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DIVERSITY, TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY, AND RADICALISATION

In ethnically heterogeneous societies, territorial reforms, such as granting asymmetric autonomy to minority groups, federalisation or decentralisation, are discussed controversially. While some see territorial reforms as a means to accommodate minority groups, others warn that strengthening sub-national political units will deepen the social and political divisions, and aggravate separatist conflicts (Brancati, 2006; Harbers, 2010; Christin & Hug, 2012; Cederman et al., 2013).

The previous literature on territorial reforms and separatist movements concentrates mainly on macro-level processes, and it treats ethnic groups as united actors, with politically homogeneous preferences, and focuses rather on separatist groups and leaders than on the preferences of citizens. In the light of the diverging results of this previous research, and addressing the critique that pluralism in the political preferences among co-ethnics, this paper studies the micro-dynamics underlying the political radicalisation along ethnic lines, and brings citizen preferences in.

This paper measures the political preferences on ethnopolitical issues, and explains them based on structural and institutional variables (socio-economic context, ethnic structure of the population, decentralisation, territorial autonomy). In a second step, it investigates how preferences are translated into cooperation or conflict. We expect that ethnic minorities with a concentrated settlement structure have more heterogeneous ethnopolitical preferences than other groups. This offers the opportunity for the government to build coalitions with the moderate parts of the minority groups, by including them into political power.

Empirically, the World Values Survey (waves 5 and 6) offer a battery of questions suitable to analyse the ethnopolitical preferences. The individual survey data is combined with information on institutions and structure, and on political coalitions and conflict at the group/country level (from the ETH-EPR and the MAR dataset).