Representation, Electoral Systemsand Stranded Minority Parties: How electoral system choices affect representation provided by small but influential ethnic minority parties

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How electoral system choices affect representation provided by small but influential ethnic minority parties

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Introduction

The question of how best to accommodate ethnic, religious and cultural minorities is as old as organized government. In the modern era, it is generally agreed that the most effective way to accommodate these small minority groups is to create representational structures that foster effective and meaningful representation. Scholars such as Hannah Pitkin and Iris Marion Young, among others, have championed numerous conceptions of representation and what it means for a group to achieve meaningful representation. Government officials, both elected and appointed, have over the course of the last twenty to twenty-five years taken up the challenge and created numerous institutional structures, explicitly or implicitly attempting to deal with the representation of minority groups.

There seems to be general agreement among scholars that proportional representation systems, among the many institutional choices available, present one of the most effective means of creating and maintaining meaningful representation for minority groups generally and small ethnic minority groups in particular. Arend Lijphart and Donald Horowitz both recognize that, for better (Lijphart) or worse (Horowitz), proportional representation systems work to bring together and solidify group identities and usually lead to a stronger and more unified voice in the political sphere. Robert Moser has found that proportional representation systems, even with the imposition of legal thresholds, are more effective for generating representation for ethnic minority parties, primarily in sheer number of seats at the table but also in effecting some voice for the minority group (Moser 2005). Other scholars, including Kenneth McRae (1974), Pippa Norris (2008) and William Kymlicka (2005) have argued strongly for the positive representational effects of proportional electoral systems.

While there seems to be at least some agreement as to the effect of proportional representation systems on the representation of small minority parties, to date there has not been a large amount of research as to the effect of various institutional choices made about PR systems, and how these choices affect the representation provided by small minority parties. General research has been done on the effect of district magnitude, electoral thresholds, reserved seats and cabinet structures, but little of this work has yet to be adequately integrated into the literature on ethnic and minority parties. In order to fully understand the representation that is provided by ethnic minority parties and how institutions foster this representation, proper account must be taken of these institutional choices.

This study will attempt to address this hole in the literature through a small-N analysis of three ethno-linguistic minority parties. This research will focus on what I label stranded minorities, groups that are nominally part of a nation that has its own state, but that reside outside of that state for reasons of historical happenstance. The parties that represent these three groups will be the main focus of the study, with the objective primarily to show how key institutional choices within a proportional representation framework affect the nature of representation provided by said parties. The three cases that will be studied are the Swedes in Finland and their party, the Swedish People's Party (SFP/RKP); the Hungarians in Slovakia and their two parties, the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK-MKP) and Most-Hid (Most); and the Serbians in Croatia, with their party the Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS). The ethno-linguistic minorities that these parties represent are particularly similar, which gives this small-N study the benefit of at least some comparative leverage. Each of the groups is relatively small, representing less than 10% of the population of the state in which they reside; they are

not regionally concentrated in a way that would allow for regional autonomy in any way consistent with the way we contemporarily think of it; and they all reside along the border area their home state shares with their kin-state. A key difference between the three cases, however, is that each state feature a slightly different institutional arrangement for its PR system: Slovakia utilizes a PR system with one national district; Finland makes use of multiple, relatively high magnitude proportional representation districts; and Croatia uses slightly smaller magnitude PR districts, but also makes use of ethnically reserved districts that ethno-linguistic minority parties compete in.

This study will contend that, other things being relatively equal, small minority parties will have the greatest chance of achieving meaningful substantive representation for their groups in proportional representation systems that feature a single national district as opposed to smaller districts. It will be argued that this benefit is the result of the fact that single national districts give small minority parties an enhanced ability to garner more seats than their proportion of the population should necessarily dictate as compared to district based PR systems. This study will also argue that ethnically reserved electoral districts, as found in Croatia and in a number of other, mainly post-Communist states, at best hinder minority representation, and at worst actually hurt the chances of substantive representation of minority issues at the national level. When discussing representation, this study will primarily make use of a Pitkinian framework, utilizing the distinction Pitkin establishes among descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation (Pitkin 1967). Substantive representation is assumed to be the ideal goal of political parties in this study, and will be operationalized as the realization of stated party goals as they pertain to issues of ethnicity, religion, language and cultural policy or other issues that are of particular relevance to minority groups. The study will make use of qualitative evidence, including cabinet

appointments, seats won, coalition inclusion, evaluation of state policy trajectories on issues of importance to the minority parties, and general historical influence of the parties in order to present a comprehensive image of the level of representation provided by these parties.

Why are Stranded Minorities Important? What makes them Different?

A question that could very justifiably be asked is what makes stranded minorities different than other small ethno-linguistic minorities, such as the Basques or the Roma. What, in particular, makes these groups interesting? As compared to groups such as these, I will contend that there are three things that make stranded minorities unique: the presence of a kin-state in close proximity; the lack of meaningful regional concentration; and, at least in the cases being examined in this study (but perhaps more generally in Europe), a history of political dominance or over-weighted political influence in the country of residence. These three factors combine to alter the political situation in which these groups exist, and thus the competitive arena in which the parties representing these groups can be expected to be meaningfully different.

As opposed to some small minority groups, such as the Basques in Spain or the Sorbs in Germany, stranded minorities are characterized by the presence of a kin-state in close proximity to their state of residence, usually but not universally directly bordering their state. This is important for a number of reasons. First is the ever present threat of irredentism. In the case of many stranded minorities, there remains a strong cultural and historical connection, real or imagined, to life under the rule of their kin-state. This leaves open the very real threat of irredentism and calls for reunification of a region with the kin-state. As Thomas Ambrosio notes when discussing the case of the Hungarian diaspora in

neighboring countries, irredentism still holds a strong place in contemporary public discussion; only the perception that pushing the issue would lead to trouble for the prospects of continued European integration seems to be holding the issue at bay, he argues (Ambrosio 2002). Markus Kornprobst comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that irredentist movements in Ireland and Germany were both reduced by the prospect of continued European integration, which changed the nature of the negotiation and potential conflict over the disputed territories (Kornprobst 2008).

Ambrosio and Kornprobst both focus mainly on the foreign policy of states with potential irredentist claims; they fail to address in the article the very real possibility of a diaspora group entreating a kin-state to push the issue of reintegrating border areas. This is a second issue associated with politics for stranded minorities: the presence of a kin-state seems likely to have an effect on the ability of an ethno-linguistic minority party gaining a strong patron from the kin-state, officially or unofficially. It also seems likely to create a situation where the stranded minority has a strong natural ally with which to raise grievances. Donald Horowitz, in discussing why irredentist claims seem to be rather few and far between in the developing world despite a strong potential for conflict, argues that irredentism in and of itself is a difficult project (Horowitz 1985). As an irredentist claim requires governmental commitment, which in turn invites international intervention and inter-state warfare in the extreme, it is a difficult decision to make. Horowitz argues, however, that irredentist claims are more likely to be pushed in cases where there exists a strong, organized ethnic minority movement in the disputed areas, which grants at least some international legitimacy to the claim, as well as providing a higher probability of acquiring domestic support.

The lack of meaningful regional concentration does not mean that stranded minorities are not a spatially concentrated group. Instead, it simply means that they lack the type of concentration that would allow for meaningful territorial autonomy or independence. Whereas groups like the Basques or the Abkhaz have a well-established territorial claim centered on a homeland in which the group represents a significant proportion of the population (if not a majority), for stranded minorities there is no real regional control or concentration. The Hungarians in Slovakia and Serbians in Croatia, for instance, are rather concentrated in absolute terms, but that concentration is mainly along a thin stretch of territory bordering their kin-state (Friedman 2007; Human Rights Watch 2006). This type of regional concentration makes territorial autonomy or independence, two of the more common political strategies for ethnic minority groups, unviable. Also, as Lijphart points out, while the creation of autonomous regions for minority groups is perhaps the most consistently bandied about solution to ethnic conflict it cannot by its nature be effective if in the process it creates a new minority, which is likely to be the outcome for stranded minorities (Lijphart 1999). In the case of nearly all stranded minorities, the creation of an autonomous region that could be self-sustaining would result in the creation of a new threatened group, as in most cases stranded minority groups live in very close proximity to members of other ethno-linguistic groups.

Finally, at least in the European context, stranded minorities tend to be associated with prior eras of imperialism or political domination by the titular nation of the state in which they reside. For all three of our examples this is true: the Hungarians in Slovakia are seen as remnants from a long period of Hungarian administrative control of Slovakia during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries; the Serbians in Croatia are seen as remnants of perceived Serbian domination during the Yugoslav period from 1945-1991; and the Swedes in Finland are widely recognized as remnant populations from the Swedish

colonization of Finland prior to Russian administration starting in 1809 (Ambrosio 2001; Human Rights Watch 2006; Raunio 2006). Outside of the cases used for this study, however, other groups that could be likely counted as stranded minorities also seemingly feature this characteristic: Turks in Bulgaria, Hungarians in Romania and Serbia, Serbians in Kosovo and Russians in the Baltic states all seem to share this background. Perceptions of privilege or dominance are strong parts of many theories of ethnic conflict, even if recent works (see Fearon and Laitin 2003, Chandra 2006) seem to indicate that their actual impact on conflict is far from clear. At the very least, however, there seems to be some agreement that past perceptions of advantage among a minority group can have implications for how minority parties behave in the political arena (Birnir 2007, Chandra 2004).

These three characteristics of stranded minorities thus create something of a unique political situation for parties representing the group in parliament. The groups are relatively small and usually have a history of political dominance, and thus cannot realistically hope to be the key party in government; nor can they hope for autonomy or independence given their lack of a strong regional concentration; but they can have at least a reasonable expectation of support or sympathy from members of a nearby kin-state, either officially or unofficially. This creates something of a unique political situation when compared to other ethnic minority parties, and thus caution must be exercised when attempted to apply lessons learned from an analysis of these groups to other minority groups and minority parties.

The Background of the Cases in Detail

Serbs in Croatia

Serbs have been living in the territory that is today in the state of Croatia at the very least starting as

early as the 18th century. Starting in the early 18th century, the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire created two military frontiers on the border with the Ottoman Empire, the Croatian Military Frontier centered on the western part of modern day Croatia, and the Slavonian Military Frontier in what is now the eastern part of modern Croatia. The Habsburg's declared these areas a place of religious freedom with little government intervention; the only requirement was that male residents must participate in defense of the region (Glenny 2001). This proclamation led to a rather significant migration of Serbians, who at the time were still under the suzerainty of the Ottomans. The population of Orthodox Serbs in both regions continued to grow through the early 19th centuries, with Serbs coming to represent almost half the population in Slavonia and somewhat less in the Western part of Croatia. The populations coexisted more or less peacefully through the 19th and early 20th centuries, despite a rise in Croatian nationalism in the late 19th century. Violence and intense nationalism flared especially starting in the 1930's, culminating with the Ustaša regime which was responsible for large scale massacres of the Serbian populations (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007). Conflict between Serbs and Croats was repressed during the period of Tito's rule in Yugoslavia, and did not re-emerge until the period of Yugoslavia's collapse starting in 1987.

At the collapse of the Communist regime in Yugoslavia, Serbs represented nearly 14% of the population in Croatia, with relatively large concentrations around the town of Knin in the Dalmatian region and in Slavonian region in the East (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007). Serbs first began organizing themselves at a large scale in the Western regions, especially in and around the city of Knin, and the Serbian Autonomous Krajina was declared in 1990 by Milan Babić (Glenny 1999). A more state-wide party, the Serbian Democratic Party, was also established at roughly the same time to compete in Croatia's

multiparty elections; this parties more peaceful stance, and the unwillingness of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman to provide political guarantees to the Serbian minority, Babić's group became the de facto political representative of the Serbian minority (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007). As the war wound down, a new Serbian political party, the Independent Democratic Serb Party, was founded in 1997. This party became the dominant Serbian party, and has been the sole parliamentary representative of the Serbian minority since the period of full democratization starting in 2001, and competes almost exclusively in the ethnically reserved Serbian minority legislative district (Šedo 2010).

Hungarians in Slovakia

For much of its history, Slovakia was under the control of the Kingdom of Hungary. Hungarians, otherwise known as Magyars, were the noble class throughout much of Slovakia, and there existed only a small Slovakian noble class (Maxwell 2009, Chap. 2). Slovakians largely existed as peasants, migratory laborers or petty craftsmen or artisans, and did not represent a majority of the population of the territory of Slovakia (though perhaps a plurality). Magyarization and the rise of a Hungarian nationalism that was tied up with Magyar ethnic superiority was resisted by the small Slovak intelligentsia at first by making entreaties to earlier, more multicultural visions of Hungarian nationalism, and starting with the 1848 Revolution for calls for recognition of the Slovak nation (Maxwell 2009, Chap 2). From this period stemmed something of a longstanding cultural memory of Hungarian domination that to some extent persists in popular memory (Harris 2007, 49). With the conclusion of the First World War, the Slovak people were grouped with their Slavic brethren, the Czechs, in the new Czechoslovakia, while Hungarians became a relatively small minority in the new state. Generally, ethnic relations in the Czechoslovakian state were unremarkable, with ethnicity not representing a major

cleavage until the collapse of Communism.

After the split of Czechoslovakia, the Slovak republic was characterized as highly nationalistic and ethno-centric. Deegan-Krause points out that Slovaks generally had a pronounced trend toward favoring parties and policies that were highly ethnically particular and nationalistic (Deegan-Krause 2006, 162-63). The Hungarian response was a fairly strong and early move toward political involvement. In the first few elections under the new Slovak constitution, multiple Hungarian parties competed for seats. With the Slovak PR system and its relatively low threshold of 3%, multiple parties could compete effectively and still have some hope of winning. It was not until after the change of the threshold to 5% in 1992, and new laws changing the nature of electoral coalitions in 1998, that the era of a single, dominant Hungarian minority party arrived, with the creation of the SMK-MKP in 1998. The SMK-MKP consistently received around 10% of votes cast in Slovak parliamentary elections through the election of 2010, when the party lost all of its seats and a large chunk of its votes to the more liberal-leaning Most-Hid (Friedman 2007, 31; Haughton et. al. 2011).

Swedes in Finland

The relationship between Swedes and Finns is perhaps a bit more muted than between the other two cases in this study, but it is not the result of a less complicated history. Swedish settlers first colonized the western coast of Finland as early as the 13th century, and Swedish control of Finland continued until the territory was ceded to Russia in 1809 (Kirby 2006, Chap. 2). Even after control of the territory was ceded to the Russians, however, Swedish speakers and the Swedish landowning class remained dominant in the administration of the region, which the Russian government was glad to leave to them.

The Finnish language was associated with peasants and farmers, and access to education and the political process was limited to Swedish speakers; at the same time, irredentism was still particularly popular among the nobility and upper classes of Sweden, specifically in regards to the dispute Aland Islands (Kirby 2006, 107). Despite the differences between Swedes and Finns, conflict between the two groups was relatively muted following the official recognition of Finnish as the language of Finland in 1892. The only major exception to this was conflict between the government of Finland and the predominantly Swedish speaking residents of the Aland Islands following the conclusion of the Second World War. It may be fair to conclude that at least part of the reason for this lack of serious conflict was the result of the fact that large parts of both the Swedish and Finnish intelligentsia came together to oppose the continuation of Russian rule in 1917 (Solsten and Meditz 1990, 96-97). In fact, many of the earliest proponents and defenders of the Finnish state, including general and statesmen C.G.E. Mannerheim, were members of the Swedish speaking community. In many ways, ethnicity was not the main dividing line in Finland, though language was an important political cleavage that drove a large amount of peaceful political contestation in the early days of democratic Finland.

One scholar of Finland, upon review of the project, cautioned that describing the Swedes of Finland as a stranded minority in the present day might not be appropriate, and in general I think that is something of a fair criticism. However, in the early years of Finland the conflict between the language groups was one of the defining features of the politics (Kirby 2006, Chap. 5). The Swedish People's Party (SFP-RKP) was founded 1906 as an alliance between the urban Swedish-speaking elite and the coastal Swedish fisherman and peasants, with the goal being protection of the Swedish language and ties with the Swedish state (Kirby 2006, 133). Since the formation of the Finnish state the SFP-RKP has

been a constant in the Finnish Parliament, and has been a member of every coalition government since 1979. While the population of Swedish speakers has declined from 13% of the population in 1900 to just less than 6% today, the party remains at least relatively strong in the parliament (Raunio 2006).

Representation – Descriptive, Symbolic, Substantive

Now that the background has been covered, a proper analysis can be conducted. This study revolves around representation, and the level or representation provided by the parties representing the 3 ethnic groups. Representation is a tricky concept to study, as there is still academic disagreement as to what it means to be represented or to provide representation. While there are a number of theories of representation, including those from J.S. Mill and Iris Marion Young, this study will make use of the theory of representation as outlined in Hanna Fenichel Pitkin's The Concept of Representation (Pitkin 1967). In particular, this study will make use of Pitkin's three types of representation: descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation. While other theories of representation may have more normative or philosophical value, Pitkin's conception has the advantage of being parsimonious along with being well suited to empirical use.

The proceeding sections will present evidence and data on representation in the three cases of this study, starting with the first election after 2000 and running through the present. The goal will be to evaluate the level of representation provided by the party, with descriptive representation being the lowest level of representation and substantive representation being the highest level. While the goal of political parties is seen as effective substantive representation, it should be noted that neither Pitkin nor I are discounting the value of descriptive or symbolic representation, as both provide a modicum of

representation that societies should strive to provide. Substantive representation, or the representation of ideas and values, is simply seen as closer to the true goal of representative political structures, and while descriptive and symbolic representation may facilitate this, they do not provide issue and value representation in and of themselves. This is a slight modification of Pitkin's theory, as she never formally establishes a hierarchy of representation, though she concludes that substantive representation is perhaps the best form of achievable representation, and indicates that symbolic representation is an imitation of substantive representation (Pitkin 1967, Chap. 10). This provides some support for using the theory in this way.

For the purposes of this study, descriptive representation will be evaluated as how close the percentage of seats controlled by the minority party in parliament compares to the minority group's share of the population. Symbolic representation is a particularly difficult concept to define. Pitkin says of symbolic representation that "…human beings, too, can be thought of as symbols, can under the right circumstances stand for a nation just as the flag does" (Pitkin 1967, 92). In this category, then, this study will look to evaluate things like the position of party leaders in national government leadership positions and the presence of the party in governing coalitions more generally. The final category, substantive representation, is described by Pitkin as being intimately tied with interest (Pitkin 1967, 212). With this as guiding context, we can establish substantive representation as whether a party is representing the interests of its constituents, in this case the minority group it purports to represent. The focus will be on party manifestos and the legislation passed and/or blocked by the ethnic minority parties, looking to establish whether the party is effectively representing the constituent interest through the promotion of ethno-cultural, religious, territorial or linguistic legislation. While one could rightly claim

that this means of identifying constituent interest is a form of imputation that has flaws, it is fair to believe that those individuals voting for a party that is self-identifying as a minority-interest party place heavy importance on the protection of their minority identity.

SDSS

The Croatian electoral system, with its reserved seats for the Serbian minority, guarantees a set level of representation, which has been stable at 3 seats since the 2003 election. The SDSS has controlled all three seats in this special electoral district since 2003, with its candidates running effectively unopposed in the multi-member plurality districts in 2007 and 2011 (State Election Committee of the Republic of Croatia). The previous Serb minority party, the Serbian People's Party, never recovered from its failure to return a seat in the 2003 election. It is not fair to say, however, that the SDSS controlled the Serb minority voting bloc. In fact, data from the 2007 election indicates that less than 15% of eligible Serb voters voted in the special electoral district (Izbori 2007). From a sheer demographics standpoint, as well, the Serbian minority is not well represented by the special electoral district. The 3 seats the minority is guaranteed has capped their percentage of the parliament at less than 2% of the seats, despite the fact that the Serbs represent no less than 4.5% of the population (Croatian Census 2001).

In fact, there is reason to believe that the situation might be worse: the 2001 census identified nearly ninety thousand individuals who refused to identify their ethnicity, and given the still volatile climate resulting from the conflict with Serbia, it seems likely that this group contains at least as somewhat higher distribution of Serbs than in the standard population. At the same time, the number of Serbs that

remained as refugees living in neighboring countries was still as high as 200,000, with between 25,000 and 50,000 expressing a desire to return to Croatia in the very near future (HRW 2006). It is not unrealistic, then, to think the Serb minority with voting rights may have numbered as much as 250,000 in 2001 (as diaspora citizens, including refugees, have the right to vote in Croatian elections), or as much as 6% of the population. Given the fact that Serbian minority voters are barred from voting in both the special minority district and the regional PR districts, and that a 5% threshold is utilized in Croatia, Serb minority parties are systematically prevented from providing adequate descriptive representation. While the situation could be worse, as the current system prevents the Serbian minority from losing all representation, it is far from ideal in allowing parties to provide adequate descriptive representation.

The ability of the SDSS to consistently unite the Serb minority into an effective bloc, and to avoid splitting the vote among other Serb parties, is significant to the party's ability to provide adequate symbolic representation. Despite the relatively insignificant size of the party, the SDSS managed to become a key member of a center-right coalition following the 2003 and 2007 elections (Antić and Gruićic 2008). The party was awarded a deputy premiership in the cabinet, with competencies for reconstruction and refugees following the 2007 election (Petricusic 2008). It should be noted, however, that participation in a coalition government with the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) or former President Franjo Tudjman was straining on Serbs and the party leadership, especially when the HDZ led government only followed through to a marginal extent with its promises to make the process of repatriation easier for Serb war refugees (Djuric 2010).

The prime representational goal of the SDSS has been and continues to be the protection of the rights of

Serbs to reparations and the creation of a streamlined and fair repatriation system (Šedo 2010). In fact, the overall party platform contains numerous references to dealing with the repercussions of the war to this day (Programa rada 2013-2017). If we take this to be the prime substantive goal of the party, it has had mixed results. It is somewhat well established that before the SDSS came into the governing coalition in 2003 the process of repatriation was difficult, and returnee numbers were lower than either the Serb leadership or foreign observers had anticipated (HRW 2006; Caspersen 2003). The SDSS received certain promises about changes to the process or repatriation as part of the bargaining over the creation of the governing coalition, including easing the process of restitution for the loss of property during the war. Evidence from both domestic and foreign observers seemed to indicate that these promises were at least marginally kept, with Human Rights Watch noting that particularly at the local level (where political offices were largely dominated by the HDZ) the process of repatriation had been greatly eased (HRW 2006). However, as both HRW and independent observers note, despite an improvement in the institutional support for repatriation after the 2003 election and during the period of the SDSS' participation in government, Serb refugee return numbers declined considerably after 2003 (Djuric 2010, HRW 2006). While it is difficult to blame the SDSS for this, both observers note that perceptions of the difficulty of repatriation contributed to the decline. In reality, because of the small size of the party, it was unable to credibly threaten to bring down the coalition government if the dominant party's promises to the SDSS party leadership were not kept. Thus, the party was only mildly successful in providing substantive representation, achieving nominal concessions but only superficial policy change. The reserved district seats, which in conjunction with the electoral threshold keep the SDSS from competing in the normal electoral arena, seem to have in effect capped the legislative effectiveness of the party.

SFP-RKP

The Swedish People's Party is a success story among ethnic minority parties, as it has maintained a constant representative presence for its minority constituency since the inception of democracy in 1919. The SFP-RKP in the period of this study has done a fairly strong job of securing descriptive representation. The party secured 9 seats out of 200 in the 2003 election, the 2007 election and the 2011 election, or 6% of total seats, completing a fall from electoral strength that Raunio describes as the gradual decline of the language cleavage in Finland (Arter 2003, Arter 2007, Arter 2011; Raunio 2006). As of the 2000 census, the Swedish speaking minority represented 5.6% of the population, and as such the party seems to be doing a fairly decent job of providing descriptive representation. It should be noted, however, that the SFP-RKP is benefiting strongly from the regional breakdown of the Finnish PR system: in 2003, 2007 and 2011, excluding the 1 representative of the Aland Islands, the SFP-RKP has returned more than 1000 votes in only four of Finland's fifteen electoral districts, and more than 1 representative in only two districts (OSF: Parliamentary Elections). However, the electoral districts also, to a degree, harm the party: despite the fact that nearly half the Swedes living in Finland reside in Uusimaa, and that they represent nearly 10% of the population, SFP-RKP has been able to return only three seats in this region (OSF: Population Structure). Descriptively, then, the SFP-RKP has been somewhat successful in providing representation in the last three elections, though it has consistently returned seat totals that underrepresent the Swedish minority despite no competition from ethno-cultural competitor parties.

Given the highly fractured nature of the Finnish party system, the SFP-RKP has had numerous

opportunities to participate in governing coalitions, and has actually been consistently represented in cabinet positions since 2003. Unlike some ethno-linguistic minority parties, SFP-RKP has managed to have candidates placed in some high profile cabinet positions. In the current government, SFP-RKP controls the Justice and Defense ministries, generally considered high profile cabinet positions; after the 2007 election it held the Culture and Sports and the Europe and Immigration cabinet seats; and in 2003 it held the Coordinate Minister of Finance and Environment cabinet seats (Governments and Minister since 1917). While the party has managed to remain in government, some see this as a negative symbol: Arter argues that the continued repeated poor showings of the party are at least partly a result of the fact that the party cannot distance itself from unpopular government decisions, as it is always part of the governing coalition (Arter 2007). Raunio echoes this point, though he points out that the consistent access to power that party enjoys at the same time sends a strong message to Swedish speakers that they are an integral part of the Finnish state (Raunio 2006).

It is difficult to talk about substantive representation in the case of the SFP-RKP in the time frame chosen. Raunio argues that the linguistic cleavage that the party is designed to represent is declining, and has not been a particularly politically salient since the end of the Second World War, and puts the decline of the party on the collapse of this cleavage (Raunio 2006). The Swedish language since that point has been an officially recognized state language on an equal setting with Finnish, and no major party outside of the nationalist True Finns is calling for a change to this policy. Thus, evaluating substantive representation on ethnic issues is relatively difficult, and must be focused the ability of the party to maintain the status quo on language policy. The party has been relatively successful in this regard: a 2004 rewriting of the official language law re-affirmed the official status of Swedish as the

second official language, and the party has to this point effectively weathered campaigns calling for a re-evaluation of the status of mandatory education in Swedish (Saukkonen 2012, 11).

There is reason to believe, however, that the official equity that the SFP-RKP has sought to preserve in policy has not been realized in local level practice. Saukkonen notes that, despite official policy that mandates public service provision in Swedish, the cuts to services that have come as a result of the recent economic crisis in Europe have seemed to come proportionally more heavily to Swedish institutions (Saukkonen 2012, 10). At the same time the question of whether the Swedish language has a place in the Finnish nation has resurfaced since the time of Raunio's work. Starting after the 2007 election campaign, the discussion of the privileged place of the Swedish language entered the political discussion for the first time in recent memory, with Prime Minister Kiviniemi giving tacit support to allowing students in the Russian border regions the option to learn Russian rather than Swedish (Arter 2011).

Saukkonen notes that the combination of these factors has led to some resurgence in Swedish minority nationalism, and Raunio acknowledges that this situation would likely led to a renewal of the language cleavage. What is most interesting, however, has been the response of the SFP-RKP. Raunio argues that if the policy and public discussion begins to move in a direction that re-politicizes Swedish language policy, the SFP-RKP would see a resulting increase in Swedish voter mobilization (Raunio 2006, 137). Yet, it remains true that the proportion of the vote that the SFP-RKP receives in elections is lower than the Swedish proportion of the population, by almost a full percentage point: in 2007 the party received 4.6% of the vote, and 4.3% in 2011 (Arter 2011). Part of the reason for this could be the way the

party's strategy and platform have changed in response to the decline of the language cleavage. Observers have noted that the party has acknowledged this decline and made modifications to the party platform starting with the 2003 election, primarily through shifting the party emphasis to a more catch-all nature, a de-emphasizing of the Swedish identity of the party and a move to run candidates in areas where traditionally there aren't many Swedish speakers (Arter 2003, 2007, 2011; Saukkonen 2012; Raunio 2006).

While observers have questioned this move, it is not terribly surprising given the electoral setting of Finland. Half of the Swedish speaking population of Finland resides in the electoral district of Uusimaa (DM=35), but they represent less than 10% of the population; another 10% of the population resides in Aland, which only sends one delegate (OSF: Population Structure). Realistically, it is difficult to imagine the party securing more than five seats in these regions. The only other electoral district with a significant Swedish population is Vaasa (DM=17), but Swedish speakers still only represent 22.5% of the population (OSF: Population Structure). If the party relies solely on Swedish speakers, it can hope to at best secure five seats in this district barring a massive change in the number of parties running. The SFP-RKP leadership was seemingly left with a platform choice: stick to the party roots, despite a demographic decline and an electoral system design that caps the strength of any party based on a Swedish identity; or move to a more multicultural party, attempting to become the party of the increasing non-Finnish minority. The electoral results seem to indicate that the party base has received this rather poorly: in Uusimaa and Vaasa, the party has seen its proportion of the vote decline in the period 1999-2011, from 11.3% to 8.3% and 20.7% to 19.4% respectively, and nationally the party has seen its total vote numbers decline by almost 10% in the same time frame (OSF: Parliamentary Elections).

SMK/Most

At the time of the 2001 census, the Hungarian population of Slovakia was 520,528, or 9.7% of the population of the country (2001 Slovakian Census). The Hungarian minority is by far the largest in the county, and resides predominantly in the south of the country, along the border with Hungary. The Slovakian electoral system is a proportional representation system with a single, national electoral district with 150 seats, and a 5% threshold (Friedman 2007, 23). Given the electoral system, it should be expected that if the Hungarian minority population does not split its vote, the party representing their interest should secure no less than 9.7 % of the vote. In fact, given the electoral threshold of 5%, it seems likely that the party would at least slightly benefit from a reapportionment of votes from parties that failed to reach the threshold. Examination of the electoral results from elections in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2012 seem to follow this pattern.

SMK-MKP, a coalition party formed in 1998 by three smaller, ideologically distinct Hungarian parties, received 20 seats in Slovakia's 150 seat parliament in both the 2002 and 2006 elections (SMK-MKP Party History; Bochsler Szöcsik 2013, 14). The party received 11.2% of the vote in 2002 and 11.7% in 2006, and received 13.3% of the seats in parliament. SMK-MKP in these elections managed to actually over-represent the Hungarian minority, securing almost 4% more seats in parliament than the Hungarian proportion of the population; the party also managed to secure more votes as a percentage of votes cast than the Hungarian proportion of the population, which may indicate higher turnout percentages for the Hungarian minority (Hlavac 2010). In both of these elections, the party benefitted from the fractured nature of the party system, with the party receiving more seats than its share of the

vote. This outcome is a well-known effect of large district magnitude settings, as first noted by Duverger (1959) and built upon by Riker (1982) and Cox (1997).

The 2006 election would be the final election where the Hungarian minority vote would vote as a bloc. Divisions in the leadership, likely emanating from the merger of the ideologically quite distinct parties in 1998 and revolving distinctly around how to respond to controversial legislation in Hungary that granted all Hungarians living abroad a Hungarian passport, led to a split in the party. With the election of new party leader Pál Csáky in 2007 the party took a more confrontational turn; former leader Béla Bugár left the party and in 2009 formed Most-Hid, a party built more around multiculturalism and the promotion of a civic conception of Slovak identity (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 17). Both Most-Hid and SMK-MKP ran lists in the 2010 elections, with Most-Hid receiving 8.1% of the vote and 14 seats, while SMK received 4.3% of the vote, falling below the 5% threshold for the first time (Hlavac 2010). Most-Hid became the beneficiary of the same transfer of votes that SMK was the beneficiary of in 2002 and 2006; despite getting only 8.1% of the votes, the party received 9.3% of the seats. A snap election in 2012 saw Most-Hid again as the more popular of the two Hungarian parties, receiving 6.89% of the vote and 13 seats as compared to SMK, which received 4.28% and again failed to pass the threshold (Hlavac 2012).

In terms of descriptive representation, then, it seems that the Hungarians in Slovakia have been fairly well represented by their political parties. Especially after the elections of 2002 and 2006, the Hungarian minority could look at their influence in parliament and legitimately see themselves being

overrepresented. Even after the minority bloc vote was split, Hungarian parties never controlled less than 8.3% of the seats in parliament. Given the size of the population, it can be realistically claimed that even as the number of seats went from 20 in 2006 to 14 in 2010 and 13 in 2012, the Hungarian minority was at an at least adequate level of descriptive representation, as by 2011 the proportion of the population identified as Hungarian had declined to 8.5% (2011 Slovak Census).

The Hungarian minority had somewhat similar results in achieving symbolic representation. A Hungarian minority party participated in a governing coalition twice in the four elections since 2000, when in 2002 SMK-MKP participated in a center-right governing coalition (with no cabinet seats) and in 2010 Most-Hid participated in a second center-right coalition (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 16). The party was brought in to a bare majority coalition, and as the second largest member it was granted 4 cabinet positions, though only one cabinet position was of any importance, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration and Minority Rights (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 16-17). Bochsler and Szöcsik point out how, in order to even participate in the coalition, the SMK-MKP was required to sideline some of its biggest, most ethnically important policy platforms, even in the area of the European Integration and Minority Rights. Other scholars acknowledge the possibility that the appointment of a Hungarian to this position may have been used as leverage in EU accession negotiations, as the issue of minority rights was a sticking point in Slovakian accession (Malova and Vilagi 2006). Nonetheless, participation in the cabinet was a symbolic victory for the Hungarian minority, as it provided them at least the appearance of an outlet and a say in the direction of the country.

The election of 2006 saw the SMK-MKP outside the governing coalition, and shortly afterward with a

new leader and new direction. Most-Hid was part of another center-right governing coalition after the 2010 elections and was allotted 3 cabinet seats, including the Deputy Prime Minister for National Minorities (Terenzani-Stankova 2010). While the party had fewer seats than SMK did in 2002, it was integral to the existence of the governing coalition, and as such it seemed to exercise slightly more influence; still, however, key parts of its policy platform, including formalized laws on the rights of minorities, were dropped as a condition of inclusion in the coalition (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 19). The ability of the Hungarian minority parties to participate in coalitions, and to secure a relatively important cabinet position, was undeniably a symbolic victory for the representation of minority interests.

Substantively, however, the case for the success of the Hungarian minority parties in providing representation for their constituents is more mixed. The simple act of participating in governing coalitions or claiming the cabinet position for minorities means nothing if the party is unable to pass legislation to benefit its constituent base or to block legislation targeted against the Hungarian people of Slovakia. The SMK-MKP had mixed results in 2002 and 2006. As part of the governing coalition following the 2002 election, the party was able to achieve some key parts of its electoral platform, most notably the establishment of a Hungarian language university (Maloga and Vilagi 2006, 516). But, as noted by various sources, the party was forced to give up some of its more controversial policy platforms, including the creation of a new administrative region populated primarily by Hungarians or the repeal of the Beneš decrees of the Second World War, in order to even be allowed to participate in governance (Maloga and Vilagi 2006; Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013).

After the party was left out of the Smer governing coalition formed in the aftermath of the 2006 election, the party began what has already been noted as a strong campaign for these two platforms, which led to a split in the party. The split in the party came at an inopportune time, as the governing coalition, led by the left-nationalist Smer party and the nationalist Slovak National Party, used the demands of the new SMK-MKP leadership to pass new anti-minority legislation, including an affirmation of the Beneš decrees and a strict new language law (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 19). It may seem unfair to lay blame for this at the feet of the SMK-MKP leadership, given their status in opposition, but the SMK-MKP was unable to rally any form of effective obstruction to these measures among the opposition parties. Former party leaders such as Bugár and others did, and formalized their split with the leadership when they established Most-Hid in 2009. Most-Hid from the beginning had a more conciliatory approach to its relations with the Slovak state, including featuring a number of Slovak politicians on its ticket and forming an electoral alliance with a small, centrist non-particularist party. The main pillars of the parties electoral strategy in 2010 included the creation of a comprehensive law on the status of minorities in Slovakia, the repeal of the 2009 language law that made it a crime to conduct business with the state in a language other than Slovakian, and the widening of official bilingualism to all areas where at least 10% of the population spoke a minority language (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 18). Most-Hid was somewhat more successful in achieving the key pillars of its program than SMK-MKP was in 2002, managing to get both of its language platforms into the government program, as well as the allowance of dual-citizenship for Hungarian citizens of Slovakia, something which had been a large part of the SMK-MKP platform but had been relatively unimportant to the Most-Hid campaign (Haughton et. al. 2011, 397; Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013, 19). It remains to be seen how Most-Hid will fair in the current parliamentary session, though the relative decline of the more

nationalistic elements of the left-nationalist coalition seems to bode well for the Hungarian minority.

Substantively, then, while the Hungarian minority parties have not been able to achieve all of the large pillars of their policy platform since 2002, they have managed to come through on a fairly large percentage of them. In both 2002 and 2010, the Hungarian minority party represented in parliament had the advantage of playing the role of kingmaker. The fractured party system and the single national electoral district that has led to it has had the result of increasing the power of the minority parties relative to the less stable parties in the system. As testament to this, even with the Hungarian minority vote bloc split in 2010, the party was an integral member of the governing coalition, and was able to get key parts of its policy platform integrated into the government program.

Conclusion

This study has presented evidence as to the effect of the different electoral system rules on the type of representation provided by ethno-linguistic minority parties. This evidence seems to indicate a number of tentative conclusions about the effect of different electoral mechanisms on representation provided by stranded minority parties. Before those conclusions are discussed, I would like to once again caution against attempting to generalize too much from these findings. This small-n study was designed to lay the groundwork for future research on representation and a specific type of minority party, by attempting to integrate a more substantive take on representation with what the field of political science has learned about electoral systems over more than half a century of study. While the findings are interesting and potentially significant, they are far from definitive, and should be taken for what they are: early evidence of a relationship that bears future and more expansive investigation.

What, then, can we conclude? It is probably best to take it bit by bit before tackling the whole. I find that all three variations of PR system in this study provide for at least a basic level of descriptive representation, providing for at least a handful of representatives from the stranded minority groups. The single national district of the Slovak system in conjunction with a five percent threshold, however, has systematically provided the Hungarian parties in parliament more seats than their share of the popular vote should dictate, and in two elections providing the party more seats than the Hungarian proportion of the population. The district based PR system of Finland, meanwhile, has resulted in the Swedish People's Party systematically receiving a similar benefit in receiving a higher proportion of seats than votes, but the proportion of seats has managed to stay relatively close to the Swedish speaking population's share of the population. In Croatia, by contrast, the use of the ethnically reserved electoral seats, in conjunction with a 5% threshold that effectively bars any Serbian party from participation in the normal electoral arena, has resulted in the SDSS consistently receiving less than 2% of seats in parliament, despite demographic evidence that the Serbian share of the population could be as high as 6%.

The conclusions about symbolic representation seem to be more ambiguous. Symbolic representation would appear to be deeply tied to the electoral success of parties, but that does not hold terribly true based on the evidence provided here. The SDSS participated in just as many coalitions and cabinets as the Hungarian minority parties, and was awarded a highly symbolic Vice Premiership in the 2007 coalition cabinet. The SFP-RKP, despite being substantially weaker than either of the Hungarian parties in terms of its absolute electoral and parliamentary strength, has been part of every coalition

government from 2003 to the present and has been awarded at times very prominent ministerial appointments. The evidence here is mixed at best. While the Hungarian parties that managed to benefit the most from their electoral system in terms of seats garnered have achieved a respectable level of symbolic representation, both the SFP-RKP and the SDSS have seemed to fair equally or better in both cabinet positions and coalition inclusion. It would seem that the level of symbolic representation provided by a stranded minority party is at most marginally impacted by the nature of electoral system rules.

The evidence on substantive representation appears to tie the whole representational project together. This evidence quite clearly shows the advantages enjoyed by the Hungarian minority parties. The Hungarian minority parties have been by far the most successful in achieving their stated ethnopolitical goals, and enjoyed perhaps their greatest success in achieving these goals in 2010, after the Hungarian minority had just split the ticket between two parties. The 5% threshold combined with the fractured nature of the party system led to a transfer of votes that kept Most-Hid politically powerful, despite garner only about 60% as many votes as SMK-MKP had in 2007. The party was able to transfer this political power into a major coalition position and the inclusion of numerous party platforms into the government program. In contrast, the SFP-RKP, despite a steady level of seats in parliament and its position as something of a kingmaker party, has struggled in recent years to prevent the gradual decline of the position of Swedish language institutions. The SDSS, meanwhile, has suffered the worst, with the party unable to realize in any significant way its platform of an open and fair repatriation system. While both the SFP-RKP and the SDSS have managed to turn their electoral success into coalition partnerships, positioned themselves as potential kingmakers in fractured party systems and garnered

official policy concessions, both have had difficulty either achieving or stemming changes on the ground.

Taken together, I believe the evidence strongly favors the idea that the single national electoral district, combined with an electoral threshold that is below the stranded minority's proportion of the population, provides the best chance for representation for stranded minority groups. This system allows the parties that represent these groups to focus on mobilizing their group as a bloc, rather than fighting to ensure the party remains relevant in districts where the population may only barely be enough to secure a seat. At the same time it allows these parties to benefit from the reapportionment that comes from parties falling below the threshold. In a single national district, it can be expected that a fairly large number of votes will be used on parties that fail to pass the threshold, as a result of the informational problems associated with large magnitude districts established by Cox (1997). While this advantage still exists in theory in district based PR systems, the reality for stranded minorities is that the lack of meaningful regional concentration of the group means that their parties are as likely to be the victim of reapportionment as they are to benefit. The evidence leads one to the perhaps uncontroversial claim that more parliamentary power in terms of seats leads to a greater possibility of the party providing adequate substantive representation.

More concretely, the evidence seems to fit in with a growing body of evidence that questions the effectiveness of ethnically reserved seats. The Serb minority in Croatia has been systematically underrepresented in parliament as a result of the use of ethnically reserved seats, and while the electoral threshold of the state means the alternative is no representation at all, this is little consolation. The SDSS has been able to provide its constituents only a semblance of representation and unable to ensure

that the concessions it achieves at the national policy level are effectively translated into practice. While these types of arrangements might be useful for particularly small minorities that would struggle to garner seats in any electoral arrangement, they seem ineffective for groups that represent a significant proportion of the population.

Going forward, there are a number of ways this research could be expanded upon. Primarily, the findings could be solidified with a larger scale quantitative analysis of the relationship. This will become more feasible as we move forward in time, as there will be more elections in the numerous post-communist states that feature stranded minorities. Further research could also attempt to confirm these findings outside a European setting. While stranded minorities seem to exist more visibly in the European context, groups like the Nepalese in India and Bhutan, Somalis in Kenya and others exist and provide opportunities for studies similar to this one.

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