

Escalating Ethnic Conflict:  
From Political Exclusion to Civil War



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Escalating Ethnic Conflict:  
From Political Exclusion to Civil War

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Aarhus, March 2016  
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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Motivation

In 1971, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) initiated an armed resistance campaign against the government in Northern Ireland. IRA saw the British rule of Northern Ireland as illegitimate, as a source of the discrimination against the Irish-Catholic minority population, and wanted to force the British off the island by means of violence (White 1989). Elsewhere, in South Africa in the early 1980s, *Umkhonto we Sizwa*, the militant wing of ANC, intensified its guerilla warfare against the white minority rule in charge of the apartheid state (Price 1991). The contexts of these two examples are markedly different in terms of history, geography, economic development, civil liberties, ethnic demography, and group identities. Some similarities do, however, stand out. In both cases a sizable share of the population was excluded from political power on the basis of ethnic affiliation, and although this had been so for decades, an increasing number of individuals now supported the use of armed resistance as a means to change the political system. The main focus of this dissertation is how political exclusion of ethnic groups escalates into civil war. I address this overall research question in a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses that investigate more specific issues such as the influence of excluded groups' claim-making on political authorities' use of violent repression, the emergence of armed resistance in ethnically exclusive regimes, and the role of different ethnic group identities in this mobilization process.

At least since Horowitz' (1985) influential book, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, the relationship between ethnicity and political violence has been widely debated among political scientists. The collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the resulting string of ethnic civil wars only intensified this trend. In one of the first systematic, global analyses of the conflict behavior of ethnic groups, Gurr (1993a; 1993b; see also Gurr 2000) finds that grievances caused by lack of political influence is among the main motivations behind protest and rebellion. Although important studies have questioned whether relatively rare events such as civil war onsets can be explained by the all too common ethnic grievances (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; see also Fearon, Kasara, and Laitin 2007), recent advancements, particularly when it comes to data collection, have strongly

supported the notion that political inequality between ethnic groups increases the risk of civil war. Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010), among others, have thus concluded that ethnic groups are more likely to rebel when they are excluded from political power (see also Cederman and Girardin 2007; Cederman, Weidman, and Gleditsch 2011; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009).

It seems fair to say that most scholars by now would agree that ethnic exclusion is associated with civil war.<sup>1</sup> However, our knowledge is much sparser when it comes to how the two are associated. To be sure, several informative case studies such as the ones highlighted above carefully explain the escalation process of ethnic conflict (see also Croissant 1998; DeVotta 2004). But little research has been done to systematically assess mechanisms that could be valid over time and across countries and regions (for an exception, see Sambanis and Zinn 2006). How should we expect that ethnic conflicts evolve from a situation in which ethnic groups are excluded from political influence over the state to one in which their members are fighting government forces?

According to Wimmer (2013a, 16, 152), ethnic exclusion and civil war are connected through “mobilization-repression spirals,” which are more likely to be triggered when a large part of the population is politically excluded. Yet Wimmer and his colleagues mainly focus on specifying the ethno-political structures that make ethnic conflict escalation most likely; as they clarify, their “theory does not explicitly address the logic of the escalation process” (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009, 331). Thus far, Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013, Ch. 3) have stated the escalation process most clearly. They argue that political exclusion is causally related to civil war through ethnic grievances. More specifically, ethnic groups that perceive the political status quo as unjust are more likely to mobilize and challenge the government, and if the political authorities respond with repression then the challengers become more likely to pick up arms and rebel (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013, 44–50). However, although the focus on the underlying mechanisms in this work should be commended, the specific steps leading from political exclusion to outbreak of armed conflict remain rather implicit. What is more, the escalation process has never been empirically assessed. It is precisely here that the dissertation makes its contribution: by theoretically explicating the sequential steps in the escalation process and by providing

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<sup>1</sup> See Denny and Walter (2014) for a recent review of the relationship between ethnicity and civil war.

one of the first systematic attempts to empirically assess how ethnic conflicts escalate.<sup>2</sup>

The dissertation adopts an inclusive conception of ethnicity, meaning that group identities based on a belief in shared descent is seen as ethnic whether the criterion for group membership is religion, language, physical appearance (race), regional belonging or other attributes of common origin (Wimmer 2013b, Ch. 1; see also Chandra 2006; Fearon 2006; Horowitz 1985, Ch. 1).<sup>3</sup> We may think of ethnic groups as politically excluded when they have no meaningful representation in the executive branch of the government including the presidency, cabinet, and top posts in the administration and the army (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009, 326). Ethnic exclusion is thus an institutionalized source of political discrimination and will expectedly be seen as illegitimate among members of excluded groups due to political, economic, and cultural marginalization (Gurr 2000; Horowitz 1985; see also Peleg 2007). The dissertation distinguishes between ethnic exclusion and violent repression, which is defined as physical sanctions such as political imprisonment, torture, and killings undertaken by state agents or affiliates in order to impose a cost on an individual or an organization (cf. Davenport 2007a, 2). As I will argue, violent repression is an often used instrument to keep ethnically exclusive regimes in power. However, the use of violent repression against legitimately perceived demands for political influence may have the unintended consequence of radicalizing regime opponents and incite (more) violent ways of challenging the regime. The final outcome of the escalation process, civil war, is understood as armed conflict between a government and opposition groups within the borders of a sovereign state in which a significant number of people are killed in battle each year (see, e.g., Gleditsch et al. 2002). Civil wars are usually thought of as “ethnic” if fighters primarily are mobilized along ethnic lines (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 79; see also Kaufman 1996; Sambanis 2001).

The armed struggle between the Provisional IRA and the Northern Ireland government did not come out of the blue. In the mid-1960s, the perceived discrimination against the Irish-Catholic population had materialized into a peaceful civil rights movement. However, on several occasions the Protestant-dominated police and the British Army responded with brutality, and the use of violent repression can explain why “people moved from sup-

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<sup>2</sup> As noted above, Sambanis and Zinn (2006; unpublished paper) take a first step in this direction by investigating why conflicts over self-determination turn violent. They argue that overturning previously granted regional autonomy makes armed conflict more likely.

<sup>3</sup> I conceptualize “ethnicity” in Chapter 2.

porting peaceful civil rights protests to supporting IRA violence” (White 1989, 1282).<sup>4</sup> In South Africa, the struggle for political inclusion also started nonviolently, but fierce acts of state violence against unarmed protesters, particularly in Sharpeville in 1960 and in Soweto in 1976, significantly changed the black population’s considerations about the justified means to fight their oppressors. Evidence even suggests that the “spirit of military resistance [was] born in the Soweto uprising” (Price 1991, 91).<sup>5</sup>

There is little reason to expect the surprisingly similar escalation processes in Northern Ireland and South Africa to be unique. As mentioned, the two cases are very different on most contextual factors, and the hunch that their trajectories might be generalizable is supported by more recent collections of case studies arguing that the combination of political exclusion and violent repression explains Islamist rebellions (Hafez 2003, 23) and that revolutionary movements typically are direct responses to political oppression and brutal, indiscriminate violence (Goodwin 2001, 3). As John F. Kennedy once put it, “[t]hose who make peaceful revolutions impossible will make violent revolutions inevitable.”<sup>6</sup> In the next section, I explicate the dissertation’s proposal on how to think of ethnic conflict escalation.

## 1.2 A stylized sequence of ethnic conflict escalation

Conflict processes rest on a complex set of interactions based on several actors’ incentives, opportunities, actions, and reactions. In that sense, the sequence presented below might seem like an overly simplistic or stylized portrait of the real world (see Lichbach 1987; Moore 1998; Pierskalla 2009). Importantly, however, the sequence is not deterministic in the sense that political exclusion always leads to civil war or that civil wars cannot evolve through alternative processes. Nor does it specify the opportunity structures that condition whether or when a specific outcome is more likely to occur.

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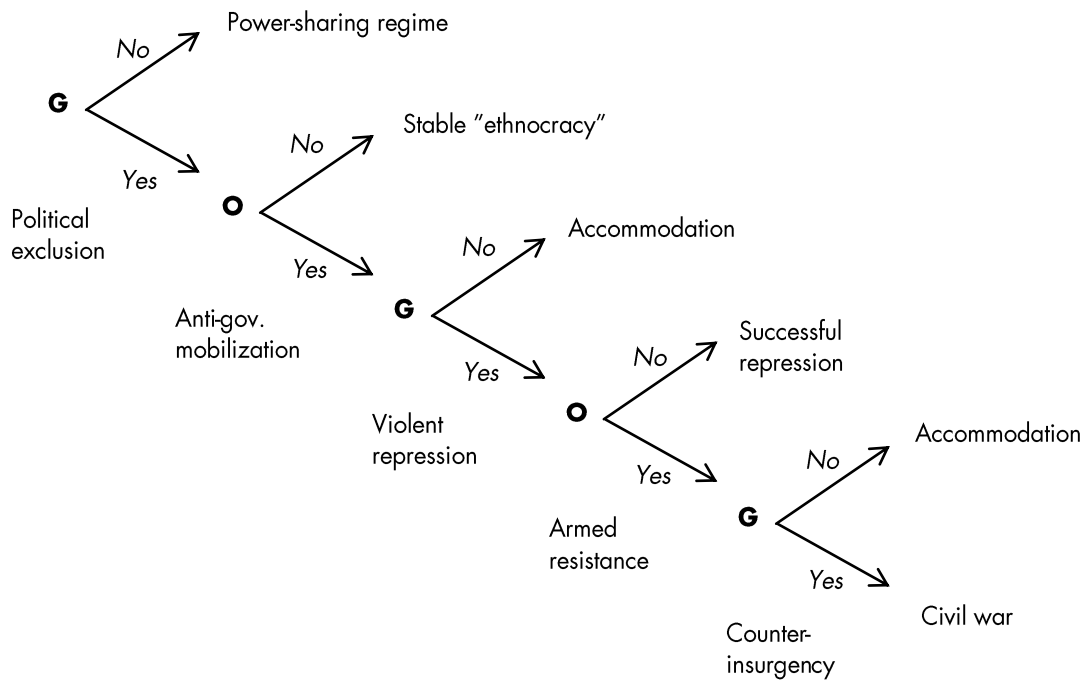
<sup>4</sup> In particular, state violence in connection with the communal riots in 1969 favored IRA’s mobilization efforts. The new, young fighters who had been radicalized by the events in 1969 were even known as “Sixty-niners” (Moloney 2002, 80).

<sup>5</sup> In Nelson Mandela’s statement at the Rivonia Trial in Pretoria, 1964 (popularly known as his “I Am Prepared to Die” speech), he stressed that the ANC leadership had embraced armed resistance because “violence in this country is inevitable” and because “it would be unrealistic and wrong for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the Government met our peaceful demands with force” (<http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=3430>).

<sup>6</sup> The quote is from Kennedy’s “Address on the first Anniversary of the Alliance of Progress” in 1962 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9100>).

Yet the sequence explains in a simple and logical way why, given the right opportunities, governments and opposition groups choose actions and reactions that can lead from political exclusion of ethnic groups to an outbreak of civil war.<sup>7</sup> As argued above, the sequential logic behind the escalation process has not been clearly explicated in previous accounts, and it may prove helpful in analyzing conflict events.

Figure 1.1: A stylized sequence of ethnic conflict escalation



Note: The figure depicts a two-actor sequence where **G** is the government and **O** is the opposition that represents the excluded ethnic groups.

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the sequence starts with the government’s (**G**) decision on whether to exclude ethnic groups from access to the state. If no significant ethnic groups are politically excluded, the regime is “power-sharing,” and the escalation process is not set in motion. Yet, as I will discuss in Chapter 3, it can often be an advantage, or even necessary, for a government in ethnically diverse countries to divide political power along ethnic lines as a way to favor certain groups in public goods provision, for security concerns, or in other ways to satisfy specific interests of incumbents or in-group members (Wimmer 2013a; 2015a; Roessler 2011; see also Horowitz

<sup>7</sup> Using the terms “government” and “opposition” (or “excluded ethnic groups”) is not meant to imply that these groups have uniform preferences or that their members always act in concert. The two-actor framework is employed to keep the sequence simple.

1985). In regimes that exclude significant parts of their populations on the basis of ethnic affiliation, what we may term ethnically exclusive regimes or “ethnocracies,” the opposition (O) representing the excluded ethnic groups has to choose whether to defy the political status quo.<sup>8</sup> If it does not, the regime has been successful in creating a stable ethnocracy (see Figure 1.1). However, it will be in the excluded groups’ interest to get access to the state, and for this reason they are likely to mobilize and challenge the government, for instance by voicing their concerns through institutionalized political channels such as elections or through demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts. Of course, an ethnically exclusive regime can be stable for several years despite the underlying demand for political change, which then can evolve into anti-government mobilization when the opportunity structures are favorable for collective action (see Gurr 2000; Tilly and Tarrow 2007). The civil rights movement in Northern Ireland mentioned above would be one example of this.

In the next step of the sequence, the government will have to choose whether to accommodate or repress the challengers’ demands. As discussed more carefully in the first paper of the dissertation, the likelihood that political authorities will counter demands for political inclusion with repression, and not alternative strategies such as cooptation and concessions, increases with the relative share of the population belonging to excluded groups (see also Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, Ch. 8; Svobik 2012, 11).<sup>9</sup> As also discussed in Paper 1, the repressive response in ethnically exclusive regimes is likely to take violent forms because nonviolent coercion, such as civil liberty restrictions, already tends to be in place for ethnic exclusion to be feasible. At the same time, such nonviolent measures are usually insufficient to quell demands for self-determination or regime change when they have already materialized (cf. Escribà-Folch 2013).

Given a repressive regime response, the opposition will once again have to decide whether to defy the political status quo. Most often, the authorities are probably successful in breaking down the anti-government mobilization. The period following the state violence in Sharpeville in South Africa in 1960 seems like a good example of what we could term “successful repression” (see Figure 1.1). In this scenario the opposition does not further intensify the

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<sup>8</sup> By “ethnocracy” I simply mean a political regime in which the distribution of power follows ethnic lines. An ethnocracy can be dominated by an ethnic majority such as in Israel or a minority such as in Syria.

<sup>9</sup> As specified in Paper 1, the authorities’ threat perception, which leads to repressive responses, is not only affected by overt challenges such as demonstration and strikes but also by the anticipation of future challenges (Davenport 1995; Nordås and Davenport 2013).

conflict. However, just as in South Africa, the success of violent repression will often be short-termed (see Young 2013). As I argue in Paper 2, the use of violent repression as a response to legitimately perceived demands for political inclusion will likely radicalize the opposition through two mechanisms. First, it “deters” parts of the moderate regime opponents by increasing the cost of political action. Second, it “inflames” others by increasing the sense of injustice and the perception that political change only will be possible through armed resistance (Della Porta 2013; Godwin 2001). Taken together, radical elements thus gain the upper hand within the opposition, which increases the likelihood that intensified challenges (when the conditions are ripe for such) will be violent, that is, in the form of armed resistance and rebellions.

In the last step of the sequence, the government will have to decide whether to accommodate the rebels or engage in counterinsurgency. Although the escalation process may stop at each step in the process, the authorities are unlikely to give up without a fight when they face a rebellion as this would almost guaranteed mean a loss political power.<sup>10</sup> Even in South Africa, which often is used as an example of peaceful transition away from ethnocracy (Wimmer 2013a, 33), the end of apartheid followed from years of armed conflict in the 1980s. And sadly, much higher numbers of casualties tend to be the result when minority-controlled regimes fight for their survival as most recently seen in Syria. As shown in Figure 1.1, civil war thus occurs when a government responds to an armed opposition by engaging in counterinsurgency strategies.

In sum, the basic idea behind the sequence is to explain how conflicts that start with an unequal distribution of political power between ethnic groups gradually intensify because of the actions and reactions of the government and the opposition until reaching a situation where members of the excluded ethnic groups face the government forces in open battle. As the dissertation will show, this sequential argument offers a valuable framework for systematically analyzing ethnic conflicts. That said, I want to stress that the model does not intend to suggest that ethnic exclusion always leads to civil war or that civil wars always erupt in this exact way. As described in the dissertation’s papers, individual steps in the sequence may be skipped because actors are predictive about how their adversaries will react. In the same way, the escalation process is conditioned by a myriad of relevant factors. Just to

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<sup>10</sup> The cost of accommodation will likely increase during the conflict process since the opposition’s demands can be expected to become more far-reaching. Violent repression can thus strengthen people’s conviction that a society needs to be fundamentally reorganized (Goodwin 2001, 48).

name a few, opposition groups considering armed struggle will likely ask questions such as: How will we be able to mobilize fighters? Do we have sufficient financial sources and available weapons? Do we have allies abroad? Does the regime have the capacity to crush us? Do we have somewhere to hide when push comes to shove? Are there any viable alternatives that do not entail us risking our lives (see Lichbach 1995; Weinstein 2006)? Attempting to specify these conditions is beyond the reach of the dissertation. However, in Paper 3 I do test a potentially critical condition for understanding ethnic conflict escalation, namely the different identity types around which ethnic groups are mobilized. In the next section, I briefly introduce the papers and describe their contributions.

### 1.3 Overview and contributions

As elaborated above, the main question posed in this dissertation is how political exclusion of ethnic groups escalates into civil war. My answer to this question is based on four papers that include ethnic exclusion as an independent variable and investigate specific parts of the sequence explicated above. The more specific research questions as well as the empirical strategies and results are outlined in Table 1 below. The first paper explains why we should expect that the power distribution between ethnic groups will affect the level of violent repression in a country. Previous research has generally expected ethnically diverse countries to be more violent than homogeneous ones, but this proposition lack solid empirical justification. Instead of focusing on ethnic diversity per se, the paper argues that political authorities are more likely to use violent repression when a large share of a country's population belongs to excluded ethnic groups. Empirically, the paper combines cross-sectional time-series analyses of 157 countries for the period 1977–2010 with a case study of the Republic of Guinea in the 1990s, which is picked based on the cross-sectional pattern. The statistical analysis shows that the level of violent repression increases with ethnic exclusion, and the case study illustrates how political authorities in Guinea in the 1990s came to see excluded ethnic groups as political threats and how they relied on violent repression to maintain their ethnic dominance.

Paper 2 goes one step further in the sequence and focusses on civil resistance campaigns in ethnically exclusive regimes. Whereas previous research has argued that political inequality between ethnic groups leads to both nonviolent and violent protest, the paper argues that resistance campaigns (that is, large-scale, organized movements that pursue regime change; see Chapter 4) become increasingly more likely to emerge violently when the size of the excluded population increases. The paper builds on the insights



from Paper 1 and suggests that the use of violent repression in ethnically exclusive regimes is the driving force behind this relationship. The argument is tested empirically in a cross-sectional, time-series design consisting of 161 countries for the period 1950–2006. The results show, first, that countries with large excluded populations are significantly more likely to experience violent than nonviolent resistance campaigns. Second, it is shown through mediation analysis that around half of the total effect of ethnic exclusion on armed resistance campaigns is mediated by the actual or expected use of violent repression in a country.

Table 1.1: An outline of the papers

Research question	Dependent variable	Empirical strategy	Main results
<u>Paper 1: Maintaining ethnic dominance: Diversity, power, and violent repression</u>			
What explains the variance in violent repression across ethnically diverse countries?	Violent repression	Quantitative (country-year): 157 countries for the period 1977–2010. Combined with case study from the Republic of Guinea in the 1990s.	Contrary to demographic measures of ethnic diversity, ethnic exclusion increases the level of violent repression in a country. The theoretical argument is supported by the case study.
<u>Paper 2: Ethnic exclusion and civil resistance campaigns: Opting for nonviolent or violent tactics?</u>			
Can ethnic exclusion help predict the prevalence of nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns across countries?	Onset of nonviolent and violent civil resistance campaigns	Quantitative (country-year): 161 countries for the period 1950–2006.	Outbreaks of violent resistance campaigns become relatively more likely with the size of population belonging to politically excluded groups. Almost half of the effect of ethnic exclusion is mediated by violent repression.
<u>Paper 3: Killing in the name of ...? Ethnic group identities and civil war</u>			
Does the likelihood that (excluded) ethnic groups will engage in armed conflict differ according to the identity type around which their members are mobilized?	Civil war onset	Quantitative (group-year): 790 ethnic groups in 137 countries for the period 1946–2009.	No evidence of either a direct or indirect effect of ethnic group identities. The effects of political exclusion and power loss are not moderated by ethnic group identities.
<u>Paper 4: How does ethnic exclusion lead to civil war?</u>			
Is there a common causal path connecting political exclusion of ethnic groups and the outbreak of civil war?	Civil war onset	Qualitative: 16 cases of excluded ethnic groups involved in an outbreak of major armed conflicts in the period 1991–2009.	Five cases support the proposed causal path, and three cases suggest an alternative causal path. No causal relationship between political exclusion and civil war onset can be observed in the remaining 8 cases.

Paper 3 examines two competing understandings of the relationship between ethnic group identities and civil war. The first one stresses the differences that exist between these identity types and proposes that religious and racial boundaries are particularly conflict-prone. According to the second understanding, ethnic groups generally have dense social networks and their incentives and opportunities to mobilize for violent collective action are associated with their political status and resources rather than their specific identity types. By testing these competing understandings empirically, the paper assesses both the appropriateness of the inclusive conception of ethnicity employed in the dissertation (as defined in Chapter 2) and whether specific types of ethnic groups should be particularly likely to experience ethnic conflict escalation as often suggested in both the academic and the public debate. The paper analyzes a global sample of 790 politically relevant ethnic groups for the period 1946–2009 and finds no statistical evidence that the probability of civil war onset is affected by whether ethnic groups are mobilized around religious, linguistic, racial, or ethno-regional markers. The effect of political exclusion and power loss on civil war onset is also not conditioned by these identity types.

Paper 4 asks the more general question of the dissertation: How does ethnic exclusion lead to civil war? The paper takes its point of departure in the quantitative studies of the ethnic exclusion-civil war relationship and presents observable implications for the two causal mechanisms proposed by Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013, Ch. 3), namely “mobilization” and “repression.” It then uses qualitative data to test whether these mechanisms are observable in a “medium-N” sample of 16 cases of excluded ethnic groups, which are represented by a rebel organization that took part in an outbreak of major armed conflict in the period 1991–2009. The cases are chosen as a sub-population of the Ethnic Power Relations dataset, which is used in the quantitative studies and introduced in Chapter 3. The analysis shows that the proposed causal path is present in five of the 16 cases, and three other cases suggest an alternative causal path. However, no causal relationship between political exclusion and civil war onset can be observed in the remaining 8 cases. As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 6, the sequence presented above can help make sense of this “disconfirmatory” finding by specifying the relevant scope for a theory of ethnic conflict escalation and by pointing out potential problems in the available data sources.

All in all, the dissertation contributes to a more thorough understanding of ethnic conflict. The four papers of the dissertation go further than previous studies when it comes to explaining how ethnic conflict escalates and they are among the first to empirically assess this process aside from single case studies. The empirical analyses generally support the stylized sequence

of ethnic conflict escalation presented above, but they also raise some important questions. In particular, although the qualitative analysis in Paper 4 finds support for the escalation process in some cases, it suggests that the causal effect of political exclusion on civil war onset may have been overestimated in previous accounts. In half of the analyzed cases, ethnic grievances have little influence on the outbreak of armed conflict. Instead, we see instances of reverse causality, where ethnic groups are excluded because of the armed conflict they are involved in, and war relapses, where previously escalated and never terminated conflicts lead to recurring acts of armed resistance and counterinsurgency.

This finding also shows how the papers supplement each other methodologically. Whereas the quantitative analyses of the dissertation primarily aim at generalizing findings across countries and ethnic groups, they are less useful when it comes to assessing whether the conclusions are drawn on a correct basis (see Brady and Collier 2004; Gerring 2007; Mahoney and Goertz 2006). For example, is it in fact the perceived injustice of being politically excluded that incites ethnic groups to challenge the regime, and is it in fact authorities' threat perception that leads them to engage in violent repression? By addressing the overall research question with different methodological approaches, I hope to approximate Tarrow's (2004) goal of "triangulation." That is, the intention is to increase the inferential leverage of the dissertation by using both quantitative and qualitative data.

Taken together, the four papers deviate from studies that argue that ethnic diversity in itself is a cause of political violence (e.g., Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005; Schneider and Wiesehomeier 2008), that ethnic grievances have little effect whatsoever (e.g., Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003), and that specific group divides, particularly religion, should make the escalation process more likely (e.g., Reynal-Querol 2002; Toft 2007). Accordingly, the findings of the dissertation have both theoretical and policy-relevant implications that can help understand contemporary conflicts such as the one in Syria where protest against the Alawi-dominated minority regime turned violent because of the government's repressive strategies, and where the bloody civil war has now lasted almost five years with immense consequences, not only for Syria but for the entire Middle East and the surrounding regions (see Hinnebusch, Imady, and Zintl 2016).

The remainder of the dissertation summary is organized as follows: Chapters 2 through 4 introduce and discuss the key concepts of the dissertation, namely ethnicity, ethnic exclusion, and the different types of political violence. These chapters also introduce the quantitative data sources used in the papers, display some descriptive statistics, and summarize relevant previous findings in the literature. Chapter 5 presents the motivations, argu-

ments, research designs, and main findings for each of the four papers briefly introduced above. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes by discussing the implications and limitations of the dissertation as well as some potential avenues for future research.

## Chapter 2: Ethnicity

Rocks are natural and bricks are constructed, but if either hits you in the head you might not appreciate the difference.  
- Monica Duffy Toft (2006, 39).

### 2.1 What is ethnicity?

People can be categorized in a practically unlimited number of ways. You can be tall or short, fat or thin, dark or light, smart or stupid, like or dislike cats, believe in A or B, and the list goes on.<sup>11</sup> Only a few of these possible identity categories will be socially and politically relevant, and even fewer will be fundamental enough to form a foundation for large-scale conflict. According to Gellner (1983, Ch. 6), identities that are unevenly distributed across societies and closely associated with people's history and geography will likely be associated with certain advantages or disadvantages in modern countries and are thus most likely to become focal points for conflict.<sup>12</sup> Physical traits, or "race," would be one such example, but importantly, deeply engrained religious or cultural habits may be just as salient as our genetic makeup although they are socially constructed (Gellner 1983, 69).

We often use "ethnicity" to describe the interplay between individual identities and group structures. However, too often it remains unclear what exactly the term refers to. One reason is that scholars simply do not agree. Should we, for instance, distinguish between ethnicity and race? Just to give one example of the potential confusion, Olzak discusses this issue in *The Global Dynamics of Racial and Ethnic Mobilization* but ends up talking about racial *and* ethnic groups although she sees skin pigmentation and body types as ethnic markers just like language, religion, and regional identification (Olzak 2006, 4). Another issue is whether ethnic identities are primordial (i.e., naturally given) or socially constructed, or perhaps in a more up-to-date reading, the degree to which ethnic identities can be constructed and deconstructed (e.g., Chandra 2012; Wimmer 2013b). To help avoid the

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<sup>11</sup> The categories can then be graduated and combined and you end up being a short, medium light person who loves cats or a very fat, smart person who believes somewhat in B.

<sup>12</sup> Gellner (1983, 63) calls these classifications "entropy-resistant" because of their tendency not to become evenly dispersed throughout society.

many pitfalls of working with this contested concept (cf. Collier, Hidalgo, and Maciuceanu 2006), I devote this chapter to presenting a hopefully clear understanding of “ethnicity.”

Fearon (2006, 853) describes the prototypical ethnic group as one whose members “share a common language, religion, customs, sense of homeland, and relatively dense social networks.” However, he goes on to say that “any or all of these may be missing and a group might still be described as ‘ethnic’ if the descent rule for membership is satisfied.” What distinguishes ethnic from non-ethnic groups in Fearon’s view is thus whether group membership is reckoned by descent; that is, does one automatically qualify for group membership if one’s parents are members? Groups defined by social class or political ideology would be clear examples where the descent rule is not satisfied. You can be poor and uneducated although your parents are rich and educated, and you can be politically conservative although your parents are liberal (although you most likely will not; cf. Alford, Funk, and Hibbing 2005). To complicate things a bit, religious, linguistic, or regional groups can also be non-ethnic. However, Fearon’s example of Protestants and Catholics in the United States and Northern Ireland does a good job of clarifying the distinction:

In the United States, Protestants and Catholics are religious rather than ethnic groups because membership is reckoned by profession of faith rather than descent; one can become a member of either group by conversion. In Northern Ireland, descent rather than profession of faith is the relevant criterion for deciding membership, even though religion is the main cultural feature distinguishing the two main social groups. Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland can thus reasonably be described as ethnic groups despite common language, appearance, many customs, and genetic ancestry (in some sense). (Fearon 2006, 853)

Chandra (2006; 2012, Ch. 2–4) agrees that attributes that are associated with, or believed to be associated with, descent are key to understanding “ethnicity.” According to her more thorough definition, ethnic identities are the subset of all identity categories in which membership is determined by descent and that satisfies the following four restrictions:

(a) They are impersonal – that is, they are an “imagined community” in which members are not part of an immediate family or kin group; (b) they constitute a section of a country’s population rather than the whole; (c) if one sibling is eligible for membership in a category at any given place, then all other siblings would also be eligible in that place; and (d) the qualifying attributes for membership are restricted to one’s own genetically transmitted features or to

language, religion, place of origin, tribe, region, caste, clan, nationality, or race of one's parents and ancestors. (Chandra 2006, 400)<sup>13</sup>

Based on this definition, Chandra (2006, 414–418) identifies two properties that distinguish ethnic from non-ethnic identities: “visibility” and “stickiness” (see also Chandra 2012, Ch. 3). First, ethnic identities are relatively visible because the descent-based attributes relate to one's physical features, speech, practices, dress, place of residence and so on.<sup>14</sup> In line with Gellner's (1983) reasoning, this will likely make the “us-them” divide more salient. Second, ethnic identities are relatively “sticky” because descent-based attributes, on average, are more difficult to change in the short term. Of course, cultural habits can be changed but even the less sticky ones such as the way one dresses and acts are inherent to most people. This does not mean that ethnic identities are fixed but rather that the changes in descent-based attributes typically will be long-term and most likely generational processes. However, individuals are often eligible for membership in a larger number of ethnic identity categories than those that they currently identify themselves with. One may, for instance, identify solely with one's linguistic group while having the descent-based attributes that qualify one for membership in a religious group or a group based on one's place of origin. And whether these different identity categories are activated or remain passive may in fact change in the short run (Chandra 2012, Ch. 1, 4).<sup>15</sup>

The activated ethnic identities can either be salient in the private sphere (socially relevant) or both in private and political life (see also Chandra and Wilkinson 2008). Ethnicity is socially relevant, for instance, when people pray, get married, and raise their children in accordance with their ethnic identity. If they at the same time form political organizations and voice demands based on the same customs, then ethnicity becomes politically relevant. These organizations can, in turn, seek to realize the group's demands through the available institutional channels in a country, for instance by voting for a co-ethnic politician, supporting a local leader, or forming an ethnic party (Horowitz 1985, Ch. 7–10; Posner 2005; see also Koter 2013). In addi-

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<sup>13</sup> (c) is an elegant way of solving the problem of mixed parentage. It is often left to convention whether a child of mixed parentage will qualify for the mother's or the father's ethnic group (or neither). Siblings' group membership can thus be used as a more general qualifier.

<sup>14</sup> Political ideology, by contrast, is often invisible.

<sup>15</sup> The disintegration of Yugoslavia is an often used example of this process. Over a relatively short time span, people who previously had no religious identity started to categorize themselves and their neighbors as Catholics, Orthodox, or Muslims (e.g., Sells 2003).

tion, as it the focus of this dissertation, ethnicity can play a part in extra-institutional politics, for example if ethnic groups engage in unconstitutional strikes, demonstrations, riots, and rebel attacks.

In the next section, I go further into the discussion of how ethnic identities come to matter and why they can be expected to be favorable to group mobilization and collective action. To summarize the argument thus far, the dissertation follows Fearon (2006), Chandra (2006; 2012), and others who define ethnicity based on descent-based attributes whether the relevant criterion for group membership is physical appearance (race), language, religion, regional belonging, or other attributes that are believed to be a sign of common descent. This definition goes as far back as Max Weber (1978, Ch. 5) and is what Horowitz (1985, 17) terms “an inclusive conception of ethnicity.” The relevant ethnic identities in a society change over time and can be socially constructed but because they are more visible and sticky than non-ethnic identities, they are also expected to be more persistent. Wimmer (2013b, 8) further clarifies that we can distinguish between subtypes of ethnicity depending on the relevant attribute, or “marker,” that is used to substantiate the belief in common descent. The most important subtypes are ethno-religious, ethno-regional, ethno-linguistic, and ethno-somatic (racial) groups. It follows from the inclusive conception of ethnicity that none of these defining attributes need to have a greater effect on group cohesion than any of the others (cf. Sambanis 2001, 266). I assess this argument with regard to civil war onset in Paper 3.

## 2.2 When does ethnicity matter and why?

As should be clear by now, ethnic identities cannot be assumed to be static. There is great variation across space and over time in how people react to ethnicity (Olzak 2006, 36–38). In this constructivist view, ethnicity is not inherently conflictual but may become so under certain circumstances. According to one perspective, the most important circumstance is *modernization* (for an introduction, see Jesse and Williams 2011, Ch. 1). As argued by Gellner (1983), the transition from agrarian to industrial society led to a change in social structuring. People, who used to have fixed roles and positions in small, self-contained communities, became mobile, and their culture (in particular language) became crucial for competition over employment and other scarce resources (Gellner 1983, 60). Ethnicity has thus become a successful source of social mobilization in modern states because it strengthens groups’ organizational potential. In Olzak’s (1983, 362) words, “economic and state modernizations encourage mobilization based upon ethnic iden-



tity because these two processes favor reorganization along larger-scale lines, rather than along, kinship, village, or some other smaller-scale boundary.”

Note that if the modernist perspective is correct then the proposed association between exclusion of ethnic groups and political violence should not be as likely in pre-modern societies. The empirical scope of the dissertation is the post-World War II period and – although the first nationalist conflicts in Europe date back to the eighteenth century (Roeder 2007; Wimmer 2013a) – the findings may not be generally valid before this period.

The second constructivist perspective, *instrumentalism*, holds that ethnicity become important when used by elites to draw support for some political purpose. Based on a review of six at that time recent books, Fearon and Laitin (2000, 846) conclude that “large-scale ethnic violence is provoked by elites seeking to gain, maintain, or increase their hold on political power.” Instrumentalists thus see the strategic use of ethnicity as its most prominent feature. What is typically viewed as ethnic violence has even been interpreted by instrumentalists as nothing but gang violence incited by self-interested leaders who use nationalist propaganda as a strategic tool (Brass 1997; Mueller 2000). Such arguments led Fearon and Laitin (2000, 869) to ask “if there has been a great upsurge in ethnic war since the end of the Cold War, or whether more insurgencies are now labeled ‘ethnic’ due to opportunistic redescriptions and salesmanship by rebel leaders seeking support from great power patrons newly disposed to see ethnic rather than Left-Right conflict.”

However, more moderate instrumentalist arguments do not reject that ethnicity is something real and potentially highly salient for individuals. Posner (2004), for example, argues that politicians will try to mobilize ethnic groups if they are big enough to compete for political power at the center, and that they will “emphasize the cleavage that defines the most usefully sized coalitional building blocks and ignore those that define groups too small to be politically viable” (Posner 2004, 538). In this view, politicians cannot construct ethnicity as they please but only in accordance with the available ethnic identity categories in society (cf. the discussion in the previous section). Eifert, Miguel, and Posner (2010) likewise argue that politicians play “the ethnic card” in proximity to competitive elections and that their ethnic constituencies play along under the expectations that the future allocation of resources will follow ethnic lines. This latter argument highlights that an elite focus does not necessarily mean treating the masses as useful idiots.

The constructivist perspectives are often contrasted with *primordialism*, which sees ethnic identities as fixed and unchanging social structures. In this view, ethnic conflict is natural, and violence needs no other cause than the ethnic boundary itself. Ethnic identities are maintained and reinforced based

on history, symbols, and myths, and primordialists see ancient hatred as an important explanation of contemporary violence (Jesse and Williams 2011, 10–11). As Chandra (2012, 134) argues, it is difficult to find social scientists who since the 1970s whole-heartedly have defended the primordialist position, and the consensus is thus that ethnic identities, at least to some extent, are socially constructed (for a thorough discussion, see Chandra 2012, Ch. 4). Horowitz (1985) has by some, including Fearon and Laitin (2003), been read as a primordialist because he portrays ethnic conflict as almost inevitable. However, this is most likely due to his criterion for case selection, which is countries most likely to experience ethnic conflict, namely “severely divided societies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean ... that received their independence during or after World War II” (Horowitz 1985, 17). Horowitz clearly incorporates both the modernist and instrumentalist perspectives by focusing on group competition under changing settings in which elites form ethnic organizations and parties and try to gain support by stirring up their constituencies’ emotions. In the same way, my aim here is not to choose between the different perspectives. It seems quite clear that none of the three perspectives sketched above can explain all instances of ethnic conflict and that each can be helpful in shedding light on different aspects of a conflict (Sambanis 2001, 263). State building and economic modernization have indeed reorganized societies and most likely made ethnic identities more important. Individuals mobilized based on these identities will probably be deeply engaged with their common history and perceive their group identities as somewhat fixed. And elites will use these identities (and possibly try to invoke others) in order for them to mobilize political support.

Why, then, would elites prefer to mobilize individuals based on ethnic rather than ideologically or class-based identities? Of course, mobilization efforts may cross or combine ethnic and non-ethnic markers, but according to Olzak (2006, Ch. 2), ethnic identities have qualities that distinguish them from non-ethnic ones and that make ethnic movements particularly likely to occur. Ethnicity is, as stressed above, generally relatively “visible” and “sticky,” and as a consequence ethnic groups tend to have dense social networks characterized by group solidarity, trust, and low-cost mobilization of group members. More specifically, ethnic groups typically have highly developed and decentralized mechanisms for monitoring group members and transmitting information about their current and previous actions. These mechanisms are often developed long before modern state structures and enable groups to punish free-riders and ensure group loyalty (Fearon and Laitin 1996, 718). It would be difficult to imagine the same fine-tuned mechanisms among political or economic groups. Building on Mancur Olson’s theory of collective action, Lindström (in Lee et al. 2004, 175) proposes that

“since individuals are recognizable inside the smallest units, free riding is more difficult among ethnic groups than among other segments of society since sanctions are easier to administer and psychological factors are more likely to come into play.” This should make ethnic identities favorable to mobilization efforts.

Denny and Walter (2014) discuss some factors that can explain why rebel movements are more likely to organize around ethnicity. Besides the fact that ethnic groups most often share the same language and customs and are characterized by trust and loyalty, mobilization is also favored by the fact that they tend to live in concentrated spaces. These spaces can also provide a safe haven for dissidents and thus help sustain rebel organizations, especially if located in peripheral and hard-to-reach areas (Denny and Walter 2014, 204). Ethnic groups are also more likely to receive financial and material support from ethnic kin in diasporas and from across the border with whom they share close ties. Next, conflict resolution is particularly difficult between ethnic groups because of commitment problems. The relatively fixed nature of ethnic identities makes it difficult to reshape preferences, and majority groups are often unwilling to compromise as they hold the voting power (Denny and Walter 2014, 206–207). This provides fertile ground for social movements. Finally, ethno-political action is also incentivized by the fact that political and economic advantages in societies often are distributed along ethnic lines. I will explicate this point in Chapter 3, which focuses on ethnic exclusion. Denny and Walter (2014, 200) nicely summarize this section:

[M]ovements are more likely to organize around ethnicity because ethnic groups are more apt to be aggrieved, better able to mobilize, and more likely to face difficult bargaining challenges compared to other groups. These conditions are the result of three features associated with ethnicity: the historical distribution of political power based on ethnicity, the physical location and concentration of ethnic groups (including migration patterns), and an ethnicity-based identity that is more fixed and identifiable relatively to other political affiliations.

### 2.3 Ethnic fractionalization around the globe

Of course, ethnic movements are only a possibility in societies with some degree of ethnic heterogeneity. In other words, ethnicity will not matter in societies where people cannot be distinguished (or are not believed to be distinguishable) based on one or more of the descent-based attributes as named above. It could also be posited that ethnic tensions and the perils that may

arise from ethnic diversity are more likely in highly fractionalized societies, or in polarized societies with two or more approximately equally sized groups (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005). It thus seems prudent to ask whether, or to what degree, we see a potential for ethnic mobilization in today's world. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the potential is overwhelming. According to Gellner (1983, 43), there are roughly 8,000 spoken languages spread across the some 200 sovereign states. In some countries there are only a few different first (mother-tongue) languages and in others there are more than 100.<sup>16</sup> Some languages are only spoken by a few thousand people and others are spoken by hundreds of millions. This gives us roughly 8,000 potential ethnic movements (what Gellner terms “nationalisms”) – and this is only based on languages and not the other relevant descent-based attributes.

In this section, I will give a brief overview of the distribution of ethnic fractionalization around the globe. In doing so, I rely on Alesina et al.'s (2003) data of ethno-linguistic fractionalization (ELF). Just like other ELF indicators, Alesina et al.'s measure does not meet the above definition one-to-one. Most importantly, it is assumed to be static over time, and it only covers linguistic and racial characteristics. Nonetheless, it is probably the most comprehensive indicator of its kind, and it provides a good basis for comparing the level of ethnic fractionalization across countries for the post-Cold War period.<sup>17</sup> The indicator reflects the probability that two randomly selected individuals from the same population belong to different ethno-linguistic groups. The relevant formula is

$$ELF_j = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^N s_{ij}^2$$

where  $s_{ij}$  is the population share of group  $i$  in country  $j$ , and  $N$  is the total number of ethno-linguistic groups within a country (Alesina et al. 2003, 159). The measure thus summarizes these groups' squared share of the population, which is deducted from 1. It takes the value zero in a country with only one ethno-linguistic group and approaches 1 when several ethno-linguistic groups comprise a significant share of the population.

To exemplify, China has several ethno-linguistic groups, but its ELF score is relatively low at 0.15 because more than 90% of the population are

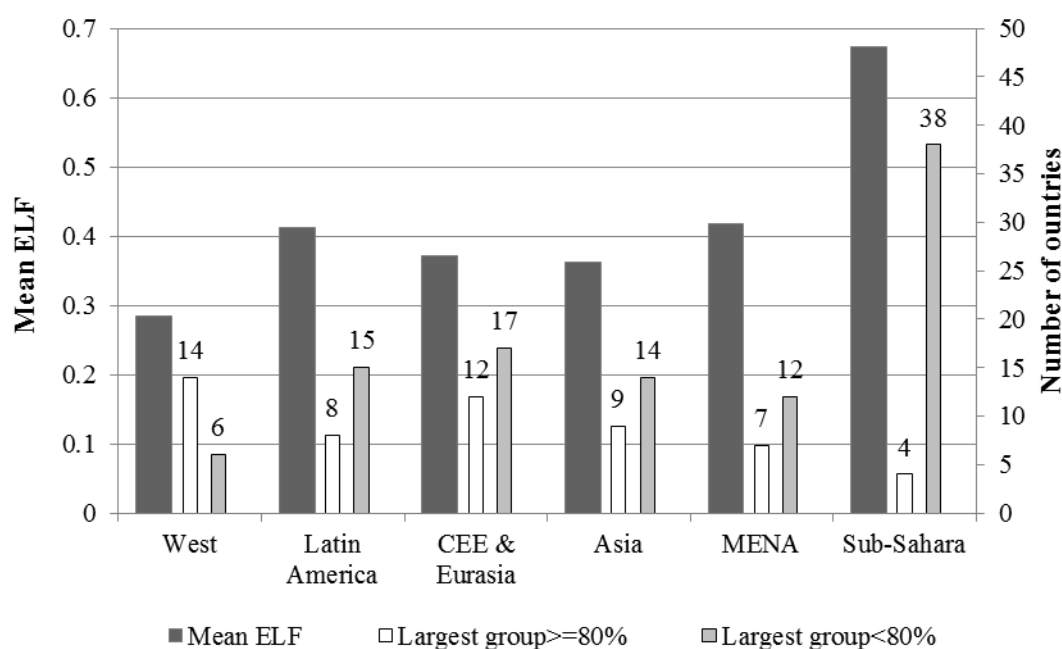
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<sup>16</sup> Iceland and India would be two examples from each end of the spectrum.

<sup>17</sup> Alesina et al.'s (2003, 159–160) data identifies around 650 ethno-linguistic groups in some 200 countries based on various sources from the early to mid-1990s.

“Han.” Malaysia, by contrast, has only a few ethno-linguistic groups but because the largest one, “Malay,” comprises around 60% of the population and the second largest, “Chinese,” around 25%, the ELF score is rather high at 0.59. If we select two random citizens in Malaysia, the predicted probability that they would belong to different ethno-linguistic groups would thus be 0.59 (compared to 0.15 in China). To keep things simple, we could speak of China as an ethnically homogenous and Malaysia as an ethnically heterogeneous country. Ellingsen (2000), for example, considers countries homogenous if the majority group comprises 80% or more of the total population. Although it is questionable whether we should think of a country as homogenous if it has a 20% minority group, it seems quite clear that no country with a majority of less than 80% is homogenous, and in order not to overstate the level of ethnic diversity in modern countries, I follow Ellingsen’s operationalization below.

Figure 2.1: Ethno-linguistic fractionalization by geo-cultural regions



Note: The ELF indicator as well as the group sizes used to designate homogenous countries (largest ethno-linguistic group at least 80%) and heterogeneous countries (largest ethno-linguistic group less than 80%) is based on Alesina et al. (2003). The geo-cultural regions are (1) “the West” (including Australia and New Zealand), (2) Latin America, (3) Central-Eastern Europe and former Soviet states, (4) South and East Asia, (5) the Middle East and North Africa, and (6) Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the mean level of ethno-linguistic fractionalization in 156 countries across six geo-cultural regions: the “West” (Western Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA), Latin America, Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and Eurasia, Asia (excluding Eurasia and the Middle East), the

Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>18</sup> As shown, the 20 countries in the West have a mean fractionalization score of just below 0.3. In Latin America and the MENA region, the same score is just above 0.4, and in CEE and Eurasia and in Asia it is just below 0.4. The degree of ethno-linguistic fractionalization is thus fairly even across these five regions and on average, the probability of randomly selecting two individuals of the same ethnic affiliation in a country in one of these regions is around 1/3. Although the West is somewhat more homogenous than the other regions when we look at average ELF scores, the main difference seems to be the number of homogenous countries. 14 in 20 Western countries have a majority group that comprises more than 80% of the total population, and if we look at Western Europe alone, only three countries, Belgium, Switzerland, and Spain, would be considered ethnically heterogeneous according to this operationalization. In no other region of the world are more than half of the countries homogenous, which is evidence of a particularly high level of state building and subsequent successful homogenization policies (which were not only implemented with education and improved infrastructure but also with state terror and ethnic cleansing; see, e.g., Mann 2005, Ch. 1–3).

Maybe the region that really distinguishes itself is Sub-Saharan Africa with its average ELF score of almost 0.7. Only four of the 42 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have a majority group comprising at least 80% of the population, namely Burundi, Lesotho, Rwanda, and Swaziland. And strikingly, two of these are known for some of the most gruesome instances of ethnic violence since World War II – Lemarchand (2009) has named the two small East African countries Burundi and Rwanda “the Genocidal Twins.” This indicates that high levels of fractionalization might not be the best proxy for when violent conflict is most likely to occur. One reason might be that polarization is a better predictor of political violence than is fractionalization (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005). According to Lemarchand (2009, 31), the recurring pattern in the former Belgian Africa has been that ethnic polarization paves the way for conflict. In Paper 1, I assess whether ethno-linguistic fractionalization and polarization can explain the variance in violent repression across countries. Another reason, as I will return to below, may be that ethnic demography cannot in itself explain when conflict is most likely to occur and that we need to include political factors in the equation.

In sum, even if we follow a quite lenient operationalization of what constitutes a homogenous country, we see that the world today, with the partial

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<sup>18</sup> The figure only includes sovereign states with more than 500,000 inhabitants. This is done to meet the inclusion criteria for the Ethnic Power Relation dataset as introduced in Chapter 3.

exception of Western Europe, is marked by high degrees of ethnic diversity. I started this section by stating (rather obviously) that ethnic mobilization only is possible where people can be distinguished according to their ethnicity. However, of the 156 countries included in Figure 2.1, only Bangladesh, the Koreas, Japan, Portugal, and Tunisia have almost perfectly homogenous populations.<sup>19</sup> In the next chapter, I turn to the main independent variable of the dissertation, namely whether ethnic groups are included in or excluded from central state power.

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<sup>19</sup> According to Alesina et al.'s (2003) codings, these are the only countries with majority groups comprising more than 97% of the population.





## Chapter 3: Ethnic exclusion

If the property is really mine, then the claim of another to the same property is nothing more than theft. Access to enjoyment of the property will be granted or withheld on my terms. The same applies to ownership of the country.  
- Donald L. Horowitz (1985, 202)

### 3.1 Why, how, and with what effects?

As argued in Chapter 2, the salience of ethnic identities is, at least partly, an effect of economic and political modernization, which favor larger-scale organization in order for people to compete for scarce resources in mobile societies. In modern countries, and particularly in developing ones, the state tends to be the most important source of resources, not least because of the relative importance of public jobs and patronage. As Posner (2005, 3) describes ethnic politics in Africa, “people want resources from the state [and they] believe that having someone from their ethnic group in position of political power will facilitate their access to those resources.” However, political power is not only desired as an instrument to secure resources but also to “dominate the environment, suppress differences, as well as to prevent domination and suppression by others” (Horowitz 1985, 187). It should thus come as no surprise that control of the state is imperative to ethnic conflict, and that unequal access to the state creates strong grievances. In this chapter, I do three things. First, I describe why, and how, ethnic exclusion comes into being and what effects it will have on excluded groups. Next, I introduce the Ethnic Power Relation dataset (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010), which is the main data source used in the dissertation. Finally, I sketch some empirical developments including how ethnic exclusion has evolved over time and how it is associated with economic development and democratic/autocratic institutions.

As stated in Chapter 1, I define ethnic exclusion as an institutional arrangement in which one or more ethnic groups of a country have no real influence over central state power (see Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009). Regimes that exclude significant parts of their populations based on ethnic affiliation, what I term ethnically exclusive regimes, either come into being

as a consequence of long-term historical processes or more recent exclusivist practices. In what follows, I describe both paths to ethnic exclusion.

Focusing on historical processes, Wimmer (2015a) considers ethnic exclusion as an unsuccessful nation-building process. In particular, weak pre-colonial state centralization leads to ethnic exclusion through two indirect and path-dependent mechanisms. The first one is low capacity to deliver public goods, which means that rulers have to limit the circle of recipients of those goods. Because they “are supposed to care for ‘their own people’, they will choose an ethnically defined circle of beneficiaries” (Wimmer 2015a, 32). As a consequence, people that do not belong to the ethnic constituency of the ruling elite will likely become excluded from the exchange networks with the state and thus from political influence. Second, weakly centralized pre-colonial states will have been less successful in implementing homogenization policies, which means that they will be more linguistically diverse. This will, in turn, create communication barriers that make exchange networks with the state more costly and increase the likelihood of ethnic exclusion (Wimmer 2015a, 31–33). Note that this argument suggests that ethno-linguistic fractionalization, as operationalized above, might have a number of indirect consequences working through ethnic exclusion.

Not only pre-colonial but also colonial structures have been argued to have an effect on ethnic exclusion in modern states. Colonial rulers typically gave preferential treatment to certain ethnic groups as divide-and-rule strategies and often these groups were minorities. For example, it is well known that Belgian rulers favored the Tutsis in Ruanda-Urundi (and even advanced an ideology of Tutsi racial superiority; Haklai 2000, 42). Specific ethnic groups were also favored in the administration or in the army in countries such as Burma, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Uganda, and this paved the way for subsequent patterns of ethnic dominance. All these countries have witnessed devastating ethno-political conflicts in their post-colonial histories (e.g., DeVotta 2004; see also Chandra and Wilkinson 2008; Horowitz 1985).

Also the type of colonial rule has been argued to matter for ethnic exclusion. Colonies aimed at resource extraction often relied on strict political control and sharp divisions between the rulers and the ruled, and even today these countries should be more prone to “internal colonialism” than more liberal forms of colonial domination that combined free trade with political freedoms (Wimmer 2015a, 35; see also Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). Other historical processes that explain ethnic exclusion are war, by which conquerors come to dominate the conquered, and migration patterns; newcomers can either play it safe and subject themselves to the current political order or, more risky, demand a slice of the pie (see also Denny and Walter 2014, 203).

If we move on to the short-term processes that lead to ethnic exclusion it becomes clear that strategic decisions by political leaders also can be decisive. Take, for instance, Kenya after the death of Jomo Kenyatta in 1978 when his vice president, Daniel arap Moi, inherited power. In Nepstad's (2011, 97–98) reading,

Moi was in a precarious situation: he was an ethnic minority president surrounded by politicians, military officers, civil servants, and business leaders whose interests and loyalties differed from his own. Thus Moi quickly began to de-Kikiyunize the government. He removed existing Kikuyu leaders by intentionally compromising their integrity and then forcing them to resign for moral violations. Then he moved ethnic minorities into these newly vacated positions. Moreover, he tightened his control over Kenya's security forces by replacing high-ranking officers and the police commissioner.

President Moi thus used ethnic exclusion as a political strategy to bolster his position of power. Roessler (2011) argues that such "coup proofing" techniques have been fairly common in Sub-Saharan Africa. Commitment problems between elites from different ethnic groups can cause internal security dilemmas in which each side has incentive to strike first and eliminate potential rivals before they attempt to do the same. Roessler (2011, 302) uses this argument to explain why political leaders would engage in ethnic exclusion when it expectedly increases the risk of protest and rebellion; simply, "given the high immediate costs of the coup d'état versus the threat of ethnoregional rebellion in the distant future, the ruler chooses a political strategy that substitutes civil war risk for coup risk." Note that the opposite scenario seems just as logically plausible: that rulers would grant representation to excluded groups to undermine the potential for rebellion in the population.

It should be added that exclusivist practices also can be a less dramatic strategy of "opportunity hoarding" (cf. Tilly 1998, 153–155). When executives face few constraints they may attempt to restrict political positions to members of their own ethnic group as a quid pro quo for being helped to power. Ethnic exclusion can also be used as a purely selfish strategy in order to exploit both the excluded population and one's own ethnic constituency, which often supports rulers because of "fear of falling under an equally inefficient and venal ruler that favours another group" (Pedró i Miquel 2007, 1260). However, this is not to say that ethnic exclusion never results from violent conflict. In its extreme, militarized minority rules (such as Idi Amin's rule of Uganda) follow from repeated coups and violent purges, what Horowitz (1985, Ch. 12) terms "ethnic attrition." The findings in Paper 4 touch directly upon the potentially endogenous relationship between ethnic exclusion and armed conflict.

What, then, are the effects of ethnic exclusion? I argue that groups without influence over the central state institutions of a country likely are aggrieved not only because of political discrimination but also because of economic and cultural discrimination. First, following Gurr (2000, 111; see also Gurr 1993a), we can think of ethnic groups as being politically discriminated if their members are systematically, and deliberately, restricted in the exercise of their political rights in comparison to members of other ethnic groups in the country. Some groups might choose not to participate in national politics out of their own free will (because of cultural habits or residential remoteness), but in most instances ethnic exclusion will coincide with political discrimination. This is the case where organizations or candidates representing an ethnic group are banned and restricted in their political practices with the consequence that members of that group are unrepresented in national politics. Even democratic institutions can be designed in ways that restrict the influence of certain ethnic groups. USA before the African-American Civil Rights Movement is a well-known example, and in countries such as Guatemala and South Africa, minority groups have even been able to dominate state power in what many scholars would regard as electoral democracies (see Min, Cederman, and Wimmer 2012).<sup>20</sup> It should thus be stated clearly that ethnic exclusion is not merely the combination of ethnic diversity and autocratic institutions. If access to the most important state institutions in a society is not determined by ethnic affiliation, no matter how autocratic the regime might be, then we do not speak of ethnic exclusion, and only when group members' political rights are restricted in comparison with members of other groups do we speak of political discrimination. In Cuba, for instance, ethnic affiliation has mattered little in national politics since the revolution. Ethnic affiliation was, by contrast, an important factor in the Soviet Union, and the ethnic minorities' political influence varied significantly (see, e.g., Gorenburg 2003). Whereas most ethnic minorities had some regional autonomy but little influence at the center, Ukrainians were generally well represented in Moscow.

In the same way, we speak of economic discrimination when members of ethnic groups are systematically, and deliberately, restricted in their access to economic goods and jobs that are available to members of other groups in the country (Gurr 2000, 109). As argued above, the need of weak states to restrict scarce resources to certain segments of society is often a driving force behind ethnic exclusion, and exclusion can also be a means to favor one's

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<sup>20</sup> Guatemala, for instance, is typically considered a democracy since Vinivio Cerezo was elected president in 1986. At the same time, the indigenous population has been de facto powerless (see the Ethnic Power Relations dataset presented below).

own ethnic group. We should thus expect that ethnic exclusion often is associated with economic discrimination. Absolute poverty is not a sign of discrimination, and group inequality based on differences in choice of profession or residence in less developed parts of a country is not necessarily a sign of discrimination. However, if members of certain ethnic groups have restricted access to jobs in the state or if public policies such as infrastructural development are designed to favor the ethnic groups that do influence national politics, then this clearly indicates economic discrimination.

Finally, members of ethnic groups are subject to cultural discrimination if they are restricted in expressing their customs and values or in pursuing their cultural interests (Gurr 2000, 118). Language policies that favor certain groups in the public space, restrictions on how to dress, and proscriptions on religious practices would all be signs of cultural discrimination. By contrast, a ban on all religious practices would not be regarded as cultural discrimination as long as it is not targeted at specific ethnic groups. Cultural discrimination is also likely to coincide with ethnic exclusion, first, because restriction on cultural practices can be used to secure dominance over the state and, second, because dominant groups tend to favor their own culture in the public space (see also Horowitz 1985, Ch. 5). To give one extreme example, Sri Lanka's Official Language Act of 1956 (better known as the "Sinhala-only" act) denied bonuses and salary increases to government officials who were not proficient in Sinhala and gave all new public employees three years to learn Sinhala or forfeit their jobs. Sinhalese public servants were also relocated to Tamil-speaking areas to make sure that the entire government apparatus operated in Sinhala. As a consequence,

while 30 percent of the Ceylon Administrative Service, 50 percent of the clerical service, 60 percent of the engineers and doctors, 40 percent of the armed forces, and 40 percent of the labor force were Tamil in 1956, those numbers had dropped to 20 percent, 30 percent, 30 percent, 20 percent, and 20 percent respectively by 1965. By 1970, they had plummeted to 5 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, 1 percent, and 5 percent respectively. (DeVotta 2004, 125–126)

All in all, ethnic exclusion can be expected to cause grievances due to political, economic, and cultural discrimination. Following the well-known theory of relative deprivation, we would expect disadvantaged groups to seek redress for what they are, or have been, or expect to be deprived of (Gurr 2000, 69). This was also what we saw in Sri Lanka where the Tamils gradually lost faith in the state and mobilized in hope of better treatment. According to Wimmer (2013a, Ch. 1), the basic problem with ethnic exclusion is that it violates the nationalist principle, which is the foundation for modern states and entails that each people should be self-ruled (what Wimmer terms the

“like-over-like” principle; see also Gellner 1983, Ch. 1). When ethnic groups are not represented in central state politics, the political system consequently lacks legitimacy, not only due to disagreement about who is entitled to public services and goods but also due to a more general disagreement about whom the state belongs to. This nationalist principle characterizes the modern era or, more specifically, the age of nationalism, which gradually set in from the end of the eighteenth century (Wimmer 2013a, 1; see also Roeder 2007).

As proposed by the sequence of ethnic conflict escalation introduced in Chapter 1, anti-government mobilization should be the likely consequence of ethnic exclusion because groups will attempt to resist discrimination. Next, because dominant groups are equally interested in maintaining their favorable position, “the transformation process whereby an ethnicized order becomes significantly more inclusive is likely to be protracted, difficult, and violent” (Peleg 2007, 16). In our Kenya example above this was exactly what we saw: President Moi’s exclusivist practices led to resistance among members of the former dominant ethnic groups (in particular the Kikuyu), who hoped for a return to the previous order, and in response, Moi “escalated the use of repressive tactics, including torture” (Nepstad 2011, 98). In Chapter 4, I will introduce the different forms of political violence investigated in the dissertation, but first I describe the data on ethnic exclusion. In sum, what I have argued in this section is that the distribution of state power is one of the most important aspects of ethnic conflict and that those restricted from access to the state will try to change the political system, whereas those who control the state will try to protect the status quo. In Gurr’s (1993a, 36–37) words,

Groups that won out in conquest, state building, and economic development established patterns of authority and various kinds of social barriers to protect their advantages, including the policies and practices for which we use the shorthand label of “discrimination.” Such barriers are subject to challenge because almost everywhere in the late twentieth century they generate a sense of grievance among members of disadvantaged groups and often a self-righteous defense of privilege among advantaged groups. ... any actions or policies that seem likely to alter the balance of power and well-being among groups provide one or both affected parties with an impetus to conflict, the disadvantaged seeking to improve their lot, the advantaged aiming to consolidate their.

## 3.2 The Ethnic Power Relations dataset

If there is one central assumption in the theoretical argument as stated thus far it is this: Power rather than ethnic diversity in itself is what generates conflict. Accordingly, we cannot test our theories about ethnic politics with measures of ethnic diversity such as the ELF indicator introduced above (Cederman and Girardin 2007). Instead, we need measures that capture the conditions under which ethnic diversity is likely to increase the risk of political violence (see also Brown and Langer 2010). In this section, I introduce the Ethnic Power Relation dataset (Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010), which takes a major step in this direction by coding the distribution of political power between ethnic groups. The dataset (EPR-ETH v.2.0; Vogt 2011) covers the period from 1946 to 2009 and includes all sovereign states with a population greater than 500,000, which amounts to 162 countries.<sup>21</sup> For each country, ethnic groups are coded according to their political status and group size. The data is time-variant, meaning that changes in power relations as well as significant demographic changes (e.g., due to large-scale migration or genocide) are recorded throughout the period. The definition of ethnic groups is inclusive, and linguistic, racial, religious, and regional groups are included insofar as their members have a shared culture and believe in common ancestry (see also Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009). The criterion for inclusion thus matches the definition of ethnicity as proposed above.

Only politically relevant ethnic groups are included in the dataset. Groups meet this criterion if at least one political organization (or significant political actor) claims to represent the group in the national political arena, or if the relevant group's members are discriminated against (systematically and deliberately) in the domain of public policy (Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009, 325; see also Min, Cederman, and Min 2012). Political relevancy may also change over time. The coding of the data is based on inputs from more than 50 country and regional experts, and for the period 1946–2009, 790 politically relevant ethnic groups are identified in 137 countries. In the remaining countries, no meaningful ethnic cleavage was identified at the national level of politics. As mentioned above, Cuba since the revolution would be one example of this; other examples would be the Scandinavian countries or Germany. Clearly, this does not mean that ethnicity is not a major policy issue in these countries but rather that important political actors are not organized according to ethnicity and that no ethnic groups are systematically and deliberately discriminated against in terms of public policy provision.

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<sup>21</sup> A more recent update, the EPR Core Dataset 2014, is available at <http://www.icr.ethz.ch/data/epr>; see also Vogt et al. 2015.

When assessing ethnic groups' political status, coders were asked to focus only on representation in the executive-level institutions of a country, specifically, the presidency, cabinet, and senior posts in the administration and army, and to give weight to these institutions depending on their de facto power in a given country. They were also asked to focus on absolute access to power irrespective of the degree of representation relative to a group's demographic size (Min, Cederman, and Min 2012, 10; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009, 326). If ethnic groups are deemed to have access to central state power, they are either coded as having undivided power ("monopoly" or "dominance") or as being part of a power-sharing regime in which they are senior partners or junior partners (depending on their relative influence in the executive). If ethnic groups have no meaningful representation and thus no influence at the executive level of government, they are coded as being excluded. This category includes both groups that are and groups that are not explicitly discriminated against ("powerless" and "discriminated") as well as groups that have no power over national politics but have some influence at the sub-national level ("regional autonomy" or "separatist autonomy").

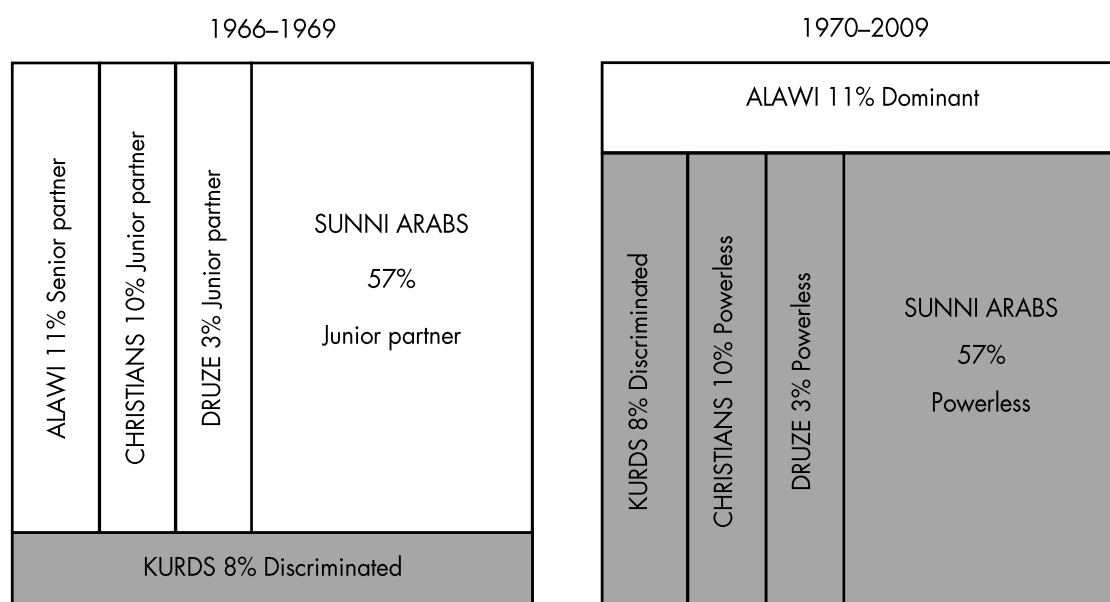
In Papers 1 and 2, I use the country-level version of the dataset where the main independent variable, "ethnic exclusion," indicates the share of the population that belongs to excluded ethnic group relative to the share of the total population belonging to politically relevant ethnic groups ( $ethnic\ exclusion = \frac{excluded\ population}{included + excluded\ pop.}$ ). The variable is thus a continuous measure ranging from 0 to 1 where 0 indicates that all politically relevant ethnic groups are represented in national politics, or that there are no politically relevant groups in a country. When scores are higher than 0.5, more than half of the population that belongs to politically relevant ethnic groups is without political representation at the executive level of government. I term these regimes "minority rules."

Figure 3.1 illustrates the ethnic power distribution in Syria in two periods, 1966–1969 and 1970–2009. In the former period, Syria was a power-sharing regime in which the Alawi, comprising approximately 11% of the Syrian population, are coded as senior partners because of their widespread influence in the Baath party and in the army. Also included in the power-sharing regime, but as junior partners, were Christians (10%), Druze (3%), and the Sunni Arab majority (57%). The Kurds, who comprised approximately 8% of the population, had gradually been bypassed since the 1954 coup in which the Kurdish President Shishakli was overthrown (Horowitz 1985, 492–496). Consequently, the Kurds had no influence in national politics from 1958 (coded as "discriminated" from 1961 onwards). The "ethnic exclusion" score for Syria 1966–1969 is thus 0.09 ( $= \frac{.08}{.11 + .10 + .03 + .57 + .08}$ ), which is rel-



actively low (the average in this period was between 0.15 and 0.20; see Figure 3.2 below). Note that only 89% of the Syrian population is considered as belonging to politically relevant ethnic groups (examples of other groups are Ismaili and Jews). By 1970, however, the Alawi controlled both the army and the Baath party and, as shown in the right-hand side of Figure 3.1, the former junior partners had lost their political influence. This is reflected in the exclusion score, which is 0.88 ( $= \frac{.08+.10+.03+.57}{.11+.10+.03+.57+.08}$ ) for 1970–2009. Syria had thus gone from being a rather ethnically inclusive regime to being a minority rule; accordingly, we would expect that ethnic conflict escalation had become more likely.

Figure 3.1: Ethnic power relations in Syria, 1966–2009



Note: The illustrations are based on the EPRETH v2.0 dataset and inspired by Min, Cederman, and Wimmer (2012). The dark shade indicates that ethnic groups are excluded from central state power. The demographic sizes of the ethnic groups are only approximately proportional to the area of the boxes in the figure.

Papers 3 and 4 have ethnic groups, and not countries, as the unit of analysis. In these papers, ethnic exclusion is therefore not a continuous measure of the size of excluded population but a dichotomous coding of whether each politically relevant ethnic group in a given year is included or excluded from central state power (see Cederman, Wimmer, and Min 2010).

An often used alternative to the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset is the Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset (Gurr 1993a; 2000; Minorities at Risk Project 2009). The main disadvantage of the MAR dataset is that it only includes disadvantaged groups (groups that are “at risk”). Power-holding groups and majority groups are thus generally excluded from the data,

which, depending on the research question, may cause selection biases (Hug 2013). Clearly, it is problematic to investigate the effect of political exclusion if the main selection criterion in the data is whether ethnic groups are disadvantaged. Although the EPR dataset in this regard is a major step in the right direction, it does face some of the same challenges as MAR. Notably, as argued under the conceptualization of ethnicity, the political relevance of ethnic groups is not independent of political processes, and we would, for instance, expect conflict patterns to change not only the salience of ethnicity but potentially also the ethnic cleavages in a society. In general, there seems to be a trade-off between testing constructivist theories of ethnicity and at the same time making sure that our predictors are exogenous to our outcomes. In other words, when we include political processes on both sides of the equation it becomes difficult to estimate causal effects (see also Fearon 2010).<sup>22</sup> Another potential step in the right direction is the AMAR (All Minorities at Risk) project, which identifies 1,200 *socially* relevant ethnic groups (Birnir et al. 2015a). Yet the sheer number of relatively small and undescribed groups makes it extremely difficult to code power relations and conflict dynamics back in time using these data. In the last section of Chapter 4, I summarize the main empirical findings made by scholars using the EPR dataset.

### 3.3 Ethnic exclusion around the globe since World War II

Figure 3.2 illustrates the general development in ethnic power relations across countries since 1946. As shown, in the two first decades after World War II, an average of 15–20% of a country's population belonging to politically relevant ethnic groups were politically excluded. Over the next two decades, the mean level of ethnic exclusion stabilized just above 0.20, but from the mid-1980s the world became significantly more inclusive. That being said, on average, the excluded share of a country's population was still closer to 15% than 10% in 2009.<sup>23</sup>

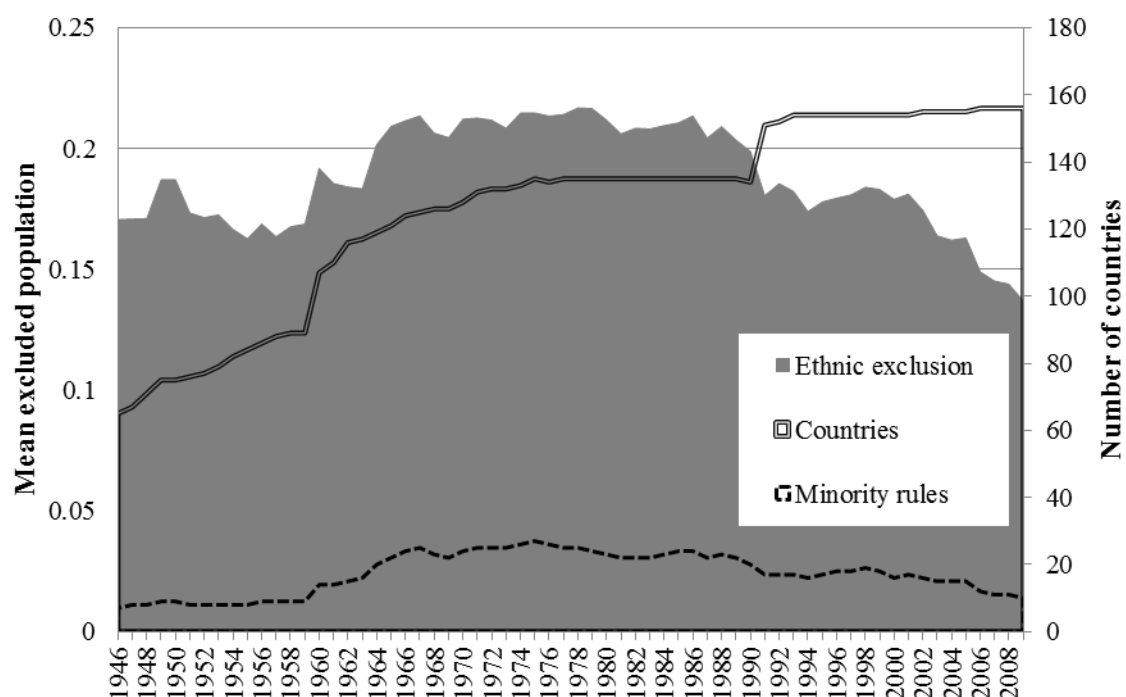
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<sup>22</sup> Of course, as stressed by Wimmer (2015a), linguistic diversity is also endogenous to public policies.

<sup>23</sup> If we instead look at the level of ethnic exclusion across the six geo-cultural regions named above (not shown here), we see that the drop in ethnic exclusion largely is driven by Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The rest of the regions have been fairly stable in terms of ethnic exclusion. In 2009, the MENA region was the most ethnically exclusive region, whereas the West has remained the most inclusive one throughout the period.

Following Wimmer (2015a, 36), we might expect a general decreasing trend in ethnic exclusion in the entire period and especially “from the 1970s onward after the global hegemon, the United States, had finally overcome racial restrictions to voting rights.” While this is not exactly what we see, the increase in exclusion in the first decades after World War II is likely explained by the many newly decolonized, sovereign states. Many of these new countries were familiar with patterns of ethnic dominance and now faced the central question: To whom does the state belong (cf. Horowitz 1985)?

Figure 3.2: The mean level of ethnic exclusion in sovereign states, 1946–2009



Note: The figure is based on the EPR-ETH v2.0 dataset. Minority rules are defined as countries in which more than 50% of the population belonging to politically relevant ethnic groups are excluded from central state power.

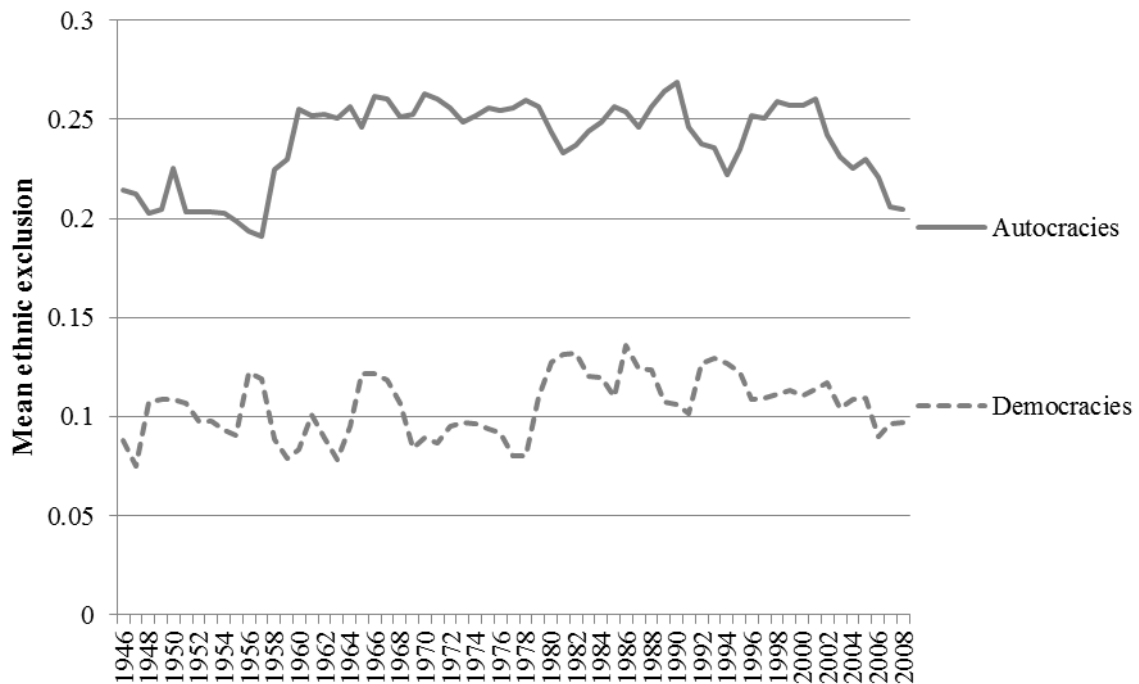
The dotted line in Figure 3.2 indicates the number minority rules. At first sight, the trend seems to reflect the mean level of exclusion very well, but when we take the number of sovereign countries into account there has clearly been a declining trend in minority rules. In 1946, 7 out of 65 countries were minority rules (11%). These were Bolivia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Jordan, Liberia, Nepal, and South Africa. In 2009, only 10 out of 156 countries were minority rules (<1%). These were Angola, Bahrain, Bhutan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa), Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), Guatemala, Jordan, Rwanda, Sudan, and Syria. This declining trend in minority rules is expected. According to Gellner (1983, 1),

there is one particular form of the violation of the nationalist principle to which nationalist sentiment is quite particularly sensitive: if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation [i.e., an ethnic group] other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety.

Given the nationalist principle, we would anticipate a high propensity for ethnic conflict in minority rules. These regimes should be challenged on and off until they tumble, even though this process likely will be protracted, difficult, and bloody (Peleg 2007; Wimmer 2013a; see also Kaufmann and Haklai 2008). This is exactly what we have seen and still are witnessing in several of the remaining minority rules listed above.

In what remains of this chapter, I briefly sketch two additional trends in the development of ethnic exclusion. First, Figure 3.3 depicts the mean level of ethnic exclusion in democracies and autocracies in the years since 1946. The definition of democracy follows Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010, 97), who sees democracies as “those regimes in which executive and legislative offices are filled through contested elections and [autocracies] as those in which they are not.” As touched upon above, we would expect, a priori, that democracies are relatively ethnically inclusive because members of ethnic groups are likely to vote for co-ethnics. However, the fact that elections are contested does not make them fair, and both formal and informal practices might hinder representation of ethnic groups. As shown in Figure 3.3, the level of ethnic exclusion in autocracies is roughly double of that in democracies and this pattern is quite stable throughout the period. Notably, the mean level of exclusion was just below 0.10 in democracies in both 1946 and 2009 and just above 0.20 in autocracies in the same years. With less than 1% minority rules in 2009, these numbers might seem high (at least from a Western point of view), but as Min, Cederman, and Wimmer (2012, 17) note, the most frequent configuration in the EPR dataset is one in which the majority group dominates political power while 10–20% of the population belongs to ethnic groups without political representation at the center. In particular, it might seem surprising that democracies are not more immune to ethnically exclusive practices, but, as we know from many plural societies, there is often a thin line between electoral democracy and ethnically exclusive majority rule; clearly, there are no guarantees for the few in the rule of the many.

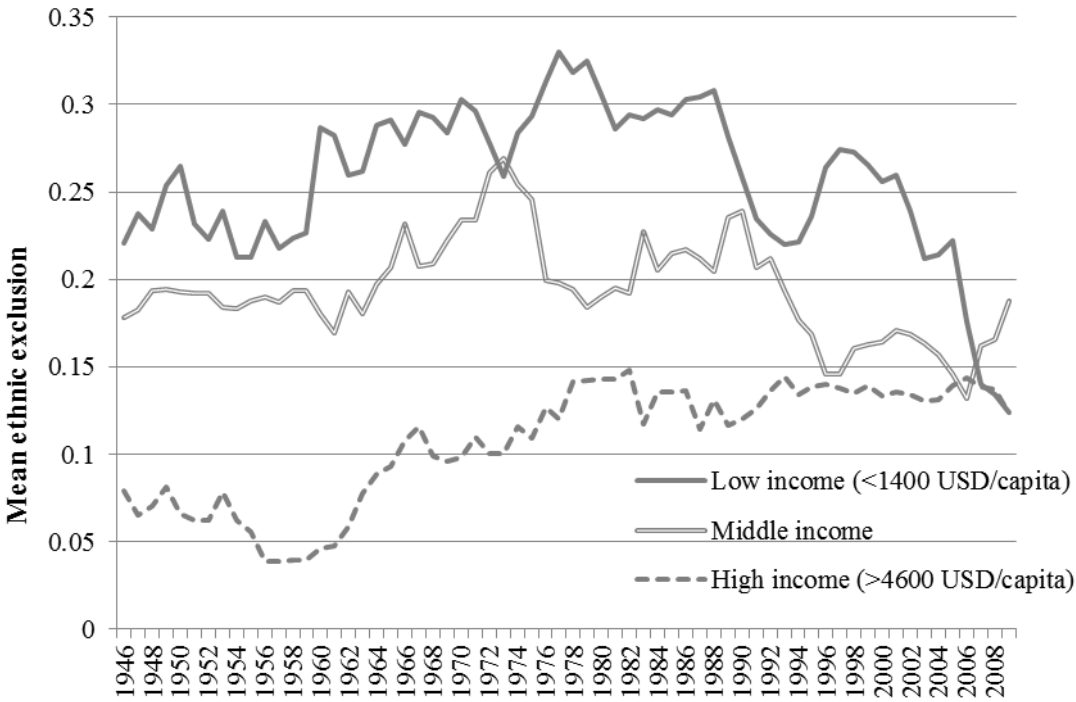
Figure 3.3: The mean level of ethnic exclusion in democracies and autocracies, 1946–2009



Note: The figure is based on the EPR-ETH v2.0 dataset. The coding of democracy/autocracy is based on Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010).

Finally, Figure 3.4 illustrates the mean level of exclusion at different income levels in the same period. As we would intuitively expect, poor countries (operationalized as those with average yearly incomes of less than 1400 U.S. dollars) have generally been the ones excluding the largest share of their populations. However, wealth has seemingly become a less significant predictor of ethnic exclusion since the 1980s, and from the mid-2000s the trend more or less disappears. An important explanation for this development is probably that rich countries used to be mainly Western countries with a history of political liberty. Today, we see affluent countries with vastly different political structures as, for instance, illustrated by the impressive standard of living in the Gulf region. Of course, it needs to be taken into account that there are fortunately a lot fewer poor countries in today's world. But that does not change the picture of absolute poverty becoming a worse predictor of ethnic exclusion. In 2009, the poorest countries were on average as inclusive as the large group of wealthy countries, while the middle-income countries were the most ethnically exclusive with a mean of almost 0.20.

Figure 3.4: The mean level of ethnic exclusion at different income levels, 1946–2009



Note: The figure is based on the EPRE-ETH v2.0 dataset. Low-, middle-, and high-income countries are operationalized according to the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> percentile of the average level of GDP per capita (constant 1990 U.S. dollar; from the Maddison Project, Bolt and van Zanden 2014) for all countries in the dataset from 1946 to 2009.

## Chapter 4: Types of political violence and previous findings

It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that Nature should dissociate, and render men apt to invade and destroy one another.  
- Thomas Hobbes (1991 [1651], 89)

In this chapter, I describe the three types of political violence featured in the stylized sequence presented in Chapter 1: violent repression, armed resistance, and civil war. Then, in the last section, I summarize previous quantitative studies focusing on ethnicity and political violence, thereby paving the way for the main findings of the dissertation presented in the next chapter.

### 4.1 Violent repression

According to Davenport (2007, 1), “[s]tate repression includes harassment, surveillance/spying, bans, arrests, torture, and mass killing by government agents and/or affiliates within their territorial jurisdiction.” In general, these coercive measures violate individuals’ physical integrity rights as well as what broadly has been termed “First Amendment-type rights,” that is, freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and movement (Davenport 2007, 2). This latter type of repression clearly has some conceptual overlaps with the definition of ethnic exclusion as proposed in Chapter 3, and it would be difficult to imagine an excluded ethnic group for which the First Amendment-type rights are not violated. This is so because governments typically restrict groups’ organizational and cultural freedom in order to deny them access to the state (as also discussed in Chapter 3). For this reason, I narrow down the concept of state repression to only include those government strategies that violate the physical integrity of individuals, what I term violent repression. Thus, when government agents or their affiliates engage in political imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial killings, “disappearances,” and the like, we can speak of violent repression.

Why would political authorities decide to use violence against their own population? In a rational choice perspective, authorities can be expected to engage in violent repression if the anticipated benefits of doing so exceed the costs and at the same time exceed the difference between the benefits and

costs of engaging in alternative strategies (i.e.,  $B_{Rep.} - C_{Rep.} > B_{Alt.} - C_{Alt.}$ ). What is of benefit to rulers is typically considered in terms of what increases their chance of staying in power (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Alternative strategies for reaching this goal include nonviolent forms of repression, various forms of concessions, cooptation, diversionary strategies, and, of course, doing nothing (e.g., Conrad 2011; Escribà-Folch 2013; Svobik 2012; Tir and Jasinsky 2008). Although this makes for a complex calculus, it seems quite clear that governments use coercion when they perceive a situation as being threatening. According to Davenport (2007, 7), “[w]hen challenges to the status quo takes place, authorities generally employ some form of repressive action to counter or eliminate the behavioral threat; in short, there appears to be a ‘Law of Coercive Responsiveness.’” Supplementing this law-like pattern, Nordås and Davenport (2013) argue that repression also is used to preempt challenges. Although their study focuses on demographic pressures, it suggests more generally that rulers pick up signals of potential resistance and balance their repressive strategies in order to prevent overt dissent (Nordås and Davenport 2013, 928). In Paper 1, I explicate why ethnic exclusion should be expected to increase the likelihood of violent repression. In short, political authorities in ethnically exclusive regimes face inherent demands for political change, and the alternatives to violent repression are insufficient, ineffectual, or overly costly.

Yet violent repression often ends up being a costly strategy in the long run. Repression may backfire and lead to greater movement mobilization (Hess and Martin 2006), especially if directed at nonviolent protesters (Lichbach 1987; see also Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Moore 1998) and if indiscriminately targeted at an entire community rather than at actual dissidents (cf. Mason and Krane 1998). Violent repression also signals that the government cannot be reasoned with, which, in turn, may intensify challengers’ demands and make them turn to armed resistance (Goodwin 2001; see also Sánchez-Cuenca and de la Calle 2009; Young 2013). As such, repression also becomes an opportunity factor for those hoping to overturn the regime with means of violence, and radicals will often try to provoke repressive state responses in order to strengthen their mobilization efforts (Goodwin 2001, 48–50).

Turning to the relevant data sources, the most commonly used indicators of state repression are the physical integrity rights index from the Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Data Project (CIRI) and the Political Terror Scale (PTS). Both indicators focus on state repression that violates the physical integrity of individuals and are thus useful for the purpose of the dissertation. The CIRI indicator is an additive index coded based on regimes’ use of disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and torture.



Each of these four variables is scored 0 for a country if it in a given year experiences 50 or more instances of the respective violations. The score 1 is given for 1–49 instances in a year and the score 2 when no instances were reported (Cingranelli and Richards 1999; 2010). The CIRI index thus ranges from 0 to 8 where 8 indicates a country that did not use violent repression in a given year, and 0 indicates a country that experienced at least 50 instances of “disappearances,” 50 instances of extrajudicial killings, 50 instances of political imprisonment, and 50 instances of torture in a given year. The data is coded yearly from 1981 onwards for all sovereign states in the world.

PTS also measures political imprisonment, torture, killings, and related forms of abuses but on a 5-level scale (Wood and Gibney 2010). PTS is coded annually since 1976 and the levels are,<sup>24</sup>

- 1: Countries under a secure rule of law, people are not imprisoned for their views, and torture is rare or exceptional. Political murders are extremely rare.
- 2: There is a limited amount of imprisonment for nonviolent political activity. However, few persons are affected, torture and beatings are exceptional. Political murder is rare.
- 3: There is extensive political imprisonment, or a recent history of such imprisonment. Execution or other political murders and brutality may be common. Unlimited detention, with or without trial, for political views are accepted.
- 4: Civil and political rights violations have expanded to large numbers of the population. Murders, disappearances, and torture are a common part of life. In spite of its generality, on this level terror affects those who interest themselves in politics or ideas.
- 5: Terror has expanded to the whole population. The leaders of these societies place no limits on the means of thoroughness with which they pursue personal or ideological goals.

Both indicators are coded based on human rights reports, specifically U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and Amnesty International Annual Reports.

Figures 4.1a and 4.1b illustrate the development of violent repression across geo-cultural regions for the period 1976–2009 based on PTS.<sup>25</sup> As shown in Figure 4.1a, the average level of violent repression in the West is

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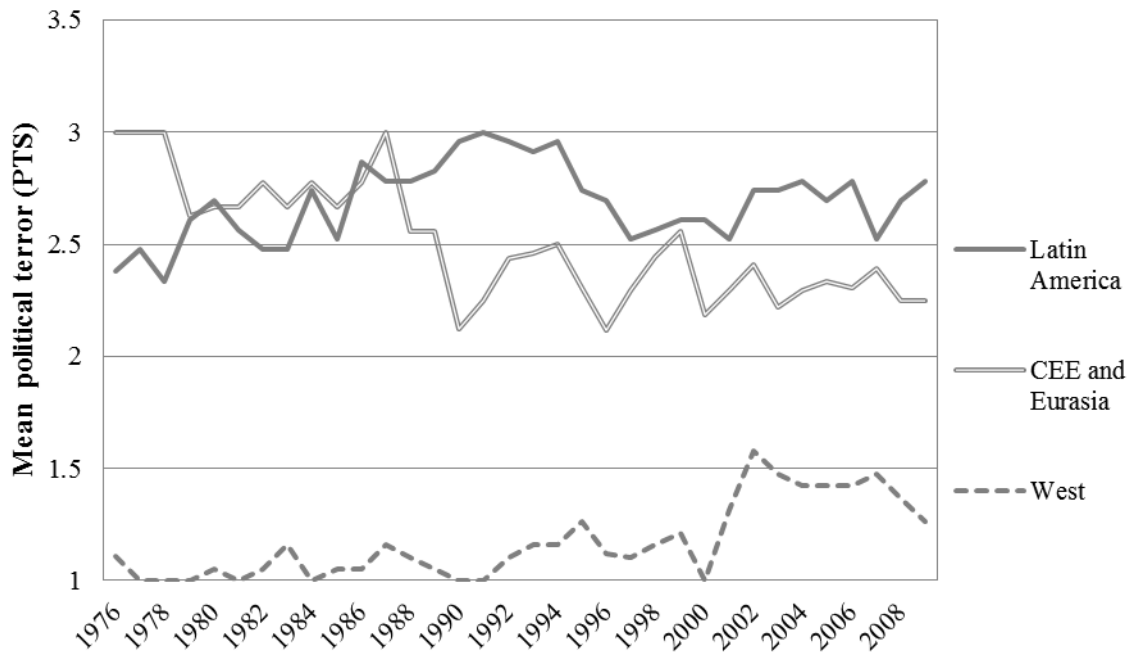
<sup>24</sup> From <http://www.politicalterroryscale.org/Data/Documentation.html>

<sup>25</sup> Although the data is coded through 2014, the time scope is confined to 2009 to match the descriptive statistics presented in earlier chapters.

close to 1 in most parts of the period, that is, people rarely experience violent repression. In Latin America, the same score was just below 2.5 in 1976 and just above 2.5 in 2009. The average Latin American country is thus somewhere between “a limited” and “an extensive amount” of political imprisonment. In Central and East Europe and Eurasia the mean level of political terror has seemingly dropped since the mid-1980s and is now well below 2.5. Not surprisingly, the drop coincides with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolution.

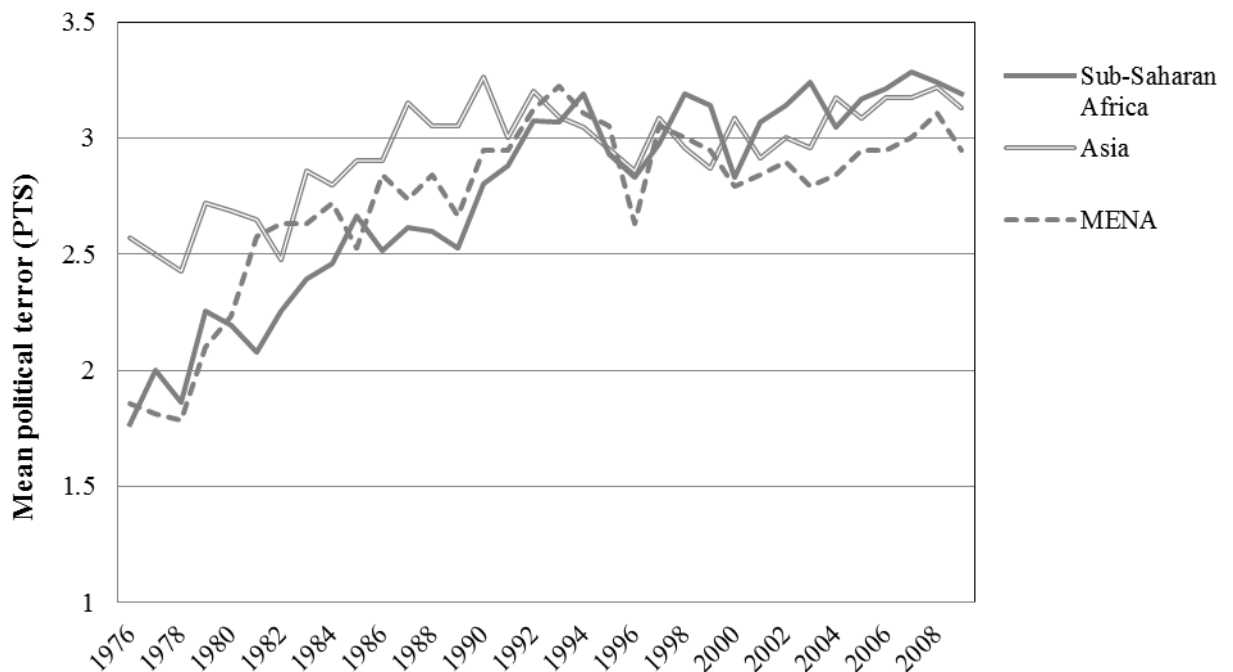
The picture is more dramatic in Figure 4.1b, which indicates that all three regions, Asia, MENA, and Sub-Saharan Africa, have experienced increasing levels of violent repression. The average country in MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa even moves from a PTS score denoting limited political imprisonment to one denoting extensive political imprisonment. As we shall see below, the two decades from the mid-1970s saw an increasing number of civil wars, and increased political instability due to democratization processes, economic crisis, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union may also explain some of this upward trend in violent repression. However, there is reason to believe that the data might overestimate this trend, and even that the world has become a more peaceful place in terms of political terror. According to Clark and Sikkink (2013), changes in both the quality and availability of information about human rights violations make it problematic to make inferences about changes in human rights over time. An act of state violence is simply more likely to be reported in 2009 than in 1976. Moreover, this “information effect” is probably larger in some countries than in others. This would also explain why Asia, MENA, and Sub-Saharan Africa see the largest upward trends as many countries in these regions have been relatively closed until recently. Accordingly, when using these state repression indicators it is important to account for potential biases in the data collection by controlling for both temporal and spatial trends.

Figure 4.1a: Violent repression across geo-cultural regions, 1976–2009



Note: PTS coding based on U.S. State Department reports.

Figure 4.1b: Violent repression across geo-cultural regions, 1976–2009



Note: PTS coding based on U.S. State Department reports.

Fariss (2014) has recently introduced a latent variable estimate of violent repression that is designed to account for this “changing standard of accounta-

bility” in human rights data. The variable is constructed based on PTS and CTRI as well as a number of other data sources including Harff and Gurr’s (1998) data on massive repressive events and Rummel’s (1997) data on “democides.” Each data source is taken to reflect a latent level of repression in society, and the estimation technique entails that the level of repression for a country in a given year is not only based on the observed level of repression in that year but also on previous observations of repression in the same country (see also Schnakenberg and Fariss 2014). Aside from addressing the temporal bias, an advantage is that the data covers the entire period for which repression data is available, that is, from 1949 onwards. On the downside, the data has little yearly variation and might not be as useful for indicating sudden up- or downswings in repression, for instance, due to regime and policy change.

## 4.2 Civil resistance campaigns

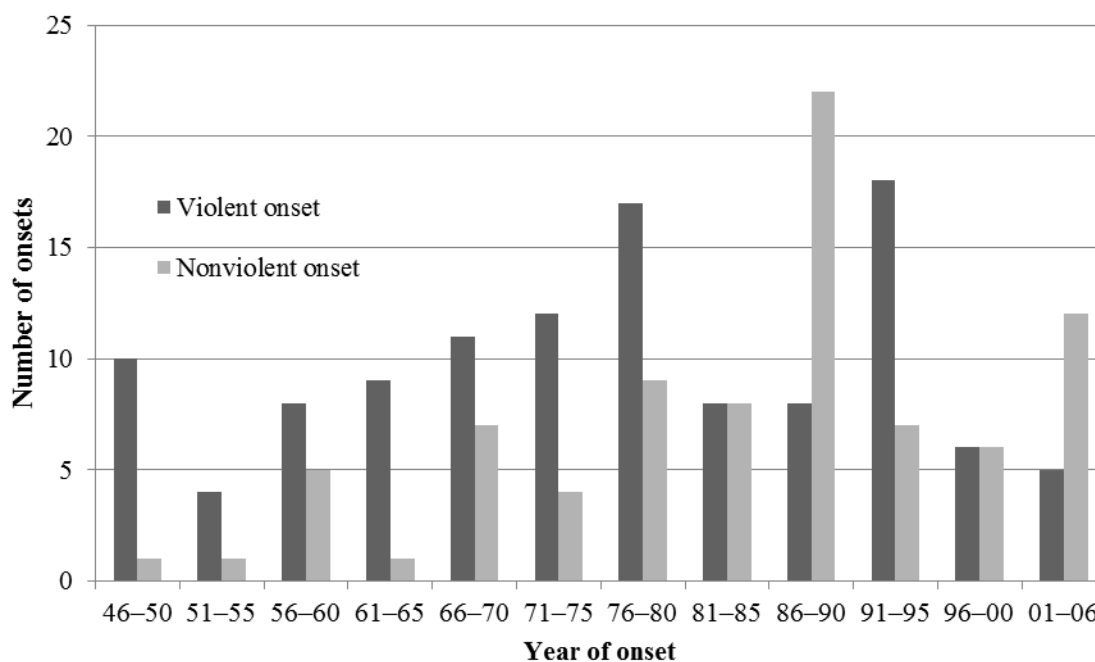
The second dependent variable of the dissertation, civil resistance campaigns, has received a lot attention since the Arab uprisings that took place from the beginning of 2010. One of the most important questions after the so-called “Arab spring” is why popular uprisings emerge nonviolent in some countries and violent in others (Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013). I address this question in Paper 2 with regard to ethnic exclusion, but generally we would expect challengers to choose tactics based on their anticipated chance of success weighed against the cost of engaging in those tactics (Cunningham 2013, 292). For instance, if peaceful struggle and armed resistance are expected to be equally likely to succeed, challengers will pick the strategy that they deem less costly.

Nonviolent resistance campaigns are mass movements that seek to change the political status quo by means of nonviolence such as strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, peaceful picket, and sit-ins. One of the more famous examples of a nonviolent resistance campaign is the Tiananmen Square protests. In the spring of 1989, students used the death of General Secretary Hu Yaobang to mobilize for nonviolent resistance against the Communist regime, and only four days into the campaign more than 100,000 protesters gathered in Tiananmen Square (Nepstad 2011, Ch. 2). Although the movement tactics were peaceful, primarily marches and sit-ins, the Communist Party’s willingness to use force to quell the protest became evident with the June 4 massacres. Interestingly in an ethnic conflict perspective, the government, which was aware that the security forces in Beijing would be unwilling to use violence against their protesting “brothers and sisters,” mobilized troops from outside the region to do the dirty work, includ-

ing soldiers from Inner Mongolia who did not speak Mandarin and thus would be immune to the protesters' pleas (Nepstad 2011, 35).

Although the resistance tactics associated with these campaigns overlap with the description of “anti-government mobilization” in Chapter 1, it is important to note that their mass-based, continuous, and purposive character surpasses what is demanded of anti-government mobilization (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013). That is, ethnic groups can mobilize to challenge the government without engaging in a nonviolent resistance campaign, which, accordingly, is not necessarily a part of the escalation process displayed in Figure 1.1. Rather, as I argue in Paper 2, nonviolent campaigns in the making may turn into armed resistance as a reaction to violent repression. Resistance campaigns can thus also be violent if the protesters hoping to change the political system primarily engage in armed tactics. The beginning of ANC's previously mentioned rebellion in the mid-1980s is a good example: “The barricades of the South African insurrection were manned by the township youth, for most part teenagers, who dubbed themselves ‘comrades.’ In roving bands, utilizing the hit-an-run tactics of the guerilla, armed with petrol bombs, paving stones, and the occasional gun, they sought to nullify Pretoria's control of the townships” (Price 1991, 192). The contrast between the political action of the Chinese and the South African youth could not be much clearer.

Figure 4.2: Onsets of violent and nonviolent civil resistance campaigns, 1946–2006



Note: Based on NAVCO 2.0; Chenoweth and Lewis 2013.

The NAVCO 2.0 data project provides information on 250 nonviolent and violent civil resistance campaigns and covers the period 1945–2006 (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013). Campaigns are defined as mass movements that seek to change the political system – for instance by overthrowing the rulers, creating an independent state, or expelling foreign occupiers – and have at least 1,000 observable participants over a continuous period of time. Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of violent and nonviolent campaign onsets for consecutive five-year periods between 1946 and 2006. The figure only includes 199 campaign onsets, 116 violent and 83 nonviolent ones, because non-sovereign countries and countries with less than 500,000 inhabitants are not taken into account (corresponding to the selection criteria in the EPR dataset). As shown, violent campaigns have generally emerged more frequently, particularly in the first four decades after World War II. Aside from this trend, the two five-year periods around the end of the Cold War are particularly noteworthy. From 1986 to 1990, there were 22 nonviolent but only 8 violent campaign onsets, and from 1991 to 1995 there were 18 violent and 7 nonviolent onsets. This illustrates that the “campaign contagion” witnessed in the Arab world in 2010 was no one-time affair. This diffusion logic was, of course, also pronounced in the 1848 Revolutions in Western Europe (Weyland 2009). Likewise, the peaceful campaigns in the five-year period before 1991 include not only the Tiananmen Square protests but also the so-called Revolutions of 1989, which spread throughout much of Central and Eastern Europe. In Paper 4, I discuss some of the rebellions that comprise the spike in violent onsets in the first five years after the end of the Cold War. These were not only triggered by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia but also by the pressure for democratization, which much of the developing world has encountered in the post-Cold War period.

### 4.3 Civil war<sup>26</sup>

Rulers facing armed resistance are unlikely to stay in power if they do not respond. They can either accommodate the rebels’ demands or use their coercive capacity and engage in counterinsurgency. If they choose the latter strategy and violence becomes two-sided, we typically speak of armed conflict, or civil war. Since World War II, armed conflicts have been much more pronounced within than between countries. In the post-Cold War period, there have been between 30 and 50 ongoing armed conflicts each year, and less than a handful have been interstate wars (Pettersen and Wallensteen

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<sup>26</sup> Parts of this section have been published in Danish in *Politica* (Rørbæk and Skaaning 2016).

2015). Although the number of civil wars is staggering, it is worth noting that a significant part of these are “protracted conflicts” that erupted in the early post-colonial years and for which the underlying conflicts never have been effectively solved (see Fearon and Laitin 2003). Just think of the recurring fighting in Israel or Myanmar.

Over the last two decades, the scholarly interest in the causes of civil war has vastly increased. In the next section, I look more carefully at the quantitative research investigating the motivational factors behind civil war, but prominent studies have likewise delved into the opportunities for fighting. Collier and Hoeffler (2004; see also Collier and Hoeffler 1999) find that the availability of finances, potential recruits, and rough terrain are important explanations of civil war onset, and Fearon and Laitin (2003) show that factors such as political instability, incomplete democratization, and previous fighting are the same. Importantly, these studies indicate that ethnic grievances cannot explain the outbreak of armed conflict. Additional opportunity factors include refugee flows, which may expand rebel networks and spread subversive ideologies and arms across borders (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006), and large youth cohorts, which provide opportunity for rebellion because young people have relatively low opportunity costs (Urdal 2006).

The UCDP/PRIO database provides yearly data on armed conflicts since 1946 (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Pettersson and Wallensteen 2015). In contrast to other data sources that restrict “civil war” to violent incidents with 1,000 or more battle-related deaths per year, the database includes all instances of fighting between a rebel organization and the government within a sovereign country where at least 25 people are killed in battle in a year. A civil war onset can thus be regarded as the first year of a new armed conflict where the number of deaths reaches this lower threshold. Ethnic civil wars are typically defined as armed conflicts where the fighting parties are mobilized along ethnic lines (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 79; see also Kaufman 1996; Sambanis 2001). The dissertation follows an operationalization where civil wars are coded “ethnic” if the relevant rebel organization claims to represent an ethnic group and at the same time recruits soldiers among that group’s members (based on the ACD<sub>2</sub>EPR dataset; Bormann et al. 2014; Wucherpfennig et al. 2012; see also Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013: 69).<sup>27</sup>

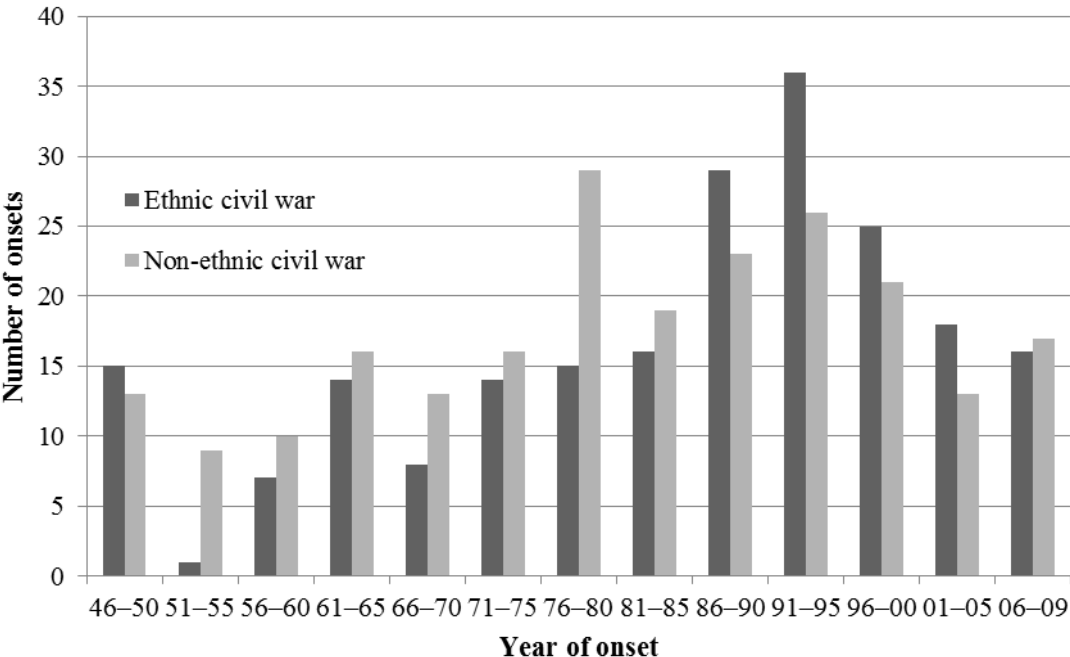
Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of ethnic and non-ethnic civil war onsets from 1946 to 2009. Contrary to Denny and Walter (2014), who find that almost two out of three civil wars since World War II have been related to ethnicity, the figure indicates that the proper estimate is just about half (228

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<sup>27</sup> For an alternative data source, see Bartusevičius 2016.

out of 472).<sup>28</sup> As shown, non-ethnic civil war onsets dominated until the mid-1980s after which ethnic civil wars have been predominant. One possible explanation for this pattern is, as mentioned, that the end of the Cold War removed rebel leaders' incentive to mobilize in ideological terms (Fearon and Laitin 2000, 869). However, as also illustrated, the distribution of ethnic and non-ethnic war onsets has balanced out in recent years. This could indicate that the predominance of ethnic civil war characterized a particular historical period, but recent armed conflicts such as in Syria and Ukraine would suggest otherwise.

Figure 4.3: Onsets of ethnic and non-ethnic civil war, 1946–2009



Note: Based on ACD2EPR Version 2014 (Wucherpfennig et al. 2012; update by Bormann et al. 2014). Ethnic civil war is operationalized as war dyads (minor armed conflicts) in which a rebel organization claims to represent an ethnic group and recruits soldiers from that group.

### 4.4 Previous findings

Numerous informative studies have over the last decades investigated how factors related to ethnicity affect the types of political violence discussed above. In this section, I outline some of the research that is most important

<sup>28</sup> Denny and Walter's (2014, 201) operationalization focuses on whether the aim of a conflict is related to ethnicity, and they consider only cases that exceed 1,000 battle deaths.



for the purpose of the dissertation, namely quantitative findings that examine the potential effect of ethnic diversity and of ethnic power relations.

Does ethnic diversity matter for political violence?

It seems fair to say that no real consensus has been reached regarding the diversity-violence relationship. Examining the number of politically motivated killings in 64 countries in the mid-1970s, Brown and Boswell (1997) find that ethnic diversity is negatively associated with political violence when the level of separatism in a country is taken into account. This finding suggests that violence in ethnic conflicts such as those in the immediate post-Cold War period are intensified by separatism, and that ethnic fractionalization actually makes rebellions less likely because ethnic competition undermines collective action (Brown and Boswell 1997, 112, 127). In contrast, Lee et al. (2004) argue in line with the arguments presented in Chapter 2 that ethnic groups have advantages in mobilizing for collective action. They therefore suspect that political authorities in fractionalized countries are more likely to use repression because they more often face mobilized opposition. However, assessing this argument in a global sample of countries for the period 1976–1993, they find little evidence that the level of violent repression (based on the Political Terror Scale) should be significantly different in ethnically diverse and ethnically homogenous countries (Lee et al. 2004, 197; see also Walker and Poe 2002; Walker 2007). Mousseau (2001) offers one potential explanation for this finding, namely that ethnic fractionalization only matters for political violence under certain circumstances. Accordingly, he shows that the effect of democratization on the risk of politically motivated killings is augmented by ethnic fractionalization (Mousseau 2001, 561–562; see also Fein 1995).

Concerning armed conflict, Sambanis (2001) shows that ethnic fractionalization does not affect the likelihood of civil war onset in 161 countries for the period 1960–1999. However, he finds a positive and statistically significant effect of ethnic fractionalization when only outbreaks of ethnic civil war are included in the analysis. By contrast, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005) find that it is not ethnic fractionalization but rather ethnic polarization that increases the risk of armed conflict. This finding suggests that fighting is more likely to occur in countries with a few large ethnic groups than in countries with several small groups. Studies have also found that certain ethnic boundaries make civil war particularly likely. Reynal-Querol's (2002) results indicate that countries with religious divides are more likely to see armed conflict than countries with linguistic divides (see also Roeder 2003). Laitin (2000), who analyzes minority groups using the MAR data,

likewise finds that language differences do not increase the likelihood of rebellion. As mentioned above, Fearon and Laitin (2003), among others, question the general notion that ethnic diversity should explain outbreaks of civil war. In their words, “ethnic antagonisms, nationalist sentiments, and grievances often motivate rebels and their supporters. But such broad factors are too common to distinguish the cases where civil war breaks out” (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76).

### Including ethnic power relations

It should not be overly surprising that conflict scholars do not agree about the potential effects of ethnic diversity. Most theories about nationalism and ethnic politics do not propose a direct causal relationship between ethnicity and conflict (see Chapters 2 and 3), which suggests a need for sounder theoretical operationalization. Stating this point, Cederman and Girardin (2007) present a first attempt to quantify ethnic groups’ access to the state. They find a positive effect of their  $N^*$  index, which measures the degree to which demographically significant ethnic groups are excluded from state power, on civil war onset in Eurasia and North Africa (Cederman and Girardin 2007, 181). Disputing the robustness of this finding, Fearon, Kasara, and Laitin (2007) show that regimes with ethnic minority leaders are, at most, weakly associated with higher risk of civil war onset.

However, recent improvements, particularly in terms of data and analytical tools, have provided strong evidence that exclusion along ethnic lines increases the risk of armed conflict. In support of Cederman and Girardin’s (2007) original finding, Buhaug, Cederman, and Rød (2008) show that civil war is more likely between the government and an excluded ethnic group if the latter is of a significant demographic size. Employing geocoded data, they are also able to show that excluded groups’ distance to the center and the roughness of the terrain they populate positively affect the risk of armed conflict (Buhaug, Cederman, and Rød 2008). The study thus stresses the advantages of combining motivation- and opportunity-based explanations.

Introducing the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset, Wimmer, Cederman, and Min (2009) find, first, that rebellion is more likely when large sections of the population are excluded from central state power; second, that infighting occurs when a large number of ethnic elites share power in a segmented state; and, third, that secessions are more frequent in countries with low state cohesion and without a long history of direct rule by the center. Adapting a disaggregated, group-level analysis of the same data, Cederman, Wimmer, and Min (2010) complement these findings by showing that conflict with the government is more likely when ethnic groups are ex-

cluded from state power, are large in size, and have experienced past conflicts. Cederman, Weidman, and Gleditsch (2011) combine geocoded data with spatial wealth estimates and show that both political and economic inequality between ethnic groups increase the risk of war.

The EPR dataset has also been used to answer related research questions. Roessler (2011), for example, finds that ethnic groups in Africa that are included in national politics are significantly more likely to execute coup d'états, especially if the power-sharing government consists of co-conspirators, that is, elites from different ethnic groups who have collaborated in illegitimately seizing power. As expressed by Robert Mugabe, sharing power with co-conspirators is like having “a cobra in a house” (Roessler 2011, 311). Wucherpfennig et al. (2012) investigate war duration and show that rebel organizations that represent excluded ethnic groups fight for longer periods. The argument is simply that “politically excluded groups harbor grievances that increase collective group solidarity and render individual fighters more cost tolerant. This, in turn, facilitates the durability of rebel organizations” (Wucherpfennig et al. 2012, 80). Asal et al. (2015) find that excluded ethnic groups' likelihood of fighting is further increased by oil wealth in their settlement areas, which constitutes a commitment problem that is difficult to resolve given the political status of the excluded group. Jazayeri (2015), who focuses on the Middle East and North Africa, shows that countries in this region have higher propensity for popular protest when large segments of the populations are excluded from political power based on their ethnic affiliation. More surprisingly perhaps, her findings indicate that the ethnic exclusion-protest relationship is particularly salient in the MENA region (Jazayeri 2015, 16).

In line with these highlighted studies, the four papers included in the dissertation are meant to deepen our knowledge about ethno-political conflict. In the next chapter, I present the main findings in the papers before concluding on their implications and limitations in Chapter 6.



## Chapter 5: The main findings of the dissertation

This chapter summarizes each of the dissertation's four papers according to motivation, theory, research design, and findings. The focus will be on the empirical results, which will be supplemented by tables and figures from the respective papers.

### 5.1 Maintaining ethnic dominance: diversity, power, and violent repression (Paper 1)<sup>29</sup>

#### Motivation

As stressed above, previous quantitative studies have reached contradictory conclusions regarding the relationship between ethnic diversity and political violence. Should we expect political authorities in ethnically fractionalized countries to be more likely to engage in violent repression than their counterparts in homogenous countries? In the most recent attempt to answer this question, Walker (2007) finds modest support for a negative relationship between ethno-linguistic fractionalization and physical integrity violations and concludes that the literature needs to investigate the conditions under which ethnicity comes to matter for political violence. The first paper of the dissertation follows up here and suggests that an unequal distribution of political power between ethnic groups, rather than ethnic diversity per se, should make rulers violate the physical integrity of their citizens.

#### Theory

In modern societies, ethnic groups compete for power, and groups that are excluded from access to the state will be motivated to change the political status quo. Power-holding groups, on the contrary, want to maintain the current political order, which is in their interest (Peleg 2007; Wimmer 2013a). Based on this simple assumption, rulers in ethnically exclusive regimes can be expected to engage in violent repression for two reasons, both of which reflect their threat perception. First, members of the excluded population are more likely to support or engage in behavioral challenges, which demand a coercive state response. Second, political authorities, who are aware of the

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<sup>29</sup> The paper is co-authored by Allan Toft Knudsen and forthcoming in *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (Rørbæk and Knudsen 2015)

latent demand for political change, have incentives to use repression preemptively and thereby hinder overt challenges to their rule (Davenport 2007; Nordås and Davenport 2013). As described in Chapter 4, the political order in these regimes is typically founded on curtailed civil liberties, and co-optations and concessions are unreliable and insufficient to satisfy popular demands for political inclusion. Accordingly, when the share of the population that belongs to excluded ethnic group increases, so does the average level of violent repression in a country.

### Research design

The paper investigates this argument by combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. First, the statistical analysis includes 157 countries and covers the period 1977–2010. Both the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) physical integrity rights index and the Political Terror Scale (PTS) are included as indicators of violent repression, and the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset is used to estimate the effect of ethnic exclusion (see Chapters 3 and 4). In order to test whether the ethnic composition of society can explain the variance in violent repression, the analysis also includes models where ethno-linguistic fractionalization and polarization are the main predictors.

The second empirical part of the paper is a case study selected based on the established cross-sectional pattern. The qualitative analysis assesses whether the correlation between ethnic exclusion and violent repression reflects the theorized relationship of aggrieved ethnic groups posing a threat to the political authorities, who, in turn, come to rely on violent repression to maintain their ethnic dominance. Out of 17 identified high-exclusion/high-repression cases suitable for in-depth analysis, the Republic of Guinea in the 1990s is analyzed based on secondary sources.

Table 5.1: Ethnic diversity, exclusion, and violent repression

	(1) CIRI	(2) PTS	(3) CIRI	(4) PTS	(5) CIRI	(6) PTS
Ethno-ling. fract. (ELF)	0.15 (0.09)	0.35 (0.27)				
Ethnic Polarization			0.10 (0.08)	0.20 (0.26)		
Ethnic Exclusion <sub>t-1</sub>					0.24** (0.09)	0.60** (0.22)
Executive Constraint <sub>t-1</sub>	-0.09** (0.01)	-0.23** (0.04)	-0.09** (0.01)	-0.23** (0.04)	-0.09** (0.01)	-0.23** (0.04)
GDP/capita <sub>t-1</sub> (log)	-0.17** (0.03)	-0.44** (0.10)	-0.17** (0.03)	-0.45** (0.10)	-0.18** (0.03)	-0.46** (0.11)
Population Size <sub>t-1</sub> (log)	0.18** (0.02)	0.43** (0.06)	0.18** (0.02)	0.43** (0.06)	0.18** (0.03)	0.41** (0.06)
Oil and Gas <sub>t-1</sub> (log)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.009)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.009)	0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.008)
Armed Conflict <sub>t-1</sub>	0.63** (0.06)	1.02** (0.16)	0.63** (0.06)	1.02** (0.16)	0.62** (0.06)	1.12** (0.16)
Fixed effects	Region-Year	Region-Year	Region-Year	Region-Year	Region-Year	Region-Year
Observations	3913	4636	3913	4636	3838	4273
Countries	157	156	157	156	151	150

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ . + $p < 0.10$ . CIRI models show OLS coefficients with heteroskedastic, panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. PTS models show ordered-logit coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses (clustered by country). One-year lagged repression included in all models (not shown to save space).

## Findings

The main statistical results from Paper 1 are presented in Table 5.1. As shown, the analysis finds no statistically significant effect of ethno-linguistic fractionalization or polarization on the level of violent repression in a country when other relevant factors such as democracy (proxied by executive constraint), income, and population size are controlled for. By contrast, the share of the population belonging to excluded ethnic groups is positively and statistically significantly associated with violent repression. The result is robust when either CIRI or PTS is used as the dependent variable as well as under several alternative specifications. To name a few, the main result holds after control for civil liberty restrictions, judicial independence, and protest events, when country fixed effects are included in the model, and when instrumental variable estimation is employed to account for the potential endogeneity of ethnic exclusion.

Next, the qualitative analysis shows that the theoretical argument has leverage on the case level. The excluded Malinké and Peul groups, which together comprised some 70% of the Guinean population, used political openings in the early 1990s to challenge the Susu regime headed by President Lansana Conté. The authorities' threat perception is clearly displayed in speeches and statements, and the use of violent repression, which increased in the 1990s, was especially targeted at members of the Malinké group who supported the main contender for power (and today's ruler of Guinea), Alpha Condé.

## 5.2 Ethnic exclusion and civil resistance campaigns: opting for nonviolent or violent tactics? (Paper 2)<sup>30</sup>

### Motivation

Paper 2 asks whether we should expect ethnic exclusion to be one of the factors that affect whether civil resistance campaigns are more likely to erupt nonviolently or violently (cf. Chapter 4)? This question has not been explicitly discussed in previous accounts. Cunningham (2013, 296), who focusses on strategic choices in self-determination disputes, argue that ethnically excluded groups, because they cannot influence the political process through conventional means, are “more likely to choose irregular tactics, either violent or nonviolent.” Jazayeri (2015, 6) reaches a similar prediction about protest dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa, but neither Cunningham nor Jazayeri finds that ethnic exclusion increases the propensity for nonviolent resistance campaigns. Paper 2 argues, contrary to the expectations raised thus far in the literature, that challengers should be anticipated to favor violent over nonviolent resistance tactics in ethnically exclusive regimes.

### Theory

Following Della Porta's (2013, Ch. 2) notion of “escalating policing,” the paper argues that the inclination to counter and preempt dissent with violent repression in these regimes, as established in Paper 1, should have two effects on the potential for civil resistance. The first effect is *deterrent* because repression increases the cost of protesting, thereby discouraging moderate regime opponents from participating. The next effect is *inflammatory* because state violence helps convince would-be moderates that armed re-

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<sup>30</sup> The paper is currently under review.

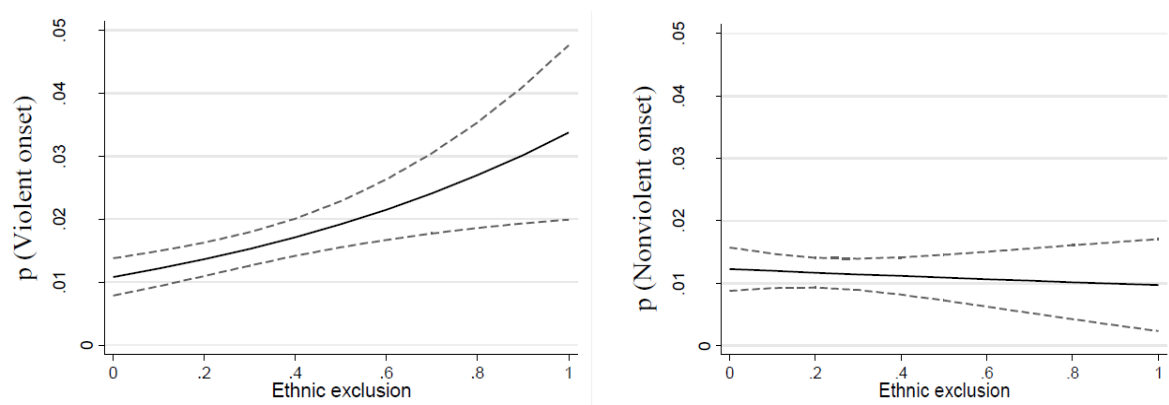


sistance is justified. This latter effect is both emotional (caused by fear or rage) and strategic as peaceful resistance comes to be seen as futile (Goodwin 2001; White 1989). All in all, violent repression increases the likelihood that challengers become dominated by radicals, that is, those committed to the use of armed resistance. The paper explicates why this escalation process should be particularly prevalent in countries where a large part of the population belongs to ethnic groups without access to the central state.

## Research design

The argument is tested quantitatively in a sample of 161 countries for period 1950–2006. The key variables in the analysis are outbreaks of civil resistance campaigns based on the NAVCO 2.0 dataset and ethnic exclusion from the EPR dataset (see Chapters 3 and 4). To test the mediating argument regarding the influence of violent repression, I rely on Fariss’ (2014) latent variable estimate, which matches the theoretical argument of the study and covers a broader time frame than alternative indicators. The empirical investigation proceeds in three steps. First, I present descriptive statistics showing that the majority of nonviolent resistance campaigns have occurred in ethnically inclusive regimes, whereas the majority of the violent ones have occurred in countries where more than 20% of the population belongs to ethnic groups without access to the central state. Next, I assess the relationship in a multinomial logit model, which enables me to test whether the relative likelihood of violent campaign onset increases with the size of the excluded population. Finally, I employ causal mediation analysis to test whether, and to what extent, the association between ethnic exclusion and armed resistance is driven by ethnically exclusive regimes’ tendency to use violent repression (see Hicks and Tingley 2011).

Figure 5.1: The predicted probability of violent and nonviolent campaign onset



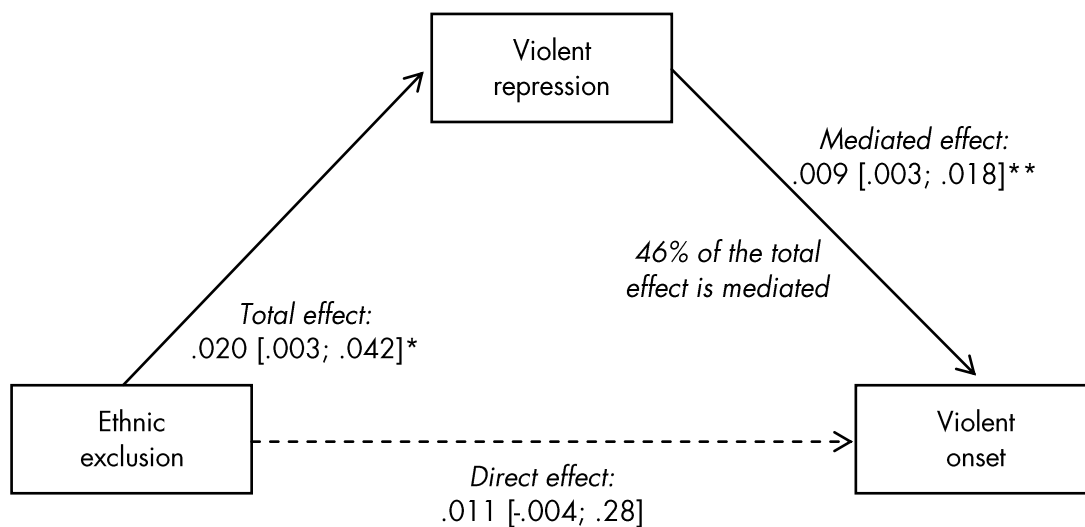
Note: The dotted lines are 90% confidence intervals. All other variables held at their means.

## Findings

Figure 5.1 reports the probability that violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns will occur at different levels of ethnic exclusion when other relevant factors are controlled for. As shown, the probability of armed resistance increases significantly, whereas nonviolent mass movements actually seem to become less likely when the size of the excluded population increases. The finding is supported by additional tests showing that the two coefficients are statistically significantly different. However, this is no longer the case when the level of violent repression in a country is controlled for, which calls for a more thorough examination of the possible mediating relationship.

The results of the mediation analysis are illustrated in Figure 5.2. The mediated effect is, as shown, statistically significant and accounts for almost half of the total effect of ethnic exclusion on violent campaign onset. By contrast, the direct effect of ethnic exclusion is statistically insignificant. The study thus lends support to the proposition that armed resistance becomes more likely in ethnically exclusive regimes because of the authorities' tendency to rely on violent measures of political control.

Figure 5.2: Causal mediation analysis



Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , + $p < 0.10$  (two-tailed tests).

## 5.3 Killing in the name of ...? Ethnic group identities and civil war (Paper 3)<sup>31</sup>

### Motivation

The literature is somewhat split when it comes to the potential effects of ethnic group identities on the propensity of armed conflict. Several studies have stressed how specific types of ethnic groups, in particular groups characterized by religious identities, should be particularly likely to mobilize for violent conflict. Another line of research builds on the inclusive conception of ethnicity as presented in Chapter 2 and to a large extent takes for granted that ethnic groups' tendency to mobilize for violent collective action is unrelated to the identity type around which their members are mobilized. There are at least two reasons to delve into the relationship between ethnic group identities and civil war, as done in this paper. First, the two lines of research can hardly be true at the same time. Second, some of the most prominent studies in the literature pool all ethnic groups without accounting for their identity types, and if the conflict behavior of ethnic groups in fact differs according to the identity type around which group members are mobilized, then the conclusions drawn from these studies may be misleading.

### Theory

The paper focuses on the four most common ethnic identity types: religion, language, race, and regional belonging (Wimmer 2013, 8; see also Wimmer 2015b). Religious identities are often regarded as being particularly conflict prone because modern religions are exclusive (people only have one) and imply different ways of understanding the world (Huntington 1996; Reynal-Querol 2002). Racial identities have in the same way been described as more fixed and less fluid than other ethnic identities, which should makes racial divides particularly salient for divisions of power and political conflict (Cornell and Hartman 1998: Ch. 2). Linguistic divides, by contrast, have been argued to have the potential to contain violence because governments find it relatively easier to compromise in language conflicts, while linguistic minorities at the same time face particular collective action problems (Laitin 2000). There are thus good reasons to expect that different types of ethnic groups have different propensities for being involved in armed conflict. However, based on the inclusive conception of ethnicity, we would expect that the mo-

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<sup>31</sup> A Danish version of the paper is published in *Politica* (Rørbæk 2016).

tives and opportunities to mobilize for violent collective action on average are equally distributed across ethnic group identities.

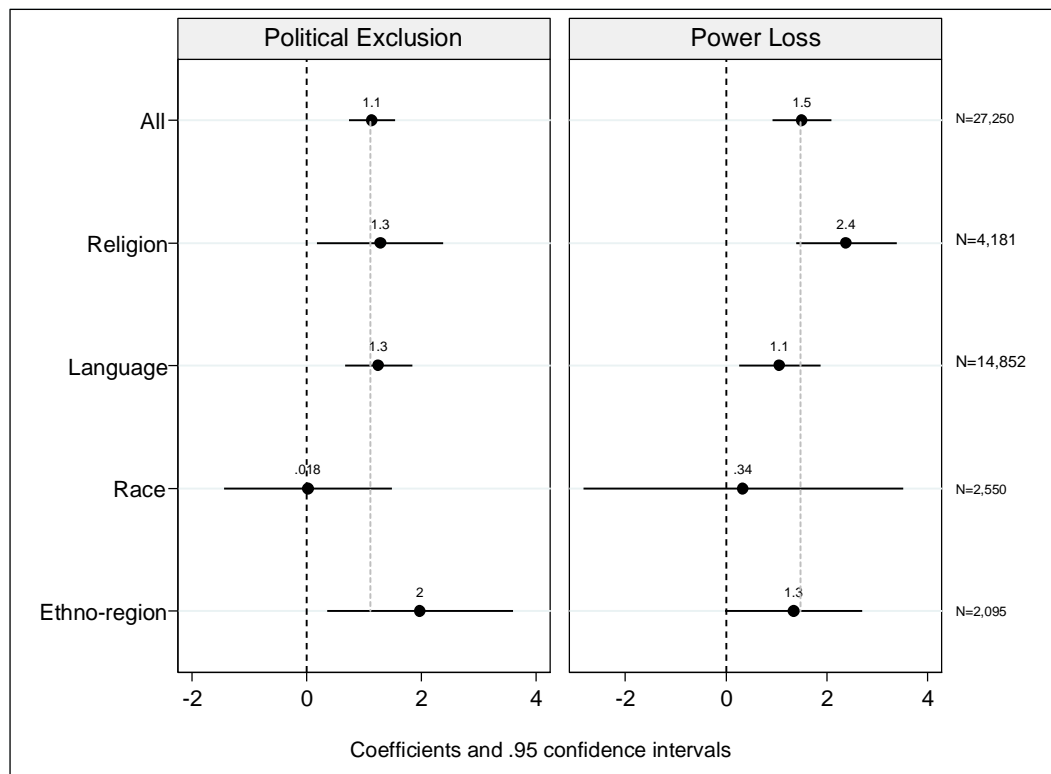
### Research design

The empirical part of the paper tests the potential effects of ethnic group identities quantitatively by combining the EPR data with newly released codings of ethnic group identities (from Wimmer 2015b). Specifically, the analysis replicates Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug's (2013, Ch. 4) analysis of political exclusion and civil war, only ethnic group identities are added to the statistical model as a group-level covariate. Each ethnic group in the dataset is assigned an identity type based on the relevant ethnic boundary around which its members are mobilized. For example, ethnic groups are coded as religious if people qualify for membership based on their religious or sectarian affiliation such as Protestants/Catholics in Northern Ireland or Muslims/Catholics/Orthodox in Bosnia. To match the theoretical foundation, the identity types are allowed to change over time, and groups whose members are not mobilized based on one predominant identity type are coded in a "mixed" category (see Wimmer 2015b).

### Findings

First of all, the results show that Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug's (2013, Ch. 4) findings remain almost unchanged when ethnic group identities are accounted for in the model. That is, relevant factors such as political exclusion, power loss, and group size remain statistically significant predictors of civil war onset. However, whether an ethnic group is mobilized around religion, race, language, or regional belonging does not seem to affect its likelihood of being involved in an outbreak of armed conflict. The different identity types are statistically insignificant across various model specifications, and neither a direct nor an indirect effect can be identified.

Figure 5.3: The effects of political exclusion and power loss on civil war onset across ethnic group identities



Note: The numbers of observations (N) in each group are reported on the right hand side of the figure. Additional covariates are held at their means.

Figure 5.3 reports the results of testing for a potential moderating effect of ethnic group identities. The figure compares the effects of political exclusion and power loss on civil war onset across ethnic group identities. As shown, the coefficients for each identity type are not statistically distinguishable from the coefficients of the total sample (“All”). This indicates that ethnic groups that are politically excluded or recently have experienced power loss on average have the same propensity for being involved in an outbreak of civil war if their members are mobilized around a religious, linguistic, racial, or regional identity.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, the study lends support to an inclusive conception of ethnicity and suggests that the escalation process proposed in Chapter 1 is equally likely across identity types.

<sup>32</sup> The full interaction models give the same result.

## 5.4 How does ethnic exclusion lead to civil war? A medium-N appraisal (Paper 4)<sup>33</sup>

### Motivation

As discussed in the last section of Chapter 4, recent quantitative studies have convincingly shown that politically excluded ethnic groups are more likely to rebel. What is lacking in this line of research is a systematic assessment of the potential causal relationship driving this correlation. Most quantitative studies have been rather implicit in this regard; however, Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013, Ch. 3) propose a causal path between ethnic exclusion and civil war onset where the perceived injustice of being politically excluded motivates anti-government mobilization, which turns violent because of repressive state responses. In this last paper of the dissertation, I present observable implications for the relevant causal mechanisms and test the theory by analyzing 16 cases in a medium-N research design. The study is thus intended to assess the theoretical argument behind the ethnic exclusion-civil war relationship proposed by quantitative studies and thus, more generally, to add to our knowledge about ethnic conflict escalation.

### Theory

The grievance-based argument formulated by Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013, Ch. 3; see also Chapter 1) centers around two main mechanisms, or processes, on the causal path from ethnic exclusion to civil war onset, namely “mobilization” and “repression.” The argument is state-centric in the sense that it is the political structures that motivate ethnic groups to mobilize and the government response that, subsequently, incites them to take up arms and rebel (see also Goodwin 2001). The paper explicates the theory, which is rather generally formulated, to involve two sequentially related causal mechanisms. These mechanisms are operationalized in line with the discussion in previous chapters: “Mobilization” should be observed as expressions of grievance such as demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, and other claim making based on excluded groups’ perceived injustices, which signals an intention to challenge the regime. “Repression” should be observed as physical sanctions such as political imprisonment, torture, and killings committed by state agents or their affiliates, which when indiscriminately targeted at members of an excluded group increase support for armed resistance.

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<sup>33</sup> This is a working paper.

## Research design

To better assess the causal mechanisms and thus make sure that inferences are made on a correct basis, the paper employs qualitative analysis (e.g., Brady and Collier 2004; Gerring 2007). The theory has already found support in several single-case studies such as those sketched in Chapter 1 (Price 1991; White 1989; see also DeVotta 2004), and the medium-N approach is chosen in order to qualify the extent to which the proposed mechanism can be observed across the relevant cases. To address the quantitative studies as directly as possible, the case selection is based on the EPR dataset. The sample is a sub-population composed of all excluded ethnic groups represented by a rebel organization that enjoys large support from the same groups' members and is involved in an outbreak of major armed conflict (more than 1000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict) that occurred in the post-Cold War period. The cases are deliberately chosen on both the independent and dependent variable because of the overall aim of assessing the causal process by which the two are connected (see Hall 2006; Mahoney and Goertz 2006).

The analysis is based on secondary sources including descriptions of the relevant conflict processes in academic books and journal articles, news reports, and human rights reports. The case evidence is presented in an online appendix together with the relevant sources, and the empirical part of the paper focuses on discussing and interpreting the findings. The 16 analyzed cases are listed in Table 5.2 together with the main findings of the analysis.

## Findings

As shown in Table 5.2, the proposed causal path is observed in the 5 of the 16 cases in which both of the operationalized mechanisms are present. The more general notion of grievance-based mobilization leading to armed conflict is observed in three other cases (Abkhazians in Georgia 1992, Serbs in Bosnia 1992, and Chechens in Russia 1994), but in these rather specific cases the ethnic groups' demands for secession were neither accommodated nor repressed. Instead, the groups managed to take control of their home regions in the context of the collapsing Soviet and Yugoslav empires before the emerging civil wars broke out. I thus interpret these as cases of "de facto secession." In half of the 16 cases, the analysis does not suggest a causal relationship between ethnic exclusion and civil war onset. In these cases, which I interpret as "war recurrences," the excluded groups' involvement in civil war were directly caused by previous or ongoing warfare, and in some of the cases the ethnic groups had even become politically excluded because of their involvement in the relevant armed conflict.

All in all, the study does not indicate that the theory is wrong but rather that its scope needs to be restricted to the first escalation into two-sided violence in a conflict process. Subsequent relapses cannot be explained by excluded groups' perception of being discriminated against. Accordingly, as I discuss in the conclusion, the paper suggests that the broadly recognized effect of ethnic exclusion on civil war onset needs to be reevaluated under a confined empirical scope. The conclusion also discusses the implications and limitations of the dissertation more broadly in light of these case studies.

Table 5.2: Summary of findings

Case (excluded ethnic group, country, and year of civil war onset)	Causal mechanism 1: Anti-government mobilization	Causal mechanism 2: Violent repression	Alternative/ contradictory path
Abkhazians in Georgia 1992	✓		De facto secession
Adibasi Janajati in Nepal 1996	✓	✓	
Albanians in Serbia and Montenegro 1998	✓	✓	
Armenians in Azerbaijan 1991	✓	✓	
Chechens in Russia 1994	✓		De facto secession
Chechens in Russia 1999			War recurrence
Fur in Sudan 2003	✓	✓	
Hutus in Rwanda 1997			War recurrence
Hutus in Rwanda 2009			War recurrence
Pashtun in Afghanistan 1995			War recurrence
Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992	✓		De facto secession
Shan in Myanmar 1993			War recurrence
Sunnis in Iraq 2004			War recurrence
Tajiks in Afghanistan 1996			War recurrence
Tutsi-Banyamulenge in Democratic Republic of the Congo 1996	✓	✓	
Uzbeks in Afghanistan 1996			War recurrence

Note: Check marks indicate positive evidence of the respective mechanism. It follows from the sequential logic of the theory that the second mechanism only can be present if the first one is the same. Cases with two check marks are considered to support the theoretically proposed causal path.



## Chapter 6: Implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research

The dissertation has proposed a simple, sequential argument of ethnic conflict escalation according to which political exclusion motivates ethnic groups to challenge the political authorities, who are likely to respond with violent repression, thereby increasing the risk of armed resistance. When the armed protesters, or rebels, are countered by the government forces, the sequence ends with an outbreak of civil war (see Figure 1.1). Previous research has found compelling evidence for an overall association between political exclusion of ethnic groups and civil war, but the underlying mechanisms driving this association have with few exceptions not been firmly theorized or empirically investigated.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, the contribution of the dissertation is twofold. First, the escalation process of ethnic conflicts has been explicated, particularly in terms of a sequential logic. Second, the analyses undertaken in the dissertation go further than previous accounts in assessing the relevant mechanisms. By scrutinizing ethnic conflict escalation using both quantitative and qualitative data, I have attempted to identify generalizable patterns and to validate them on the on the case level, thereby increasing the inferential leverage (Brady and Collier 2004; Gerring 2007; Tarrow 2004).

The four papers, which constitute the backbone of the dissertation, generally lend support to the sequential argument. When ethnic groups are politically excluded, violent repression becomes more likely (Paper 1), which, in turn, increases the probability that challengers will take up arms (Paper 2). Civil wars often erupt on this background (Paper 4), and the escalation process is not conditioned on whether the descent-based attribute by which ethnic groups are mobilized relates to religion, language, race, or regional belonging (Paper 3). Hence, in line with recent advancements in the literature, the findings suggest that power struggles between ethnic groups are among the main culprits when it comes to political violence in ethnically diverse societies.

To illustrate the real-world relevance of these findings, take the current civil war in Syria, which has been strongly present in the general public for

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<sup>34</sup> See Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug (2013, Ch. 3) for a theorization of the political exclusion-civil war relationship and Sambanis and Zinn (2006, unpublished paper) for an empirical assessment of conflict escalation in self-determination movements.

almost five years. First, the arguments presented in the dissertation suggest that the high-level ethnic diversity in the country is not the direct cause of the political violence. Instead, the Alawi-dominated minority rule that followed from the decolonization process can be seen as the foundation for the conflict (Haklai 2000; Horowitz 1985, 492–496). In line with the constructivist position, the ethnic structures in Syria should thus not be regarded as a cause but as an “arena” for the conflict, which became activated as a consequence of political transformation and elite incentives to utilize these structures. Next, and perhaps more boldly, the dissertation suggests that the civil war would have occurred even if the ethnic boundary between the Alawis and the Sunni Arabs had not been religious but, say, linguistic.<sup>35</sup> That is, in the counterfactual situation where the power structures were the same but the identity types had changed, ethnic conflict escalation should still be expected. In support of this argument, the Kurdish population fighting in northern Syria is mobilized as a language group. Note, however, that the dissertation has not investigated the potential relationship between ethnic group identities and related phenomena such as war duration and the intensity of civil wars (in terms of battle death). In that sense, religious mobilization may still play a part. Finally, the arguments stated in the dissertation suggest that the Syrian government’s use of violent repression in response to the initially peaceful protest in 2011 has played a decisive role in radicalizing the opposition (see Macleod 2011; New York Times 2011). Recent studies of the civil war seem to concur. According to Hinnebusch, Imady, and Zintl (2016, 245), the “non-violent struggle was gradually undermined by the Syrian regime’s disproportionate use of force, by self-fulfilling sectarian rhetoric, and by the opposition’s turn to armed struggle.” To paraphrase the JFK quote used in Chapter 1, by making a peaceful Syrian revolution impossible, the Assad regime made a violent Syrian revolution if not inevitable, then at least much more likely.

A couple of policy recommendations may be warranted at this time. As shown in Figure 1.1, the escalation process can be brought to a halt at each step in the sequence. At the risk of stating the obvious, a more equal distribution of political power would diminish the risk of violence. There is a broad literature that delves into the potential for conflict management in divided societies by means of institutional engineering, perhaps most famously characterized by Lijphart’s (1977) notion of “consociational democracy” (see also Reilly 2001; Sartori 1997). However, as discussed by Horowitz (1985, Ch. 14–16), the problem with these institutional solutions to ethno-political strug-

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<sup>35</sup> The Alawi community is a Shia sect but like the Sunni majority in the country, the Alawis speak Arabic.

gles is that they typically require low levels of conflict to begin with. That is, the arrow points in the opposite direction: group parity and intergroup cooperation condition the possibility for building well-functioning institutions. Horowitz (1985, 576) is quite explicit in his skepticism about Lijphart's theory: "[T]he Asian or African regime which declares that it has a grand coalition probably has, not a consociational democracy, but an ethnically exclusive dictatorship." In the last section of the chapter, I give one explanation for why premature transitions to democracy in divided societies can increase the risk of armed conflict. A less pervasive step in many conflict-prone societies would be to guarantee all significant ethnic groups at least some representation at the center, including in the administration and the army.

When ethnically exclusive regimes already are in place, we need to pay particular attention to the link in the sequence that connects anti-government mobilization and violent repression. When protesters-turned-rebels have already taken up arms, the window of opportunity for avoiding large-scale violence is closing fast. Yet when challengers make their initial demands there is still time to maneuver. Although rulers in ethnically exclusive regimes are prompted to rely on violent means of political control, it might still be possible to push their calculus towards accommodation. Economic incentives might be one possibility, sheer force might be another. Considering the impact of the Syrian civil war, in terms of not only human suffering but also instability in the Middle East and Europe, few world leaders will not have looked back in hindsight at the first peaceful gatherings in the streets of Dara'a, Baniyas, Homs, and Damascus considering what could have been done differently.

The findings of the dissertation are, however, not only confirmatory. A number of questions and concerns were raised, some of which I address in the remainder of this concluding chapter. In particular, I will discuss the main argument of each of the four papers and suggest some directions for further research in light of the case studies carried out in connection to Paper 4.

## 6.1 On violent repression

The analyzed cases generally show that citizens' physical integrity is at great risk in ethnically exclusive regimes. In five of the eight cases where excluded ethnic groups mobilized to challenge the central government because of perceived injustices, violent repression followed as a direct consequence (see Table 5.2). Yet the mechanism by which this took place was not always as straightforward as it may appear from the discussion above. For example, the immediate violent response to the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians' de-

mand for secession was carried out by civilian Azerbaijani, and the victims were Armenians from outside the break-away republic (see Croissant 1998). Although the violence was state sanctioned, it would be interesting to further investigate how political authorities' threat perceptions correspond with their ethnic constituencies and how these "affiliates" react accordingly. Alternatively, what might be interpreted as rational state responses could be a combination of lack of state authority and an enraged or self-interested public acting with impunity.

Recalling Davenport's (2007) so-called "Law of Coercive Responsiveness," it may also come as a surprise that three other demands for secession (Abkhazians in Georgia, Chechens in Russia, and Serbs in Bosnia) were not immediately countered with repression. Yet what the analysis showed was that the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia paralyzed the national governments or at least postponed effective government responses. These "de facto secession" cases illustrate some of the challenges of predicting state violence. Authorities in unstable regimes have the highest incentives to repress their citizens but may not have the capacity to do so.<sup>36</sup> And when the repressive response comes, the state's lack of capacity is likely to make it ham-handed. A particularly interesting avenue for future research would be to investigate when political authorities are able to engage in selective, targeted repression and when they have to rely on indiscriminate state violence. Although it seems reasonable to expect that state weakness and ethnic exclusion favor the latter (Goodwin 2001; Roessler 2011; see also Mason and Krane 1989), such arguments have not been thoroughly explored empirically.

## 6.2 On civil resistance

Concerning civil resistance, the case studies show that protesters as predicted do take up arms as a response to violent repression. For instance, as stated by Rasmush Haradinaj, one of the key figures in the Kosovo Liberation Army,

people initially choose the easy way. They always wanted to believe that they wouldn't have to pay the higher price for achieving what they wanted ... [but we] didn't have much choice at that time. We knew that we could be killed one way or the other – in the prisons of Serbia, by being assassinated, or by resisting them directly. We knew that, every day, we could be one of those; we

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<sup>36</sup> Likewise, the most repressive governments in the world will rarely find it necessary to engage in large-scale violence against civilians.

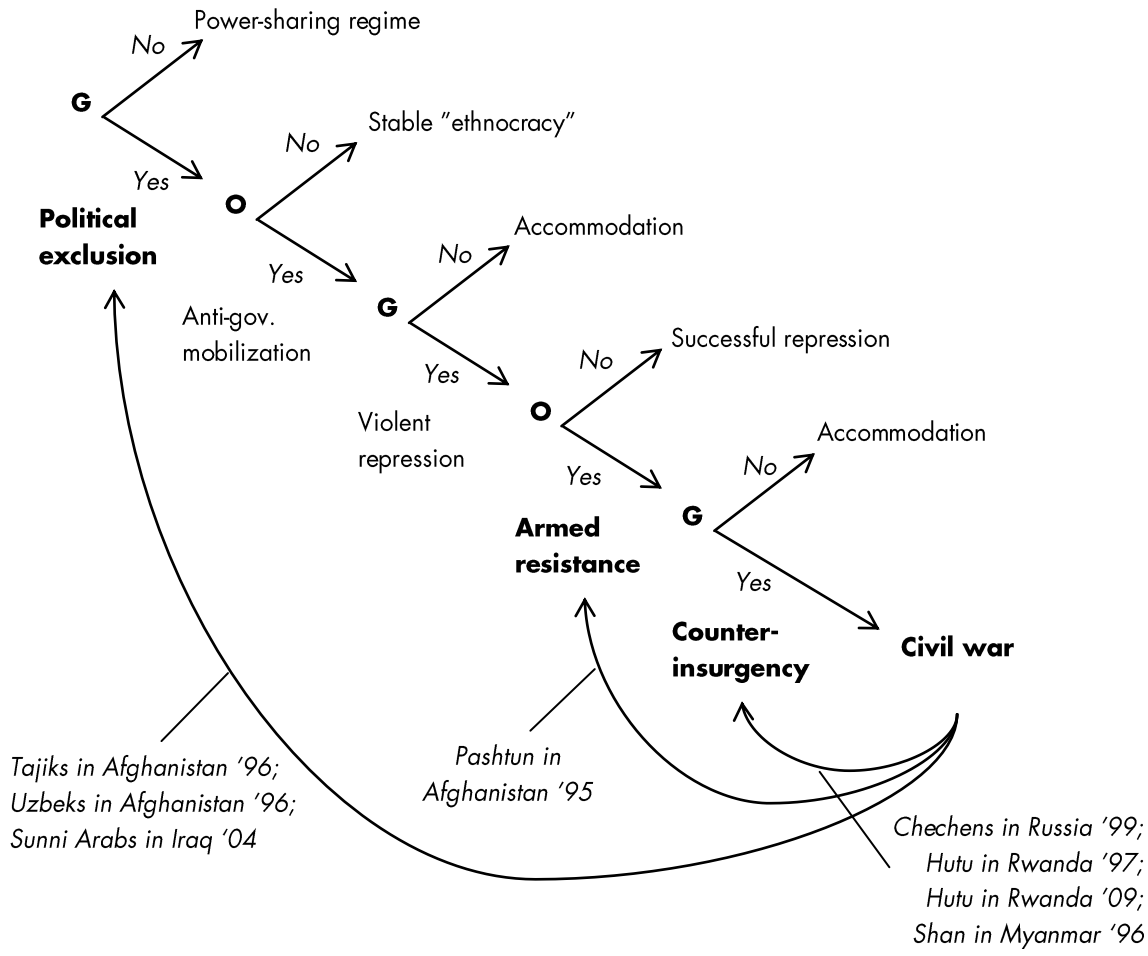
could be killed. There would be no warning. We had no choice but to fight. (in Perritt 2008, 1)

Such evidence strengthens the validity of the theoretical argument. However, the “war recurrence” cases identified in Paper 4 challenges the notion that ethnic exclusion increases the likelihood of armed resistance because of violent repression. An alternative explanation might simply be that challengers opt for violent tactics because they have become radicalized by previous warfare. Accordingly, endogeneity concerns loom large in these inherently violence-prone contexts.

Figure 6.1 depicts the “war recurrence” cases in relation to the stylized sequence explicated in Chapter 1. Most seriously, the qualitative analysis shows that in three of the eight cases, ethnic groups had become politically excluded as a result of the armed conflict and not the other way around (see Table 5.2). I illustrate this in Figure 6.1 with the feedback arrow from civil war to political exclusion. In one case (Pashtun in Afghanistan), the excluded ethnic group was not mobilized to fight because of perceived injustice based on political exclusion but because of already ongoing war in the country. I illustrate this in Figure 6.1 with the feedback arrow from civil war to armed resistance. In the remaining four cases, the excluded group had an already functioning rebel organization from previous warfare, and the new war “onset” was not a rebellion but a counterinsurgency strategy initiated by the government to remove the latent threat of a new rebellion or to restore territorial control. I illustrate this in Figure 6.1 with the last feedback arrow leading from civil war to counterinsurgency. As I argue in Paper 4, most research in the field has focused on why groups or people rebel, and much more could be done to explain the opposite side of the coin, namely why and when governments seek to defang rebels.

As also argued in Paper 4, a more elaborate research agenda would benefit from concrete initiatives to weed out in the sources of endogeneity. I suggest two specific data procedures to approach this goal. First, ethnic groups should not be coded as politically excluded unless they were without political influence during the last period of peace in a given country. This procedure would mean that the three cases in Afghanistan as well as the Sunni Arabs in Iraq would not have been coded as being politically excluded (see Table 5.2). Second, intermediate periods between consecutive armed conflicts should only be coded as periods of peace if rebel organizations are demobilized and their soldiers lay down their weapons. Following this procedure, the four cases of the last feedback arrow in Figure 6.1 would be coded as “civil war relapse” and not “civil war onset.”

Figure 6.1: The stylized sequence of ethnic conflict escalation and cases of war recurrence



Note: The figure depicts a two-actor sequence where **G** is the government and **O** is the opposition that represents the excluded ethnic groups. The feedback arrows illustrate the cases of war recurrence, which are listed in the bottom of the figure.

In Syria, by contrast, the armed wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had operated during the armed conflict in the early 1980s, had been demobilized long before the Arab uprisings in 2010. Specifically, the Hama massacre of 1982 effectively ended the Brotherhood’s attempt to rebel (Haklai 2000; Hinnebusch, Imady, Zintl 2016).<sup>37</sup> For this reason, Syria from 2011 onwards can be regarded as a new conflict process. Together, the two procedures will increase the certainty that we actually generalize from the cases where ethnic

<sup>37</sup> According to Hinnebusch, Imady, and Zintl (2016, 230) the Brotherhood’s defeat in 1982 can help explain the relatively slow escalation in Syria in 2011: “Also the Muslim brotherhood had converted to non-violent resistance as a function of the high costs of the 1980s violent insurgency. ... As a result of this [, the Brotherhood] was slow to turn towards violent resistance throughout 2011, in spite of regime violence against protesters.”

exclusion should be expected to cause civil war, that is, a conflict process' first escalation into two-sided violence. Reevaluating key findings in the literature with data adjusted accordingly would significantly increase confidence in the political exclusion-civil war relationship.

Returning to civil resistance more specifically, future research could also add to the dissertation's findings by looking more closely at the different motives for taking up arms. As argued in Paper 2, violent repression may give rise to armed resistance as both a strategic and an emotional choice. But "emotions" is a broad concept that includes factors such as fear, hatred, rage, resentment (Petersen 2002) as well as greed, which has been widely debated as a potential motivational factor behind rebellions (Collier and Hoeffler 1999; Collier, Hoeffler, and Roehner 2009). "Ethnic" violence has even been described as little more than banal thug violence (Mueller 2000) and civil war, more generally, as a theater of violence for opportunistic civilians hoping to "reap all kinds of benefits, including settling accounts with personal and local enemies" (Kalyvas 2006, 14). Accordingly, although some dissidents are motivated by a desire to correct perceived injustice, this is clearly only one of many motives. In that sense, the dissertation might present an overly romantic picture of civil resistance.

### 6.3 On ethnic group identities

The case studies give little reason to reconsider the inclusive conception of ethnicity. Although the analyzed escalation processes often were rather complex, the specific identity types around which groups were mobilized did not seem to matter much. Instead, what seemed to matter was the perception of "us" being discriminated against by "them." However, this does not necessarily mean that ethnic group identities are irrelevant for the exclusion-civil war relationship. One issue identified in the case studies is that group identifications may be an effect of political discrimination. In Sudan, for instance, the categorization of the Fur people as a racial group of *zurga* (blacks) was largely a consequence of Arab supremacism and the desire to turn *Dar Fur* into and *Dar al Arab* (see Flint and de Waal 2005, 51).

Relatedly, because of the selection criteria of "politically relevant" ethnic groups in the EPR dataset (see Chapter 3), the analysis in Paper 3 could not establish whether certain types of ethnic groups are particularly likely to be subjected to political discrimination. That is, although it seems quite clear that the primary identity type around which ethnic groups are mobilized cannot explain the propensity for conflict escalation, groups might still be more likely to be at the initial step of the escalation process, so to speak, because of their specific ethnic identity. According to Caselli and Coleman

(2013), minority groups are more likely to be discriminated against if they can be distinguished by physical appearance (race). The reason is that “visibility” makes it less costly for dominant groups to police their group borders and prevent members of the minority community from passing over (either assimilating or “blending in”). If this argument is correct (and racial groups in fact are more visible, which is not necessarily the case, cf. Paper 3), then we should expect racial groups to be more likely victims of discrimination and thus to be overrepresented in the EPR dataset. Hence, a potential contribution would be to assess the association between ethnic group identities and political discrimination empirically. The new All-Minorities at Risk (AMAR) dataset may make this possible (Birbir et al. 2015a). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the AMAR dataset identifies around 1,200 “socially relevant” ethnic groups. Data on political discrimination and ethnic markers are not available for this population, but Birbir and her colleagues have coded the relevant variables for a subset, which makes it possible to correct the selection bias in the original MAR dataset by weighting the MAR groups against the AMAR groups according to their chance of being among the socially relevant groups (Birbir et al. 2015b). A potential direction for further research would thus be to assess whether ethnic groups that can be distinguished by physical appearance (race) are more likely to be politically discriminated against. This would inform us about the antecedents of ethnic conflict escalation.

## 6.4 On armed conflict

The importance of opportunity structures for explaining outbreaks of armed conflict was rather clear in the analyzed cases. Some of the most important ones were availability of arms, foreign support, and political instability. Regarding the latter, it seems promising to delve into how political openings affect the propensity for ethnic conflict escalation. On the one hand, democratization can be expected to increase the opportunities for collective action because enhanced political liberties function as “coordination goods” (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2010; see also Hegre 2014). On the other hand, democratization can be expected to shrink the excluded part of the population thus diminishing the motivation for protest. However, as illustrated in Chapter 3, democracies are not immune to ethnic exclusion, and if significant ethnic groups remain excluded, then political openings may be like oxidizing a fire. To exemplify, the 1990 constitution in Nepal significantly increased the political liberties in the country, but despite these apparent improvements, the Adibasi Janajati (the country’s indigenous ethnic groups) remained impoverished and subjected to political discrimination. The new constitution’s



inability to address popular grievances increased support for the radical left, and a Maoist rebellion broke out in 1996 (Thapa with Sijipati 2004). The Nepali case suggests that conflict escalation is particularly likely during democratic transition processes that do not effectively address group-based discrimination. It would thus make for an interesting study of the interaction between motives and opportunities for ethnic conflict escalation to combine the EPR dataset with indicators of democratization, for instance from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project (Coppedge et al. 2015) or from the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy (Skaaning, Gerring, and Bartusevičius 2015).

Several important questions regarding ethnic conflict escalation remain. A particularly important one, which has received little attention here, is how to stop ethnic conflicts from escalating. More could also be done to specify the dissertation's scope. The empirical parts of the papers have focused on the post-World War II period, but "the age of nationalism" dates back to the eighteenth century (see Roeder 2007; Wimmer 2013a). It would thus be interesting to investigate whether the escalation process can be identified in pre-World War II cases of ethnic civil war (see Møller 2016). In the same way, one may ask whether the sequential argument proposed here is general enough to encompass ethnic as well as non-ethnic armed conflicts. If not, how do ideological and class-based conflicts escalate? The theoretical part of the dissertation has argued that ethnic groups are more likely to experience discrimination and at the same time are more successful in the mobilization process. But this does not preclude that non-ethnic groups follow similar escalation processes. For instance, Wood's (2003) exemplary study of the civil war in El Salvador suggests that the proposed sequence could also apply to class conflicts:

In 1979, workers struck for higher wages on the Hacienda California, their last attempt to better working conditions through what in many countries would be considered normal forms of worker collective action. National Guard troops billeted on the farm responded with growing violence. As the country lurched toward civil war at the end of the 1970s, brutalized corpses of activists, relatives of activists, and suspected activists appeared overnight where the coastal highway meets the roads going north to the towns of San Francisco Javier and San Agustín. ... But as violence deepened in the area, a few residents joined the FMLN. Many began covertly supporting the insurgent organization. ... [As] one elderly resident of Tierra Blanca (1992) told me; 'in 1979, the people rose up against all this injustice – the origins of the war lie in the holding of land in the hands of a few.' (Wood 2003, 2)

Accordingly, although the dissertation holds that ethnic divides – when politicized – are particularly conflict prone, an obvious direction for further research would be to consider conflict escalation stemming from political exclusion and discrimination more broadly. My own future research will hopefully help to fill some of the lacunas highlighted in this concluding discussion.

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## English summary

In this dissertation, I investigate how ethnic conflicts escalate from a situation in which ethnic groups are excluded from influence over the central state to one in which their members are engaging government forces in open warfare. Previous research has found compelling evidence that political exclusion of ethnic groups is correlated with outbreaks of civil war, but few studies have assessed the mechanisms underlying this relationship. Against this backdrop, I propose a simple, sequential argument of ethnic conflict escalation: 1) Politically excluded ethnic groups perceive their situation as unjust and are thus more likely to mobilize for anti-government protest such as demonstrations and strikes. 2) The political authorities will likely see such mobilization efforts as threatening to their rule and use violent repression to protect their dominant position. 3) However, the reliance on violent means of political control tends to have the unintended effect of radicalizing challengers, thereby increasing the likelihood of armed resistance. 4) Finally, political struggles evolve into civil war when the government counters the protesters-turned-rebels with force (i.e., counterinsurgency).

I adopt an inclusive definition of ethnicity that encompasses group identities related to religion, language, physical appearance (race), regional belonging, and other attributes of common origin as long as the criteria for group membership are related to descent. Although ethnic group identities are changeable they are on average more visible and sticky than non-ethnic identities such as class and ideology and therefore more favorable to political discrimination and group mobilization. Ethnic boundaries are particularly likely to become focal points for political struggles during economic and state transformations in which elites utilize ethnic affiliations to win support. Ethnic groups are considered politically excluded when they are without influence at the executive level of government, including the administration and the army.

The dissertation is based on four papers that theorize and assess different parts of the escalation process. The empirical parts of the papers feature quantitative cross-sectional analyses at the country and group level as well as case studies examining the underlying conflict processes. The results show that ethnic exclusion increases the level of state violence in a country, which, in turn, leads to higher probability of armed resistance. Ethno-political struggles often evolve into civil war following this path, and the escalation process is not conditioned on whether the ethnic groups are mobilized based on a shared religion, language, race, or regional belonging. I thus find support for the dissertation's overall proposition. However, the findings also

raise a number of questions and suggest some limitations. In particular, the case studies show that the political exclusion-civil war relationship is troubled by reverse causality and war recurrences that are not directly caused by groups' discrimination-based grievances. I conclude by arguing for the need to specify the scope under which ethnic conflict escalation is likely to occur and by suggesting several avenues for further research.

I denne afhandling undersøger jeg, hvordan etniske konflikter eskalerer fra en situation, hvor etniske grupper er udelukket fra indflydelse over statsapparatet til en, hvor deres medlemmer er involveret i åben kamp mod regeringsstyrker. Tidligere studier har vist, at politisk eksklusion af etniske grupper er relateret til borgerkrigsudbrud, men de underliggende mekanismer, som driver denne sammenhæng, er kun i få tilfælde forsøgt undersøgt. På denne baggrund fremsætter jeg et simpelt, sekventielt argument angående eskalering af etnisk konflikt: 1) Ekskluderede etniske grupper opfatter deres position som uretfærdig, og vil derfor med større sandsynlighed mobilisere og protestere imod regeringen, fx via strejker og demonstrationer. 2) Magthaverne vil forventeligt se en sådan mobilisering som en trussel og benytte voldelig undertrykkelse for at værne om deres dominerende position. 3) Bruget af voldelige midler for at bevare kontrol medfører imidlertid, at udfordrerne radikaliseres og med stigende sandsynlighed vil benytte sig af væbnet modstand. 4) Den væbnede kamp udvikler sig slutteligt til regulær borgerkrig, når regeringen besvarer oprøret med magt.

Jeg benytter mig i afhandlingen af en inklusiv etnicitetsforståelse, som indbefatter gruppeidentiteter relateret til religion, sprog, race, regionalt tilhørsforhold og lignende karakteristika, såfremt gruppe-medlemskabet er bestemt af individers afstamning. Selvom etniske gruppeidentiteter er foranderlige, er de mere synlige og vedhængende end ikke-etniske identiteter relateret til eksempelvis ideologi og klasse. Af denne grund er de også fordelagtige for politisk diskrimination og gruppemobilisering. Etniske skel bliver ofte omdrejningspunkt for politisk konflikt i forbindelse med økonomiske og statslige transformationsprocesser, hvor eliter benytter etniske tilhørsforhold til at vinde opbakning. Etniske grupper kan anses som værende politisk ekskluderede, når de ingen indflydelse har over den udøvende statsmagt inklusiv administrationen og hæren.

Afhandlingen bygger på fire artikler, som teoretiserer og undersøger forskellige dele af den nævnte eskaleringsproces. De empiriske dele af artiklerne indeholder statistiske analyser på lande- og gruppeniveauet såvel som kvalitative casestudier, der efterprøver de underliggende mekanismer. Resultaterne viser, at etnisk eksklusion øger magthavernes brug af voldelig undertrykkelse, hvilket efterfølgende giver større sandsynlighed for væbnet oprør. Etnisk konflikt udvikler sig ofte til borgerkrig på denne baggrund, og eskaleringsprocessen er ikke afhængig af, om den etniske gruppe er mobiliseret på baggrund af religion, sprog, race eller regionalt tilhørsforhold. Jeg finder dermed generelt set støtte til det fremførte argument. Resultaterne

stiller imidlertid også en række spørgsmål og påpeger nogle begrænsninger. Særligt viser casestudierne, at sammenhængen mellem politisk eksklusion og borgerkrig er plaget af omvendt kausalitet og borgerkrigstilbagefald, som ikke direkte kan forklares af den opfattede uretfærdighed, som stammer fra politisk eksklusion. På denne baggrund fremhæver jeg behovet for at indskærpe genstandsfeltet for, hvornår vi taler om etnisk konflikteskalering, og jeg foreslår en række muligheder for videre studier.