, including the Muslim Minister of Trade Mohamed Kassim, to join the PNC. From that point on UF fell into disarray. D'Aguiar resigned, sold off his companies and moved to Portugal. His name is preserved on the bottles of Guyana's (now nationalized) finest rum. Aubrey Collins, then member of UF's executive committee, told me that he believed the party had no other choice: “If we had backed PPP, it would have been a non-starter. The Americans would have blocked us and harassed us in all sorts of ways.”⁸³

The PNC Years: 1968-1992

After D'Aguiar's departure, PNC ruled alone but continued to feign democracy. Opposition parties were not banned and elections continued, although ballot boxes were

⁸² Central Intelligence Agency, *British Guiana Survey, March, 1964, Vol. 1 – Analysis of Tabulations*. Cheddi Jagan Research Center (copy from LBJ Library).

⁸³ Interview with Aubrey Collins, 9/10/08; Spinner, *A Political and Social History of Guyana*, pp. 113-131; Singh, *Politics in a Plantation Society*, pp. 29-38; Burrowes, *The Wild Coast*, pp. 217-221.

removed by the military and stuffed in secret locations. Burnham introduced or expanded voting by proxy, by mail, and voting from overseas. In theory, these measures were supposed to facilitate political participation by the diaspora and to protect the secrecy of the vote in small communities. In practice, they were used to manipulate results, and were naturally protested by the opposition (see PPP poster). In 1969, the ranch owners and their Amerindian workers in the southern district of Rupununi staged a revolt declaring secession in response to the rigged 1968 election. The army swiftly recaptured Lethem and the rebels fled to Brazil. After the Rupununi revolt, oppression increased. Burnham proclaimed Guyana a republic with him as president and promulgated a new constitution in 1980.⁸⁴

The most important new arrival in Guyana's political scene during the PNC years was the Working People's Alliance (WPA). Founded in 1974 by small breakaway groups from the PPP and PNC, it sought to bridge the racial divide on a socialist platform. Led by the charismatic Pan-Africanist historian Walter Rodney, the WPA quickly gathered a number of Afro-Guyanese figures disillusioned with the PNC, like Sydney King (by now known as Eusi Kwayana). With prominent Afro-Guyanese in its ranks, WPA was a different threat to PNC than PPP, as it exposed the regime's growing unpopularity. Unlike the PPP, the WPA was also committed to armed struggle. Its leadership was arrested after setting fire to the Ministry of National Development in 1979 and Walter Rodney was killed by a bomb explosion—a suspected assassination—during the 1980 election campaign.

The PNC's ideological position swerved during the Cold War. Having risen to power thanks to US and British aid, from the late 1960s on Burnham embarked on a socialist path that brought him closer to the Eastern bloc. The nationalization of the bauxite industry (in which the Soviet Union eventually invested), economic protectionism, and good relations with Cuba (including refueling for Cuban aircraft en route to Angola) were probably not the policies that the CIA were expecting from Burnham in the early 60s. While relations with the US grew chillier in the 1970s and 80s, Burnham defended his policies as necessary for Guyana's economic development, arguing that the PPP, if in power, would have been even more pro-Soviet. Burnham's economic policy was catastrophic and the standard of living fell. Opposition to the PNC gradually widened. Originally centered around the Indian sugar trade

⁸⁴ For a history of Guyana under Burnham see Singh, *Politics in a Plantation Society*, pp. 39-138 and Premdas, *Ethnic Conflict and Development: the Case of Guyana*, pp. 112-141.



Janet Jagan and PPP supporters in London in 1962 picketing against PR
Photo Courtesy: Cheddi Jagan Research Center. Copyright: Nadira Jagan



An interracial alliance against the PNC; Walter Rodney meeting Cheddi Jagan in 1974
Photo courtesy: Cheddi Jagan Research Center; no copyright

P.P.P WARNS ALL GUYANESE!


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ANOTHER P.N.C. TRICK LIKE THE
PROXY VOTE TO RIG ELECTIONS

NO!

REFUSE TO SIGN ANY PAPERS

The application for a "Postal Vote" is another swindle to deprive you of your vote!

BEWARE THOSE WHO COME AROUND ASKING FOR YOUR SIGNATURE



like wolves in sheep's clothing
They will tell you all kinds of lies, including the one that they are from the P.P.P!

Fight & Expose all election rigging by the P.N.C.
DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THIS TRAP!!

Printed by N.G.C.E.

1970s PPP poster warning its voters against proxy and postal voting
(Courtesy of Cheddi Jagan Research Center)

unions, by the 1970s it had expanded to the Guyana Council of Churches, and by the 1980s to the black trade unions, which had once been bulwarks of the regime.⁸⁵

Paradoxically, the PPP, WPA, and PNC at some level recognized one another as leftist parties that had all grown out of Guyana's national liberation movement. In the bizarre universe of Guyanese politics, their leaders would all travel to Havana to attend conferences of Marxist Caribbean parties, while their supporters were involved in a death struggle back home. The Soviet Union was eager to see the leftist parties of Guyana make peace, and to that effect mediated secret negotiations between Burnham and the opposition in 1984-85 for a power-sharing agreement. But Burnham died in 1985, and his successor, former Prime Minister Desmond Hoyte decided to slowly liberalize the economy, sensing that the tide was turning against socialism. Leftist unity was no longer an important goal and the negotiations with PPP were scrapped.⁸⁶ On the opposition side, PPP and WPA remained in contact and agreements for a united anti-PNC front ebbed and flowed, while mutual mistrust was lurking; Guyana's transition back to democracy was not destined to be led by a PPP-WPA coalition.

The 2nd PR Period: 1992-

At the end of the Cold War, Guyana was a part of democratization's third wave that did not get much airtime. One of the few outsiders paying attention was former US President Jimmy Carter, who personally intervened to broker an agreement between Hoyte and the opposition in 1990. US support for PNC had long evaporated, and now without the Soviet boogiemaster the PPP did not look all that menacing. The "Carter Formula" proposed the creation of a Guyana Election Commission (GECOM), with three members approved by the governing party and three by the opposition, to oversee free elections. Hoyte conceded, but the opposition front squabbled over the selection of the presidential candidate. For PPP, Cheddi Jagan was the obvious choice, a vindication for his long-term exclusion from the reins of government.⁸⁷ WPA and other smaller groups disagreed, believing that Jagan was a

⁸⁵ Garner, *Guyana, 1838-1985*, pp. 253-272; Singh, *Politics in a Plantation Society*, pp. 90-97.

⁸⁶ Halim Majeed, *Forbes Burnham: National Reconciliation and National Unity, 1984-1985* (New York: Global Communications Publishing, 2005) and interview with Elvin McDavid. McDavid, the PNC negotiator and Burnham's personal advisor, was removed by Hoyte and appointed ambassador to Zambia.

⁸⁷ For a critique of PPP's stance see David Hinds, "Problems of Democratic Transition in Guyana: Mistakes and Miscalculations in 1992" *Social and Economic Studies*, vol. 54 no. 1 (2005): 67-82.

divisive figure who could not attract the Afro-Guyanese vote. PPP toyed with the idea of proposing a black candidate, either the veteran PPP trade unionist Ashton Chase or the WPA academic Clive Thomas, but such thoughts were dropped in the end; Cheddi Jagan's icon was irresistible, and PPP felt confident that Indo-Guyanese numbers would carry the day in a free election. One of the few black opposition figures who embraced Cheddi's candidacy was Sam Hinds, a member of WPA. He and other individuals joined the ranks of the PPP as a loose group of allies called 'Civic' (a term which from then on appears next to PPP on the ballot without actually constituting a party).⁸⁸

PPP won the 1992 election and every election ever since. Cheddi Jagan triumphantly assumed the post he had been denied at independence, and was succeeded by his wife Janet upon his death in 1997. PPP has governed without vindictiveness, although its opponents accuse it of inverting PNC's discrimination by now favoring East Indians. PNC staged major demonstrations after the 1997 election, claiming disenfranchisement due to the introduction of voter identification cards. CARICOM intervened in 1999 to break the deadlock, obtaining a commitment from Janet Jagan and Hoyte to jointly oversee constitutional reforms. The amendments passed in 2001 created regional electoral districts (explained in a previous section) and an Ethnic Relations Commission to address issues of racial discrimination. The semi-presidential nature of the 1980 constitution was retained, although Guyana's president appears so powerful only because of PPP's perennial parliamentary majority.⁸⁹ In 1998 Guyana's supreme court declared the voter identification requirement unconstitutional but rejected PNC's demand to annul the 1997 elections.⁹⁰

For PPP the black vote is hard to obtain, but in Amerindian areas its cross-ethnic appeals have gained resounding success. Educational and health projects and an Amerindian Act delineating indigenous lands in negotiation with the local communities have made the PPP government popular, allowing it to eclipse TUF in the competition for the Amerindian vote. It is difficult and perhaps unfair to question how much of this was due to sincere interest in national development and how much can be attributed to shrewd calculation.

⁸⁸ Interviews with Sam Hinds, N. K. Gopaul, Clive Thomas, and Rupert Roopnaraine.

⁸⁹ The president is elected from the party that wins a plurality of votes in the legislative election, but must resign if the government loses a vote of confidence. Cohabitation is therefore impossible, and since the PPP has not had the need to form coalitions, PPP presidents need not make many compromises.

⁹⁰ "Esther Pereira Case" High Court of the Supreme Court of Juricature No. 36-P 1998 Demerara

Donald Ramotar, PPP's general secretary, does not deny that the Amerindian vote makes the difference: "if we didn't get these cross-over votes, we couldn't have a majority within the country; the Indo-Guyanese make up less than fifty percent of the population in Guyana."⁹¹ Vincent Alexander, former PNC vice-chairman, put it cynically: "the Amerindians vote for whomever has the resources."⁹² Carolyn Rodrigues, the most prominent Amerindian in the PPP cabinet, who worked on the indigenous lands bill as Minister of Amerindian Affairs, deems this view "an insult to the intelligence of Amerindian people."⁹³ Young, energetic, and not officially a member of the party, she is living proof of PPP's flexible winning approach towards Amerindians in the last decade. Still, her skills and dedication do not mean that the PNC remarks are fundamentally untrue. State resources are a powerful asset which both PPP and PNC knew how to use. Many Amerindians live in closely-knit rural communities with strong group pressures. Roy, a young Amerindian tourist guide in region 8, told me about voting in his village: "Everyone votes for the same party. During the PNC government, PNC built the school and everyone voted PNC. Now PPP built the health care center and everyone votes PPP."⁹⁴

Until 2006, small parties did not fare well in post-transition Guyanese elections. After Walter Rodney's death, the WPA never gathered a strong following, and it stopped participating in elections in 2006. With the Portuguese gone and the Amerindians voting for PPP, TUF is no longer a significant force. Its current leader, Manzoor Nadir, an Indo-Guyanese Muslim, serves as labor minister in the PPP government and leaves open the possibility of quitting the party leadership to join the PPP in the future.⁹⁵ This will be an ironic end for the party of business that theoretically stands on the opposite end of the ideological spectrum from PPP Marxists. The political mobilization and advancement of a younger generation of Amerindians has clearly worked against a party that had a somewhat patronizing relationship with them. In Nadir's own words, "there is an idea that Amerindians should only be represented by Amerindians," which was not the case in D'Aguiar's days in

⁹¹ Interview with Donald Ramotar, Freedom House, Georgetown, 25/9/2008.

⁹² Interview with Vincent Alexander, University of Guyana, 9/10/2008.

⁹³ Interview with Carolyn Rodrigues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17/10/2008.

⁹⁴ Interview with Roy, Kaieteur Falls, 19/10/2008.

⁹⁵ PPP has a majority without TUF's additional seat. Manzoor Nadir calls it "a coalition not out of necessity, but inclusiveness."

the 1960s. But an effort to create a purely Amerindian party, GAP (Guyana Action Party, originally planned to stand for Guyana Amerindian Party), also did not bode too well. GAP won one seat running on a joint ticket with WPA in 2001, and once again in alliance with ROAR in 2006. The party's leader, Paul Hardy, currently spends more time working in Brazil than campaigning in Guyana.

The biggest overturn came from within the larger parties in 2005. Rafael Trotman, a disheartened member of PNC's younger generation, joined forces with WPA deputy Sheila Holder and PPP deputy Khemraj Ramjattan, who had been at odds with his own party's leadership, to form a new party with an explicitly inter-ethnic agenda: the Alliance for Change (AFC). Thanks particularly to Trotman's popularity, the party gained just over 8% of the vote and five seats in the election within one year of its formation, a much more impressive result than established parties like WPA or TUF had achieved. According to Trotman and Ramjattan, polls privately commissioned for the party showed that the AFC drew most of its support from voters of mixed ancestry. The party is understandably reluctant, however, to adopt a "mixed people's" platform, which would reinforce racialism and hem in the AFC's great expectations. It remains to be seen whether the AFC can become kingmaker or even break Guyana's entrenched two-party system. There is good reason to believe that it cannot, and detractors who accuse Trotman of dividing the African vote are probably correct on the facts. The AFC picked up seats lost by the PNC and its leaders recognize that they cannot succeed unless they also capture part of PPP's voter base. Their plan for the 2011 election is to put up Ramjattan instead of Trotman as the party's presidential candidate, hoping that this will have the intended psychological effect on Indian voters.⁹⁶

Ethnicity and Elections in Guyana: An Appraisal

Guyana's overall racial demography has been undominated throughout its democratic history. The existence of regional majorities meant that half or more of the legislative seats were safe contests for one of the two major ethnic groups under SMP. Nationwide list PR

⁹⁶ Interviews with Rafael Trotman and Khemraj Ramjattan.

since 1964 has made regional demographics less important. The creation of regional districts did not significantly change things, except by giving an advantage to a party that commands the Amerindian vote. In a society where two rival ethnic groups—neither of which constituted a majority—vied for political control, SMP allowed the real possibility of a hegemonic party forming a government on its own with only a plurality of votes. This is unlikely under PR, forcing parties to seek votes across racial groups or to form cross-racial coalitions with other parties. Given the racial deadlock, if politicians instrumentally searched for alternative identity categories to form electoral majorities, religion would be an obvious choice. Considering Guyana's demographics, this could happen in two possible ways. Either with a party rallying a Christian identity, to capitalize on the Christian religious majority; or with a Muslim party attempting to crosscut the racial divide and gain leverage as a crucial coalition partner for the larger parties.

Religion has indeed been politically mobilized in Guyana, with various rates of success. The PPP in the 1950s carried the banner of Hindu and Muslim grievances and Cheddi Jagan gained popularity by introducing various measures limiting the control of Christian missionaries over education. Hinduism has been most closely associated with the PPP; it is fair to say that since its creation, PPP has commanded the Hindu vote even more securely than it has the East Indian vote overall. It is no coincidence that Pandit Reepu Daman Persaud, the most prominent Hindu leader in Guyana, is a historical member of PPP. The most effective instance of Christian political mobilization was the United Force, an essentially Catholic party which briefly married the Amerindian masses with the Portuguese bourgeoisie in the 1960s. Christianity, mingled with anti-communism, played an ideological role in the brief PNC-TUF coalition in 1964, PPP and Hinduism being associated then with Nehru's India and nonalignment.⁹⁷ But Christianity overall, as opposed to UF's Catholicism, has never been the driving platform of any political party in Guyana. Spanning the three main racial groups, Christianity never developed into a salient ethnic identity in its own right. This may seem like a natural consequence of Guyana's denominational fragmentation. It is worth

⁹⁷ Afro-Guyanese negative reflexes towards Hinduism are still present today in some quarters. For a recent polemical exposition, see Kean Gibson, "The Dualism of Good and Evil and East Indian Insecurity in Guyana," *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 36 no. 3 (2006): 362-381.

noting, however, that at the same time Indian identity in Guyana has remained politically cohesive across three religions (Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity).

Muslims are another interesting case for the lack of sectarian political mobilization. Two efforts to rally them around a separate party (the GUMP in the 1960s and the UMP recently) were both total failures. Burnham's attempt to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims in order to weaken the PPP also failed in the long term.⁹⁸ A party commanding the Muslim vote would theoretically be kingmaker between PPP and PNC, and PR should have made such a Muslim party more feasible. However, even though such thoughts have certainly been aired, they have not yet gained momentum within the Muslim community.⁹⁹ Indo-Guyanese Muslims seem happy enough with PPP rule to not wish to upset the status quo. Contrasting religion with race, Guyana's political history demonstrates that many minimum-winning coalitions may be numerically possible, but the entrenchment of ethnic identities along a certain dimension can keep them securely unrealized.¹⁰⁰

Both PPP and PNC are eager to project that they are multi-ethnic parties open to the other group, and keep token personalities in prominent positions (Prime Minister Sam Hinds in PPP, Vice-Chairman Winston Murray in PNC). It is generally understood that this is just a facade. Sam Hinds, who is one quarter Portuguese and attended an overwhelmingly Indo-Guyanese Presbyterian mission school, speaks openly about his distance from the Afro-Guyanese electorate: "I am not close to the black community... Most black Guyanese would find that I am different."¹⁰¹

It is an accepted reality that voting since the 1960s has been heavily along racial lines.¹⁰² PPP deputy Moses Nagamootoo pertinently observes:

⁹⁸ Interview with Elvin McDavid.

⁹⁹ Interview with Fazeel Farouz, President of Central Islamic Organization of Guyana, Georgetown, 15/10/2008.

¹⁰⁰ Guyana is therefore a counterexample for the framework Dan Posner presented in *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁰¹ Interview with Sam Hinds, Prime Minister's Office, Georgetown, 1/10/2008.

¹⁰² For evidence on the 1961 and 1964 elections, see Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 321-322 and Premdas, *Ethnic Conflict and Development*, pp. 60-72. Former GECOM member Haslyn Paris calculated that in 1992 in the 59 polling divisions of Georgetown the correlation between the PPP vote and percentage of East Indians was 0.89 and that between the PNC vote and percentage of Africans was 0.83. Such detailed data are not currently available to outside researchers due to pending PNC court appeals on past general elections. In the 2006 Americas Barometer survey, among respondents declaring a party affiliation, 85.7% of Indo-Guyanese supported the PPP, while 76.1% of Afro-Guyanese supported the PNC (p. 135).

In 1964 the PNC got 40% of the vote which was exactly the percentage of Africans; in 1992 after 30 years of dictatorship, the crushing of an African rebellion, the assassination of Walter Rodney, and structural adjustment which hurt Africans, Hoyte again got 40%.¹⁰³

That being said, PPP has historically been much more successful at cross-ethnic appeals than the PNC in free elections. After the Burnham split, PPP defended its multi-ethnic character and still managed to attract black votes in 1957, which probably won it the election, despite unfairly drawn constituencies. The party lost its non-Indian support at the height of the race riots in the 1960s, while facing an orchestrated propaganda campaign funded by formidable outside powers. In the 1990s, PPP reestablished its multi-ethnic reach, capturing the Amerindian vote (which it could not do in the 1960s for lack of resources and the advantageous position of UF's Catholic leadership), and even claiming some African votes. PPP's ability to muster the Indian vote with an unarguably ethnic agenda and then reach out to other groups on a Guyanese Marxist platform has stood the test of time under different electoral systems. The East Indians' position as the single largest ethnic bloc gives the PPP an electoral advantage, but one that could easily have been squandered if PPP had alienated all other groups, since Indians are a plurality, not a majority in Guyana.

In contrast, the PNC was able to broaden its ethnic support only under undemocratic conditions, by cajoling some East Indians and Amerindians into accepting its patronage. Since 1992, it has shrunk back to its African power base, and is unable to break out of it. This is not just due to a lack of state resources, but is also a failure of leadership, and the historical legacy of Burnham's oppression. For all their cries of discrimination, Africans are aware that it was their party, not PPP, that suspended democracy, and this is something that East Indian and Amerindian voters are not yet ready to forgive. The PNC *has* historically alienated non-African voters, and this, not the Indians' demographic supremacy, is the reason for its exclusion from power.

Regarding the theoretical hypotheses, Guyana's ethno-electoral heterogeneity remained high throughout, while proportionality changed. Propositions 1 and 2 would predict that after the PR reform, the number of parties would increase, separate parties representing

¹⁰³ Interview with Moses Nagamootoo, 3/11/2008. His arithmetic is technically incorrect according to the census, but it reasonably includes mixed people with African ancestry in the PNC's voter base.

Amerindians and perhaps also mixed people would emerge, and more parties would compete for the votes of the two major groups—East Indians and Africans. Comparing the first and second electoral periods, most of these predictions did not materialize. The effective number of parties by vote share decreased in the PR period, and Guyana's two-party system has been preserved for four consecutive elections after the democratic transition.¹⁰⁴ A competitor to PPP for the Indo-Guyanese vote (ROAR) arose but was unsuccessful. It remains to be seen whether the AFC will increase competition for votes within the African community, which is the most likely one to be looking for alternatives in its frustration. Survey data indicates that AFC's support came overwhelmingly from African and Mixed voters, whereas its Indo-Guyanese support was minimal.¹⁰⁵

Proposition 3 is also not supported, considering that the trend towards racial voting began *before* the PR reform. During the SMP period the electoral demography was very conducive to cross-ethnic appeals and parties initially put forward multi-racial candidate rosters. But racial voting increased over time along with racial polarization, and the electoral incentives were not enough to hold the tide. In the PR period, on the other hand, higher proportionality did not hamper the PPP's ability to win cross-ethnic votes and to out-compete small parties for the Amerindian vote—under an electoral regime that actually favors such parties.

The empirical evidence for Proposition 4 is ambiguous. In the SMP period, PPP was successful in winning the most ethnically mixed constituencies (Berbice River, Eastern Demerara, Essequibo River, Western Essequibo) but it is not clear if this was due to cross-ethnic voting or higher East Indian turnout.¹⁰⁶ PPP was aware that these were strategic seats that had to be won. In 1961 PPP chose not to run candidates in the urban centers, where East Indians were a minority. In the PR period, considering the entire country as an undominated electoral district, cross-ethnic voting is significant, but this is only due to the behavior of the smaller groups, the Amerindians and the Mixed; in Georgetown, the country's most ethnically mixed area, voting is very racially polarized.

¹⁰⁴ The average Laakso-Taagepera index for the effective number of parties by votes share is 2.76 for the period 1953-1961 and 2.21 for 1992-2006; it is 2.57 for 1964. By seat share it is 2.03 for 1953-1961 and 2.22 for 1992-2006; it was highest at 2.53 for 1964.

¹⁰⁵ *The Political Culture of Democracy in Guyana: 2006*, p. 135.

¹⁰⁶ Turnout in 1957 was particularly low. See Table 7.

Regarding the corollaries, none of them hold true. Although the conflict in Guyana has remained at a low level, it did not decrease after the introduction of PR, even if the 1964 election, with its Cold War climate and inimical outside intervention, is omitted and one looks only at the post-1992 period. The same phenomena (racial polemic, riots, and accusations of electoral fraud) continued unabated. Under SMP, PNC had some reason to complain that the electoral system made an ethnic plurality a permanent majority; under PR, this argument no longer holds, and the situation has not changed. The only thing that may be changing is PNC's intensity of resentment, which has more to do with the international environment. In the 1960s, Britain and the US were easily swayed by anti-communism into supporting Burnham. After the Cold War ended, the international environment has become much more genuinely conducive to mediation and impartiality towards the Guyanese parties. The absence of violence in 2006 can be largely attributed to these international influences, either direct (through pressure on the PNC leadership) or indirect (through mediated constitutional reforms giving the opposition more say in appointments). Regarding the role of cross-ethnic appeals by multi-ethnic parties, those made to Amerindians by TUF or PPP have been inconsequential for the primary racial divide between East Indians and Africans. No party has been able to bridge this divide since 1957, under either electoral system.

In his seminal survey of ethnic conflict, Donald Horowitz presented Guyana in the 1960s as a quintessential case of an ossified ethnic party system.¹⁰⁷ This is still true today, but not because all Guyanese vote for an ethnic party affiliated with their group. Rather it is so because most people vote along ethnic lines, but the party of the largest group regularly manages to attract other voters as well. Unless these patterns of ethnic voting drastically change, the PPP is bound to monopolize government. Realizing that they cannot win elections or annul them in court, the PNC in the last few years has been moving more and more in the direction of pressing for a power-sharing agreement. PPP, which eagerly engaged in such negotiations under desperate circumstances in 1964 and 1984, is now cold towards the idea. Most PPP leaders claim that the current institutional arrangements suffice. "Our constitution gives the opposition many rights in appointments," Donald Ramotar told me. "We have more inclusiveness than other Caribbean states." In our interview on the other side

¹⁰⁷ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Chapter 7.

of Georgetown, the opposition leader Robert Corbin rattled ominously that unless the PNC is included in government, “there will be an explosion; mark my words.” His threats may be a hollow show. In the 2006 elections Corbin followed a policy of restraint, under pressure from Guyana's foreign donors, according to observers.¹⁰⁸ The 2006 election saw the lowest turnout since the democratic transition. Without the opposition inciting confrontation, Guyana had a calm election for the first time in half a century. Dr. Sherwood Lowe quit the PNC that same year, believing that the party had been spending too much effort quibbling elections and was not focused on pursuing power-sharing with PPP. “Our problem is not the electoral system,” he says, “it’s our system of government. I’ve read about all electoral systems; a change would not make a difference.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Terrence Simmons and Roxanne Myers, *From Violent to Peaceful Elections: a Preliminary Look at Peace Building Initiatives in Guyana* (Georgetown: UNDP, 2007), p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ Interviews with Donald Ramotar, Robert Corbin, and Sherwood Lowe.

Figure 1: Historical evolution of Guyanese political parties, 1950-2006

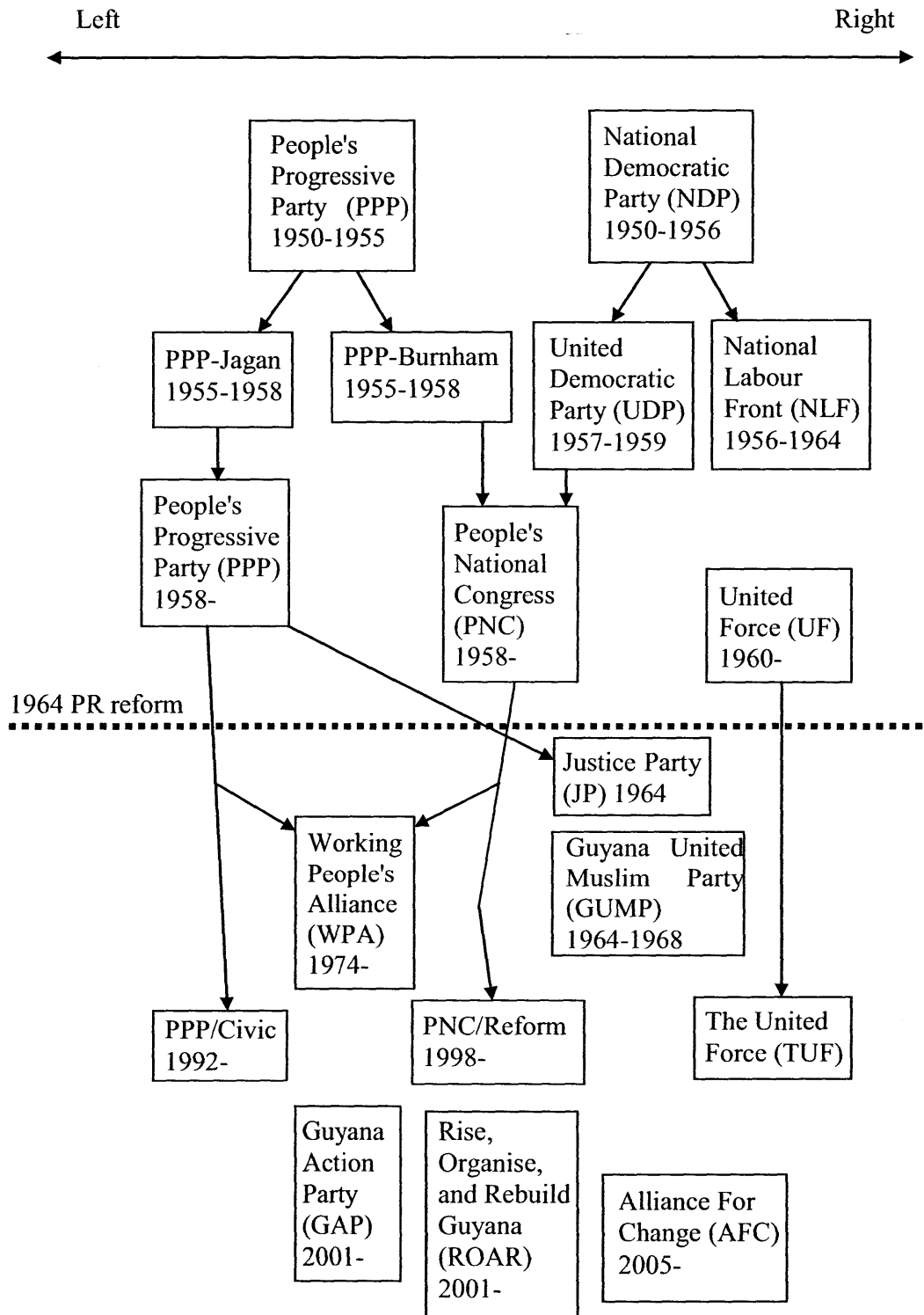


Table 6: Ethnic structure codification of Guyanese political parties

First Period, 1953-1963

PPP	Magnet → Hegemon	<i>(Indians, Africans) → (Indians)</i>
NDP	Magnet	<i>(Africans, Mixed, Portuguese)</i>
PNC	Antagonist → Magnet	<i>(Africans, Indians) → (Africans, Mixed)</i>
NLF	Antagonist	<i>(Mixed, Portuguese, Amerindians)</i>
UDP	Antagonist	<i>(Africans, Mixed)</i>
TUF	Magnet	<i>(Portuguese, Mixed, Amerindians)</i>

Transitional Period, 1964-1968

PPP	Hegemon	<i>(Indians)</i>
PNC	Magnet	<i>(Africans, Mixed)</i>
TUF	Magnet	<i>(Portuguese, Mixed, Amerindians)</i>
GUMP	Agonist	<i>(Muslims)</i>

Second Period, 1992-2006

PPP	Magnet	<i>(Indians, Amerindians, Mixed)</i>
PNC	Magnet	<i>(Africans, Mixed, Amerindians)</i>
TUF	Agonist	<i>(Amerindians)</i>
WPA	Antagonist	<i>(Africans, Mixed, Indians)</i>
AFC	Antagonist	<i>(Mixed, Africans, Amerindians)</i>
GAP	Agonist	<i>(Amerindians)</i>
ROAR	Agonist	<i>(Indians)</i>

Note: Italics mean that the party attracts the vast majority of that ethnic group's votes.

Table 7: Summary of Guyanese parliamentary election results, 1953-2006 (vote share/seats)

SMP Period, 1953-1963

	PPP		NDP		Others	
1953	51.0%	18	13.2%	2	35.9%	4

	PPP-Jagan		PPP-Burnham		UDP		NLF		Others	
1957	47.5%	9	25.5%	3	8.2%	1	11.5%	1	7.3%	0

	PPP		PNC		TUF	
1961	42.6%	20	41.0%	11	16.3%	4

Transitional PR Election

	PPP		PNC		TUF		Others	
1964	45.8%	24	40.5%	22	12.4%	7	1.2%	0

PR Period, 1992-2006

	PPP/Civic		PNC/Reform		WPA/GAP		TUF		Others*	
1992	53.5%	35	42.3%	27	2.0%	2	1.0%	1	1.2%	0
1997	55.3%	36	40.5%	26	1.2%	1	1.5%	1	1.4%	1
2001	53.1%	34	41.7%	27	2.4%	2	0.7%	1	1.4%	1
2006	54.6%	36	34.0%	22	1.2%	1	0.8%	1	9.2%	5

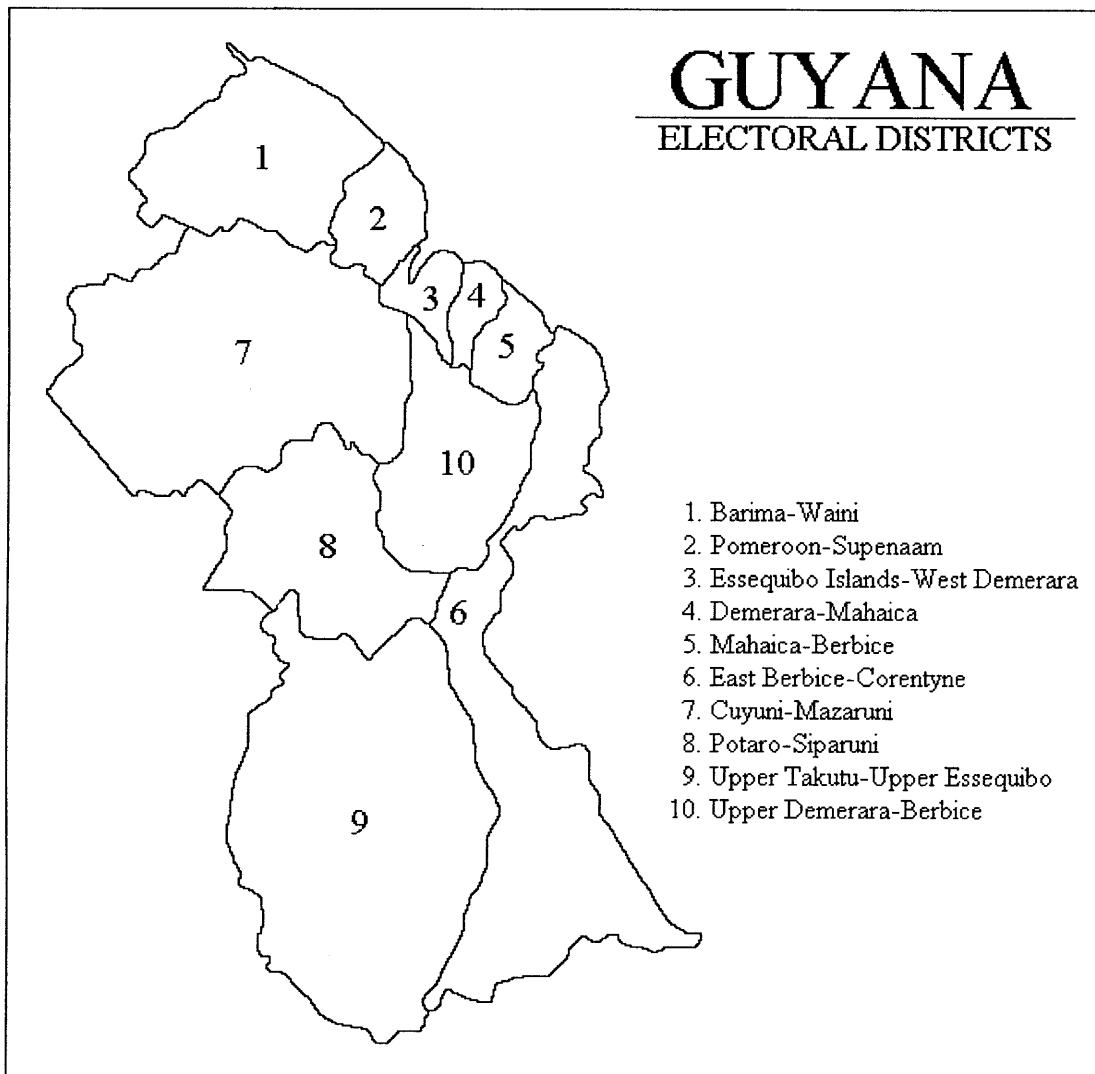
Seats for 1992 and 1997 include the 12 indirectly elected regional seats. Vote shares for 2001 and 2006 are for the national list; regional votes shares were almost identical.

*The 5 seats listed in 2006 were won by AFC.

Table 8: Turnout in Guyanese elections, 1953-2006

Year	Turnout	Year	Turnout
1953	74.8%	1992	80.4%
1957	55.8%	1997	88.4%
1961	89.4%	2001	91.7%
1964	97%	2006	69.4%

Map 1: Guyana's Regions and Electoral Districts (Source: Adam Carr's Election Archive)



Chapter 3

NORTHERN IRELAND: THE LAW OF THE WEAK MIDDLE

Northern Ireland stands out from my other case studies due to its location in the developed world as well as the comprehensive nature of its current peace settlement which brought an end to a long cycle of sectarian violence, even if it is not necessarily considered final by many observers and participants. My fieldwork in the province took place in the spring and summer of 2008, amidst very modest celebrations marking the tenth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). The conflict in Northern Ireland has been one of the most scrutinized and well-documented in the world, with several excellent studies on its electoral aspects. To the best of my knowledge, though, none of them has tried to assess the impact of its electoral reforms in a macro-historical framework. The present chapter is my effort to fill this gap.

Religion and Identity in Northern Ireland

Unlike all other cases included in this study, Northern Ireland is a society with a single ethnic cleavage. Jim Gibney, from the executive committee of Sinn Féin, a party that historically constituted the political wing of the Irish Republic Army (IRA), put it starkly: “The constitutional question is the overriding question. It overrides every election that we fight here.”¹¹⁰ Most people know of the conflict in Northern Ireland as one between Protestants and Catholics, and researchers often feel the need to clarify the terms they use for the two communities. Following a widespread convention, I will use ‘Protestant’ and

¹¹⁰ Interview with Jim Gibney, Culturann, West Belfast, 10/7/2008.

‘Catholic’ almost interchangeably with the respective terms ‘unionist’ and ‘nationalist’; this should not obscure the fact that the object of contention is an entirely secular one.

Northern Ireland is the remnant of a larger historical conflict once encompassing the entire island, during which religious denomination functioned as a proxy for different ethnic backgrounds (Irish, English, and Scottish). Its origins date to the complete subjugation of Ireland to the English crown and the plantation of Ulster, its northern province, with English and Scottish settlers in the 17th century. As the Irish language receded with the advance of English, religion remained as the primary ‘ethnic’ marker.¹¹¹ The extension of England’s religious wars to Ireland is still echoed in the traditions of the Protestant community, such as the controversial 12th of July parades marking the 1690 Battle of the Boyne. Formal religious discrimination in the United Kingdom ended in the 19th century, and the Irish question evolved into a problem of self-determination focused on agitation for Home Rule. This in turn gave rise to the division between nationalists (wanting an autonomous united Ireland) and unionists (wanting to preserve British rule), with the fault lines typically drawn along religious affiliations. Before the First World War, the more radical branch of nationalists termed ‘republicans’ (wanting an independent Ireland) crystallized into Sinn Féin. At the end of an IRA insurrection that spilled into communal violence in the north, the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty created the Irish Free State, excluding six counties (out of the nine comprising Ulster) where most unionists lived. These counties (Antrim, Down, Londonderry, Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh) became Northern Ireland. The bitter disagreement over the acceptability of this territorial sacrifice to obtain independence became the defining political cleavage in post-war Ireland.

Between the 1920s and the 1960s Northern Ireland was a self-governing part of the United Kingdom with a parliament located at Stormont, west of the capital, Belfast. The attitude of the Catholic minority to the Protestant-dominated state was a mixture of indignation, protest, and abstention from the political process. In the late 1960s, inspired by the Civil Rights movement in the United States, a generation of younger Catholics led a campaign of civil disobedience marred by confrontations with the police, soon followed by a

¹¹¹ The last native speakers of Irish Gaelic in Northern Ireland died during the 20th century, but the teaching and use of the language in public signs has become a symbolic issue for nationalists. See *The Irish Language in Northern Ireland*, edited by Aodán Mac Póilín (Belfast: Ultach Trust, 1997).

resurgent IRA and the introduction of British troops. Bombings and shootings cost the lives of 3,500 people over the next thirty years, with their peak in the early 1970s—a relatively low-intensity conflict dubbed The Troubles which nonetheless scarred relations between the two communities. The IRA eventually declared a ceasefire, and a protracted peace process culminated in the GFA in spring 1998.¹¹² Stormont reopened and devolved government returned to the province, with some interruptions due to ongoing disputes.

Even on an island that continues to be one of the most devout parts of the Western world, religiosity has declined over time. Sectarian and ethnic identities are not always congruent: a few Catholics may be immigrants from England, while a handful of Protestants (particularly Presbyterians, who did not align with Anglicans until the late 19th century) played important roles in the early phases of Irish nationalism. Still, the approximate overlap of religious background with positions on the constitutional question remains salient (see Table 1). Since the outbreak of communal conflict, Protestants have become much more likely to identify as British and not as Irish, with the reverse being true for Catholics. Figures from recent surveys also suggest that among those who do not identify with either religion the proportion of people with unionist leanings is significantly higher.¹¹³

Table 1: Political identity by religion (Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey 2003)

Religion	Nationalist	Unionist	Neither	Other
Catholic	60%	-	36%	1%
Protestant	1%	69%	29%	2%
No religion	9%	22%	66%	3%

As religion structured communal life and defined political orientations among a population with no physical differentiations, people in Northern Ireland developed ways of deducing one another's sectarian identities; an intricate social practice referred to as 'telling' is elegantly captured in verse by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney:

¹¹² For a history of the organization, see Richard English, *Armed Struggle: the History of the IRA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹¹³ For a more extensive treatment, see Claire Mitchell, *Religion, Identity, and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of Belonging and Belief* (Aldershot, England, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

Manoeuvring to find out name and school,
Subtle discrimination by addresses
With hardly an exception to the rule
That Norman, Ken and Sidney signalled Prod
And Seamus (call me Sean) was sure-fire Pape¹¹⁴

An important historical aspect of the social division in Northern Ireland has been the existence of sectarian societies devoted to the promotion of the respective community's goals, closely associated with political parties and either with the state security apparatus (for unionists) or with paramilitary groups (both nationalists and unionists). On the unionist side, the key organization has been the Orange Order, an international society of Irish Protestants with branches in other English speaking countries, which was formally linked to the Unionist Party until 2004.¹¹⁵ On the nationalist side, the Ancient Order of Hibernians played a similar role in the early 20th century, but its influence on the Nationalist Party declined over time. The Republican Clubs served as meeting places for IRA sympathizers, although they never formed a coherent body comparable to the Orange Order.

Once separated by just a street, but living segregated lives, many working class communities in today's peaceful Belfast are still divided by barbed wire barricades ("peace walls") built since the 1970s to keep restless youngsters in the respective Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods out of trouble. With all its confrontational tactics that at times—particularly in the earlier stages—fueled rather than tamed the conflict, in the long term the British intervention prompted major social changes in Northern Ireland. In the first Stormont era, Catholics used to accuse Protestants for a host of discriminatory practices with respect to voting rights and electoral gerrymandering, policing, housing, public sector employment, and control of education.¹¹⁶ Under pressure from London and particularly after Stormont was

¹¹⁴ "Whatever You Say, Say Nothing" (1975), quoted in Miles Hewstone et al., "Intergroup Contact in a Divided Society: Challenging Segregation in Northern Ireland", published in *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion*, edited by D. Abrams, J. M. Marques, and M. A. Hogg (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2005).

¹¹⁵ For an excellent survey, see Eric P. Kaufmann, *The Orange Order: a Contemporary Northern Irish History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹¹⁶ For a review of the debate on the true extent of these allegations, see John Whyte, "How Much Discrimination Was There under the Unionist Regime, 1921-1968?" pp. 1-35., *Contemporary Irish Studies*, edited by Tom Gallagher and James O'Connell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) and Jonathan Tonge, *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change* (New York: Longman, 2002).

suspended and replaced by direct rule, the British government took measures to address these concerns. Protestants organizations have claimed that their community is now the target of reverse discrimination.¹¹⁷ No-one can deny, however, that in the last decade Northern Ireland has enjoyed the fruits of peace and experienced unprecedented development, as evidenced by sprawling new construction and a more cosmopolitan lifestyle, all largely financed with money poured in from the outside. Sean Brennan, a Catholic friend, was very sarcastic on this point: “When I was growing up, pizza and hamburger were foreign foods and we were excited when we had them. Now I laugh at people who go out to restaurants and say ‘oh, this wasn’t very well cooked’.” Common membership in the EU, a flexible citizenship policy allowing double passports, and harmonious relations between London and Dublin have all rendered the constitutional question less relevant. Noeleen Diver, a middle-aged lady who used to work for a public agency overseeing equitable housing and is now a member of an inter-communal NGO, summarized this spirit: “I believe in the United States of Europe and in a world where it will not matter which state we live in.”

Sectarian Demographics

Northern Ireland is a majority-Protestant society by design. However, the margin of Protestant dominance has declined over time, from two-thirds in the 1920s to possibly a mere plurality today. Until the 1960s higher birth rates among Catholics were offset by equally higher rates of emigration. Protestant emigration increased to match it with the outbreak of the Troubles. This has left nationalists with a gestating hope that, thanks to their slow increase, the constitutional status of the province may change one day through a favorable plebiscite. The umbrella term “Protestant and other Christian” is often used to include not only the three main Protestant churches (Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, and Methodist), but non-Catholics as a whole. This was historically a valid simplification, given that the number of non-Christians was minuscule and non-Catholic inhabitants were collectively assumed to be loyal to the crown. In reaction to British authorities during the Troubles, many people refused to answer the religion question on the census, inflating the ‘none’ category (see Table

¹¹⁷ Interview with Drew Nelson, Grand Secretary of the Orange Order, East Belfast, 26/6/2008.

2).¹¹⁸ In addition to stated religion, the 2001 census included a question on family religious background, recording 53.1% as Protestant and other Christian, 43.8% as Roman Catholic, and 3.1% as none or other. Immigration since the 1990s has enriched the ethnic mix, making headlines in 2007 when Anna Lo of the cross-communal Alliance Party became the first Chinese-born woman elected to a European legislature. Nevertheless, non-whites comprised less than one percent of the total population in the 2001 census.

Table 2: Religion in the Northern Ireland census, 1926-2001

Year	Total	Catholic	Presbyt.	Anglican	Method.	Other	None	'Protestant'
1926	1,256,561	33.5	31.3	27.0	3.9	4.1	0.2	66.3
1937	1,279,745	33.5	30.5	27.0	4.3	4.5	0.2	66.3
1951	1,370,921	34.4	29.9	25.8	4.9	4.6	0.4	65.2
1961	1,425,042	34.9	29.0	24.2	5.0	5.0	1.9	63.2
1971	1,519,640	31.4	26.7	22.0	4.7	5.8	9.4	59.2
1981	1,481,959	28.0	22.9	19.0	4.0	7.6	18.5	53.5
1991	1,577,836	38.4	21.3	17.7	3.8	7.8	11.0	50.6
2001	1,685,267	40.3	20.7	15.3	3.5	6.3	13.9	45.8

The Protestant demographic preponderance is not uniform at the regional level. The River Bann marks the point of transition, the east (including Belfast) being more Protestant and the west more Catholic. Nevertheless, due to Belfast's demographic size, most Catholics actually live east of the Bann. The areas bordering the Republic of Ireland (South Armagh,

¹¹⁸ A number of studies have tried to calculate the 'true' percentages of Protestants and Catholics in the 1971, 1981, and 1991 censuses. See Paul Compton, *Northern Ireland: a Census Atlas* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978); David Eversley and Valerie Herr, *The Roman Catholic Population of Northern Ireland in 1981: A Revised Estimate* (Belfast: Fair Employment Agency, 1985); Paul Compton and John Power, "Estimates of the Religious Composition of Northern Ireland Local Government Districts in 1981 and the Change in the Geographical Pattern of Religious Composition between 1971 and 1981," *Economic and Social Review* 17:2 (Spring 1986): 87-105; and M. P. A. Macourt, "Using Census Data: Religion as a Key Variable in Studies of Northern Ireland," *Environment and Planning* April 1995 vol. 27 no. 4: 593-614. In light of the 2001 census, these studies probably underestimate the sincerity of the 'none' response. Nevertheless, I have used their estimates of the Catholic population as the basis of calculations in the concluding chapter.

South Down, Fermanagh, the city of Derry or Londonderry as Protestants call it, and parts of Tyrone) are predominantly Catholic.¹¹⁹

The 1920 Government of Ireland Act determined that Northern Ireland and the Free State would use the Single Transferrable Vote (STV) system of proportional representation for their parliamentary elections, but permitted a future change in the electoral formula. The nine existent Westminster constituencies in Northern Ireland were used to elect 48 members (see Map 1), with an additional four from the Protestant-dominated Queen's University.¹²⁰ SMP continued to be used for elections to the British parliament. The religious breakdown of these original STV constituencies according to the 1926 census is shown in Table 3. More than half of them were almost evenly split or contained a significant Catholic minority. Considering the proportional and preferential nature of the STV electoral system this configuration ensured minority representation and provided many opportunities for cross-sectarian appeals and voting. In the wake of partition, however, the political climate in the 1920s was very tense and this potential was not realized.

Table 3: Religious composition of Northern Ireland's constituencies, 1926

Constituency	Population	Catholic	Protestant	Seats
Antrim	191643	20.15	79.85	7
Armagh	110070	45.42	54.58	4
Down	209228	30.39	69.61	8
Fermanagh & Tyrone	190776	55.63	44.37	8
Londonderry	139693	47.54	52.46	5
Belfast North	100917	13.29	86.71	4
Belfast East	93622	17.74	82.26	4
Belfast South	91018	13.52	86.48	4
Belfast West	129594	41.17	58.83	4

In 1929 the governing Unionist Party abolished STV in an electoral reform aimed at stifling opposition within the unionist camp. SMP was adopted for Stormont elections on the basis of 48 single-member constituencies (see Map 2). Their religious composition was never published and it is impossible to determine with accuracy from census data. It was broadly

¹¹⁹ The decision on how many counties to include was strategic on the part of northern unionists: few enough to ensure a Protestant majority, while also forming an economically viable territory (cf. the creation of Lebanon).

¹²⁰ There was also a 24-member senate, indirectly elected by the parliament; this was abolished in 1973.

understood, however, by contemporary politicians, giving rise to many uncontested elections. Table 4 which compares the religious composition of Belfast's STV constituencies with the wards that comprised them provides an illustration.¹²¹ The residence patterns of Protestants and Catholics were more segregated at lower levels of aggregation, and as a result on average smaller geographic units tended to be less mixed.¹²² Thanks to their preponderance west of the Bann, the Catholics' parliamentary representation as a whole was affected only by the loss of one seat. But whereas STV constituencies made voting by members of both communities meaningful across the board (except in parts of Belfast where Catholics were too few to gain a seat), the vast majority of the narrower SMP contests were guaranteed victories for one or the other community. Most importantly, SMP made it harder for small parties relying on the Protestant vote to gain seats and upset the Unionist Party majority.

Table 4: Religious breakdown of Belfast constituencies by wards, 1926 census

Westminster	Protestant	Catholic	Wards	Protestant	Catholic
Belfast North	86.7	13.3	Clifton	74.6	25.4
			Duncairn	90.1	9.9
			Shankill	95.5	4.5
Belfast East	82.3	17.7	Dock	58.2	41.8
			Pottinger	85.5	14.5
			Victoria	94.4	5.6
Belfast West	58.8	41.2	Falls	10.8	89.2
			Court	77.1	22.9
			St Anne's	61.6	38.4
			St George's	95.3	4.7
			Smithfield	9	91
			Woodvale	95.2	4.8
Belfast South	86.5	13.5	Cromac	79.5	20.6
			Ormeau	93	7
			Windsor	83.5	16.5

¹²¹ Only four of the wards (Dock, Cromac, Windsor, and Falls) coincided with their homonymous constituencies. Ormeau was divided into two constituencies, while others were carved out of parts of wards in ways that make it impossible to determine their exact religious composition.

¹²² Note how the highly mixed constituency of Belfast West consisted of a number of much more homogeneous wards. The average fractionalization (ELF) index of Belfast's STV constituencies according to these figures was 0.31; the same average for its wards was lower, 0.24.

In response to the outbreak of the Troubles, STV was reintroduced in 1973 on the basis of the twelve Westminster constituencies existing at the time. These were modified in the 1990s to produce the current eighteen constituencies (see Map 3) used to elect six MLAs each for the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly (for a total of 108), and one MP each for the UK national parliament. The religious background of the population in each constituency according to the 2001 census is shown in Table 5. Seven out of the eighteen constituencies feature at least a three-quarters majority, making it unlikely that the minority community there will elect more than one deputy.¹²³ The rest, however, have only a thin majority or a substantial minority and present a significant potential for electoral appeals and voting across sectarian lines, similar to the situation in the 1920s.¹²⁴

Table 5: Religious background in Northern Ireland's parliamentary constituencies, 2001

Constituency	Population	Catholic	Protestant & other Christian	Other
Belfast East	79,261	9.9	84.6	5.5
Belfast North	86,066	44.9	51.9	3.3
Belfast South	94,994	41.4	52.0	6.6
Belfast West	87,610	82.7	16.2	1.1
East Antrim	84,062	15.8	79.2	5.1
East Londonderry	88,737	37.9	59.2	2.8
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	91,127	55.6	43.1	1.3
Foyle	105,066	75.4	23.2	1.5
Lagan Valley	101,696	20.6	75.0	4.4
Mid Ulster	86,496	65.3	33.7	0.2
Newry and Armagh	100,950	67.1	31.8	0.2
North Antrim	101,437	30.0	67.7	2.3
North Down	85,992	11.7	81.6	6.7

¹²³ These roughly correspond to the areas where elections were typically uncontested under SMP, but at least now the minority community is guaranteed some representation.

¹²⁴ The average ELF index for these constituencies based on the 2001 census figures is 0.43, compared to 0.40 based on the 1926 census for the old STV constituencies shown in Table 3.

South Antrim	99,810	29.7	66.0	4.3
South Down	104,658	66.3	31.8	1.8
Strangford	98,158	15.4	80.0	4.7
Upper Bann	102,947	42.9	54.7	2.4
West Tyrone	86,200	67.8	31.3	1

Electoral Systems and Political Parties in Northern Ireland

STV was invented in England in the 19th century and championed by election reform proponent Thomas Hare. At the time of its adoption in Ireland it was only used in Tasmania. STV is a system that combines proportionality and preference voting. Unlike list PR, ballots do not consist of party lists, but include the names of all candidates from all parties running in the constituency. Voters mark their preferences with numbers next to the candidates' names (marking such preferences beyond the first is optional in Northern Ireland). For seat allocation, candidates who obtain a number of first preferences above a district quota are elected.¹²⁵ If seats remain unfilled, the votes of the elected candidates in excess of the quota are redistributed to the remaining candidates according to their lower preferences and totals are recalculated to check if any of the remaining candidates has reached the quota. If seats still remain unfilled, the candidate with the lowest number of first preferences is eliminated, and his or her votes are redistributed to the remaining candidates again according to lower preferences. This process is repeated until all seats are filled or until there are no remaining candidates.

First Period, 1921-1929

The 1921 election took place throughout the island in an atmosphere of communal violence and fighting between British security forces and the IRA. Northern unionist leader James Craig declared that it was in effect a plebiscite over "Who is for Empire and who is for

¹²⁵ The Droop quota equal to $\left(\frac{\text{votes}}{\text{seats} + 1}\right) + 1$.

a Republic?” Joe Devlin, Belfast’s prominent nationalist politician who had supported Irish autonomy within the United Kingdom, made a deal with Sinn Féin to avoid intra-Catholic competition, accepting Sinn Féin’s condition to boycott the Northern Ireland parliament after the election. The Unionist Party secured its (largest ever since) majority of seats and began its monopoly of government.¹²⁶ Vote transfers between the two camps were infinitesimal.¹²⁷

By late 1922 fighting in the north had ended, as the Free State sank into civil war over the question of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The pro-treaty forces prevailed and Sinn Féin broke up. But a lingering possibility remained for a boundary commission to re-examine the border between north and south. Northern Catholics from the border areas hoped to be transferred to the Republic; Belfast Catholics, on the other hand, feared that this would further diminish their weight as a minority within the north. The boundary commission idea was eventually scrapped in 1925 when Dublin realized that London would not consent to ceding Fermanagh and Tyrone (the counties with marginal Catholic majorities) and thus reduce Northern Ireland to a rump state. The issue, however, had exposed the internal divisions within the Nationalist Party (NP), which would characterize all its future history.¹²⁸ Under Devlin’s leadership, the party aimed to be the voice of all northern nationalists, but lacked adequate organization and was plagued by the fundamental question of abstention. Abstentionists believed that “by taking their seats in a Northern Ireland parliament Nationalists would be effectively recognizing the permanency of partition,” while Devlin argued that “permanent abstention means permanent disenfranchisement.”¹²⁹ After the 1925 election, with Sinn Féin in disarray, NP became the dominant voice of the Catholic community. Its MPs gradually took their seats in Stormont, although they continued to boycott Westminster.

Apart from the Official Unionists (who were affiliated with the Conservative Party in Britain) and the Nationalists, Northern Ireland’s nascent party system included Independent

¹²⁶ For a comprehensive party history, see Graham Walker, *A History of the Ulster Unionist Party: Protest, Pragmatism, and Pessimism* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

¹²⁷ See Robert Osborne, “Voting Behaviour in Northern Ireland 1921-1977,” in *Integration and Division: Geographical Perspectives on the Northern Ireland Problem*, edited by Frederick W. Boal and J. Neville H. Douglas (London: Academic Press, 1982), p. 149.

¹²⁸ For the beginnings of nationalist politics in Northern Ireland, see Eamon Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism: Nationalist Politics, Partition, and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland, 1890-1940* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1994).

¹²⁹ Brendan Lynn, *Holding the ground: the Nationalist Party in Northern Ireland 1945-72* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1997), p. 3.

Unionists and the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). The former often campaigned on issues of class inequalities within the Protestant community, but remained staunch supporters of the northern state. The latter was an ideological kin but never formally an affiliate of its British counterpart. Having shunned Ireland's partition, the British Labour Party maintained a neutral stance and left NILP to its own devices. NILP's power base was naturally among the Belfast working class. In 1925 the Unionist Party lost four seats to Independent Unionists and three to NILP, all in the Belfast area. These losses were seen as a clear threat.

As early as 1922 the Unionist Party abolished STV in local elections and shrewdly gerrymandered the districts for urban and rural councils, most blatantly in the case of Derry, whose council passed to the control of the city's Protestant minority. In 1929, SMP replaced STV for Stormont elections as well (except for the seats of Queen's University). Among the new 48 constituencies drawn up, gerrymandering against Catholics was flagrant only in Fermanagh, which was divided into one overwhelmingly Catholic constituency and two with a slim Protestant majority.¹³⁰ Craig stated that it was not his intention to alter the sectarian balance in the legislature. On the contrary, he said,

What I want to get in this House, and what I believe we will get very much better in this House under the old-fashioned plain and simple system, are men who are for the Union on one hand, or who are against it and want to go into a Dublin parliament on the other.

Devlin also understood that "this thing is not to wipe us out. It is to wipe out what are called the Independent and Labour members."¹³¹ Nevertheless, the reform dashed any hopes that the Unionist majority might be overturned in the near future by an alliance between the Nationalists and Labour.¹³²

¹³⁰ Even though data on religious composition are not available, this is obvious from election results and can be deduced from the 1911 census. See Robert Osborne, "The Northern Ireland Parliamentary Electoral System: the 1929 Reapportionment," *Irish Geography* vol. 12 (1979): 42-56 and Margaret O'Callaghan, "Franchise Reform: 'First Past the Post' and the Strange Case of Unionist Ireland." *Parliamentary History*, vol. 16 (1997): 85-106. County Armagh was a more debatable case: having a small Protestant majority, it returned three Protestants and one Catholic under SMP.

¹³¹ Paul Mitchell and Gordon Gillespie, "The Electoral Systems" in *Politics in Northern Ireland*, edited by Paul Mitchell and Rick Wilford, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1999), p. 69.

¹³² Thomas Hennessey, *A History of Northern Ireland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 43-55.

Second Period, 1929-1969

The Depression and the Second World War brought more strains to inter-communal relations.¹³³ In 1932, after a row with the speaker, Joe Devlin left parliament again, and never returned. That same year Éamon de Valera, leader of the anti-Treaty party, won the election in the Republic and followed a confrontational course. In 1933, as prime minister of Ireland, he stood for election and won a Stormont seat in Northern Ireland (South Down) on an abstentionist ticket. To prevent such occurrences, Unionists passed the 1934 Representation of the People's Act, requiring prospective candidates to sign a declaration affirming that they would take their seats if elected. In summer 1935 NILP's offices were raided by a Protestant mob and rioting broke out when the 12th of July parade was fired at in Belfast. In 1937 de Valera's new constitution of Ireland replaced the British king with a president and declared that the entire island constituted national territory. But De Valera did not agree to admit Nationalist MPs from the north into the Irish parliament. During the war, he kept the Republic neutral, while NP opposed the introduction of conscription in the north. Unionists took pride in the contribution that Northern Ireland made to the British war effort, thanks to its shipyards and its strategic location guarding the passage between Ireland and Scotland.

Unionists regarded the Labour victory in the UK election in 1945 with apprehension, considering Labour's historical stance on the Irish question. Nationalists were encouraged; NP returned to Stormont and launched an Anti-Partition League (APL) aimed at reuniting all northern Catholics. Eddie McAteer, MP from Mid-Londonderry and head of APL, became a leading nationalist figure. But nothing came out of this excitement. In 1948 Ireland officially declared sovereignty in foreign relations, its last vestige of belonging to the United Kingdom. In turn the British parliament passed the 1949 Ireland Act, which accepted this new situation and declared that Northern Ireland's status could only be changed with the consent of its parliament. In the 1950s the division between the NP and the pro-IRA republicans returned. A negotiation thriller took place before every election period to determine if both sides would put forward candidates (and risk dividing the Catholic vote in mixed constituencies) or if one

¹³³ For a history of this early period see Patrick Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances: Devolved Government in Northern Ireland, 1921-1939* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979).

side would stand down. In December 1955 IRA militants launched a border campaign against Northern Ireland. Fearing a confrontation with Britain, the Republic arrested and jailed the IRA leadership and the campaign had fizzled by 1958.

NILP's vote share during this period has been characterized as "a virtual barometer of communal tension."¹³⁴ Although it contained Catholics and espoused bi-communalism in its class struggle, NILP drew most of its support from Protestants.¹³⁵ The party was unable to overcome the sectarian divide. Its leader, Harry Midgley, lost his seat to a unionist in 1938 because his support for the Republicans against Franco in Spain alienated the Catholic voters. He later resigned from NILP and founded the Commonwealth Labour Party (CWLP), with the aim of working for labor interests within unionism. In 1947 he disbanded CWLP altogether and simply joined the Unionist cabinet, expressing his vocal disdain for the minority. NILP had avoided taking a stance on the constitutional issue until 1949, when the party conference voted for the union in response to the Irish Republic's declaration of full sovereignty. NILP consequently lost much of its Catholic support in Belfast to Paddy Devlin's Irish Labour Party (ILP) and Harry Diamond's Socialist Republican Party (SRP). Like NILP, however, labor republicanism was also primarily a Belfast phenomenon. When Harry Diamond and ILP's Gerry Fitt joined forces in 1964 to form the Republican Labour Party (RLP), the joke was that "two one-man parties became a two-man party."¹³⁶

Between the 1930s and the 1960s, elections in Northern Ireland were characterized by low turnout (see Table 10) and a stable pattern of nationalist and unionist support (see Map 2). Around two fifths of the seats went uncontested—sometimes more, sometimes less, depending on the degree of *intra*-communal divisions.¹³⁷ Nationalists typically did not contest in Protestant-majority areas where NILP fielded candidates in order not to divide the anti-Unionist vote. Nationalists and Unionists clashed only in the few constituencies where the sectarian split was close and different communal turnout rates could make a difference.

¹³⁴ Paul Mitchell, "The Party System and Party Competition" in Mitchell and Wilford, *Politics in Northern Ireland*, p. 95.

¹³⁵ For a history of the party, see Aaron Edward, *A History of the Northern Ireland Labour Party: Democratic Socialism and Sectarianism* (Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹³⁶ Paul Arthur, "Political Parties: Elections and Strategies" in *Northern Ireland Politics*, edited by Arthur Aughey and Duncan Morrow (London and New York: Longman, 1996), p. 68.

¹³⁷ For comprehensive results constituency by constituency see Sydney Elliott, *Northern Ireland Parliamentary Election Results, 1921-1972* (Chichester: Political Reference Publications, 1973)

NILP and labor republicans clashed only in the Belfast Docks, the single constituency whose population shifted from majority Protestant to majority Catholic in this thirty-year period.¹³⁸

In the late 1950s and early 1960s NILP regrouped and achieved its most impressive results, gaining four seats in Belfast and becoming the official opposition.¹³⁹ Unionist Prime Minister Terrence O'Neil sought to stem this tide by introducing reforms and expanding social welfare. In 1964 the British Labour Party came to power in London once again, and pushed him in the same direction, but hesitated to interfere heavy-handedly. In the late 1960s the traditional party system imploded as a wave of new social movements precipitated a spiral of escalation. NP was facing criticism from a progressive segment of the Catholic community that reacted to the party's unconstructive abstention. Some critics gathered around the National Democratic Party (NDP), while others took the path of activism, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. In 1968 the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) started staging marches as part of a civil disobedience campaign aimed at attracting publicity in Britain and abroad.¹⁴⁰ The unionist government banned the marches, demonstrators clashed with the police in Derry, and rioting became endemic by 1969. The activists protested discriminatory employment and housing practices as well as the disenfranchisement of tenants and the corporate vote in local elections, crying for "one man, one vote." A change in the electoral formula was not a core demand. As Prof. Paul Arthur of the University of Ulster, then a member of the radical leftist group People's Democracy, remembers, "We were not looking for an alternative electoral system, just equity."¹⁴¹

O'Neil appealed for calm and promised reforms which conservative unionists thought went too far and nationalists thought did not go far enough. He called an election in February 1969 that had record turnout and manifested the fissures in the traditional parties. Unionist candidates were divided between pro- and anti-O'Neil factions, and the prime minister almost lost his seat to Ian Paisley, the vehemently anti-Catholic founder of the Free Presbyterian Church. In Derry, NP chairman Eddie McAteer lost his seat to independent John

¹³⁸ Osborne, "Voting Behavior in Northern Ireland," pp. 143-148.

¹³⁹ Despite being the second largest party in Stormont, NP rejected this role until 1965.

¹⁴⁰ For an exhaustive monograph placing the events in the global perspective of that dramatic year, see Simon Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt, and the Origins of the Troubles* (Dublin and Portland OR: Irish Academic Press, 2007).

¹⁴¹ Interviews with Paul Arthur and Austin Currie.

Hume.¹⁴² SMP constrained this fragmentation and returned the same Unionist majority, but faced with internal dissent in his party O'Neil resigned, as British troops arrived to enforce order.

The Troubles and British Intervention, 1969-1973

Constitutional constraints initially prevented London from intervening in the affairs of its devolved province, but the outbreak of violence and a renewed IRA bombing campaign made the situation critical. In 1969 the IRA (and later Sinn Féin) broke up into two factions, the Official IRA, which took a Marxist path, and the more traditionalist Provisional IRA. The Protestant community's sense of siege triggered the formation of loyalist paramilitaries, most notably the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA). In 1972 the Official IRA declared a ceasefire, but the Provisionals carried on. The neutrality of the British army was irrevocably compromised after thirteen civil rights protesters, many of them teenagers, were shot dead in Derry in an incident commemorated as Bloody Sunday. As the Northern Ireland government refused to give up control of its security powers to London, the British government suspended Stormont and introduced direct rule.¹⁴³ The need for a radical overhaul of Northern Ireland's political system was recognized by British officials, leading to a number of proposals including power sharing and the reintroduction of STV.¹⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Northern Ireland's political landscape was changing rapidly. In 1970 the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI) was founded by pro-O'Neil unionists and liberals. Progressive nationalists and labor republicans including John Hume, Gerry Fitt, and civil rights leader Austin Currie joined to form the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP).¹⁴⁵ Both parties had cross-sectarian ambitions. Only Alliance succeeded in this goal, but its appeal was restricted to the moderate middle-class. Thanks to the popularity of the civil rights movement, SDLP grew to become the main moderate voice of the nationalist

¹⁴² On the demise of the Nationalist Party, see Brendan Lynn, *Holding the Ground: the Nationalist Party in Northern Ireland, 1945-72* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1997), pp. 171-237.

¹⁴³ Hennessey, *History of Northern Ireland*, pp. 171-222.

¹⁴⁴ The electoral reform was spelled out in the White Paper produced by the Northern Ireland Office, *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals* (London: HMSO, 1973), Paragraph 6.

¹⁴⁵ For SDLP's foundation and early years, see Ian McAllister, *The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party: Political Opposition in a Divided Society* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1977).

community, pressing for reforms while also denouncing IRA violence. APNI accepted the union as the status quo, although its position today is that it is neither unionist nor nationalist. SDLP accepted the principle of Protestant consent, but still espoused the dream of a united Ireland.¹⁴⁶ On SDLP's failure to cross the sectarian divide, Austin Currie told me: "It was my hope and others' that the logic of our argument would appeal to reasonable unionists. But unfortunately there were few reasonable unionists." To the right flank of the Ulster Unionists, Ian Paisley's movement took the name Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). When all of these parties were launched, the electoral reform was entirely unanticipated. As APNI leader David Ford told me, "At the party's first annual conference in 1971 the call for STV was narrowly defeated. It was voted the following year. Our expectation was that we would win under FPTP. Now that looks distressingly naïve..."¹⁴⁷ The only new party formed after the announcement of the return to PR was the militant unionist Ulster Vanguard.¹⁴⁸

Third Period, 1973-2007

In the 1973 election held under STV, SDLP gained a percentage similar to NP's in 1925, as Catholic votes were again mobilized in Protestant majority areas. Unionists were divided between pro- and anti-White Paper factions, DUP, and Vanguard, with APNI making an impressive showing. UP leader Brian Faulkner, who had resigned from the O'Neil cabinet protesting concessions to the Catholics, now found himself at Sunningdale, in England, negotiating a power-sharing executive with the SDLP. The agreement included a provision for a cross-border Council of Ireland, a largely cosmetic concession to nationalists which had been an unimplemented part of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. Hard line unionists interpreted this as an ominous sign, citing the Republic's constitutionally enshrined territorial

¹⁴⁶ In his article "Horowitz's Theory of Ethnic Party Competition and the Case of the Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party, 1970-1979," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* vol. 14 no. 4 (October 2008): 549-578, P. J. McLoughlin uses Horowitz's logic of centrifugal pull to explain SLDP's position in the absence of strong electoral competition for the nationalist vote in the 1970s.

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with Austin Currie and David Ford.

¹⁴⁸ In our interview current UUP leader Sir Reg Empey and former chairman of Vanguard confirmed that at its formation in 1973 the party expected to benefit from the reform: "STV indeed helped Vanguard and UUUP. DUP was formed before the change took place; Vanguard wasn't. PR encouraged that with its lower threshold."

claim on the north. A massive Protestant strike with the slogan “Dublin is just a Sunningdale away” forced Faulkner to resign and the agreement to collapse.¹⁴⁹

British efforts to reconstitute Stormont in the 1970s and early 80s failed miserably.¹⁵⁰ The (Ulster) Unionist Party (from now on designated as UUP) was taken over by the faction resisting power-sharing with the Catholics. With the unionist majority against an agreement, elections in 1975 for a constitutional forum led nowhere. A major development in the 1980s was the abandonment of abstention by the republicans. Beginning with a 1981 Westminster by-election (when an IRA prisoner on hunger strike, Bobby Sands, stood and won, dying a month later), republicans shifted to an “armalite and ballot box strategy” whose purpose was to demonstrate that they enjoyed popular backing. Sinn Féin (SF) became an electoral factor again, mobilizing those Catholics who had traditionally abstained—around one third of the community or one tenth of the total vote. The same strategy on the loyalist side did not pay off, as most Protestant voters disapproved of the involvement of paramilitaries in politics.¹⁵¹ Although Margaret Thatcher’s term was generally characterized by confrontational rhetoric in Northern Ireland, she did conclude a historic agreement in 1985 with Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald. In exchange for a recognition of its advisory role on the question, Ireland formally accepted the principle of consent, i.e. that the unionist majority had a veto over the province’s constitutional status. Nevertheless, the recognition of the Republic’s role in the governance of the north led to protests and electoral collusion between DUP and UUP. While Vanguard remerged with UUP, Paisley became synonymous with the phrase “Ulster says no” and DUP gathered in its ranks most of the hard line elements of unionism.¹⁵² Like the NP of old, SDLP had been boycotting the assembly produced by the 1982 election; after the Anglo-Irish agreement, the unionists also walked out on the British.

¹⁴⁹ For a critical account condemning SDLP for pushing the Irish unification agenda too far in this negotiation, see P. J. McLoughlin, “‘Dublin is Just a Sunningdale Away’? The SDLP and the Failure of Northern Ireland’s Sunningdale Experiment,” *Twentieth Century British History* vol. 20 no. 1 (2009): 74-96.

¹⁵⁰ On this period, see Rick Wilford, “Regional Assemblies and Parliament” in Mitchell and Wilford, *Politics in Northern Ireland*, pp. 117-141 and Cornelious O’Leary, Sydney Elliott, and Rick Wilford. *The Northern Ireland Assembly 1982-1986: A Constitutional Experiment* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1988).

¹⁵¹ Fearing a British withdrawal, UDA in the 1980s had even supported the idea of an independent Ulster.

¹⁵² For a recent biography, see Steve Bruce, *Paisley: Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

London's and Dublin's opinions on the future of the province were converging, but two key hurdles remained: ending the IRA campaign, and persuading unionists to accept power sharing. In the late 1980s, an ongoing dialogue between SDLP leader John Hume and Sinn Féin's president Gerry Adams mended fences inside the nationalist community, while secret negotiations with London led to an IRA ceasefire in 1994.¹⁵³ To facilitate peace talks, the British called a special election for a Northern Ireland Forum in 1996 with list PR instead of STV, and a bonus of two seats for the ten parties polling highest. The goal of this formula was to include small parties affiliated with loyalist paramilitaries like the UVF's Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and UDA's Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), but also alternative voices like the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC).¹⁵⁴ The idea was also that by enlarging the number of participants, SF would feel more pressure not to leave the table.¹⁵⁵ Former NIWC co-chair Bronagh Hinds acknowledges that, "If it had been a normal type of election I doubt that we would have gotten in."¹⁵⁶ Although the small parties played a constructive role, much of the heavy lifting had to be done by John Hume and UUP's David Trimble, a former member of Vanguard who came to accept power sharing.¹⁵⁷ The peace process bore its long awaited fruits in 1998, with the signing of the Belfast (or Good Friday) Agreement.¹⁵⁸ In simultaneous referenda the Republic of Ireland amended its constitution to remove its claim on the north, and Northern Ireland's population approved of the deal with a margin of 71% in favor and 29% against.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ See Gerard Murray and Jonathan Tongue, *Sinn Féin and the SDLP: From Alienation to Participation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). The ceasefire was ended in 1996 with IRA bombings in London and Manchester, but resumed in 1997.

¹⁵⁴ On PUP, see James McAuley, "Just Fighting to Survive: Loyalist Military Politics and the Progressive Unionist Party," *Terrorism and Political Violence* vol. 16 no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 522-543; on NIWC, see Kate Fearon, *Women's Work: The Story of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1999) and Yvonne Galligan, "Women in Northern Ireland's politics: feminising an armed patriarchy?" in M. Sawer, M. Tremblay, and L. Trimble, *Representing Women in Parliament* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Chris MacCabe, then director of the Northern Ireland Office.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Bronagh Hinds, 1/7/2008.

¹⁵⁷ For a biography, see Frank Millar, *David Trimble: the Price of Peace* (Dublin: Liffey Press, 2004).

¹⁵⁸ For an account of the nerve-wracking negotiations, see Jonathan Powell, *Great Hatred, Little Room: Making Peace in Northern Ireland*. (London: The Bodley Head, 2008).

¹⁵⁹ A subsequent study has shown that the 'no' vote was higher among Protestants, but the agreement was probably supported by a slim majority of the Protestant community; it was overwhelmingly supported by Catholics. See Bernadette Hayes and Ian McAllister, "Who Voted for Peace? Public Support for the 1998 Northern Ireland Agreement," *Irish Political Studies* vol. 16 no. 1 (2001): 73-93.

DUP was the only major party opposed to the agreement. In the election that followed within a month, UUP and SDLP remained the dominant voices of the two camps, but vote transfers between the moderate parties were minimal. The cohabitation in the power-sharing government proved difficult, and serious disagreements about weapons decommissioning led the British government to suspend the assembly for a few months in 2000, and for a much longer period between 2002 and 2007. In subsequent elections APNI remained weak, NIWC lost its seats, and UUP and SDLP were overtaken by their respective hardliner rivals. DUP capitalized on simmering qualms about the agreement among Protestants.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile, SF demonstrated superior organization to SDLP and reaped the benefits of its turn to mainstream politics.¹⁶¹ After consolidating their position within their respective communities in 2007, DUP and SF finally agreed to co-lead the power-sharing executive—a historic first. Their cooperation has been far from smooth, but at least devolved government has returned to Northern Ireland. The provisions of the GFA requiring separate communal majorities for controversial issues have been criticized for producing deadlock and putting middle-ground parties like APNI in an awkward position.¹⁶² Occasional talk about replacing the mandatory grand coalition with a two-thirds qualified majority rule (a “voluntary coalition” in local parlance) echoes similar ideas from the 1970s and is rejected as ‘fiction’ by nationalists.¹⁶³

Electoral Engineering in Northern Ireland: An Appraisal

The prevailing climate of opinion among scholars of Northern Ireland is to view SMP negatively and to welcome the return of STV, with few dissenting voices. It is not possible to claim that the electoral system did not matter at all in Northern Ireland; but how much it

¹⁶⁰ Bernadette Hayes, Ian MacAllister, and Lizanne Dowds. “The Erosion of Consent: Protestant Disillusionment with the 1998 Northern Ireland Agreement.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinions and Parties* vol. 15 no. 2 (September 2005): 147 -167; Cathy Gormley-Heenan, and Roger Macginty, “Ethnic Outbidding and Party Modernization: Understanding the Democratic Unionist Party's Electoral Success in the Post-Agreement Environment,” *Ethnopolitics*, vol. 7, no. 1 (March 2008): 43-61.

¹⁶¹ Agnès Maillot, *New Sinn Féin: Irish Republicanism in the Twenty-First Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); Kevin Bean, *The New Politics of Sinn Féin* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).

¹⁶² In 2001 three of APNI's Stormont deputies declared themselves ‘unionist’ to ensure a unionist majority in support for the reelection of David Trimble as First Minister. See Jocelyn Evans and Jonathan Tonge, “The Future of the ‘Radical Centre’ in Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement,” *Political Studies* vol. 51 no. 1 (March 2003): 26-50.

¹⁶³ APNI favors this possibility which would probably guarantee it a permanent place in the coalition. Interviews with David Ford, Carmel Hanna, Alex Maskey, and Richard Bullick.

mattered for the course of the conflict is very much an open question. In logic, the law of the excluded middle refers to the impossibility of a third option between a proposition and its negation. To carry the pun to sectarian politics, it is often lamented that the middle ground (APNI and other small parties today, NILP in the past) has been excluded from power as the impossible third option between two irreconcilable extremes (unionism and nationalism). In places like Northern Ireland the tragedy is not that the middle ground is really inconceivable, but rather that it is so perennially weak. Electoral systems came and went, but the incentives they provided did not change this sad reality. As Table 6 shows, survey data corroborate that the sectarian character of Northern Ireland's party system has remained intact.

Table 6: Religious vs. party affiliation (Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey, 2003)

Party	Protestant	Catholic	No religion
UUP	34%	-	9%
DUP	28%	-	8%
PUP	1%	-	1%
SDLP	2%	39%	10%
SF	-	23%	9%
APNI	5%	2%	12%
NIWC	1%	2%	4%
Other	6%	5%	6%
N/A	24%	28%	42%
Total	100%	100%	100%

My focus in this chapter has been on the parliament/assembly of Northern Ireland, the key legislative body in those periods when the province functioned as an autonomous self-contained entity. Westminster elections have been relatively peripheral due to the province's devolved constitutional status.¹⁶⁴ As explained, gerrymandering was primarily a problem in local, not parliamentary elections in Northern Ireland, and it certainly would not have been sustained if the province's legislature were not monopolized by Unionists. In such a society with a single ethnic cleavage, class was the only viable candidate for cross-sectarian political mobilization. Labor politics (with NILP prominent) provided some hope in this direction

¹⁶⁴ The Conservative Party's support for unionism was intertwined with its historical alliance with the Unionist Party; as sympathetic as the Labour Party was to Catholics, it was certainly not anti-union.

before 1969. The Troubles caused the working class to bifurcate, but brought part of the middle class together in APNI.¹⁶⁵ The Troubles also triggered the breakup of the traditional blocks into moderate (SDLP, UUP) and hardliner (SF, DUP) parties. The question then for electoral design is whether these forces (cross-sectarian and moderate sectarian parties) were aided or hurt by the electoral formula used for parliamentary elections and whether they could have performed better under a different formula.

Northern Ireland's demographic makeup provides a high degree of sectarian mixing in large geographic units, which diminishes significantly if constituencies become smaller, as was the case under SMP. Considering the hypotheses laid out in the theoretical chapter, the expectation from propositions 3 and 4 is that cross-sectarian voting would remain generally low under SMP and PR, possibly rising slightly under PR through the operation of STV, a preferential system, in mixed constituencies. Cross-sectarian voting in Northern Ireland has indeed been low, but the most successful cross-sectarian party in history by vote share was NILP, which polled up to a fifth or a quarter of the vote in the early 1960s, compared to one tenth of the vote for APNI in the late 1970s and early 80s.¹⁶⁶ This counterintuitive situation is due to the fact that SMP, by creating overwhelmingly mono-sectarian constituencies, allowed Protestant voters to focus on intra-sectarian divisions, with the small Catholic minority in the constituency either abstaining or supporting Labour. Unfortunately, small district magnitude simultaneously hurt NILP by depriving it of seats analogous to its vote share. However, it is difficult to claim counterfactually that Labour would have made a bigger impact if STV had continued to be used in the 1960s, because electoral contests in larger constituencies would heighten the sectarian divide (as they did in the 1920s, when Labour did miserably). A study of voting patterns under STV has indicated that in mixed constituencies support for DUP

¹⁶⁵ Intra-communal class differences were originally present between DUP and UUP, and to a lesser extent SF and SDLP, but recent research indicates that the relationship between class and party affiliation has declined. Geoffrey Evans and Mary Duffy, "Beyond the Sectarian Divide: the Social Bases and Political Consequences of Nationalist and Unionist Party Competition in Northern Ireland," *British Journal of Political Science* vol. 27 no. 1 (January 1997): 47-81; James Tilley, Geoffrey Evans, and Claire Mitchell, "Consociationalism and the Evolution of Political Cleavages in Northern Ireland, 1989-2004," *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 38 no. 4 (October 2008): 699-717.

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted, however, that turnout was lower in the early 1960s. In terms of votes cast, in their heyday both NILP and APNI hovered around 50,000-60,000 votes.

among Protestants and SF among Catholics is actually higher.¹⁶⁷ This, as well as NILP's good performance in the predominantly Protestant parts of Belfast in the 1950s and 60s, is evidence against Proposition 4 (the mixed constituency hypothesis) in Northern Ireland. As for APNI, it is severely disadvantaged by SMP in Westminster elections and depends on PR to obtain seats in the current Assembly. Its closest ideological predecessor, the Ulster Liberal Party, performed even worse under SMP in the 1960s.

STV is a complicated system and deserves some detailed discussion. Its preferential aspects have not made much of an impact in Northern Ireland both because of the strong sectarian divide and because the party strategists have astutely realized that they stand to gain more from capitalizing on STV's proportionality; thus they focus on voters' first preferences. Even small parties have to maximize first preferences—to stay in the counting and benefit from transfers. As Green Party MLA Brian Wilson explained, “The important thing is to get a good first preference vote. The middle ground gets preferences from everywhere as long as you don't get knocked out. But you need enough first preferences for that.”¹⁶⁸ Ben Reilly, a major advocate of preferential voting systems in the scholarly literature, has noted that,

Another reason for the varying degrees of success of preferential voting... is the existence of a small but influential group of moderate voters, who will sometimes cast their ballot on issues other than ethnicity and appear prepared to respond to cross-ethnic appeals.

The catch here is that “rewards to moderation” presuppose a minimum existing moderation. Moderate candidates that fail to receive enough first preferences are eliminated first. Peter Emerson, a maverick electoral reform activist, who is sometimes derided for his passionate support of the qualified Borda count, is right in pointing out that “you can be everyone's second preference and get eliminated in the first round.”¹⁶⁹

The major parties have honed their skills at estimating their support in a constituency, running exactly the number of candidates that they can elect based on this level of support, and instructing their voters in different localities to put different candidates as their first

¹⁶⁷ Donald Beaudette and Andrew Kirkpatrick, “Group Threat in Northern Ireland: Examining Vote Shares of Radical Parties,” unpublished paper presented at the APSA 2008 conference.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Brian Wilson, Stormont, 25/6/2008.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Peter Emerson.

preferences, so that all of the party's candidates meet the quota from the first round. Jimmy Spratt, DUP's MLA from South Belfast, could not emphasize this more: "You have to have very close vote management in council and assembly elections under STV." SF is widely admired for having perfected this art to a margin of a few hundred votes. Alex Maskey, also elected in South Belfast, takes pride in the success of the party machine: "People who accuse us of vote management miss the point. This is a bigger project. It speaks to the sophistication of our electorate." Unionist detractors claim that SF polling agents know their constituencies so well that they can see who has not voted on election day from the register, call up the local party bosses and ask them to drive up to people's homes and fetch them to the polling station. Seamus, a young SF supporter from the staunchly republican borderlands of South Armagh, corroborated these rumors: "where I'm from you *cannot* not vote," he told me.

Most people put down preferences only for candidates of one party (a practice called 'plumping') or, if they transfer to other parties, they keep their vote "within the community." Typically 70-85% of transferred votes stay within the party. Cross-community voting is rare. It is seen in some constituencies where one community is too small a minority (i.e. where the system is least proportional by nature of the demography).¹⁷⁰ Table 7 shows the distribution of vote transfers between parties (called "terminal transfers" in STV parlance) as calculated by Sydney Elliott from Queen's University.¹⁷¹ The previous to last column shows the percentage of non-transferrable votes, i.e. those where the voter engaged in some degree of plumping and did not put down enough lower preferences. The last column indicates terminal transfers as a percentage of the total first preferences that the party received in the election.

The table shows that the tendency is indeed mostly centripetal. DUP voters transfer to UUP, and SF voters transfer to SDLP. UUP voters transfer in both directions, to DUP and to SDLP (in 2003, relations between the two unionist parties were bad and all transfers went centripetally to SDLP). SDLP voters behave in a similar fashion, but they do not return the favor to UUP; for those who transfer to the center, the preferred alternate is APNI. The problem then is not that STV transfers are not in the 'desired' direction for encouraging

¹⁷⁰ This is the case for Protestants in Derry, where UUP voters transfer preferences to SDLP to thwart SF.

¹⁷¹ Sydney Elliott, "The Electoral Dynamics of the Belfast Agreement," in *The Northern Ireland Question: The Peace Process and the Belfast Agreement*, edited by Brian Barton and Patrick J. Roche (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

moderation, but that their magnitude is too low to make a great difference. In terms of *first* preferences in these two elections, the moderate parties were overtaken by DUP and SF. It is definitely true that DUP and SF have toned down their rhetoric in recent years and that public opinion in Northern Ireland as a whole has converged on certain key issues (the value of North-South links, power-sharing, and weapons decommissioning). To explain the paradox of moderate voters switching to the extreme parties, Paul Mitchell, Jeffrey Evans, and Brendan O’Leary have argued that DUP and SF possess an “ethnic valence” factor, a reputation for being the tough bargainers for their respective community’s interests.¹⁷² Although this is a valid point, it does not change the fact that voters chose to reward the parties that caused deadlock and the suspension of Stormont—and that the electoral system could not translate voter preferences otherwise. Being able to default to direct rule from London and having guaranteed a level of peace through the GFA, Northern Irish voters enjoyed a luxury that citizens of many other divided societies cannot afford. It is hard to say if voters would have behaved more moderately if there were no GFA and the only alternative to power sharing was again chaos.

Table 7: Distribution of terminal vote transfers in the 2003 and 2007 assembly elections (adapted from Sydney Elliott, “The Electoral Dynamics of the Belfast Agreement”)

2003 Election

From/To	DUP	UUP	Other U	SDLP	SF	APNI	Non-trans	% trans
DUP		38.8%	12.3%	2.7%	1.1%	1.7%	39.5%	9.4%
UUP	-		0.4%	41.8%	0.6%	2.4%	54.8%	5.7%
SDLP	0.3%	15.6%	0.6%		42.1%	23.5%	13.8%	4.0%
SF	0.3%	0.9%	0.1%	83.4%		1.9%	13.5%	3.6%

2007 Election

From/To	DUP	UUP	SDLP	SF	APNI	Non-trans	% trans
DUP		75.5%	6.5%	0.2%	0.4%	15.8%	3.2%
UUP	49%		19%	0.8%	-	25.6%	12.9%
SDLP	2%	14%		13.8%	16.9%	36.3%	11.1%
SF	1.2%	1%	67%		3.4%	23%	6.2%

¹⁷² Paul Mitchell, Jeffrey Evans, and Brendan O’Leary in “Extremist Outbidding in Ethnic Party Systems is not Inevitable: Tribune Parties in Northern Ireland.” *Political Studies* vol. 57 no. 2 (December 2008): 397-421.

Regarding the effects of the electoral formula on the number of parties, propositions 1 and 2 would predict a significant decrease in party fragmentation after 1929 and a converse increase after the 1973 reform. The former did not take place but the latter did.¹⁷³ The lack of effect from the first reform may be due to the early abolition of STV. This is a weakness in my study design, being the only case of a reform that came too soon to allow me to observe the previous system in operation for at least four elections. Although it is impossible to guess how voting would have evolved if STV had continued past 1929, it is important to observe that SMP did not prevent new parties from challenging the UP and NP in the second period. SMP helped UP and NP to maintain their hegemonic positions in terms of seat allocation, but it did not have the strategic effect of discouraging other parties from entering the electoral race. PR after 1973 perhaps sustained the high degree of party fragmentation, but as close examination of the historical record and interviews with key participants showed, it did not cause it. The fragmentation of the party system started in 1969—when the PR reform was unanticipated—and it was caused by intra-communal divisions over the proper response to the civil rights violence.

In terms of the corollaries, STV in the 1920s did not guarantee perfectly proportional minority representation because Belfast districts were small (four-member). Catholics could thus only hope to gain 12 seats, whereas they claimed they should be entitled to at least 16 (one third of 48). Under SMP, they could secure 11, only a marginal deterioration, although SMP certainly drove up voter abstention in strongly dominated constituencies. The sectarian seat distribution became exactly proportional only in the 1990s when district magnitude was set uniformly at six. Historically, however, the central problem was the Catholics' permanent exclusion from power, not whether or not their parliamentary representation was perfectly proportional. For this reason, obtaining a commitment to power sharing from unionists has been a much more important issue for nationalists than district magnitude. There is no doubt that weak support for cross-sectarian parties or for cross-sectarian alliances of moderate sectarian parties negatively affected conflict dynamics. But this problem cannot easily be attributed to the proportionality of STV; it has been a recurrent feature of Northern Ireland's

¹⁷³ The effective number of parties by vote share was 2.33 in 1921-1929, 3.13 in 1929-1969, and 5.39 in 1973-2007; by seat share it was 1.98 in 1921-1929, 1.93 in 1929-1969, and 4.88 in 1973-2007.

party system across electoral formulas. NILP's relative success under SMP was probably due to the reduction in the ethnic heterogeneity of constituencies rather than to incentives for strategic voting provided by low proportionality.

What can surely be attributed to STV is an advantage given to small parties. The proliferation of parties in Northern Ireland today is often seen as a positive sign of pluralism. British officials welcomed the contributions of APNI, NIWC, and PUP to the peace process. However, forgetting that Vanguard, DUP, and Sinn Féin also used to be small parties that benefited from PR and wrecked the peace process for two decades would amount to a grave historical omission. SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon famously characterized the GFA as "Sunningdale for slow learners." Veteran politicians who were involved in that abortive attempt at power-sharing in 1973 are particularly bitter about the way it was ripped to shreds by unionist strikers and republican bombers. Granted, the Republic of Ireland had not yet officially given up its territorial claim on Northern Ireland. But this claim was largely symbolic, while SDLP, the party whose inclusion in government was the bone of contention, had endorsed the principle of consent. In our interview, Unionist leader Reg Empey admitted in a low voice that Vanguard and its offshoot party, the UUUP, "probably were a mistake." Austin Currie asked me persistently: "I dare you to show me the difference between current and then arrangements. What is it that justified the loss of one life, never mind 3,000?" For all the knowledge I gained about Northern Ireland during the course of my research, I do not have a good answer to this question.

Figure 1: Historical evolution of political parties in Northern Ireland, 1921-2009

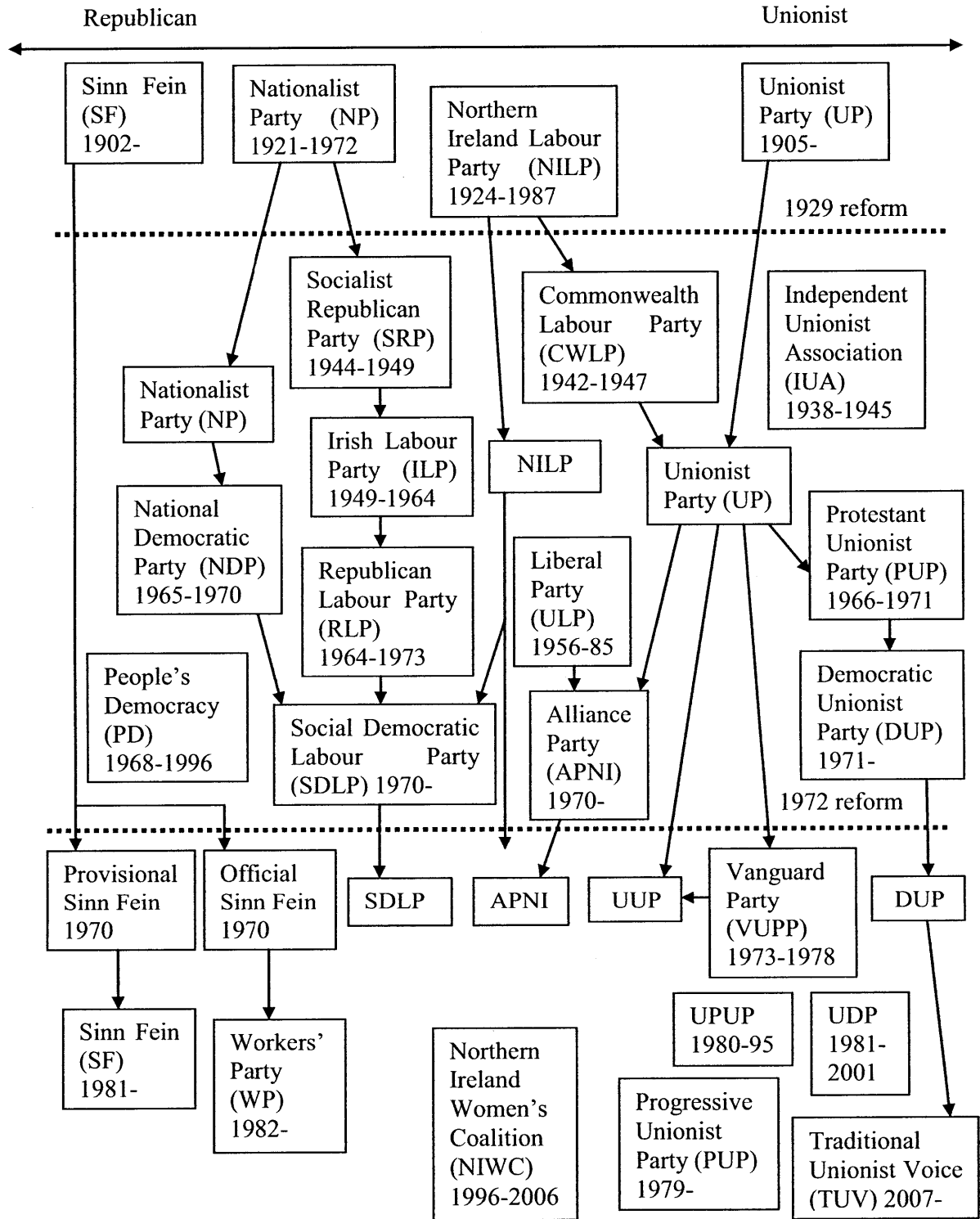


Table 8: Ethnic structure codification of Northern Ireland's political parties

First Period, 1921-1929

UP	Hegemon	<i>(Protestants)</i>
NP	Agonist → Hegemon	<i>(Catholics) → (Catholics)</i>
SF	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
NILP	Antagonist	<i>(Protestants, Catholics)</i>

Second Period, 1929-1969

UP	Hegemon → Agonist	<i>(Protestants) → (Protestants)</i>
NP	Hegemon → Agonist	<i>(Catholics) → (Catholics)</i>
ULP	Antagonist	<i>(Protestants, Catholics)</i>
NILP	Antagonist	<i>(Protestants, Catholics)</i>
IUA	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
CPNI	Antagonist	<i>(Catholics, Protestants)</i>
CWLP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
SRP/ILP	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
RLP	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
NDP	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
PD	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
PUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>

Third Period, 1973-2007

DUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
UUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
SDLP	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
SF	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
APNI	Antagonist	<i>(Protestants, Catholics)</i>
VUPP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
UPUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
UDP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
PUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
UKUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
NIUP	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>
WP	Agonist	<i>(Catholics)</i>
NIWC	Antagonist	<i>(Protestants, Catholics)</i>
TUV	Agonist	<i>(Protestants)</i>

Note: Italics indicate that the party captured the vast majority of that ethnic group's votes

Table 9: Northern Ireland parliament/assembly summary election results, 1921-2007

First Period, 1921-1929 (vote share/seats)

Election	UP		NILP		NP		SF		Other U		Other R		Other	
	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats
1921	66.9	40	0.6	0	11.8	6	20.5	6	0.2	0	-	-	-	-
1925	55.0	32	4.7	3	23.8	10	-	-	9.0	4	5.3	2	2.2	1

Second Period, 1929-1969 (vote share/seats)

Election	UP		ULP		NILP		NP		Other U		Other R		Other	
	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats
1929	50.8	37	6.2	0	8.0	1	11.7	11	14.3	3	1.3	0	7.7	0
1933	43.5	36	-	-	8.5	2	13.1	9	21.3	3	13.4	2	0.2	0
1938	56.8	39	-	-	5.7	1	4.9	8	28.7	3	-	-	3.9	1
1945	50.4	33	-	-	18.5	2	9.1	10	12.8	3	2.6	1	6.6	3
1949	62.7	37	-	-	7.1	0	26.8	9	0.6	2	0.0	1	2.8	3
1953	48.6	38	-	-	12.1	0	10.8	7	12.8	1	13	4	2.7	2
1958	44.0	37	0.3	0	15.8	4	14.9	7	8.8	0	9.3	2	6.9	2
1962	48.8	34	3.6	1	25.4	4	15.1	9	-	-	3.6	2	3.5	2
1965	59.1	36	3.9	1	20.4	2	8.2	9	-	-	5.9	3	2.5	1
1969	48.2	36	1.3	0	8.1	2	7.6	6	19.4	3	11.7	2	3.9	3

Third Period, 1973-2007 (vote share/seats)

Election	DUP		UUP		APNI		SDLP		SF		Other U		Other	
	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats	Vote Share	Seats
1973	10.8	8	25.3	24	9.2	8	22.1	19	-	-	26.7	18	6.8	1
1975	14.8	12	25.4	19	9.8	8	23.7	17	-	-	22.3	21	4.0	1
1982	23.0	21	29.7	26	9.3	10	18.8	14	10.1	5	5.6	2	3.4	0
1996*	18.8	24	24.2	30	6.5	7	21.4	21	15.5	17	10.4	7	3.5	4
1998	18.0	20	21.3	28	6.5	6	22.0	24	17.7	18	11.5	10	3.2	2
2003	25.7	30	22.7	27	3.7	6	17.0	18	23.5	24	2.8	2	4.8	1
2007	30.1	36	14.9	18	5.2	7	15.2	16	26.2	28	2.8	1	5.5	2

* The 1996 election for the Northern Ireland Forum was a special election conducted with list PR; two bonus seats were awarded to the each of the top ten parties

Abbreviations: Other U = Other Unionist, Other R = Other Republican

Table 10: Turnout in Northern Ireland parliament/assembly elections, 1921-2007

First Period, 1921-1929

1921	88%
1925	75.1%

Second Period, 1929-1969

	Official*	Effective
1929	67.6%	37.7%
1933	67.7%	21.4%
1938	71.1%	40%
1945	70.3%	42.3%
1949	79.3%	44.7%
1953	60.2%	29%
1958	67.1%	27.1%
1962	66%	33.5%
1965	57.6%	35.8%
1969	71.9%	61.3%

*Official turnout figures for this period are based on the electorate in contested constituencies only. I calculated effective turnout based on the entire electorate of Northern Ireland.

Third Period, 1973-2007

1973	56.1%
1975	65.8%
1982	63.5%
1996	64.7%
1998	69.9%
2003	63.1%
2007	62.3%

Sources:

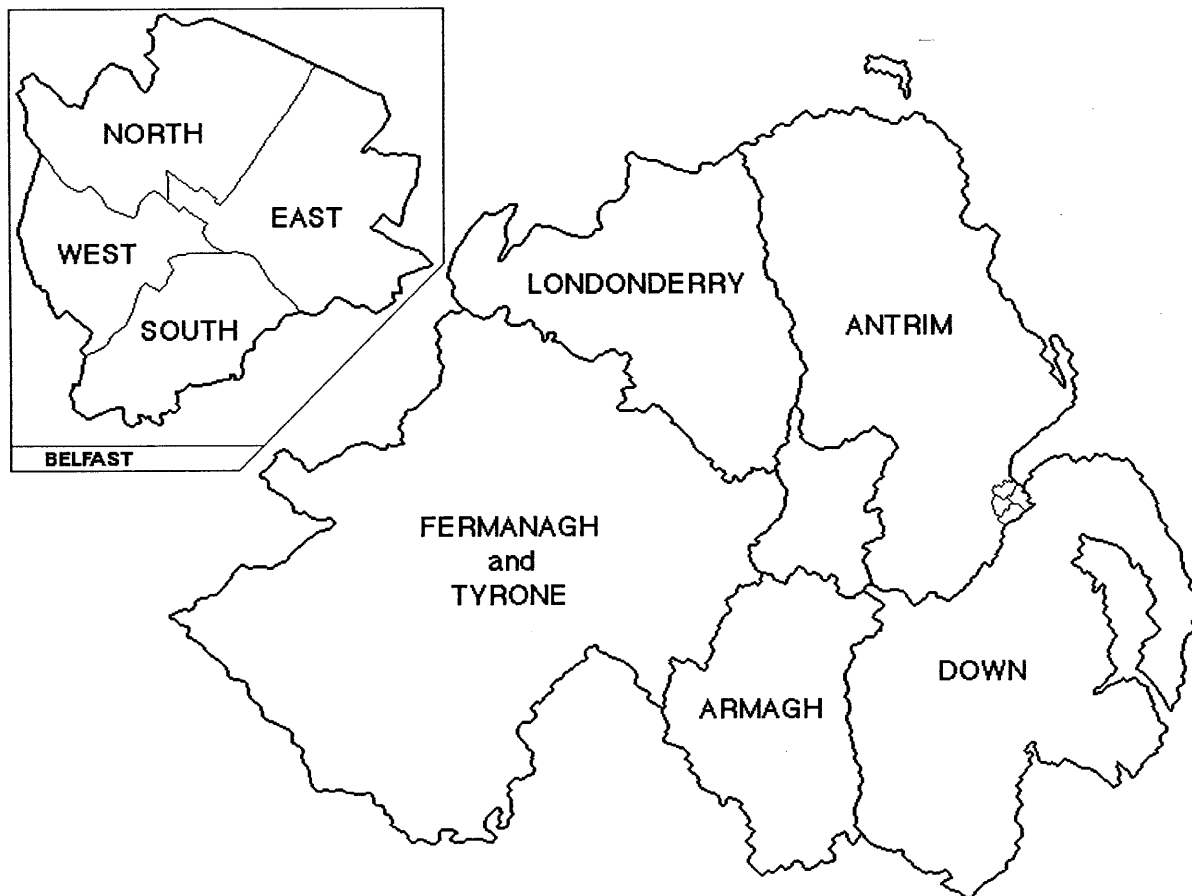
CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet)

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/>

ARK Northern Ireland

<http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/>

Map 1: Northern Ireland's constituencies, 1921-1929 (Source: ARK Northern Ireland)

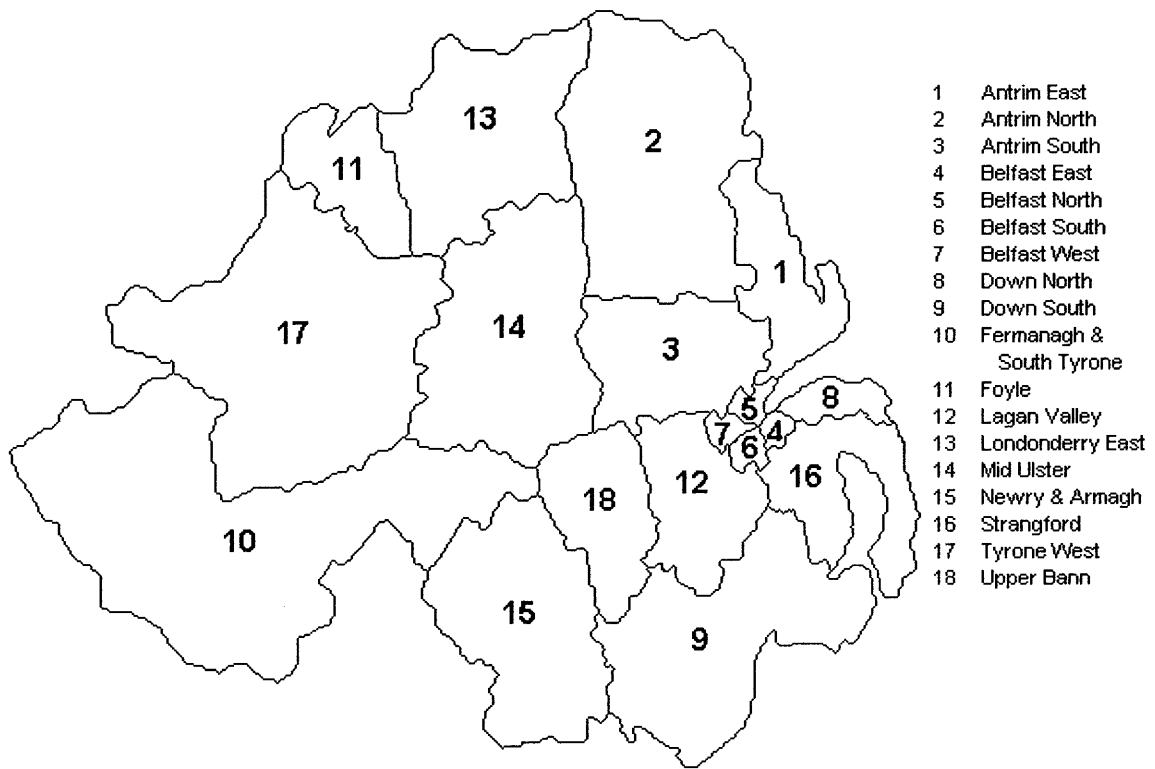


Map 2: Northern Ireland's constituencies, 1929-1969 (Source: ARK Northern Ireland)



Note: Dark shade indicates the eleven constituencies consistently won by nationalists, white those won by unionists or Labour. Dock (lightly shaded in Belfast) was the only constituency that changed sides due to a demographic shift in the Catholics' favor by the 1960s.

Map 3: Northern Ireland's constituencies since 1998 (Source: ARK Northern Ireland)



Northern Ireland political posters (clockwise from top left): Ian Paisley 1960s poster; 1972 Alliance poster; 1975 unionist poster denouncing the Sunningdale Agreement; poster from the H-block prisoners hunger strike. Source: CAIN and Linen Hall Library visual collection



Chapter 4

TURKEY: CROSSCUTTING CLEAVAGES REVISITED

A large middle-income country that implemented two major electoral reforms in the course of its modern political history, Turkey was the case I was most familiar with at the beginning of this research project. It also seemed to me the most daunting, both for language reasons (little did I know about Irish English at the time) and because, being Greek, my own ethnic background did not make me neutral in the eyes of respondents. My fieldwork in Turkey took place in three localities (Ankara, Istanbul, and Diyarbakir) in fall 2007-winter 2008. It was a difficult period marked by constant skirmishes between the army and the PKK, Turkish air strikes against guerrilla bases in Northern Iraq, and political polarization as the governing Islamic party held a constitutional referendum, which the opposition bitterly opposed, while the judiciary filed closure cases against the Kurdish minority party, and later the Islamic party as well. For those who know Turkey, this was a hot, but not unusual period; the country has been in turmoil over these issues for the last three decades. In this chapter I will present them specifically under the lens of electoral politics.

Ethnic Identities in Turkey

In Ottoman times, Anatolia was a religiously diverse region, but after the maelstrom of the First World War, it was ethnically cleansed of its Christian minorities. By the 1930s only small communities of Armenians, Greeks, and Jews remained in Istanbul, and the Turkish Republic emerged as a unitary state with a homogenizing ideology and an overwhelmingly Muslim population. According to the constitution, “everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk.”¹⁷⁴ Turkish has for long been the only

¹⁷⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, Article 66.

official language; primary instruction in other languages is restricted to the non-Muslim minorities of Istanbul and certain foreign language schools.¹⁷⁵

Despite this veneer of homogeneity, Turkish society encapsulates several Muslim ethnic groups. Some are native to the Black Sea region, like the Caucasian Laz around Rize, the Armenian-speaking Hemshin in nearby Artvin, and the Greek-speaking Muslims of Trabzon. Others descend from Muslim refugees who streamed into Anatolia from the 18th century onwards as the Ottoman Empire contracted: Circassians, Crimean Tatars, Albanians, Bulgarian, Bosnian, and Cretan Muslims. Most of these refugees settled in towns in the Marmara and Aegean regions. Today, their communities are considered highly assimilated and their numbers are too small to have notable political impact.¹⁷⁶ Speakers of Arabic, living in lands across the border with Syria, have historically been more numerous, making up just over one percent of the total population in 1965. Although it is commonly known that many people from these regions, particularly the Hatay province annexed by Turkey in 1939, have Arab ancestry, they are assimilated today and Arab identity has not become politicized.¹⁷⁷

Leaving these small minorities aside, this study will focus on two large groups found in Eastern Turkey, one linguistic and one confessional: the Kurds and the Alevis. Both have developed a conscious and highly politicized identity and their position in Turkish society continues to be controversial. There is some overlap between the two, so that the categories ‘Alevi’ and ‘Kurd’ are not mutually exclusive. Activists from both of these groups claim that their people have been historically oppressed by the majority population in Turkey, consisting of people who are native speakers of Turkish and follow the Sunni Islamic tradition. In this discussion, I will also treat Sunni Turkish speakers as the majority group, the

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, Articles 3 and 42.

¹⁷⁶ For more information on some of these minorities see Peter Andrews, *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey* (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1989); Samim Akgönül, *Türkiye Rumları* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2007); Arsen Avagyan, *Çerkesler* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004); Stanford Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1991); Alexandre Toumarkine, *Les Lazes en Turquie* (Istanbul: Les éditions Isis, 1995); Hovann Simonian, ed., *The Hemshin: History, Society, and Identity in the Highlands of Northeast Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); and “Balkan and Caucasian Immigrant Associations” in *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, edited by Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert, and Karin Vorhoff (Istanbul: Orient-Institut, 2000).

¹⁷⁷ I know of no cultural or political organization claiming to represent Arabs in Turkey today. Nusairi Arabs have adopted a broader Alevi identity. See Marianne Arinberg-Laanatza, “Alevis in Turkey-Alawites in Syria: Similarities and Differences,” in Olsson, Özdalga and Raudvere eds., *Alevi Identity* pp. 151-166.

unmarked category in Turkish society, but will not focus on them or explore Sunni faith as an ethnic characteristic.¹⁷⁸

The Kurds are said to be one of the largest ethnic groups in the world agitating for self-determination. Within Turkey's context, I will use the term Kurd to describe people who either speak a dialect of Kurdish or claim Kurdish-speaking ancestry. The predominant Kurdish dialect in Turkey is Kurmanji, or Northern Kurdish, which is substantially different from the Sorani or Southern Kurdish dialect spoken by most Kurds of Iraq. Zazaki or Dimli, spoken in an area from Diyarbakir to Erzincan, is an Iranian language unintelligible with Kurmanji, but in recent decades Zaza people generally self-identify as Kurdish.¹⁷⁹ Sunni Islam (of the Saafi, not Hanafi school as in the rest of Turkey) is the predominant religion among Turkey's Kurds, while a minority of Kurds, more commonly Zazas, are Alevi.¹⁸⁰

Kurdish-speaking areas were historically divided between the Ottoman and Persian Empires but the small semi-autonomous Kurdish principalities were brought under direct Ottoman control only in the mid-19th century. Educated Kurdish diaspora communities in Istanbul and Cairo created the first nationalist organizations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Turkish War of Independence in 1919-1922 was waged by Mustafa Kemal on an explicit platform of alliance between Anatolian Muslims, Turks and Kurds alike. After the establishment of the republic in 1923, however, the rhetoric changed and Kurdish demands for autonomy were rejected. Several revolts broke out in the 1920s and 30s but the Kurds' linguistic, confessional, and tribal fragmentation meant that each movement gained support only among a certain segment (Alevi, Zaza Sunni, or Kurmanji Sunni) and was subsequently defeated in detail. Dersim, the most rebellious Alevi region, was finally reduced in 1938 and renamed Tunceli. Kurdish notable families were exiled to other parts of Turkey, Turkish-

¹⁷⁸ Although the conflict between secularism and Sunni religiosity is a contentious aspect of Turkish politics, it is very hard to track "atheism" or "Sunni fundamentalism" as identities bearing ethnic characteristics in the Turkish populace; survey research seems to indicate that Sunni self-definition has a more continuous distribution. See for example Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest, and Stability in an Islamic Society* (I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 120-130, whose 2002 data showed that 98% of their respondents believed in God, 55% objected to their daughter marrying a non-Muslim, 30% never went to mosque, and 16.5% desired a state based on Islamic sharia law.

¹⁷⁹ See Paul White, "The Debate on the Identity of Alevi Kurds" in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: a Comprehensive Overview*, edited by Paul White and Joost Jongerden (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003).

¹⁸⁰ David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 8-12.

speaking state officials were brought in as settlers, and use of Kurdish for state purposes was banned.¹⁸¹ The term ‘Kurd’ remained an official taboo throughout the Cold War.

After the 1980 coup, the Turkish military took a tougher stance and in 1984 the Marxist-inspired PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*—Kurdistan Workers Party) began its armed campaign which has since cost approximately 40,000 lives. Albeit decapitated after the capture of its idolized leader, Abdullah Öcalan, in 1999, PKK persists with border raids and occasional bombings. The Kurdish question has traumatized Turkish society; attitudes towards Kurds range from tolerance to outright hostility. The presence of independent Kurdish deputies in parliament since the July 2007 election has also been divisive. Language rights, demands for regional autonomy, and accusations of harboring terrorism are the bones of contention.

Unlike Kurds, Alevi make no territorial demands and are broadly considered loyal to the Turkish Republic.¹⁸² Alevism refers to the heterodox religious practices of some originally rural Anatolian populations, whose exact origins are obscure. Heterodox Turkic nomads known as Kızılbaş ('Redheads') gave rise to the Safavid dynasty of Iran and were persecuted as heretics by the Ottomans during their wars with Persia in the 16th century. A central religious figure for many Alevi is Hacı Bektaş Veli (1209-1271), the mystic pilgrim founder of the Bektashi Sufi order, which held great sway over the Ottoman Janissary corps.¹⁸³ The Bektashi lodges were suppressed together with the Janissaries in 1826, officially closed together with all religious orders by Atatürk in 1925, and restored for museum purposes beginning in the 1950s. Turkish scholars in the 1920s associated Alevi practices with pre-Islamic Turkic shamanism originating in Central Asia, and claimed Alevi as the purest of Turks.¹⁸⁴ But historians note that, through the Bektashi order, Alevism also

¹⁸¹ McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, chapter 9; Paul White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers? The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey* (New York: Zed Books 2000).

¹⁸² Alevi Kurds are an exception; TIKKO, the primarily Alevi Kurdish armed wing of the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist, collaborated with PKK until the Turkish army leveled its rural bases in Tunceli in 1994. See Michiel Leezenberg, “Kurdish Alevi and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s,” in *Turkey’s Alevi Enigma*, pp. 197-212.

¹⁸³ Children of non-Muslims recruited through a child levy and raised as servants of the Ottoman Sultan.

¹⁸⁴ Ali Yaman and Aykan Erdemir. *Alevism-Bektashism: A Brief Introduction* (Istanbul: England Alevi Cultural Center and Cemevi, 2006) pp. 25-26.

attracted Anatolian Christians, particularly Armenians, converting to Islam in the Ottoman period—an ancestry that Alevis today are often cognizant of.¹⁸⁵

Alevis (literally “followers of Ali”) may use different names for themselves in different localities (Bektaşî, Kızılbaş, Tahtacı, Nusairî) but an evolving cultural movement has fostered a sense of community among previously isolated groups. Apart from special reverence for Imam Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, practices that set them apart from Sunnis include different holidays and fasting schedules, extensive use of music and dance and non-segregation of sexes in ceremonies, pilgrimage to the tombs of Alevi holy figures instead of Mecca, and greater openness to Christianity and Judaism. Alevi worship (*cem*) takes place in an assembly house (*cemevi*) and is led by hereditary elders (*dede*) from families claiming ancestry to Ali. Alevis, however, may also attend ceremonies at Sunni mosques, and like other non-orthodox groups in Islam may exercise *takiye* (Arabic *taqiyya*), i.e. concealment of their religious identity in predominantly Sunni environments.¹⁸⁶

As mentioned, the Alevi community in Turkey includes people of Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic origin. Some Alevi scholars strongly object to the term ‘ethnic’ when referring to Alevis, given the group’s tolerance to its linguistic diversity.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, it is also the case that whereas the Bektashi order accepted disciples on a voluntary basis, Alevi identity has generally been considered hereditary.¹⁸⁸ Most Alevis consider themselves Muslims of a different denomination (*mezhep*) than Sunnis, a minority consider themselves closer to Shiism, while a more radical wing places Alevism outside Islam.¹⁸⁹ Mehmet, a 32-year-old Alevi from Sivas, is among the latter: “we are not Muslim,” he told me, “we just honor Ali because he was open-minded.”¹⁹⁰ Such views came to prominence in the turbulent 1970s, when a younger generation of Alevis became involved in Marxist movements.

¹⁸⁵ Irène Mélikoff, “Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and its Consequences” in Olsson, Özdalga and Raudvere, *Alevi Identity*, p. 6-7; interviews with Enver and Fuat.

¹⁸⁶ For more information see *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious, and Social Perspectives*, edited by Tord Olsson, Elizabeth Özdalga and Catharina Raudvere (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1998); David Shankland *The Alevis in Turkey: The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition* (London, New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2003); Ali Yaman, *Alevilik ve Kızılbaşlık Tarihi* (Istanbul: Noktakitap, 2007).

¹⁸⁷ For example, Yaman and Erdemir, *Alevism-Bektashism*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁸⁸ “Anyone can become a Bektashi but one cannot become an Alevi if one is not born an Alevi.” Irène Mélikoff, “Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and its Consequences” in *Alevi Identity*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁹ See Faruk Bilici, “The Function of Alevi-Bektashi Theology in Modern Turkey”, Reha Çamuroğlu, “Alevi Revivalism in Turkey,” and Fuat Bozkurt, “State-Community Relations and the Restructuring of Alevism,” in Olsson, Özdalga and Raudvere, *Alevi Identity*, pp. 51-62 and 79-96.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Mehmet.

Alevi grievances revolve around the recognition and equality of their community in present-day Turkey. Alevis criticize the state for favoritism towards Sunnis, exemplified by Sunni domination of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DİB—*Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı*). They complain that the school curriculum, which includes compulsory education courses, does not incorporate Alevi beliefs, that the state funds mosques in Alevi areas but not Alevi religious activities, and that successive right-wing governments have tried to assimilate Alevis to the Sunni faith.¹⁹¹ For these reasons, Alevis are particularly sensitive to the principle of secularism and suspicious of the Islamic party currently in government. Sevgi, a 28-year-old female state employee told me: “I do not feel comfortable revealing my religious identity at work; saying you are Alevi is a sure way to stunt your career in the public sector.”¹⁹²

Like Kurds, Alevis became more radicalized through leftist movements in the 1970s, which the military clamped down on after the 1980 coup. While younger generations cling less to the traditional religious beliefs, Alevis are known for their leftist inclinations and attitudes towards them are not always friendly. Fırat, a 26-year-old Sunni from Yozgat, a mixed Sunni-Alevi area, told me openly: “I don’t like Alevis. They don’t really believe in anything anymore. They just try to preserve an idea that they are somehow a separate community.”¹⁹³

Ethnic Demographics

Administrative districts in Turkey have been used as electoral constituencies under all electoral systems but the exact numbers and location of Alevis and Kurds are hard to assess. The Turkish census stopped recording language after 1965 while census information on Alevism was never collected. The accuracy of Turkish census figures is doubted by Turkish experts, due to past inconsistencies and built-in incentives for local authorities to both over-

¹⁹¹Yalman and Erdemir, *Alevism-Bektashism*, pp. 9-13, 57-58; Harald Shüler, “Secularism and Ethnicity: Alevis and Social Democrats in Search of an Alliance,” in *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey*, edited by Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert, Karin Vorhoff, (Istanbul: Orient-Institut, 2000), pp. 197-250.

¹⁹² Interview with Sevgi and Canan.

¹⁹³ Interview with Fırat.

report and under-report figures.¹⁹⁴ Urbanization has intensified since the 1960s with large numbers of people from the east moving to major urban centers in the west and south of the country. Because of restrictions on ethnic expression, survey data on ethnicity are problematic and the ethnic background of individual candidates may be hard to determine, although the ethnic agendas of political parties are more obvious. Despite these shortcomings, census, survey data and anthropological research give at least a general picture of the numbers and location of Kurds and Alevis, providing some clues to their electoral behavior.

Turkish censuses from the 1950s and early 60s counted speakers of Kurdish (usually grouping Kurmanji and Zaza) somewhere between 7 and 9 percent of the total population, but with significant fluctuations which appear incongruent. These summary figures can be seen on Table 1.¹⁹⁵ Correcting and extrapolating from census data, incorporating migration and higher birth rates in the southeast, Servet Mutlu has estimated Kurdish speakers as 12.6 percent of the population in 1990.¹⁹⁶ This figure is corroborated by a 2002 country-wide randomized cluster survey by Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Ali Çarkoğlu in which 12.8 percent of the sample reported knowledge of Kurdish.¹⁹⁷ From the 1960s on, Kurds have migrated to larger (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir) and smaller (Adana, Mersin, Antalya) urban centers, often clustering in shanty town slums. The conflict in the southeast accelerated this exodus in the 1990s, generating a large number of IDPs (between 1 and 1.5 million according to unofficial estimates).¹⁹⁸ Although a significant minority has thus relocated west, most Kurds still live in the southeast where they constitute a local majority.¹⁹⁹ It should be noted, however, that the southeast is linguistically mixed as well and that due to linguistic assimilation many people who claim Kurdish ancestry do not speak Kurdish.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁴See Çarkoğlu and Erdoğan, "Fairness in the Apportionment of Seats in the Turkish Legislature: Is There Room for Improvement?" *New Perspectives on Turkey* Vol. 19 No. 1 (December 1998): 97-124.

¹⁹⁵Source: TÜİK. These figures include only first-language speakers. Figures on second best-spoken language (which were not collected in 1950) would raise the percentage of Kurds to 8.9% in 1965 as well.

¹⁹⁶Servet Mutlu, "The Kurds in Turkey: a Demographic Study," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 28, no. 4. (Nov., 1996): 517-541.

¹⁹⁷Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest, and Stability in an Islamic Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 13

¹⁹⁸Joost Jongerden, *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 79-80.

¹⁹⁹Mutlu (p. 533) estimated that 81.8% of Turkey's Kurds lived in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions in 1965, but only 65.2% did so in 1990.

²⁰⁰A 2007 survey conducted by Metropoll (www.metropoll.com.tr) in southeastern Anatolia reported that 52.8 percent of respondents spoke Kurmanji, 7.4 percent Zazaki, and 13.5 Arabic. The administrative Southeastern

Table 1: Census figures on speakers of different languages in Turkey, 1950-1965

Year	Turkish	Kurdish	Other	Total
1950	18,254,851 (87.1%)	1,855,169 (8.9%)	837,468 (4.0%)	20,947,188
1955	21,622,292 (89.9%)	1,679,265 (7.0%)	763,196 (3.2%)	24,064,763
1960	25,172,535 (90.7%)	1,847,674 (6.7%)	734,611 (2.6%)	27,754,820
1965	28,289,680 (90.1%)	2,370,233 (7.6%)	731,508 (2.3%)	31,391,421

Using Servet Mutlu's estimates, the regional distribution of Kurdish speakers by electoral district can be seen on Maps 1-2.²⁰¹ Throughout the multiparty period, Kurds have probably formed the majority in the provinces of Diyarbakır, Mardin, Van, Hakkari, Siirt, Bitlis, Bingöl, Muş, Ağrı, Tunceli (and in Şırnak, Batman, and Iğdır, which were created later) and a minority with electoral weight in adjacent provinces.

The number of Alevis is much harder to pinpoint. Experts tend to converge on an estimate of approximately 15 percent of Turkey's population, but in surveys explicitly asking about sectarian affiliation the percentage of respondents openly declaring an Alevi identity is much lower. Although Alevi groups have traditionally lived throughout Turkey, their greater concentrations were within a geographic triangle starting from Çorum northeast of Ankara, and extending east to Erzurum and south all the way to Hatay. Only in the province of Tunceli are Alevis believed to form a decisive majority. In all other provinces, including their most populous heartland, Sivas, Alevi villages are in close proximity with Sunni ones. From the 1950s on, Alevis have been migrating to the major urban centers. It is possible that more Alevis today live in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and Mersin than in the east, but similar (and dubious) claims are made for Kurds. The traditional Alevi homelands lie to the northwest of the Kurdish ones, with the overlap occurring along Erzurum, Erzincan, Tunceli, Bingöl, Muş, Elazığ, Malatya, and Adıyaman provinces. The number of Kurdish Alevis is the hardest to estimate, but most authors believe the overlap to be symmetric: around one fifth of Alevis are probably Kurdish and one fifth of Kurds are probably Alevis.²⁰² If that is true, Alevi Kurds must constitute about 2.5-3 percent of Turkey's population.

Region, however, does not correspond well to the Kurdish-speaking region of Turkey, as it excludes some predominantly Kurdish provinces and includes some predominantly Turkish ones.

²⁰¹Dark gray designates provinces with a Kurdish majority and medium gray those where a theoretical party winning all the Kurdish vote could pass the district threshold and elect one or more deputies under PR.

²⁰²For more information see Shankland, *The Alevis in Turkey*, p. 20-21; Ali Carkoglu, "Political Preferences of the Turkish Electorate: Reflections of an Alevi-Sunni Cleavage," *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, (June 2005):

Although similar in size, the Alevi and Kurdish minorities in Turkey therefore have different geographic profiles. Kurdish speakers are clustered in the southeast whereas Alevis are dispersed among Sunni majorities in all provinces save Tunceli—which is exceptional in being both overwhelmingly Alevi and predominantly Kurdish. A handful of eastern provinces (Erzincan, Elazığ, Malatya, Adıyaman, Urfa) may be undominated with Sunni Turkish pluralities and both Kurdish and Alevi minorities.

Electoral Systems and Political Parties in Turkey

From 1925 to 1946 Turkey was a one-party state led by the Republican People's Party (CHP—*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*), originally founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and inherited by his second-in-command, İsmet İnönü, upon Atatürk's death in 1939. Despite the closure of the Bektashi lodges, Alevis were generally supportive of the republic, which abolished the Caliphate and preached citizen and gender equality.²⁰³ The abolition of the Caliphate was a rallying point for rebelling Sunni Kurdish leaders, but their revolts were crushed, while certain Kurdish tribes were co-opted by the state. After the Second World War, under both domestic and international pressure, the CHP allowed opposition parties to form. The first election in 1946 was by all accounts rigged, but in 1950 CHP lost power to the *Demokrat Parti* (DP), which had been formed by disgruntled former CHP members, many of them rural landowners.

1st Period: 1950-1960

Turkey's electoral system and constitution in the first multi-party period were inherited from the one-party state. Elections took place in multi-member constituencies under a Block Vote system that allowed voters to vote for as many candidates as there were seats.

273-292; Reha Çamuroğlu, "Alevi Revivalism in Turkey," in *Alevi İdentiy*, pp. 79-84; Harald Schüler, "Secularism and Ethnicity: Alevis and Social Democrats in Search of an Alliance," in *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism*, pp. 237-241.

²⁰³See Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, "Atatürk and the Alevis: a Holy Alliance?" in *Turkey's Alevi Enigma*, pp.53-69, and Rabia Harmanshah, Rabia, "Redefining the Past: How Bektashis Accommodated the Abolition of their Religious Order," (Paper presented at 40th MESA Annual Meeting, Boston, November 2006).

However, ballots were printed by political parties, so that in practice the system became equivalent to the Party Block, whereby the party with the largest number of votes gained all seats in the constituency. The extremely majoritarian nature of the electoral formula and disaffection with past CHP authoritarianism combined to give the DP very large majorities in 1950, 1954, and 1957.

The DP reversed many CHP policies during its decade-long reign. It favored rural over urban areas, agriculture over industry, and the private sector over state enterprises; it took a more lenient stance towards Islam despite maintaining secularism, and abandoned Atatürk's foreign policy of neutrality, joining NATO in 1952. But Turkey's authoritarian legacy and the extreme prerogatives afforded to the executive led to the abuse of power by the DP governments. As restrictions on opposition parties became asphyxiating and the DP was considering a motion to confiscate the CHP's assets, the military intervened in 1960 with a coup that brought down and banned the DP, executing its top three leaders and jailing hundreds of others.

Parliaments and elections in the 1950s were dominated by the rival giants, the DP and the CHP. Neither party had an exclusive ethnic base. The vote in Kurdish areas was just as divided as in other parts of the country, while the DP attracted many Alevi figures who were repulsed by the hardships suffered by the predominantly rural Alevi population under the CHP one-party rule. Smaller parties formed in this period were electorally unsuccessful and did not have an ethnic character either. The right-wing conservative Nation Party (MP—*Millet Partisi*) was closed down in 1954 for its Islamic inclinations and reopened as the Republican Nation Party (CMP—*Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi*); it only gained seats in its founder's constituency, Kırşehir, in Central Anatolia, a region that became the cradle of the Turkish far right. The Freedom Party (HP—*Hürriyet Partisi*) was formed in 1956 by former DP deputies revolting against the party's dictatorial behavior. It had a country-wide organization, including in Kurdish areas, but failed to attract much of the DP vote or gain any regional foothold. The HP dissolved after the 1957 election and its deputies joined the CHP.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) pp. 231-252; Mustafa Albayrak, *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Demokrat Parti (1946-1950)* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2004); Burak Özçetin, *Democracy and Opposition in Turkey: Locating the Freedom Party*, METU Master's Thesis, September 2004.

Kurdish politics until the 1960s were dominated by powerful landowning families and their clientelist relations with the state. The economy in the southeast was overwhelmingly agricultural and land distribution extremely skewed. With most of the population being rural, landowners controlled and could deliver votes to either the DP or the CHP in return for political favors. The CHP had established such links with tribal leaders after crushing the Kurdish rebellions, and with the DP ascendant, opposing tribes found a natural ally. Intellectual publications and short-lived journals in Kurdish began to appear in the late 1950s but no Kurdish political movement emerged. The DP dominated elections in the southeast, as in the rest of Turkey, but it continued the CHP policy of not acknowledging Kurds as a separate ethnic group.²⁰⁵

2nd Period: 1960-1980

The 1960 coup ushered in a period of greater political liberty thanks to constitutional and legal reforms introduced by a short-lived military junta. The state recognized the role of political parties, but required them to abide by the principle of the country's indivisibility. The electoral law was changed to PR using the d'Hondt highest average method, with a quota threshold for each district equal to the ratio of total votes to seats. A party that did not make the threshold could not receive a seat in the district. The change in the electoral system was designed to forbid overwhelming majorities like those achieved by the DP and to help the CHP, the military's favorite, form a government. The CHP indeed came first in the 1961 election and formed a coalition with the New Turkey Party (YTP—*Yeni Türkiye Partisi*), consisting of former DP politicians some of whom had been in the defunct HP. But the core of the DP reconstituted itself as the Justice Party (AP—*Adalet Partisi*), which evolved into the main right-wing party during this period. Before the 1965 election, the CHP introduced a national remainder in the electoral law, i.e. a pool of seats that would correct for loss of proportionality caused by the district threshold. The Justice Party, led by Süleyman Demirel, still managed to win a clear majority and form single-party governments in 1965 and 1969.

²⁰⁵McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 399-407; Kutad, A. "Patron-Client Relations: the State of the Art and Research in Eastern Turkey," in Engin Akarlı and Gabriel Ben-Dor eds, *Political Participation in Turkey* (Istanbul: Bogazici University Press, 1975) pp. 61-87.

The AP abolished the national remainder in 1968 but smaller parties took this law to the constitutional court, which in turn ruled against the district threshold. The 1969, 1973, and 1977 elections were conducted with d'Hondt PR without any thresholds. Despite these small changes, Turkey's electoral system during this period was overall the most proportional in its modern political history. This generous proportionality was later held responsible for the political instability that led to the collapse of the Second Turkish Republic.²⁰⁶

From the 1960s on Turkey experienced increased industrialization, domestic migration, urbanization, and a growth in its student population and work force. Student movements and trade unions became active, political journals and mass circulation newspapers appeared, and Cold War tensions took a strong domestic dimension. Discussions of ethnicity, until now taboo, began to surface. As AP recaptured the voter base of the old DP, YTP became dominated by Yusuf Azizoğlu, a wealthy landowner from Diyarbakir, who had been accused of ethnic favoritism while serving as health minister in the CHP-YTP coalition government.²⁰⁷ YTP broke with CHP and essentially continued as an undeclared party of Kurdish notables, until it joined the AP in 1969. In its literature, YTP never used the word 'Kurd' and only spoke of vaguely of the need to economically develop the eastern provinces.²⁰⁸

Marxism provided an ideological reference point and a vocabulary for young intellectuals, particularly those coming from the minorities of the east. In this atmosphere, new parties were formed and were able to enter parliament thanks to the permissive electoral system. On the left, the Turkish Worker's Party (TİP—*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*) founded in 1961, brought together trade unionists, student groups, and Kurdish intellectuals in a party that was Marxist in all but name. TİP began to speak about the oppression of eastern minorities in its electoral campaigns, while its Kurdish student members in Istanbul and Ankara founded the Revolutionary Eastern Culture Hearths (DDKO—*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*). In its fourth congress in 1970 the party made an all-out declaration on the Kurdish question, affirming that “Kurdish people are living in the east of Turkey” and that “handling the

²⁰⁶William Hale, “The Role of the Electoral System in Turkish Politics,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 11, No. 3 (May 1980): 401-417.

²⁰⁷Azizoğlu's Kurdish background “was mentioned with a low voice” in YTP (interview with Feride Açar).

²⁰⁸Yeni Türkiye Partisi Seçim Beyanamesi 1965, Yeni Türkiye Partisi 4. Büyük Kongresi'nin Açış Konuşması ve Büyük Türk Milletine Bildirisi (Mayıs 1969), Yeni Türkiye Partisi 1969 Seçim Bildirisi.

'Eastern question' as an issue of regional development is nothing but an extension of the chauvinist-nationalist views and stance of the ruling class bosses."²⁰⁹ This declaration became the official reason for TİP's suppression by the constitutional court in 1971 on grounds of advancing separatism.

Despite these bold moves, TİP had only managed to swing a small portion of the Kurdish and Alevi vote in its favor.²¹⁰ The party served primarily as a preparatory school for the next generation of the Kurdish far left. After TİP's demise, the nascent Kurdish youth movement progressively distanced itself from the Turkish left, seeking to voice its own particular ethnic concerns. By the late 1970s, the first independent radical leftist Kurdish candidates that did not hail from notable families appeared in the southeast.²¹¹

TİP was not the only party to mix leftist and ethnic rhetoric in this period. The Unity Party (TBP—*Türkiye Birlik Partisi*) was founded in 1966 by Alevis determined to seek greater equality and freedom of religious expression. Although it made gains in the 1969 election, the BP did not enjoy broad backing from Alevi civil society. It soon started suffering from defections and criticism, both within and outside the Alevi community, that it was promoting sectarianism. The party progressively took a leftist stance, expressing a younger generation of Alevis frustrated with the conservatism and low educational level of the hereditary dedes. During the 1970s support for the party collapsed as Alevi voters turned decisively to the CHP.²¹²

Far right-wing parties also made their appearance, giving the Turkish political system its present multi-polar character. The Republican Peasant Nation Party (CKMP—*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi*), successor to the CMP, was taken over in 1965 by Alparslan Türkeş, a frustrated Turkish-Cypriot colonel marginalized after the 1960 coup, and renamed the Nationalist Action Party (MHP—*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) in 1969. The first Islamic party was founded by Necmettin Erbakan in 1970, closed down and reopened in

²⁰⁹Türkiye İşçi Partisi 4. Büyük Kongresi, TİP Archive, Tarih Vakfı. Ironically, materialist explanations and antidotes for separatism are primarily the standard of the right, not the far left, in Turkey.

²¹⁰Artun Ünsal, *Türkiye İşçi Partisi (1961-1971)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2002) pp. 17-18, 111, 273; interviews with Tarık Ziya Ekinci and Naci Kutlay.

²¹¹See Gilles Dorronsoro and Nicole F. Watts, "Toward Kurdish Distinctiveness in Electoral Politics: the 1977 Local Elections in Diyarbakir," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 41 no. 3 (August 2009): 457-478.

²¹²Kelime Ata, *Alevilerin İlk Siyasal Denemesi: (Türkiye) Birlik Partisi (1966-1980)* (Istanbul: Kelime Yayınevi, 2007); interview with Mustafa Timisi.

1972 as the National Salvation Party (MSP—*Milli Selamet Partisi*). In the 1970s left-wing and right-wing extremism escalated as the economy was hit by the oil shocks. The military stepped in, removed Demirel, banned TİP, and swore in a caretaker government in 1971, but the situation worsened thereafter. CHP itself swayed left in 1972, replacing İnönü with Bülent Ecevit. Employing leftist rhetoric on equality and development, Ecevit's CHP attracted the Alevi vote, but usually found itself in opposition to right-wing “national front” coalitions consisting of AP, MHP, and MSP. The CHP's leftist turn led its right wing to split and form the Republican Trust Party (CGP—*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi*), which included some influential Kurds.²¹³ The vote in the southeast remained fragmented between various parties and independent candidates. University takeovers, kidnappings and robberies by revolutionary groups, clashes between rightwing and leftwing militias, massacres of Alevis in eastern towns, and political assassinations had taken civil war proportions by 1980. The military decided to put a temporary stop to Turkish democracy in September of that year.²¹⁴

3rd Period: 1980-present

The 1980 junta banned all political parties and imprisoned thousands of their members. The military declared martial law and passed a new constitution and several decrees, including one entirely banning the use of Kurdish. A new electoral law in 1983 maintained d'Hondt PR but introduced a nation-wide 10 percent threshold designed to eliminate fringe parties from parliament. The formula became even less proportional when a district quota (*kontenjan*) was added in 1987. The law did allow independent candidates to be elected, but this was facilitated only when the district quota was abolished in 1995.²¹⁵

Government in the 1980s was dominated by the Motherland Party (ANAP—*Anavatan Partisi*) and its leader Turgut Özal, a technocrat with religious ties and partially Kurdish (assimilated) descent. Pursuing privatization and free-market reforms, ANAP's ideology also stressed Islam as an integral part of Turkish culture, during a period when

²¹³S. Gül den Ayman, *Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi* [The Republican Trust Party], Master's Thesis, İstanbul University Political Science Department (Istanbul: İstanbul University Social Science Institute, 1987).

²¹⁴Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 253-291.

²¹⁵Republic of Turkey, Statute No: 2839, Parliamentary Elections Law (<http://www.ysk.gov.tr>); Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler (1877-2002)* (Ankara: TESAV, 2003) pp. 122-123.

leftist Kurdish separatism reached its height. From 1984 on, the southeast became a combat zone between the Turkish military and the Marxist PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*) led by Abdullah Öcalan.²¹⁶ But the military gradually ceded direct political control; in 1987 the ban on old politicians was lifted and multiple parties were allowed to participate in elections. Despite reduced proportionality, Turkish politics in the 1990s were again characterized by coalition governments and the number of parties in parliament did not decrease. In fact, the coup contributed to the fragmentation, splitting the old center-right and center-left in two. On the right, Demirel founded the True Path Party (DYP—*Doğru Yol Partisi*), accusing ANAP of collaborating with the military. Similar personal feuds on the left kept the Social-democrat People's Party (SHP—*Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Partisi*), later renamed CHP and chaired by İsmet İnönü's son, separate from the Democratic Left Party (DSP—*Demokratik Sol Partisi*) led by a disgruntled resurgent Ecevit.²¹⁷

While the military struggle went on and culminated in the capture of Öcalan in 1999, the Kurdish movement entered civilian politics. In 1987, SHP tried to promote a political solution to the insurgency and to approach the Kurdish population with a manifesto, but was ultimately unable to negotiate a middle ground between its socialist ideology and its commitment to Kemalist unitary nationalism. Kurdish deputies defected from SHP in 1990 but subsequent negotiations allowed them to run on SHP lists again in the 1991 elections. The pact was shattered when five of them brazenly took their parliamentary oath in Kurdish and were detained and eventually tried. The Kurdish contingent eventually broke off to form a separate party that was repeatedly banned and reestablished with new names, the most long-lived of them being People's Democracy Party (HADEP—*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*). The detachment of the Kurdish faction was greeted with relief in the SHP, which suffered electoral losses in the western provinces after this abortive affair and underwent a period of crisis.²¹⁸ As for HADEP, it performed well in local elections in the southeast but persistently failed to enter parliament due to the high barrier.²¹⁹ Reconstituting itself as the Democratic Society Party (DTP—*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*) in 2005, it entered its candidates as

²¹⁶McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 420-449.

²¹⁷Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, pp. 292-342.

²¹⁸Erdal İnönü, *Anılar ve Düşünceler* (Istanbul: Yorum, 1999) pp. 239-261; interview with Korel Göymen.

²¹⁹Aylin Güney, "The People's Democracy Party," in *Political Parties in Turkey*, pp. 122-137.

independents in the 2007 elections and formed a parliamentary group of twenty deputies. But within a few months its leader was arrested and it was again threatened with closure.²²⁰ Meanwhile, in 2004 the PKK repudiated the ceasefire it had declared after Öcalan's capture and resumed attacks in the southeast from its bases in Northern Iraq.

The biggest development of the 1990s was undoubtedly the rise of the religious right.²²¹ Despite being ousted from government by the military in 1997, Necmettin Erbakan's party continued to poll well, shutting down and reopening with different names. Whereas scandals and a financial crisis in 2001 discredited DYP, ANAP, and DSP, the Islamic party built a reputation for good governance and attendance to the poor, increasing its votes both in major urban centers and in the southeast.²²² While other parties collapsed after the 2001 banking fiasco, the Islamic party underwent a take-over by its younger and more progressive wing led by former Istanbul mayor Tayyip Erdoğan. His Justice and Development Party (AKP—*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*), regrouped the right-wing vote and secured one-party majorities in 2002 and 2007. Riding the wave of modern trends, AKP has adopted a tolerant stance on questions of ethnicity, which its virulent nationalist critics deplore by dubbing it “the Arab-Kurdish Party.”²²³

An Alevi cultural revival movement has been flourishing in Turkey and abroad, primarily in Germany, since the mid-1980s. Journals and books, media outlets, and pious foundations have established a presence, giving the community more visibility than ever before.²²⁴ Alevis initially rallied around the SHP but their confidence in the party's ability to protect them was shaken in 1993, when right-wing extremists set fire on a hotel during an Alevi festival in Sivas. SHP/CHP lost votes and there was even a short-lived attempt to recreate an all-Alevi party (the Peace Party—*Barış Partisi*) in 1995-1999, but it was a one-man show and even less successful than the Unity Party of old. Today, the bulk of Alevi organizations and voters have returned to the CHP, constituting at least one third of its voter

²²⁰“Turkey arrests Kurdish leader,” *The New York Times*, December 19, 2007.

²²¹Ali Çarkoğlu and Ilgaz Ergen, “The Rise of Right-of-Center Parties and the Nationalization of Electoral Forces in Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* Vol. 26 (2002): 95-137.

²²²Birol Yeşilada, The Virtue Party, in *Political Parties in Turkey*, pp. 62-81; Fehmi Çalmuk, *Erbakan'ın Kürtleri* [Erbakan's Kurds] (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2001).

²²³Ergün Poyraz, *Hilafet Ordusundan Arap Kürt Partisine* (Istanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm, 2004).

²²⁴Yalman and Erdemir, *Alevism-Bektashism*, pp. 50-56; Karin Vornhoff, “Academic and Journalistic Publications on the Alevi and Bektashi of Turkey,” in *Alevi Identity*, pp. 23-50.

base.²²⁵ But some Alevi votes go to other parties, and AKP has made clumsy efforts to woo them in its favor by airing promises to grant cemevis official status as houses of worship.²²⁶

Increasingly since the 1991 and particularly after legal reforms introduced in 2002, publications and broadcasts in Kurdish are allowed and instruction in Kurdish is now possible in private settings. Recognizing that the language ban was a mistake Turkish government officials claim today that the conditions in southeastern Turkey have changed, that the PKK represents a marginal fanatical minority, and that the state guarantees equality and rights for citizens of Kurdish origin. Kurdish nationalist critics point out that Kurdish is still not an official language, and that decades-long assimilation policies have caused a weakening of Kurdish identity which the state has to redress. “In what kind of country are we living? A mayor in Antalya can publish a brochure in English but not in Kurdish,” shouted a DTP deputy in a recent session.²²⁷ Referring to a new draft constitution, the veteran Kurdish politician Ahmet Türk said: “The new constitution should be built on the understanding of a two nation-state. It won't be realistic to write the new constitution on the basis of the existence of one nation in the country.”²²⁸ Regional autonomy demands, a mainstay of the Kurdish left, are still a red flag for all Turkish governments. As for the high electoral threshold, though the Council of Europe has criticized Turkey, an effort by DTP politicians to take this cause to the European Court of Human Rights recently failed, when the court ruled that Turkey is not in violation of international conventions.²²⁹

After weathering a protracted confrontation with the military and the CHP opposition over presidential succession in 2007, AKP called a successful referendum that introduced direct election of the president. It also launched a public television channel in Kurdish, and has been working on additional reforms, including dropping the designation of Turkish as the only official language from the constitution. DTP has found itself on the same side with AKP on some issues, but relations between the two parties are far from cordial. Tayyip Erdoğan

²²⁵ Necdat Erder, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler Yandaş/Seçmen Profili* (Istanbul: TÜSES, 2002), p. 79.

²²⁶ Reha Çamuroğlu, a respected Alevi intellectual and AKP deputy, announced a much-publicized initiative to this effect, which was met with resistance from Alevi organizations and eventually came to nothing. See “EU monitors Alevi reform,” *Turkish Daily News*, November 29, 2007; “Alevi 'Önce Hak' Diyor” *Milliyet*, December 3 2007.

²²⁷ “DTP, AKP in quarrel over ban on Kurdish language,” *Turkish Daily News*, January 12, 2008

²²⁸ “PM slams pro-Kurdish party's stance on PKK,” *Turkish Daily News*, January 9, 2008.

²²⁹ European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Yumak and Sadak v. Turkey* (8 July 2008).

has not hesitated to order military operations against PKK bases in Northern Iraq or to call DTP deputies terrorists.²³⁰ Granted, the material spoils of office have played no small role in winning Kurdish votes for AKP. To its credit, however, the Islamic party is attempting what no other right-wing party dared to do in the past: use its electoral appeal in the southeast to reconcile minority cultural demands. When the left tried the same twenty years earlier, it quickly receded. Times have changed in the long interim. Democracy became more consolidated, external pressure through the (by no means certain) prospect of EU accession bore some fruit, and Turkish society is now much more accepting of its own ethnic diversity.

Ethnicity and Elections in Turkey: An Appraisal

Turkey stands out from other cases in that the majority community has bridging ethnic attributes with both minorities, in a pattern of crosscutting cleavages: Turkish Sunnis share a common native language with Alevi Turks and a common faith with Kurdish Sunnis. Political scientists often consider crosscutting cleavages advantageous for overcoming ethnic divisions, but clearly in Turkey they were insufficient to avert conflict.²³¹ Bridging appeals have been employed by the secular left on Alevis, and by the religious right on Sunni Kurds. In the historical section I used the terms center-left, center-right, far left and far right (religious and nationalist), which are commonly accepted among Turkish political scientists, to ideologically place Turkish political parties, regardless of their unremitting name changes. A summary of Turkish party system history is presented in Tables 2-4.²³²

In the 1950s, a strongly majoritarian electoral formula condemned any party with geographically dispersed electoral support to certain failure. It is therefore not surprising that no ethnic Alevi party was formed, and that Alevi politicians sought membership in the two major contender parties, with preference for the DP. The same does not hold for Kurds, whose demographic concentration would have guaranteed representation to an ethnic

²³⁰ "DTP Spreads Protests," *Turkish Daily News*, Monday, November 3, 2008.

²³¹ See John McGarry, Brendan O'Leary, and Richard Simeon, "Integration or Accommodation? The Enduring Debate in Conflict Regulation," in *Constitutional Design in Divided Societies*, edited by Sujit Choudhry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 85.

²³² I have excluded the first post-coup election of 1983 from the analysis because the ban on veteran politicians and the severe restrictions on party registration made it hardly a free contest.

Kurdish hegemonic party. The biggest factor, however, in the 1950s were not the electoral incentives, but the low level of political and social development in the east. Kurdish society in particular was completely dominated by landlord families and still reeling from two decades of disastrous revolts.

The PR period in 1960-1980 was, notwithstanding fluctuations in the electoral law, the best time for small parties to flourish, while coalition governments gave them extra leverage. Urbanization and social mobility also facilitated ethnic awareness among Alevis and Kurds. Agonist parties theoretically could try their lot in successive elections, until voters realized that they were worth supporting. Indeed, some small parties succeeded, but they came from the far right (MHP and MSP) and were expressing extremist positions within the Sunni Turkish majority. Alevi organizations reacted to the rise of the right by turning decisively to CHP, which became a magnet for them in the 1970s.²³³ Kurdish politics remained divided and dominated by notable families, who oscillated between various parties. Landowner candidates often ran on a different party's ballot from one election to the next, and none of them voiced Kurdish claims until the late 70s. TİP, the Marxist party that dared to do so, only won one seat in Diyarbakir thanks to the rural votes of its well-to-do Kurdish candidate's home town.²³⁴

The electoral system since 1983 is more complicated because it combines PR with a country-wide threshold reducing proportionality. It therefore forces parties and voters to consider the entire country as a constituency, within which both Kurds and Alevis are dominated minorities. Given the complete lack of official data and the muffling of ethnic expression, I think it is fair to say that neither Kurdish nor Alevi voters have a clear idea of their exact numbers, although if a hegemonic party could rally either identity it would most likely cross the ten percent barrier.

But in either case, such a calculation is politically irrelevant. Most Alevis today have avowed loyalties with the center-left. Alevi civil society organizations feel comfortable associating with the party of Atatürk, which embraces a secular agenda and incorporates

²³³ Alevi leftwing voting behavior has been amply recorded by both countrywide and village- and suburb-specific research. See Shankland, *The Alevis in Turkey*, Appendix 4; Harald Schüler, *Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), pp. 157-185, and "Secularism and Ethnicity," in *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism* pp. 197-250.

²³⁴ Lice, the birthplace of Tarık Ziya Ekinci.

them in a wider vision of Turkey, even if it did not push for their demands when it was last in power and is very unlikely to win an election at any point in the near future. This political choice may also be due to the cultural uniqueness of Alevis, who have a long tradition of concealing their identity and, at least the Turkish-speaking ones, a profound devotion to the Kemalist republic.

Kurdish voting behavior is another matter. The Kurdish vote has always been split among different parties, but in the 1990s it became definitively polarized along a left-wing/secular/separatist versus right-wing/religious/assimilationist cleavage.²³⁵ The last two elections in the southeast were exclusive duels between AKP and HADEP/DTP. There is no doubt that a demand to rectify Kurdish linguistic oppression lies at the core of the HADEP/DTP movement. Sami, a Kurdish doctor living with his Turkish wife, Ünzile, and their baby daughter in a suburb of Ankara, told me the following:

When I was little the teacher at school made us swear to the Koran that we would not speak Kurdish any more. I started talking to my parents in Turkish and didn't break that oath until I went to university. I don't want my child to grow up the way I did.

Baran, a medical student at Dicle University in Diyarbakir, spoke along similar lines:

I speak Kurdish but not very well. I am a product of the assimilation policy.... My mother is illiterate. When I drove her and my father to the polling station on election day, she told me 'I will vote for the lamp' [the lamp is the AKP symbol]. I told her, 'what lamp? Is this why I brought you here?' I took the DTP ballot, put it in her hand, and said, '*this* is what you're gonna vote for.'²³⁶

Although the army used recruits from the west to do most of the heavy fighting in the southeast in the 1980s and 90s, the conflict also had a fratricidal dimension, with certain Kurdish tribes and individual soldiers (known as *köy korucu*, village guards) pitted against other tribes and youngsters recruited by the PKK. These divisions, which often have an

²³⁵Hakan Yavuz and Nihat Ali Özcan, "The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Justice and Development Party," *Journal of Middle East Policy* vol. 8 no. 1 (Spring 2006).

²³⁶Interview with Baran, Diyarbakir, 28/1/2008.

ethnic origin, lie behind some of the present electoral variation.²³⁷ Within Diyarbakir province, eastern mountainous areas where villages were destroyed by the military are DEHAP/DTP strongholds; the AKP is stronger in the Tigris valley and in the predominantly Turkish-speaking western areas. In 2002 DEHAP won respectively 77 and 74% of the vote in the eastern districts of Silvan and Lice in Diyarbakir province; it won only 15 and 22% in the westernmost districts of Çüngüş and Çermik. In Batman and Mardin provinces, Arabic-speaking villages fought against the PKK and have been traditionally voting for right-wing parties (ANAP and DYP in the 1990s, and AKP today).²³⁸ Despite its detractors' wordplay, the AKP is more like an Arab-Turkish than an Arab-Kurdish party in these regions.

The electoral system in the post-1987 era created strong incentives for political parties to merge in order to cross the mercilessly high threshold. Such merges did take place several times (most recently in 2007 when the stumbling ANAP and DYP joined forces and DSP candidates were put on CHP lists). But what would have been a truly historic marriage, the affair between the Turkish and the Kurdish left in 1987-1991, ended with a divorce. From that point on the Kurdish left kept control of local government in the southeast and an approximate five percent of the national vote, which left it out of parliament. As much as the CHP struggled to stay in parliament itself (and failed to do so in 1999), it calculated that it had suffered too much from its association with the Kurds and was better off reclaiming its traditional Turkish voter base in western Turkey. Under its new president Deniz Baykal, the CHP adopted a more nationalist rhetoric against Kurdish separatism and its position deteriorated in the southeast, to the extent that it now finds it hard to field enough candidates for local elections.²³⁸

Throughout modern Turkish electoral history most Alevi voters have lived in constituencies strongly dominated by Sunnis and most Kurdish voters have lived in constituencies strongly dominated by Kurds. Given the numerical superiority of the Sunni Turkish majority and the regional concentration of Kurds, Turkey is a country with medium-to-low heterogeneity and the demographic potential for Turkish-Kurdish cross-ethnic voting

²³⁷Interviews with Hilmi Aydođlu, Abdurrahim Hattapođlu, Muzafer Deđer, Salih Altun, Hilmi Öncü and Cemal Vesko.

²³⁸Interviews with Yakup Kepenek and Korel Göymen.

at the constituency level is not very high; the potential for Sunni-Alevi cross voting is greater, at least in those constituencies where Alevis form a substantial minority.

Despite the dramatic population growth, urbanization, and ethnic conflict in the span of the last six decades, Turkey's ethnic demography has remained fairly constant. Kurds and Alevis make up significant, partly overlapping minorities today as they did in the 1950s, within a predominantly Turkish-speaking Sunni society. Kurds are a majority in the southeast, while Alevis are a minority everywhere, except in Tunceli, where most of them are Kurdish-speaking. The only difference is that Alevis, like the rest of Turkey, may now be a predominantly urban population. While the war with the PKK and forced evacuations of villages by the military in the 1990s painfully accelerated the migration flow, the religious and linguistic map of eastern Turkey did not substantially change.

Regarding the theoretical propositions, in the first period of multi-party democracy (1950-1960), P1 and P2 would predict low party fragmentation; P3 and P4 would predict low cross-ethnic voting between Turks and Kurds, but some cross-sectarian between Alevis and Sunnis. The Kurds' regional concentration favored the formation of a party appealing to Kurdish ethnicity; Alevis were more disadvantaged by the strongly majoritarian electoral system, but their demographic weight in many eastern districts gave them some leverage. The prediction about the number of parties is indeed correct, but the one about cross-ethnic voting fails with respect to Kurds. Intra-Kurdish divisions maintained two-party competition in the southeast, while the DP, which was successful in mixed Sunni-Alevi areas, did make an effort to appeal to Alevis.

In the second period (1960-1980), districts remained almost identical, so ethnic heterogeneity remained constant (no change for P2 and P4). P1 would predict an overall rise in the number of parties and P3 would predict a drop in cross-sectarian voting among Alevis, since the highly proportional system created no incentives for it, and the formation of agonist parties representing Alevis and Kurds. P1 proves correct but P3 does not. Despite the favorable low threshold, an agonist party (TBP) failed to win the Alevi vote, which was eventually captured by a magnet party (CHP). An agonist party (YTP) was briefly successful in the southeast, but it did not advance Kurdish-specific appeals and later disbanded. All parties competing for the Kurdish vote in the 70s were contenders with a primary voter base

outside the southeast. In other words, in a period that favored ethnic voting, Kurds and Alevis continued to vote across ethnic lines.

In the third period, the national threshold forced politicians to think of the entire country as a constituency as well. All parties and particularly small parties would have an incentive to appeal to minorities, in order to gain valuable votes that would allow them to enter parliament. The reduction in proportionality should therefore lead to party merges and probably higher cross-ethnic voting for both Kurds and Alevis. P1 would predict the overall number of parties to decrease and P3 would predict higher cross-ethnic voting. P1 is correct in the long run, but it took more than a decade of adjustment and unstable parliaments for Turkish parties to adjust. In the 1990s party fragmentation remained higher than it had been in the 70s, under higher proportionality, and parties typically preferred to risk staying out of parliament than to merge with their ideological kin. It took the 2000 financial fiasco to achieve what the electoral threshold could not do—eliminate some parties from the race.

P3 fails yet again, as cross-ethnic voting decreased over time in the third period—both because the center left lost its Kurdish following, and because of the rise of the nationalist far right. Initially, Alevis continued and Kurds began to append themselves to a mainstream Turkish leftist magnet party (SHP/CHP). But the experiment failed on the Kurdish side, and an agonist party was formed instead that has attempted but failed to gain universal support among Kurdish voters.²³⁹ Nevertheless, the party has attracted almost half the Kurdish electorate, who supported it in successive elections for emotional reasons, even though they understood that it was unlikely to enter parliament.

DTP officials often complain that the party's electoral performance would be better had HADEP/DEHAP not faced so much state persecution. The party has clearly faced many obstacles in its operation, and this complaint may not be entirely undounded—neitehr though is the accusation that it has served as the political wing of the PKK. But one should not forget that the Islamic party also faced persecution and still managed to win both Turkish and Kurdish votes, eventually rising to power.²⁴⁰ Over time, the Islamic party was able to

²³⁹Aylin Güney, "The People's Democracy Party," in *Political Parties in Turkey*, pp. 122-137; interviews with Ufuk Uras and Tarik Ziya Ekinci. The DTP maintains cordial relations with fringe Marxist Turkish parties like the ÖDP, and launched a new initiative in 2008 for an all-inclusive leftist party (Çatı Partisi); but the perennial weakness of the Turkish far left leaves it without any sizable ideological counterpart.

²⁴⁰A case for DTP's closure is still pending at the Supreme Court; a similar case against AKP was dropped.

maintain its cross-ethnic appeal, whereas HADEP/DTP remained hemmed in as an ethnic Kurdish party of the left. The two larger phenomena of bridging attributes (the attraction of Alevi voters by the secular Turkish center left and the attraction of Sunni Kurdish voters by the Turkish religious right) are observed continuously since the 1970s and cannot be attributed to the reduction in electoral proportionality introduced in 1983.

In terms of effects on party system structure, Turkey's electoral reforms therefore generally conform to predictions about party fragmentation (more so the first than the second one), but generally fail predictions about cross-ethnic voting. Assessing the impact of party system structure on ethnic conflict is harder because there is a weaker basis for within-case comparison. Nevertheless it is worth observing that inclusion in a magnet party for Alevis did not reduce sectarian tension, compared to the period when an agonist Alevi party existed. Alevi attitudes towards the far right and vice versa continue to be very hostile. Similarly, the success of religiously-minded right-wing parties, most notably AKP, at attracting Kurdish votes in the southeast has not yet produced a political solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey. Change may just be on the horizon, but admittedly EU pressure and general democratization has played an important role. In the past, Turkish mainstream parties, right and left of center, tended to pursue agendas based on integrative, unitary citizenship, which are synonymous with assimilation and oppression for the Kurdish left. Cross-ethnic voting in Turkey, therefore, has not had a clear mitigating effect on ethnic conflict, and in the southeast it may indicate underlying ethnic rifts between Kurds and Arabs, between religious and secular Kurds, between those who accept and those who reject assimilation or between tribes that fought with the PKK and tribes that fought against it. Nor can the Kurdish question be exactly described as a problem of access to power for Kurds.²⁴¹ Assimilated Kurds have been able to rise to positions of authority and there has never been a governing party in Turkey that did not poll at least decently well in Kurdish areas. Turkey has been primarily governed by right-wing parties in the last sixty years, so it has been a major challenge particularly for the left to increase its vote share. But the secularist Turkish left has repeatedly demonstrated (in 1991 and 1999) that it prefers the Turkish center-right as a coalition partner to the Kurdish far left.

²⁴¹In *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), Jóhanna-Kristín Birnir argues that resort to violence is more likely for ethnic groups that are excluded from government.

While electoral systems and levels of violence fluctuated, some features of Turkish politics with respect to ethnicity have exhibited continuity. One of them undoubtedly has been political censorship on expressions of ethnicity. One could even claim that this reduces Turkey's value as a case study for electoral design since such restrictions are unlikely to be imposed by liberally-oriented international actors. Nevertheless, in Turkey's case these restrictions have not impeded parties with ethnic platforms from forming and competing in elections since the 1960s. A more important constant has been the qualitative difference between Alevi and Kurdish demands and the willingness of mainstream Turkish parties to engage them. Alevis can be satisfied either with a state that abstains from religious affairs or one that engages them as a religious community on an equal footing with Sunnis. To the secular left, either agenda is acceptable. Religious equality may now start becoming acceptable to the right as well, even though Alevis are suspicious of AKP's assimilationist intentions. In contrast, Kurdish demands to reverse linguistic discrimination or to consider territorial autonomy for the southeast have been unacceptable to most Turkish parties. At the same time there is a traditional segment within Kurdish society which values Islamic religious identity above Kurdish linguistic identity and finds common ground with conservative Sunni Turks. Tolerance towards the Kurdish language has increased in Turkey in the last two decades as a result of both domestic and international pressures, notably the prospect of EU accession. But changes in this direction have been and continue to be painfully slow. Under these circumstances it becomes obvious why electoral instruments have not been crucial. What really matters is not whether political institutions favor the creation of ethnic parties and their inclusion or exclusion from parliament, but whether the majority group is inclined to engage the minorities or not and on what common grounds. This, not the electoral system, is what has determined Alevi and Kurdish electoral support for parties making cross-ethnic appeals.

Maps 1-3: Estimated concentration of Kurds (1965, 1990) and Alevis by province

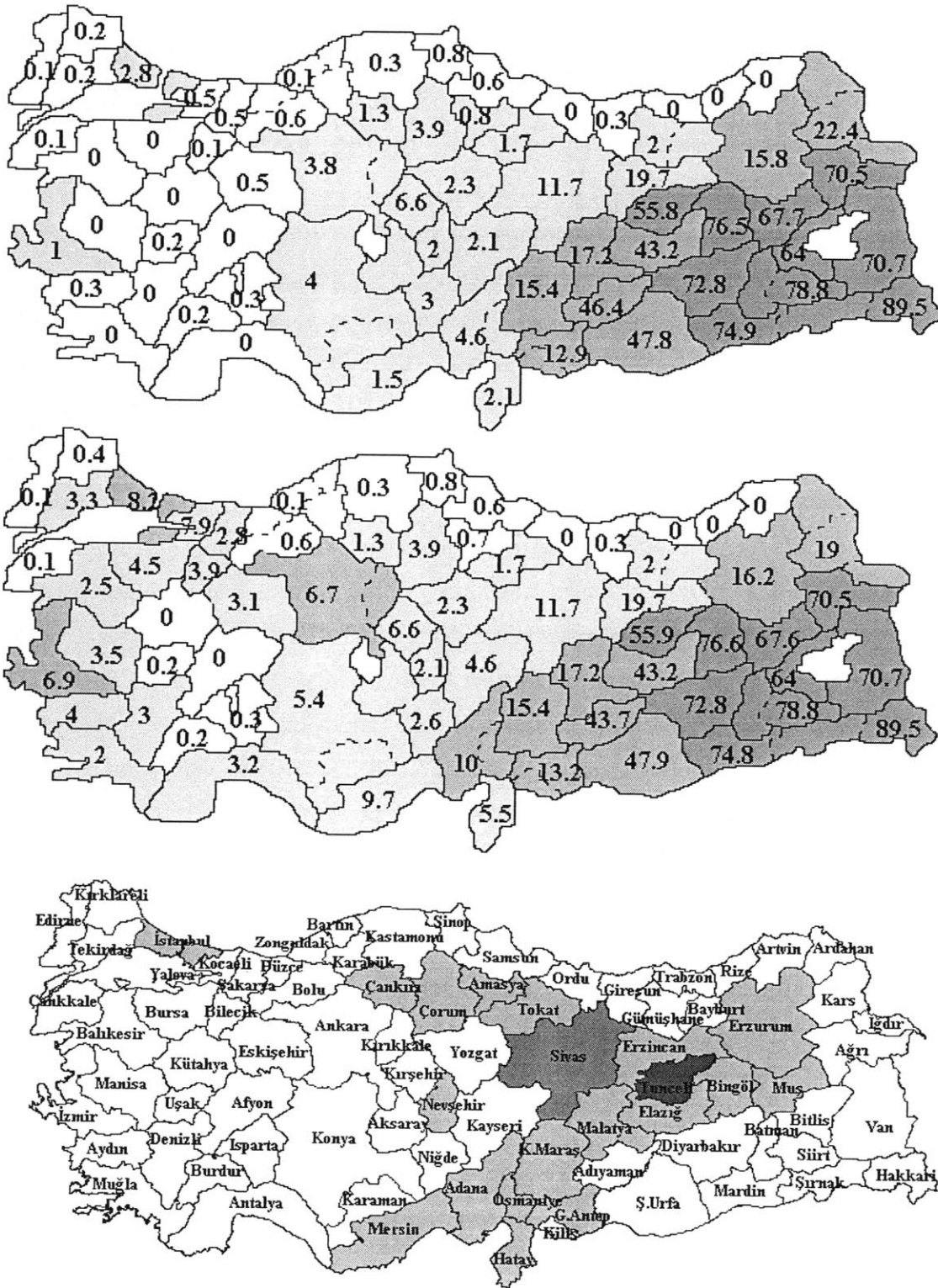


Table 2: Historical Evolution of Turkish Political Parties, 1950-2007

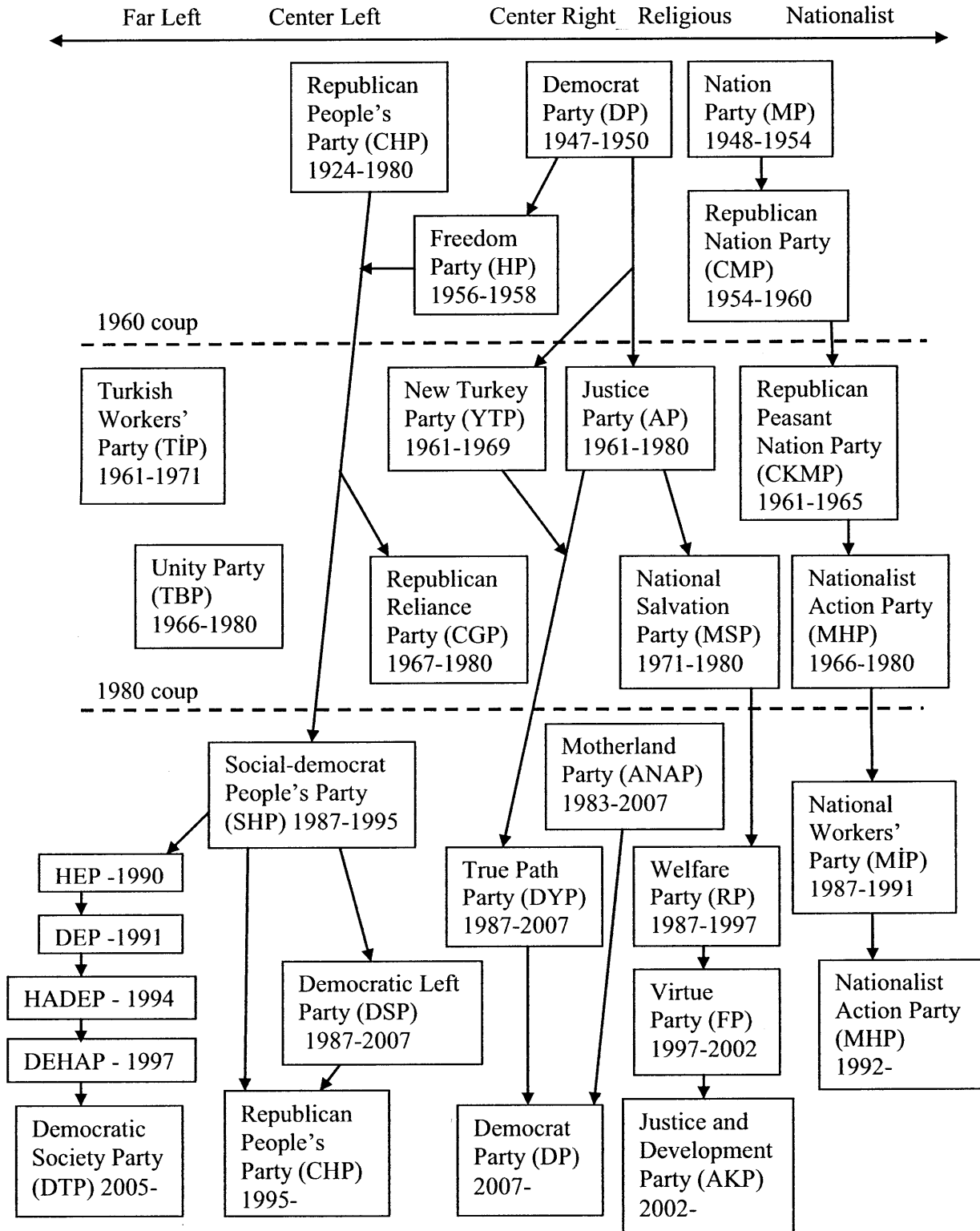


Table 3: Ethnic Structure Codification of Turkish Political Parties, 1950-2007

First Period, 1950-1960

DP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds)
CHP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds)
MP/CMP	Agonist	(Sunni Turks)
HP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Kurds)

Second Period, 1960-1980

AP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds) → (Sunni Turks, Kurds)
CHP	Antagonist→Magnet	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds)
YTP	Antagonist→Agonist	(Sunni Turks, Kurds) → (Kurds)
TİP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds)
TBP	Agonist	(Alevi)
CGP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds) → (Sunni Turks, Kurds)
MHP	Agonist	(Sunni Turks)
MP	Agonist	(Sunni Turks)
MSP	Agonist/Antagonist*	(Sunni Turks and Kurds)
DP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Kurds)

Third Period, 1987-2007

ANAP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Kurds)
SHP	Magnet	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds)
CHP	Magnet→Antagonist→Magnet	(Sunni Turks, Alevi)
DYP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Kurds)
RF/FP/AKP	Agonist/Antagonist*	(Sunni Turks, Kurds)
MHP	Agonist	(Sunni Turks)
DSP	Antagonist	(Sunni Turks, Alevi, Kurds)
HADEP/DTP	Agonist/Antagonist*	(Sunni and Alevi Kurds)

* The Kurdish party and the Islamic party are agonists along one dimension of cleavage (language or sect) and antagonists along the other dimension.

Table 4: Summary of parliamentary election results in Turkey, 1950-2007 (source: TÜİK)

First Period, 1950-1960 (Vote Shares/Seats)

Year	MP/CMP		DP		HP		CHP	
1950	3.1	1	57.4	417	-		39.5	69
1954	4.9	5	59.2	505	-		35.4	31
1957	7.1	4	47.9	424	3.8	4	41.1	178

Second Period, 1960-1980 (Vote Shares)

Year	MHP	MP	MSP	AP	DP	YTP	CGP	CHP	BP	TİP	Other
1961	14.0	-	-	34.8	-	13.7	-	36.7	-	-	0.8
1965	2.2	6.3	-	52.9	-	3.7	-	28.7	-	3.0	3.2
1969	3.0	3.2	-	46.5	-	2.2	6.6	27.4	2.8	2.7	5.6
1973	3.4	0.6	11.8	29.8	11.9	-	5.3	33.3	1.1	-	2.8
1977	6.4	-	8.6	36.9	1.9	-	1.8	41.4	0.4	0.1	2.5

Second Period, 1960-1980 (Seats)

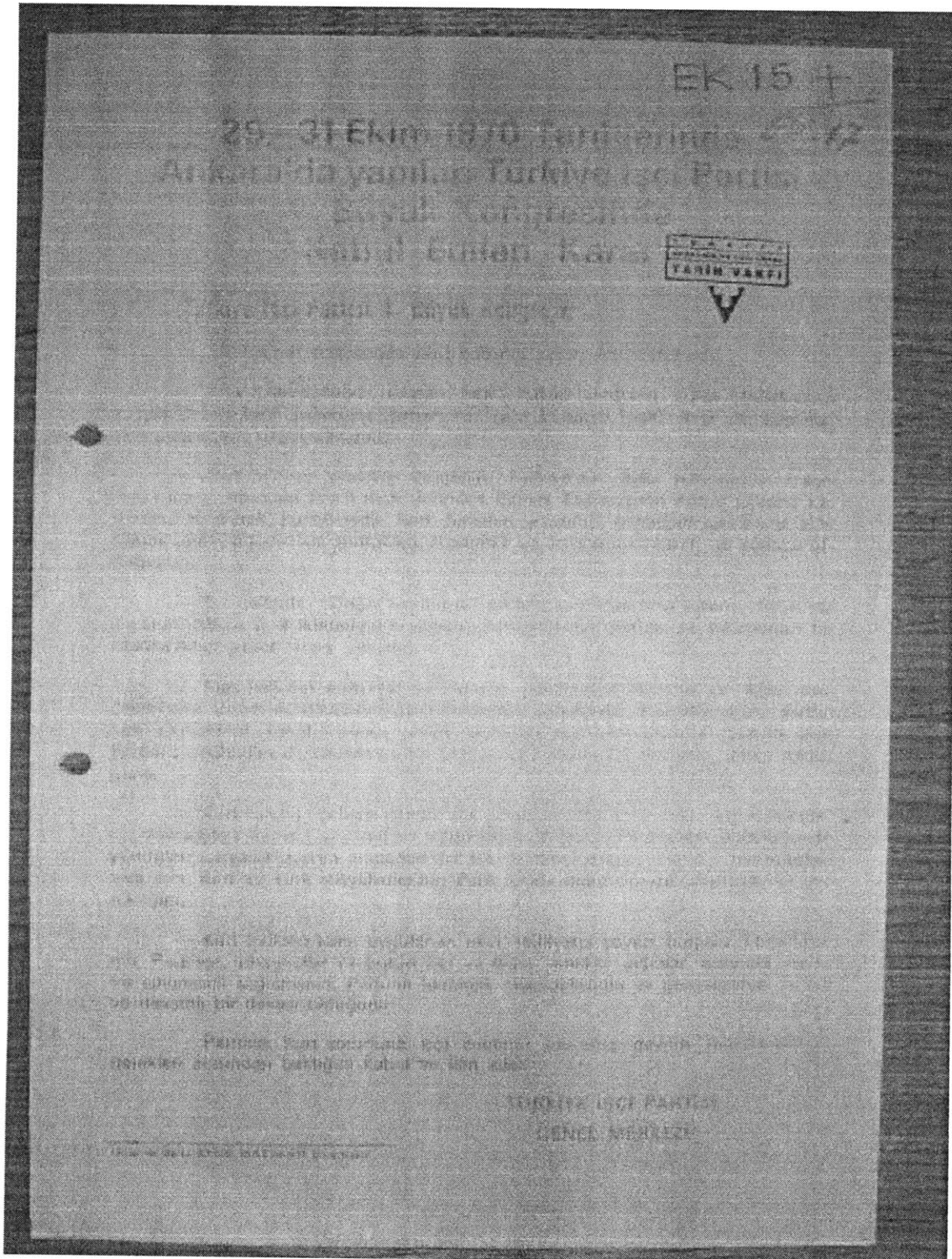
Year	MHP	MP	MSP	AP	DP	YTP	CGP	CHP	BP	TİP	Other
1961	54	-	-	158	-	65	-	173	-	-	-
1965	11	31	-	240	-	19	-	134	-	14	1
1969	1	6	-	256	-	6	15	143	8	2	13
1973	3	0	48	149	45	-	13	185	1	-	6
1977	16	-	24	189	1	-	3	213	0	0	4

Third Period, 1987-2007 (Vote Shares)

Year	MHP	RP/FP/AKP	ANAP	DYP	DSP	SHP/CHP	HADEP	Other
1987	2.9	7.2	36.3	19.1	8.5	24.7	-	1.2
1991		16.9	24.0	27.0	10.8	20.8	-	0.6
1995	8.2	21.4	19.7	19.2	14.6	10.7	4.2	1.8
1999	18	15.4	13.2	12.0	22.2	8.7	4.8	6.5
2002	8.4	34.3	5.1	9.5	1.2	19.4	6.1	16
2007	14.3	46.6	-	5.4	-	20.9	5.2*	7.6

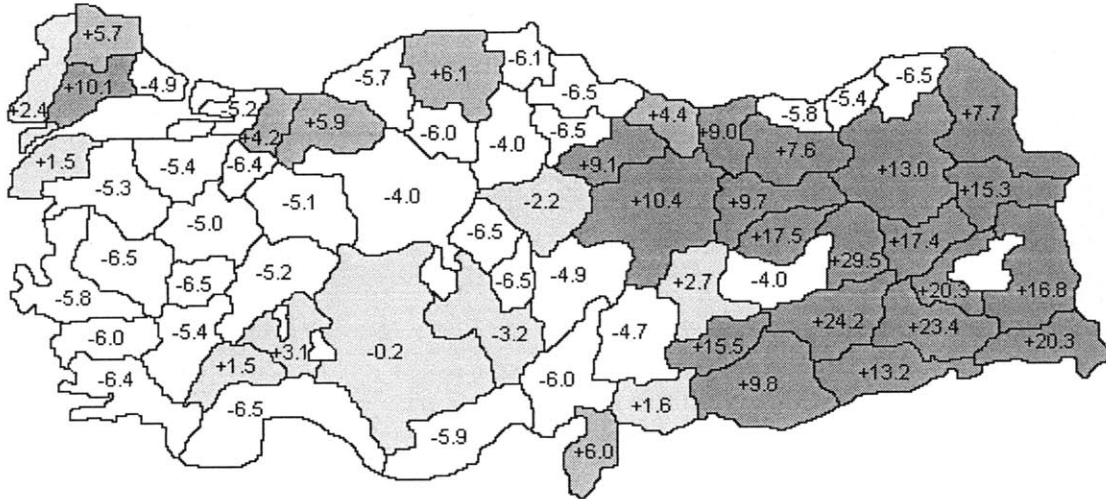
Third Period, 1987-2007 (Seats) * DTP candidates ran as independents in 2007

Year	MHP	RP/FP/AKP	ANAP	DYP	DSP	SHP/CHP	HADEP	Other
1987	0	0	292	59	0	99	-	-
1991		62	115	178	7	88	-	0
1995	0	158	132	135	76	49	0	0
1999	129	111	86	85	136	0	0	3
2002	0	365	0	0	0	177	0	8
2007	71	341	-	0	-	112	20*	6

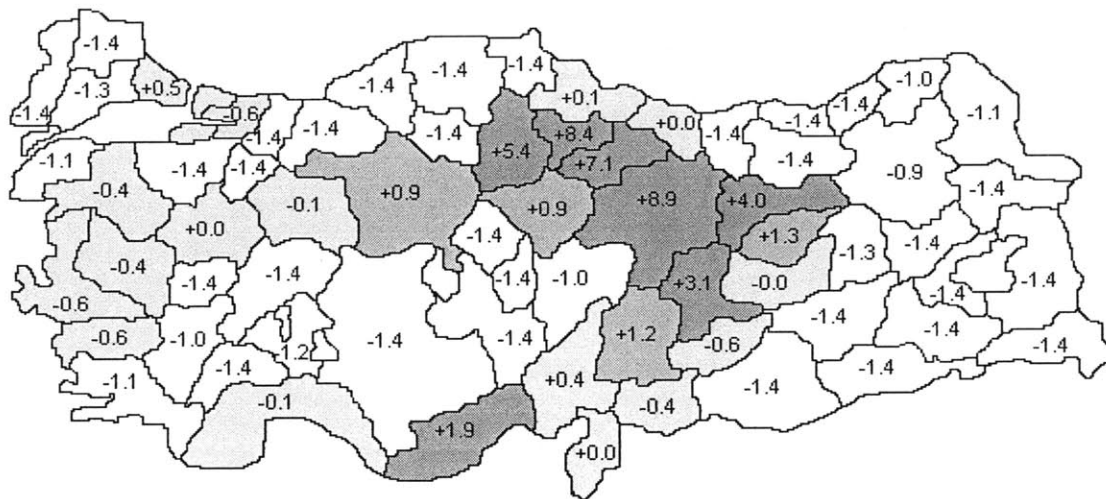


The Turkish Workers' Party 4th Congress declaration on the Eastern Question
(Courtesy of the Turkish History Foundation)

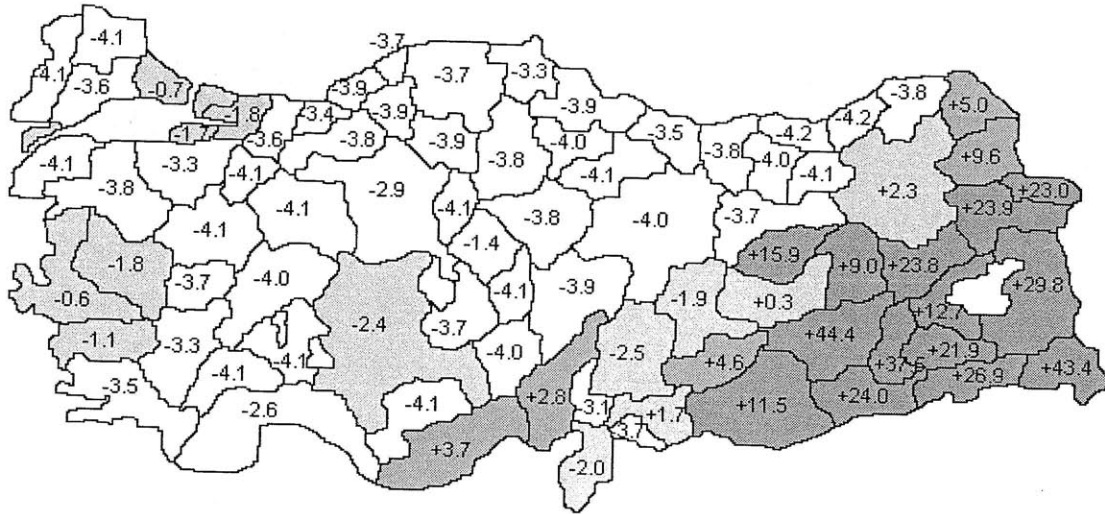
Map 4: Deviations from the average national YTP vote share in 1961-1969 by electoral district (dark gray in districts where the party received 200% or more of its national average vote, medium gray where it received between 150% and 200%, pale gray where it received between 50% and 150%, and white where it received less than 50% of its average). The party's stronghold in the east and particularly the southeast is evident.



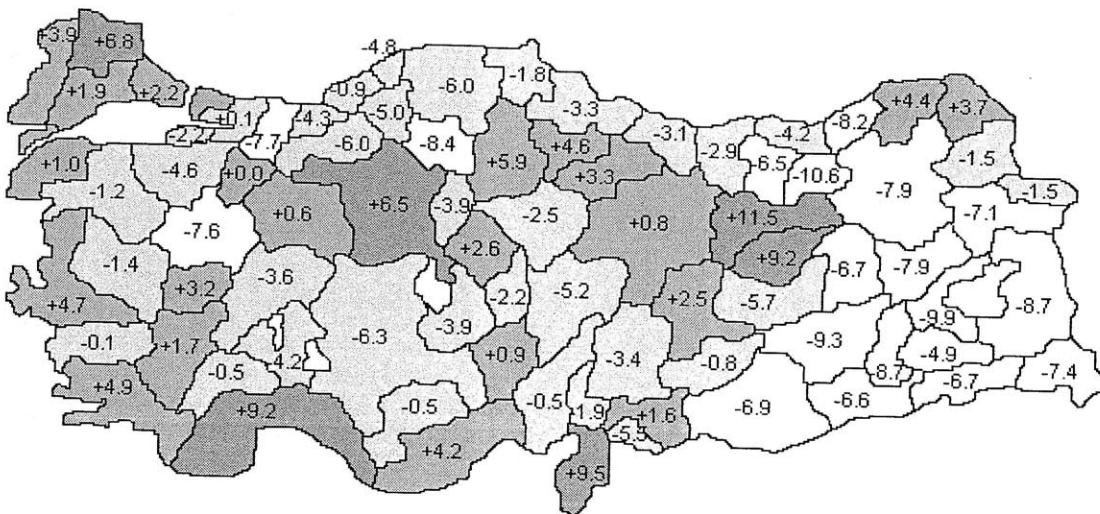
Map 5: Deviations from the average national TBP vote share in 1969-1977 by electoral district (dark gray where the party received 200% or more of its national average, medium gray where it received between 150% and 200%, pale gray where it received between 50% and 150%, and white where it received below 50% of its average). The concentration in Alevi areas is evident (cf. Map 3). Both YTP and TBP failed to sustain themselves under a very favorable electoral system.



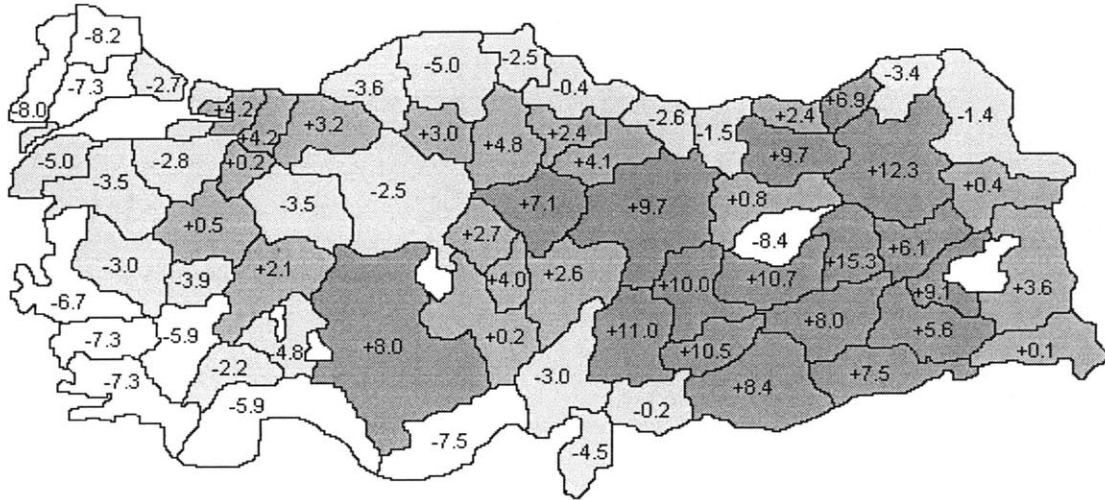
Map 6: Deviations from the average national HADEP/DEHAP vote share in 1995-2002 by electoral district (dark gray for provinces where the party received 200% or more of its national average vote, medium gray where it received between 150% and 200%, pale gray where it received between 50% and 150%, white where it received below 50% of its average). The party's stronghold in the southeast is evident. HADEP established itself and persisted under a very unfavorable electoral system.



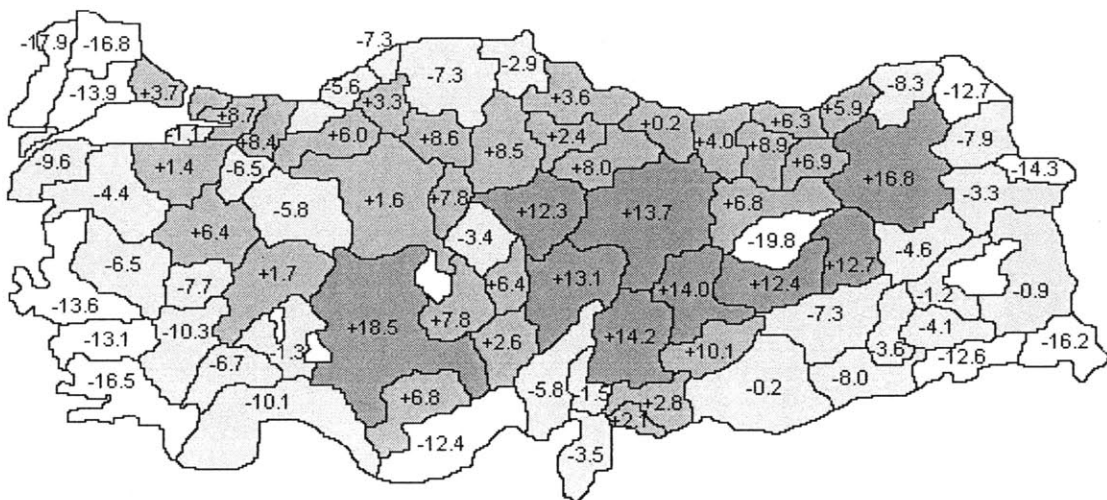
Map 7: Deviations from the average national CHP vote share in 1995-2002 by electoral district (dark gray in districts where the party received 150% or more of its average national vote, medium gray where it received between 100% and 150%, pale gray where it received between 50% and 100%, and white where it received below 50%). CHP performs best in the capital, in western coastal regions, and in Alevi areas; and worst in the southeast and the religiously conservative Central Anatolia and Black Sea regions.



Map 8: Deviations from the average national MSP vote share in 1973-1977 by electoral district (dark gray for over 150%, medium gray for 100-150%, pale gray for 50-100% and white for below 50% of the national average). Under low-threshold PR, the Islamic party established itself both in Sunni Turkish Central Anatolia and in the Sunni Kurdish southeast. The votes in Alevi minority areas came from Sunnis. This is evident from Tunceli, the only Alevi majority district, which is a white island in the east (-8.4).



Map 9: Deviations from the average national RP/FP/AKP vote share in 1995-2002 by electoral district (dark gray for over 150%, medium gray for 100-150%, pale gray for 50-100% and white for below 50% of the national average). Under high-threshold PR, the Islamic party retained and enlarged its power base in Central Anatolia and the Black Sea, facing competition from the Kurdish HADEP/DEHAP/DTP in the southeast, and from CHP in Alevi and western areas (contrast with Maps 1-3).



Chapter 5

SRI LANKA: THE DIVIDED MINORITY

Few countries can compete with Sri Lanka in serving as sad examples of the long term costs of ethnic strife on socioeconomic development. The British once considered Ceylon their model colony and introduced universal suffrage as early as the 1930s. At independence in 1948, Ceylon looked no less if not more poised for success than Hong Kong or Singapore. Six decades later, with a per capita income only slightly higher than Guyana, it is reeling from a protracted civil war that claimed approximately 80,000 lives, by far the deadliest case of ethnic conflict included in this study. My fieldwork in Sri Lanka took place in winter and spring of 2009, during the final stages of this war between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It was a dramatic climax marking the failure of peace negotiations aimed at institutional reforms and conversely the success of the resort to brute force. My goal in this chapter is to analyze the minimal impact that electoral institutions have had on the course of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, and to argue that they ultimately proved irrelevant.

Ethnic Identities in Sri Lanka

Like Turkey, Sri Lanka has one dominant ethnic group comprising between two thirds and three quarters of the population and has experienced conflict both along linguistic and religious lines. Unlike Turkey, however, the two cleavages are reinforcing rather than overlapping (except Christianity), creating a number of segmented minorities vis-à-vis a majority that shares no common ethnic attribute with them. The major ethnic group, the Sinhalese, the people of the lion (*sinha*), gave their name to Ceylon. Sinhala is an Indo-

European language whose literary ancestor, Pali, was used to record the most ancient Buddhist sacred texts. The association of the island with Buddhism was a recurrent theme in these traditional epics, which gained renewed symbolic importance for the Buddhist revivalist movement protesting British colonialism and creeping Christianization in the late 19th century. Apart from criticizing the colonial authorities' partiality towards Christians, Buddhist revivalists also resented an alleged 'Tamilization' of Ceylon, manifested both through Tamil immigration from India and overrepresentation of Tamil speakers in the administration.²⁴²

There are three Tamil-speaking minority groups on the island: the Sri Lankan Tamils, the Indian Tamils, and the Moors. The Ceylon or Sri Lankan Tamils, approximately one ninth of the total population, live primarily along the northern and eastern coasts, which they claim as their traditional homelands. The Indian Tamils are descendants of indentured workers recruited in South India by the British to work in the coffee and tea plantations of the central highlands.²⁴³ Tamil is a Dravidian language spoken by over sixty million people in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Pali sources mention Dravidians on the island since ancient times, but the Tamil concentration in the northeast is probably the result of a large scale invasion from South India in the late medieval period. Just as the Sinhalese kingdoms of old had an often adversarial relationship with the South Indian Tamil dynasties, Sinhalese nationalists in modern times have viewed the much larger population of Tamils across Palk Strait with a sense of suspicion and alarm: originally as a source of unwanted migrants, and later as a support base for LTTE insurgents and a lobbyist to the Indian government in favor of intervention in Sri Lankan affairs. After independence, Sinhalese politicians disenfranchised most Indian Tamils and pressured India to repatriate them, eventually reducing their numbers on the island by half (see Table 1).

²⁴² For more details for the role of Buddhist revivalism in the conflict see Patrick Grant, *Buddhism and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009); David Little, *Sri Lanka: the Invention of Enmity* (Washington DC: USIP Press, 1994); Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); and K. N. O. Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion and Ethnic Assertiveness: the Growth of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

²⁴³ For an authoritative history of this migration see Patrick Peebles, *The Plantation Tamils of Ceylon* (London, New York: Leicester University Press, 2001).

Table 1: Ethnicity and religion in the Sri Lankan census, 1946-2001

	1946	1953	1963	1971	1981	2001
Sinhalese	69.41	69.36	70.99	71.96	73.95	81.97
Sri Lankan Tamils	11.01	10.96	11	11.22	12.7	4.32
Indian Tamils	11.73	12.03	10.61	9.26	5.52	5.05
Moors	6.15	6.32	6.44	6.73	7.05	7.91
Others	1.71	1.32	0.93	0.82	0.77	0.75
	1946	1953	1963	1971	1981	2001
Buddhist	64.27	64.33	66.18	67.27	69.3	76.71
Hindu	19.97	19.89	18.51	17.64	15.48	7.76
Muslim	6.6	6.69	6.84	7.11	7.55	8.48
Christian	9.12	8.95	8.36	7.91	7.61	7
Other	0.03	0.14	0.11	0.07	0.06	0.05
Population	6657	8098	10582	12690	14847	16929

Note: Ethnic and religious groups are given as percentages, total population in thousands.

Figures for the 2001 census include government-controlled areas only.

The third Tamil-speaking group identifies more closely with its faith than with its language.²⁴⁴ The Ceylon Moors, as they were historically known, or Sri Lankan Muslims, as they presently prefer to be called, form around seven percent of the population. Tamil leaders have repeatedly approached them on the basis of a common linguistic platform and have viewed them simply as Tamil converts to Islam, like the Muslim population of Tamil Nadu. But the Moorish leadership has decided to distance itself from Tamil separatism, trading its loyalty to the Sinhalese establishment in return for concessions on religious and educational matters. Muslim intellectuals have also fostered a different sense of ethnic origin, claiming ancestry from Arab traders who settled on the island over the centuries, married local Tamil women, and adopted the South Indian lingua franca. The Muslim community of Sri Lanka is technically larger than the Moors, encompassing small numbers of Malay, Gujarati, and Sindhi immigrants from British times concentrated in the capital, Colombo; but these groups

²⁴⁴ M. A. Nahman, *Sri Lankan Muslims: Ethnic Identity within Cultural Diversity* (Colombo: ICES, 2007).

have dwindled in size and were never electorally significant. Most Sri Lankan Muslims speak Tamil at home, peppered with some Arabic vocabulary. However, given the option to choose the medium of instruction for their children since 1956, more and more Muslim families living in Sinhalese-majority areas opt for Sinhala primary education, signaling a gradual linguistic shift.

The vast majority of Sinhalese are Buddhist, while most Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils are Hindus. Christianity has served as the only bridging religion between the two linguistic groups and Ceylon's colonial masters generally favored cultural assimilation through conversion. The Portuguese were most fervent, to the point of expelling Muslims from the west coast and destroying Hindu and Buddhist temples. As a result, Catholicism is the largest Christian denomination; most Christians live along the western and northern coasts; and a significant concentration of Muslims is found in the east, descendants of the 16th century refugee wave. The Dutch promoted Protestantism less fanatically, while their trickle of immigration to the island produced a patrilineal mixed-race aristocracy, the Burghers, who continued to play an important role under British rule. The Ceylon Tamils and the low country coastal Sinhalese were more affected by colonial assimilation than the Sinhalese highlands, which were conquered last. By the mid-20th century English language education and experience in colonial administration had given rise to a common culture among Ceylonese elites, nourishing the Britons' false optimism for the prospects of ethnic accommodation after their departure. Things turned out differently. Though schooled by Christian missionaries, key Sinhalese politicians at least nominally embraced or reconverted to Buddhism, riding the wave of the fundamentalist anti-colonial movement. The Burghers' political clout disappeared when their appointed legislative seats were abolished in 1972, and many have since left the country. Tamils did not follow this trend and Christians retained a high profile in the minority's leadership.

As in other South Asian societies, caste distinctions exist among the Tamils and the Sinhalese but their relative salience has decreased over time.²⁴⁵ The traditional caste systems

²⁴⁵ For a rich treatment see Janice Jiggins, *Caste and Family in the Politics of the Sinhalese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Bryan Pfaffenberger, *Caste in Tamil Culture: the Religious Foundations of Sudra Domination in Tamil Sri Lanka* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1982); Michael Roberts, *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation: the Rise of a Karava Elite in Sri Lanka, 1500-1931* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Tamara Gunasekera, *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism: Caste, Class, and*

of the two communities mirrored one another to a great extent, while differing from those on the subcontinent. The dominant and by far the largest caste were farmers (Goigama for the Sinhalese, Vellalar for the Tamils), making up 50-60% of each group. Next in social hierarchy came various service castes, most notably the fishermen (Karava for the Sinhalese, Karaiyar for the Tamils—approximately 10%). Among the Tamils, the untouchability of the five low castes (Panchamar) was stricter than among the Sinhalese, constituting a significant social issue in intra-Tamil politics. The Indian Tamil indentured laborers overwhelmingly came from the untouchable castes of Southern India (Parayar, Pallar, Sakkiliar), while their supervisors (known as Kangany) usually came from the Vellalar caste. In the immediate post-independence period, Goigama and Vellalar families dominated Sinhalese and Tamil politics respectively, and Kanganies led the Indian Tamil trade union movement. Among the Sinhalese, caste remains salient in the countryside, particularly for marriage arrangements; its importance in urban centers has declined as education and commercial opportunities created upward mobility and the state adopted socialist welfare policies. In the north, Tamil nationalists deplored caste discrimination as undermining Tamil unity and the insurgency contributed to significant caste leveling.²⁴⁶

As in Turkey, language and territoriality have constituted the principle dividing issues between the majority and the main minority in Sri Lanka; unlike Turkey, though, religion is an overlapping rather than a crosscutting cleavage that can play a potentially bridging role. Following independence, the Buddhist movement agitated for the adoption of Sinhala as the only official language, the pinnacle of a wider agenda aimed at reducing the influence of Christian elites and eliminating the overrepresentation of educated Tamils in the public sector. Although never fully implemented and eventually abandoned, the Sinhala-only campaign generated immense resentment among Tamils and led to outbreaks of communal violence in the 1950s. Unable to ensure safeguards for the status of Tamil as a regional minority language, Tamil leaders espoused the goal of a separate Tamil homeland in the

Power in Sinhalese Peasant Society (London: Athlone Press, 1994); Shakkela Jabar, *Does Caste Matter? A Study of Caste and Poverty in Sinhalese Society* (Colombo: Centre for Policy Analysis, 2005); John D. Rogers, "Caste as a Social Category and Identity in Colonial Sri Lanka," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* vol. 41 no. 1 (2004): 51-77; and *Casteless or Caste-Blind? Dynamics of Concealed Caste Discrimination, Social Exclusion and Protest in Sri Lanka*, edited by Kalinga Tudor Silva, P. P. Sivapragasam, and Paramsothy Thanges (Colombo, Chennai: Kumaran Book House, 2009). Article 12 of Sri Lanka's 1978 constitution prohibits caste discrimination.

²⁴⁶ Much of Tigers' leadership, including Prabhakaran himself, came from the Karaiyar caste.

northeast, either federal or, as attitudes hardened after the 1983 riots, independent. Tamils have also decried the land settlement schemes promoted by the Sri Lankan government as organized colonization of their traditional lands, which Sinhalese leaders have variably defended as necessary on grounds of agricultural development and population pressures.²⁴⁷ The state now officially promotes bilingualism, but many Tamils still feel alienated. As Sunil, a Sinhalese staff officer of a major international organization candidly told me “I wouldn’t like to be a minority in this country.” For the last twenty years, the conflict has essentially revolved around the constitutional status of the predominantly Tamil-speaking Northern and Eastern Provinces (see Map 1). After the LTTE’s rout, regional devolution, the subject of all past abortive peace plans, seems to have been put aside.

Ethnic Demographics

Until the 1980s, Sri Lanka’s overall ethnic demographic balance had changed only as a result of the emigration of groups that had settled there in colonial times. Apart from the departure of Burghers and Malays, the main driver was the practically forced repatriation of Indian Tamils to India (some of them second and third generation immigrants who had never left the island). Accounting for roughly twelve percent in the 1940s and 50s, the Indian Tamil share of the total population dropped to under six percent in 1981, the year that India stopped issuing passports and forced Sri Lanka to naturalize most of the remaining stateless persons.

The census authorities have been counting Ceylon and Indian Tamils as separate categories since 1911, but the distinction has not always been clear-cut, particularly since all plantation Tamils were awarded Sri Lankan citizenship in 1988. The social disruption and deemphasizing of Tamil caste distinctions caused by the LTTE insurgency has brought about the assimilation of Indian Tamils in the north—those living there all along as well as those who fled north in response to communal riots in the south. Meanwhile, after acquiring

²⁴⁷ See K. M. De Silva, “Separatism in Sri Lanka: the Traditional Homelands of the Tamils” in *Secessionist Movements in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Ralph Premdas, S. W. R. de A. Samarasinghe, and Alan B. Anderson (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990); Chelvadurai Manogaran, “Colonization as Politics” in *The Sri Lankan Tamils: Ethnicity and Identity*, edited by Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfaffenberger (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); and Jeyaratnam Wilson, “Sri Lanka: Ethnic Strife and the Politics of Space” in *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict*, edited by John Coakley. (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003).

citizenship, some Indian Tamils in the south also preferred to identify as “Sri Lankan Tamil” as a means of underlining and defending their residence status. Much like the Moors, the plantation Tamils of the central highlands distanced themselves from Tamil separatism, working instead with the Sinhalese elites to secure their own interests. Over time, through these processes, immigrant ancestry and caste receded in comparison to region and political outlook as the defining differences between Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils, with the latter in the south adopting an Upcountry Tamil (*Malaiyaka Tamil*) identity. As one scholar has astutely noted, “paradoxically, up-country Tamils have been increasingly identifying themselves as Tamil Sri Lankans, but this did not entail further links and connections with Sri Lankan Tamils.”²⁴⁸

In terms of regional demographics, Tamil speakers are highly clustered in the northeast; but whereas the Jaffna peninsula in the north is overwhelmingly Sri Lankan Tamil, the Eastern Province is split between Tamils, Muslims, and a substantial Sinhalese minority that grew over time as a result of the land settlement schemes. Indian Tamils are a plurality in the tea producing peaks of Nuwara-Eliya and a significant minority in the neighboring regions. The Moors are the only group that is more evenly spread, straddling opposite coasts. Despite their concentration in Eastern Province, two thirds of Muslims actually live outside the east, with an important presence in the two major urban centers, Colombo and Kandy (see Maps 2-5). Notwithstanding the mingling of her Anglophone elites and the multiethnic character of her capital, Sri Lanka’s demographic make-up has provided poor potential for cross-ethnic electoral appeals—with Eastern Province, parts of Central Province, and of course Colombo being the notable exceptions.

Like Guyana, Sri Lanka inherited the British single-member district formula; unlike Guyana, Sri Lanka maintained it long after independence. The regional clustering of ethnic groups made it possible to ensure adequate minority representation under plurality voting if the institutional designers were so inclined. Indeed, the issue was hotly debated in the last years of British rule—the Tamils unsuccessfully airing a demand for 50:50 representation in the 1930s—and the 1946 delimitation commission took particular pains to achieve as

²⁴⁸ Daniel Bass, “Making Sense of the Census in Sri Lanka,” in *Writing Tamil Nationalism*, edited by R. Cheran (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2007), p. 315.

proportional an expected ethnic distribution of seats as possible, lamenting that this was not perfectly feasible for the Indian Tamils and Muslims due to their thinner dispersal.²⁴⁹ A small number of multi-member districts were created for this very purpose, most notably Colombo Central, where at least one of the three deputies returned was consistently a Muslim.²⁵⁰ Voting in the multi-member districts was cumulative, which worked to the advantage of minorities.²⁵¹ The number of MPs was increased twice, in 1959 and 1976 (see Map 6), and the stated goal of safeguarding minority representation was retained. In practice, while Muslims managed to win seats even in districts where they constituted a minority, the concern about plantation Tamils was eclipsed when most were stripped of citizenship in 1949. As shown in Table 2, the originally drawn single-member districts actually produced fairly proportional ethnic representation; it was the citizenship restrictions, rather than the plurality formula, that skewed the seat distribution in favor of the Sinhalese. The Sri Lankan Tamils were slightly overrepresented at first, but subsequent reapportionments corrected this—to the further advantage of the Sinhalese majority.²⁵²

Table 2: Expected Ethnic Distribution of Ceylon's Legislative Seats under SMP

Year	Seats	Sinhalese		Ceylon Tamil		Indian Tamil		Muslim	
1946	95	69	72.6%	13	13.7%	8	8.4%	5	5.3%
(1949)	95	76	80.0%	14	14.7%	0	0%	5	5.3%
1959	151	126	83.4%	18	11.9%	0	0%	7	4.6%
1976	168	141	83.9%	19	11.3%	1	0.6%	7	4.2%

Note: Figures for 1949 reflect the effects of the Citizenship Acts, not a new delimitation. Calculations by the author based on delimitation commission reports.

A constitutional overhaul in 1978 replaced SMP with PR, using the administrative districts (see Map 1) to elect 196 MPs, plus 29 on a national list for a total of 225. This

²⁴⁹ See the *Report of the Delimitation Commission*, Sessional Paper XIII – 1946 (Colombo: Government Publications Bureau, 1946), pp. 19-24.

²⁵⁰ Another one was consistently won by Pieter Keuneman, a Burgher communist.

²⁵¹ Benjamin Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies*, p. 116. The cumulative vote is a variation of plurality voting in multi-member districts; voters have a number of votes equal to the deputies returned, which they can either cast all for one candidate or distribute them among candidates, or any combination thereof.

²⁵² Reapportionment was done on the basis of total, not voting population, and thus assigned additional seats to parts of the highlands with a Sinhalese voting majority and an Indian Tamil disenfranchised minority.

reform would have made only a small difference (mostly by increasing representation for Muslims) were it not also for the final settlement of the Indian Tamil problem in the 1980s. Table 3 shows the ethnic composition of the PR constituencies according to the 1981 census. Most of them remain overwhelmingly dominated by either the Sinhalese or the Sri Lankan Tamils, with the exception of Nuwara-Eliya in the center where Indian Tamils form at least plurality (in reality a majority, considering what was previously mentioned about the “Sri Lankan Tamil” identification in the census), and Trincomalee and Ampara in the east, which have no ethnic majority.

Table 3: Ethnic composition of Sri Lanka's PR electoral constituencies, 1981 census

	Sinhalese	SL Tamil	Indian Tamil	Moor	Others	Population
Colombo	77.6	10	1.2	8.2	3	1699241
Gampaha	92	3.5	0.4	2.7	1.4	1390862
Kalutara	87.2	1.2	4.1	7.4	0.3	829704
Kandy	74.3	5	9.4	10.5	0.8	1048317
Matale	80	5.8	7	7	0.5	357354
Nuwara-Eliya	42.1	12.7	42.7	2	0.5	603577
Galle	94.5	0.9	1.4	3.2	0.2	814531
Matara	94.5	0.7	2.2	2.5	0	643786
Hambantota	97.1	0.6	0.1	1.2	1	424344
Jaffna	0.8	95.2	2.4	1.6	0	830552
Vanni	10.2	59.8	15.7	13.6	0.7	278852
Batticaloa	3.4	70.8	1.2	23.9	0.7	330333
Ampara	37.8	20	0.4	41.5	0.4	388970
Trincomalee	33.4	34.3	2.1	29.3	0.9	255948
Kurunegala	92.9	1.2	0.6	5	0.3	1211801
Puttalam	82.6	6.6	0.5	9.9	0.4	492533
Anuradhapura	91.1	1.4	0.1	7.1	0.3	587929
Polonnaruwa	91.4	2	0.1	6.4	0.3	261563
Badulla	69.1	5.9	20.2	4.2	0.6	640952
Monaragala	92.7	2	3.2	1.9	0.3	273570
Ratnapura	85	2.4	10.6	1.7	0.4	797087
Kegalle	85.9	2.2	6.7	5	0.2	684944
SRI LANKA	73.9	12.7	5.5	7.1	0.8	15125602

Until the late 1970s, the repatriation of Indian Tamils and the controversial Sinhalese colonization of the east were the two factors altering regional demographics. The civil war

then produced major population movements; 1981 was the last census conducted throughout the island. The 1983 riots sent thousands of Tamils fleeing north or abroad, to India, Britain, and North America. The fighting in the northeast affected all ethnic groups, with disputes between settlers, squatters, and displaced locals being fueled by the government and insurgent forces. The LTTE particularly targeted Sinhalese settlers and in 1990 it expelled all Muslims from Northern Province, flooding neighboring Puttalam district in the west and Trincomalee district in the east with Muslim refugees.²⁵³ The general effect of these population movements was to make the north even more purely Tamil and to polarize the situation in the ethnically mixed Eastern Province. The 2004 tsunami caused massive loss of life and displacement along the entire coastline, but its impact on regional demographics was relatively limited because the communities affected were often resettled locally, while the government and the LTTE kept separate control over the international relief process in their respective areas of control.

Electoral Systems and Political Parties in Sri Lanka

Except an undemocratic interlude in the mid-1980s, Sri Lanka has one of the longest electoral records in the developing world. In 1931 Ceylon became the first non-white British colony to be granted universal suffrage. All residents aged over twenty-one could vote for a consultative State Council with limited authority and the British registered around 100,000 Indian Tamils voters (one fifth of their population).²⁵⁴ Echoing the Indian example, Sinhalese and Tamil elites had originally collaborated within the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) in advancing demands for self-rule, although ethnic antagonisms were well evident by the 1930s.²⁵⁵ When the prospect of independence became clear after World War Two, the Tamil leader G. G. Ponnambalam formed the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC or simply TC). CNC's Sinhalese component and prominent Muslims like Razik Fareed (All Ceylon Muslim

²⁵³ This is also evident in the 2001 census for Puttalam and a special 2007 enumeration in Eastern Province for Trincomalee, showing the Muslim percentage to have increased to 18.8 and 45.5 respectively.

²⁵⁴ For details on the introduction of franchise and general history of elections under SMP, see K. M. De Silva, *Universal Franchise, 1931-1981: the Sri Lankan Experience* (Colombo: Department of Information, Ministry of State, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 1981).

²⁵⁵ For an excellent account of this period, see Nira Wickramasinghe, *Ethnic Politics in Colonial Sri Lanka, 1927-1947* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1995).

League) and T. B. Jayah (All Ceylon Moors' Association) rallied behind Don Stephen Senanayake's United National Party (UNP). Ceylon also had an active socialist movement which had split during the war into the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the pro-Soviet Communist Party (CP).

First Period, 1947-1977

In the first election for a legislature with full powers, UNP polled highest but fell short of a majority due to the large number of independent candidates. It consequently joined in a coalition with ACTC, an act interpreted then as an indication that cross-ethnic cooperation would continue at the highest level. The adopted national flag added a green and an orange stripe next to the Sinhalese lion—a symbol of inclusion for the Hindu and Muslim Tamil-speaking minorities.²⁵⁶

One of UNP's first initiatives, though, was to retract the extension of suffrage to the Indian plantation workers initiated by the British. The UNP leadership had been hostile to Indian immigrants all along, and as talks between Nehru and Senanayake had reached an impasse, the Soulbury Commission responsible for Ceylon's constitution left the issue up to the legislature. Electoral considerations in 1947 also seem to have played a part: the Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC), the plantation workers' trade union-cum-political party, won six seats, while Indian Tamil votes helped leftist candidates in several neighboring districts. Senanayake moved swiftly and got G. G. Ponnambalam to agree on a move that would both weaken the left and stall the path to citizenship for the lower castes. The 1948 Citizenship Act required plantation workers to document that their father or grandfather was born in Ceylon, while the 1949 Indian and Pakistani Residents Act allowed those with an uninterrupted residence on the island (ten years for the single, seven for the married) to apply for citizenship as long as they fulfilled certain income requirements. By the 1951 deadline, the vast majority of Indians had thus applied, but the Ceylonese authorities were very slow in

²⁵⁶ For a historical survey lionizing the Senanayake legacy, see K. M. De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka, 1880-1985* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986). For a pro-Tamil account, see A. Jeyaratham Wilson, *The Breakup of Sri Lanka* (London: Hurst & Co., 1988).

processing their applications, leaving almost a million people stateless and pressuring India to take them back.

The close ties with UNP and the Indian Tamil question triggered ACTC's decline. In 1949 three of the party's deputies left it in protest to form the Lanka Tamil Federal Party (*Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi*, abbreviated as ITAK or more often FP in English sources).²⁵⁷ ITAK's leader, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, a man who described himself as four times a minority (Tamil among Sinhalese, Christian among Tamils, Protestant among Christians, and Anglican among Protestants), famously declared that "today it is the Indian Tamils. Tomorrow, it will be the Ceylon Tamils who will be axed."²⁵⁸ ITAK supported Pancharam activists campaigning to end discrimination against the Tamil untouchable castes. At first, cross-caste Tamil nationalism did not resonate at all with the Vellalar establishment. In 1952 Chelvanayakam lost his seat, defeated by a Tamil UNP candidate who had fervently argued against universal suffrage.²⁵⁹

ACTC was not the only target of ethnic outbidding. On the UNP side, Solomon Bandaranaike, Senanayake's long-term internal rival, broke off in 1951 to form the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), building on his strong links with the Buddhist religious community.²⁶⁰ Meanwhile, a synthesis of Sinhala nationalism and Third World socialism had made its appearance on the left, personified by Philip Gunawardena, a founding member of LSSP who drifted first to CP and eventually to SLFP. Campaigning jointly under the banner of MEP (*Mahajana Eksath Peramuna*, People's United Front) in the 1956 election, Bandaranaike and Gunawardena placed the adoption of Sinhala as the only official language at the top of their agenda, arguing that the continuing use of English was a colonial legacy favoring Christian and Tamil elites. UNP felt compelled to follow suit, losing most of its Muslim and Tamil support. LSSP and CP wanted both Sinhalese and Tamil as official languages, but nonetheless agreed to limit their electoral contests with SLFP, in order to

²⁵⁷ For sympathetic accounts of ITAK's history, see Jeyaratnam Wilson, *S. J. V. Chelvanayakam and the Crisis of Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: 1947-1977* (London: Hurst, 1994) and Ambalavanar Sivarajah, *The Federal Party of Sri Lanka: the Strategy of an Ethnic Minority Party in Government and Opposition, 1949-2002* (Colombo: Kumaran Book House, 2007).

²⁵⁸ Quoted in Sithamparam Nadesan, *A History of the Up-Country Tamil People* (Colombo: Ranko Publishers, 1993), p. 176.

²⁵⁹ This serves as anecdotal demonstration that SMP does not necessarily favor ethnic outbidders.

²⁶⁰ For his biography, see James Manor, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

minimize vote-splitting vis-à-vis UNP. The strategy worked. In the first of a series of unbalanced election results under plurality, UNP received only 8 seats with 28% of the vote and SLFP formed a majority government. ITAK swept the board in the Tamil northeast against ACTC, and even elected two Muslim candidates.²⁶¹

The 1956 (Sinhala Only) Language Act was a source of tremendous bitterness for Tamils.²⁶² To assure the continued use of Tamil as a minority regional language in the northeast, Chelvanayakam negotiated a pact with Bandaranaike in 1957, but Sinhalese nationalist circles forced the latter to recant. In 1959 Philip Gunawardena pulled out of the coalition and Bandaranaike was assassinated by a radical Buddhist monk. His widow, Sirimavo, took over the reins of SLFP. In 1960 Senanayake's son, Dudley, won without a majority, but he was unwilling to form a coalition with the Tamils. In a follow-up election that same year, Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the world's first female prime minister. She was assisted in that victory by a comprehensive no-contest pact with LSSP and CP. Even the Indian Tamils were persuaded to support the accord, and Sirimavo gave one of SLFP's appointed seats to the CWC leader, S. Thondaman.²⁶³ Alarmed at the prospect of Buddhist-leftist rule, the Christian old guard of the military staged an unsuccessful coup against her in 1962, and was then summarily purged.²⁶⁴ In 1964 LSSP officially joined the government and Sirimavo reached an agreement with Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri to naturalize about one third of the Indian Tamils and ship the rest to India.²⁶⁵

In reaction to SLFP's leftist turn, the party's right wing split in 1960 and formed the Lanka Democratic Party (LPP—*Lanka Prajatantravadi Pakshaya*). Joined by more SLFP dissenters in 1964, LPP crossed the floor to the opposition along with Thondaman, who was

²⁶¹ For more information on the allegiances of Muslims in this period, see Urmila Phadnis, "Political Profile of the Muslim Minority of Sri Lanka", *International Studies* vol. 18 no. 1 (January-March 1979): 27-48 and De Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions*, pp. 227-235.

²⁶² For a detailed treatment of the language question, see Neil De Votta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

²⁶³ Until 1972, six seats appointed by the Governor were reserved for "underrepresented" interests.

²⁶⁴ Donald Horowitz's book *Coup Theories and Officers' Motives: Sri Lanka in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) is considered the classic account of this affair.

²⁶⁵ The original agreement called for Ceylon to naturalize 300,000 of the stateless population "plus their natural increase" and India to issue passports to and accept the repatriation of 525,000, with the fate of the remaining 150,000 to be decided later. A 1974 follow-up agreement with Indira Gandhi split this remainder equally, increasing Sri Lanka's quota to 375,000 and India's to 600,000. For details on these negotiations see P. Sahadevan. *India and Overseas Indians: the Case of Sri Lanka* (Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 1995).

promised by UNP that the naturalized Indian Tamils would not be put on a separate electoral register. UNP returned to power in 1965 with a coalition including LPP, MEP, ACTC, and ITAK. But Senanayake, like Bandaranaike before him, reneged on guarantees he had given to Tamils for language equality and a stop to Sinhalese colonization projects in Eastern Province. In 1968 ITAK left the coalition, while SLFP, LSSP, and CP declared that they would collude in the next election as the United Front. Although UNP actually received a higher share of the vote than SLFP in 1970, the plurality system gave the latter a crushing advantage.²⁶⁶ Extending the parliament's tenure to enact constitutional changes, the United Front renamed the country Sri Lanka in 1972 and declared it a republic, cutting the umbilical cord with the United Kingdom. The new constitution introduced an indirectly elected president and abolished the senate and the appointed legislative seats. The government expanded welfare and the public sector and strengthened ties with socialist countries like China. By siding with SLFP, LSSP and CP made a strategic decision that cost them in Tamil votes.²⁶⁷ Prof. Tissa Vitarana, nephew of LSSP founder N. M. Perera, justifies this on ideological grounds: "We had to fight against imperialism, sever our ties with the British crown... SLFP was ready to go along with the anti-imperialist struggle of LSSP. The fact that they were racist was unfortunate."²⁶⁸

In the overpopulated south, a radical section of Sri Lanka's frustrated unemployed Sinhalese youth found its expression in the Maoist People's Liberation Front (JVP—*Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna*). The government quelled a disorganized JVP insurrection in 1971, and imprisoned its top leaders. It then implemented standardization quotas for university admissions that effectively constituted affirmative action for Sinhalese and Muslim students. After the Sinhala language policy had eroded their position in public administration, comparatively higher rates of university admission had remained a key professional career outlet for the educated Jaffna Tamils. Disillusioned with the Sinhalese leadership, ITAK, ACTC, and CWC joined to form the Tamil United Front (TUF) in 1972, with Chelvanayakam at the helm. But the pan-Tamil alliance was not meant to last. When it

²⁶⁶ For a detailed account of this election see A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, *Electoral Politics in an Emergent State: the Ceylon General Election of May 1970* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

²⁶⁷ While generally unable to win seats with the notable exception of CP's 1956 win in Point Pedro, Marxist candidates competed ably against ITAK and ACTC in the north until 1965.

²⁶⁸ Interview with Prof. Tissa Vitarana, Ministry of Science and Technology, Colombo, 18/3/2009.

became clear that separatism would be the central platform, CWC abandoned ship. The party was then renamed the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), embracing in its manifesto the claim for historically separate Tamil territoriality in the northeast. TULF particularly protested the carving of two Sinhalese-majority electoral districts (Seruwila and Ampara, numbers 93 and 99 on Map 6) from areas of Eastern Province that had been flooded with Sinhalese settlers.²⁶⁹

Sri Lanka's economic woes under the United Front (from which LSSP had been expelled in 1975) led to a UNP landslide victory in 1977. It was now SLFP's turn to taste the unfairness of the plurality system, winning only eight seats with almost 30% of the vote. TULF with eighteen deputies became the official opposition, sparking new riots.

The Long Parliament and the Onset of Civil War, 1978-1989

UNP's new leader, J. R. Jayawardene, decided to use his insuperable majority to launch constitutional reforms that would benefit the country, the party, and himself: proportional representation to avoid extremely skewed election results; a directly elected executive presidency, which he was certain to win; and a two-thirds majority requirement to amend the constitution in the future, something unlikely for any one party to achieve after the introduction of PR.²⁷⁰ The Tamil minority stood to gain from several of these points. Tamil's status was raised to 'national' language, although Sinhala remained the 'official' one. PR guaranteed minority representation and made coalition governments with Tamil participation more likely, while also making it improbable for a Tamil party to be the main opposition in parliament ever again—an ethnically polarizing configuration. The president would be elected through a preferential system, which theoretically meant that even if a Tamil candidate were running, Tamil voters could strategically express a lower preference for one

²⁶⁹ Chelvadurai Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 140-148. Manogaran's observations about the underrepresentation of Tamils, however, sidestep the fact that it was due to the disenfranchisement of Indian Tamils, not gerrymandering.

²⁷⁰ As Prof. Lakshman Marasinghe, Attorney-at-Law at the Sri Lankan Supreme Court and legal advisor to past presidents told me, "today's system was devised so that the constitution would be difficult to change." After Jayawardene won the new executive presidency, PR would deprive SLFP of the majority needed to revoke his powers.

of the main Sinhalese contestants.²⁷¹ This was obviously designed to aid UNP, which was considered less anti-minority than SLFP. Jayawardene himself opined that, “A President elected by the people will have to depend on the minority vote: he cannot go against them.”²⁷²

In implementing his reform package, Jayawardene abused the same prerogatives previously employed by the left, while ethnic relations deteriorated further. By the late 1970s a number of Tamil rebel groups had sprung up in the northeast, the LTTE being only one among them.²⁷³ The state responded with harsh security measures. In 1981, in retaliation for the death of two Sinhalese policemen at a TULF rally, the police went on a rampage in Jaffna burning down the public library. In 1982, UNP held presidential elections and a referendum to extend the parliament’s term. Jayawardene won amidst convincing accusations of fraud. In July 1983, an LTTE ambush against an army patrol triggered the largest pogrom against Tamils to date. Jayawardene failed to take control of the situation and publicly blamed the episodes on the Tamils.²⁷⁴ As full-scale civil war unraveled, TULF deputies forfeited their seats in parliament when they refused to take an oath to a new constitutional amendment (Article 157A) proscribing separatism. UNP declared an emergency and postponed elections indefinitely.

Meanwhile, important political developments affected the smaller Tamil-speaking minorities. Muslims in Eastern Province were at first sympathetic to the rebels, but LTTE extortion tactics and land disputes pushed them to the government side. In 1981 a former TULF candidate, M. H. M. Ashraff, founded the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC).²⁷⁵ In

²⁷¹ The system for the election for the president is technically considered an extension of the supplemental vote (SV) rather than full-fledged AV, in that it allows voters to rank their top choice plus only one or two additional candidates, depending on the total number of candidates in the race. Marking preferences is optional. See *The Constitution of Sri Lanka*, Chapter XIV, articles 88-104.

²⁷² Quoted in Amita Shastri, “Channeling Ethnicity Through Electoral Reform in Sri Lanka,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* vol. 44 no. 1 (March 2006): p. 38.

²⁷³ See chapter “The Armed Groups” in *The Sri Lankan Tamils: Ethnicity and Identity*.

²⁷⁴ A commission appointed twenty years later by Kumaratunga apologized for ‘Black July’ and put the blame on everyone but the left. See *Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1984)*, Sessional Paper No. III-2003 (Colombo: Department of Government Printing, 2003). Estimates of the total death toll vary and the commission did not provide a complete list of victims. In *The Intra-Group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 118-134, Kenneth Bush gives 2,000 dead, 18,000 homes and 5,000 shops destroyed.

²⁷⁵ For background on SLMC’s formation, see Sari Knoerzer, “Transformation of Muslim Political Identity,” in *Culture and Politics of Identity in Sri Lanka*, edited by Mithran Tiruchelvam and Dattathreya C. S. (Colombo: ICES, 1998).

that same year, India reneged on the Sirimavo Shastri pact and by 1984 the repatriation of Indians was completely suspended due to the conflict. With S. Thondaman acting as a mediator, Jayawardene agreed to naturalize the remaining stateless Tamils, a decision supported by all parties except SLFP and MEP. The 1988 Citizenship Act extended Sri Lankan citizenship rights to an additional 230,000 people from the original plantation population, bringing a paradoxically peaceful conclusion to the plight of Indian Tamils in the midst of civil war.²⁷⁶

By the mid-1980s, the LTTE had ruthlessly decimated its rival Tamil groups, forcing them to join it or else become inactive or collaborate with the government. While Tamil Nadu and India as a whole remained friendly toward the rebels, Sri Lanka sought military aid from India's adversaries: China, Pakistan, and Israel. When the Sri Lankan army launched an assault to capture the Jaffna peninsula in 1987, Rajiv Gandhi responded with an airlift to relieve the siege and force Jayawardene to negotiate. The resultant Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed in July 1987 without rebel participation and envisioned that an Indian peacekeeping force (IPKF) would enforce it. The Northern and Eastern provinces would be temporarily merged, subject to a referendum on their status—which never took place. The 13th and 15th amendments to the Sri Lankan constitution elevated Tamil to a co-official language along with Sinhala and reduced the district electoral threshold from 12.5% to 5%.²⁷⁷

India was in principle opposed to Tamil secession, and thought it could arrange the affairs of the northeast as it saw fit, giving more power to those it favored: TULF (whose leadership had fled to Tamil Nadu) and smaller armed groups like the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). The LTTE demanded full control of the transitional administration and repudiated the ceasefire. Having underestimated the rebels, by October the IPKF found itself fighting them, thus simply replacing the Sri Lankan army. But the Sri Lankan government was in no better position to smirk. The JVP re-emerged and launched a second insurrection based on university campuses, accusing the government of treason for having acquiesced to India's intervention. Jayawardene nearly escaped an assassination attempt. His successor elected in

²⁷⁶ Sahadevan. *India and Overseas Indians*, pp. 214-232.

²⁷⁷ Constitution of Sri Lanka, Chapter IV, Article 18 & Chapter XIV, Article 99.

1988, Ranasinghe Premadasa, crushed the JVP with executions and surreptitiously helped the Tigers expel the IPKF. Rajiv Gandhi was less lucky than Jayawardene. At a rally near Chennai in 1991 he and fourteen more people were blown up by a female LTTE suicide bomber.²⁷⁸ Premadasa met the same fate in 1993.

Second Period, 1989-2009

The prize for the re-enfranchisement of Indian Tamils was, of course, their votes. In the long overdue 1989 election, UNP, the party of Sinhalese capitalists, was returned to power in cooperation with CWC, the trade union of Tamil plantation laborers. The Sri Lankan Tamil vote was split between (presumably pro-LTTE) independents and a TULF-TELO-EPRLF alliance. LSSP and CP tried their luck on a joint leftist ticket in the south but failed miserably. The time when the Marxist left could act independently of SLFP had passed. SLMC won about half of the Muslim vote in the east, urging its co-religionists to “vote for the Koran.” In March 1990 India completed its withdrawal and the LTTE took over one city after another in the northeast. Having grown stronger and more experienced by fighting the IPKF, the Tigers resumed operations against the government.

By 1994, war fatigue was settling in among the Sinhalese. Bandaranaike’s daughter, Chandrika Kumaratunga, was the perfect figure to embody compromise, having lost her father and husband to Sinhalese extremists.²⁷⁹ The LTTE welcomed her peace proposals and she easily won the presidential election north and south—her margin of victory was so large that she did not even need the Tamil vote. Her People’s Alliance (PA), including SLFP, LSSP, and CP, won the legislative election earlier that year and formed a coalition with SLMC and a small Indian Tamil party, the Upcountry People’s Front (UPF). But her proposed regional devolution package did not bode well. LTTE made exorbitant demands

²⁷⁸ On the Indian debacle, see Alan Bullion, *India, Sri Lanka, and the Tamil Crisis 1976-1994: an International Perspective* (London and New York: Pinter, 1995); Sumantra Bose, “Flawed Mediation, Chaotic Implementation: the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Agreement,” published in *Ending Civil Wars: the Implementation of Peace Agreements*, edited by Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Gautam Das and M. K. Gupta-Ray, *Sri Lanka Misadventure: India’s Military Peacekeeping Campaign, 1987-1990* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2008). On JVP, see Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka, a Lost Revolution? The Inside Story of the JVP* (Kandy: Institute of Fundamental Studies, 1990) and C. A. Chandraprema, C. A. *Sri Lanka, the Years of Terror: the JVP Insurrection, 1987-1989* (Colombo: Lake House Bookshop, 1991).

²⁷⁹ Her husband, popular actor and leftist politician Vijaya Kumaratunga, was killed by the JVP in 1988.

and UNP now played the Sinhalese nationalist card from the opposition benches.²⁸⁰ In 1995 the ceasefire broke down and the Sri Lankan army managed to recapture Jaffna. To borrow Sumantra Bose's aptly chosen words, "during 1995-1996, President Kumaratunga metamorphosed from dove to hawk, pledging to wage a 'war for peace' to finish the LTTE."²⁸¹ With CWC and the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) switching to her side, PA won the elections again in 2000. But the government's own MPs like Mahinda Rajapakse voted against Chandrika's devolution plan and M. H. M. Ashraff threatened to defect. After his death in a mysterious helicopter crash, his party split. His deputy, Rauf Hakeem, opened negotiations with UNP, but his widow Ferial decided to remain with Chandrika. Meanwhile the Tigers captured the strategic Elephant Pass, isolating Jaffna by land. SLMC's defection precipitated fresh elections in 2001 which were won by UNP's Ranil Wickremesinghe on a peace platform. After adopting semi-presidentialism, this would be Sri Lanka's first experience with split government.

Wickremesinghe continued the peace process under Norwegian mediation. At first, the Tigers toned down their demands to federal autonomy, opened the highway to Jaffna and set up political offices. While the government was economically exhausted, they too were pressured after 9/11, with their international financial network based on money laundering and diaspora contributions coming under scrutiny. Having assassinated Neelan Tiruchelvam, the TULF negotiator for the devolution package, in 1999 the Tigers made it clear to Sri Lankan Tamil politicians that whoever was not with them was against them. In 2001 TULF, TELO, and most of EPRLF coalesced to form the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). But the talks again stalled in 2003 as the government was unwilling to simply hand over control of a transitional administration of the northeast to the rebels. While Wickremesinghe was visiting the US, Kumaratunga precipitated a showdown by using her presidential powers to declare a state of emergency and dismiss his ministers.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ For the failure of this proposal see Neelan Tiruchelvam, "The Politics of Federalism and Diversity in Sri Lanka," in *Autonomy and Ethnicity: Negotiating Competing Claims in Multi-Ethnic States*, edited by Gai Yash (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 197-218; and Partha Ghosh, *Ethnicity versus Nationalism: the Devolution Discourse in Sri Lanka* (Delhi and London: Sage Publications, 2003).

²⁸¹ Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 38.

²⁸² For a more on elections in this period, see Laksiri Jayasuriya, *The Changing Face of Electoral Politics in Sri Lanka* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005). For the peace process, see *Negotiating Peace in Sri Lanka: Efforts, Failures, and Lessons*, edited by Kumar Rupesinghe (Colombo: Research and Documentation

Beginning in 2000, SLFP and UNP faced new challengers from the far left and the far right. Having abandoned terrorism for electoral politics, JVP was reincarnated with “a one-point agenda of undermining the peace process with the Tamils.”²⁸³ On the right, the Sinhala Heritage (SU—*Sihala Urumaya*), later renamed National Heritage Party (JHU—*Jathika Hela Urumaya*), combined an odd array of fundamentalist ideals ranging from anti-Tamil Sinhalese nationalism to anti-Western eco-Buddhism. JHU started chipping away at UNP votes in the capital’s Western Province. JVP also gained most of its votes from Western Province as well as the southern coast, its traditional power base. Ahead of the 2004 election, Kumaratunga made a pact with JVP, who had assassinated her husband. TNA dominated the northeast, performing even better than TULF had in 1977. UNP held on to Colombo and the highlands, the latter thanks to the Indian Tamil vote. After the election though, CWC, which had run on the UNP ticket, switched sides to PA and helped it form a government. To counter a split in JVP, Prime Minister Rajapakse later brought even JHU into the cabinet. When I asked him how devout Buddhists could co-exist in government with communists, JHU’s Environment Minister Champika Ranawaka told me that their “sole aim was to preserve the unitary character of the Sri Lankan state.”

By 2004 the peace had faltered, and the PA government scored a major victory when the rebel commander in Eastern Province, Colonel Karuna, defected. By taking half as many lives in one day as the war took in twenty years, the 2004 tsunami gave international observers false hopes that the tragedy might provide an opportunity to overcome ethnic divisions. To the contrary, the government accused foreign NGOs of funneling aid funds to the LTTE. The Tigers made a major strategic blunder by boycotting the 2005 presidential election.²⁸⁴ The contest between Wickremesinghe and Rajapakse was so close that it could have been, for the first time, decided by the minority vote. Indeed, Tamils in the east and upcountry voted en masse for the UNP candidate, but turnout in the north was too low. Following his incredible defeat, Wickremesinghe took a visiting fellowship at MIT and Rajapakse unleashed the dogs of war on the LTTE. Internationally isolated, the Tigers

Centre, Foundation for Co-Existence, 2006) and chapter 7 in Timothy Sisk, *International Mediation in Civil Wars: Bargaining with Bullets* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

²⁸³ Bose, *Contested Lands*, p. 47.

²⁸⁴ Rumors that Rajapakse somehow tricked the LTTE into believing that he would give them a better deal seem plausible but cannot be confirmed.

conceded defeat in May 2009. Vellupilai Prabhakaran, the evil genius who defeated the Indian army and had wrecked every peace plan since the 1980s, lay dead. Colonel Karuna turned his faction into a political party (TMVP) and was given a government portfolio. Having triumphed in the battlefield and in provincial elections, Rajapakse is now preparing for a big win in the 2010 general election.

Yet another constitutional review process regarding electoral reform is underway. The dominant proposal is for a mixed system, with two thirds of the seats coming from the old single-member constituencies and one third from the current PR district lists. SLFP favors a “best-loser” variant that will assign the PR seats to the parties with largest remainders, whereas UNP prefers a more majoritarian version.²⁸⁵ The impetus for the reform comes partly for the realization that “executive presidency can’t exist with PR,” as Susil Premajayantha, general secretary of the governing coalition told me. Sensing that it is designed to weaken small parties, JHU and JVP oppose the change, but LSSP and CP favor it, believing that they used to win more seats under SMP because they were able to concentrate on a few smaller constituencies. TNA is also in favor, as much as it wants to see the executive presidency abolished.²⁸⁶ This is a promise that Kumaratunga had aired in the past, but neither major party is really likely to fulfill.

Elections and Ethnicity in Sri Lanka: an Appraisal

Sri Lanka’s pre-independence ethnic politics shared some parallels with Guyana, but the two fellow British colonies followed different paths. In both places the British had favored an educated minority and initially the party system featured cross-ethnic, class-based cooperation that broke down before independence. Ceylon, however, was a more developed colony than British Guiana, and its politics tilted to the conservative side. Like PPP, CNC split along ethnic lines; but CNC had been an opportune coalition of Sinhalese and Tamil bourgeois elites, whereas PPP was a leftist alliance of Indian and African trade unionists. Hence the British felt comfortable transferring power to Senanayake, whereas they thwarted

²⁸⁵ See *The Electoral Debate in Sri Lanka*, edited by Rohan Edrisinha and Asanga Welikala (Colombo: Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2008).

²⁸⁶ Interviews with Susil Premajayantha, Ranil Wickremesinghe, Champika Ranawaka, D.E.W. Gunasekara, and Nallathamby Sri Kantha.

Jagan. Ceylon's Marxist parties also enjoyed a cross-ethnic appeal early on, although the plantation Tamil trade unions never merged with them, remaining ethnically separate. Throughout the SMP period, Ceylon's party system remained more diverse than Guyana's, characterized by intra-ethnic competition between UNP and SLFP among the Sinhalese, and ACTC and ITAK among Tamils, with LSSP and CP trying to compete for the Tamil vote but eventually throwing their lot with SLFP. As in all three preceding case studies, crosscutting social cleavages did not manage to save Ceylonese democracy. The Marxist parties were mobilizing voters along a different dimension and spanning the ethnic groups, but when they found joint cause with SLFP on their socialist agenda, they basically tossed the multicultural one.

Despite Ceylon's geographically clustered demography, there was cross-ethnic voting under SMP. This was not only due to strategic voting by minorities for majority candidates in mixed constituencies like Colombo (as predicted by Proposition 3); Moor candidates were able to attract Sinhalese votes and win in constituencies where Muslims were a minority, while UNP and the Marxist parties often ran at least a few Tamil candidates in the north. What is most surprising, however, is that the intense competition between UNP and SLFP did not lead either of them to reconsider the disenfranchisement of Indian Tamils in the plurality period, when the electoral incentives to 'activate' and capture those extra votes were immense. Instead, both parties remained loyal to the Sinhalese nationalist line for three decades, fighting solely over the votes of the plantation Tamils naturalized through the snail-paced official process.²⁸⁷ The policy changed only when India forced Sri Lanka's hand and the government became worried that Indian Tamils might join the insurgency.

After the PR reform and the re-enfranchisement of Indians, both proportionality and the ethnic heterogeneity of districts increased. The combined effect from Propositions 1 and 2 would predict at least a moderate rise in the number of parties in parliament. The exact opposite occurred: the effective number of political parties by vote share dropped from 3.83 in 1952-1977 to 2.67 in 1989-2004. The Sinhalese party system became more polarized in

²⁸⁷ Between 1949 and 1970 only around 148,000 Indians received Ceylonese citizenship; the only plantation Tamil parliamentarians were the appointed ones. Another 102,000 were naturalized by 1977 and Nuwara Eliya was made a three-member district, allowing CWC's Thondaman to finally win a seat there that year. The source of the figures is Sahadevan, *Indian and Overseas Indians*, pp. 142, 176, and 190.

the PR period as the Marxist left ceased to be an independent pole and amalgamated with SLFP. The absence of a strong multiplicative effect from PR can also be observed in Ceylon Tamil politics. Under SMP, ACTC and ITAK maintained a healthy competition for the Tamil vote in the northeast for twenty years, the former being UNP's favored conservative partner. ACTC then merged with ITAK in the 1970s not because it was so disadvantaged by the electoral system, but because the Jaffna elite became exasperated with Sinhalese rule. Under PR, competition for the Sri Lankan Tamil vote between TULF, EPDP, DPLF, and TELO resurfaced in the 1990s, only to decline again with the formation of TNA. PR's failure to increase party diversity, however, may be attributed to the simultaneous introduction of a directly elected executive presidency.

Patterns of cross-ethnic voting remained more or less constant over time. Contrary to the predictions of Proposition 3, cross-ethnic voting by Muslims and Indian Tamils continued under PR. Colombo Tamils (who comprise around 11% of the capital's population and a similar proportion of the island's Sri Lankan Tamil population as a whole) still vote for UNP—the party primarily responsible for Black July. Against the predictions of Proposition 4, the Indian Tamil parties choose to run on either the UNP or the PA ticket, even though the Tamils' concentration in Nuwara-Eliya, Badulla, and Kandy makes the 5% district threshold easy for them to cross on their own. Here economics dictate electoral strategy. Vulnerable and dependent on the Sinhalese welfare state, upcountry Tamils have learned to play the kingmaker role as adroitly as the Muslims, but always on board a Sinhalese train. SLMC surely benefited from PR, yet this did not dramatically change the pattern of Muslim support for the two major Sinhalese parties. Even in Eastern Province, SLMC's power base, a large chunk of the Muslim vote still goes to UNP.²⁸⁸

As in eastern Turkey and Northern Ireland, elections in the northeast of Sri Lanka were conducted under problematic circumstances during the civil war. But this does not mean that their results can be easily dismissed as unrepresentative or rigged, or that Sri Lanka's experience is fundamentally different from other societies steeped in conflict. It is

²⁸⁸ SLMC's vote share is consistently lower than the percentage of Muslims both nationally and in Amparai, the only Muslim plurality district, where turnout has been generally very high. In 1994 SLMC switched its allegiance to PA because UNP would not agree not to run its own Muslim candidates in Eastern Province. As an independent Muslim party, SLMC appears as a novelty facilitated by PR. But in the SMP period, Eastern Province had a tradition of electing independent Muslim deputies.

true that most elections were severely disrupted by violence, particularly in rural areas. The Tigers were often boycotting and turnout was lower than average, yet this varied between elections. In 1989 when the IPKF was present, turnout in Jaffna was 44.8%. It dropped to 2.3% in 1994 when the city was LTTE-controlled, rising to 21.3% in 2000, 31.1% in 2001, and 47.4% in 2004 (cf. the first 2005 election in Iraq with 58% nationwide turnout and only 2% in Anbar province). Lower turnout in legislative elections in the north did not deprive the Sri Lankan Tamils of a political voice because the districts are ethnically homogeneous and the same number of deputies was elected regardless. The issue was whether the LTTE would decide to contest in some way, or scorn the electoral process and go on with the war. Hundreds of thousands of people from Northern and Eastern Province voted in each election at polling stations set up in government-controlled areas and the pro-rebel TNA actually won in 2001 and 2004.

So far the preferential aspects of the post-1978 electoral system have not played an important role either. Not once has a presidential candidate won thanks to lower preferences, to the delight of the election commission that has been spared the tiresome task of counting them.²⁸⁹ This does not mean that no president has ever been elected thanks to the Tamil vote. It was certainly the case in 1988 for Premadasa, who won with a narrow margin nationally but carried all but one of the districts in the northeast (as did Kumaratunga in 1994, although she would have won with the Sinhalese vote alone). Even with Tamil candidates in the race, most Tamil voters give their first preference directly to the least nationalistic Sinhalese candidate, demonstrating that they are even more strategically minded than the SV formula assumes. Thus vote pooling at the presidential level is observed and did make a difference electorally. But it did not subsequently make a difference politically, because the winning Sinhalese candidate was still not as conciliatory as the LTTE and the Tamil politicians would have wanted. Wickremesinghe might have been the exception, but he was deprived of victory in 2005 by the foolish LTTE boycott.

At the legislative level, the open list PR system could also have encouraged individual candidates to make cross-ethnic appeals in Colombo and in mixed upcountry constituencies. This has generally not been the case. The upcountry Tamil parties run as many candidates on

²⁸⁹ ...as the Additional Election Commissioner, P. M. Siriwardana, frankly confessed to me in our interview.

the UNP ticket as UNP expects to elect based solely on the numbers of Indian Tamils in the district. Mano Ganesan, a popular Indian Tamil UNP deputy from Colombo and leader of CWC's rival trade union, the Western People's Front (WPF), was lucid on this topic:

As far as I know, no Sinhalese ever votes for non-Sinhalese, Muslims always vote for Muslims... We say Tamils vote for Tamils only. We don't see anything wrong with that... We tell people: 'vote for elephant symbol [UNP] but give all three preferences to our candidates.'

By generating competition between candidates on the same party list, preferences (*manapa* in Sinhala) have become a source of intra-ethnic conflict instead of cross-ethnic vote pooling. Election monitoring NGOs ordinarily report bombings and beatings taking place far from the battle zones, orchestrated by candidates wanting to get rid of fellow party rivals.²⁹⁰ It comes as no surprise that parties have reached a consensus to abolish open lists in the future. Closed lists may help women and minority candidates, but they may also create more space for ethnic tokenism, as the national list does today and the appointed seats used to in the past. SLFP has often resorted to this practice, since it has traditionally found it hard to attract the Sri Lankan Tamil vote.²⁹¹

Regarding the corollaries, the picture again casts doubt on the impact of the electoral reform. As explained, PR was not necessary to ensure the fair representation of minorities (but the re-enfranchisement of plantation Tamils was). Contemporary observers believed that SMP had not stifled party pluralism in Ceylon.²⁹² The trend in more recent scholarship is to blame plurality voting for exacerbating ethnic polarization. In her qualified critique, Amita

²⁹⁰ Interviews with Kingsley Rodrigo and Paikiasothi Saravanamuttu.

²⁹¹ In the 1970s, SLFP included in its cabinets the appointed Tamil MP Chelliah Kumarasuriar, who was reviled for this reason by Sri Lankan Tamils. In 1975 the SLFP mayor of Jaffna (and former independent MP) Alfred Duraipappah was one of the LTTE's first victims. In 2005 the LTTE assassinated the foreign minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, a Tamil elected on the PA national list. Things changed after Karuna's defection, UPFA won all three districts in provincial elections in Eastern Province in 2008, including the overwhelmingly Tamil Batticaloa. TNA boycotted the election, claiming intimidation by TMVP gunmen.

²⁹² See Robert Kearney, *The Politics of Ceylon* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 94-101.

Shastri has argued that SMP was responsible for strengthening the larger parties on each side of the ethnic divide.²⁹³ Echoing Donald Horowitz, Sumantra Bose has written that

The sustained dynamic of intraethnic competitive chauvinism... was driven by the nature of Sri Lanka's electoral system... This built-in tendency for the front-runner party to emerge with massive parliamentary majorities also provided an incentive to the two major Sinhalese parties to try to outbid each other in adopting the most populist and intransigent positions on Tamil issues. [The territorial concentration of Tamils] meant that in the rest of Sri Lanka... Tamil voters were not a factor that needed to be taken into consideration by vote-seeking Sinhalese politicians.²⁹⁴

SMP was certainly responsible for producing erratically unbalanced seat distributions between the two major parties—SLFP won twice, in July 1960 and in 1970, with a lower percentage of the vote than UNP. But the claims linking SMP with ethnic polarization seem much less convincing when compared to the subsequent PR period. It is difficult to establish that SMP instigated the drop in party fragmentation, since the phenomenon continued under high proportionality. The Sri Lankan party system became more bifurcated over time due to the fusion of SLFP and the far left. This was not driven by either electoral formula, but by post-electoral considerations: given its anti-Western orientation, SLFP was the left's natural coalition partner. Sinhalese parties did not ignore Tamil votes under SMP any more than they do under PR. In fact UNP always relied on the Tamil vote in Colombo, where Ceylon Tamil parties did not run candidates. And it is simply not true that SMP bestowed an advantage to the greatest jingoist; if that were the case, UNP would not have won in 1952, 1965, and 1977. UNP repeatedly squandered its opportunities to forge a lasting ethnic compromise because, albeit more tolerant of the minorities, it too was committed to the basic tenets of Sinhalese nationalism. PR removed the crushing seat imbalance produced by SMP, but also smoothed the path for ethnic outbidding by small parties like JVP and JHU. And while government

²⁹³ Amita Shastri, "Electoral Competition and Minority Alienation in a Plurality System: Sri Lanka 1947-1977," *Electoral Studies* vol. 10 no. 4 (December 1991): 326-347. As she correctly points out, however, the advantage to SLFP accrued from overrepresentation of rural districts due to weightage by area in addition to population.

²⁹⁴ Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands*, pp. 22-23.

formation under PR has relied more on Tamil parties, this was accomplished through more Indian Tamil and less Ceylon Tamil support.²⁹⁵

The Tamil-speaking minority's religious and caste divisions created opportunities for UNP and SLFP to make cross-ethnic appeals (or to divide and rule, as one may see it), without this contributing in any way to the resolution of the conflict, since separatism was a specifically Ceylon Tamil agenda which Muslims were uninterested in and Indian Tamils unable to embrace. As noted, Sri Lanka's electoral history contradicts most of the theoretical predictions laid out in the introductory chapter. The main culprit for the electoral institutions' inefficacy is not the demographic dominance of the Sinhalese majority or the geographic clustering of the Tamil minority. Rather, it is the difficulty of bridging drastically divergent views on regional autonomy seen since 1968, when ITAK left the UNP coalition. The Tigers were more radical than ITAK or TULF, overestimating their ultimate chances of success and always asking for more than the Sri Lankan government could offer. Prabhakaran can be rightfully blamed for this intransigence. In his absence, a negotiated solution might have been reached. But the LTTE was not exactly a one man-show; it was a social movement that drew strength from the Sri Lankan Tamils' turn to separatism in the face of the Sinhalese insistence on a unitary state. The reasons behind this persistent divergence may be sought in Sinhalese colonial grievances, Tamil resentment for Sinhalese oppression, the pernicious proximity of Tamil Nadu, or the West's sympathy for the Tamils. They are not to be found in electoral dynamics. The greatest indication that the electoral formula has been relatively inconsequential for the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is that the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils can hardly agree on any other constitutional issue of substance, yet they agree on electoral reforms.

²⁹⁵ The 1947, 1952, and 1965 governments were formed with support from the largest Ceylon Tamil party in parliament at the time. The only Sri Lankan Tamil party to participate in governments under PR (in 2000 and 2004) has been the relatively marginal leftist EPDP. Under SMP, SLFP formed its governments without Tamil support. Under PR, all governments since 1989 have included at least one Indian Tamil party.

Figure 1: Historical evolution of Sinhalese political parties in Sri Lanka

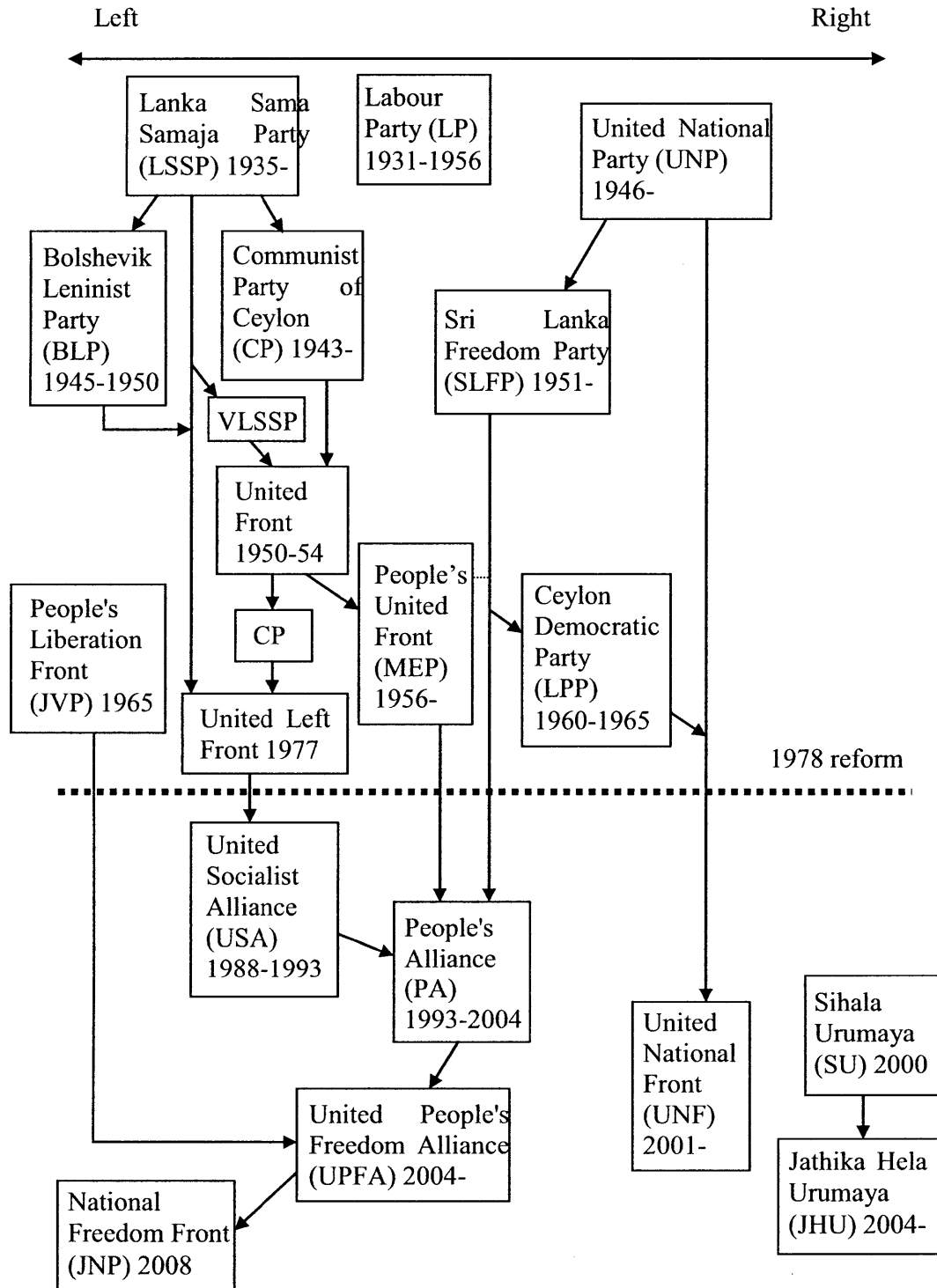


Figure 2: Historical evolution of Tamil and Muslim political parties in Sri Lanka

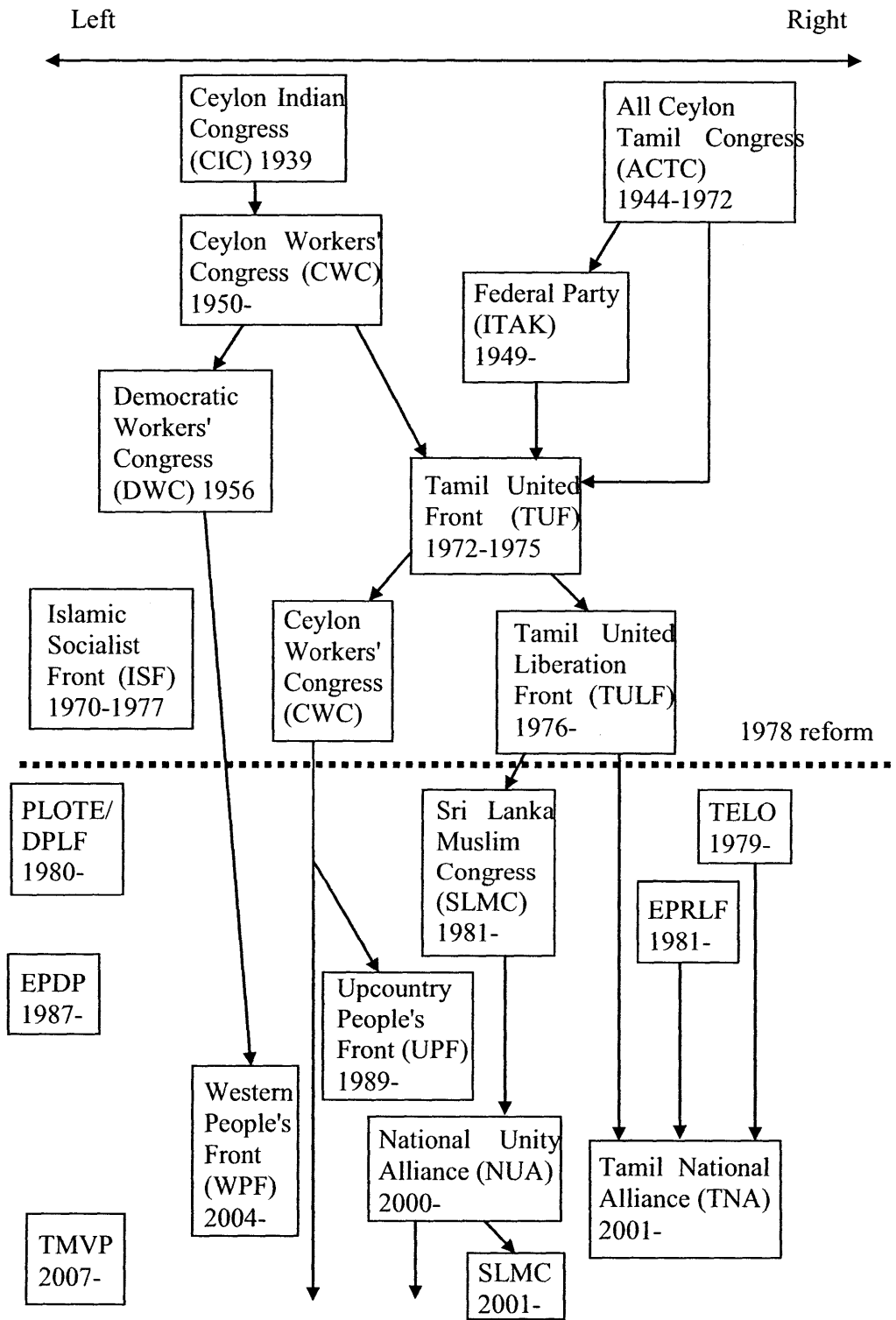


Table 4: Ethnic structure codification of Sri Lankan political parties

First Period, 1947-1977

UNP	Magnet → Antagonist	(Sinhalese, <i>Muslims</i>) → (Sinhalese, Muslims)
SLFP	Agonist → Antagonist	(Sinhalese) → (Sinhalese, Muslims)
LSSP	Antagonist → Agonist	(Sinhalese, Tamils) → (Sinhalese)
CP	Antagonist → Agonist	(Sinhalese, Tamils) → (Sinhalese)
MEP	Agonist	(Sinhalese)
LPP	Agonist	(Sinhalese)
LP	Antagonist	(Sinhalese, Tamils)
ACTC	Hegemon → Agonist	(<i>Ceylon Tamils</i>) → (Ceylon Tamils)
ITAK	Agonist → Antagonist	(Ceylon Tamils) → (Ceylon Tamils, Muslims)
TULF	Agonist	(Ceylon Tamils)
CIC	Hegemon	(<i>Indian Tamils</i>)
CWC	Hegemon	(<i>Indian Tamils</i>)
DWC	Agonist	(Indian Tamils)

Second Period, 1989-

UNP/UNF	Magnet → Antagonist → → Magnet	(Sinhalese, Muslims, <i>Indian Tamils</i>) → → (Sinhalese, Muslims, Indian Tamils) → → (Sinhalese, Muslims, <i>Indian Tamils</i>)
SLFP/PA	Agonist → Antagonist	(Sinhalese) → (Sinhalese, Indian Tamils) → → (Sinhalese, Muslims)
USA	Antagonist	(Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils)
SLMC	Agonist	(Muslims)
NUA	Agonist	(Muslims)
JVP	Agonist	(Sinhalese)
JHU	Agonist	(Sinhalese)
TULF	Agonist	(Ceylon Tamils)
EPDP	Agonist	(Ceylon Tamils)
DPLF	Agonist	(Ceylon Tamils)
TELO	Agonist	(Ceylon Tamils)
TNA	Hegemon	(<i>Ceylon Tamils</i>)
CWC	Hegemon → Agonist	(<i>Indian Tamils</i>) → (Indian Tamils)
UPF	Agonist	(Indian Tamils)
WPF/DPF	Agonist	(Indian Tamils)

Note: Italics mean that the party attracts the vast majority of that ethnic group's votes.

Table 5: Parliamentary election results in Sri Lanka by vote share, 1947-2004

First Period, 1947-1977

	LSSP	CP	MEP	SLFP	LPP	UNP	CWC	ACTC	ITAK	Others
1947	10.8	3.7	-	-	-	39.8	3.8	4.4	-	37.4
1952	13.1	5.8	-	15.5	-	44.1	-	2.8	1.9	16.8
1956	10.4	4.5		39.5	-	27.9	-	0.3	5.4	12
1960a	10.7	4.9	10.7	21.3	4.4	29.9	-	1.3	5.8	11.1
1960b	7.4	3	3.5	33.7	1	37.7	-	1.5	7.1	5.1
1965	7.5	2.7	2.4	30.2	3.2	39.3	-	2.4	5.4	6.9
1970	8.7	3.4	0.9	36.9	-	37.9	-	2.3	4.9	5
1977	3.6	2	0.4	29.7	-	50.9	1		6.8	5.7

Second Period, 1989-2004

	JVP	LSSP/ CP	MEP	SLFP	SU/ JHU	SLMC	UNP/ UNF	TULF/ TNA	Other Tamil
1989	-	2.9	1.7	31.8	-	3.6	50.7	3.4	3.9
1994	1.1			48.9	-	1.8	44	1.7	0.6
2000	6			45.1	1.5	2.3	40.2	1.2	1.7
2001	9.1			37.2	0.6	1.2	45.6	3.9	1
2004				45.6	6	2	37.8	6.8	0.9

Table 6: Presidential election results in Sri Lanka by vote share, 1989-2005

	UNP	SLFP	JVP	Others
1982	52.9	39.1	4.2	3.9
1988	50.4	45	-	4.6
1994	34.4	64.1	-	1.5
2001	42.7	51.1	4.1	2.1
2005	48.4	50.3	-	1.3

Table 7: Post-election parliamentary seat distribution in Sri Lanka, 1947-2004

First Period, 1946-1977

	LSSP	CP	MEP	SLFP	LPP	UNP	CWC	ACTC	ITAK	Other
1947	10	3	-	-	-	42	6	7	-	27
1952	9	4	-	9	-	54	-	4	2	13
1956	14	3		51	-	8	-	1	10	8
1960a	10	3	10	46	4	50	-	1	15	12
1960b	12	4	3	75	2	30	-	1	16	8
1965	10	4	1	41	5	66	-	3	14	7
1970	19	6	0	91	-	17	-	3	13	2
1977	0	0	0	8	-	140	1		18	1

Second Period, 1989-2004

	JVP	LSSP/ CP	MEP	SLFP	SU/ JHU	SLMC	UNP/ UNF	TULF/ TNA	Other Tamil
1989	-	3	3	67	-	4	125	10	13
1994	1			105	-	7	94	5	13
2000	10			107	1	4	89	5	9
2001	16			77	-	5	109	15	3
2004				105	9	5	82	22	2

Table 8: Sri Lanka parliamentary elections turnout, 1947-2004

First Period, 1947-1977

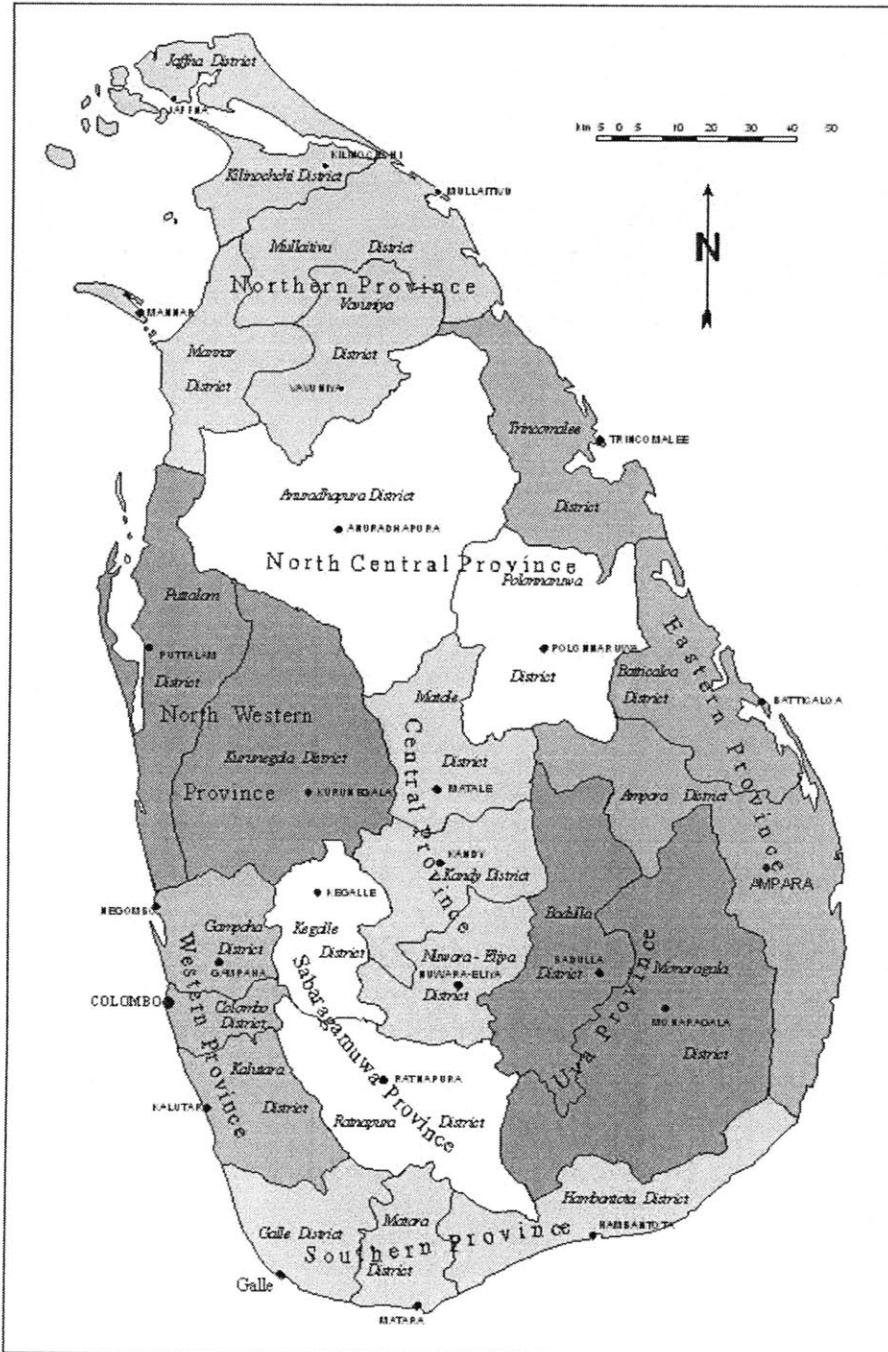
1947	61.6%
1952	70.7%
1956	69%
1960 (March)	77.6%
1960 (July)	75.9%
1965	82.1%
1970	85.2%
1977	93.6%

Second Period, 1989-2004

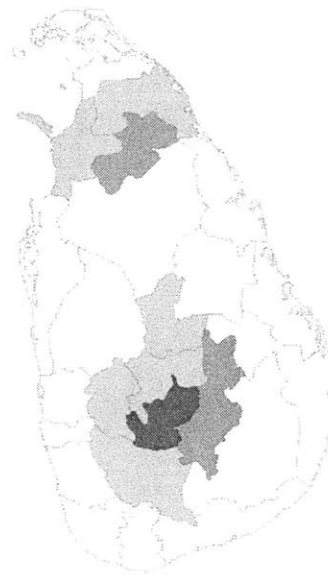
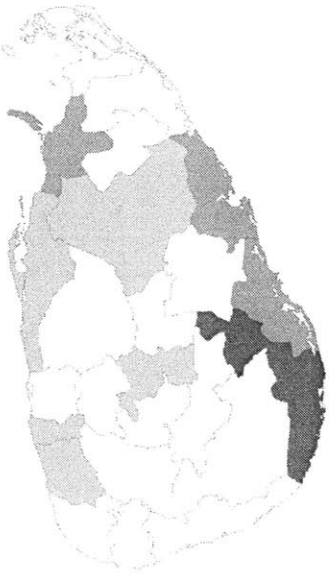
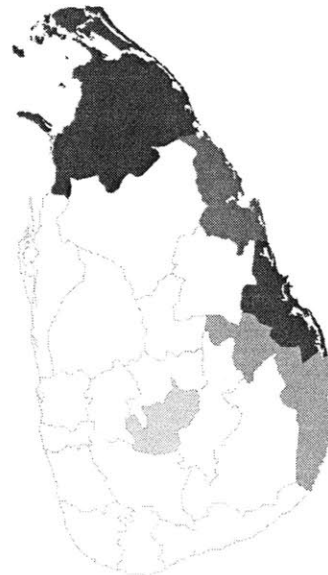
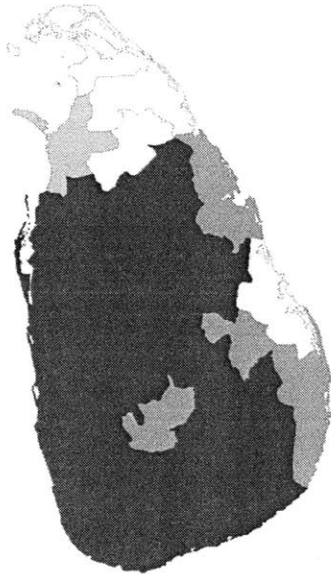
1989	63.6%
1994	76.2%
2000	75.6%
2001	76%
2004	75%

Map 1: Map of Sri Lanka's administrative provinces and districts (Source: ICES)

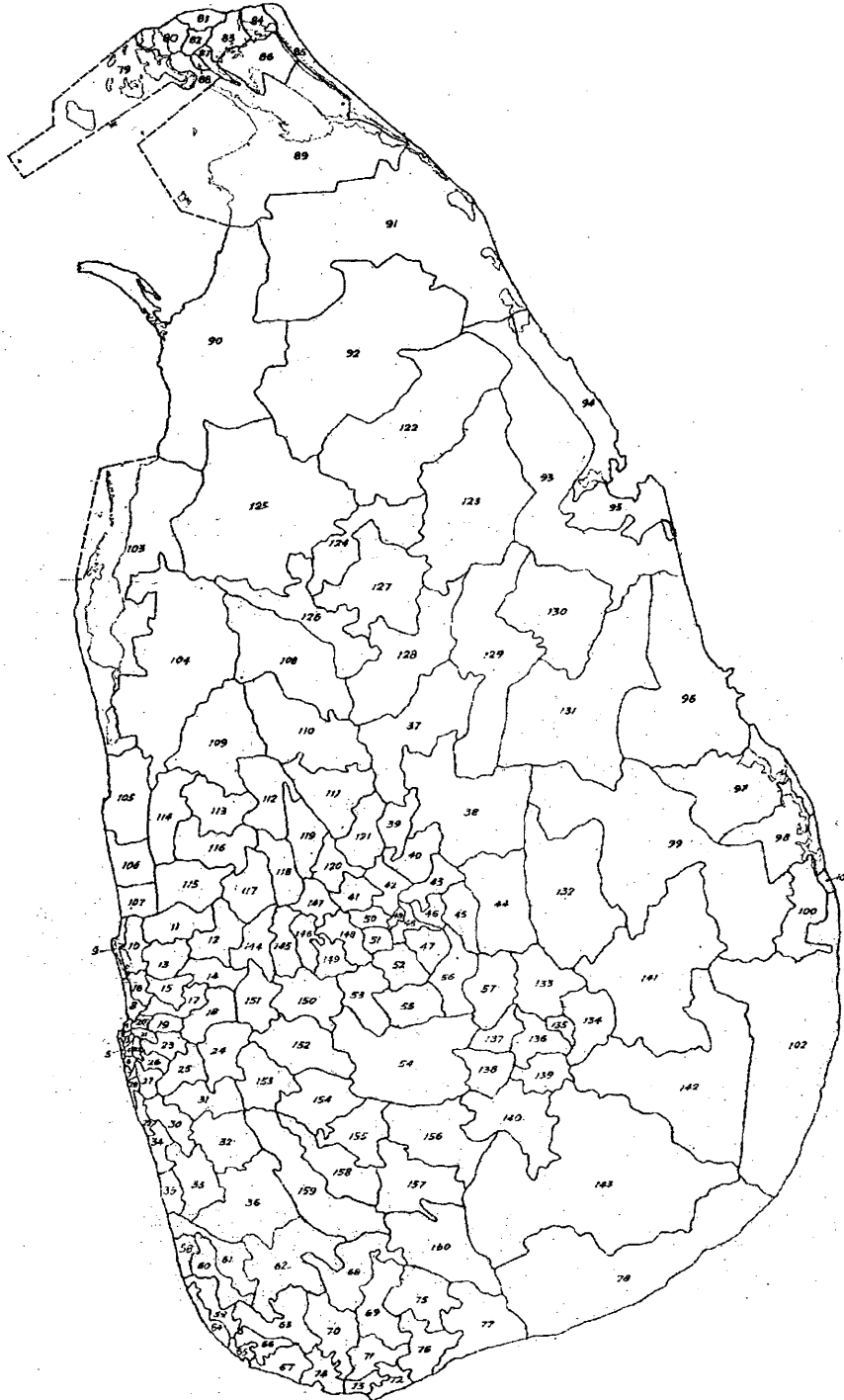
Note: For electoral purposes, Killinochchi is joined with Jaffna district, Ampara is called Digamadulla, and Mullaitivu, Mannar, and Vavuniya together form the Vanni district.

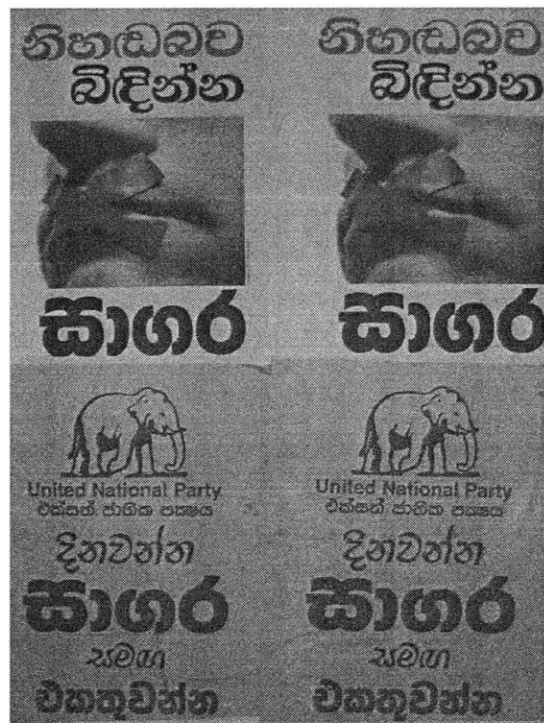


Maps 2-5: Regional concentrations of Sinhalese (top left), Sri Lankan Tamils (top right), Moors (bottom left) and Indian Tamils (bottom right) according to the 1981 census (dark shade indicates a majority, medium shade a plurality, light shades a substantial minority)



Map 6: Sri Lanka's single-member districts in 1977 (Source: Ceylon Daily Times)





Posters showing the different campaign attitudes of the two major Sri Lankan parties towards the end of the civil war: (above) militaristic poster for SLFP President Mahinda Rajapakse, Hikkaduwa, February 2009; (below) UNP poster protesting war censorship that appeared after the assassination of journalist Lasantha Wickramatunga, Colombo, January 2009.

(Photographs by author)

Chapter 6

THE LIMITS OF ELECTORAL ENGINEERING

In this final chapter, I will bring together the material from the four case studies in a structured comparison reinforcing the common negative finding that differences in electoral proportionality and district demographics had no systematic observed impact on ethnic party systems. First, I will distinguish which hypotheses can be best evaluated at which level of comparison and explain my choice of indices for measuring the variables of interest. Then, I will proceed with within- and across-case comparisons examining the hypotheses on the first theoretical link, between the electoral formula and the ethnic structure of parties. Finally, I will make a more reserved assessment of the hypotheses on the second causal link, between party system and ethnic conflict, and offer some general concluding thoughts about the electoral engineering enterprise as a whole.

Making a Structured Comparison

Depending on the hypothesis examined, the case studies provide observations that can be analyzed at two levels: individual elections, and entire electoral periods during which the electoral formula and demography remained approximately the same. There are a total of ten electoral periods (three for Northern Ireland and Turkey, two for Guyana and Sri Lanka) which from now on I will refer to with Latin numerals, so that Sri Lanka I stands for the 1947-1977 period in Sri Lanka, etc. Examining the impact of an electoral reform involves a within-case comparison of two consecutive electoral periods. The hypotheses make static predictions about ultimate outcomes. Dynamically comparing individual elections within the same case-period can only serve to determine whether there was actually a trend towards that predicted outcome; this was done in the individual empirical chapters.

Figure 1: Predictions and country-periods mapped by the independent variables

		District Heterogeneity	
		Low	High
Proportionality	High	Medium party fragmentation Low cross-ethnic voting	High party fragmentation Low cross-ethnic voting
	Low	Low party fragmentation Medium cross-ethnic voting	Low party fragmentation High cross-ethnic voting

		District Heterogeneity	
		Low	High
Proportionality	High	Turkey II & III, Sri Lanka II	Guyana II, Northern Ireland II & III
	Low	Turkey I, Sri Lanka I, Northern Ireland II	Guyana I

Figure 1 summarizes the predictions for different combinations of the independent variables and maps out the electoral periods of each case according to their values on these two variables. As explained in the theory chapter, the theoretical expectation is that under high proportionality cross-ethnic voting would be low, while party fragmentation should vary from medium to high depending on ethnic heterogeneity. Under low proportionality, party fragmentation should be low, while cross-ethnic voting should vary from medium to high depending on ethnic heterogeneity. Note that the bottom right cell contains a single country-period, Guyana 1947-1961, whereas all other cells contain three. This dearth of observations for this particular combination of independent variables creates a problem for the strength of cross-case inference involving that cell. I will return to this point in the regression analysis.

The four variables of interest can be operationalized in different ways. I have used both standard indices used in the literature as well as ones that I devised and which I believe are better suited for the questions at hand.

Proportionality has been measured in various ways in electoral studies. The most common are a categorical classification (e.g. plurality/majority vs. proportional), the proxy of district magnitude, and the Gallagher least squares index (LSI). If v_i stands for each party's vote share in an election and s_i for that same party's corresponding seat share in the legislature, the Gallagher index is calculated by the following formula:

$$LSI = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n (v_i - s_i)^2}$$

LSI is considered the best among a class of related indices.²⁹⁶ Its conceptual limitation is that it is retrospective, measuring proportionality from the angle of vote-to-seat allocation (what Maurice Duverger referred to as the mechanical effect of the electoral formula), and thereby ignoring the strategic effect that the electoral formula had on political parties' decisions to run candidates or not. District magnitude (or its logarithm) can capture both effects, but it cannot capture malapportionment or details of electoral systems like special thresholds. To address this, I have devised an alternative measure for proportionality based on the Gallagher index and the concept of "elections as census" in the ethnic politics literature. If p_i stands for the proportion of an ethnic group in a country's population and s_i stands for the seat share that this ethnic group could hope to achieve if all votes fell along ethnic lines, then Ethnic Proportionality (EPR) can be defined as the Gallagher index in an imaginary ethnic census election:

$$EPR = 1 - \sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n (p_i - s_i)^2}$$

²⁹⁶ Rein Taagepera and Bernard Grofman, "Mapping the Indices of Seats-Votes Disproportionality and Inter-Election Volatility," *Party Politics* vol. 9 no. 6 (November 2003): 659-677.

EPR captures how proportionally the different ethnic groups are represented by the electoral system in place, a core concern in most divided societies. Using constituency-level information on ethnic composition, I have calculated EPR separately for each country and each election. In the quantitative analysis I will use both EPR and district magnitude in alternative models to compare their performance; the qualitative comparisons amount to a categorical classification of proportionality.

Ethno-Linguistic Fractionalization (equal to one minus the Herfindahl index) is the most common measure of ethnic heterogeneity. A major premise of the research design was that studies using ELF did not capture constituency-level demographic information, which is relevant for electoral calculations. For this purpose I have developed an alternative index, Regional Ethnic Fractionalization (REF), which is similar to ELF except that it uses the *weighted average of the districts' Herfindahl indices*. If p_{ij} is the proportion of an ethnic group in a district's population and k_j is a population weight for that district, then

$$REF = 1 - \sum_{j=1}^m \sum_{i=1}^n k_j p_{ij}^2$$

REF can be calculated on the basis of any sub-national geographic division; naturally, I used electoral constituencies as the relevant unit. REF is substantially different from ELF and can change with every redrawing of district boundaries even under the same electoral formula. For example, a country with two ethnic groups of equal size concentrated in two distinct homogeneous regions will have $ELF = 0.5$ but $REF = 0$. Like ELF, REF ranges between zero and one; the higher it is, the more diverse a country's regions are on average.

For party fragmentation, I used the Laakso-Taagepera index for the Effective Number of Parties (ENP) calculated on the basis of both vote shares and seat shares, to measure the strategic and mechanical effect of the electoral formula respectively. ENP equals one over the Herfindahl-Hirschman index, where p_i stands for a party's vote (or seat) share.

$$ENP = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n P_i^2}$$

Cross-ethnic voting (CEV) is perhaps the most difficult variable to operationalize, both for conceptual and measurement reasons. In single-member districts, it could be defined as the total number of voters who cast a ballot for a non-co-ethnic candidate; in practice, though, this is almost impossible to determine accurately. The problem becomes even more complicated when voters can allocate votes across different candidates or when they vote for party lists which may contain candidates of various ethnic origins. This is where the functional party categorization I developed in the theory chapter comes handy. It is far easier to determine if a party as a whole is receiving substantial support from one or multiple ethnic groups than to estimate the ethnic breakdown of a given candidate's voters. Therefore gross CEV can be simply defined as *the total vote share of magnet and antagonist parties* in a given election. This definition also applies in societies with clustered demographics where a party with multi-ethnic appeal may be running mono-ethnic candidate rosters in different ethnically homogeneous regions (this is the case for some Sinhalese parties running Tamil candidates in Jaffna, or Turkish parties running Kurdish candidates in the southeast).

However convenient this definition may be, it is not conceptually appropriate for all cases. Centripetalist theorists and policymakers are concerned with encouraging cross-ethnic appeals that bridge salient ethnic cleavages. Cross-ethnic voting between groups that enjoy relatively good relations may be welcome but not so relevant. It may also be the result of alliances that sprang during the course of the conflict—as with Moorish support for Sinhalese parties in Sri Lanka. In addition to total CEV, I therefore measured *salient CEV*, i.e. cross-ethnic voting only along the primary cleavage: Sinhalese/Tamil in Sri Lanka, Indian/African in Guyana, and Turkish/Kurdish in Turkey.²⁹⁷

To codify parties, I considered 3/4 and 1/10 as cutoffs for determining congregation and pluralism respectively. These rough cutoffs were fairly easy to assess based on census data, survey results, secondary sources, and interviews. Parties that received at least 3/4 of

²⁹⁷ Obviously, this makes no difference for Northern Ireland. CEV estimates for Northern Ireland include terminal transfers to parties of the other community as calculated by Sydney Elliott (see Chapter 3).

the vote of one group and 1/10 or more of the vote of at least one more group were coded as magnets; parties that received 3/4 of the vote of one group and no more than 1/10 of the vote of any other group were coded as hegemons; parties that received at least 1/10 (but less than 3/4) of the vote of more than one group were coded as antagonists; all other parties were coded as agonists (See Appendix). In each country, I checked the output of this coding method with specialists, who found it uncontroversial. The complete list of parties coded by their ethnic structure is presented at the end of each empirical chapter.

Electoral periods were defined by changes in proportionality. Nationwide ethnic heterogeneity and district-level heterogeneity also changed somewhat between electoral periods, but this change was dramatic only in Northern Ireland (whose constituencies in the plurality period were much more homogeneous than in the PR periods). With the exception of Northern Ireland then, it is valid to regard electoral reforms as changes in only one independent variable and to use them as a quasi-experimental test for evaluating P1 and P3, which theorize the effects of changes in proportionality. The simultaneous changes in proportionality and district heterogeneity in Northern Ireland are actually convenient because their predictions are in the same direction. In 1929, both proportionality and district heterogeneity dropped, which would predict even lower party fragmentation (and cross-ethnic voting) in the subsequent period than a drop in proportionality alone. The opposite is true for the 1973 reform, where both proportionality and district heterogeneity rose: the combined effect should be even higher party fragmentation than with a rise in proportionality alone. It is not a problem then to include the reforms in Northern Ireland when assessing P1 and P3 qualitatively. P2 and P4 could be assessed within-case by comparing electoral results in constituencies with different demographic configurations. I have done this qualitatively in the empirical chapters, but a more detailed analysis was hampered by data limitations (Sri Lanka is the only case with reliable data on the ethnic composition of all of its constituencies for all periods). Despite this shortcoming, I was able to produce estimates of the overall electoral demography (captured by the REF index) for each country and period, as described above. I will use these estimates to examine all propositions quantitatively with a pooled data set of all elections from all cases.

A few judgment calls were necessary during the coding process. REF could be calculated accurately with census data only for Sri Lanka, Guyana, and the STV periods in

Northern Ireland.²⁹⁸ For the SMP period, I estimated it arbitrarily at 0.25 based on the data from Belfast wards. The calculation of EPR for Northern Ireland in the SMP period did not require detailed constituency-level information on religion, because, as explained in Chapter 3, the majority religion in each constituency was obvious and the districting led to a very predictable pattern of seat allocations between Nationalists and Unionists. REF and EPR estimates for Northern Ireland were based on a Catholic vs. non-Catholic dichotomy because all reliable estimates by experts for the problematic censuses (1971, 1981, and 1991) lump together Protestants and others. For the 2001 census I used the data for family religious background (rather than stated religious affiliation) for the same reason. For Turkey, I used Servet Multu's estimates for the Kurdish population and added my own estimates for Alevis by district to calculate a value of REF = 0.25 for 1950-1980 and 0.32 after 1987. The district-level estimates for Turkey were also used to calculate EPR. To reflect Turkey's party block vote system in multi-member districts in 1950-1960, I set district magnitude at 1 for that period. For all other periods I used the mean district magnitude.²⁹⁹

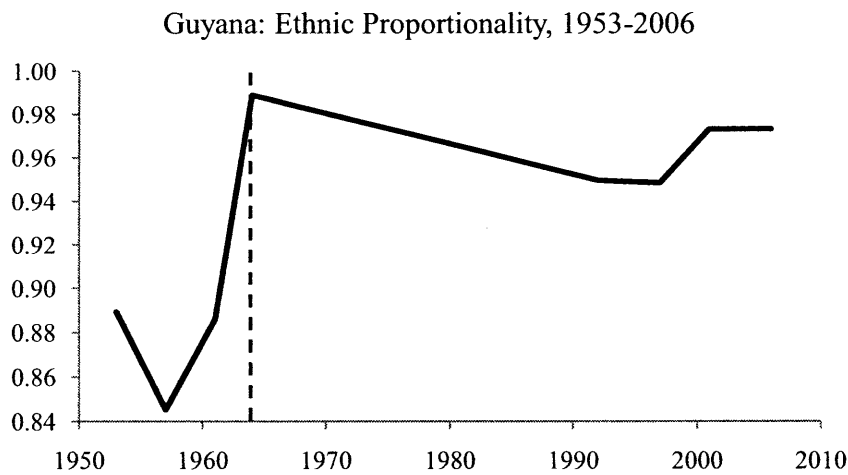
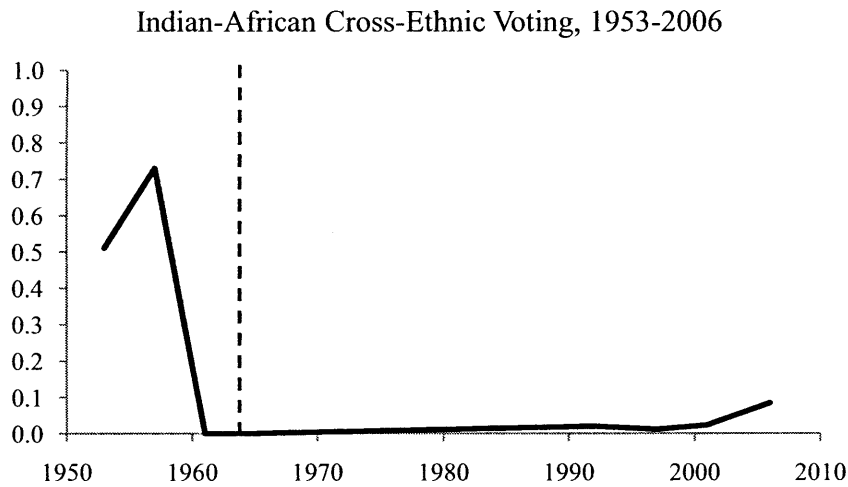
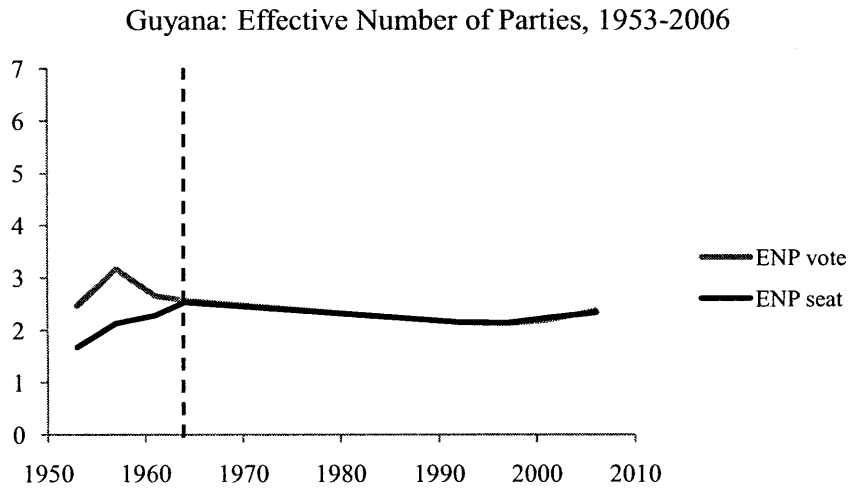
The graphs in figure 2 track changes in ENP, CEV, and EPR for each of the four cases studies across time. They provide a very good summary of the findings presented in the empirical chapters regarding electoral history and voting behavior.

The discussion this far covered the hypotheses regarding the causal link between electoral design specifics and party system outcomes. The hypotheses linking party system features and ethnic conflict outcomes will be examined last, qualitatively, across-case, using my knowledge of the cases and the roles that political parties played in conflict resolution. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the research design of this project was developed to address specifically the first set of hypotheses, which is logically precedent. Acknowledging that the comparison for the second set of hypotheses is less structured (since systematic controls for factors affecting ethnic conflict, such as external involvement, are missing), it is nonetheless possible to make some general pertinent remarks.

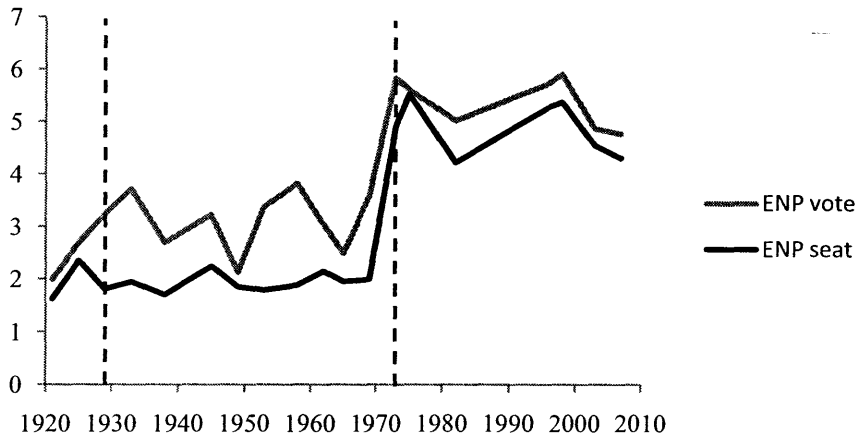
²⁹⁸ It was not possible to accurately determine REF for Guyana in 1953 because I was unable to find published information on the boundaries of the 24 electoral districts. Instead I averaged the values for 1957 (0.562, 14 districts) and 1961 (0.522, 35 districts). The expected allocation of seats by ethnic group for the calculation of EPR was much easier.

²⁹⁹ Although the median district magnitude is more commonly used, I preferred the mean in order to better capture the proportional effect of Sri Lanka's and particularly Guyana's national list seats.

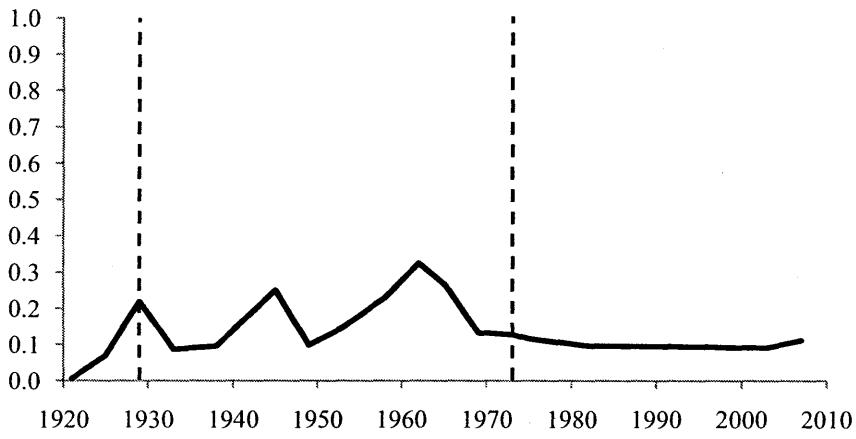
Figure 2: ENP, CEV, and EPR over time in each of the four cases



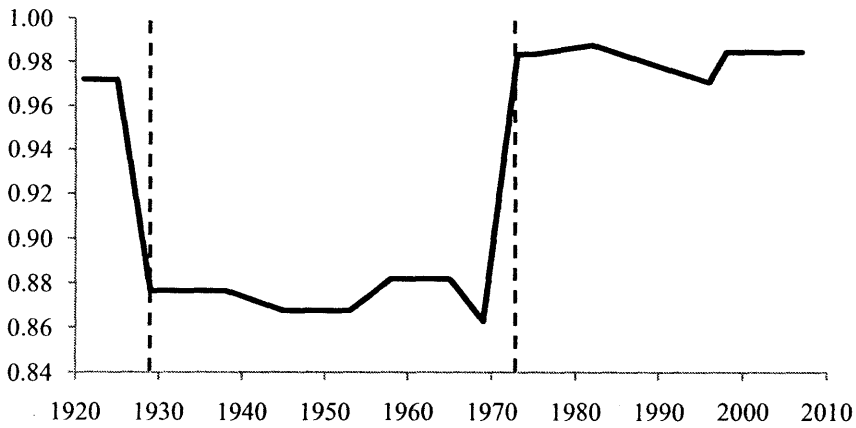
N. Ireland: Effective Number of Parties, 1921-2007



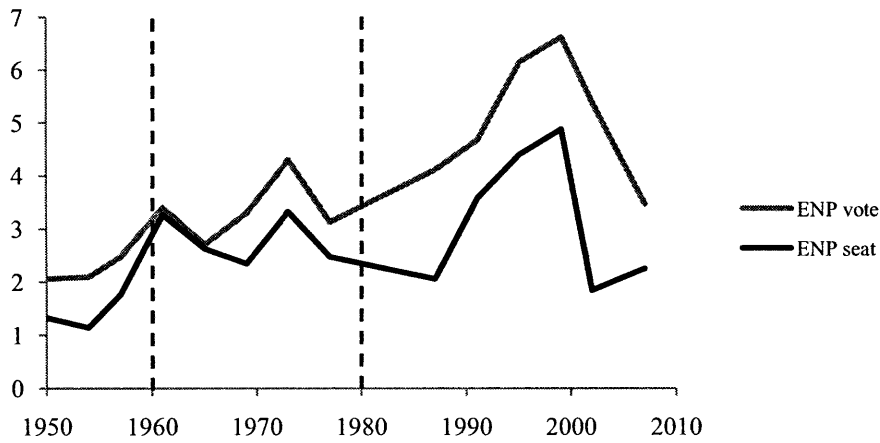
N. Ireland: Cross-Sectarian Voting, 1921-2007



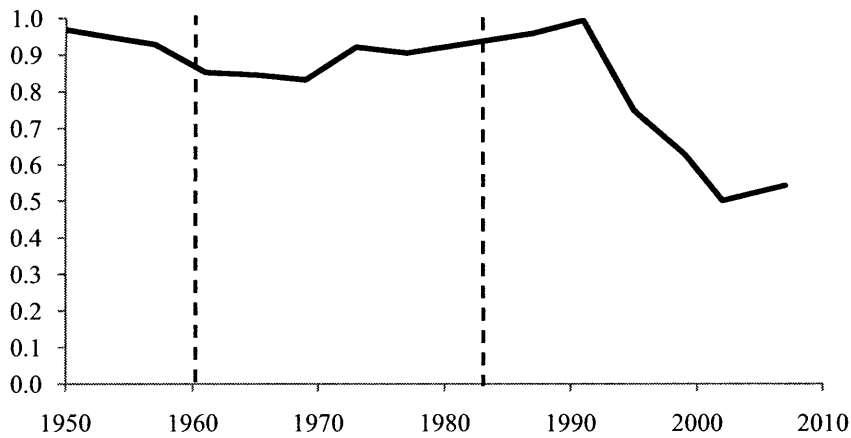
N. Ireland: Ethnic Proportionality, 1921-2007



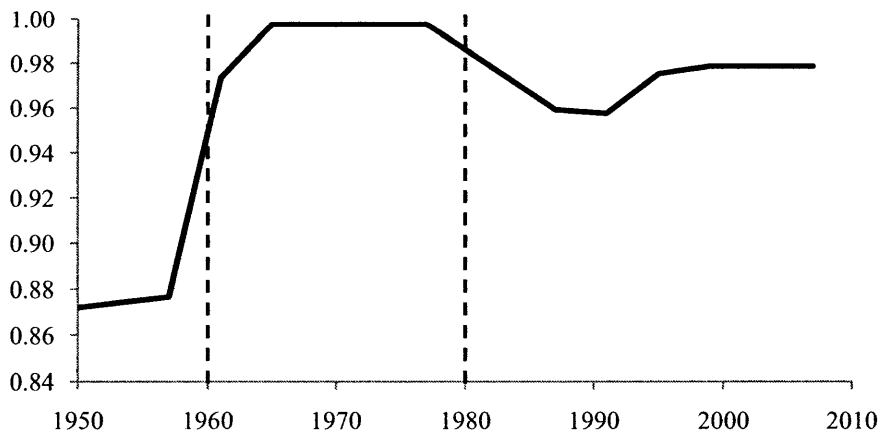
Turkey: Effective Number of Parties, 1950-2007



Turkish-Kurdish Cross-Ethnic Voting, 1950-2007



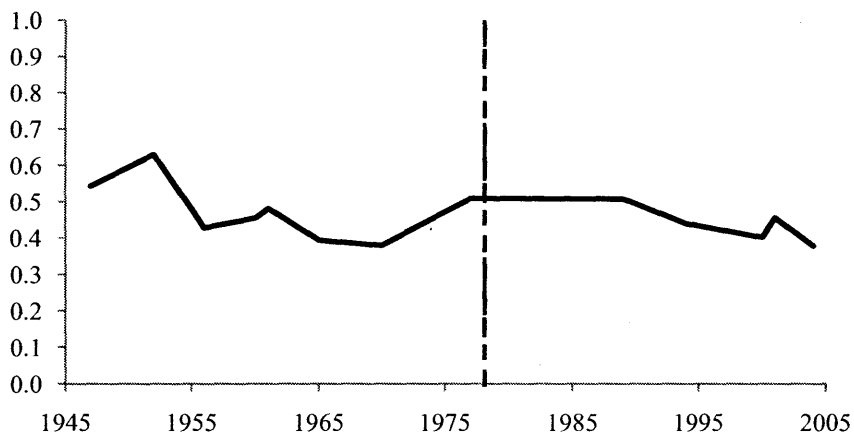
Turkey: Ethnic Proportionality, 1950-2007



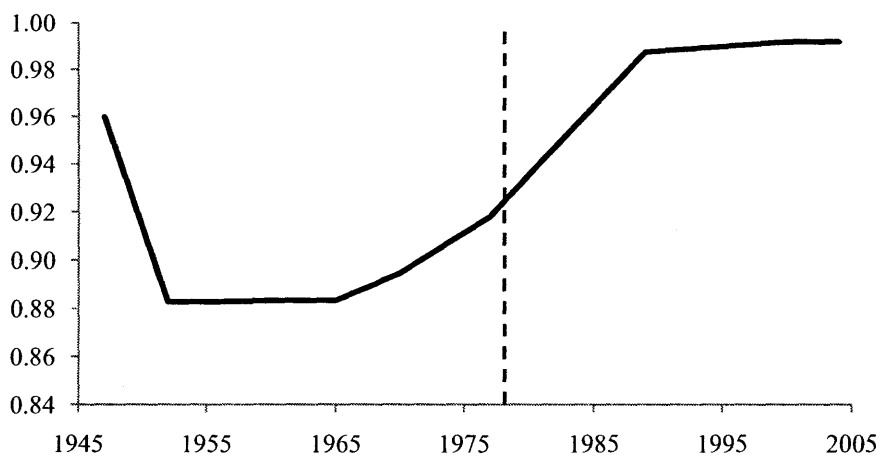
Sri Lanka: Effective Number of Parties, 1947-2004



Sinhalese-Ceylon Tamil Cross-Ethnic Voting, 1947-2004



Sri Lanka: Ethnic Proportionality, 1947-2004



Within- and Across-Case Comparison: Electoral Reforms

The quasi-experimental research design involving electoral reforms allows strongest inference for propositions 1 and 3 regarding the effects of changes in proportionality. There were a total of six such reforms in the case studies (two in Northern Ireland and Turkey, one in Sri Lanka and Guyana). Comparative case studies cannot easily measure magnitudes of effects, but they can certainly identify direction. Binary (pass/fail) results of within-case comparisons presented in the empirical chapters are summarized in the following truth table.

	High ethnic heterogeneity			Low ethnic heterogeneity		
	Guyana	N. Ireland (b)	N. Ireland (a)	Turkey (a)	Turkey (b)	Sri Lanka
PR:	Increase	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	Increase
P1:	Fail	[Pass]	[Fail]	Pass	Fail	Fail
P3:	[Pass]	Pass	[Pass]	Fail	Fail	Fail

Brackets indicate that caveats shed some doubt on the validity of that observation. For the 1929 reform in Northern Ireland which took place after only two STV elections, there is a question of truncation—perhaps there was not enough time for the party system to adjust. If truncation did matter, the results might have been flipped (NILP might have increased its share of the vote later on, so P1 would pass and P3 would fail). The effect of P1 for the 1973 reform in Northern Ireland and P3 for the 1964 reform in Guyana was actually observed one election before the reform, so this weakens the argument that the reform caused it.

The overall picture does not lend strong support for either proposition, with P1 failing in four and P3 in three out of the six reforms. There is some indication, however, that P3 (the centripetalist claim that an adverse relationship exists between PR and CEV) may hold for more ethnically heterogeneous societies; this deserves some further investigation. The fact that Northern Ireland is the only case with a high ‘pass’ rate may also indicate that our theories have been based on insights gained from electoral behavior in developed societies (cf. how consociationalism has used the Lower Countries and Switzerland as models or how centripetalists use Australia as an example for the adoption of AV).

Across-Case Comparison: Election Results

To evaluate the hypotheses across cases, I use regressions with pooled data from all elections (N=54). The panel nature of the data requires accounting for the fact that errors may be heteroschedastic within clusters, meaning the different electoral periods for each country, during which the values of the independent variables did not substantially change. Since the number of time periods is small compared to the number of countries, and the observations were not spaced in regular time intervals across cases, I preferred to employ OLS with robust standard errors clustered by country.³⁰⁰ The dependent variables are ENP (either by vote or seat share) and salient CEV.

I am using two explanatory models: one with the indices I created (EPR, REF, and their interaction term), and one with the indices that are most commonly used in quantitative studies (district magnitude for proportionality, ELF for heterogeneity, and their interaction term). The interaction term is included to capture the purportedly interactive relationship between proportionality and heterogeneity according to previous studies and centripetalist theories. I am also using two control dummy variables to account for weaknesses of the research design mentioned in the theory chapter. The variable ‘violence’ switches on in each election year when there was ethnically motivated violence before the election. This includes every year after 1983 for Sri Lanka, 1961, 1964, and 1992-2001 for Guyana, 1958 (due to the IRA border campaign) and 1969-1996 for Northern Ireland, and 1977-1999 and 2007 for Turkey (a PKK ceasefire was in place during the 2002 election). The competing hypothesis is that violence increased ethnic polarization, and may therefore have triggered a reduction in both party fragmentation and cross-ethnic voting. The second control variable is semi-presidentialism, adopted by Guyana after 1980 and Sri Lanka after 1978. Direct election of the executive is expected to have a reductive effect on party fragmentation, since it operates essentially as an additional (and institutionally important) single-member district election. Pair-wise correlations showed no substantial collinearity between the independent variables except ELF and REF (0.82) and EPR and district magnitude (0.74). This verifies that the indices I developed are closely related to those usually employed by similar studies.

³⁰⁰ This is also the approach followed by William Clark and Matt Golder in “Rehabilitating Duverger’s Theory” *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 39 no. 6 (August 2006): 679-708.

Regression results are shown on Table 1. The models with EPR and REF perform consistently better than the models using ELF and district magnitude, but the results for ENP reveal no significant effect of proportionality, heterogeneity or their interaction on party fragmentation. Violence and semi-presidentialism appear significant for the effective number of electoral parties, but the effect of the former is in the opposite direction than expected: violence is associated with higher party fragmentation. The two control variables, however, seem to have had primarily a strategic effect. Their mechanical effect on the number of legislative parties is both weaker (smaller coefficient) and less significant.

The model for CEV using ELF and district magnitude is entirely unimpressive, but the one using EPR and REF shows both variables and their interaction significant at $p < .01$ and an R^2 of 0.50.³⁰¹ But I suspect that this finding was driven primarily by the observations from Guyana's SMP period. Guyana started its electoral history with high levels of cross-ethnic voting, but then the party system became racially polarized and cross-ethnic voting collapsed by 1961. There is some concern here about truncation; it is very possible that if the switch to PR had not taken place in 1964 but later, Guyana would have seen many more elections with low CEV under low proportionality. The findings may therefore be driven essentially by only two observations, the Guyanese 1953 and 1957 elections. Indeed, when Guyana I is dropped as a cluster, the significance of REF and the interaction term evaporates, while that of EPR drops substantially. This indicates that it is necessary to include more data in the sample from cases similar to Guyana I (low proportionality, high heterogeneity) before issuing judgment on the centripetalist assertion that proportionality and district heterogeneity affect cross-ethnic voting.

These inferences are not substantially different if the interaction terms are dropped, or if other clusters are dropped, particularly Northern Ireland I which also exhibits truncation. In short, the data do not justify the theoretical claims about purported relationships between the variables that institutional designers can change and the variables describing the ethnic structure of the party system in divided societies.

³⁰¹ Semi-presidentialism was not included as an explanatory variable for CEV; there is no hypothesis linking it with cross-ethnic voting, unless there are district distributional requirements as in Nigeria and Indonesia.

Table 1: Regression results (OLS with robust standard errors clustered by period)

Dependent Variable: Effective Number of Electoral Parties				
Regressor	Coefficient	Robust SE	Coefficient	Robust SE
EPR	2.00	(11.51)		
REF	- 20.17	(28.33)		
EPR × REF	20.71	(31.21)		
Violence	0.75**	(0.29)	0.62*	(0.27)
Semi-presidential	- 2.04***	(0.59)	- 2.03**	(0.67)
log(district magnitude)			3.47	(2.80)
ELF			2.88	(4.65)
log(district magnitude) × ELF			- 5.36	(5.68)
Constant	1.91	(10.49)	1.81	(2.11)
Observations	54		54	
R ²	0.39		0.38	

Dependent Variable: Effective Number of Legislative Parties				
Regressor	Coefficient	Robust SE	Coefficient	Robust SE
EPR	0.47	(11.60)		
REF	- 28.51	(30.70)		
EPR × REF	30.64	(33.45)		
Violence	0.45*	(0.24)	0.31	(0.24)
Semi-presidential	- 1.20*	(0.61)	- 1.22	(0.70)
log(district magnitude)			3.38	(2.49)
ELF			3.82	(4.26)
log(district magnitude) × ELF			- 4.55	(4.98)
Constant	2.22	(10.84)	0.45	(1.93)
Observations	54		54	
R ²	0.32		0.28	

Table 1: (continued)

Dependent Variable: Salient Cross-Ethnic Voting						
Regressor	Coeff.	Robust SE	Coeff.	Robust SE	Coeff.	Robust SE
EPR	12.80***	(2.19)			17.50*	(7.63)
REF	29.31***	(6.20)			48.53	(28.98)
EPR × REF	- 32.37***	(6.79)			- 52.21	(30.31)
Violence	0.02	(0.10)	0.04	(0.11)	0.04	(0.10)
log(distr. magnitude)			1.05	(1.07)		
ELF			- 1.09	(1.85)		
log(distr. magnitude) × ELF			-1.86	(2.01)		
Constant	- 11.23***	(2.03)	0.77	(0.92)	- 15.78*	(7.24)
Observations	54		54		51	
R ²	0.50		0.41		0.54	
					Guyana I dropped	

This is all unsurprising considering the results of qualitative within-case comparisons in the individual case studies. The more demographically mixed societies, Guyana and Northern Ireland, did not display higher levels of cross-ethnic voting than Turkey and Sri Lanka, which are more clustered—in fact it was just the opposite. PR did not produce greater political diversity in Guyana, Sri Lanka, or among Alevis in Turkey; the multiplicative effect of PR was only seen in Northern Ireland and among Turkey’s Kurds, but less so for Kurds who, unlike Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants, never voted for one party en masse. PR did not hurt cross-ethnic voting in Sri Lanka and Turkey. It may have done so in Northern Ireland and Guyana, but in both cases the drop in CEV preceded the electoral reform, casting doubt on direct causality. It is possible that PR sustained the low level of cross-ethnic voting, providing no incentives for a change in pattern. The centripetalist assertion that lowering proportionality in mixed demographics could increase incentives for cross-ethnic appeals certainly deserves more exploration. This is an open topic for future research, requiring sub-national electoral data from more cases, including data on the ethnic composition of electoral constituencies.

Across-Case Comparison: Party Systems

As mentioned, the hypotheses on the second causal link, between party systems and ethnic conflict outcomes, are much harder to assess because the study was built with better controls for the first link. Arguably, if the first link is weak, that is if we admit that we cannot produce or bolster the types of political parties we want by manipulating the electoral formula and the electoral demography, the whole enterprise of electoral design for divided societies falls apart. However, even if we can achieve results at least in some cases, electoral engineering may be worth trying. So it is still important to examine the next step: assuming that the electoral intervention has some impact on the party system, does that then have the expected effects on ethnic conflict? To assess the second set of hypotheses, I will consider the instances where a case study satisfied the proposition leading to a corollary, and ignore those instances where the electoral reform flatly did not work as expected.

On Corollary 1 (voice to the alternative) vs. Corollary 3 (rewards to extremism)

The PR reforms in Guyana and Sri Lanka failed to increase the number of parties, but the ones in Northern Ireland and Turkey did lead to greater party proliferation. Did this help or was it detrimental? In both cases the two effects cancelled out. In Northern Ireland the PR reform consistently helped the Alliance Party, and in the 1990s other small parties as well (the Women's Coalition, and the Progressive Unionist Party), to remain part of the political landscape and bring their views to multi-party talks. But before that, PR had helped extremist fringe parties (Vanguard, Democratic Unionists, Sinn Féin) to gain a voice and undermine the peace process for years. When we remember the positive role that small moderate parties played in Northern Ireland, we should not forget that for the larger moderate parties the problem of ethnic outbidding was exacerbated by the permissive electoral system. SDLP and UUP would likely have been able to work better together in the 1980s and 90s were it not for the competition they faced respectively from SF and DUP. Looking at the larger historical picture, it is unclear whether small parties in Northern Ireland brought the peace agreement closer or pushed it further away. The same dynamic can be observed in Sri Lanka, where whatever moderating incentives came from the inclusion of small Indian Tamil parties in

parliament has been countered by the flanking effect of the Buddhist fundamentalist JHU on UNP and the radical Sinhalese nationalist JVP on SLFP. In Turkey, the role of the Islamic MSP and the Pan-Turkist MHP in bringing down the Second Republic in the 1970s is well established; the desire to exclude the Turkish far right from parliament was just as much a motivation behind the military's decision to introduce the 10% threshold, as was the emergence of the Kurdish left. The reverse move, reducing proportionality to eliminate extremist parties, is harder to assess; it was attempted with that goal in mind in only one of the cases (Turkey), and it is also an infrequent kind of electoral reform globally. It certainly did not work well in Turkey. Once a popular radical political movement is formed, shutting it out of politics without addressing the underlying grievances that caused it is unlikely to make the problem go away.

On Corollary 2 (voice to the excluded)

The reform in Guyana, the first reform in Turkey, and the second reform in Northern Ireland expanded opportunities for representation to Africans, Alevis, and Catholics respectively compared to the previous plurality/majority system. Did this help reduce ethnic tensions? Not by itself in any of the cases. For Alevis in Turkey, it allowed the possibility of an all-Alevi party, but the minority quickly retracted to hiding under the mantle of Turkish secularism when small far-right Sunni parties emerged that clearly benefited from the same reform. For Africans in Guyana and Catholics in Northern Ireland, it did not change the fact that they constituted a minority that was not guaranteed a share in government without a power-sharing agreement. Catholics got that concession simultaneously with the PR reform through Britain's intervention, but it sparked twenty-five years of conflict until Protestants could reluctantly accept it. In Guyana the African party held on to power through dictatorial means and vote rigging, and when it returned to its demographically dictated role in opposition after the Cold War it still tried to undermine the electoral process, frustrated by its exclusion from government. As the work of Jóhanna Kristín Birnir also indicates, fair representation by itself does not help when it is accompanied by permanent exclusion from

power.³⁰² When parties of the majority group are perpetually unwilling to enter pacts with parties of the dissenting minority, the external intervenor will have to consider mandatory power-sharing as a non-electoral institutional mechanism.

This is not to diminish the symbolic and practical importance of representation. Among the cases examined, only in Sri Lanka was a minority group entirely disenfranchised, and that was done formally through citizenship rules, rather than through the electoral formula. Due to their immigrant past, the Plantation Tamils were too weak economically and educationally to rebel or resist deportation, and worked with the government to amend the law even while their ethnic kin on another part of the island took up arms. In Turkey, the electoral system after 1980 worked to deprive a substantial sector of a minority from any voice in the legislature—but this was almost as much a result of the Kurdish party's choice not to exploit windows in the law as it was of the law itself. Even in these cases the polarizing effect of non-representation was felt. More generally, under a disproportional electoral formula, the demographic situation *combined with the reluctance of the majority group's parties to engage minority voters* may leave an ethnic group entirely unrepresented, with whatever perilous consequences that may entail. It is only in these joint circumstances that increasing electoral proportionality becomes mandatory.

On Corollary 4 (rewards to moderation)

As mentioned, the case study observations do not show any clear relationship between proportionality and cross-ethnic voting. Parties drawing votes from multiple ethnic groups have fared well under both plurality/majority and proportional systems (PPP in Guyana, UNP in Sri Lanka, and both center-right and center-left parties in Turkey). Cross-ethnic voting has remained high in Turkey and low in Northern Ireland throughout their modern political history. Northern Ireland is the only case that consistently had higher cross-ethnic voting under plurality, and there is evidence that low proportionality may have played a role in that—Nationalists generally refrained from running candidates in Protestant-dominated constituencies so as not to divide the vote of Labour against the Unionists. But at

³⁰² Bimir, *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics*, chapter 7.

the same time, plurality was highly detrimental to Labour, making it the biggest loser in the vote-to-seat allocation (a whopping 16-17 percentage point difference in the early 1960s). It is hard to assess counterfactually how Labour would have fared in post-World War II Northern Ireland under a PR system. Cross-ethnic voting has historically been high in Guyana only if the voting behavior of smaller ethnic groups (the Amerindians and people of mixed race) is considered; focusing only on the primary ethnic cleavage, Guyana has had low salient cross-ethnic voting since 1961, before its PR reform. In Turkey, it could be argued that the decrease in proportionality strengthened incentives for cross-ethnic voting because an Alevi or Kurdish party would have to muster the entire minority vote to enter parliament. Finally, Sri Lanka has seen more cross-ethnic voting between Sinhalese and Tamils under PR (on the basis of party lists, not individual candidates). It is unclear whether PR had anything to do with this, because most Indian Tamils, who furnish the bulk of cross-ethnic votes, were disenfranchised before the electoral reform.

What is not hard to conclude is that even salient cross-ethnic voting has had very little to do with actual conflict resolution. It is a known fact that ethnic conflicts often develop intra-ethnic dimensions—this was evident in all cases.³⁰³ Cross-ethnic voting can be the electoral manifestation of such an intra-ethnic rift that is not a path to a solution but just an aspect of the ongoing conflict. The Tamil-Moor clash in Sri Lanka and the intra-Kurdish violence in southeast Turkey during the respective insurgencies attest to this. In Sri Lanka, the Tamil-speaking Muslims have long downplayed their Tamil identity and rallied with Sinhalese political parties, while the Upcountry Tamils distanced themselves from Jaffna Tamil separatism after the early 1970s. In Turkey, the Kurdish-Turkish and Alevi-Sunni cleavages coexist with a larger religious vs. secular social division. The bonds between Alevi and non-practicing Sunnis on one hand, and religious Sunni Turks and Sunni Kurds on the other were forged already in the 1970s, and continue to this day. Undeniably, the governing Islamic party has approached the Kurdish populace with a wider agenda for minority policy reform which may soon turn Turkey into a peaceful success story. But this has more to do with broader changes within Turkey society, the softening of anti-minority attitudes, and the pervasive pressure from the EU. Until the mid-1990s, mainstream Turkish

³⁰³ Rogers Brubaker and David D. Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* vol. 24 (August 1998): 423-452.

parties won the bulk of the Kurdish vote by promising economic patronage without making any concessions on linguistic rights. One should not forget that the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Turkey were ultimately decided by the force of arms, not by moderate parties making cross-ethnic appeals; while Guyana and Northern Ireland, with much lower levels of cross-voting, have experienced less ethnic violence overall.

Concluding Remarks

My personal inspiration for this research project dates to the summer of 2005, which I spent working for the Elections Department of the OSCE mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There I experienced first-hand the frustration of the international officials, who had literally run the entire election process for ten years since the Dayton Accords, still finding themselves in the unpleasant position of having to work with the same governing parties that had waged the war (the Serbian SDS, the Croatian HDZ, and the Muslim SDA). Despite occasional bureaucratic turf battles between OSCE and the omnipotent Office of the High Representative (OHR), the two international watchdogs had collaboratively employed various methods to weaken the nationalist parties: a PR electoral system that should help new contenders, dismissals of individual elected politicians, the threat of financial audits, a one-time unsuccessful experiment in using AV for the presidential election in the Serb federal entity, and flagrant support for the ex-communist Social Democratic Party in the 2000 elections.³⁰⁴ When OSCE handed the reins over to an all-national Election Commission in summer 2005, there was a pervasive feeling that the organization had served its official mandate well but had not made striking progress in its unofficial feud with the nationalist parties.³⁰⁵

In all its misfortune, Bosnia is relatively lucky as far as post-conflict societies go in receiving so much direct international diplomatic attention and economic aid, along with a

³⁰⁴ Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, *The Dilemmas of State Building: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 183-186.

³⁰⁵ For more background on Bosnia see Carrie Manning, Carrie and Miljenko Antic, "The Limits of Electoral Engineering: Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 14 no. 3 (July 2003): 45-59 and Roberto Belloni, *State Building and International Intervention in Bosnia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

host of initiatives regarding war crimes persecution, refugee return, and ethnic reconciliation. The EU is so invested in Bosnia's future that it has no real deadline for withdrawal, only dreams of accession. Among the cases included in this study, Northern Ireland also benefited from the fortuitous circumstance of being located in Europe. Despite whatever role the governments of Great Britain and Ireland had played in the past, by the mid-1980s they were fundamentally more concerned about the general well-being of the local population and mutual good relations than ultimate ownership of the territory. Moreover, they both belonged to a supranational European community that made national borders increasingly less relevant; and Britain's internationally acknowledged and domestically undisputed sovereign right meant that if consensus in Belfast was lacking or had collapsed, London could always be counted on to provide some democratic governance. Most conflict-torn societies are not privileged with such a constellation of propitious factors. In other places, where the commitment was weaker and the perceived time pressure stricter, the internationals strove to make an impact in a shorter period with more limited resources. The pressure to build legitimacy through a free election was strong, and the hopes placed on the results of this election sometimes, unrealistically, enormous.

Perhaps nowhere else was this pressure more palpable than in Afghanistan and Iraq after the US invasions. To avoid Bosnia's perceived mistake of conducting the poll too soon, elections were in both cases postponed. Afghanistan, Asia's poorest and most illiterate society, opted for the Single Non-Transferrable Vote (SNTV), a peculiar semi-proportional system abandoned in Japan, where it had been used for decades to perpetuate one-party rule. In theory, it is a system as simple as SMP, but with larger districts that can provide some degree of proportionality. Critics have argued that in practice it is detrimental to party formation, favoring personalistic politics and organized elites that can engage in shrewd vote management. And yet, it is hard to see how the warlord-domineered Afghan society could end up with any better a post-war legislature.³⁰⁶ In literate and much more developed Iraq, PR was chosen, but the districts were changed between the two elections that took place in 2005. In January, the Iraqi Transitional Government was elected with one nationwide

³⁰⁶ Notably, the election of a significant number of women was guaranteed thanks to a quota. See Andrew Reynolds, "The Curious Case of Afghanistan," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 17 no. 2 (April 2006): 104-117; and "Afghanistan Considers Election System Change," IFES Feature Story, September 6 2007, URL: [http://www.ifes.org/features.html?title=Afghanistan Considers Election System Change](http://www.ifes.org/features.html?title=Afghanistan+Considers+Election+System+Change)

constituency, under the thinking that this would maximize proportionality. The result was a parliament dominated by a massive Shia and a smaller Kurdish block, while Sunnis were effectively unrepresented due to the extremely low turnout and fighting in western provinces. Realizing the blunder, Iraq's eighteen governorates were chosen as electoral constituencies for the December election. Sunni participation improved, but the mono-ethnic character of cartel parties largely continued. Given Iraq's clustered demographics, it is unclear how a different electoral formula could have produced any other result.³⁰⁷

On one hand there is the hope that democracy in places like Iraq and Afghanistan will survive and flourish, and that whatever pluralism the institutional designers hoped to achieve will surface in the future; and on the other hand, the awareness that these will be long term processes (decisively affected by the security situation), not the kind of immediate solutions that could make matters easier for the internationals. While they may, in some cases, if sustained, work in the desired direction in the long run, electoral reforms have repeatedly failed to produce short-to-medium term ripple effects in the party system within a realistic time frame for the intervenors—give or take a decade or three elections.

Even if they are sustained over several iterations, there is no guarantee that electoral incentives will triumph eventually over countervailing considerations. Two main reasons for this arise from the case studies presented here. The first is that ethnic outbidding often works in critical junctures when moderation could have changed the course of events (in Ceylon in the 1950s and 60s, Northern Ireland in the 1970s, Turkey in the early 1990s). If the expected or actual loss of co-ethnic votes supersedes the gains from cross-ethnic votes, no electoral formula that weighs these votes equally can save a moderate party of the majority group—the one usually required to make concessions for an ethnic deal to work. The second reason is that once established, and particularly when they rest on a slim demographic advantage, governing majorities (like the Ulster Protestants before the Troubles) or pluralities (like the Indo-Guyanese) are adept at ethnically policing their unity through fear tactics that inflate the threat from a change in the status quo. On the contrary, ethnic minorities may be more prone to fragmentation either under pressure from the majority or due to internal disputes over

³⁰⁷ See Aweed Dawisha and Larry Diamond, "Iraq's Year of Voting Dangerously," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 17 no. 2 (April 2006): 89-103 and Imad Salamey and Frederic Pearson, "The Crisis of Federalism and Electoral Strategies in Iraq," *International Studies Perspectives* vol. 6 no. 2 (April 2005): 190-207.

strategy when condemned to the role of eternal opposition (consider Turkey's Kurds and the Sri Lankan Tamils for the former, the Northern Irish Catholics before the Troubles and the Afro-Guyanese recently for the latter).

Electoral formulas are algorithms for translating social preferences into representative constellations and, through them, into decision outcomes. Our theoretical interest in voting rules in political science stems from the observation that the same social preference profile could correspond to different decision outcomes under different electoral formulas. This should not cause us to forget that some social preference profiles may produce the same result under different electoral rules. In practice, electoral engineers in divided societies may not wish to translate social preferences as they currently stand, but rather to alter them or to distort them. The former is probably unfeasible by means of the electoral rule, and the latter is probably unwise. As Orit Kedar has argued in her effort to explain why moderate voters may at times support extremist parties, voters can anticipate the political outcomes of specific institutional configurations and try to work around them.³⁰⁸ Therefore, electoral reforms based on observations of current patterns of ethnic voting may ignore that voters will respond to the reform and adjust their voting behavior to obtain the same preferred outcomes.

There is a growing realization in the field today that electoral institutions are not the powerful tool once thought to be, and that the electoralist approach to ethnic conflict has produced mixed results at best.³⁰⁹ Given accumulating evidence to the contrary, perhaps the real curiosity is not whether electoral engineering works, but why the view that it does still persists. The answer, I believe, is as simple as it is embarrassing for our profession to confess. Electoral systems were and continue to be one of the most studied subjects in political science. While major electoral reforms in established democracies are rare, in the post-Cold War era the third wave of democratization on one hand and the cascade of international interventions on the other created a thriving market for applied electoral design expertise. It was only natural that experts would take to the field either insight gained from

³⁰⁸ Orit Kedar, "When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 99 no. 2 (May 2005): 185-199.

³⁰⁹ See Benjamin Reilly, "Post-war Elections: Uncertain Turning Points of Transition," in *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, edited by Anna K. Jarstad and Timothy D. Sisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Robert G. Moser, "Electoral Engineering in New Democracies: Can Preferred Electoral Outcomes be Engineered?" in *Is Democracy Exportable?* Edited by Zoltan Barany and Robert Moser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

less problematic contexts or ideas developed theoretically but hardly tested in real life situations. And while political scientists certainly cannot be accused of generating the demand for this expertise, we also cannot deny that there were benefits in being asked to provide it, and even, perhaps, an instinctive inclination to put faith in the potency of the medicine one had built a career on prescribing. This happens in every profession, and there is no basis for castigating what was generally well-intended scholarship. But after two decades of toying with electoral engineering it is time for dogmatic views on the efficacy of this approach to subside.

Should we then entirely give up on the idea of designing electoral rules or influencing party systems in divided societies? Political necessity dictates otherwise: interventions in such places will occur, elections will have to be conducted, and certain political forces will be preferred over others. Still, we can benefit from some sobering realizations. The first is that we still do not have a good grasp of the underpinnings of social preference formation, of why different societies end up with different party systems, or why electoral formulas work as expected in some societies but not others. More research is needed, and in the meantime, more moderation about the state of our knowledge would be wise. Since optimal electoral design eludes us, one suggestion would be to refocus our quest on at least avoiding disastrous electoral design—a somewhat different, more limited agenda. The second realization is that elections may be one of the most facile but not the most appropriate stage to intervene in the political process. After all, they are but moments of reckoning, preceded by long incubations and followed by intricate power play. If electoral engineering is a poor avenue, we should pay more attention to other institutional and extra-institutional approaches including power-sharing agreements, collective executives, veto rights, targeted financial incentives, and grass-roots political party development. All these are in fact currently tried and even less well understood. Compared to the vast literature on electoral design, that on power-sharing is only now budding, and there is very little systematic work on the rest. Acknowledging that it is no easy endeavor, we certainly cannot give up on the effort to rebuild conflict-ridden societies. We ought to, however, give up on those methods that have proven unfruitful.

Appendix

CODING PARTIES BY THEIR ETHNIC STRUCTURE

A codification of ethnic structure for current and historical political parties in each of the four case studies was provided at the end of each empirical chapter (pp. 81, 112, 146, and 181). The typology of parties presented in the theory chapter with four ideal types (hegemon, magnet, agonist, and antagonist) in practice requires defining thresholds for congregation and pluralism: How much of an ethnic group's vote must a party capture to be a hegemon and not simply an agonist? How much of a second ethnic group's vote must a party capture to be a magnet and not just a hegemon? Similarly, how much of a second group's vote must a party capture to be considered an antagonist and not an agonist? The reader may have noticed that my typology basically differs from Horowitz's in that I omitted the 'non-ethnic' category and instead created two variants for mono-ethnic (hegemon and agonist) and multi-ethnic parties (magnet and antagonist) based on the concept of congregation. I did this because of the need to focus on actual electoral performance, but also out of a belief that, ultimately, there is no such thing as a non-ethnic party in ethnically divided societies. Every political party in these societies has to have and indeed does have some stated position on the ethnic question, which either appeals to only one or to multiple communities. And if a segment of the population strongly and consistently self-identifies as 'others' under conditions of high polarization, then what we have essentially is another ethnic group.

The typology stemmed from my empirical understanding of politics in a number of multiethnic societies. If parties fell along a perfect continuum of ethnic support, then the four types would not make a lot of sense, and exact measurements of congregation and pluralism would be needed instead. However, in practice the ethnic support profiles of political parties tend to be quite discrete. Several parties in divided societies are entirely mono-ethnic and

compete with other like-minded parties only for their own ethnic group's votes; these are the agonists, the easiest type to identify—from the party's name, platform, the backgrounds of its candidates, or its regional basis of support. The agonist then is the fundamental party type from which other types are differentiated, either by a higher level of congregation (hegemon) or pluralism (antagonist) or both (magnet).

Setting rule-of-thumb thresholds for party categorization is an exercise in calibration, which entails a dialogue between concepts and empirics. At the empirical level, knowing my cases, I know that some parties enjoyed cross-ethnic appeal while others did not, that some parties monopolized their ethnic group's political expression in certain periods while others did not. Since I developed my theoretical insights from my case studies, I should calibrate my concepts to fit this empirical material—and, in the future, test whether this calibration is appropriate for the larger universe of divided societies. Conceptually, on the other hand, the thresholds should satisfy the intuitive logic behind the typology: hegemon and magnet are parties that face very little to no credible competition for the votes of one specific group; magnets and antagonists are parties with support bases in more than one group, each sizeable enough to make them unmistakably multiethnic. Finally, the nature of my data dictated some technical limitations. Lacking information on the ethnic composition of very small units of aggregation (e.g. polling divisions) or even electoral results at such levels, it was not possible to apply sophisticated ecological inference methods to arrive at quantitative estimates of each party's ethnic support. My calibration would thus inevitably have to be qualitative, but using the same logic as ecological inference: looking at the electoral performance on parties first in ethnically homogenous areas, and then making educated guesses about mixed areas.

The easiest party type to identify was agonists: parties with clear mono-ethnic profiles that obtained only a fraction of the vote of the group they appealed to even in elections with high turnout. There is no doubt that parties like the Upcountry People's Front, the Guyana United Muslim Party, Sinn Féin, or the Turkey Unity Party (whose official emblem was the lion, a Safavid symbol of Ali, circled by twelve stars representing the twelve imams of Shia Islam) belong to this category. For the other party types, a proper calibration method should identify a common minimum level of congregation between ideal hegemon and magnet, and a common minimum level of pluralism between ideal magnet and antagonist. Some

parties from the case studies fit the ideal profiles so well (at least in some historical periods) that I considered them appropriate to serve as prototypes. I list them here indicatively.

Hegemons	Magnets	Antagonists
UUP (1920s)	UNP/UNF (Indian Tamils)	ANAP
CIC (1940s)	SHP/CHP (Alevi)	DYP
TULF (1970s)	PPP/Civic (Indo-Guyanese)	PA
TNA (2000s)	PNC/Reform (Afro-Guyanese)	AFC

From such a cursory cross-case comparison, three quarters of an ethnic group's vote appeared as an appropriate common minimum level of congregation between ideal hegemons and magnets. I could not exclude the possibility that a few Tamils in the east voted for UNP and not TULF in 1977 or that some Alevi did not vote for SHP; I was certain that some Protestants voted for NILP and independent unionists instead of UUP in 1925 and that Indian Tamils voted for Marxist parties in areas where they constituted a minority and CIC did not run candidates in 1947. Still, given overall vote shares and turnout rates, I could safely claim that the parties in the first two columns commanded the vote of at least three quarters of their key ethnic constituency. Similarly, for the last two columns, one tenth of the vote of at least two ethnic groups appeared as a satisfactory minimum level of pluralism for magnets and antagonists. By looking at district-level electoral results it was easy to surmise that a party obtained a fraction of a minority's vote (Kurds for ANAP and DYP, Amerindians for PPP and PNC, Sri Lankan Muslims for PA) that did not fall below one tenth. At the same time, the performance of these parties outside minority regions indicated that they also obtained at least one tenth—or much more—of a larger group's vote (Sunni Turks for ANAP, DYP, and SHP, Sinhalese for UNP and PA, Indo-Guyanese for PPP, Afro-Guyanese for PNC).³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Other possible higher or lower thresholds would miscode one or more parties. A higher requirement of two-fifths or one-quarter of an ethnic group's vote for pluralism would make the Turkish parties and the Sri Lankan leftist PA seem not multiethnic enough; on the other hand, any threshold less than one tenth of the minority vote would set the bar very low and also be difficult to assess based on the data—for example, it would make it difficult to exclude parties like the ultra-nationalist MHP, whose votes in southeastern Turkey are widely believed to come mostly from Turkish public servants and soldiers stationed there, not the Kurdish inhabitants. Similarly, a lower threshold of congregation, e.g. two-thirds, would force me to code more parties as hegemonic even when they faced fierce intra-ethnic competition (e.g. ITAK, UUP, and NP in the 1960s), while a threshold

Hegemons and magnets are by their nature large parties relative to their bastions of ethnic support; therefore defining thresholds with reference to the electorate (three quarters of *an ethnic group's voters*, and for magnets an additional one tenth of *another group's voters*) was sufficient. For antagonists, however, this criterion would be problematic for small parties with demonstrably cross-ethnic but weak overall support. To address this, I had to modify the minimum threshold with a reciprocal reference to the party's voter base, so that a party was deemed to be ethnically plural if it commanded at least one tenth of the vote of more than one ethnic group *or* if at least one tenth of *its own voter base* came from more than one ethnic group. This conjunction allowed me to code small cross-communal parties (like APNI and NIWC in Northern Ireland, the Communists in Ceylon, and WPA in Guyana) as antagonists, and to maintain the same codification for parties that retained their diverse sources of ethnic support even as their electoral fortunes waned, like ANAP and DYP in Turkey.

Therefore, parties that met only the pluralism criterion were coded as antagonists and those that met only the congregation criterion were coded as hegemons; parties that met both were deemed magnets, and those that met neither were deemed agonists. Using these criteria, I was able to codify all parties that obtained at least one percent of the total vote (and several parties that obtained even less) with confidence for most of their history. However, I knew from the historical record and I could corroborate from the electoral results that the ethnic support of some parties had shifted at certain times. In some cases this transition was clearly marked by a pivotal election; in other cases it was more gradual and required a judgment call on my part. I am including here a list of these transitions, separated into those I could identify with greater confidence and those where I made a more subjective decision based on rough estimates and my general knowledge of the period.

Coded with Confidence

UUP	Hegemon → Agonist	1929
	Agonist → Hegemon	1949
	Hegemon → Agonist	1953

above three quarters would set the bar too high and exclude cases like UUP in the 1920s (which faced electoral competition for the Protestant vote only in Belfast).

NP	Agonist → Hegemon	1925
	Hegemon → Agonist	1933
	Agonist → Hegemon	1949
	Hegemon → Agonist	1953
YTP	Antagonist → Agonist	1965
CHP	Antagonist → Magnet	1973
	Magnet → Antagonist	1995
	Antagonist → Magnet	2002
ACTC	Hegemon → Agonist	1952
ITAK	Agonist → Antagonist	1956
UNP	Magnet → Antagonist	1952
	Antagonist → Magnet	1989
	Magnet → Antagonist	2000
	Antagonist → Magnet	2001
SLFP	Agonist → Antagonist	1952
PA	Agonist → Antagonist	2000
CWC	Hegemon → Agonist	1994

All these cases involved a marked shift in electoral support clearly visible in election results and corroborated by secondary sources. The party's appeal to an ethnic group either critically contracted (hegemon → agonist, antagonist → agonist, magnet → antagonist) or critically expanded (agonist → hegemon, antagonist → magnet, agonist → antagonist). Some of these shifts were only temporary, while others had long-lasting effects.

Coded with Ambivalence

NILP	Antagonist	1938, 1949
PPP	Magnet → Hegemon	1961
PNC	Antagonist → Magnet	1961
CP	Antagonist → Agonist	1965
LSSP	Antagonist → Agonist	1965

These cases revolved around three particular historical situations: NILP's declining support among Catholics during the Spanish Civil War and after the Northern Ireland Act; the outbreak of race riots in Guyana; and the alignment of the far left in Ceylon with SLFP. In the first case, the question is whether NILP was at times reduced to a Protestant party in the electoral arena and should therefore be coded as an agonist instead. Being unable to judge if NILP received less than a tenth of its votes from Catholics, I decided to keep the party's categorization as an antagonist, in recognition of the fact that its membership remained bi-communal and that NILP continued to court the Catholic vote. Since NILP performed poorly in both elections (5.7% and 7.1% of the vote respectively) a different coding would affect my estimate of cross-sectarian voting in those two years only slightly downwards. In Guyana, PPP split into a predominantly Indian and a predominantly African faction in 1955 but both parties still put up candidates belonging to the other ethnic group in 1957. Research by Donald Horowitz and Ralph Premdas indicates that electoral support for PPP and PNC had bifurcated along racial lines by the early 1960s. I therefore set the 1961 election as the point of transition, recognizing that at least PPP, which continued to feature Africans in prominent positions within the party, perhaps maintained some support among black voters until 1964. In Ceylon, CP's and LSSP's alignment with SLFP was gradual, starting with an electoral no-contest pact in 1960 and culminating in the formation of the United Front in 1968. It is clear that after 1960 support for the left dropped in the overwhelmingly Tamil north—and LSSP and CP received fewer than a tenth of their votes from Northern Province. However, I have no way of guessing how many Tamils voted for Marxist candidates in the Colombo area. I decided to consider the year 1964 (when LSSP joined the SLFP cabinet and prominent Tamil trade unionist N. Sanmugathasan left the Communist Party) as the point of transition, coding LSSP and CP as Sinhalese parties from the 1965 election on.

In short, my approach to the coding process was to look at the electoral record first, and only if that was ambiguous to consider other aspects of the party's profile such as the ethnic composition of its cadre, its electoral platform, or its parliamentary behavior.

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Walter Rodney National Archives
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Georgetown

National Library
76/77 Church and Main Streets
Georgetown
<http://www.natlib.gov.gy/>

Bureau of Statistics
57 High Street, Kingston
Georgetown
<http://www.statisticsguyana.gov.gy/>

Lands and Surveys Commission
22 Upper Hadfield Street
Durban Backlands
Georgetown
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Sri Jayawardenapura
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No. 7 Reid Avenue
Colombo 7
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International Center for Ethnic Studies
2 Kynsey Terrace
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LIST OF INTERVIEWS

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C. N. Sharma, leader of Justice for All Party and owner of CNS Channel 6 station, Georgetown, CNS TV 6 building, 11/9/2008

Dr. Sherwood Lowe, University of Guyana Dean of Technology, ex-PNC parliamentarian and election campaign manager, Plaisance, 15/9/2008

Khemraj Ramjattan, AFC leader and ex-PPP central committee member, Georgetown, 16/9/2008

Manzoor Nadir, Minister of Labour and TUF leader, Stabroek, Georgetown, 18/9/2008

Raphael Trotman, AFC leader and ex-PNC parliamentarian, Georgetown, 18/9/2008

Aubrey Norton, PNC spokesperson and region 4 parliamentarian, Plaisance, 22/9/08

Prof. Clive Thomas, WPA co-leader and former parliamentarian, Stabroek, Georgetown, 22/9/08

Donald Ramotar, PPP general secretary, Freedom House, Georgetown, 25/9/2008

Dr. Steve Surujbally, Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) Chairman, GECOM, Georgetown, 24/9/2008

Henry, 66, Roman Catholic security guard of mixed African and Indian descent, East Bank Demerara, 24/9/2008

Haslyn Paris, former PNC deputy prime minister, member of constitutional review commission and election commission, Pisces Bar, Buxton, 25/9/2008

Raule, 35, Afro-Guyanese taxi driver, Georgetown, 25/9/2008

Trevor Benn, Electoral Support Program Analyst, UNDP, Georgetown, 26/9/2008

Moen McDoom, barrister and member of election commission, Georgetown, 26/9/2008

N. K. Gopaul, Permanent Secretary and Head of Public Service, former trade unionist (NAACIE) and leader of Civic Guard, Office of the President, Georgetown, 29/9/08

Samuel Hinds, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guyana and former member of WPA, Office of the Prime Minister, Georgetown, 2/10/2008

Freddie Kissoon, lecturer at University of Guyana and former member of WPA, Garden City Cafe, Georgetown, 3/10/2008

Elvin McDavid, former PNC Minister of Information, advisor to Forbes Burnham, and Guyanese ambassador to Moscow, Queenstown, Georgetown, 3/10/2008

Vincent Alexander, member of GECOM and former PNC vice-chairman, University of Guyana, Plaisance, 9/10/2008

Aubrey Collins, former member of TUF executive committee and editor of the party newspaper *The Sun*, Meadowbrook Gardens, Georgetown, 9/10/08

Adam Harris, chief editor of Kaieteur News and former PNC central committee member, Georgetown, 13/10/2008

Fazeel Farouz, President of Central Islamic Organization of Guyana, Twin's Pharmacy, Georgetown, 15/10/2008

Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs, MFA, Georgetown, 17/10/2008

Norris Witter, Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC) general secretary, Critchlow Labour College, Georgetown, 18/10/2008

Roy, 20, Amerindian tour guide from region 8, Kaieteur Falls, 19/10/2008

Pandit Reepu Daman Persaud, President of Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha and former PPP Minister of Agriculture, Office of the President, Georgetown 22/10/2008

Ashton Chase, founding member of PPP and Minister of Labour in 1953 cabinet, Georgetown, 22/10/2008

Winston, 55, Afro-Guyanese former policeman, West Coast Demerara, 22/10/2008

Robert Corbin, PNC/R leader and former Deputy Prime Minister of Guyana, Congress Place, Sophia, Georgetown, 23/10/2008

Yesu Persaud, chairman of Demerara Distillers Ltd and the Private Sector Commission of Guyana, Kingston, Georgetown, 24/10/2008

Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine, WPA co-leader, former parliamentarian and member of the Constitutional Reform Commission, Tranquility Hall, Mahaica, 25/10/2008

Bishop Juan Edgehill, chairman of Ethnic Relations Commission and former chairman of the Guyana Council of Churches, ERC, Queenstown, Georgetown, 27/10/2008

Majid, 37, Muslim Indo-Guyanese lawyer, East Coast Demerara, 28/10/2008

Ron, 33, Amerindian from region 6, former Guayanese army officer, East Bank Demerara, 29/10/2008

Cara, 55, Christian Indo-Guyanese and Narin, 32, Hindu Indo-Guyanese, private employees, Georgetown, Guyana, 30/10/2008

Ravi, 26, Hindu Indo-Guyanese entrepreneur, East Bank Demerara, 31/10/2008

Dr Daniel Kumar, lecturer in government and international affairs, University of Guyana, Georgetown, 1/11/2008

Leroy, 29, Hindu Indo-Guyanese businessman, East Bank Demerara, 1/11/2008

Eddie, 48, salesman of mixed Indian, Chinese, and Amerindian descent, Georgetown, 1/11/2008

Eric Phillips, executive member of the steering committee, African Cultural Development Association (ACDA), East Bank Demerara, 2/11/2008

Moses Nagamootoo, PPP parliamentarian, novelist, and former Minister of Information, Georgetown, 3/11/2008

Sam, 54, Afro-Guyanese mechanical engineer, Georgetown, 3/11/2008

Lloy, 21, Afro-Guyanese entrepreneur, East Bank Demerara, 4/11/2008

Rolf Olson, Political Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Guyana, Cara Lodge, Georgetown, 4/11/2008

Jason Jonathan, 28, Guyana Defence Forces officer and student leader at the University of Guayana, Georgetown, 4/11/2008

Interviews in Ireland

Dr. Sidney Elliot, QUB School of Politics, Belfast, 25/4/2008

Helen Lewis, Policy and Practice Coordinator, INCORE (International Conflict Research), University of Ulster Magee campus, Derry, 14/5/2008

Dr. Myrtle Hill, QUB School of Sociology, Belfast 7/5/2008

David, 38, Protestant public service employee, Belfast, 1/4/2008

Michael, 21, Protestant senior college student in sociology, Bangor, 26/5/2008

Peter, 53, Protestant taxi driver, Belfast, 27/5/2008

David Ford, Alliance Party leader and member of NI legislative assembly (South Antrim), Stormont, 28/5/2008

Anna Lo, member of NI legislative assembly (APNI-South Belfast), Stormont, 28/5/2008

Peter Emerson, political activist and founder of De Borda Institute, Belfast, 2/6/2008

Dawn Purvis, leader of PUP and member of NI legislative assembly (East Belfast), Stormont, 2/6/2008

John Smyth, 56, Protestant, victim of UDA assault, Belfast, 3/6/2008

Oliver Napier, former APNI leader and Legal Minister, Holywood, 3/6/2008

Prof. Paul Arthur, University of Ulster School of History and International Affairs, former member of People's Democracy, Bangor, 9/6/2008

Hugh Smyth, Belfast City Councillor and former PUP leader, Belfast 9/6/2008

Michael, 54, Catholic tour guide, Belfast, 10/6/2008

Noeleen Diver, former staff member of Northern Ireland Housing Executive and member of New Ireland Group, Stormont Hotel, Belfast, 10/6/2008

Seamus, 24, Catholic fast food chain manager from South Armagh, Belfast, 11/6/2008

Mark Devenport, BBC correspondent for Northern Ireland, Broadcasting House, Belfast, 12/6/2008

Baron Paul Bew, member of the House of Lords and Professor of Irish Politics at Queen's University Belfast, QUB, Belfast, 24/6/2008

Noel, 46, Protestant taxi driver from Ballynahinch, Belfast, 25/6/2008

Brian Wilson, first Green Party MLA (North Down) and former member of NILP and APNI, Stormont, 25/6/2008

Steven Agnew, Brian Wilson's assistant and member of Green Party, Belfast, 25/6/2008

Drew Nelson, grand secretary, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, East Belfast, 26/6/2008

Reverend Martin Smyth, former Grand Master of the Orange Lodge and Unionist MP, former deputy leader of Vanguard, Belfast, 30/6/2008

Lord John Alderdice, former Alliance Party leader and Northern Ireland Assembly Speaker, Knockbracken Healthcare Centre, Castlereagh, 30/6/2008

Maria Duggan, 34, Catholic NGO worker, Ormeau Road, Belfast, 30/6/2008

Bronagh Hinds, former electoral strategist for NIWC and senior fellow at QUB Institute of Governance, Belfast, 1/7/2008

Jimmy Spratt, member of NI legislative assembly (DUP-South Belfast) and chair of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee, Craigagh Road, Belfast, 7/7/2008

Austin Currie, former Nationalist Party MP and founding member of SDLP, Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, 8/7/2008

Jim Gibney, member of Sinn Fein executive committee and ex-prisoner, Falls Road, Belfast, 10/7/2008

Douglas Bain, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, St Anne's House, Belfast, 10/7/2008

Sean Brennan, member of INTERCOM (inter-communal dialogue NGO), Belfast Center, 17/7/2008

Stevie, 44, Catholic from mixed background, clinical psychologist, Family Trauma Centre, South Belfast, 18/7/2008

Collin, 40, Catholic from mixed marriage, shop owner, Ormeau Road, Belfast, 19/7/2008

Richard Bullick, advisor to DUP leader and First Minister Peter Robinson, Stormont Castle at Stormont Estate, Belfast, 22/7/2008

Alex Maskey, member of legislative assembly (Sinn Fein-South Belfast) and former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Ormeau Road, 25/7/2008

Carmel Hanna, MLA (SDLP-South Belfast), first woman minister in NI, and her husband Eamon Hanna, former SDLP general secretary, Lisburn Road, Belfast, 28/7/2008

Chris MacCabe, former NIO political director, Queen's University Belfast, 29/7/2008

Sir Reg Empey, UUP leader, former chairman of Vanguard and deputy leader of UUUP, Department of Employment and Learning, Belfast, 29/7/2008

Interviews in Greece

Hasan and Ali, Kurdish refugees from Diyarbakir, Triandria, Thessalonica, 29/7/2007

Orhan, editor of the journal *O Agonas* [The Struggle], Exarchia, Athens, 23/8/2007

Panayotis Bouras, Director, Red Cross Refugee Center, Lavrio, Attica, 24/8/2007

Salahattin, spokesperson of Kurdish refugees from Turkey, Lavrio, Attica, 24/8/2007

Members of Kurdistan Mutual Aid Center, Exarchia, Athens, 27/8/2007

Ali, Zaza Alevi author and refugee from Turkey, Omonoia, Athens, 28/9/2007

Interviews in Turkey

Murat Koçak, Youth Branch Director and Assistant to the President, Demokrat Parti, Balgat, Ankara, 7/11/2007

Mehmet, 32, airline manager, Alevi from Sivas, Bostancı, Istanbul, 12/11/2007.

Prof. Ali Çarkoğlu, professor of political science at Sabanci University, Hilton Hotel, Istanbul, 13/11/2007

Prof. Sabri Sayari, professor of political science at Sabanci University, Şaşkınbakkal, Istanbul, 14/11/2007

Fırat, 26, Sunni hotel manager from Yozgat, Bilkent Center, Ankara, 24/11/2007

Dr. Doğan Tılıç, EFE correspondent, member of ÖDP and ex-member of Dev Yol, Emek, Ankara, 26/11/2007

Prof. Zafer Üskül, AKP parliamentarian (Mersin) and chairman of the human rights parliamentary committee, TBMM, Ankara, 27/11/2007

Abdulrahman Kurt, AKP parliamentarian (Diyarbakir), TBMM, Ankara, 28/11/2007

Ufuk Uras, independent parliamentarian (ÖDP - Istanbul), TBMM, Ankara, 4/12/2007

Nacı Kutlay, retired doctor, former TİP member of Kurdish background and advisor to the DTP, Kızılay, Ankara, 4/12/2007

Emre, 21, university student of Circassian background, Kızılay, Ankara, 10/12/2007

Unnamed US embassy official, Tunalı, Ankara, 12/12/2007

Prof. Yakup Kepenek, former CHP parliamentarian and professor of economics emeritus, of Hemshin background, METU, Ankara, 13/12/2007

Mustafa Timisi, member of CHP, former BP leader and BP and SHP parliamentarian, Bayındır Hastanesi, Ankara, 8/1/2008

Prof. Feride Açar, daughter of Raif Aybar, DP, HP, and YTP politician from Bursa, METU, Ankara, 9/1/2008

Prof. Korel Göymen, professor of political science and former member of the SHP steering committee, Sabanci University, Istanbul, 10/1/2008

Evren, 25, physical therapist of Alevi background from Sivas, Şişli, Istanbul, 11/1/2008

Dr. Cemal Şener and İbrahim Dede, Karaca Ahmet Sultan Cemevi, Üsküdar Istanbul, 13/1/2008

Fuat, 27, filmmaker, Kurdish Alevi from Erzincan, Taksim, Istanbul, 13/1/2008

Sevgi and Canan, 28 and 31, sisters of Alevi Kurdish background, Dikmen, Ankara, 20/1/2008

Kemal Avcı, DTP press officer, DTP headquarters, Balgat, Ankara, 22/1/2008

Mesut Değer, member of CHP central committee and former parliamentarian (CHP-Diyarbakir), CHP headquarters, Ankara, 23/1/2008

Zevki, 40, security guard, Sunni Kurd from Batman, Diyarbakir, 24/1/2008

Hilmi Aydođlu, DTP Diyarbakir province chairman, Diyarbakir, 25/1/2008

Muzafer Değer, brother of Mesut Değer, CHP Diyarbakir province chairman, Diyarbakir, 25/1/2008

Celal, 27, human rights activist of Kurdish background, Diyarbakir, 25/1/2008

Abdurrahim Hattapođlu, AKP Diyarbakir province chairman, Diyarbakir, 26/1/2008

Ahmet Öcal, MÜSiAD Diyarbakir province chairman, Diyarbakir, 27/1/2008

Prof. Fazıl Hüsnü Erdem, professor of constitutional law, member of the constitution drafting committee, Dicle University, Diyarbakir, 28/1/2008

Baran, 25, medical school student, Ofis, Diyarbakir, 28/1/2008

Abdullah, 27, carpet dealer, Diyarbakir, 29/1/2008

Salih Altun, former DTP chairman of Batman province, Batman, 29/1/2008

Reyhan Yalçındağ-Baydemir, lawyer, vice-president of İnsan Hakları Derneği and wife of mayor Osman Baydemir, Diyarbakir, 31/1/2008

Hilmi Öncü and Cemal Vesko, DTP current and ex-chairman in Mardin province, Mardin, 1/2/2008

Yasemin, 30, member of DTP with relatives who have fled abroad, Diyarbakir, 2/2/2008

Sami and Ünzile, married couple, doctors, Yüzüncü Yıl, Ankara, 5/2/2008

Diego Mellado, Deputy Head of Mission of European Commission in Turkey, Gaziosmanpaşa, Ankara, 6/2/2008

Ercan Geçmez, chairman, and other members of Hacı Bektaş Veli Foundation, Dikmen, Ankara, 6/2/2008

Doğan Bermek, president of the Federation of Alevi Associations, Cem Foundation, Yenibosna, Istanbul, 7/2/2008

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Dr. Vijaya Samaraweera, Sinhalese NGO consultant, ICES, Colombo, 12/1/2009

Marian, 52, and Padmini, 47, inter-ethnic Christian couple, Ruckmalgama, 18/1/2009

Koenraad, 38, Burgher businessman, Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo, 12/2/2009

Prof. Jayadeve Uyangoda, Political Science Department Chair, University of Colombo, 19/2/2009

Sriyantha, 25, Sinhalese construction manager, Bambalapitiya, Colombo, 21/2/2009

Kingsley Rodrigo, Chairman, People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), Kirulapone, Colombo, 24/2/2009

Ianthi, 48, Sinhalese speech therapist, Kollupitiya, Colombo, 24/2/2009

Niamh O'Connor, Senior Country Director, National Democratic Institute, Colombo, 26/2/2009

K. A. P. Siddhisena, Professor of Demography, University of Colombo, 26/2/2009

W. N. Wilson, Head of Department of Geography, University of Colombo, 27/2/2009

Reshan, 34, Sinhalese electrical engineer, Borella, Colombo, 28/2/2009

Champika Ranawaka, JHU parliamentarian and Minister of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Sri Jayawardenapura, 2/3/2009

Susil Premajayantha, UPFA general secretary and Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Sri Jayawardenapura, 2/3/2009

Sunil Bastian, senior research fellow and former director, International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Colombo, 3/3/2009

Dr. Mahinda Gunasekara, National Movement Against Terrorism, Nugegoda, 4/3/2009

Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Executive Director, Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), Centre for Policy Alternatives, Colombo, 4/3/2009

Prof. Lakshman Marasinghe, Professor of Law Emeritus and Attorney-at-Law at Sri Lanka's Supreme Court, Colombo, 4/3/2009

Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Urban Development, MEP leader and son of party founder Philip Gunawardena, chair of parliamentary electoral reforms committee, Sri Jayawardenapura, 6/3/2009

Gamunu, 39, Sinhalese tour guide, Colombo, 8/3/2009

Mahesh Senanayake, Lecturer in Political Science, University of Colombo, 9/3/2009

Vasana Jayakody, Senior Statistician, Department of Census and Statistics, Colombo, 9/3/2009

Ranil Wickremesinghe, UNP leader and former prime minister, Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo, 9/3/2009

Prof. K. Sivathamby, Professor of Tamil Emeritus at University of Jaffna and former member of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, Wellawatte, Colombo, 11/3/2009

Sunil, 42, Sinhalese international organization staff member, Colombo, 11/3/2009

– Mohammed, 52, Muslim administrative assistant, Colombo, 11/3/2009

D. E. W. Gunasekara, CP general secretary and Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Kollupitiya, Colombo, 14/3/2009

P. M. Siriwardana, Election Commissioner, Elections Secretariat, Rajapiriya, 15/3/2009

Saman, 54, Sinhalese security guard, Kollupitiya, Colombo, 15/3/2009

Jeevan Thiagaraja, Executive Director, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo, 16/3/2009

Nallathamby Sri Kantha, member of TELO, TNA parliamentarian from Jaffna and party spokesperson, ICES, Colombo, 16/3/2009

Prof. Tissa Vitarana, Minister of Science and Technology, LSSP parliamentarian, nephew of party founder N. M. Perera, chair of constitutional reforms committee, Kollupitiya, Colombo, 18/3/2009

Rajah, 64, Tamil librarian from Jaffna, Colombo, 18/3/2009

Mano Ganeshan, Indian Tamil UNF parliamentarian from Colombo and leader of Democratic People's Front, Pamankada, Colombo, 18/3/2009

Kamalakkanan, 36, repatriated Tamil journalist, son of refugees from Jaffna who fled to the UK, Colombo, 18/3/2009