

# Divergence in Diversity? The Dissimilar Effects of Cleavages on Electoral Politics in New Democracies

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*Recent theory on ethnic identity suggests that it is constructed and highly influenced by contextual factors and group leaders' strategies. Therefore, while the notion that social cleavages stabilize electoral politics is well established, which cleavages matter and why remain open questions. This article argues that in new democracies the effects of diffuse ethnic cleavages on electoral politics diverge depending on the amount of information they provide to their constituency. The information provision, in turn, depends on how well the cleavage lends itself to the formation of ethnic parties. A formal model of voting stability is developed and empirically tested using data on electoral volatility in all new democracies since 1945 and on individual voting in democratizing Bulgaria. The results show that in the sample examined only identity that centers on language jump-starts party-system stabilization, while race and religion do nothing to stabilize the vote in early elections.*

While the notion that social cleavages stabilize electoral politics is well established (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Horowitz 1985; Lipset and Rokkan 1967), we still cannot distinguish between the effects of different cleavages or explain precisely why cleavages stabilize the vote.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Bartolini and Mair (1990) collapse the cleavages of religion and linguistic heterogeneity into a single indicator of “cultural heterogeneity” (228) that they demonstrate is negatively related to volatility in West European countries. Similarly, rather than explaining the differences in voting behavior of divergent cleavage types, the scarce testing of the effects of individual cleavages on the vote worldwide focuses on the general determinants of cleavage support for particular parties or the system (Lijphart 1999; Norris 2004). Recent theory on ethnic identity suggests, however, that it is constructed and highly influenced by contextual factors and political strategies adopted by the group leaders (Chandra 2004; Horowitz 1985; Laitin 1998; Olzak 1992; Posner 2005). Posner (2005), in fact, shows empirically

that different cleavages are activated under divergent circumstances. It stands to reason, therefore, that the effect of diffuse cleavages on electoral politics diverges in ways that are important to our understanding of democratic electoral politics.

The objective of this article is to develop and test a theory that helps to distinguish between the different effects of divergent cleavages on electoral behavior in new democracies. A simple formalization of this argument generates a number of testable implications about differences in voting patterns as a result of ethnic diversity. I test two of the implications on national electoral data from nearly 60 new democratic party systems and on subnational public opinion data from one new democracy, Bulgaria. I demonstrate that in new democracies the notion that ethnicity stabilizes voting is partially correct. Only some cleavages stabilize the vote immediately, while the effect of others may manifest over time. More specifically, the results suggest that identity that is expressed through ethnic parties, and in this sample centers on language,

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<sup>1</sup>Horowitz (1985) discusses stability in ethnic support for political parties but does not differentiate between the vote stability induced by ethnicity and other cleavages or between the different effects on the vote of divergent types of ethnic identity.

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jump-starts party-system stabilization. A stabilizing effect of racial and religious identity, in turn, is not evident in early elections.

According to Downs, stability in voter behavior is important because “uncertainty forces rational governments to regard some voters as more important than others[ . . . thereby modifying] the equality of influence which universal suffrage was designed to insure” (1957, 95). More recent theories suggest reform in new democracies tends to be derailed with dire consequences by vote instability induced by short-term losers such as an unemployed public (Przeworski 1991) or short-term winners such as local officials preventing market entry to protect rents (Hellman 1998). Furthermore, new democracies are arguably more vulnerable to rebellion and protest, including ethnic protest, though the empirical evidence in support of this argument is mixed (Fearon 1998; Laitin and Fearon 2003; Saideman et al. 2002). If new democracies are indeed more vulnerable than established democracies to reform-derailing vote swings, protest, and violence, an ethnic vote stabilizer might be just the political antidote new democracies need to sustain regime-stabilizing reform through transition. This is not to suggest that excessive vote stability in the long run is healthy for democratic development. Importantly, therefore, the theory developed here posits that there is no reason to believe that in the long-term ethnic loyalties are fixed. To the contrary, it suggests that the effect of ethnicity is fluid as is the identity itself.

## **Ethnic Political Identity in New Democracies**

Theories of ethnic identity have moved away from the understanding of ethnicity as primordial (Geertz 1973; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972) to one of ethnicity as a more or less constructed category (Chandra 2004; Horowitz 1985; Laitin 1998; Olzak 1992; Posner 2005) that is highly influenced by contextual factors and group leaders’ strategies. If ethnicity is fluid and context dependent, why then do ethnic identities transcend contextual differences to manifest strongly under as divergent political conditions as Franco’s Spain and Ceaușescu’s Romania, as well as Democratic Spain, Romania, Bulgaria, India, and Zambia, while other identity does not?

One answer is that ethnic identity is exceptionally salient for group identification because it is organized around characteristics that are either impossible to change, such as color of skin, or difficult to change, such as language or religion (Posner 2005), in contrast to entirely voluntary associations such as unions of blue-collar

workers.<sup>2</sup> Ethnicity is passed on through, among other things, language and culture, which are difficult to regulate, and maintaining ethnic identity is in some instances a form of resistance to the dominant regime. Evidence from Western Europe since before the development of contemporary democracies suggests that separate ethnic identities develop despite institutional incentives for ethnic groups to assimilate.<sup>3</sup> The same is true for contemporary Eastern Europe. Under Ceaușescu’s authoritarian regime in Romania, for instance, associations at all levels, from boy scouts to political parties, were suppressed. Nevertheless, the regime was never able to strip people of their ethnic identity. Language and culture were passed on within families. In public settings, group identity was maintained through preferential treatment of members of the ethnic group by other members of that same group. Under authoritarian conditions, in the absence of wholly voluntary associations, it is therefore likely that ethnicity will emerge as a strong organizing principle around which group members will coalesce.

In turn, when liberal political conditions allow or even foster the development and sustenance of ethnic identity, ethnicity will emerge wherever this organizational principle is useful. Hence, this article posits that we can expect strong ethnic identity to emerge across many different types of authoritarian and democratic institutions. Moreover, the expectation here is that during transition, ethnic group identity, maintained and even strengthened under authoritarian conditions, rises to the political surface as a practical organizing principle because democracy more likely encourages political expression of identity.

Identity formation under authoritarian conditions is not exclusive to members of ethnic groups. For instance, communist parties in many new East European democracies command the loyalties of sizeable groups after democratization. It is not clear, however, that such loyalties originate under the authoritarian regime and are sustained through democratization. Indeed, Grzymala-Busse argues very convincingly that the democratic success of communist parties in Eastern Europe depended on their ability to break with the past organizationally and programmatically. She notes that “where the parties first retained or allowed conservative communist members, and then tailored party programs to suit their demands, the gap between party supporters and the rest of voters grew,

<sup>2</sup>This definition includes racial, linguistic, religious, and other characteristics.

<sup>3</sup>According to Lipset and Rokkan (1967), the center-periphery (ethnic) cleavage developed in opposition to nation building by the center before the extension of suffrage.

as did the alienation of the broader electorate” (2002, 133). The implication is that communist parties that attempted to retain loyalists eventually withered, while successful parties attracted new constituencies. Alternatively, demagogues, such as Peron in Argentina, sometimes retain the loyalties of many voters following authoritarian periods. The difference between those types of loyalties and ethnic loyalties, however, is that while the idea of ethnicity as information shortcuts transcends particular historical circumstances and is generalizable to all new democracies, explanations of voter information based on demagogues or particular parties are path dependent and not generalizable. Therefore, *on average* only ethnic voters have more political information than their nonethnic<sup>4</sup> counterparts in all new democracies. Furthermore, since ethnic political support is rooted in a socialization of a personal identity that is not entirely dependent on particular circumstance, it is likely more robust than support even if based on identity, if that identity is necessarily tied to particular social circumstances exogenous to the group. For example, in transitional democracies ethnic identification likely remains more stable while communist party identification is eroded as a result of changing political circumstances, including the introduction of a multiparty system. Similarly, Peronism is tied to particular economic circumstances favoring populism and is likely eroded as economic conditions change. Thus, the working assumption in this article is that *in general* in new democracies nonethnic voters do not have a group identity that rivals ethnicity and directs their vote behavior in early elections. I believe this assumption is well justified, and the following empirical analysis of Bulgaria presents some empirical evidence to support it.

Finally, members of dominant groups may also forge a strong communal identity under exceptional circumstances, such as external threat. The difference between ethnic and dominant identity during democratization, however, is that the external impetus unifying the dominant group is reduced or even eliminated,<sup>5</sup> while the ethnic group member’s incentive to define herself in ethnic terms remains unchanged. Consequently, Crawford’s (1996) conclusion that ethnicity was the only cleavage sufficiently salient to be mobilized early on in the new democracies of Eastern Europe is not surprising.

Given that people can be expected to differentiate into ethnic groups prior to democratization, these questions remain: What effect does ethnic diversity have on demo-

cratic electoral politics? And how do the electoral effects of divergent ethnic identity cores, such as language, race, and religion, differ? I deal with each question in turn.

Combining theories of political learning which hold that the individual learns political attitudes from her group (Campbell et al. 1960; Zaller 1992), Downs’ (1957) and later Popkin’s (1991) versions of political information shortcuts, I posit that the most important source of political information for the ethnic individual is other members and leaders of that ethnic group. My account of shortcuts in the *low-information environments* of new democracies where all political information is scarce contributes to Downs’ explanation and Popkin’s account of “low information rationality,” both of which occur in the *high-information environments* of developed democracies, where many voters choose to access relatively little of the available information. In high-information environments available information shortcuts include known political personalities, party identification, and in Popkin’s account, incumbency.<sup>6</sup> So far no literature that I am aware of distinguishes the development of information shortcuts at the outset of democratic development.

Indeed, Chandra (2004, 34) notes that while the idea that ethnic cues are an information shortcut for political choices is common, the literature does not identify the types of situations where ethnic cues are more likely to be used than other types of information.<sup>7</sup> Chandra further suggests that only ethnic cues are costless as all people display ethnic characteristics. Consequently, only ethnic information is readily available about others when making political choices. Along the lines of Chandra I differentiate between ethnic and other cues. Where she focuses on patronage democracies, however, my argument is temporal, encompassing all types of democracies as I posit that during democratization ethnic information is the only developed form of political identification across all types of new democracies. Furthermore, where she contends ethnicity is generally salient as it is costless, I argue ethnicity is particularly salient in new democracies as the political uncertainty in relation to other identities is greater than that of ethnicity. Finally, the argument in this article aims to explain why an individual, with respect to her own identity, personally chooses to support an ethnic party as opposed to much of the literature which explains how an individual makes political choices dependent on her classification of others (Chandra 2004) or institutional

<sup>4</sup>In this article nonethnic refers to the majority ethnic group in reference to an ethnic minority.

<sup>5</sup>Democratization likely reduces external threat as democracies rarely fight each other (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999).

<sup>6</sup>Indeed, one of Popkin’s main contributions is articulating how voters combine old and new information to update their shortcuts for political choices.

<sup>7</sup>Others demonstrate how ethnicity is used as an information shortcut or even substitutes for formal legislation in nonpolitical exchanges such as trade (Landa 1994).

constraints on her political identification (Posner 2005). Therefore, the principal proposition of this article is that *due to political socialization, membership in an ethnic group functions as a stable information cue for political choices in an environment of low political information.*

## Voting in New Democracies

Precisely how does the cohesion-dominating ethnic group behavior early on become manifest in electoral politics in new democracies? This section elaborates the electoral components of the proposition regarding the *stable ethnic-information shortcut*. The aim is to provide a more detailed mechanism for how ethnic socialization is turned into stable ethnic voting in the short term and to highlight the attributes that distinguish ethnic voters in new democracies from other voters. In this context I define stability as the tendency to vote for the same party between elections.

Because the idea of information-based socialization is very simple, the possibilities for fleshing out the nuances of the argument are multiple. The form selected here, decision theory, follows a common tradition in models of voting (Arrow [1952] 1963; Cox 1990; Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968).<sup>8</sup> Thus far, however, none of the prior models specifically address ethnic voting in new democracies.

## Utility and Uncertainty

I argue that utility in voting determines ethnic and nonethnic vote choice. The utility in voting for a party in a new democracy is determined by the voter's policy preference with respect to the party's policy preferences. Utility refers to a cost benefit calculation. If the cost is lower than the benefit, there is positive utility in voting for a particular party.

All voters' (ethnic and nonethnic) basic quadratic utility in voting for any party based on policy preference is the utility of choosing  $Z$ , given  $X$  that is:

$$U(Z|X) = -1/2(Z - X)^2.$$

The quadratic utility function demonstrates that the voter's utility in supporting party  $Z$  is greatest when the voter's policy preferences ( $X$ ) are perfectly aligned with the party's policy preferences ( $Z$ ), and decreases as the voter's

policy preference moves further away to either side from the party's policy preference ( $Z$ ).<sup>9</sup> Assuming a two-party system, I call the spatial policy location of the two parties  $Z_L$  for party left and  $Z_R$  for party right when discussing voters at large. When I turn to the difference between ethnic and other voters I substitute the ethnic party ( $Z_E$ ) for party left ( $Z_L$ ).

A basic assumption I make is that voters seek representation of their policy preferences. In other words, I assume that voters seek representation of a policy package by casting their vote for a party that promotes the policy that is closest to their own preferred policy package. I assume the ethnic voter's policy preference package is composed of several issues that include the ethnic issue, some of greater importance than others. Similarly, any party's policy preference package contains many issues, sometimes including the ethnic issue, and some issues are more important than others.

In a two-party system then, the policy benefit to a voter expressed in  $-1/2(Z - X)^2$  is greatest when the party's ( $Z$ ) policy proximity to the voter with respect to the other party is at least at the middle of the policy space between the two parties  $\frac{Z_L + Z_R}{2}$  or closer. Mathematically speaking, the policy benefit is greatest when the two policies, party policy ( $Z$ ) and voter's policy preferences ( $X$ ), are identical, so that the expression  $-1/2(Z - X)^2$  equals 0 or when:  $-1/2(Z - X)^2 = -1/2(\frac{Z_L + Z_R}{2} - \frac{Z_L + Z_R}{2})^2$ .

Most people of voting age in established democracies spend little time researching their voting choice. Most do not read all the literature put out by competing parties, nor do they listen to all debates or engage in other types of time-consuming information gathering. In fact, most people do none of this even the first time they are allowed to vote, when the activity is still novel. Instead, they use information shortcuts to make voting decisions (Downs 1957; Popkin 1991).

Readily available information shortcuts contain sufficient information for a voter to make up her mind about how to vote without investing much time or energy in researching the divergent options. Information shortcuts are provided, for instance, by people we trust as authorities on political subjects and social groups to which we belong. Rather than read the party literature, a voter in the United States might, for example, follow the suggestions of her union leadership. Another person might vote Republican because her family always has. A third person

<sup>8</sup>On decision theory in modeling social choice and voting, see, for example, Hinich and Munger (1997).

<sup>9</sup>The reason for including  $-1/2$  in the calculation is that it makes intuitive sense as this term inverts the quadratic curve and facilitates other calculations such as taking derivatives.

who is Irish Catholic might vote Democratic because that party historically has represented her ethnic group.<sup>10</sup>

The types of information shortcuts found in a political system are not restricted to interpersonal networks but also depend on the history and institutions in that system.<sup>11</sup> For instance, while religion is an information shortcut in the United States, the church was not represented by particular parties during democratization in Eastern Europe (Crawford 1996; de Weydenthal 1997; Wittenberg 2006). Similarly, party identification remains constant through generations most often in systems where party labels have been meaningful for a long time. Therefore, a person in the United States might vote for the Democratic Party because the label signals a general set of policies (Campbell et al. 1960; Zaller 1992). Many of the information shortcuts we take for granted in established democracies, including party identification, may, however, be either underdeveloped or nonexistent in new democracies. This is because their expression depends to a great extent on the existing political system, and under nondemocratic conditions, the expression of organized groups often is suppressed or simply not useful.

Furthermore, in new democracies parties do not have established legislative track records, and the parties themselves do not know exactly who their constituency is and to what promises this constituency will respond. In addition, the parties lack the experience of ruling that might guide them as to what policy promises are urgent and reasonable. Therefore, while politicians seeking election (Mayhew 1974) make policy promises in the name of parties, in new democracies, these initial campaign promises often are quite vague. Consequently, most voters' access to information about the party's policies is very limited, and as a consequence they can, at best, only roughly place the parties in a multidimensional issue space before the first election. It is thus likely that there is often considerable difference between what many voters perceive as the party's policy preferences before the first election, and even the first few elections, and the actual policies that the party will come to pursue over time. Given the lack of information that determines the voter's initial beliefs about party policy preferences, I adopt the simple assumption that in new democracies all voters' initial beliefs about any party's policy preferences are normally distributed around the true party policy preferences.

<sup>10</sup>According to cleavage theorists such as Lipset and Rokkan (1967), people support the party that best represents the interest of the cleavage to which they belong.

<sup>11</sup>West European political cleavages were the result of sociocultural conflicts that formed prior to the extension of suffrage. Only when that threshold to participation had been eliminated did these cleavages manifest as party systems (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

Taking the expectation ( $E$ ) of the utility function of voting  $-1/2(Z - X)^2$  allows me to account for this uncertainty about party policies.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the expectation of the utility equation of voting for the party  $Z$  can be written as:

$$-1/2E(Z - X)^2 = -1/2E(Z - E(Z))^2 - 1/2(E(Z) - X)^2.$$

Simplifying the expression:

$$-1/2E(Z - E(Z))^2 = -1/2Var(Z).$$

Thus, the final and more explicit expression of the voter's initial utility equation including the variance is:

$$-1/2E(Z - X)^2 = -1/2Var(Z) - 1/2(E(Z) - X)^2.$$

Here the expression  $-1/2(E(Z) - X)^2$  refers to the voter's expectation about the proximity of the policy of the party ( $Z$ ) and the voter's own policy preference ( $X$ ). The expression  $-1/2Var(Z)$ , in turn, refers to the variance of the voter's beliefs around the true policy position of the party ( $Z$ ). This variance is expected to decrease over time as parties establish reputations. In sum, therefore, the equation  $-1/2E(Z - X)^2 = -1/2Var(Z) - 1/2(E(Z) - X)^2$  tells us that a voter's expected utility in voting for party ( $Z$ ) is determined by the expression  $-1/2(E(Z) - X)^2$ , which denotes policy proximity of the party ( $Z$ ) to the voter's policy preferences ( $X$ ), and the expression  $-1/2Var(Z)$ , which represents how closely the voter's beliefs about the party position approximate the true party policy position.

The cost to the voter decreases, and the benefit increases, as the policy preferences of the voter and the party converge. Thus, when the party's policy preferences are known to be closer to those of the voter than is any other party's policy, there are no policy costs to the voter in voting for the first party. In new democracies, however, when there is great uncertainty about a party's policy preferences, there is potentially high policy cost involved in voting for that party.

## Voting in New Democracies

In an environment of uncertainty in a new democracy, how then does a voter decide to vote for party left ( $Z_L$ ) as opposed to party right ( $Z_R$ ) when the party policies

<sup>12</sup>The expectation is akin to the average, which is the reference point for the variance that accounts for how much uncertainty there is in the voter's mind about a party's policy position. To facilitate calculation of the variance we can insert  $E(Z) - E(Z)$  into the equation because  $E(Z) - E(Z) = 0$ . Therefore, when I expand (calculate) the expectation of the equation  $-1/2(Z - X)^2$ , I am really expanding  $-1/2E(Z - E(Z) + E(Z) - X)^2$ .

appear equally appealing because both are fairly vague and the voter has little information? According to the above utility definition, she should vote for party left ( $Z_L$ ) when the utility of  $Z_L$  (choosing a left party) given  $X$  is greater than the utility of  $Z_R$  (choosing a right party) given  $X$ . Mathematically speaking she should vote for party left ( $Z_L$ ) when:

$$U(Z_L | X) > U(Z_R | X)$$

Or, using the form of the equation stated above, she should vote for party left ( $Z_L$ ) when:

$$\begin{aligned} -1/2\text{Var}(Z_L) - 1/2(E(Z_L) - X)^2 \\ > -1/2\text{Var}(Z_R) - 1/2(E(Z_R) - X)^2 \end{aligned}$$

Solving this inequality for  $X$  we get:<sup>13</sup>

$$X < \frac{E(Z_R) + E(Z_L)}{2} + \frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_L)}{2(E(Z_R) - E(Z_L))}$$

Therefore, according to this last inequality the voter should vote for party left ( $Z_L$ ) when her policy preferences ( $X$ ) are left of the policy middle between the two parties left ( $Z_L$ ) and right ( $Z_R$ ) represented by the expression  $\frac{E[Z_R] + E[Z_L]}{2}$ , plus half the uncertainty about the true policy positions of the two parties represented by the expression  $\frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_L)}{2(E(Z_R) - E(Z_L))}$ .

The obvious conclusion is that when she knows nothing about either party so that the uncertainty associated with picking either party is high because party left might really represent policies right and vice versa, the difference in the uncertainty cost associated with picking one party over another is low, ( $\frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_L)}{2(E[Z_R] - E[Z_L])} = \text{low}$ , or even none). Consequently, the voter will pick the party that she *thinks* best represents her policy position ( $X$ ) but her choice is not very robust, and will likely, therefore, oscillate between elections as policy objectives of parties become increasingly clear.

<sup>13</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} -\text{Var}(Z_L) - (E(Z_L) - X)^2 &> -\text{Var}(Z_R) - (E(Z_R) - X)^2 \\ -\text{Var}(Z_L) - E(Z_L)^2 + 2E(Z_L)X - X^2 &> -\text{Var}(Z_R) \\ -E(Z_R)^2 + 2E(Z_R)X - X^2 & \\ -\text{Var}(Z_L) + \text{Var}(Z_R) + E(Z_R)^2 - E(Z_L)^2 &> 2E(Z_R)X \\ -2E(Z_L)X & \\ -\text{Var}(Z_L) + \text{Var}(Z_R) + E(Z_R)^2 - E(Z_L)^2 & \\ > (E(Z_R) - E(Z_L))(2X) & \\ \frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_L) + E(Z_R)^2 - E(Z_L)^2}{E(Z_R) - E(Z_L)} &> 2X \\ \frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_L)}{E(Z_R) - E(Z_L)} + E(Z_R) + E(Z_L) &> 2X \\ X < \frac{E(Z_R) + E(Z_L)}{2} + \frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_L)}{2(E(Z_R) - E(Z_L))} \end{aligned}$$

In new democracies, ethnic parties and ethnic voters differ from majority parties and majority voters in one important respect. The ethnic voter already has a strongly established group affiliation by the time of the first democratic election. Presumably any party that claims to represent the ethnic group will, therefore, immediately propose specific policies that benefit that group. Due to inexperience with governance shared among all parties, the ethnic party may be as vague as other parties on many of the other aspects of its program. However, the party leaders know precisely whom their constituency is and can therefore make specific promises that appeal to that population. Thus, during democratization, campaign promises of ethnic parties will be, *on average*, less vague in the minds of voters than those of other parties. Given the established group membership and greater policy concreteness on the part of the ethnic party, the ethnic voter does not face the same uncertainty in his beliefs about political parties that other voters do.

In short, ethnic voters have more information about the ethnic party than nonethnic voters have about any of the parties that appeal to them. Therefore, the ethnic voter's utility calculation differs in one important respect from that of other voters. Assuming that the ethnic voter has a preference for the ethnic policy (so that  $X$  includes the ethnic policy), she should vote consistently for the ethnic party ( $Z_E$ ) whenever there is less uncertainty (variance) about the policy positions of the ethnic party ( $Z_E$ ) than the policy positions of party right ( $Z_R$ ). Stated in mathematical terms, lower variance about the ethnic party's policy ( $Z_E$ ) than party right's policy ( $Z_R$ ) contributes a high overall variance "cost" to the model because ( $\frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_E)}{2(E[Z_R] - E[Z_E])} = \frac{\text{high} - \text{low}}{2(E[Z_R] - E[Z_E])} = \text{high}$ ). Thus, the equation accounting for the ethnic voter utility in voting for the ethnic party,  $X < \frac{E(Z_R) + E(Z_E)}{2} + \frac{\text{Var}(Z_R) - \text{Var}(Z_E)}{2(E(Z_R) - E(Z_E))}$ , shows that the ethnic voter's choice is significantly more robust to changes in perception about the ethnic parties' true policy positions than the choice of nonethnic voters for party left.

Indeed, the greater the uncertainty about the policy position of party right ( $Z_R$ ), the closer the voter's true preferences ( $X$ ) can move toward the right, to the true policy position of party right ( $Z_R$ ), while the voter's utility still remains higher by voting for the ethnic party ( $Z_E$ ). This is due to the fact that as a result of the higher variance around the policy preferences of party right ( $Z_R$ ), voting for it could leave the voter with party policies that are further from her preference than anything she would get from voting for the ethnic party ( $Z_E$ ). Even when uncertainty about policy positions of party right ( $Z_R$ ) decreases so that the variance term is eliminated, ethnic voters maintain a strong incentive to vote for the ethnic

party ( $Z_E$ ) as the ethnic party policy is better aligned with their policy preferences.

### The Core Identity of Ethnic Choice

The question that remains is whether we would expect all components of ethnic identity to be equally important with respect to early elections. The answer is not necessarily. Ethnicity is fluid and the same person can identify in different ways on different occasions. For example, a member of a minority group in Romania might identify as a Hungarian Catholic or a German Catholic. At some point or under certain circumstances linguistic identification may supersede religious or other identification and vice versa.

The formal theory does not distinguish between the information provision capabilities of different cleavages *per se*. The theory simply articulates that the information that stabilizes the vote is delivered through ethnic parties. An implication of this theory is that the particular cleavage that gets activated politically during transition is one that best (or most easily) facilitates the formation of ethnic parties. The formation of ethnic parties along particular cleavage lines, in turn, likely depends on the institutional setting (Posner 2005) and the sizes of the groups defined by a cleavage in a particular country at any given time. The smaller the group is, the lower the intragroup heterogeneity is likely to be. The greater the intragroup homogeneity is, the fewer the cross-cutting pressures, and the more likely an ethnic party is to form. Furthermore, a smaller group facilitates the successful collective action needed to (Olson c1951) run a party.

An empirical examination of the sample of new democracies suggests that linguistic cues are more likely activated through ethnic parties in early elections than are racial cues, because racial identity is generally broader than linguistic identity.<sup>14</sup> Unless the racial group is very small, it is likely crosscut by a number of additional cleavages and consequently difficult to mobilize uniformly except under extraordinary circumstances. Furthermore, the uncertainty thus associated with race is not likely to change much over time without association with other ethnic attributes such as language. Racial identity, therefore, is probably only a choice for political emphasis in democracies under restrictive (often undemocratic)

<sup>14</sup>Comparison between the social fragmentation produced by the purely linguistic fractionalization measure (0.34) and the index accounting for race, which is a measure of both linguistic and racial characteristics (0.40; see further discussion of measures on p. 612), shows that race adds little to the overall measure of fragmentation because racial categories are few and large and most societal fragmentation in this sample occurs along linguistic lines.

institutions or in combination with other identification. Examples of racial identity that fractures into smaller linguistic groups under democratic political conditions abound from South Africa's Blacks to Bolivia's indigenous (Birner and Van Cott 2007; Madrid 2005b).

Whether linguistic or religious cues are more likely to translate into ethnic parties in new democracies is less clear empirically,<sup>15</sup> but theory suggests that linguistic cues will be the more salient of the two because early on many parties can reasonably credibly present themselves as competing proponents of the same religion. Indeed, Wittenberg (2006) argues that religious political loyalties persisted throughout Communism in Eastern Europe due to countersocialization by the church of its members.<sup>16</sup> However, as explained by Wittenberg, this loyalty was not to particular parties, such as many of the "historic" parties that were revived during transition, but rather to the relative "right" political blocks or political families of the political spectrum. Hence, while linguistic affiliation likely immediately translated into particular party affiliations, religious identity directed voters to party blocks but gave them little guidance as to which parties within the bloc to vote for. While little direction is better than none, it is, therefore, likely that religious political affiliations to particular parties took longer to develop in Eastern Europe than ethnic political affiliations. Anecdotal evidence supports this idea. According to Crawford (1996), for example, linguistic identity was the only cleavage that was salient enough to be mobilized early on in the new democracies of Eastern Europe. Because many parties can credibly present themselves as proponents of the same religion the same is likely true for other regions. Over time, however, as uncertainty decreases, religious cleavages have taken on increased importance in countries such as Poland (de Weydenthal 1997).<sup>17</sup>

In sum, in a new democracy where representative capabilities of parties are generally unknown, a voter who, due to lack of information, is ignorant of the policy differences between two parties cannot reliably choose between them and will likely oscillate in her support for parties. Ethnic voters, in turn, initially coalescing around the core

<sup>15</sup>The average religious fragmentation in the sample is slightly higher (at 0.41) than the linguistic fragmentation.

<sup>16</sup>Wittenberg also confirms that during democratization East European voters were unable to distinguish between particular parties on policy grounds.

<sup>17</sup>The index of religious fragmentation is significantly higher than that of race. Consequently, it is possible that over time, as parties distinguish themselves with respect to religious policy issues, religious fragmentation may come to complement, rival, or even supersede linguistic fragmentation as a natural ethnic constituency base. The same is likely not true for race.

of language identity will know more about the true policy preferences of the party they initially vote for than voters at large. Thus ethnic voters will tend to immediately vote for ethnic parties or nonethnic parties that explicitly represent the ethnic issue and are more likely to continue their support of that party than voters at large are to continue supporting their initial choice.

The important conclusion, therefore, is that in the very first election ethnic voters everywhere will likely vote with their group for sincerely preferred ethnic or nonethnic parties that represent the group.<sup>18</sup> Nonethnic voters will likely also vote sincerely in the first election. However, due to the ethnic information advantage, the parties incorporating ethnic issues will more likely accurately reflect the ethnic voter policy preferences, while nonethnic parties will be less likely to accurately reflect those of nonethnic voters. Consequently, in early elections ethnic voters will, *on average*, be more likely to remain loyal to the party they voted for initially than nonethnic voters. In this sample, the cleavage most likely to translate into ethnic parties is language but this may change over time.

The many testable implications that emerge from this argument include that:

- H1:* Voting behavior in new, linguistically heterogeneous democracies is initially more stable than in new, linguistically homogeneous democracies.
- H2:* In diverse new democracies, ethnic minority populations, who are represented through ethnic parties, are initially more stable in their voting behavior than the nonethnic majority.

## Ethnic Voting and Party System Stability

The remainder of this article seeks to test the implications of ethnic vote stability at aggregate and individual levels. To sum, I find support for both hypotheses. Ethnic diversity stabilizes initial vote behavior in heterogeneous new democracies everywhere, and in first elections only language identity stabilizes the vote while religious and racial identities do not. Furthermore, in new democracies indi-

<sup>18</sup>The stabilization of the ethnic vote may possibly also occur through a nonethnic party as long as that party makes it abundantly clear that it represents the ethnic group's interests. The type of party (ethnic or nonethnic) will probably differ depending on the electoral system and attributes of the group. Nevertheless, due to uncertainties about all parties in first elections, it is also likely that the party that sends the strongest signal to ethnic groups, or the explicitly ethnic party, will be disproportionately sincerely preferred by ethnic voters in early elections.

vidual ethnic voters are significantly more stable in their vote than are their nonethnic counterparts.

## The Aggregate Test. Data and Method

The first test in this article is of the first hypothesis. This test uses country-level cross-sectional data on election results, one observation from each of 59 new democracies that have held at least two elections between 1945 and 2003,<sup>19</sup> in addition to demographic, institutional, and economic data. "New" refers to any newly established democracy, whether the prior authoritarian regime resulted from domestic events or foreign control.<sup>20</sup> Electoral volatility is the common empirical indicator of the stability of the pattern in intraparty competition. Electoral volatility denotes the percentage of votes gained by any one party and lost by any other party in each pair of elections. The greater the volatility, the more voters have switched between parties from one election to the next. The standard measure of electoral volatility is Przeworski's (1975) index,<sup>21</sup> which accounts for change in votes for parties between elections (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Birnir 2005; Madrid 2005a; Pedersen 1979; Przeworski 1975; Roberts and Wibbels 1999). To distinguish between real electoral volatility and volatility in party cohesion or the legislature, I trace the origin of all parties and coalitions competing in each election for each country. Consequently, in order to assess the amount of change for parties that split between elections, the votes for all the "offspring" in the first election after the split are compared to the vote for the "mother party" in the previous election. In the second election after a split from a "mother party," the changes in the "offspring" votes are measured separately. For parties that joined coalitions, the individual party vote in the election before the coalition was formed is compared with the aggregate vote for the coalition. In the second election after the coalition was formed, the change in vote is measured for the coalition between elections. If parties split from the coalition, their volatility is

<sup>19</sup>Following Geddes (2003) I do not count authoritarian periods of less than three years as break in democracy. Only Greece, Turkey, and Uruguay enter the data more than once.

<sup>20</sup>This article follows the definition of democracy used by Geddes (2003). Generally, a country must be independent for the election to be included. Due to data scarcity I include only votes for parties with seats.

<sup>21</sup>The formal definition of electoral volatility is  $\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{|P_{it} - P_{i(t+1)}|}{2}$ . Volatility between elections at  $t$  and  $t + 1$  is measured as half the sum of the absolute difference between vote shares ( $P$ ) of all parties in each election. The shares are taken without their sign in the aggregate and half of the observed difference is used.

**TABLE 1** List of New Democracies, Their Linguistic Fractionalization, and Volatilities in the First Election Period

Country	First Democratic Election	Vote Stability	Linguistic Fract.	Country	First Democratic Election	Vote Stability	Linguistic Fract.
Albania	1991	30.9	0.0399	Macedonia	1990	11.9	0.5021
Argentina	1983	MD	0.0618	Madagascar	1993	MD	0.0204
Austria	1945	11.85	0.1522	Malawi	1994	4.72	0.6023
Bangladesh	1991	10	0.0925	Mauritius	1967	41.7	0.4547
Benin	1991	26	0.6303	Moldova	1994	CPI	0.5533
Bolivia	1985	27.825	0.224	Mongolia	1990	8.45	0.3734
Bosnia	1996	MD	0.6751	Mozambique	1994	6.03	0.8125
Brazil	1982	13.785	0.0468	Namibia	1989	17.75	0.7005
Bulgaria	1990	9.2	0.3031	Nepal	1991	10.65	0.7167
Chile	1989	4.795	0.1871	Nicaragua	1984	24.65	0.0473
Costa Rica	1953	33.7	0.0489	Nigeria	1999	5.395	0.8503
Croatia	1990	25.29	0.0763	Pakistan	1988	11.4	0.719
Czech Republic	1990	13.35	0.3233	Panama	1994	23.05	0.3873
Dominican Republic	1978	5.6	0.0395	Papua New Guinea	1964	MD	0.3526
Ecuador	1979	30.785	0.1308	Paraguay	1993	11.175	0.5975
El Salvador	1985	21.65	MD	Peru	1980	31.18	0.3358
Estonia	1992	17.95	0.4944	Philippines	1992	MD	0.8366
France	1945	3.45	0.1221	Poland	1991	25.9	0.0468
Georgia	1990	MD	0.4749	Portugal	1975	9.6	0.0198
Germany	1949	17.85	0.1642	Romania	1990	31.65	0.1723
Ghana	1992	MD	0.6731	Russia	1993	27.33	0.2485
Greece	1946*	37.8	0.03	Slovakia	1990	16.3	0.2551
Greece	1974	13.7	0.03	Slovenia	1990	24.55	0.2201
Guatemala	1984	21.605	0.4586	South Africa	1994	10.52	0.8652
Guinea-Bissau	1994	MD	0.814	South Korea	1988	32.65	0.0021
Honduras	1981	4.1	0.0553	Spain	1977	7.8	0.4132
Hungary	1990	21.6	0.0297	Sri Lanka	1947	15.45	0.4645
India	1950	7.04	0.8069	Thailand	1992	17.15	0.6344
Indonesia	1999	MD	0.768	Turkey	1950	6.25	0.2216
Israel	1949	21.45	0.5525	Turkey	1983	9.34	0.2216
Italy	1946	15	0.1147	Ukraine	1994	25.27	0.4741
Jamaica	1944	10.65	0.1098	Uruguay	1946	5.8	0.0817
Japan	1946	8	0.0178	Uruguay	1984	10.655	0.0817
Latvia	1993	30.15	0.5795	Venezuela	1958	19.55	0.0686
Lithuania	1992	33.65	0.3219				

MD = Missing Data, CPI = Communist Party Illegal. \*The Greek Communist Party was banned from 1946 until 1974. However, the EDA, or United Democratic Left (in 1950 called Democratic Front, in 1961 Pan-Agrarian Democratic Front of Greece) was generally regarded as a front for the illegal Communist Party (Mackie and Rose 1991). Thus, Greece is included here.

measured with reference to the earlier coalition vote in the first election after the split, but separately thereafter.<sup>22</sup> Table 1 lists all new democracies included in the study and their volatility between the first and second elections.

<sup>22</sup>This method of tracing follows Birnir (2005, 2007). I do not account for ideological inter- or intrablock volatilities in the national level calculations (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Furthermore, I do not account for independents in the volatility index used here. I did, however, run the analysis with an index that includes vote shares of independents, and the results remained substantively the same.

The definition of ethnicity in this article is self-identification around a characteristic that is impossible or difficult to change, such as race, language, or religion. In new democracies the level of political uncertainty associated with divergent possible identities also varies. Following Wittenberg (2006) I posit that in new democracies the uncertainty associated with language is less than that associated with religious identification. My empirical expectation is also that the uncertainty associated with language is lower than that of racial identity due to racial group size and internal diversity.

To test the different effects of these diverse cleavages, I use Alesina and colleagues' (2003) indexes of linguistic fractionalization, a measure of both linguistic and racial characteristics and an index of religious fractionalization. All indexes are calculated using the Herfindahl formula subtracted from one.<sup>23</sup> The indexes account for the probability that people drawn at random from a population belong to different groups. The greater the number of roughly equivalent groups, the higher the fractionalization. Alesina and colleagues' indexes capture the idea of the stabilizing influence of ethnicity on the vote because, all else equal, the greater the number of roughly equivalent ethnic groups in society the more viable ethnic parties, through which I expect the stabilization of the vote.<sup>24</sup>

In reality, however, not all ethnic groups run candidates in elections for reasons that range from small size and geographic dispersion to lack of funds. Such voters will likely align with other groups that may or may not incorporate ethnic policy into their platform. Ethnic individual voting for parties that do not specifically appeal to ethnic groups, in turn, eliminates the "ethnic" electoral information. Therefore, I expect that in highly fragmented societies—where there are likely many small ethnic groups that do not field separate ethnic parties and that nonethnic parties do not attempt to capture with ethnic policy—the stabilizing effect of ethnicity on the vote tapers off. Thus, on average highly fragmented societies with diverse ethnic groups, roughly equal in size and measuring the highest on the fractionalization scale, will still have more stable voters than homogeneous societies but the effect is not linear. To capture this expected tapering off I take the log of the fractionalization measures.

### Other Determinants of Vote Stability

Change in the ethnic diversity and concomitant change in relationships between voters and parties is but one of the determinants of the decision voters make at election time about what party to support. Party-formation

<sup>23</sup>The index varies from 0 in a perfectly homogeneous country to 1 when every individual belongs to a different group. The formal definition of the Herfindahl concentration index (conventionally subtracted from one) is  $1 - \sum_{i=1}^n s_i^2$  where  $s_i$  is the  $i^{\text{th}}$  share of group  $i$  ( $i = 1 \dots n$ ).

<sup>24</sup>Alternative measures of social fragmentation are less likely to capture vote stability in new democracies. Polarized groups, for example, will initially be appealed to by multiple parties focusing on either pole, and choice between parties within each pole in a low-information environment will be more random and more likely to change between elections. This is even true in two-party systems because which two parties emerge over time as the viable contestants at the district level is likely not evident in first elections.

institutions (Birnie 2004; Moreno 2005), allocation rules, and changes in those rules also affect electoral volatility (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Roberts and Wibbels 1999). This effect is not necessarily linear (Bartolini and Mair 1990), and systems may differ qualitatively (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001). Consequently, I rely on the product of all the various institutions, party fragmentation in the legislature, to control for electoral institutions. This solution gets directly at the hypothesized mechanism between electoral institutions and volatility, that is, difference in the number of parties as a result of changing institutions between countries or within a country. Citizens also take economic conditions into consideration when they decide for whom to vote (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981). There is, however, little consensus on whether voters are pocket-book voters (Gomez and Wilson 2001; Kramer 1983) or sociotropic voters (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Thus, I control for both effects using change in the rate of growth of Gross Domestic Product and Gross Domestic Product per capita.<sup>25</sup> Theoretically volatility increases with significant changes in the size of the electorate (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Madrid 2005a). Hence I control for the absolute percent change in the number of total votes between years.<sup>26</sup> Voter relationships to parties and their instability increases over time due to a variety of influences ranging from changes in party funding to the development of mass media (Katz and Mair 1995). Therefore, I include an ordinal variable accounting for the decade of the second election in each pair. Finally, "Culture Matters" (Harrison and Huntington 2000) but has proven the most difficult variable to measure in the social sciences. Assuming that history and culture are at least region, if not country, specific, (Kitschelt et al. 1999), I use regional dummy variables to capture what in all likelihood are some of the effects of history and culture. Table 2 presents summary statistics for the first election period (first two elections) for all the variables included in the analysis.

### The Results

As national level volatilities theoretically range from 0 to 100, I use Ordinary Least-Squares regression to estimate the effect of ethnicity. The results of the statistical analysis in Table 3 support the hypothesis that increasing ethnic

<sup>25</sup>The source for these data is the Penn World Tables (Heston et al. 2002).

<sup>26</sup>The sources are IDEA (2006) and various election handbooks. Figures for Indonesia in 2004 and Mauritania in 1967 are valid votes.

**TABLE 2** Summary Statistics for Variables Included in the Analysis of the First Election Period (Elections One and Two) in New Democracies

	Observations	Mean	Stdev	Min	Max
Volatility	59 <sup>a</sup>	17.500	9.936	3.450	41.70
Linguistic and Racial Fractionalization	59	0.379	0.220	0.002	0.851
Linguistic Fractionalization	58 <sup>b</sup>	0.306	0.258	0.002	0.865
Log of Linguistic Fractionalization	58 <sup>b</sup>	-1.723	1.255	-6.166	-0.145
Religious Fractionalization	59	0.389	0.203	0.005	0.860
Number of parties in the legislature	59	9.356	6.825	2	35
Eastern Europe	59	0.170	0.378	0	1
Latin America	59	0.288	0.457	0	1
Former Soviet Republics (including the Baltics)	59	0.085	0.281	0	1
Asia (including Turkey)	59	0.186	0.393	0	1
Africa (including Israel)	59	0.136	0.345	0	1
Western Europe	59	0.136	0.345	0	1
Decade	59	4.695	1.803	1	7
Percent absolute change in number of votes cast	57 <sup>c</sup>	19.992	17.050	0.603	79.784
GDP growth	47 <sup>d</sup>	2.978	6.646	-10.260	24.602
GDP per capita	49 <sup>e</sup>	5309.163	3131.210	762.500	12170.990

<sup>a</sup>Inclusion in this table and the analysis is determined by availability of volatility data. For missing data on this variable with the respect to the universe of cases see Table 1.

<sup>b</sup>Linguistic fractionalization is missing for El Salvador.

<sup>c</sup>Turnout figures are missing for Croatia and Macedonia.

<sup>d</sup>GDP growth is missing for Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Germany, Greece, Uruguay, Bulgaria, Croatia, Mongolia, and Nigeria.

<sup>e</sup>GDP per capita is missing for Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Croatia, Mongolia, and Nigeria.

fractionalization decreases initial electoral volatility and the idea that different strands of ethnic identity are politicized at different times. First, the results show that linguistic fractionalization better predicts vote stability of ethnic groups in first elections than a measure that includes racial components or a measure of religious fractionalization. Furthermore, it appears that institutions, change in turnout, and regional differences affect early vote stability. The following discussion highlights the properties of each model specification and explains the significance of each variable.

The first model includes the measure of ethnic fractionalization that centers both on racial and linguistic characteristics, a measure of religious fractionalization, a variable accounting for fractionalization in the legislature, four of the five regional variables (Eastern Europe, Latin America, Former Soviet Republics, Asia, and Africa; in reference to Western Europe), the decade in which the second election is held, and percentage change in turnout. The second model includes the same variables except that it substitutes a measure of linguistic fractionalization for the measure that combines racial and linguistic characteristics. The third model is identical to the second model

with the exception that I substitute a log transformed variable for the measure of linguistic heterogeneity. The fourth model adds economic variables measuring GDP per capita and GDP growth.

All of the measures of ethnic fractionalization are negatively related to volatility when controlling for other relevant influences. A comparison between the first and second models demonstrates, however, that the measure of linguistic diversity better captures voting dynamics in new democracies than the diversity measure that includes racial components. The overall fit of the second model is better than the first, and the linguistic variable is weakly significant, whereas the measure including racial attributes does not approach significance. The third model, including the log transformed linguistic variable, supports the idea that the stabilizing effect of ethnic diversity on vote preferences tapers off in exceptionally diverse societies. The difference between the effect of the linguistic and racial indicators is quite interesting as it suggests that for political purposes, linguistic identification is important in first elections whereas racial identification is not. Anecdotally, this finding seems to describe ethnic politics quite well, as ethnic political groups are defined

**TABLE 3 Regression Results. Ethnic Fractionalization and Volatility in the First Election Period (Elections One and Two). (Cross-Sectional Sample of All New Democracies 1945–2003.)**

Dependent Variable: Vote Stability	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Linguistic and Racial Fractionalization	-2.100 (8.146)			
Linguistic Fractionalization		-12.475 (7.323) <sup>#</sup>		
Log of Linguistic Fractionalization			-2.731 (1.165) <sup>*</sup>	-2.463 (1.331) <sup>#</sup>
Religious Fractionalization	-2.704 (7.782)	-2.676 (7.558)	-4.727 (7.424)	-6.060 (9.872)
Number of parties in the legislature	0.275 (0.222)	0.344 (0.209)	0.370 (0.204) <sup>#</sup>	0.420 (0.223) <sup>#</sup>
Eastern Europe <sup>a</sup>	8.510 (5.846)	7.872 (5.696)	9.542 (5.541) <sup>#</sup>	19.370 (7.035) <sup>**</sup>
Latin America <sup>a</sup>	4.020 (5.047)	3.410 (4.609)	4.313 (4.517)	12.328 (7.083) <sup>#</sup>
Former Soviet Republics (including the Baltics) <sup>a</sup>	11.160 (6.753)	12.991 (6.622) <sup>#</sup>	14.672 (6.539) <sup>*</sup>	22.444 (8.335) <sup>*</sup>
Asia (including Turkey) <sup>a</sup>	-0.511 (5.068)	2.111 (5.025)	1.502 (4.711)	8.591 (7.491)
Africa (including Israel) <sup>a</sup>	-0.104 (7.859)	5.346 (7.870)	5.094 (7.183)	13.894 (11.033)
Decade	-0.143 (0.947)	0.097 (0.909)	-0.161 (0.866)	-0.434 (1.191)
Change in turnout between elections	0.170 (0.096) <sup>#</sup>	0.160 (0.096)	0.173 (0.092) <sup>#</sup>	0.063 (0.108)
GDP growth				0.479e-04 (5.453e-04)
GDP per capita				0.414 (0.266)
Constant	10.705 (5.720)	10.817 (5.576)	3.267 (6.200)	-1.223 (9.622)
Observations	57	56	56	45
R <sup>2</sup>	0.27	0.33	0.36	0.42
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.18	0.22	0.21

Ordinary Least-Squares Regression. Standard Errors in Parentheses.

<sup>#</sup>Significant at 10%; <sup>\*</sup>Significant at 5%; <sup>\*\*</sup>Significant at 1%.

<sup>a</sup>Reference category is Western Europe

more often along linguistic lines, for instance Hungarians in Romania or Basques in Spain, and less frequently along racial lines exclusively. Furthermore, despite the systematic restriction of cases in the third model the log of the linguistic variable remains weakly significant. The lack of significance associated with religious cleavages in first elections in all of the models is noteworthy in light of evidence that indicates religion is a strong determinant of the vote in mature democracies (Bartolini and Mair 1990;

Norris 2004). Clearly the effect of divergent cleavages on the vote differs according to the age of democracy. This finding is also consistent with Wittenberg (2006), who argues that while religion provided voters with a general direction as to which party blocks they should align with in early elections in Eastern Europe, it did not direct voters to particular parties. In sum, early on race and religion are not as effective information shortcuts as linguistic divides.

## The Controls

A number of control variables in Table 3 are important to the analysis, though not all are significant. Judging by the  $R^2$ , the third model provides the best fit. According to this model an increase in the number of parties increases vote instability, as does a significant change in turnout. Furthermore, volatilities in both Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics are higher than volatilities in Western Europe. This is likely, in part, due to the greater suppression of parties and other elements of civil society in these regions than in, for example, Latin America where traces of pre-authoritarian political identity other than ethnicity may have carried over from one democratic period to the next. The variable accounting for decade is not significant but it is likely that higher volatilities in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics are in part due to party system change over time, usurping the effect of time. Finally, neither economic variable is significant but this result is likely related to the lack of recent economic data, and data immediately after WWII, which restricts the number of cases significantly.

## The Ecological Inference Problem

The principal aggregation problem in national studies of vote stability is that the dependent variable potentially conceals some of the true volatility in each election (Mair 2000). That is to say, a party could lose its entire previous constituency and gain all new voters, so that its volatility would measure zero while real volatility would actually be 100%. Nevertheless, this measure is a useful indicator where aggregate comparative survey data may not be available (Mair 2000). This is certainly the case for most new democracies. More importantly, unless there are systematic differences between countries in how volatilities at the local level conceal volatility from national volatilities calculations, there is no reason to believe cross-country comparisons are unreliable in establishing general trends. According to Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck (1984), however, because of these problems the measure cannot be used to infer magnitude of individual partisan preferences. King (1997) agrees that inferences about individual voters from aggregate data are unreliable. Therefore, the second test in this article estimates the effect of diversity on vote stability in a study of individual voting in Bulgaria.

The case selection for a test of ethnic voting at the individual level requires that the country be a heterogeneous new democracy. It is also necessary that at least one ethnic party runs in elections so that a vote for the party

can reasonably be considered an ethnic vote. Survey data from new democracies asking voters about their ethnic affiliation and voting history are very scarce. For example, only the second module of the impressive Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES 2005)<sup>27</sup> asks about individual voting history. Of the 25 countries included in the second module, only four, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, are arguably new democracies at the time the questionnaire was administered.<sup>28</sup> Only one of those, Bulgaria, had an ethnic party run consistently in every election.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, I test the hypothesis of ethnic voting stability on data from Bulgaria.

Bulgaria is quite diverse. Among the 882 respondents (out of 1482) who gave valid answers to the questions of what party they voted for in both the 1997 and 2001 legislative elections, 738 identified as Bulgarian, 77 as Turkish, 40 as Gypsy (hereafter called Roma), and 27 as belonging to other ethnic groups.<sup>30</sup> Bulgaria's party system is exceptionally fluid. Between the first few elections parties frequently merged, split, and changed names. The first column in Table 4 lists all party options given by the CSES survey in Bulgaria that were mentioned by at least one respondent as her vote choice in the 1997 election.<sup>31</sup> The second column in the table lists all parties that were listed by any respondent who had also voted in 1997, as

<sup>27</sup>For the full data including question wording, see [www.cses.org](http://www.cses.org).

<sup>28</sup>The questionnaire was administered in 2001, and respondents in Bulgaria were asked how they voted in the 2001 and 1997 elections. While 11 years passed from democratization until the 2001 election, the extraordinarily volatile party system in Bulgaria makes the assumption plausible that the political environment still provided very little consistent information. Thus, it is likely that ethnic cues continued to be relatively important in 2001.

<sup>29</sup>The Bulgarian Constitution bans ethnic parties. In 1991 the BSP banned the MRF but after long legal disputes the MRF was recognized by the Constitutional Court and was able to register itself as a "party" in a regional court. While the party is not officially an ethnic party it is commonly thought to represent the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

<sup>30</sup>Gypsy is the term used in the survey. Other ethnic groups who voted in both elections are Bulgarian Muslim (Pomak), Jew, Wallachian, Armenian, and Greek. Importantly, Turks and Roma were no more likely than ethnic Bulgarians to report not voting in either election or to give nonsensical responses. In the 2001 election 21% of ethnic Bulgarian respondents reported they did not vote and 25% gave an inconsistent answer; the corresponding numbers for Turkish respondents were 15 and 19%, and 17 and 27% for Roma. When asked about the 1997 election, 28% of ethnic Bulgarians reported that they did not vote and 32% gave inconsistent answers; corresponding numbers for Turkish respondents were 22 and 25% and 26 and 30% for Roma respondents.

<sup>31</sup>The survey includes a question about respondents' religious denomination. Less than half of those who gave valid answers to the questions of whom they voted for in 1997 and 2001 also provided their religion. Consequently, I have not included this variable in the analysis.

**TABLE 4** Tracing of Bulgarian Political Parties Mentioned in CSES Surveys about Elections in 1997 and 2001<sup>a</sup>

1997	2001
Coalition Bulgarian Social Democratic Party (BSP)	Coalition for Bulgaria—includes BSP (BSP)
United Democratic Forces (ODS) <sup>b</sup>	United Democratic Forces (ODS)
Bulgarian Agricultural National Forces – ‘N. Petkov’ <sup>c</sup> (BZNS) see ODS	See ODS
Union for National Salvation, includes Movement for Rights and Freedoms (ONS)	Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS)
Green Party <sup>d</sup> see ONS	
Euroleft (BEL)	Euroleft (BEL)
Bulgarian Business Bloc	The Bloc of G. Ganchev <sup>e</sup>
Bulgarian Communist Party <sup>f</sup>	
Bulgarian Agricultural National Forces <sup>g</sup>	
Democratic Alternative for the Republic	
Other Parties	National Movement Simeon the Second Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization National Union, Fatherland Left <sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup>For information on parties in coalitions see CSES notes on Bulgaria. In particular, variables B5001-A through E and var. B5025. Also see Spirova (2005). Proper names are those given in CSES, acronyms are based on Spirova.

<sup>b</sup>Includes Union of Democratic Forces.

<sup>c</sup>Since 1997 aligned with ODS (Spirova 2005). Listed separately here because it was listed separately by CSES for 1997. Votes are counted with ODS in 1997 and 2001.

<sup>d</sup>In 1997 Greens ran with ONS (Spirova 2005). Listed separately here because the party was listed separately by CSES for 1997. Votes are counted with ONS in 1997.

<sup>e</sup>Former president of BBB; see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Political\\_parties\\_in\\_Bulgaria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Political_parties_in_Bulgaria).

<sup>f</sup>The BCP is not the pre-1990 Communist Party of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) is the continuation of the pre-1990 Communist Party. According to Spirova (2005) BCP ran independently in 1997 and 2001.

<sup>g</sup>Due to differences in translation between sources it is not clear which ‘‘Agricultural’’ and ‘‘Fatherland’’ parties these are, but the number of respondents that voted for either is trivial.

her choice in the 2001 election. The table also traces the parties through mergers, splits, and name changes. The following analysis reflects this tracing in that a vote for BZNS in 1997 and ODS in 2001, for example, is not considered a change as BZNS was subsumed by ODS.

Table 5 tests the difference in vote stability between Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian ethnic voters in Bulgaria while controlling for a number of other variables. The dependent variable is a dummy that accounts for whether the respondent changed her vote from one party to another between elections. The regression technique is logit analysis. The independent variables of primary interest are also dummies. The first accounts for whether the respondent is an ethnic Bulgarian or belongs to another ethnic group. The second set of dummies distinguishes between respondents who self-identify as Turkish, as Roma, or as belonging to other ethnic groups with respect to Bulgarian

voters. My expectation is that Turkish voters are more stable in their vote choice than their Bulgarian counterparts. Because the Roma are not represented by an ethnic party, I do not expect the same stability in their voting behavior as in that of Turks. The first control variable accounts for pocketbook voting by recording household income, in quintiles from lowest (1) to highest (5). The CSES data do not include a good measure of sociotropic voting, but I expect some of that is captured through an included variable accounting for whether the respondent voted for the ODS in 1997. Since the Bulgarian economy deteriorated prior to the ODS administration and began recovery under their control, I would expect sociotropic voting to diminish vote flight induced by a poorly performing pocketbook. Alternatively, I expect the ODS variable will capture vote changes that aim to ‘‘punish’’ the incumbent. I also account for education as politically sophisticated voters are

**TABLE 5 Regression Results. Ethnic Affiliation and Volatility between the 1997 and 2001 Legislative Elections in Bulgaria**

Dependent Variable: Vote change between elections (0 or 1)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Ethnic voter (any non-Bulgarian ethnicity) <sup>a</sup>	-0.628 (0.202)**		
Turkish voter <sup>a</sup>		-1.370 (0.288)**	-2.344 (0.296)**
Roma <sup>a</sup>		0.752 (0.419) <sup>#</sup>	0.583 (0.428)
Other (not Turkish or Roma) ethnic voter <sup>a</sup>		-0.517 (0.405)	-0.795 (0.412) <sup>#</sup>
Voted for ODS in last election	1.074 (0.155)**	0.999 (0.158)**	
Education	-0.122 (0.048)*	-0.115 (0.049)*	-0.144 (0.050)**
Household Income	-0.107 (0.041)**	-0.098 (0.041)*	-0.105 (0.042)*
Voted for the BSP coalition in last election			-1.402 (0.172)**
Constant	0.841 (0.233)**	0.820 (0.235)**	2.051 (0.277)**
Observations	882	882	882
Log likelihood	-556.270	-544.754	-530.078

Logit regression. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>#</sup>significant at 10%; \*significant at 5%; \*\*significant at 1%.

<sup>a</sup>Reference category is ethnic Bulgarian voter.

considered more stable in their vote choice (Zaller 1992). Finally, to test how communist party loyalties compare to ethnic party loyalties, the third model records whether the respondent voted for the BSP in 1997. Since the ODS and the BSP are the two largest parties/coalitions, votes for them in the first election are highly negatively correlated. To avoid the problems associated with collinearity, I exclude the variable accounting for ODS vote in this specification.

In sum, Table 5 shows that all of the included variables are significant or highly significantly related to vote instability. The first specification shows that ethnic voters in Bulgaria are significantly more stable in their vote behavior than other voters. The second specification demonstrates that, as expected, this ethnic vote stability is driven by the Turkish linguistic minority. Furthermore, the Roma are possibly less stable than the majority of Bulgarian voters, though this finding is inconsistent between models. Similarly, only the third specification suggests that other minority voters may be more stable than Bulgarian voters at large, but this finding may depend on other controls. The control variables show that

as expected more educated and wealthier voters are more stable in their vote behavior. Furthermore, the ODS suffered the incumbent's punishment in 2001 despite overseeing a turnaround of the economy. Finally, a communist vote in Bulgaria translates into increased vote stability. Following Grzymala-Busse's (2002) contention, it is not clear, however, whether these Communist allegiances were carried over from the authoritarian period or are new.

According to the log likelihood the third specification provides the best overall fit. Thus, using Long and Freese's (2001) procedure, I generated predicted probabilities of vote change associated with change from the minimum to the maximum (0 to 1 for ethnicity) for the independent variables included in the third specification in Table 5. Vote stability associated with being Turkish is substantively more important than that of the other variables as it reduces the probability of vote change between parties, between elections, 50 percentage points. In comparison, voting for the BSP in 1997 reduces the probability of a vote change only 33 percentage points and belonging to the highest income level or having postgraduate education

reduces the probability that a voter changed her vote from one party to another between the 1997 and 2001 elections around 20 percentage points each, compared to voters with the lowest income and education levels.

## Conclusion

Ethnic diversity stabilizes vote behavior in new democracies. This finding is robust and substantively significant in individual-level analysis in Bulgaria and in a cross-sectional analysis of first elections in all new democracies since 1945. This finding is particularly important in light of recent arguments that hold democratic transitions are prone to detrimental instability (Hellman 1998; Przeworski 1991).

Furthermore, the analysis supports the idea that linguistic diversity has a greater effect on stabilizing early voting behavior than racial or religious identification. The finding that in new democracies linguistic diversity stabilizes the vote above and beyond that of religious or racial identification is particularly interesting in the context of social cleavage theories that argue that cleavages are associated with vote stability (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). While such prior studies show a general relationship between the existence of social cleavages and vote stability, this study is the first to differentiate between the effects of identity cleavages, theoretically with the argument of ethnicity as information shortcuts expressed through ethnic parties and empirically in new democracies. Bartolini and Mair, for instance, collapse the cleavages of religion and linguistic heterogeneity into a single indicator of “cultural heterogeneity” (1990, 228) that they demonstrate is negatively related to volatility in West European countries. Thus the idea that different social cleavages—language and religion, for example—have different effects on vote stability is novel. Furthermore, while Bartolini and Mair (1990) differentiate between the effects of high and low levels of fractionalization, they make no temporal distinctions between the effects of social cleavages when party systems are less and more institutionalized. Thus, the idea that language cleavages stabilize voting immediately in new democracies, while voting associated with other cleavages, such as religion, takes more time to develop is new.

There are multiple future directions for this work. For example, in contrast to the ethnic conflict literature (Dahl 1971; Horowitz 1985; Olzak 1992; Powell 1982; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Reilly 2001), the theory here suggests that initial ethnic vote stability is not due to inherent ethnic group intransigence. To the contrary, the stabilizing influence of ethnicity stems from the dynamic

and fluid process of socialization. This ethnic socialization provides information shortcuts for vote choice in the low-information environments of new democracies. If ethnic groups are stable but not inherently intransigent, the initial vote stability I demonstrate here does not foreshadow dysfunctionality of plural democracies. Other work (Birnie 2007) develops the theory of the long-term propensity of electorally active ethnic groups to remain peaceful or turn violent and tests the implications. Related questions include how different identities play out in electoral politics over time and the little understood effects on democratic development, holding institutions constant. This and connected questions remain the topic of future study.

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