"Beyond outbidding. Explaining Ethnic Party Behaviour in Competition"
Cumulative Dissertation by Christina Isabel Zuber
Overview prepared for the defense on 18 December 2012

Paper 1: Whose Mobilisation? An Ontological Primer on the Mobilisation of National Minorities

Aim: Discusses three ontologies of ethnic groups, essentialism, social constructionism and naturalised constructionism and argues in favour of the latter.

Publication Status: Forthcoming in "New Nation States and National Minorities", ed. J. Danero, N. Stojanovic and S. Weinblum, Colchester: ECPR Press.

Abstract: While research results in the field of comparative ethnic mobilisation studies are highly sensitive to the views researchers hold about the nature of ethnic groups and ethno-political collective action, ontological considerations have largely remained implicit in their research. This chapter seeks to discuss the ontological assumptions involved in studying minority mobilisation explicitly. After dismissing both essentialism and conventional constructionism, I argue in favour of a third ontological path, naturalised constructionism, inspired by social categorisation research in cognitive psychology. Taking the conditions for ethnic identification and mobilisation as both generalizable (ethnic categorization as an innate cognitive mechanism) and context-specific (the cluster of properties defining membership in the ethnic category as a social construct) can explain actors' cross-cultural predisposition to naturalize along ethnic and racial social categories better than conventional constructionism, yet without re-essentialising ethnic identities. Working from this perspective, comparative research aimed at generalizable knowledge on the role of ethnicity in political mobilisation and context-centred, interpretive approaches seeking to extract the actual meaning attached to specific ethnic categories in a given context can be fruitfully connected.

Paper 2: Beyond outbidding? Ethnic party strategies in Serbia

Aim: Typologises ethnic party strategies beyond outbidding and explores factors driving their selection based on comparative case studies of Hungarian and Bosniak parties in Serbia.

Publication status: Published online before print in *Party Politics* on 25 July 2011.

Abstract: The outbidding model of ethnic party competition predicts that ethnic parties adopt radical strategies to maximize support among voters of an ethnic group. In contrast, this article argues that ethnic parties have a wider range of strategies at their disposal. Integrating recent findings, ethnic party strategies are defined by the criteria of appeal and policy position as 'static bidding', 'ethnic underbidding', 'ethnic outbidding', 'lateral bidding', 'lateral underbidding' and 'lateral outbidding'. Empirically, a comparison of strategies adopted by ethnic parties competing for votes of the Hungarian and Bosniak minorities in Serbia shows variance of strategies within and across groups despite an environment conducive to outbidding and while holding institutional context factors constant. Factors causing this variance are explored through content analysis of 18 semi-structured interviews with ethnic party elites. An explanation that links strategies to parties' goals and the incentives of the structure of intra- and inter-ethnic competition is suggested for further research.

Paper 3: Ethnic party competition beyond the segmented market

Aim: Introduces the "nested competition" model of ethnic party competition and illustrates the model with evidence from competition between mainstream and ethnic Hungarian parties for Hungarian votes in Serbia.

Publication status: Published 2012 in *Nationalities Papers* 40(6), 927-944.

Abstract: The outbidding model of ethnic politics focuses on party competition in an ethnically perfectly segmented electoral market where no party appeals to voters across the ethnic divide. The power sharing model retains this assumption, yet tries to prevent outbidding through moderation-inducing institutional

design. Empirically, imperfectly segmented electoral markets and variance of ethnic party strategies beyond radical outbidding have been observed. To provide a stepping stone towards a more complete theory of ethnic party competition, this article introduces the notion of nested competition, defined as party competition in an imperfectly segmented market where some – but not all – parties make offers across ethnic divides and where competition in intra-ethnic arenas is nested within an inter-ethnic arena of party competition. The notion of nested competition helps explain why ethnic outbidding does exist yet is not omnipresent in contemporary multi-ethnic democracies. A moderate position on the ethnic dimension that appears inauspicious from the perspective of intra-ethnic competition can turn into the strategically superior choice once ethnic parties take the whole system of competitive interactions within intra- and inter-ethnic arenas into account. A case study of nested competition for Hungarian votes in the Vojvodina region of Northern Serbia illustrates the conceptual innovations.

Paper 4: EPAC – a new dataset on ethnonationalism in party competition in 22 European democracies (with Edina Szöcsik)

Aim: Presents the methodology of the EPAC expert survey on ethnonationalism in party competition and subjects the EPAC data to a series of validity and reliability tests.

Publication status: Published online before print in *Party Politics* on 1 November 2012.

Abstract: Datasets in the field of ethnic politics still tend to treat ethnonational groups as unitary actors and do not differentiate between the positions of the organisations representing these groups. Datasets in the field of party politics differentiate between the positions of political parties, yet fail to convincingly conceptualise an ethnonational dimension of competition. This research note presents EPAC, a new dataset on Ethnonationalism in Party Competition that seeks to fill this gap. Based on an expert survey, EPAC provides cross-sectional data on the ethnonational positions of 210 political parties in 22 multinational European democracies. The research note introduces the conceptualisation of an ethnonational dimension of competition underlying the dataset and performs a series of validity and reliability tests. Test results show that EPAC provides valid and reliable measures of party positions on an ethnonational dimension that can serve as an empirical base to study the causes and effects of the mobilisation of ethnicity in party competition.

Paper 5: The dynamics of party competition and ethnic party radicalism (with Edina Szöcsik)

Aim: Tests hypotheses on the determinants of ethnic party radicalism through cross-sectional OLS and logistic regression analysis of 76 ethnic parties in 21 multinational European democracies.

Publication status: unpublished manuscript

Abstract: Whether ethnic parties constitute a threat to democratic stability has long been debated in the literature on multinational societies. Drawing on theories of ethnic politics and recent case studies conducted by the authors, this article develops an analytical framework that systematically differentiates characteristics of party competition that provide incentives for ethnic party *radicalism* from characteristics of party competition that provide incentives for ethnic parties to play a *moderate* role. Radicalism is understood as a two-dimensional phenomenon, consisting of a platform of extreme minority nationalism and the readiness of ethnic parties to resort to illegal action. The analysis draws on EPAC, a novel expert-survey based dataset that provides indicators for the radicalism of 76 ethnic parties representing 40 ethnic groups in 21 European democracies. Estimating OLS and logistic regression models we find that a representational monopoly and competition with non-ethnic parties on economic issues negatively affect ethnic party radicalism. In addition, participating in government weakens nationalism, but does not affect the likelihood that ethnic parties will resort to illegal action. The results have important implications for assessing the relationship between ethnic mobilisation and democratic stability.