Nationalism and Ethnic Mobilization: Towards an Integrated Perspective

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Abstract

This article reviews the literature on nationalism and ethnic mobilization. I first discuss the different strands of research in the field, highlighting three key sources of division that characterize existing literature: geography, ethnic cleavage type, and strategy of mobilization. Arguing that the lack of dialogue between different niches of research can undermine the accumulation of general knowledge, I propose an integrated perspective on nationalism and ethnic mobilization that serves to assimilate findings from these separate niches. I conclude by discussing how such an integrated perspective can enhance our knowledge of the causes, dynamics, and consequences of ethnic mobilization.

Keywords: nationalism; ethnic movements; ethnic parties; nationalist parties; ethnic violence; repression; ethnic exclusion; self-determination

Introduction

Nationalism and ethnic mobilization in its myriad forms pervade politics across the globe. The end of the COVID-19 pandemic has given way to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Australia's peaceful referendum on new constitutional rights for Indigenous people in fall 2023, the electoral ascent of a nationalist party in France combined with anti-immigration protest and riots in the United Kingdom in summer 2024, as well as the ongoing war in Gaza. According to Tilly (1978, 69), mobilization refers to "the process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life." It encompasses a broad spectrum of different strategies: from electoral mobilization or more unconventional but peaceful strategies to violence against the state or civilians, and different tactics within these strategies: for example, petitions, mass rallies, strikes, and hunger strikes are all examples of peaceful mobilization tactics outside institutionalized politics. Such mobilization can occur in the name of diverse groups and interests, including unions, women's rights, environmental issues, democratization, etc. Ethnic mobilization, specifically, refers to the concerted political organization and claim-making by ethnic groups to influence public life and state policy.

I define ethnic groups in the Weberian sense as communities whose members are united (and distinguished from members of other communities) by a subjective belief in common ancestry and shared culture (Weber 1976 [1922]). Thus, according to this view, what makes ethnic groups ethnic – and distinguishes them from other social groups defined by class, gender, sexual orientation, etc., as well as issue-defined (for example, pro-democracy) groups – is this belief in a shared ancestry.

Often, but not always, the latter includes a territorial component: a common (present or past) homeland.[1] It also often (but not always) builds on relatively sticky identity markers, such as language, religion, or certain phenotypical features (summarized in the term "race") (Chandra 2006; Horowitz 1985, 51–2), which serve as observable indicators of group membership, distinguishing insiders from outsiders (many times even those who attempt to cross ethnic boundaries by learning a new language, adopting cultural practices, etc.).

Ethnic mobilization is closely linked to nationalism because nationalism itself often builds on ethnic identity. Ernest Gellner, for instance, defined nationalism as a principle of political legitimacy that holds that "the political and the national unit should be congruent" and that "ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones" (Gellner 1983, 1). Going beyond Gellner's modernist perspective, Smith (1986) highlighted the pre-modern ethnic core of nations and how nationalism constructs mythological interpretations of the nation's past, invoking the identity, territory, and symbols of this pre-existing core. Indeed, even though some authors have distinguished between ethnic and civic nationalism (Brubaker 1992), others have pointed out that most commonly cited examples of the latter, such as US-American nationalism, equally tend to have an ethnic nature at its core (Gat and Yakobson 2013).

Moreover, while Gellner's emphasis is on political boundaries, many other nationalist objectives and practices stop short of or go beyond achieving a sovereign state. Accordingly, Tilly (1998, 175) distinguishes between state-seeking and state-led nationalism, with the latter referring to the creation and imposition of a dominant identity and its symbols, history, etc., and the subordination or elimination of competing identities. Similarly, Snyder (2000, 23) defines nationalism as "the doctrine that a people who see themselves as distinct (…) should rule themselves in a political system that *expresses and protects those distinctive characteristics*" [my emphasis]. This broader definition of the nationalist doctrine, together with a recognition of the ethnic foundations of ostensibly civic state authority, has important implications for how we think about ethnic mobilization, as I will discuss below.

Overall, there is widespread agreement in the literature that with the emergence of nationalism as a dominant political ideology, ethnic mobilization has become a defining feature of modern-day politics, spawning an extensive field of social science research. However, given the broad definition of the term, it is hardly surprising that scholarship on ethnic mobilization has branched out into multiple diverging strands. Dialogue between these strands, in terms of both theoretical arguments and empirical findings, has been limited. Moreover, several key actors and processes of ethnic mobilization have been studied by related but separate literature (for example, works on state formation) whose insights, again, remain insufficiently integrated into studies of ethnic mobilization.

In this article, I will argue that this divergence undermines the collective accumulation of general knowledge and that research on ethnic mobilization has much to gain from a more integrated perspective. In the following, I will first discuss some key divisions in the existing literature, highlighting three sources of division in particular: geographic focus, different ethnic cleavage types related to specific claims and issues that ethnic mobilization centers on, and the different mobilization strategies studied by scholars. I will then present an integrated perspective on nationalism and ethnic mobilization that serves to assimilate findings from these separate strands of research. I conclude by outlining the implications of such an integrated perspective, including new research questions with the potential to enhance our general knowledge of the causes, dynamics, and consequences of ethnic mobilization.

A Divided Literature

Scholarship on ethnic mobilization comprises multiple strands of research focusing on specific contexts or forms of mobilization. I will call these strands "niches" – not because they are concerned with insignificant questions but because dialogue between them has been limited. Scholars within a given niche tend to develop their theories and interpret the empirical findings of their studies within

the predefined scope of this niche while theoretical dialogue with, and empirical comparisons to, works from other niches – as well as other related literatures – is much less common. In this section, I will focus on three key sources of divisions in the existing literature: i) geography, ii) ethnic cleavage type, and iii) strategy of mobilization, which all have created separate niches of research.

First of all, many studies of ethnic mobilization are concerned with the phenomenon in a specific *geographic* context. For instance, a long-standing tradition of research has analyzed the emergence of secessionist movements in Europe, their manifestations in the electoral arena in the form of ethno-regionalist parties (such as the Basque and Catalan parties in Spain, Flemish parties in Belgium, etc.), and their political impact (for example, Beissinger 2002; De la Calle 2015; De Winter and Tursan 2003; Hechter 1975; Roeder 1991; Sorens 2005; Stroschein 2012). Studies of Eastern Europe have also focused on states' relations with trans-border ethnic kin groups and irredentism (for example, Jenne 2007; Weiner 1971). The units of analysis in these "Europeanist studies" are typically *collective* units; either the parties themselves, subnational regions, or ethnic groups/movements, which seems to reflect the implicit or explicit view of these subnational actors as (representatives of) proto-nations. Indeed, these studies tend to follow the Rokkanian notion of a structural center-periphery cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), and ethnic mobilization is treated as synonymous with state or autonomy-seeking nationalism by peripheral minorities.

Curiously, the flip side of the nationalist coin – majority nationalism – remains mostly excluded from this niche of scholarship.[2] Research on right-wing nationalist parties (for example, Kitschelt and McGann 1997; Mudde 2000) and, more recently, majority nationalism (Loizides 2015) constitutes the focus of entirely separate literature. However, many of the core groups that control modern (European) states are ethnically defined themselves (as, for example, the Castilians in Spain, the English in Great Britain, or the Estonians in Estonia). Thus, the "offensive mobilization" (Tilly 1978, 74–5) by such ethnically defined core groups of the state to protect and reinforce their political and cultural hegemony, including the repression of challengers, should be seen as ethnic mobilization as well. Many of these dynamics have been covered by the rich literature on state formation, which has explored in detail rulers' myriad (more or less) coercive strategies to forge nation-states out of ethnically heterogeneous populations (for example, Mylonas 2012; Weber 1976; Wimmer 2018). Insights from this literature – as well as from the literature on right-wing nationalist parties – could fruitfully complement existing accounts of ethno-regionalist mobilization.[3]

In contrast to this view of ethnic mobilization as "peripheral nationalism" (Roeder 1991: 196), scholars of ethnic politics in Africa highlight a *deficit* of nationalism in African states (for example, Bates 1974; Lemarchand 1972).[4] Accordingly, much research has focused on the detrimental effects of ethnic heterogeneity – with respect to ethnic mobilization, most importantly, violent ethnic conflict, such as communal violence/riots (for example, Fjelde and Østby 2014; Juon and Rohrbach 2023; Müller-Crepon 2022) and ethnic civil conflict (for example, Roessler 2016). Moreover, more recent literature is characterized by a decidedly individualist perspective, with individuals as the typical units of analysis and individual attitudes and behavior as the outcomes of interest, partly encouraged by the currently prevailing experimental approach in political science, which seems to consider Africa a convenient laboratory for survey experiments. Thus, an important part of the "Africanist" literature has examined the micro-level foundations of the "nationalist deficit," studying the determinants of ethnic identification (for example, Eifert, Miguel and Posner 2010; Robinson 2014) and voting (for example, Ferree, Gibson and Long 2021; Ichino and Nathan 2013).[5] Less attention has been paid to ethnic parties (Elischer 2013), perhaps partly because they are explicitly banned by many African constitutions (Moroff 2010).

In line with this individualist perspective, there is very little emphasis on ethnic mobilization's ideological roots in nationalism in the "Africanist" literature. Ethnic mobilization is supposed to follow an instrumentalist logic, and ethnic groups, instead of proto-nations, tend to be seen as "interest groups" (Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 7) engaged in a competition over scarce resources (Bates 1974; Posner 2005). Elites use available ethnic categories – at least partly European-imposed

products of colonialism (Mamdani 1996) – to mobilize voters, and voters expect to gain access to resources through co-ethnic leaders in a pattern of ethnically defined clientelism (Lemarchand 1972). Interestingly, then, this literature – contrary to the "Europeanist" perspective – identifies a *lack* of nationalism as the cause of ethnic mobilization.

Both of these "Europeanist" and "Africanist" influences can be identified in works on ethnic mobilization in India, which, given its size, diversity, and geopolitical importance, has spawned its own body of literature. Following the early influential work of Brass (1991), many have studied center-periphery relationships, emphasizing the nationalist aspirations of collective subnational units (for example, Capoccia, Sáez and De Rooij 2012; Lacina 2014). More recently, Lacina (2015) has extended this perspective to consider within-periphery rivalries, arguing that the likelihood of violent secessionist conflict depends not only on the interaction between the state center and mobilizing peripheral groups but also on the former's relationship with *other* ethnic groups in the same territory, thus accounting more fully for the country's vast ethnic diversity at the subnational level. Other arguments follow a more individualist and instrumentalist logic, emphasizing ethnic clientelism, rather than collective ethno-regional identities, to explain ethnic mobilization in India (for example, Chandra 2004; Ziegfeld 2016). Moreover, many studies also examine how such clientelist politics usher in ethnic violence in the form of ethnic riots (for example, Bulutgil and Prasad 2023; Varshney 2001; Wilkinson 2004), again similar to the "Africanist" literature.

For its part, Latin America has long remained absent from scholarship on ethnic mobilization. However, more recent literature has analyzed the emergence of ethnic social movements (Rice 2012; Yashar 2005) as well as ethnic parties (Madrid 2012; Van Cott 2005) and the consequences of this new phenomenon (Hooker 2005; Madrid 2005; Van Cott 2008; Vogt 2016). In contrast to the prevailing arguments in the "Africanist" literature, Latin American scholars tend to see the region's ethnic movements in a favorable light (Madrid 2005; Sieder 2002; Van Cott 2007). For example, Madrid (2012) argues that fluid group boundaries in Latin America, due to ethnic/racial mixing, encourage indigenous parties to make inclusive appeals and minimize the risk of violent conflict. At the same time, while resembling the "Europeanist" literature in terms of the studied outcomes (for example, Rice and Van Cott 2006; Van Cott 2005), scholarship on ethnic mobilization in Latin America has remained mostly detached from theories of nationalism.[6] Instead, given the persistent ethnic hierarchies in the region, the political mobilization of indigenous and African-descendant peoples has typically been analyzed from the lens of social movement theories.

Ultimately, with some early exceptions (for example, Gurr et al. 1993), few (empirical) studies of ethnic mobilization (beyond very specific forms, such as violent rebellions) have dared to cross the geographic boundaries of their main focus.[7] This geographic separation is accompanied by a further division based on different *ethnic cleavage types* related to specific claims and issues that ethnic mobilization centers on. Traditional research on Western Europe mostly focused on linguistically distinct minorities. As a consequence, research on the mobilization of racially defined minorities or marginalized groups developed as a separate strand of literature. Most conspicuously, African American mobilization in the United States has mostly been covered from a social movement perspective (for example, Biggs and Andrews 2015; Haines 1995; McAdam 1982; Wasow 2020). The same is true for research on white supremacist mobilization in that country (for example, McVeigh, Cunningham and Farrell 2014).

In addition, following Huntington's (1993) bold claim of an impending "clash of civilizations," an entirely separate body of literature has dedicated itself to religion as a distinct ethnic marker. This literature emphasizes the prevalence of religious discrimination, the mobilizational force of both religious identity and religious networks, and, as a consequence, religion's unique propensity to violence (for example, Basedau, Pfeiffer, and Vüllers 2016; Toft 2007). Many of these studies neglect existing research on nationalism and ethnic mobilization and lack an explicit empirical comparison of religious discrimination, religious mobilizational networks, etc., to their non-religious counterparts (Tabaar et al. 2023: 9). This is problematic because, ultimately, we can only ascertain whether specific ethnic cleavage types, such as religion, and related claims are associated with particular

outcomes of mobilization (such as violence) if we explicitly compare them to other cleavage types (Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt 2017; Capoccia, Sáez, and De Rooij 2012).

Similarly, while studies focusing on self-determination movements have usefully expanded the analysis of "peripheral nationalisms" beyond Europe (for example, Cunningham 2014; Sambanis, Germann and Schädel 2018), most mobilized ethnic groups do not make claims for self-determination (Vogt, Gleditsch and Cederman 2021, 1303), and it is not self-evident that the findings from this literature – for example, on state concessions or conflict escalation – equally apply to centripetal mobilization, that is, mobilization aiming for central state power. Indeed, such centripetal mobilization might often precede the centrifugal self-determination demands and, thus, the latter might constitute an escalation in mobilization in itself and/or be a consequence of prior state concessions (or the lack thereof).

Finally, a third division in existing scholarship on ethnic mobilization concerns the *strategy of mobilization.* Partly due to the accessibility of information, many studies of ethnic mobilization have focused on electoral politics and, thus, ethnic parties (Birnir 2007; Chandra 2004; Elischer 2013; Rice and Van Cott 2006; Sorens 2005). Ethnic mobilization outside the electoral arena has been the focus of a separate literature. In particular, where historically marginalized ethnic groups lacked the resources for electoral mobilization, as in Latin America, and/or where authoritarian regimes inhibited electoral mobilization altogether, as in the former Soviet Union, scholars of ethnic mobilization focused on the emergence and effectiveness of ethnic mass movements, measured, for example, by the presence and number of movement organizations (for example, Biggs and Andrews 2015; McVeigh, Cunningham and Farrell 2014; Vogt 2016) or the frequency and type of contentious actions, such as protests (for example, Beissinger 2002; Marquardt 2018; McAdam 1982; Roeder 1991; Stroschein 2012; Wasow 2020). Yet another strand of the literature has focused on violent ethnic mobilization, mostly in the form of ethnic civil conflict and relying on data on ethnically based rebel organizations (for example, Wucherpfennig et al. 2012).

This division of labor with respect to strategies of mobilization, together with the other divisions based on geographic focus and cleavage type, is very much reflected in existing data on ethnic mobilization. Datasets on ethnic parties (Birnir 2007; Szöcsik and Zuber 2012), self-determination organizations or movements (Cunningham 2014; Sambanis, Germann and Schädel 2018), and rebel organizations (Wucherpfennig et al. 2012) mostly exist in isolation from each other.[8] This makes it difficult to analyze under what conditions particular forms of mobilization are selected, what the consequences of these strategic choices are, when non-violent mobilization turns violent, etc. Existing works that do study changes in strategies of mobilization tend to be limited again to specific types of ethnic cleavages/claims – for example, escalation in self-determination conflicts (Germann and Sambanis 2021; Lawrence 2010) – or world regions – for example, ethnic movements' transition to parties in Latin America (Van Cott 2005).

An Integrated Perspective on Nationalism and Ethnic Mobilization

The existing divisions in the literature on ethnic mobilization likely hide important theoretical and empirical insights. This calls for an integrated analytical framework that can be applied across different regional contexts and ethnic cleavage types and includes all main available mobilization strategies. Figure 1 depicts one such possible framework.[9] Building on Snyder (2000) and Tilly (1998, 172–80), my framework starts with the basic observation that ethno-nationalism can be pursued by either state-controlling/majority ethnic groups or minority/non-dominant groups. Both types of ethnonationalism are ultimately concerned with three key elements in Weber's (1919 [2004], 33) definition of the state: "territory," "human community," and "the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force," all of which can provide (and have provided) the ideological building blocks of ethnic mobilization. My analytical framework connects these different ethno-nationalist aspirations to various empirical manifestations of ethnic mobilization through five
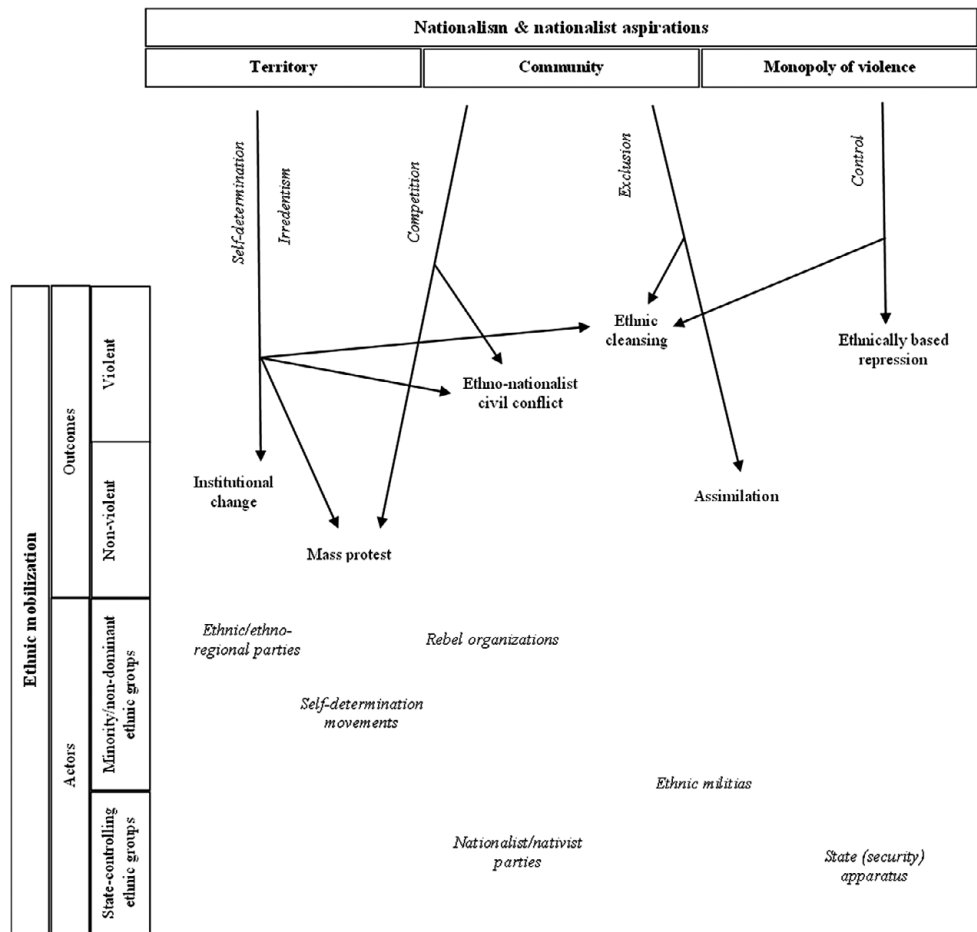
Figure 1. An integrated analytical framework for nationalism and ethnic mobilization.

broad mechanisms: secessionism, irredentism, ethnopolitical competition, ethnic exclusion, and ethnic control. Figure 1 also lists the political actors that are key to these causal mechanisms.

First of all, given the close connection between ethnicity and territory, territorial aspirations are central to much ethnic mobilization, with the term *self-determination* often used in the literature to describe the aspirations of minority (or non-dominant) groups to achieve either (increased) autonomy within existing state borders or outright secession. The outcomes of such self-determination conflicts studied in the existing literature range from instances of non-violent institutional or constitutional change – for example, toward plurinationalism (Keating 2001) or what Stepan, Linz, and Yadav (2010) call "state-nations" – and territorial referenda (Mendez and Germann 2018) to the dynamics of mass protest and ethno-nationalist civil conflict. One of the most consistent findings in the literature on self-determination movements on the escalation from non-violent to violent mobilization is that within-movement fragmentation increases the risk of escalation due to competition (for example, Cunningham, Bakke and Seymour 2012; Lawrence 2010; Pearlman 2008/09).

However, fragmentation can also entail strategic complementarity between the different (types of) actors involved in such territorial mobilization, and what is missing here is a more concerted effort of integration – especially on the empirical side – of these actors. For instance, there is little consideration of the electoral participation and performance of ethno-regional parties – a common

outcome variable in the "Europeanist" literature – in this causal chain of (de-)escalation in self-determination conflicts. One exception is Brancati (2006), who shows that stronger ethno-regional parties (in terms of votes gained) are connected with higher levels of ethnic rebellion and intercommunal conflict (see also De la Calle 2015).

Of course, territorial aspirations are not limited to minority, state-seeking nationalism: ethno-nationalists in power may seek to extend the existing territory of their state by integrating ethnic kin living in other states. Thus, *irredentism* can be seen as the territorial aspiration of majority/state-led nationalism. Often, state-seeking secessionism in one state combines with irredentist aspirations in another, fueling the risk of violent conflict. Cederman, Rüegger, and Schvitz (2022) find that the risk of violent mobilization by ethnic groups that are fragmented across different states is particularly high under conditions of past border changes. Shelef (2016) also shows that the loss of subjectively defined homeland territory increases the probability of violent conflict between states. As indicated in Figure 1, such territorial conflict then often sets the stage for ethnic cleansing as states seek to capture or defend territory from/against rival states (Bulutgil 2016).

This observation leads to the second main nationalist concern, which refers to the community that lives on the state's territory and enjoys the rights and duties of statehood. Beyond the question of sheer physical presence, what is at stake here is the definition of the *political* community (the demos in democracies) and, thus, citizenship. As explained above, the dominance of nationalism as a doctrine of political legitimacy entails that the political community has often been defined in ethnic terms. In the most extreme case, this can lead to the physical removal of ethnic minorities from the state's territory in the form of ethnic cleansing or even genocide.

Existing research suggests that exclusionary "founding narratives" rooted in ideas of superiority of one ethnic group over others (but also in perceived threat and the consequential desire for *control*) increase the risk of ethnic cleansing or genocide (Straus 2015), especially in the absence of salient non-ethnic cleavages (Bulutgil 2015) and economic incentives for restraint (Straus 2015) and when ethnic out-groups become seen as "fifth columns" in the context of international conflict (Bulutgil 2016; Mylonas 2012). Linking the notion of threat to the mechanism of (potential) irredentism, Müller-Crepon, Schvitz, and Cederman (forthcoming) show that ethnic minorities in Europe who rule another state or were previously independent have been particularly likely to suffer ethnic cleansing in their "host" country. While clearly related to nationalism and ethnic mobilization (albeit by state-controlling ethnic groups), the actors responsible for these outcomes of ethnic cleansing – most importantly, state agents in the security apparatus, but also ethnically based militias (often affiliated with state governments), as listed in Figure 1 – have mostly been ignored by scholars of ethnic mobilization.

Of course, ethnic *exclusion* need not reach the level of systematic and large-scale physical violence. Many ethnic groups – from the Roma in Europe, Shiites in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, and Black Africans in Mauritania to African Americans in the USA and Indigenous groups in Latin America – are subjected to more or less overt discrimination in the political, economic, social, and cultural realms. Cultural discrimination often rests on language and religious policies that privilege the state-controlling group's language and/or religion. It entails an important symbolic element, degrading other groups to a lower cultural status (for example, Horowitz 1985, 216–24). From a historical perspective, states' exclusionary definitions of the political community have manifested themselves mostly in the large-scale ethnic assimilation of minorities, which constitutes an outcome of state-led ethnic mobilization in its own right, but which has mostly been studied by scholars of nation-state formation (for example, Hechter 1975; Mylonas 2012; Weber 1976). From O'Leary's (2001, 28–9) more general perspective, secession, ethnic cleansing or genocide, and assimilation all form part of the "grand strategies for eliminating" ethnic differences that "state managers" can pursue. He distinguishes these from another overarching category of "grand strategies for managing" ethnic differences, which includes, among others, the granting of autonomy/devolution and consociational regimes.

Ethnic mobilization scholars have almost exclusively focused on the ethnic movements challenging regimes of discrimination. In the context of Latin America, for example, Vogt (2016) shows that the peaceful mobilization of historically marginalized indigenous groups has enhanced these groups' political status at regional and national levels. Similarly, Biggs and Andrews (2015) find that African American mobilization contributed to desegregation in cities in the US South, and Wasow (2020) links non-violent African American protests to increased county-level vote shares for the Democratic Party more sympathetic to the Civil Rights agenda. Yet, the institutions upholding such discrimination are often propagated by ethno-nationalist parties representing the state-controlling group (Vogt 2019, 64–8). Thus, as illustrated in Figure 1, an integrated perspective on ethnic mobilization ought to equally consider majority nationalism and the currently thriving nationalist-nativist parties in Western Europe – such as the True Finns in Finland, the National Front in France, or the Freedom Party of Austria – as yet another variant of such ethnic mobilization by state-controlling groups. Indeed, recent empirical evidence suggests that nationalist right-wing parties often gain strength in response to government concessions to ethnic and social minorities (Basta 2021; Bustikova 2014).

The question of the definition of the political community also afflicts states without a majority or (historically defined) state-controlling ethnic group. Indeed, where no group can claim "ownership" to the state (Wimmer 1997), the political community may remain fragmented into separate ethnically defined sub-communities, each represented by their own elites and organized as informal "pyramids of authority" (Hale 2014, 11; see also Roessler 2016). The ensuing ethnopolitical *competition* over access to the state and its resources is assumed to become reflected in an ethnicization of societies' organizations, especially in the form of ethnic/ethno-regional parties in democratic systems (Horowitz 1985; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972). A series of empirical studies, however, qualify this assumption, showing how various contextual factors, from the institutional system (Huber 2012) to the relevance of ethnic swing voters (Horowitz 2015), parties' and candidates' positions in electoral races (Gadjanova 2021), and the availability of strong local intermediaries fostering non-ethnic clientelism (Koter 2013; Siroky et al. 2020), can discourage political parties from ethnically based electoral mobilization even in places where such mobilization should be expected.

Ethno-political competition, where it does occur, and ethnic exclusion often go hand-in-hand (Gurr 1994; Wimmer 1997). There is by now ample evidence that, ultimately, such ethnically based inequality increases the risk of violent rebellion by marginalized groups (for example, Birnir 2007; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013; Gurr et al. 1993; Wimmer 2013a). What is still less well understood empirically is the precise process of mobilization between ethnic inequality and violence, especially mobilizing groups' choice of strategy in the face of inequality or discrimination. Grievances might initially spur peaceful mobilization in many cases (Lindström and Moore 1995), and subsequent competition between different actors (Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012; Lawrence 2010), escalating demands (Vogt, Gleditsch, and Cederman 2021), and state repression (Moore 1998) then increase the risk of escalation to violence. Yet, the choice of peaceful or violent strategies of resistance might also depend on structural conditions that shape the opportunities for either strategy; for example, ethnic group interdependence should make non-violent forms of mobilization more effective (Vogt 2019, 51–5).

Finally, considering the third, and most often cited, element of Weber's definition – the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force – allows us to include in the framework shown in Figure 1 additional mobilization strategies of majority/state-controlling ethnic groups keen to preserve their hegemony. For example, public manifestations of minority mobilization, even if peaceful, might seem particularly threatening to the monopoly of violence in the eyes of the ruling elite in multiethnic states, inciting a desire for *control* and, consequently, resulting in particularly heavy-handed repression of such mobilization. Indeed, Rorbaek and Knudsen (2017) find evidence for a systematic connection between the level of ethnopolitical exclusion in a country and the degree of violent repression. Focusing on protest and policing in the USA between 1960 and 1990,

Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong (2011) show that African American protest events were subjected to more police action than comparable events by white protesters, although the effect of racial identity varied across time periods.

The same threat perceptions might also affect the attitudes of rank-and-file members of dominant ethnic groups. For instance, Manekin and Mitts (2021) present experimental evidence that members of the dominant ethnic group in the USA and Israel perceive non-violent protest by ethnic minorities as more violent and more requiring of police action than identical mobilization from their own group members. In the extreme case, militant members of these groups might feel entitled or encouraged to protect what they perceive as their monopoly of violence over ethnic minorities. Recent studies in the field of terrorism, for example, highlight terrorism committed by majority religious groups in the context of state support of religion and discrimination against minorities (Henne, Saiya, and Hand 2020) as well as violent attacks by native populations in OECD countries against refugees from countries that harbor transnational terrorist organizations (Wucherpfennig and Polo 2022).

Implications and Future Directions

An integrated analytical framework, such as the one depicted in Figure 1, that is applicable across different contexts and mobilization strategies, can serve to draw researchers' attention to a series of understudied research questions concerning the emergence, dynamics, and impact of, as well as policy responses to, ethnic mobilization – which in turn may stimulate the accumulation of generalizable knowledge by recognizing hitherto overlooked commonalities across different contexts and/or fine-tuning the scope conditions of existing theories.

With respect to the emergence of different variants of ethnic mobilization, for example, recent research examines the conditions under which political actors appeal to religion or other ethnic identities (Birnir and Şatana 2022). Yet, we still do not know enough about the mobilization potential of different ethnic cleavage types and the drivers of political actors' framing choices in contexts of multiple, cross-cutting cleavages. Considering the distinct ethno-nationalist aspirations in actors' framing of ethnic mobilization would also allow for a more detailed analysis of the roots and implications of specific ethnic claims and narratives by (state) elites, such as restorative nationalist aspirations (Cederman et al. forthcoming; Ding, Slater and Zengin 2021), inclusionary vs. exclusionary visions of the political community (Straus 2015; Tudor and Slater 2021), or the strategic combination of ethno-nationalist with class-based appeals (Howe, Szöcsik, and Zuber 2022). Furthermore, if state governments make concessions to divided self-determination movements to uncover new information and strengthen moderates (Cunningham 2011), what does this imply for ethnic movements that contain both centrifugal forces and organizations that make demands for central state power? And how do governments' rejection of, or concessions to, centripetal demands by ethnic minorities influence the subsequent emergence of self-determination movements?

In terms of mobilization dynamics, if outbidding on the side of non-state ethnic challengers increases the risk of violence (Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012; Lawrence 2010; Pearlman 2008/09), what is the effect of ethno-nationalist outbidding among organizations claiming to represent the state-controlling group? More generally, how do majority/state-controlling ethnic parties and ethno-regional parties interact with each other, and what are the parallels and differences between them in terms of their societal effects? Similarly, a combined consideration of different mobilization strategies would not only deepen our understanding of why and when ethnic movements switch from one strategy to another, but also of the diffusion of strategies across movements and countries. For instance, choices of mobilization strategy, such as the use of terrorism, by one ethnic group might encourage similar groups to follow suit (Polo 2020), but we do not know whether group similarity (for example, due to shared grievances) inspires strategic

convergence, specifically, or simply helps diffuse mobilization, in general – unless we consider the diffusion of various *alternative* mobilization strategies across groups.

Finally, with respect to the impact and the policy implications of different forms of ethnic mobilization, if ethnic movements in Latin America have promoted ethnic equality without increasing the risk of violence (Vogt 2019), in what other societies with long-standing ethnic discrimination are we likely to observe this emancipatory logic? If internal colonialism has characterized state and nation-building in both Europe (Hechter 1975) and Latin America (Gonzalez Casanova 1965), what are the effects of institutions that grant cultural and territorial rights to minorities across both of these regions? At the individual level, existing research shows that individuals' experience of violent ethnic conflict (including state-led ethnically based violence) decreases their out-group tolerance (for example, Beber, Roessler, and Scacco 2014; Hirsch-Hoefler et al. 2014), but it is less clear whether this finding is specific to the experience of violence and how exposure to large-scale non-violent ethnic mobilization affects individuals' identities and attitudes.

Pursuing such an integrated analytical approach carries implications not only for the "what" but also the "how" of research on ethnic mobilization. On the theoretical side, it requires researchers to engage with the "bigger picture" of the ethnic mobilization literature as a whole – as well as related literature – at all stages: situating their research question within this bigger picture rather than just within their own niche (for example, their own region), specifying the geographic, etc., scope conditions of their theoretical arguments more precisely (and perhaps more ambitiously!) by identifying parallels and differences in the causal mechanisms beyond the world region or mobilization strategy immediately covered in their own study and interpreting their empirical results accordingly.

Empirically, rather than collecting ever new datasets, more effort should be dedicated to integrating existing data sources, especially those on the actors of ethnic mobilization. One promising strategy for this purpose would be to build on general actor-centered datasets, such as data on pro-government militias (Carey, Mitchell, and Paula 2022) and political parties (Szöcsik and Zuber 2012). For example, the new EPR-Organizations (EPR-O) dataset (Gremler, Vogt, and Weidmann, forthcoming; Vogt, Gleditsch, and Cederman 2021) includes information on both violent and non-violent ethnic organizations making different types of political claims, including centrifugal and centripetal claims, demands for religious or linguistic rights, etc. This paves the way for more systematic cross-national research on different strategies and political demands made in ethnic mobilization. Moreover, especially book-length studies of ethnic mobilization should also probe the external validity of their empirical findings (of either a quantitative or qualitative nature) beyond the immediate focus of their analysis; for example, by extending the latter to "out-of-sample" cases (Slater and Ziblatt 2013).

From an institutional perspective, this means that research on ethnic mobilization would benefit not only from more "cross-regional" co-authorship (Mylonas and Tudor 2021, 124), but also from more "rotation" by individual scholars themselves, studying different world regions, forms of mobilization, etc. over the course of their careers. Given relatively entrenched research cultures and peer networks within the existing niches of the ethnic mobilization literature, this would require "diplomatic" efforts on both ends; researchers turning their attention to a new niche must engage seriously with existing perspectives in that niche while the established figures in the niche – for example, in their role as peer reviewers – must be willing to let "outsiders" contribute to their debates.

Finally, what is needed is room for work that crosses multiple such artificial boundaries. In a recent contribution, Lieberman (2016) argues in favor of political science embracing a more diverse range of studies, akin to the biomedical research cycle, including descriptive, associational, and experimental studies. Associational studies are likely better suited for the purpose of integrating different niches than experimental studies, which tend to be more restricted in scope. In this sense, the integrated analytical approach propagated here is also a call for methodological pluralism and a

stronger emphasis on external validity even if this sometimes comes at the expense of internal causal identification.

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Notes

1 One prominent exception is African Americans in the United States (US) whose sense of shared ancestry/history is more closely related to the experience of slavery and the history of the transatlantic slave trade, which distinguishes them, for instance, from more recent African immigrants in the US.
2 This focus on ethno-regional minorities (and the corresponding lack of consideration of state-controlling groups) is also reflected in the first global dataset on mobilized ethnic groups: the "Minorities at Risk" (MAR) dataset (Gurr et al. 1993).
3 See Basta (2021) and Hennayake (1992) for two examples of such studies of "interactive" nationalisms.
4 This "nationalist deficit" is related to but different from the deficit in state institutional power highlighted by the state building/capacity literature (see, for example, Herbst 2000).
5 See Koter (2023) for an overview.
6 An interesting exception is the literature on plurinationalism in countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia (for example, Merino 2018; Postero 2017).
7 More recently, Vogt (2019) analyzes both violent and non-violent ethnic mobilization in different post-colonial societies, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.
8 Exceptions are the original MAR dataset by Gurr et al. (1993) and its successor A-MAR (Birnir et al. 2018), which both contain mobilization-related variables at the ethnic-group level, as well as the new EPR-Organizations (EPR-O) dataset (Gremler, Vogt and Weidmann forthcoming; Vogt, Gleditsch and Cederman 2021).
9 Wimmer's (2013b) work on ethnic boundary making presents a similarly integrated perspective applicable across different regional contexts and ethnic cleavage types but focuses on the formation of ethnic groups, rather than the political mobilization of ethnicity. Hale (2008) advances a general theory of ethnic politics that links the psychological foundations of ethnicity as an identity category to the political exploitation of ethnicity in the pursuit of concrete interests – thus unifying identity-centered and instrumentalist perspectives – but with respect to ethno-political mobilization he focuses on separatism, specifically, and on the former Soviet Union.

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