

Ethnic Party Formation and Success:
The Strategic Roles of Reserved Seats, Parties, and Horizontal Accountability

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Abstract:

More than twenty legislatures reserve a portion of seats for ethnic minority groups, often in an attempt to prevent violent conflict and redress historical oppression. The intention of reserved seats coincides with ethnic group objectives—to achieve political representation while maintaining autonomy. Yet the formation and electoral success of ethnic parties does not always follow adoption of a reserved seat system. I explain this inconsistency by taking reserved seats as a necessary but insufficient condition of ethnic party formation, and arguing that two additional conditions must be met to motivate ethnic groups to form a viable party: the failure of the existing party system to respond to group interests and the failure of grievance resolution mechanisms to fairly adjudicate disputes between indigenous groups and the state. I compare this model of ethnic party formation to three case studies—Colombia, New Zealand, and Taiwan—each with a reserved seat system for indigenous peoples but nonetheless exhibiting different levels of ethnic party formation and success. This research makes three significant contributions: it explores how indigenous groups strategically balance autonomy and participation; it suggests reconsidering how ethnic party formation and reserved seats are conceptualized by rational choice approaches; and it points to new ways of thinking about how elites can manipulate reserved seats to cultivate state legitimacy and enforce minority group assimilation.

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INTRODUCTION

Under what conditions do ethnic parties form and become electorally successful? Rational choice approaches emphasize the importance of decreasing institutional barriers such as costly party registration requirements and high effective electoral thresholds. Reserved seats are a way of decreasing the barriers to ethnic minority representation while maintaining group autonomy by formally guaranteeing a particular ethnic group a minimum number of legislative seats (Bird 2014).¹ Yet viable ethnic parties do not always follow directly from reserved seat adoption (Van Cott 2003).

I argue that reserved seats, while functioning as an important reduction in the cost of ethnic party entry, critically fail to address a second cost factor: ethnic minority group assimilation into mainstream political competition and liberal institutions. From this analytical foundation, the decision of ethnic groups to form a party is determined by the balance of assimilation costs and rights preservation. Ethnic minority groups are pressured into this dilemma by established main parties that benefit from the regime legitimacy and stability effects provided by small ethnic party entry.

I conceptualize these interactions as a strategic game played by an established main party and an ethnic minority group with the potential to either form a new party or acquiesce to government demands for assimilation. A key implication of my model is that ethnic party formation can be induced by governing parties willing to manufacture a failure of horizontal accountability. That is, the strategic disruption of grievance resolution mechanisms dedicated to

¹ Bird (2014) identifies three “families” of ethnic quotas: threshold exemptions or proportional seat allocation among ethnic parties, special voting districts which require ethnic group membership to legally cast a vote, and party-list quotas or best-loser mechanisms which incorporate ethnic group representatives into pan-ethnic parties. My use of the term ‘reserved seats’ is to indicate the effect of the first two families; that is, a minimum number of seats are in one way or another legally dedicated to the representation of ethnic groups. The third family of ethnic quotas is more likely to formally and functionally fail this standard and so I exclude it from my definition of reserved seats (Htun 2004).

protecting ethnic group rights and adjudicating reparations settlements—for example, special tribunals—can change the decision calculus of ethnic groups such that party formation and entry into electoral competition becomes the least costly alternative for securing group rights and interests. On the other hand, my theory suggests that established parties too weak to bear the legitimacy cost of rejecting horizontal accountability will back down from their assimilationist challenge to ethnic groups. The game of ethnic party entry also has important implications for the electoral success of newly formed ethnic parties. Specifically, I argue that new ethnic party success is influenced by the reputational effects of players' strategic choices made in the course of the ethnic party formation game.

This research contributes a strategic model of ethnic party formation which incorporates endogenous politicization of ethnic groups by main parties and provides insight on how these ethnic groups strategically balance autonomy and participation. It further suggests how governing elites can leverage reserved seats and horizontal accountability institutions to cultivate state legitimacy and enforce minority group assimilation. Finally, the model gives an example of how rational choice approaches generally, and theories of strategic party entry specifically, conceptualize ethnic party behavior in a way which more accurately reflects the structural inequalities indigenous groups face in postcolonial democracies.

After reviewing existing literature on ethnic party entry in the next section, I introduce a model of ethnic party formation. The implications of this model are then integrated into a theory of new ethnic party success. The empirical part of the paper follows, bringing together the theories of ethnic party entry and success for a test using a diverse case study method (Seawright & Gerring 2008). The paper concludes by identifying some limitations of this research,

directions for future research, and expanding upon the three key contributions of my modified model of ethnic party formation and success.

REEVALUATING ASSUMPTIONS: CONSTRAINTS AND INCENTIVES

Studies of the relationship between electoral institutions and party systems have frequently incorporated ethnic groups into the analysis, either as the central focus of the research question or as a convenient proxy for exogenous social cleavages. Many scholars (e.g., Cox 1997; Harmel & Robertson 1985; Lijphart 1994; Taagepera & Shugart 1989) emphasize the explanatory power of district magnitude—the number of legislative seats in an electoral district—in accounting for new party entry and success. More recently, seats reserved for underrepresented ethnic groups in national legislatures have been considered as an institutional factor in ethnic party formation and success (e.g., Bernauer & Bochsler 2011; Chandra 2005; Htun 2004; Van Cott 2003). However, permissive electoral institutions which reduce the cost of party entry and ethnic minority representation—reserved seats are designed for just this purpose—are not always followed by ethnic party formation or electoral success (Birbir 2004; Van Cott 2003). Yet Lublin (2014) argues electoral rules are more important than ethnic tensions and social cleavages in shaping party systems.

I engage these theoretical tensions in this section for the purpose of clarifying the structure of the game of ethnic party formation. In brief, the electoral system mediates the relationship between social cleavages and the party system, which is in turn influenced by the special conditions of ethnic minority reserved seats and the responsiveness of parties to ethnic group demands. However, which ethnic groups make what demands of parties is endogenous to the competition between parties and among political elites. The resulting ethnic mobilizations

and tensions have important consequences for regime stability and legitimacy, and ethnic minority assimilation and autonomy. These benefits and costs are readily accessible through mainstream parties' interactions with horizontal accountability institutions which, to varying extents, are assigned to resolve disputes between the state and ethnic minority groups.

When do Ethnic Parties Form and Succeed?

Rational choice and political opportunity approaches to party entry have clashed over the sufficiency of permissive electoral systems versus the necessity of political mobilizations of social groups in their respective explanations of the formation of electorally viable parties. Under a rational choice framework, the decision for new party entry as influenced by the electoral institutional environment is defined by the interaction of the benefits of office with the probability of electoral support, less the cost of entry (Tavits 2006). The costs include registration rules (fees, signature requirements) and the threshold of exclusion (minimum share of votes needed to qualify for a seat in the legislature). Hence, higher district magnitudes which functionally lower the vote quota for winning a seat are considered by Ordeshook and Shvetsova (1994) to be the most important factor in explaining party formation and sustainability, although they qualify that this effect is conditional upon the number of issue dimensions with which parties can align themselves. Ordeshook and Shvetsova also find that single member districts render party systems impervious to underlying ethnic heterogeneity. However, more recent studies have provided nuance to the relationship between electoral system proportionality and ethnic party entry by accounting for the territorial distribution of politically active ethnic groups relative to district magnitude (Bochsler 2011; Lublin 2017; Morelli 2004; Mozaffar et al. 2003)

and legal entry requirements with spatial conditions, e.g., signatures or local offices in a certain number of districts (Birbir 2004).

For scholars employing a political opportunity framework, the removal of institutional barriers may be a necessary but not always sufficient condition, for ethnic party entry (Birbir 2004; Van Cott 2003). Reserved seats for ethnic minority groups provide an institutional solution to the typical costs of party entry by restricting who can vote, who can be elected, or both, to the underrepresented ethnic group (Bird, 2014; Bernauer & Bochler 2011; Rice & Van Cott 2006), but a preceding mobilization of an ethnic group demanding representation is key to ethnic party formation and viability (Van Cott 2003). This may help explain Lublin and Wright's (2013) finding that while reserved seats are associated with an increase in ethnic minority representation, they do not enhance the prospects for ethnoregional party success.

Thus, elites' strategic politicization of social cleavages and group identity is an essential element in explaining ethnic party formation. In contrast to the sociological approach of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), which views social cleavages as fundamental in organizing the structure of party competition, constructivist analyses of party systems and ethnic cleavages hold that political actors strategically mobilize and depoliticize different markers of ethnic identity in order to manipulate the lines of party competition (Torcal & Mainwaring 2003). Enyedi (2005, 699) encapsulates the constructivist view of the relationship between social cleavages and the structure of party systems with the observation that "cleavages would not exist without elites conceptualizing the conflict situation." To be sure, not all potential ethnic cleavages become mobilized in the project of defining party competition (Mozaffar et al. 2003), and a number of scholars have adopted constructivist assumptions about variability in the political relevance of

different ethnic identities to improve upon theories of ethnic group representation and electoral and party systems (e.g., Chandra 2005; Enyedi 2005; Htun 2004; Torcal & Mainwaring 2003).

Further, responsiveness to ethnic group voters once a party achieves representation in the legislature has important effects on future party competition. More specifically, reserved seats can increase the descriptive representation of ethnic minority groups, but the conversion of descriptive representation to substantive representation of ethnic group interests depends on the intensity of electoral competition and its tendency towards party-centered or candidate-centered campaigns (Bird 2014). Dunning and Nilekani (2013) find that party discipline and main parties' cultivation of a multiethnic electoral support base intervenes in the translation of ethnic quotas to ethnic group mobilization and representation. Similarly, Madrid (2005b) and Raymond and Arce (2011) suggest that main parties often fail to respond to ethnic minority interests, even if they have recruited ethnic minority candidates and campaigned on an inclusive platform. The lack of main party responsiveness to ethnic group demands, even in the context of reserved seats, suggests that mobilized ethnic group voters may support small parties—especially ethnic parties (Bird 2014; Htun 2004; Madrid 2005b).

In sum, permissive electoral institutions—typified by high district magnitude and a reserved seat system—in combination with an appropriately distributed and sizeable ethnic population (in the case of single member districts, concentration of ethnic populations is advantageous) and politically mobilized ethnic groups demanding representation are facilitative of ethnic party entry and success. However, the ability to sustain electoral success is influenced by parties' translation of descriptive representation and campaign promises into policy outcomes that are responsive to ethnic group demands.

Is Ethnic Party Entry Desirable or Not?

A second thread of scholarly debate surrounds the normative consequences of ethnic party formation, and the associated tension between ethnic group assimilation and autonomy. These questions are important from the perspectives of both mainstream elites and ethnic groups. One of the reasons elites may activate certain markers of ethnic identity (e.g., language, religion, race, territory of residence) is not only to secure an electoral advantage (Enyedi 2005; Mozaffar et al. 2003; Torcal & Mainwaring 2003), but also to cultivate regime legitimacy and stability (Chandra 2005; Madrid 2005a). As Htun (2004, 445) notes, reserved seats are often adopted as a “founding compromise” which provides groups with “a constitutional share of power, giving [them] an incentive not to defect from the existing political regime and undermine the survival of the state.” Ethnic quotas that allow voters to self-select into the electorate for ethnic minority reserved seats have been observed to produce stronger ethnonationalist mandates, for example, in Croatia and New Zealand (Bird 2014). This tendency comports with ethnic outbidding models (Horowitz 1985; Rabushka & Shepsle 1972) which posit that relatively centrist positions are progressively defeated by increasingly extreme parties appealing to ethnic groups and entrenching ethnic divisions. The result of this ethnic outbidding process is argued to be that either the majority group wins and strips the minority ethnic group of its rights or the minority group preemptively engages in political violence against the majority; in either case democracy is undermined (Chandra 2005). Madrid (2005a, 161-162) cites critics who contend that the emergence of indigenous parties portends ethnic conflict and democratic instability because these movements clash with Western culture and maintain ties with radical leftist groups.

However, the claim that the representation of ethnic groups is a threat to democratic regime stability has come under scrutiny and, for some researchers, been turned on its head.

Chandra (2005) argues that the primordialist assumptions of the ethnic outbidding model give way to further assumptions of homogenous ethnic group identities and interests which obscure the benefits to politicizing ethnicity and the formation of parties which draw on multiple and fluid ethnic identities. The institutionalization of ethnic cleavages allows parties to credibly campaign on platforms which do not challenge the regime, thus bringing ethnic competition back towards the center. Other empirical research finds that party system fragmentation due to a proliferation of mono-ethnic parties is constrained by resource and constituent availability, prompting multiethnic parties to develop instead and reducing overall fragmentation (Raymond 2015).

More generally, the politicization of ethnic groups brings benefits to mainstream elites through its favorable relationship with regime stability. The incorporation of ethnic minority groups into democratic processes via reserved seats signals inclusion and that “the minority community is a full party of society,” but also has the practical effect of increasing the potential for cooptation of ethnic group elites by government (Bird 2014, 19). Further, Bird (2014) notes, where representatives are more accountable to parties than voters, and ethnic quotas require fixed definitions of ethnic group identity to functionally determine eligible voters for reserved seat tier elections, symbolic inclusion trades off with legitimizing the status quo regime. Thus, elites have an interest in manipulating ethnic cleavages as a strategy for accessing political power and economic resources—an incentive which postcolonial institutions inherited as a legacy of the colonial period (Mozaffar et al. 2003). Besides these regime stabilizing and legitimation benefits, the potential cost of ethnic party entry to major parties tends to be relatively minimal: the fluidity and ambiguity of indigenous political identity requires ethnic parties to be inclusive of multiple identities and deters radical ethnonationalist platforms. Indeed, where indigenous parties have

espoused strong hostility towards nonindigenous people, they have performed poorly at the polls even among indigenous voters (Madrid 2005a). It is therefore possible that, where mainstream elites cannot win ethnic group assimilation and protected resource access by acquiescence, inducing small ethnic party entry may be a low risk alternative.

Htun (2004, 441-442) portrays reserved seats differently than do the assimilationist and cooptation critiques described above, arguing that “their objective is to facilitate autonomy of political communities and electoral success of group-specific parties” and that “ethnic groups prefer, and receive, legislative reservations.” According to Htun, ethnic groups want independent access to political power—achieving both representation and maintaining autonomy—unlike the demand of women and the effect of gender quotas of integrating women into existing mainstream parties. In this sense, the presence of an ethnic minority party in the legislature may serve as a check on the executive and other parties against abuses or rollbacks of ethnic group rights. Ethnic group demands for reserved seats as institutional insurance for autonomy and representation makes sense if ethnic reservations are viewed as a compromise ensuring survival of the democratic state. However, Htun’s observation of this relationship glosses over the broader historical context and the root preference for self-government of ethnic minority groups by basing its conclusions on a contrast between legislative quotas which explicitly integrate candidates into established parties and reserved seats which permit—though not require—representation by an independent ethnic party, rather than holding the precolonial period as the reference point. Hence, what Htun’s analysis actually reveals is elite motivation for the survival of the liberal democratic state in which they hold political power and the ability to exploit economic resources, while indigenous ethnic groups prefer to maximize autonomy and preserve their rights.

The Strategic Role of Horizontal Accountability

The impasse created by the fundamentally opposed preferences held by mainstream parties and ethnic minority groups gives reason for the importance of horizontal accountability—formal institutions endowed with the authority to check the actions of other state institutions (O’Donnell 1998). In the case of ethnic minority rights, horizontal accountability mechanisms are those institutions, such as courts or tribunals, which hear and rule on grievances brought by ethnic minorities against the state, and adjudicate issues relating to treaty settlements, though there is variation in the availability and effectiveness of the means of enforcement (Cleary 2000; Lashley 2000).

Building off of the research cited above which finds ethnic party entry to be more desirable than not, mainstream elites may subsequently have some incentive to violate special rights assigned to ethnic minority groups by treaties or other laws, and to disregard unfavorable rulings issued by horizontal accountability institutions in response to these violations. The proposition of manufacturing a failure of horizontal accountability has two possible benefits for mainstream elites and the parties they lead. On the one hand, the ethnic group may acquiesce to the violation of their rights, for example to autonomously manage ancestral lands, and the government gains access to lucrative natural resources while the ethnic group passively assimilates. On the other hand, the ethnic group may reject the transgression, politicizing the issue and consequently ethnic group identity. In this case, mainstream parties have gained the regime legitimacy and stability benefit of ethnic group assimilation by way of the entry of an ethnic group party seeking to restore and insulate group rights.

The decision to create a horizontal accountability failure is thus a strategic one involving a cost-benefit calculation by mainstream parties. In comparison to the benefits just described, costs of exceeding the limits of horizontal accountability are derived from the threat of punishment parties responsible for the failure face at the polls (Schedler 1999). Research on democratization (O'Donnell 1998, 1999; Powell 2004; Weingast 1997) and indigenous movements (Yashar 1999) has observed a complementary relationship between vertical and horizontal accountability. As Diamond et al. (1999) argue, this relationship extends beyond the more conventional legislative-executive dynamic to involve more autonomous horizontal accountability institutions such as human rights commissions or special tribunals. Hence, a failure of horizontal accountability which facilitates policy-making in ways which contradict salient ethnic group interests are likely to motivate party formation as an exercise in collective action to restore responsiveness to group interests through retrospective vertical accountability (O'Donnell 1999; Powell 2004). This expectation is in line with empirical evidence which suggests that enhancements to horizontal accountability require "a clear public demand for reform" (Schedler 1999, 341). The remaining question, then, is the location of the cost-benefit threshold which motivates established main parties to manufacture a horizontal accountability failure in an attempt gain access to economic resources and ethnic group assimilation. I theorize an answer in the next section using game theory to develop a formal model of ethnic party entry and success.

THE MODIFIED GAME OF ETHNIC PARTY ENTRY AND SUCCESS

In this section, I introduce a formal theory of ethnic minority party formation followed by expectations about the electoral success of newly formed parties. This theory modifies the

general game-theoretic model of party entry and success introduced by Simon Hug (2001).

Although Hug intends his model to be generally applicable within the universe of consolidated democracies, and to indirectly inform expectations about the success of new parties (Hug 2001, 6), I argue the model requires significant modification to be useful in explaining ethnic minority party entry and success. The unique institutional and incentive structures surrounding the interactions between established parties and potential small ethnic parties—that is, reserved seats, competing interests in terms of autonomy and assimilation, and horizontal accountability institutions which mediate government action and ethnic group rights—fundamentally alter the structure of Hug’s general game and thus demand its revision. My theory also improves upon the explicit linkages between the conditions of new party entry and new party success, which I describe following explication of the game of ethnic party entry.

The Baseline Model of Ethnic Party Entry

The game of ethnic party entry involves two rational players: an established mainstream party (E) with significant policy influence deriving from its position as the plurality party in the legislature or member of a coalition government (or, in presidential systems, the holding of the executive), and a potential new ethnic party (P). Depending on how the game is played, a third player—a horizontal accountability institution (H)—is introduced as an exogenous decision-maker. While the consequences of H on the outcome are unknown until the players involve the grievance resolution mechanism, the effect of reserved seats is known *a priori*. Specifically, reserved seats, as previously described, minimize the electoral system cost factor but do not address the costs to autonomy associated with assimilation into institutional politics and the loss of group rights. In this game, therefore, P experiences a cost of entry equal to assimilation costs. Figure 1 presents

the extensive form of the model, with five sequential decision points (indicated by a column of vertically aligned decision nodes) which progress from left to right. The payoffs to each player are given immediately to the right of each terminal arrow.

[Figure 1 about here]

The game begins with E issuing an assimilationist challenge (*c*) and forcing the ethnic group to respond. P has three options: to acquiesce (*a*) to E's challenge by giving up autonomy and assimilating, to fight against the challenge by entering party competition (*f*), or to reject the challenge (*r*). As depicted in Figure 1, if P chooses any strategy besides rejection the game ends at either outcome I or II. The game may also end with outcome III should E accept P's rejection and drop the challenge. However, the path to outcomes IV through VIII are realized when E persists in its challenge to P, referring the contested matter to H for adjudication. The game branches depending on H's ruling in favor of the established main party (*e*) or the ethnic group (*p*). In the former case, P has the final decision to acquiesce to the ruling (outcome IV) or dispute the ruling and enter into party competition to restore group rights (outcome V). In the latter event, it is E who decides to accept H's decision and give up the challenge (outcome VIII), or to reject accountability and force P to either finally give in (outcome VII) or fight by forming a party (outcome VI).

Before attempting to solve for the equilibrium outcome of the game, it is necessary to define assumptions about party types and player interests. There are two types of parties in the game, strong (*s*) and weak (*w*). I begin with the assumption that E is a strong party and P, should it decide to form a party, would be weak.² Further, both E and P possess sufficient information

² I offer that this assumption is reasonable given the definition of E as a veto player and the reputational, infrastructural, and electoral base disadvantages of P compared to established parties.

about each other's strength to accurately classify their opponent as strong or weak.³ Party type is an important distinction in the model of strategic party entry because it factors prominently into the credibility of demands and ordering of preferences.⁴ Insofar as E maintains its position as a strong type its challenges to P are credible because E, by virtue of its type, has the capacity to pay the costs of the challenge (c). In the game of ethnic party formation, the challenge is of a specific and constant substance; that is, the challenge to the rights and ultimately autonomy of the ethnic group is issued by E in order to gain the benefits of assimilation to regime legitimacy, stability, or access to valuable natural resources. The costs of issuing a challenge include expenditures on advertising, polling, signature collection, and other strategies to persuade and demonstrate supportive public opinion (Hug 2001). In addition to these general components, I add costs particular to the assimilationist challenge also include legal fees—which are included in the calculation of c —and the investment of party reputation on the issue. Because this investment can show a positive return if the ethnic group assimilates or a negative return if the challenge is ultimately unsuccessful, I define it separately as a and it is only realized on the cost side of E's payoff if E acquiesces to a rejection of the challenge. If the challenge is successful, the return on investment is included on the benefit side of E's payoff as either b_w when the ethnic group assimilates by forming a party or b_c when the group concedes to the challenge without entering party competition. In the former case, E faces costs associated with fighting the new

³ Information about potential ethnic minority strength may be obtained through several sources, including: census data, other demographic surveys, and registration requirements for ethnic minorities to access certain rights or services—especially special district voter rolls which require identification as an ethnic minority in order to vote on candidates or party lists in reserved seat elections. Further, the ethnic party entry cost and probability of electoral success differentials between reserved seats and general tier seats substantially limits the expected legislative strength of new ethnic minority parties.

⁴ Although Hug (2001) operationalizes party strength as a nominal variable, it is more accurate to think of party strength as a continuum ranging from the strongest party in the system to the weakest. However, because the parties in the model are only abstractions and therefore cannot be measured for their actual level of strength, I generally proceed with the discussion at the nominal level.

party in elections (f) which is less or more expensive depending on the new party's strength.⁵ E's ordered preferences for these benefits and costs are given by the following assumptions, respectively⁶:

$$0 < b_w < b_c \quad (1)$$

$$0 < f_w < f_s < a \quad (2)$$

For the potential new ethnic party, being coerced into this game by the actions of an established main party, there are only potential costs as payoffs. These costs are of three varieties: accepting the challenge and conceding group rights and autonomy (a), rejecting the challenge by referring it to a grievance resolution mechanism (r), or fighting against the challenge—and E—by forming a party and contesting the next general election (f). Although both forming a party and accepting the challenge require exchanging autonomy for assimilation, the decision to fight E in elections is preferable because it holds onto the potential for restoring the status quo *ex ante* through influencing policy as a party in the legislature. Rejecting the challenge is the most preferred strategy for P since if E acquiesces to the rejection there is no cost to P and if E persists in challenging P retains the ability to fight. Hence, these costs are related as shown in the following assumption:

$$0 < r < f_s < a \quad (3)$$

However, because of the potential involvement of a horizontal accountability institution, it is possible for P's cost incentives to be reordered. Horizontal accountability failures (occurring in the game at P's two rightmost decision-points) function as an exogenous shock on the institutional environment which raises the salience of ethnic identity and facilitates new party

⁵ Fighting may occur against a weak type party (f_w) or a strong type party (f_s).

⁶ Payoffs are normalized to equal zero for a costless demand.

entry (Ordeshook & Shvetsova 1994; Tavits 2006). In this altered environment, P faces a renewed challenge from E with the following restructured cost relationship:

$$0 < (r - r) < f_s < a \quad (4)$$

The negation of P's ability to reject and refer demands to H reflects the ethnic group's loss of its institutional safeguard against violations of its rights and autonomy. Hence, P is left with the option to acquiesce to the assimilation demand of E or to form a party. The latter continues to be the preferred strategy for the ethnic minority group because, while costing a similar level of assimilation, only entering party competition can offer the ethnic group an immediate restoration of minimal autonomy through representation by an independent ethnic party in addition to the long-run possibility of restoring the capacity of the horizontal accountability institution to protect group rights. In other words, forming a party provides an ethnic group with the opportunity to exercise the horizontal accountability function of the legislature against an ethnic minority rights-transgressing governing party until the standing grievance resolution mechanism can be rehabilitated and secured against future failures. In this sense, the assimilation cost represented by f_s is at least potentially temporary whereas the same cost associated with choosing a is comparatively permanent.

The final relevant actor is the horizontal accountability institution. Although H's decision-making is assumed to be exogenous and random for the purposes of the game, it still has an important effect on the outcome. The first consequence is temporal (t): E earns an expediency benefit if the game ends prior to H's involvement while P receives a delay benefit if the game continues beyond adjudication by an institution of horizontal accountability. Second, H confers a legitimacy (l) penalty and reward to the loser and winner of its decision, respectively. External validation of the challenge provides E with a benefit to its position while an adverse

decision by H costs E issue legitimacy. The opposite effects apply to P and can boost or undermine the ethnic group's pursuit of autonomy. As with c , t and l are independent of each other and any other benefits and costs in the game, and cannot be ordered. However, these factors do influence the order of preferred outcomes for each player as shown in Table 1.

[Table 1 about here]

In the baseline model, I assume H to be neutral from the perspective of P. In other words, the chances of H deciding in favor of P are such that the expected value of fighting after H's ruling is equivalent to the payoff from forming a party at the current decision-point.⁷ I also assume, for the time being, that E is strong enough that rejections of its challenge by neither P nor H will lead E to withdraw its challenge. Under these conditions, the only plausible equilibrium outcomes are II, V, and VI. Outcomes I, IV, and VII do not occur because the ethnic group always prefers the cost mitigation strategy of fighting over acquiescing to assimilation demands ($-f > -a$). Additionally, outcomes III and VIII are not reached by definition of E as a strong type, implying that the benefits of a challenge are at least as great as the costs. This leaves outcomes II, V, and VI with positive payouts to E and the least costly available alternatives for P. In each instance, the general effect is the same: the ethnic minority group forms a party and enters into electoral competition against E in order to restore its rights while the established main party wins the assimilation benefits of regime legitimacy and stability by way of P's participation.⁸

⁷ Given by: $q(l) = r - t$; where q is the probability of H choosing p .

⁸ Which particular outcome from the general baseline equilibrium set of II, V, and VI depends on the relative value of the time benefit t and P's nature as risk-averse or risk-accepting. Where t is small and P is risk-averse, P chooses to join electoral competition before H has a chance to rule in favor of E (outcome II). Conversely, larger values of t and a risk-accepting disposition for P leads P to reject E's initial challenge and allowing H to make a ruling, leading to outcomes V or VI.

Special Model 1: Unfavorable Horizontal Accountability Outcome

Adjusting the assumption about H's reputation with P so that P regards H as more likely to make an unfavorable decision by affirming E's assimilationist challenge produces very similar equilibrium results as the baseline model. The unfavorability condition is defined by the expected value of fighting after an adverse decision by H as being less than the payoff from forming a party at the current decision point.⁹ In this variant of the game of ethnic party entry, outcomes V and VI are eliminated from the set of plausible results because the potential legitimacy effect from a favorable ruling by H is less likely to occur than an issue legitimacy punishment resulting from H ruling against P. Hence, the equilibrium outcome when horizontal accountability institutions are perceived as unfavorable by ethnic groups facing an assimilationist challenge is immediate ethnic party formation (outcome II).

Special Model 2: Favorable Horizontal Accountability Outcome

On the other hand, if H is instead considered by P to have a favorable reputation and therefore is thought to be more likely to deny the legitimacy of E's challenge, then outcome II is instead removed from the set of plausible outcomes. This is because the favorability condition—that the expected value of the legitimacy reward conferred by H's affirmation of P's autonomy exceeds the cost spent by P rejecting the challenge less the time delay benefit¹⁰—produces an expected payoff wherein fighting later is valued over fighting now. Thus, in the event that the horizontal accountability institution supports the assimilation demand, a new ethnic party is formed (outcome V). Alternatively, when horizontal accountability favors the ethnic minority group, and maintaining the assumption of E as a strong party such that the challenge is absolutely credible,

⁹ Given by: $q(l) < r - t$.

¹⁰ Given by: $q(l) > r - t$.

the result is again ethnic party formation, although in this instance the ethnic party enters with a relative issue legitimacy advantage (outcome VI).

Special Model 3: Varying Established Party Strength

Until now, each equilibrium outcome has resulted in ethnic party formation. However, this changes if E's strength is allowed to vary. When E is a relatively stronger party it is more likely that E rejects horizontal accountability following H's ruling or prefers to accept P's initial rejection and thereby avoid H altogether. To see why E is likely to choose to continue its challenge, note that for every opportunity to acquiesce the cost of doing so increases exponentially and that for each successive challenge the respective cost increases algebraically. The doubling-down of the reputation investment on the issue of ethnic group assimilation magnifies the salience of the issue and increases the consequences of failure for E in terms of future electoral support (Meguid 2005). In a similar vein, continuing the challenge requires additional resources to maintain its credibility. Thus, the established main party becomes "locked-in" to its to challenge and prefers to realize the benefits associated with forcing ethnic group assimilation (as in outcome VI) rather than accept the costs of a failed challenge (outcome VIII).

On the other hand, relaxing the assumption of established main party strength makes it possible for the game to end without ethnic party formation (outcomes III and VIII). As E's strength decreases (such as moving from the position of majority government to surplus coalition partner) so does the cost of refusing horizontal accountability, and therefore the attractiveness of accepting H's ruling in favor of P increases (outcome VIII). The logic of this outcome is revealed through a brief examination of comparative statics. When E weakens, the relative size

of the legitimacy punishment l increases, as does the marginal cost of maintaining the challenge c given a weaker party's relatively fewer resources compared to a stronger party. At the point where these relative costs exceed the potential benefits of refusing H's affirmation of P's autonomy (outcomes VI and VII), it is a rational choice for E to accept the limits of horizontal accountability and withdraw its challenge (outcome VIII). Moreover, if E shares P's perception of H as favorable to protecting ethnic group autonomy, a relatively weak E may prefer to accept P's first rejection, leading to outcome III.

Altogether, the baseline and special models imply three hypotheses related to ethnic party formation by ethnic minority groups who prefer autonomy and protection of their rights:

- H1: If the demand for assimilation can be referred to a functioning institution of horizontal accountability, no ethnic party will form until after adjudication.*
- H2: If the grievance is decided against the interests of the ethnic group, an ethnic party will form.*
- H3: If the grievance is decided in favor of the ethnic group, an ethnic party will form if the established party chooses to refuse the ruling but not if the ruling is respected.*

New Ethnic Party Success

Turning to the electoral success of newly formed ethnic parties, I first expect that variation in new party success is influenced by the interaction of electoral institutions and the geographic distribution of the ethnic minority group. As described near the beginning of the previous section, proportional representation (PR) systems with low electoral thresholds—marked by high district magnitude and reserved seats—in addition to permissive and non-spatially conditioned registration requirements should be associated with higher vote and seat shares if the ethnic group is geographically evenly distributed. Where ethnic groups are geographically concentrated, on the other hand, majoritarian electoral systems—especially systems with single member

districts (SMDs)—are conducive to ethnic parties winning a higher portion of votes and seats. These relationships assume a tendency towards homogeneity in ethnic group voting behavior in the direction of supporting an ethnic party above its competitors. This assumption is validated by the events leading up to ethnic party formation: the politicization of ethnic identity by mainstream parties in their strategy to induce assimilation accomplishes the task of mobilizing ethnic minority groups.

Further, the opposition response to the strategic failure of horizontal accountability mechanisms and subsequent entry of an ethnic party—in addition to the legitimacy penalties and rewards received by E and P—may have an effect on the electoral success of the new ethnic party. Meguid (2005) contributes a modified spatial model of niche party success which posits that the interaction of main party responses to a new niche party—of which new ethnic parties emerging under my model are a type—can influence the salience and ownership of the niche party's issue, thereby affecting its level of support in the general electorate. The three types of main party response identified by Meguid are accommodative, adversarial, and dismissive. Although Meguid's theory of main party response has been tested and found to be a statistically insignificant variable in explaining ethnic party success (Bernauer & Bochsler 2011), I argue that this result is attributable to Bernauer and Bochsler's research design which does not account for interactions between established elites and ethnic minority groups prior to ethnic party formation. My model allows me to improve upon this previous test of Meguid's theory by informing the arrangement of starting relationships. I assume that the established party which manufactured a failure of horizontal accountability signals an adversarial stance relative to the new ethnic party, given that its policy actions directly conflict with ethnic group interests.

The effect on electoral support for the ethnic party is therefore impacted by the strategic response of the main opposition party. If the opposition party is either dismissive of the ethnic party or joins the governing party in its adversarial orientation, the new ethnic party should receive greater electoral support. In the former instance, the adversarial behavior has a stronger effect on voter perception of issue legitimacy (ethnic group rights) ownership (the new ethnic party) than the ‘no-comment’ style of the dismissive strategy. In the latter case, the ethnic party should also benefit from more votes because the main parties are acting in concert to legitimize the issue of ethnic group rights. However, if the opposition party adopts an accommodative response, ethnic party vote shares improve when the adversarial strategy is stronger than the competing accommodation. If the accommodative strategy were to be stronger, it would legitimize the issue of ethnic group rights, but also claim ownership of the issue through its more strongly established reputation and capacity for reaching a broad audience with its own messaging on the issue. The adversarial strategy militates against the effectiveness of accommodation because it predates the opposition party’s campaign, securing issue ownership for the ethnic party. The effects of main party interactions are compounded or mitigated by the distribution of legitimacy payoffs assigned during the ethnic party formation process.

Consequently, I test three additional hypotheses, this time relating to new ethnic party success:

- H4: Electoral success should be greater where the geographic distribution of the ethnic group comports with the proportionality of the electoral system.*
- H5: If the main opposition party takes on an adversarial or dismissive stance towards the ethnic party, the new ethnic party should receive greater voter support.*
- H6: If the main opposition party carries an accommodative strategy which is more persuasive of voter perceptions than the competing adversarial strategy, the ethnic party’s vote shares should decrease.*

CASE STUDIES

To test these hypotheses, I employ a diverse case study method. As Seawright and Gerring (2008) explain, maximizing the variance of the independent variables of interest in the selection of cases improves the representativeness of the sample and thus mitigating—though not completely eliminating—a prominent drawback of small-N approaches. Starting from the lists of ethnic seat reservations compiled by Htun (2004) and Bird (2014), I narrowed the initial set of approximately 25 cases by eliminating non-democracies and countries lacking a reserved seat system for indigenous groups from the sampling frame. These eliminations were made to ensure that the cases studied each involved parties and potential new parties who could make meaningful decisions about their political participation, and so that the ethnic groups considered had similar historical orientations towards the state and modern political institutions. Controlling for regime type and ethnic group preferences for autonomy, I then selected three cases—New Zealand, Colombia, and Taiwan—which exhibited a diversity of values along the independent variables of reserved seat system, horizontal accountability failure, geographic dispersion of the ethnic group population, and main opposition party positioning on the issue of ethnic group autonomy. The remainder of this section describes the institutional, historical, and demographic context, the strategic decisions made by each actor, and the electoral fate of newly formed ethnic parties.

New Zealand

Maori comprise 15.2 percent of New Zealand's population and are distributed between urban and rural areas throughout the country (Kroeber 2017). The founding document of New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 between Britain and the Maori, established several articles

enumerating the rights of Maori and form the basis of modern Maori claims to self-determination. This aspect of the treaty provided the legal justification for the creation of separate Maori electorates (Bargh 2013). Maori reserved seats are elected via SMDs which together cover the entire territory of New Zealand. Candidates for these seats may be either Maori or non-Maori, but only those Maori voters who register for the reserved Maori roll are eligible to vote in reserved seat elections. From the establishment of reserved seats in 1867 to the Electoral Act of 1993, the number of Maori reserved seats was held constant at four, all the while the general tier of the New Zealand legislature steadily expanded, effectively decreasing Maori representation (Banducci et al. 2004). The 1993 reform made the number of reserved seats dependent on the number of Maori registered on the Maori electoral roll, leading to incremental increases in the number of reserved seats from four to seven as of 2001 (Banducci et al. 2004).

While the European settlers' motivation for implementing a reserved seat system was to assimilate Maori into the Europeanized New Zealand state through coercing participation in its political institutions, Maori came to associate voting with assimilation and the forfeiture of autonomy (Banducci et al. 2004; Bargh 2013). Consequently, and despite the minimization of the electoral system component of the cost of party entry, the assimilation cost deterred the formation of a specifically Maori party.¹¹ The Maori were shielded from assimilation demands by the Waitangi Tribunal, a horizontal accountability institution established in 1975 to "hear claims of breached treaty rights...and may make proposals for long term restoration" (Lashley 2000, 7-8). Although the Tribunal's decisions were not legally binding, its recommendations

¹¹ In fact, two nominally ethnic parties formed during the 20th century in New Zealand: the Rātana Party from the 1930s and later the Mana Motuhake Party in 1979. However, the Rātana Party was soon absorbed into the Labour Party and Mana Motuhake failed to achieve any political significance (Belgrave 2014). Moreover, Labour won most Maori reserved seat elections from 1943 to 1993 (Karp & Banducci 1999). I argue, therefore, that these parties should not be counted as ethnic parties because they made rather peripheral appeals to Maori identity and interests instead of acting as "a party that is the champion of the particular interests of one ethnic category or set of categories" (Chandra 2011, 155).

grew in informal authority, and prompted Maori to make greater use of national courts (Belgrave 2014). The Treaty of Waitangi's guarantee of *tinio rangatiratanga* (chiefly authority) forms the basis on which Maori found their claims for self-determination and restoration in the Tribunal (O'Sullivan 2008). These settlements are critical to Maori economic and social standing.

As a result of the importance of the Waitangi Tribunal and courts to Maori interests, the Labour Party's decision to override the Maori Land Court and then the Court of Appeal's 2003 ruling in favor of Maori land ownership rights prompted the mobilization of Maori voters and the formation of the Maori Party (Belgrave 2014). The Foreshore and Seabed Act of 2004 promulgated by the Labour government intended to nationalize lands claimed by the Maori and was a direct subversion of the Court of Appeal's 2003 decision. As O'Sullivan (2008, 327-328) notes, the legislation "removed the right to ask a Court to determine whether or not a property right exists, which clearly limits access to due legal process" and "diminished the extent to which Maori may exercise self-determination." This maneuver was not only unprecedented but also threatened the tradition of discovering aboriginal rights through the courts and the Maori strategy of using "the courts to try to assert Treaty or common-law rights" (Belgrave 2014, 208). This rejection of horizontal accountability led Labour MP Tariana Turia to defect from the party and form the Maori Party.

The opposition National Party's 2008 parliamentary election campaign took an adversarial stance towards the Maori Party, arguing that Maori reserved seats should be abolished (Tahana 2008). While Labour lost its majority and National gained enough seats to form a government, the Maori Party won five seats and was able to negotiate a supply and confidence agreement with National, giving the Maori Party influence over policy-making. The Maori Party's electoral success enabled it to achieve key policy gains including replacing the

Foreshore and Seabed Act of 2004, staving off National's plan to eliminate Maori reserved seats, and the signing of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Humpage 2017).

With the restoration of important aspects of group rights and autonomy, the assimilation cost was no longer worth paying for many Maori voters, often claiming that the Maori Party had "sold out to National's neoliberal economic agenda" by the 2014 elections (Humpage 2017, 477). This sentiment was reflected in the results for the Maori Party, which only won a single seat in the 2014 parliament.

In summary, the Maori Party formed and achieved electoral success following (and not before) Labour's rejection of horizontal accountability after the court's favorable ruling against the government's assimilationist challenge, supporting *H1* and *H3*. Moreover, the Maori population's dispersion across electoral districts along with the legitimacy benefit conferred by the court's favorable ruling and the opposition National Party's adversarial stance contributed to the Maori Party's initial electoral success, supporting *H4* and *H5*. *H6* was also supported by this case, as in the ensuing round of parliamentary elections accommodative stances between the main parties and the Maori Party was associated with a loss of votes and ultimately seats.

Colombia

Approximately 2 percent of Colombia's population is indigenous, with over 80 percent of indigenous peoples living on *resguardos* (collective lands owned by indigenous groups granted to them during the colonial period) that cover about one quarter of Colombia's land area (Van Cott 2000). Despite significant ethnic diversity within the indigenous population—composed of 81 different ethnic groups—collective mobilization led by indigenous groups in the Cauca region worked to secure autonomy and the authority of *cabildos*, the indigenous councils overseeing the

resguardos (Troyan 2008). Van Cott (2003) identifies three indigenous organizations in particular which developed in response to the assimilationist challenge of the government between the 1960s and 1980s: the Indigenous Council of the Cauca Region (*Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca*, CRIC) formed in 1971, the Colombian Indigenous Authorities Movement (*Movimiento de Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia*, AICO) formed in 1977, and the Colombian National Indigenous Organization (*Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia*, ONIC) founded in 1982. However, prior to the 1991 constitution, there was no reserved seat system in place to provide indigenous groups representation in liberal institutional politics, nor did these organizations initially want to pursue their interests through party politics (Troyan 2008). Yet the repeated failures of horizontal accountability to guard indigenous interests against government encroachment eventually motivated these social movements to form into political parties when the opportunity to reinforce mechanisms of horizontal accountability presented itself in the form of the 1990 Constituent Assembly elections.

Indigenous mobilization was prompted by the land reforms and centralization of the state carried out by the parties which ruled together under the National Front pact. Liberal and conservative elites negotiated the National Front pact to restore stability and secure their own political influence following a period of violence from 1947-1953 (Troyan 2008). During this period, which lasted 16 years from 1957 to 1973, indigenous identity and history was subject to erasure by the National Front as a part of its liberal project of constructing an abstract national identity and separation from the colonial past in order to consolidate regime legitimacy (Findji 2018). The major material component of this assimilationist policy by supporting private non-indigenous settlements on *resguardo* lands, reducing the jurisdiction of Law 89 of 1890 which otherwise provides the legal justification for *cabildo* authority and indigenous collective

ownership of these lands (Findji 2018). It was in this context that grassroots indigenous organizations such as CRIC and AICO emerged and supported land reclamation strategies of indigenous communities.

Without an effective institutional link between the *cabildos* and the national court system which reinforces rather than dismisses indigenous rights, however, what gains were made by the land reclamation movement and other strategies which eschewed participation in party politics were ultimately unstable. On the other hand, the ethnic tensions produced by land reform grievances and the indigenous group's abstention from liberal forms of political participation—such as forming a party and contesting elections—threatened the legitimacy and stability of the state. In 1990, mainstream elites attempted to increase state legitimacy by holding Constituent Assembly elections and rewriting the constitution with the aim of “making the legal and political systems more inclusive and participatory” (Van Cott 2000, 211). Given the unfavorable reputation of current institutions to hold governments accountable for transgressions of indigenous autonomy, and the significant reduction of the electoral threshold by the use of a single nationwide PR system for electing the Constituent Assembly, both ONIC and AICO successfully entered electoral competition and won one seat each (Findji 2018; Van Cott 2003). While both major parties (the Liberals and Conservatives) remained hostile to the newly formed indigenous parties, indigenous candidates also contested and won local level elections on a platform advocating the defense of indigenous rights (Findji 2018).

Indigenous representation in the Constituent Assembly allowed for indigenous interests in creating effective horizontal accountability mechanisms and securing group autonomy to be written into the 1991 constitution. The establishment of a constitutional court and, as Van Cott (2000) notes, especially Article 246 of the new constitution requiring coordination between the

national judicial system and indigenous jurisdictions, improved the potential for favorable outcomes in disputes between the state and indigenous people. The 1991 constitution also reserved two seats in the Colombian Senate for which only indigenous voters could cast ballots. However, these reserved seats were elected from nationwide districts and internal ethnic divisions within Colombia's indigenous population divided votes among indigenous candidates, leading to the limited success of indigenous parties (Van Cott 2003). ONIC has since exited party competition, while the Indigenous Authorities Movement (associated with AICO) and the *Alianza Social Indigena* (associated with CRIC) rarely winning any seats in the national legislature and struggling to top one percent of the national vote (Kollman et al. 2018).

In sum, three indigenous parties formed after a prolonged period of horizontal accountability failures of the *cabildos*, Law 89 of 1890, and the national courts to support the previous two institutions. This situation would, according to my model, lead to the formation of an ethnic party in the near term because of the absence of a functioning and reliable horizontal accountability institution (the converse of *H1*). However, it was not until the highly proportional electoral system was implemented for the Constituent Assembly elections that the electoral system cost factor was reduced enough for party entry to be the optimal strategy in responding to horizontal accountability failure to protect against assimilationist challenges, supporting *H2*. Finally, the adversarial stances of major parties towards indigenous interests provided an issue ownership benefit to the electoral success of the new indigenous parties, supporting *H5*, though in later legislative elections electoral support dwindled possibly due to rivalry between the indigenous parties and splitting votes amongst themselves in the nationwide reserved district, lending moderate support to *H4*.

Taiwan

The complex intersection of party politics with ethnic and national identity which characterizes Taiwan has led to internal fractionalization, strategic cooptation, and general apathy of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan. Fetzer and Soper (2011) identify three primary ethnic groups which compose the population of Taiwan: the mainlanders who arrived from China in 1949 (about 14 percent of the total population), the native Taiwanese who came to the island largely between the 1600s and start of the 1900s (about 84 percent),¹² and the indigenous peoples (about 2 percent). The indigenous population has tended to reside in their traditional homelands of the central mountains and eastern coast, although a minority has migrated to cities and gained employment as industrial labor (Chi 2001). Orientations towards politic participation and the state also differentiate indigenous groups. For example, the Taroko and Seediq maintain a tradition of anti-state resistance while the Bunun groups find agency in compliance with the state (Simon 2010). Additionally, the design of the indigenous reserved seat system, which was implemented in 1991 as part of democratizing constitutional reforms and splits six seats in the Legislative Yuan equally between mountain indigenous tribes and plains indigenous tribes, has created controversy between large and small tribes as the latter claim a structural disadvantage in winning these seats and gaining representation (Simon 2010).

Despite these differences, scholars of Taiwan indigenous politics observe a generally strong preference for autonomy following the severe assimilation policies enforced by Japanese colonialists and then under the authoritarian Kuomintang (KMT) from 1949 until 1991 (Fetzer & Soper 2011; Simon 2010; Stainton 2007). Stainton (2007) argues that indigenous people's movement for self-government has become a constitutive party of their identity and understood

¹² Simon (2010) further subdivides the native Taiwanese into the Hoklo—whose ancestors came from Fujian, China, during the Dutch colonial period and make up about 72 percent of the population—and the Hakka—whose ancestors arrived from Guangdong, China, in the 1700s and 1800s and account for around 13 percent of the population.

as an inherent right. While some indigenous legislators have negotiated concessions with major parties, these gains have been moderate and unrelated to the core interests of political autonomy and land rights while coming at the cost of cooperation with non-indigenous elites who instrumentalize their party's relationship with indigenous groups (Fetzer & Soper 2011). As Simon (2010, 731) observed of Taiwan indigenous groups, "while eating and drinking, they gossip about and laugh at would-be leaders of their communities who collaborate with the wider political system." Indeed, the indigenous peoples of Taiwan historically do not have a concept of a permanent leader or hierarchically structured institutions, nor is there widespread ambition to be a candidate in parliamentary elections (Simon 2010). Consequently, there is little support for the formation of an indigenous party due to the high assimilation costs this strategy would entail. Instead, most indigenous candidates run as independents or under the party label of the KMT or—less frequently—the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (Stainton 2007).

A second complementary yet distinct factor contributing to the lack of indigenous party entry and success in Taiwan is the absence of an assimilationist challenge in the current democratic period. This absence is in significant part attributable to the salience of Taiwan's relationship with the People's Republic of China and the critical importance to this issue held by the politics of Taiwanese national identity (Fetzer & Soper 2010). Both the Pan-Blue coalition (KMT, the People First Party, and the New Party) and the Pan-Green coalition (DPP and the Taiwan Solidarity Union) have positioned themselves as allies of indigenous peoples of Taiwan in order to legitimize their respective platforms as they relate to Taiwan's relationship with China. Hence, mainstream parties have been accommodative of indigenous interests and candidates in order to boost their issue legitimacy. The Pan-Greens advocate independence from China and strategically seek a historical foundation for a non-Chinese identity, making

indigenous peoples an attractive and valuable symbolic ally (Brown 2004). On the other hand, the Pan-Blues are generally accommodative of China and claim for themselves “a historical role as protector of indigenous peoples” (Simon 2010, 732). In this context, indigenous peoples in Taiwan tend to see their participation in formal politics as signaling complicity with the use of their ethnic identity as a discursive tool by mainstream elites (Simon 2010). As a result, no indigenous party has formed and found success in Taiwan.

Overall, the high assimilation cost of participation in formal political institutions in combination with major party sensitivity to indigenous identity contributed to established parties’ acceptance of horizontal accountability during the democratic period, providing support for *H3*. Similarly, the generally synchronous accommodationist stances of both Pan-Blue and Pan-Green coalitions towards indigenous interests meant that any new party that did form would have very little success in capturing a significant number of votes. Indeed, as data from Kollman et al. (2018) indicate, the Chinese Taiwan Aborigines Party consistently failed to win more than 0.1 percent of the vote between 1995 and 2001, supporting *H6*.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has introduced a game theoretic model of ethnic party entry and developed theoretical links between the reputational effects of the strategic decisions made by the game players and new ethnic party success. Specifically, I argued that ethnic groups prefer autonomy and strong, favorable horizontal accountability institutions to secure group rights while established mainstream parties prefer ethnic group assimilation through acquiescence to the extension of state authority or, if not, then through ethnic group entry into party competition. By reconceptualizing the costs of entry to account for ethnic group demands for autonomy, my

model provides an explanation for the lack of ethnic party formation even when electoral institutions are optimally designed for reducing the electoral system cost factor—as in the case of reserved seats. The second key contribution of my model is its recognition of how established mainstream parties can strategically manufacture a failure of horizontal accountability in order to coerce ethnic minority groups into assimilation via party formation. Finally, I theorize how main opposition party orientation towards the new ethnic party and how whether the governing party or the ethnic party rejected horizontal accountability affects issue legitimacy and ownership in regards to ethnic group rights and autonomy, and—subsequently—new ethnic party success. I used a diverse case study method to test hypotheses derived from this theory against empirical evidence. Overall, the results provided support for my model of ethnic party entry and success.

However, it is also worth noting some limitations of this theory and empirical approach so that the inferences drawn here are appropriately measured and to give initial direction to future research about how the model and method may be improved. First, the model does not do well in accounting for ethnic group heterogeneity. As the cases of Colombia and Taiwan suggest, internal factions may have differently ordered preferences and therefore different optimal strategies. The implications of ethnic group heterogeneity are most apparent in evaluating electoral outcomes, and in the case of Colombia, the entry of multiple ethnic parties. An improved model should explain the effects of ethnic group heterogeneity on party entry and success. Second, I have not incorporated into the game of ethnic party entry conditions about the overall duration of the game and time between decision-points, nor have I attempted to explain why the established party issues an assimilationist challenge when it does. It may be worth revising the model, for example, to account for the New Zealand Labour Party's delay until the early 2000s to initiate a strong assimilationist challenge and refusal of horizontal accountability.

Last, despite the improvement made upon most similar and most different case study designs, the diverse case study method is still a small-N approach and cannot provide the same extent of generalizability as a large-N test. Thus, future iterations of this research would benefit from employing a large-N quantitative component to improve the external validity of the results.

Nonetheless, this research makes three important contributions to the literature on strategic party entry and ethnic group politics. First, it examines the strategic balancing act performed by ethnic minority groups between maintaining their autonomy and supporting formal institutions which secure that group autonomy against government threats. Modelling this strategic decision-making process helps to fill the gap in ethnic politics and comparative parties literature identified by Bird (2014) and Dunning and Nilekani (2013) about the interactive effects of group mobilization and institutional environment on ethnic party formation and voter behavior. Second, it speaks in a critical tongue to the debate over the optimal design of democratic institutions for the purpose of maximizing regime stability. While some advocate a consociational approach (Lijphart 1977) and others focus on encouraging multiethnic electoral coalitions (Horowitz 1985), I argue—and my model suggests—that liberal democracy is terminally bound to its colonial past. Hence, the suggestion to bring marginalized ethnic groups into the fold by extending an (coercive) offer to participate in the formal institutions of liberal democratic politics is an iron fist in a velvet glove. This paper provides evidence of how mainstream elites leverage democratic institutions such as reserved seats and courts to enforce assimilation of autonomy-desiring ethnic minority groups in order to legitimate the postcolonial liberal democratic state. Inclusion of underrepresented groups in the centers of power must facilitate emancipatory work in order to be a genuine and empowering offer of participation. Finally, scholars utilizing a rational choice approach to the study of ethnic minority party

formation should adapt the conceptualizations and rhetorical practices to more fully acknowledge the structural inequalities inherent in the subject. My model reframes reserved seats from “an incentive” for party formation to an institution which imparts a partial cost reduction. More generally, the benefit—in the conventional language of rational choice theory—of ethnic party entry is really an opportunity to effect a harm mitigation strategy. In this sense, one cannot really speak of a “benefit” as such. Applications of rational choice models to the question of ethnic minority parties should demystify residual colonial oppressions embedded in modern democratic institutions, and thereby contribute to improving knowledge about ethnic party behavior.

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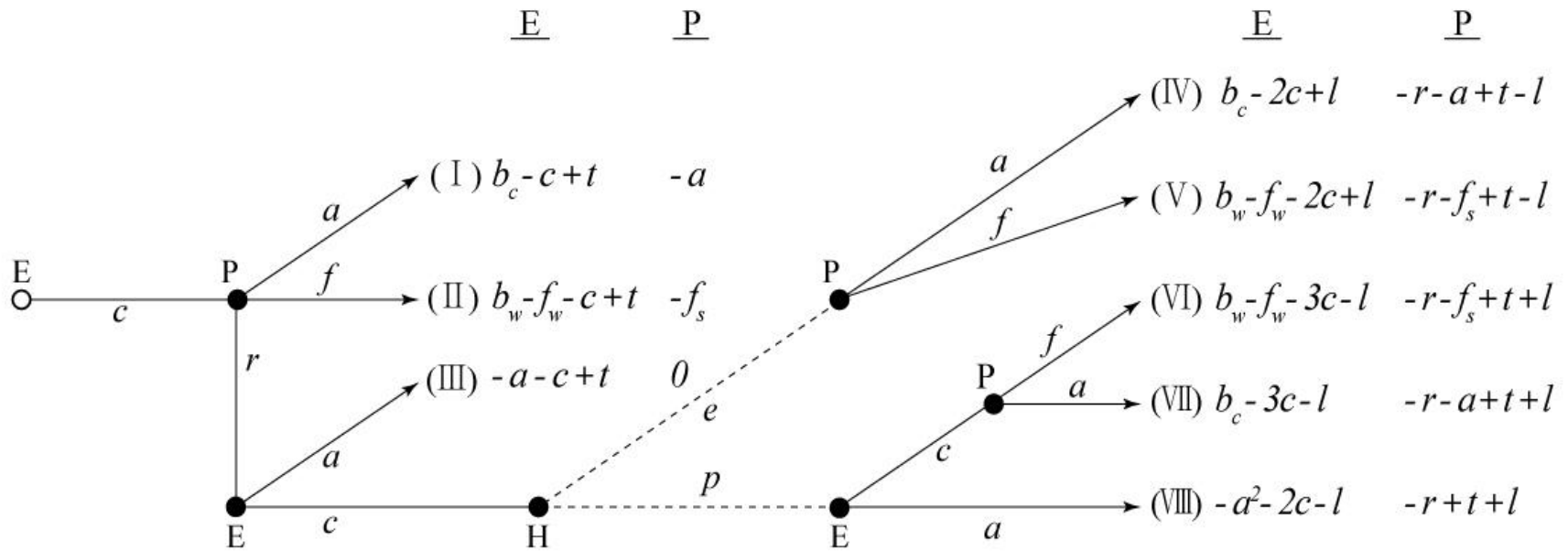
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TABLES AND FIGURES

Fig. 1. Extensive Form of the Game of Ethnic Party Entry



Notes

- Outcomes are numbered using roman numerals and are displayed in brackets.
- E (established mainstream party) actions are always displayed below decision segments.
- P (potential new ethnic party) actions are always displayed above decision segments.
- H (horizontal accountability institution) action is exogenous as indicated by the dashed line.

Table 1. Outcomes in Order of Preference for Each Player

	Established Mainstream Party (E)	Potential New Ethnic Party (P)	
		H: Favorable Reputation	H: Unfavorable Reputation
(Most Preferred)	(I) $b_c - c + t$	(III) 0	(III) 0
	(IV) $b_c - 2c + t$	(VIII) $-r + t + l$	(VIII) $-r + t + l$
	(VII) $b_c - 3c + t$	(VI) $-r - f_s + t + l$	(II) $-f_s$
	(II) $b_w - f_w - c + t$	(II) $-f_s$	(VI) $-r - f_s + t + l$
	(V) $b_w - f_w - 2c + l$	(V) $-r - f_s + t - l$	(V) $-r - f_s + t - l$
	(VI) $b_w - f_w - 3c - l$	(VII) $-r - a + t + l$	(I) $-a$
	(III) $-a - c + t$	(I) $-a$	(VII) $-r - a + t + l$
(Least Preferred)	(VIII) $-a^2 - 2c - l$	(IV) $-r - a + t - l$	(IV) $-r - a + t - l$

H refers to a horizontal accountability institution which adjudicates grievances between ethnic minorities and the state. The left column represents the rank of outcomes if H has a history of deciding in favor of P, and the right column represents the opposite tendency. Mathematically, P perceives H as favorable if $q(l) > r - t$, where $q(l)$ is the expected value of the legitimacy benefit gained from a favorable decision by H.