Foreign Interventions and Secessionist Movements: The Democratic Factor

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Introduction

Why do some secessionist movements succeed while others fail? Why, for instance, did East Timor and Eritrea achieve secession while Chechnya and Somaliland failed to do so? Analysts often argue that foreign support to secessionist groups is the determining factor in the success or failure of secession (Young, 1994; Heraclides, 1991; Horowitz, 1985).[1] The German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 clearly demon-

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strates the critical role of foreign support in the success of secession (Crawford, 1996). This leads to a second question: If foreign support is crucial, why is it that some secessionist movements receive more external assistance than others? Evidence indicates, for example, that Bangladesh found strong international support for independence, while Abkhazia (Georgia) and Aceh (Indonesia) did not. The last question is the focal point of the present research. This article aims to further our understanding of the disparity in third states' behaviour toward states embattled with secessionist movements (host states), thus contributing to what has been, and is still, an important debate in the field of International Relations.

The Usual Suspects: Vulnerability and Ethnic Ties

During the Cold War, a state's own vulnerability to secession was the standard explanation through which the international dimension of secession was studied. Scholars of the liberal tradition have argued that a state's own vulnerability to internal secessionist turmoil inhibits it from supporting independentist movements abroad. This proposition, known as the vulnerability argument, was first applied to the African regional context (Herbst, 1989; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982; Cervenka, 1969). According to this claim, vulnerability explains why states embrace international norms of cooperation, such as the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states.[2] Neoliberals thus assert that the common vulnerability of African states is a strong incentive for them to cooperate, because the defection of states from cooperation could result in a dangerous domino effect, leading to the infinite redrawing of African borders. They argue that as a result, African states persist over time despite the strength of secessionist movements (e.g., Biafra, Katanga, Somaliland) because leaders have no choice but to accept rules and norms of cooperation.

Although straightforward and parsimonious, the vulnerability argument is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation of the behaviour of third states toward secessionist conflicts. Since the early 1990s, several vulnerable states that should have been inhibited from supporting secession did indeed grant support and recognition to foreign secessionist groups (e.g., Albania recognized Kosovo, Italy recognized Croatia and Russia supported Trans-Dniester).[3] Moreover, Alexis Heraclides (1990) demonstrates that multiethnic states (especially those vulnerable to separatism) are not less likely to support secessionists than homogenous states. Stephen Saideman (2001, 1997) also shows that the vulnerability proposition has weak empirical support. His studies indicate that vulnerable third states (including African states) are not deterred from supporting secessionist groups elsewhere.[4] Thus, international norms of

Abstract. This article explores the impact of political regime type on the decision of third states to support secessionist movements abroad. It suggests that democracies share political values, which lead them to oppose their mutual secessionist claims, while autocracies are not bound by this normative consideration. The statistical analysis supports the effect of the democratic factor: democracies rarely support secessionist groups emerging from democratic states. Moreover, it shows that there is no autocratic counterpart to this argument. This research also casts some serious doubts on the ability of conventional explanations—namely vulnerability and ethnic affinities—to explain external support to secessionist movements.

Résumé. Cet article analyse l'impact du type de régime politique sur la décision des États tiers d'appuyer des mouvements sécessionnistes à l'étranger. L'étude soutient que les démocraties partagent des valeurs politiques communes qui les mènent à s'opposer aux mouvements indépendantistes qui se manifestent parmi elles, alors que les régimes autocratiques ne sont pas liés par cette considération normative. L'analyse statistique valide l'effet du facteur démocratique : les démocraties appuient rarement les groupes sécessionnistes qui émergent au sein d'autres États démocratiques. Les données démontrent également qu'il n'y a pas d'équivalent autocratique faisant écho au facteur démocratique. L'étude indique en outre que les thèses courantes de la vulnérabilité et du lien ethnique expliquent mal l'appui des États tiers aux groupes sécessionnistes.

cooperation among vulnerable states do not account for the foreign-policy decision making of third states as regards secession.

In recent years, ethnic politics has been increasingly regarded as a central determinant of third-state intervention in ethnic conflicts (Saideman, 2002, 2001; Carment and James, 1997, 1996). In this case, the theory argues that when facing a foreign secessionist conflict, third states will support actors with which they share an ethnic tie. This argument has replaced the vulnerability proposition as the common explanation for intervention by third states. According to Saideman, states support the side of an ethnic conflict that shares ethnic ties with the leaders' constituents. He asserts that "ethnic politics serves as a critical dynamic compelling some politicians to support secession elsewhere while constraining others" (Saideman, 1997: 725–26). This line of reasoning is interesting and has shed new light on a neglected aspect of foreign policy toward secessionist conflicts. We take the findings by Saideman as well as by Carment and James as a strong indication that ethnic ties are, in general, more significant than the vulnerability of third states in explaining external support for secession. However, the quantitative data used by these authors impose limits to their interpretation. Carment and James use the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project dataset and therefore limit their observation to interstate-level conflicts, excluding domestic secessionist claims that have not developed as international crises (Carment and James, 1997). Saideman, for his part, uses the Minority at Risk (MAR) dataset, which includes ethnic conflicts without specifying if they are secessionist or not (Saideman, 2001b). Therefore, quantitative findings on ethnic ties are valuable but methods of case selection have not yet permitted scholars to perform direct and specific tests on secessionist movements *per se*. In an attempt to further pursue this research program,

we have designed a strategy that allows us to move the statistical analysis of secessionist conflicts toward a more precise selection of cases.

This article also suggests an explanation other than ethnic ties or vulnerability. It argues that a democratic regime bond between a third state and a host state constitutes an important normative explanatory variable that can account for the behaviour of foreign countries towards secessionist claims. More precisely, we maintain that democratic states stand by each other and do not support their mutual secessionist movements. A review of the literature on the topic reveals that little attention has been given to this factor.[5] There is indeed a clear theoretical scarcity regarding the impact of democracy on states' actions toward secessionist crises. Therefore, studying the influence of regime type extends the debate on this issue by providing a credible conjecture that seeks to explain variations in the behaviour of third states.

Regime Types and Intervention of Foreign States

This article is a preliminary answer to the need to consider the dyadic political regime variable in the study of external support for secessionist groups. The logic of our democratic argument is derived from the findings of Werner and Lemke (1997), who show that in their decision to join an ongoing conflict, states will align themselves with other countries sharing similar political regimes. Our argument has also been influenced more generally by the literature on democratic peace (Leeds and Davis, 1999; Doyle, 1997; Russett, 1993; Maoz and Russett, 1993; Lake, 1992). A large array of this literature addresses the issue of political regime types to explain international events. Scholars who worked on this topic found that democratic states rarely fight each other and that jointly democratic dyads are more cooperative and less bellicose than mixed dyads or jointly nondemocratic dyads. Considering the voluminous literature on democratic peace published over the last decade, it is surprising to note that little progress has been made on the specific influence of regime type on a foreign state's intervention in secessionist conflicts. This is the main motivation behind the decision to use a dyadic approach to evaluate the impact of democracy on the decision to support secessionist groups in foreign countries.[6]

Theoretical Framework

A stable international system is a core principle on which state leaders agree. It is the foundation for political cooperation among states, economic prosperity, as well as for the survival of sovereign entities (Frost, 1996: 106). Because stability is so vital, states have traditionally maintained an anti-secessionist bias in order to preserve the territorial status

quo. Following the Second World War, states agreed to conform to a set of rules and norms that limited the circumstances under which peoples had the right to declare independence.[7] First, only peoples under colonial rule had the right to external self-determination (Heraclides, 1991). Second, only self-determined entities (i.e., evolving under colonial rules) could be recognized as sovereign states by third countries. Third, states could not intervene in others' internal affairs, a principle whose roots can be found in the Westphalian conception of sovereign equality among states.[8] These norms, which emanated from United Nations' declarations and treaties, developed into a strong barrier to secession.[9]

With the end of the Cold War, however, the anti-secessionist norms were relaxed to better integrate liberal and democratic values.[10] Concerns for human rights, justice and minority representation have been increasingly seen as important criteria that, if violated, could legitimize secession. Indeed, there has been a growing consensus that groups subjected to exploitation, domination and social injustice by their central state make stronger cases for secession than those that exercise internal self-determination within their state (Buchanan, 1991, 1998; Miller, 1998). Hence, according to Allen Buchanan (1998), the presence of democracy in a host state reduces the legitimacy of its own secessionist groups, since democracy is tantamount to domestic self-determination for minorities and nationalities. Debates over the legitimacy of secession show that regime type is a very important factor that must be taken into account when dealing with secessionist issues.

The democratic peace literature indicates that democracies act according to a normative appreciation of the world—democracies rarely fight each other. The objective now is to measure whether democratic states espouse a similar normative view when dealing with foreign secessionist crises. Some recent events lead us to think that democracies are indeed normative actors with regard to secession. In Canada, the reference case on Québec secession issued by the Supreme Court in 1998 is a revealing example. The Court stated that international law contains an implicit right of secession in exceptional circumstances where peoples cannot exercise their right of internal self-determination because they are oppressed or colonized (para. 112).[11] This assertion supports Buchanan's moral argument for secession. In every other circumstance, the Court maintains that "peoples are expected to achieve self-determination within the framework of their existing state" (Reference Case, 1998: 4). Thus, according to the Court, Québec does not have the right under international law to secede because it can freely exercise its internal right to self-determination within the Canadian state (paras. 135–36). Canada is a "sovereign and independent state conducting itself in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory with-

out distinction" (para. 136). In other words, the Court implicitly argues that the legitimacy of secessionist movements depends highly on the host states' political regime and thus that Québec can freely exercise its right of self-determination within the Canadian federation, since Canada is a representative democracy (i.e., equal rights of people, representative government, etc.). The Court also indicates that although largely determined by the level of democracy in the host state, the legitimacy of an independentist movement also depends on the democratic will expressed by the people living in the secessionist state. Thus, the Court argues that if a clear majority of Quebecers express the desire to leave the federation by answering to a clear referendum question on secession, this would give a democratic legitimacy to the initiative that the rest of Canada would have to recognize.

A similar normative view on secessionist claims was echoed by United States President Bill Clinton in his speech on federalism delivered at the Forum of Federations in 1999. Clinton argued that before considering any support for independence, third states should find out whether secessionists can exercise their right of internal self-determination within their state. He declared: "When a people think it should be independent in order to have a meaningful political existence, serious questions should be asked: Is there an abuse of human rights? Is there a way people can get along if they come from different heritages? Are minority rights, as well as majority rights, respected?" (Clinton, 1999). These examples show that in the 1990s a new democratic norm emerged that mainly evaluates the legitimacy of secessionist movements based on the level of internal self-determination they exercise within their state. We contend that this is the main normative motive guiding democracies' foreign policy toward secession.

Built on these assertions, in the present research study we argue that third states that are democratic mostly estimate the legitimacy of secessionist groups based on the nature of the host states' political regime. Thus, secessionist movements evolving within democracies are unlikely to obtain support from democratic states, since these countries operate according to a normative principle that assumes that a liberal democratic order provides minorities with internal self-determination. This principle is, therefore, hardly compatible with a claim for secession. As a result, we hypothesize that democracies stand by each other and oppose their mutual secessionist movements because they share common political values that respect minorities and sub-state nations.

A corollary claim of this article is that the democratic factor has no autocratic counterpart. We assert that non-democracies do not share political values that are likely to inhibit them from supporting secessionist movements. Political regime type, we argue, is therefore not a significant normative element affecting the foreign policy of autocratic leaders toward host states struggling against secessionists. It is now time to ver-

ify the empirical accuracy of the regime type argument. The previous theoretical propositions generate the following testable hypotheses:

H1: Democracies support democratic host states and oppose their secessionist movements.

H2: Autocracies are not inhibited by regime type when they choose to support secessionist movements.

Operationalization and Measurement

The temporal domain of this empirical test is 1990–1992, inclusively. Since we collected data from several sources using different time spans, the time period covered by all the necessary data banks is perforce limited. We also acknowledge the fact that the three years under study are rather unusual, since they cover international transformations resulting from the end of the Cold War. During these tumultuous years, the international community witnessed a radical increase in the number of secessionist movements and faced the disintegration of multinational states (Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Yugoslavia). Secessionist demands erupted, for instance, in the Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine, and precipitated the collapse of the Soviet Union. These events brought 15 new sovereign states to the map. Yugoslavia was also unable to survive its internal secessionist movements—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia all seceded from the Yugoslav federal state in 1991–1992. Despite the fact that this time period is limited and empirically unusual, we think that these limitations do not invalidate our test and we are hopeful that in the near future we will be able to expand our temporal domain extensively and be more confident in our conclusions.

To select our cases, we used data from Phase III of the Minorities at Risk Project (MAR). This dataset, which provides information on minorities within states, deals, among other things, with the issue of minorities' motivation to seek independence. In order to avoid the kind of drawback identified earlier, we isolated secessionist cases from other ethnic conflicts by only selecting states within which the quest for independence by communal groups was, in the language of the MAR, either: 1) a very important issue, or 2) a significant issue. As indicated by Table 1, for the years 1990 to 1992, the MAR identifies 32 secessionist groups from 21 different host states fitting our selection criteria, and those are included in our study.[12]

In order to verify our hypotheses, we need to measure different relationships between each of the 21 selected host states and the so-called third states. The choice of these third countries was made according to the Political Relevant International Environments (PRIE) of our 21

Table 1

Host States and Their Secessionist Movements By Political Regime Type, 1990–1992

Democracies:

Canada (Quebecers), France (Basques), India (Kashmiris, Nagas, Tripuras, Assamese and Bodos), Israel (Palestinians), Italy (South Tyrolians and Sardinians), Moldova (Slavics), Russia (Chechens, Tatars, Lezgins and Tuvinians), Turkey (Kurds) and the United States (Native Hawaiians).

Non-Democracies:

Angola (Cabindese), Azerbaijan (Armenians), China (Turkmens and Tibetans), Djibouti (Afars), Ethiopia (Afars and Oromos), Georgia (Abhkazians), Indonesia (East Timorese and Papuans), Iraq (Kurds), Morocco (Saharawis), Senegal (Diolas de Casamance), Somalia (Issaqs) and Sudan (Southerners).[33]

selected countries. A state's PRIE is composed of all states "with which it is geographically contiguous and all major powers which are capable of interacting militarily with the focal state."[13] In order to establish these PRIE or strategic environments, we used the Expected Utility Generation and Data Management Program (EUGene) developed by D. Scott Bennett and Allan C. Stam.[14] This program allowed us to create dyadic links between states affected by secessionist groups and third states on the basis of their PRIE. Cases were included in our dataset if they met one or both of the following dyadic criteria: a) two contiguous states, at least one of which is involved in a secessionist contest; and b) a state affected by secessionist strife and a major power.[15] Canada, for instance, which is a selected host state because of the secessionist movement in Québec, has seven states in its PRIE. The United States is one of those, since it is both contiguous to Canada and a major power. Germany, however, is not contiguous to Canada, but it is part of Canada's strategic sphere because it is considered a major power. Turkey, which is another selected host state in our study because of the Kurdish separatist movement, has 16 countries in its PRIE. Japan, for instance, is part of the Turkish environment because it is a major power, and Iran appears as a Turkish third state as well, since it is contiguous. In sum, we established the Political Relevant International Environment of the 21 selected host states according to power and contiguity. The creation of these strategic environments uncovered 385 dyads, after some observations were dropped due to missing data.[16]

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables measure the occurrence and level of external support for secessionist movements. In order to gather this information,

several steps had to be taken. The first difficulty arose from the realization that the MAR dataset does not provide information on the identity of the third states that provide support to secessionist groups. As a result, it was necessary to refer directly to the MAR's code sheets on external support for the years 1990 to 1992.[17] The code sheets compile the requisite information on the identity of providers of external support for each secessionist group. Following this, it was vital to this research project to decide which type of external support should be considered. The decision was to concentrate on the support of foreign governments, since this leads to the most representative and formal type of third-state support for foreign secessionist movements. For each of the secessionist groups studied in the MAR code sheets, this article considers the strongest level of governmental support provided by a member of a PRIE to a secessionist group for the years 1990 to 1992 (See Table 2). The variable "level of support" ranges from no support (value 0) to the highest level of support (value 14). A dummy variable, named "occurrence of support," is also retained. It is coded as one when any level of support occurs; otherwise, the variable takes on the value of zero. Table 3 lists the cases where external support was granted to secessionist groups.

Independent Variables

Political regime type is our main explanatory variable. It appraises the impact of the dyadic democratic factor on the propensity to lend support

TABLE 2

Levels of Third State's Support to Secessionist Groups[34]

0	No support
1	Ideological encouragement
2	Nonmilitary financial
3	Access to external communication
4	Funds for military supplies
5	Cross-border sanctuaries
6	Military training in exile
7	Military equipment
8	Military advisors
9	Peacekeeping personnel
10	Blockades/interdiction
11	Rescue missions in country
12	Active combat units
13	Cross-border raids
14	Diffuse support
15	Other

TABLE 3

External Support for Secessionist Movements, 1990–1992
Level of External Support

Host State[a]	Secessionist Group	Intervening State	External Support[b]
Angola (A)	Cabinda	Zaire (A)	Cross-border sanctuaries (5)
Angola (A)	Cabinda	Congo (A)	Ideological encouragement (1)
Azerbaijan (A)	Armenians	Russia (D)	Peacekeeping personnel (9)
Azerbaijan (A)	Armenians	Armenia (D)	Military equipment (7)
China (A)	Turkmens	Afghanistan (A)	Military equipment (7)
China (A)	Turkmens	Kyrgyzstan (D)	Access to external communication (3)
China (A)	Turkmens	Kazakhstan (A)	Access to external communication (3)
China (A)	Tibetans	United States (D)	Ideological encouragement (1)
China (A)	Tibetans	France (D)	Ideological encouragement (1)
China (A)	Tibetans	Great Britain (D)	Ideological encouragement (1)
China (A)	Tibetans	Germany (D)	Ideological encouragement (1)
China (A)	Tibetans	India (D)	Access to external communication (3)
Georgia (A)	Abkhazians	Russia (D)	Military advisors (8)
India (D)	Kashmiris	Pakistan (A)	Military equipment (7)
India (D)	Tripuras	Bangladesh (D)	Military training in exile (6)
India (D)	Assamese	Myanmar (A)	Military training in exile (6)
India (D)	Bodos	Bhutan (A)	Cross-border sanctuaries (5)
Iraq (A)	Kurds	United States (D)	Rescue missions in country (11)
Iraq (A)	Kurds	Great Britain (D)	Rescue missions in country (11)
Iraq (A)	Kurds	Iran (A)	Cross-border sanctuaries (5)
Iraq (A)	Kurds	Syria (A)	Funds for military supplies (4)
Israel (D)	Palestinians	Syria (A)	Military equipment (7)
Italy (D)	South Tyroleans	Austria (D)	Ideological encouragement (1)
Moldova (D)	Slavs	Russia (D)	Active combat units (12)
Morocco (A)	Saharawis	Algeria (A)	Funds for military supplies (4)
Russia (D)	Chechens	Turkey (D)	Nonmilitary financial (2)
Russia (D)	Chechens	Lithuania (D)	Ideological encouragement (1)
Senegal (A)	Casamancais	Guinea Bissau (A)	Diffuse support (14)
Senegal (A)	Casamancais	Gambia (D)	Access to external communication (3)
Sudan (A)	Southerners	Uganda (A)	Diffuse support (14)
Sudan (A)	Southerners	Kenya (A)	Diffuse support (14)
Sudan (A)	Southerners	Ethiopia (A)	Ideological encouragement (1)
Turkey (D)	Kurds	Iraq (A)	Military training in exile (6)
Turkey (D)	Kurds	Iran (A)	Cross-border sanctuaries (5)
Turkey (D)	Kurds	Syria (A)	Military training in exile (6)

a) Letters between parentheses indicate regime type: (A) for autocracy and (D) for democracy.
b) Numbers between parentheses indicate statistical value attributed to each intervention level.

to secessionist groups. In order to assess the strength of this proposition,
we also included variables representing the vulnerability of third states
to secession, as well as ethnic ties between intervening states and seces-
sionist groups. This makes it possible to compare the validity of our model
with major arguments developed by other researchers. This analysis also

incorporates the following control variables, which may have an impact on the external support for secessionist movement: military alliances, territorial contiguity, the overall level of cooperation/conflict between PRIE members and the durability of the regime facing a secessionist movement. A discussion of each of these variables follows.

Political Regime Dyads

Relying on data from Phase III of the Minorities at Risk Project generated by EUGene, each state included in the dataset is attributed a "democracy score." EUGene distributes regime scores on a ten-point scale, where zero means no democracy and 10 indicates a highly satisfying level of democracy.[18] For the purpose of this study, a "cut-off" point was established to separate democratic regimes from non-democratic regimes. To be considered democratic, a regime must obtain a score of at least 6 out of 10 on EUGene's point scale.[19] Of the 21 states battling with secessionist movements, 9 are democratic and 12 are not.[20] To test our hypotheses, three variables were constructed. When the members of a dyad are both democracies, the "democratic dyad" variable is coded as one, while other cases are coded as zero. The same logic applies to our construction of the variables representing "autocratic dyads" and "mixed dyads." In order to avoid multicollinearity, the variable "mixed dyads" is excluded from the analysis and these dyads constitute the baseline cases.

Vulnerability

The level of vulnerability of third states constitutes the second independent variable. This article investigates the impact of this variable, because previous studies as well as conventional wisdom suggested that a vulnerable third state would support a central government battling with secessionist movements, instead of supporting secessionist groups within that state. In order to measure whether states are vulnerable, we use the MAR dataset, which provides an estimation of the vulnerability level of third states based on indicators of the presence of minorities seeking a significant level of autonomy in a specific state. For the purposes of this study, the MAR variables are rearranged into the following categories to ensure the linearity of the impact of the vulnerability variable on the dependent variables: values of zero for "no grievance on issue," one for "issue of lesser importance," two for "issue significant/relative importance unclear," and three for "issue important for most." This article tests the hypothesis that when a communal group searches for autonomy within a state, the central government of that state is vulnerable to secession. Consequently, a vulnerable third state is less likely to lend support to a secessionist group in another state.

Ethnic Ties

Previous studies have asserted that ethnic ties are good predictors of external support for secessionist groups (Carment, James and Rowlands, 1997; Davis and Moore, 1997). For Saideman (1997, 2001, 2002), the existence (or not) of ethnic kinship between important constituencies of one state and the secessionist group in another was the best predictor of states' foreign policy toward secessionist crises. While not directly measuring external support for ethnic groups, Henderson (1997, 1998) reports that ethnic and linguistic similarities (which are normative factors) increase the likelihood of conflict between states.

    Our research considers that there is an ethnic affinity—coded as a one—in a dyad when the secessionist group shares linguistic and/or religious similarities with politically significant constituencies within the state belonging to the PRIE of the host state. Where no ethnic kinship is identified, this variable takes on the value of zero. Since there is no existing and reliable databank on the ethnic affinity of secessionist minorities, the authors proceeded with their own coding, relying on several sources (MAR dataset, the *CIA World Factbook*, the Library of Congress' *Country Studies*, *L'État du monde* and others).[21]

Control Variables

Alliances

This variable is based on an assumption derived from *Realpolitik*. From the premise that allies do not usually fight or threaten each other with military action, we can cautiously hypothesize that they will not intervene in each other's secessionist conflicts. For instance, it is unlikely that the United States would support the Kurdish secessionist movement in Turkey, since both the US and Turkey are members of NATO. This variable is inspired by Joanne Gowa's (1999) argument that democracies were only peaceful with one another during the Cold War because they were engaged in military alliances and defense pacts against the Soviet threat. To test whether alliances rather than political regimes account for the behaviour of third states toward secessionist conflicts, data compiled by the Correlates of War (COW), available through the EUGene software, are included in the statistical section of this article. The data accounts for alliance configurations and takes on the following values: one for a defense pact, two for a neutrality pact, three for entente and four for no alliance.

Contiguity

Alexis Heraclides (1990) argues that contiguous states are more likely to be involved in a neighbour's secessionist turmoil than non-neighbouring states. Since contiguity seems to have an impact on the foreign policy of third states, the following statistical analysis includes a variable named "contiguity." For instance, this makes it possible to measure whether Finland, which is contiguous to Russia, is more likely to intervene in the secessionist crisis in Chechnya than France, which has no borders with Russia. We operationalize this variable as follows: contiguous dyads are coded as one while non-contiguous dyads are coded as zero.

Level of Cooperation/Conflict

In an attempt to put the attitude of third states toward secessionist claims into the context of the overall political relationship between third states and host states, a composite measure of cooperation/conflict for each selected dyad is used.[22] The Kansas Event Data System (KEDS) and the World Events Interaction Survey (WEIS) provide the raw data for this endeavour.[23] These datasets identify numerous dyadic interactions between countries, including all dyads selected for our analysis. However, as Goldstein (1992) noticed, KEDS and WEIS do not classify data according to conflicts and cooperation, which would have been relevant for this analysis. Therefore, in order to solve this problem, Goldstein suggests a "new scaled" measure of more than 60 possibilities of international actor interactions. Goldstein's coding, which goes from military attack, in the worst case-scenario, to the extension of military assistance, in the best case, is the classification retained for this investigation of the dyadic level of conflict. This study adopts Goldstein's coding and it incorporates a variable called "cooperation/conflict" in statistical analysis.

Regime Durability

Mansfield and Snyder (1995) build a strong theoretical case to demonstrate that, while it appears true that there exists a separate peace among mature democracies, a regime undergoing a democratic transition is also more war-prone than an established democracy.[24] In response, Braumoeller (1997) suggests that the more citizens in a democratizing state perceive their neighbours to be democratizing, the less they expect them to fight, while others argue that democratization does not affect the likelihood of conflict (Enterline 1998b; Oneal and Russett 1997; Rousseau 1997).

On the basis of these previous conflicting findings, this article suggests that regimes that are undergoing or have recently undergone a transition are more likely to invite external intervention in a domestic secessionist struggle. Thus, Moldova or Russia, for instance, which proceeded to political transition in the 1990s, are more likely to face external

support for their secessionist movements than well-established democracies such as Canada or France. The regime durability variable adds a control for the consideration of the relationship between regime type and foreign support for secessionist movements. Data on regime durability are taken from the POLITY IV project. More specifically, a variable labelled "regime durability" is incorporated into the statistical analysis. It assesses the number of years since the most recent regime change (defined by a three-point change in the POLITY score over a period of three years or less).[25]

Analysis

In order to test for the level and incidence of external support for secessionist groups, this article resorts to regression analysis (Ordinary Least Squares) and maximum likelihood estimation (Logit) respectively.[26] The results displayed in Table 4 allow us to verify the hypotheses regarding the statistical significance of regime types, previously used alternative explanations and control variables on the incidence and level of governmental external support for secessionist movements.[27] We are particularly interested in comparing the central hypothesis—that democratic states are unlikely to lend support to a secessionist movement in another democracy—to the standard explanations of vulnerability and ethnic ties.

TABLE 4

External Support for Secessionist Movements, 1990–1992
Robust Regression and Logit Estimates, and Standard Errors

Variables	Level of External Support (Robust OLS)		Incidence of External Support (Robust Logit)	
	Coefficient	Rob. St. Err.	Coefficient	Rob. St. Err.
Regime characteristics				
Democratic dyad	−.374	.135***	−1.386	.647**
Autocratic dyad	.616	.422	.720	.499
Alternative explanations				
Vulnerability	.002	.070	−.112	.154
Ethnic affinity	−.167	.290	−.361	.536
Control variables				
Coop./confl. level	−.068	.024***	−.160	.051***
Contiguity	.450	.150***	1.459	.475***
Alliance	−.028	.088	.148	.209
Regime durability	.004	.004	.011	.008
Constant	.156	.317	−4.11	.906
N	385		385	
R-square (adjusted)	.07		.16	

***$p < .01$; **$p < .05$; *$p < .1$ (two-tailed test).

Due to a limited number of cases included in this study, these results will not be the last word on the external state support for secessionist claims, but we are hopeful that they will elicit the kind of response that will lead to fruitful cumulation in this research area.

To determine the relative impact of our independent variables on the likelihood of external support, the empirical analysis considers the individual impact of independent variables on the decision to lend external support to secessionist groups. This statistical method estimates the marginal impact of each variable independently, while holding all of the other variables constant.[28] To show the effect of one specific variable on the probability of external support, it must be compared to a baseline specification of the model. This allows for the estimation of the likelihood of external support in a standard dyad. The following step estimates how a certain deviation in one of the variables affects the typical, i.e., baseline, dyad. In this analysis, the baseline dyad is mixed, i.e., democracy-autocracy (the variables "democratic dyad" and "autocratic dyad" are both set at zero). Furthermore, the standard dyad is neither non-contiguous nor composed of allies, the level of cooperation/conflict between the dyad's members is neutral, the host state is not threatened by its own secessionist group, and there is no ethnic affinity between the intervening state and the secessionist group in the host state. Finally, the value of the durability of the host state's regime is set at its mean.[29] With these values and the coefficients from Table 4, the "marginal impact" technique assesses the probability that a typical dyad would experience external support for a secessionist movement. The baseline probability of such an occurrence is approximately .037, or a little less than four out of one hundred.[30] Next, the statistical value of one or more of the independent variables is changed to estimate the impact on the probability of external support induced by such a modification. The results of this statistical analysis are presented in Tables 5 and 6.[31]

A quick glance at the results reveals that they correspond well with both the "democratic regime" hypothesis and our reservations regarding standard explanations. Of the three independent variables tested, democratic dyads are the most likely to reduce the chance of external support. Interestingly, one of the non-significant independent variables—autocratic dyads—increases the probability of external support. The standard "vulnerability" and "ethnic ties" variables are insignificant and do not exert much influence on the propensity of external support. The results obtained for each of the independent variables are discussed below.

Democratic Bonds Strongly Reduce External Support to Secessionists

The central independent variable "regime type" (more precisely "democratic dyads"), is statistically significant (.006 level for the amount of

Table 5

Percentage Change in External Support for Secessionist Movements, 1990–1992
All variables at baseline value (mixed dyad, noncontiguous, no alliance, no grievance, regime durability of 25 years, neutral relationship and no ethnic affinity) except:

DEMOCRATIC DYADS equals 1	−74%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT LEVEL increased to its maximum (8.3)	−73%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT LEVEL increased by one standard deviation (3.9)	−45%
ETHNIC AFFINITY equals 1	−29%
VULNERABILITY equals 3 (issue important for most)	−28%
REGIME DURABILITY decreased to 0 years	−24%
ALLIANCE equals 1 (defense pact)	−35%
REGIME DURABILITY increased by one standard deviation (48 years)	+28%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT LEVEL decreased by one standard deviation (−3.9)	+80%
REGIME DURABILITY increased to its maximum (90 years)	+97%
AUTOCRATIC DYADS equals 1	+98%
CONTIGUITY equals 1	+283%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT LEVEL decreased to its minimum (−10)	+330%

support and .032 for the existence of support) and drastically reduces the probability of external support for secessionist groups. When this dummy variable is changed from its value of zero (meaning a case involving a mixed dyad) to a value of one (meaning a case involving a jointly democratic dyad), the likelihood of external support drops by 74 per cent from its original baseline rate.

These findings are clearly consistent with our first hypothesis that jointly democratic dyads inhibit the overt expression of external support for secessionist movements. In fact, with all other variables held at their baseline values, jointly democratic dyads reduce the likelihood of external support to approximately 10 cases out of one thousand.[32] Thus, secessionist movements evolving in Western democracies such as Québec, South Tyrol or the French Basque Country are very unlikely to receive support from democratic states. This variable boasts the most dramatic limiting effect on the propensity of external support, even more striking than a very strong cooperative relationship between two members of the same dyad (see discussion below). This result is even more noteworthy if we consider that at the baseline rate there is already a very low probability of external backing. Another way to interpret this result is to consider that external support is almost four times less likely to occur across jointly democratic dyads, all else remaining equal. In comparison, the positive marginal impact of another variable would need to reach a level of nearly +400 per cent to demonstrate an analogous reverse effect.

The statistical results do not demonstrate the same restraining influence from jointly autocratic dyads. On the contrary, jointly autocratic dyads appear to increase the likelihood of external assistance to secessionist movements, which tends to prove our second hypothesis. This shows that the normative relationship among democracies with regard to the issue of secessionist movements does not exist among autocracies. This implies that independentist groups evolving within autocracies, such as Cabindese (Angola), Papuans (Indonesia) and Tibetans (China), are more likely to be supported by foreign autocratic states, in comparison to the support Western secessionist movements can expect from democracies. The departure from the baseline model is an increase of 98 per cent, as the probability of external assistance goes up to over seven cases out of one hundred when the variable autocratic dyad is set at the value of one, all else remaining unchanged. This result must be interpreted with caution, since the variable is not statistically significant in the OLS and logit analyses (respective level of significance of .145 and .149 and a positive coefficient).

Alternative Explanations Perform Poorly

Table 4 shows the unexpected result that the more vulnerable governments are to their own secessionists, the more likely they are to assist secessionist groups in another state (hence the positive coefficient). This puzzling finding is not addressed here due to time and space constraints but should definitely be investigated in future studies that account for a much larger number of cases. The negative coefficient for level of support is more in line with traditional theoretical expectations. Nonetheless, the direction of the impact of vulnerability on external support cannot be assessed with authority. The variable does not exhibit statistical significance (levels of significance equal .467 and .977 for existence of support and level of assistance respectively). This is in line with previous findings by Saideman (1997, 2001 and 2002). In addition, when all other variables remain at their baseline value and "vulnerability" is at its maximum value (i.e., the secessionist issue is of the utmost importance in the intervening state), the likelihood of external support decreases by a mere 28 per cent (from a baseline of .037 to a proportion of .027 of the sample cases).

Results regarding cultural and religious ties between a foreign government and a secessionist community are just as insignificant. Ethnic ties impact negatively on the level and incidence of international support for a domestic ethnic group, but the variable does not exhibit statistical significance (.565 and .500 respectively). The existence of ethnic ties

between a foreign state and a dominated ethnic group in a host state even decreases the likelihood of assistance by 29 per cent (see Table 5). Once again, due to the lack of significance for these two variables, any interpretation of their impact on the likelihood of external support should be taken with a grain of salt. Yet, this should not conceal the fact that jointly democratic dyads have a much more powerful and significant impact on the level and probability of external assistance to secessionist groups.

Significant Impact: Contiguity and Level of Conflict

The control variables exhibit varying levels of statistical significance and influence on the dependent variables. Not surprisingly, external support is much more likely to occur across contiguous states (statistical significance of .002). The level of international assistance to an ethnic group is also more important across contiguous states (significance = .003). In addition, with all other variables at the baseline level, contiguity increases the odds of external support by an impressive 283 per cent. This result is second only to the impact of a maximum level of conflict between two members of a particular dyad. When the level of cooperation/conflict is set at -10 (i.e., military attack, clash or assault), all other variables being at baseline values, external support increases from an original probability of 3.7 per cent to a 16.1 per cent chance of external support (marginal impact of 330%). When the level of cooperation/conflict is reduced by one standard deviation (-3.9), the likelihood of external assistance increases by 80 per cent. The impact of a positive relationship between two states is not as salient as a high level of conflict. At the other end of the spectrum, a one-standard-deviation upsurge in the rate of cooperation $(+3.9)$ decreases the chances of external support by 45 per cent, while a maximum level of cooperation $(+8.3)$ lessens the odds of assistance by 73 per cent. It should also be noted that the variable is highly significant (.005 for the level of support and .002 for the existence of support).

Insignificant Impact: Alliances and Regime Durability

There is little evidence that international alliances and the host state's regime durability exercise any type of influence on the propensity of governments to lend assistance to foreign secessionist groups. Neither of these variables is statistically significant in the models and they have only minor impacts on the odds of external support for ethnic liberation movements.

Sensitivity Analysis

Table 6 illustrates additional sensitivity results. The first line of the table indicates the impact of the combination of jointly democratic dyads and

TABLE 6

Predicted Probability of External Support for Secessionist Movements, 1990–1992

All variables at baseline value (mixed dyad, noncontiguous, no alliance, no grievance, regime durability of 25 years, neutral relationship and no ethnic affinity) except:

BASELINE PROBABILITY	3.7%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT at maximum of +8.3 and DEMOCRATIC DYAD	.25%
CONTIGUITY and DEMOCRATIC DYAD	4%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT at minimum of −10 and CONTIGUITY	45%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT at minimum of −10 and CONTIGUITY and DEMOCRATIC DYAD	17%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT at maximum of +8.3, DEMOCRATIC DYAD and DEFENSE PACT	.17%
COOPERATION/CONFLICT at maximum of +8.3, DEMOCRATIC DYAD, DEFENSE PACT and CONTIGUITY	.71%

a good overall relationship between two states on the propensity of external support for secessionist claims. Under those circumstances, keeping all other variables at their baseline level, the odds of external support drop to a meager one case out of four hundred (for a percentage change of −93%). This situation describes the lack of support from the United States for the Basque secessionist movement in France. The next line of Table 6 shows how the strong positive impact of contiguity on external support has its opposite match in the jointly-democratic dyads variable. When both variables are set at a value of one (contiguous and jointly democratic dyads) in the sensitivity analysis, there is virtually no change from the baseline likelihood of external support for secessionist movements (4% vs. 3.7%). This result can be compared with the combination of contiguity and a highly belligerent overall relationship, where the probability of external support jumps to a striking 45 per cent (for an increase of 1109% from the baseline). The first situation corresponds to the Bulgarian non-support for the Kurds in Turkey; in contrast, the second case exemplifies Iraq's strong backing for the same secessionist group. In addition, the results of Table 6 show that even in a situation where the relationship between two contiguous states is volatile, the impact of democratization drastically lessens the likelihood of external support for secessionist organizations. Indeed, with the inclusion of a jointly democratic dyad in the equation, the likelihood of external support falls to 17 per cent from a previous level of 45 per cent (line 5 of Table 6). The above result indicates that, in light of all the recent controversy related to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by an American-led coalition, the movement towards a democratic Iraqi regime would dramatically reduce the prospect of Baghdad's assistance to the Kurds in Turkey.

The last two lines of Table 6 shed some light on the public policy aspect of this article. There is little that leaders can realistically do about their geographical co-habitation with other states, the durability of their regimes, their ethnic affinity with secessionist groups in other countries, or the vulnerability of other states to their own secessionist claims. However, they can develop a hospitable relationship with other countries. To achieve this goal, they can incite their counterparts to undertake democratic transitions, seek to maximize their level of cooperation with other nations, and create alliances. These are the best means to reduce external support to secessionist movements and to diminish, at the same time, the likelihood of interstate conflicts. The penultimate line of Table 6 suggests that when dyadic cooperation reaches its zenith, including a defense pact between two democratic states, the likelihood of external support for secessionist movements tumbles to its nadir (approximately one case out of five hundred). The last line of Table 6 shows how a neighbourly foreign policy negates the impact of contiguity on external support for secessionist groups. Under those circumstances, the odds of outside support remain minimal at .71 per cent, which constitutes a dramatic decrease from the baseline of 3.7 per cent.

Discussion

First and foremost, the baseline model reveals that there is a very low likelihood of external support for secessionists around the world (a predicted probability of approximately 4 per cent). We are thus discussing a phenomenon as rare as open armed conflicts. In their influential study of international conflicts, Russett and Oneal (2001: 08) estimate that the annual probability of a typical dyad to experience a military dispute is about six chances in one hundred. Nonetheless, when secessions occur, they constitute dramatic international events and we know that interstate conflicts sometimes arise over the treatment of ethnic minorities. It is therefore critical to better understand the factors that favour or prevent foreign intervention in domestic clashes. This is why our statistical results regarding the impact of jointly democratic states on the propensity to lend external support to secessionist groups give reason to be optimistic about the future. As the percentage of democratic states and, consequently, of jointly democratic dyads increases in the world polity, external support in domestic strife should diminish and, by extension, the externalization of a domestic conflict should eventually become an exceptional occurrence.

In addition, our results cast some serious doubts on the vulnerability and ethnic tie arguments. When it comes to the specific issue of whether or not to support a foreign group, domestic considerations, such

as a quarrel with one's own dissident group, are not as consequential as the overall level of cooperation/conflict between two states or a common belief in strong democratic institutions. It is especially true in cases where a highly confrontational relationship exists between two states. The results regarding ethnic affinity between a foreign government and a secessionist group are more puzzling. It makes a lot of sense to believe that a dominant group in one nation-state would lend support to their religious and/or linguistic "brothers" in another country, especially if the latter have expressed an overt desire for independence. Nonetheless, in this first direct statistical test of the impact of ethnic ties between a dominant or politically important foreign group and an ethnic minority seeking secession, we find no statistical evidence that such a relationship affects, in one way or another, the decision to assist secessionist movements. Until these relationships are tested on a less sensitive time period and with the inclusion of a much larger number of cases, it is not our contention that current research on vulnerability and ethnic ties should be abandoned. We do however offer the cautious claim that, on the basis of our statistical results, democratic brotherhood is thicker than blood kinship.

Policy Prescriptions

From a policy perspective, if government leaders are facing ethnic dissension, there are a few options open to them to avoid external support for secessionist movements. Building strong democratic institutions to allow internal self-determination for national minorities is one of those options. Democratic leaders are likely to perceive the effort of other democratic leaders to let their separatist dissidents voice their opinions and they will not, at least officially, intervene in other domestic polities. Avoiding open international dissension, or at least striving to maintain a civil relationship with other members of the international community, also goes a long way to inhibit external backing to domestic secessionist factions. Those are elements that government leaders can more or less control. The most important cause of external support is contiguity and, unless one is ready to seek the unrealistic objective of closing up a country's borders, there is little that can be done on this issue. However, the effects of contiguity can at least be alleviated by a strong level of cooperation with one's neighbours and the development of strong internal democratic institutions.

   As for leaders of secessionist movements seeking external support, this study implies that they have little chance of receiving such support from democratic states if they themselves live in a democratic host state. Thus, those who claim, for instance, that France would support Québec if the province tries to secede from Canada will be disappointed by these results. Moreover, secessionist leaders should not count too much on cul-

tural or ethnic affinities when looking for external support but would be well advised not to prejudge a state's attitude towards their claim on the basis of its own vulnerability. To stick with the same example, this means that France's internal vulnerability to the Basque separatist movement would probably not negatively influence its behaviour towards the issue of Québec secession, nor would cultural affinity be enough of a favourable condition for Paris to grant support for its secessionist cousins.

Conclusion

The main objective of this article was to evaluate the impact of dyadic regime types on the propensity for a foreign state to support a claim for secession. The findings are still preliminary, due to the limited time period of the study, but they lend credence to the regime type hypothesis. They are congruent with Gurr's contention that the energetic promotion of democratic institutions and ideology by Western democracies has a soothing effect on intercommunal conflicts (Gurr, 2000). They also cast some serious doubts on the theses of vulnerability and ethnic ties. Further research should focus on expanding the temporal domain of the cases. The findings of this article are limited by the period for which complete data were obtainable. It is as yet unclear what the effects of the fall of the Soviet Union are on external support for separatist groups given this short (1990 to 1992) period of study. The full impact of the end of the Cold War could be better evaluated if data were collected on cases occurring several years before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Furthermore, this article makes the implicit observation that external support may lead to the externalization of domestic conflict. This, also, deserves further investigation.

Notes

1 Secession is defined as: "the formal withdrawal from a central political authority by a member unit or units on the basis of a claim to independent sovereign status" (Wood, 1981: 110).

2 Cervenka argues that "since many are vulnerable to external incitement for secession it was obvious to most of the O.A.U. Members that a reciprocal respect for boundaries, and abstention from demands for their immediate revision, would be to their general advantage. In order to survive, weak African governments had to be assured of the recognition and respect for their sovereignty by neighboring states, as well as any other states in a position to undermine their authority and control" (1969: 232–33).

3 For an analysis of vulnerable states, see Saideman, 2001: 147.

4 Saideman analyzes 30 cases of highly vulnerable third states that intervened in three secessionist crises: the Congo, Nigeria and the Yugoslav conflict. His work demonstrates that among the 30 vulnerable states, at least 16 of them supported secessionist movements instead of central governments (Saideman, 2001: 65, 98 and 147).

5   To our knowledge the following studies constitute the exceptions: Saideman (2001b); Davis, Jaggers and Moore (1997); and Davis and Moore (1997).

6   Saideman (2001b) takes an important step toward our stated objectives by dealing with regime type. However, in contrast to our approach, Saideman studies regime types mainly from the perspective of secessionist movements and not in a dyadic fashion. He uses the regime type variable to suggest that in non-democratic regimes ethnic groups in general, and not specifically secessionist ones, "are more likely to receive broad and intense external support" (Saideman 2001b: 183). Our approach is different. We do not treat the democratic features of the host states and the intervening states separately but, rather, dyadically. We also believe that secessionist crises should not be confounded with ethnic conflicts since they do not have the same political implications.

7   The Charter of the United Nations mentions the right of self-determination. The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People clarified this right in 1960 (Heraclides, 1991).

8   Despite the harshness of that regime, states have occasionally departed from it by supporting secessionist movements (e.g., Belgium supported Katanga, India recognized Bangladesh, South Africa supported Biafra).

9   Alexis Heraclides (1991) summarizes these anti-secessionist norms. See also Richard Little (1975: 15–32).

10 It became evident in the early 1990s that the functional principle of sovereignty could no longer justify any action undertaken by central governments against their minorities. Atrocities committed in places like Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor pressured for the redefinition of the meaning of sovereignty. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) recently maintained that "Sovereignty implies a dual responsibility: externally—to respect the sovereignty of other states, and internally, to respect the dignity and basic rights of all the people within the state" (ICISS, 2001: 8).

11 Supreme Court of Canada. *Reference of the Supreme Court of Canada on Quebec Secession*, [1998], 2 S.C.R. 217. http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/csc-scc/en/pub/ 1998/vol2/html/1998scr2_0217.html (January 2004). See also James Crawford (1997).

12 It should be blatantly clear that our analysis is limited to groups seeking "political independence" (MAR variables AUTGR390 and AUTGR392), and that it does not include groups that are seeking a lesser goal of "widespread autonomy" (MAR variables AUTGR490 and AUTGR492). This may limit the number of cases we can include in our statistical analysis, but it is in line with our desire to study instances and levels of external support toward secessionism.

13 See Leeds and Davis (1999). For the original sources on Political Relevant International Environments see Maoz (1996, 1997).

14 The software can be downloaded at http://www.eugenesoftware.org/.

15 These major powers are China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Russia and the United States. For more on this selection, see Maoz (1996).

16 The dataset is available, on request, from the authors. Table 3 shows a list of cases where external support has taken place, as well as the level of support.

17 See the *Minorities at Risk Project*'s Web site at http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/ mar/. We would like to thank the officials of the MAR project for sending us the code sheets.

18 For a detailed explanation of the ten-point scale and to understand how scales are distributed in the dataset of the Minorities at Risk Project, see Gurr, Jaggers and Moore (1990).

19 It seems that there is a consensus on the "cut-off" point that separates democratic from non-democratic states. See Gowa (1999: 50) and Leeds (1999).

20 EUGene does not provide information on the level of democracy for Djibouti and Moldova for the years 1990–1992. Therefore, we had to refer to MAR's variables DEMOC 89 and DEMOC 94 (Polity 98), which provide the level of democracy of these two states for the years 1989 and 1994. In 1989 and 1994, the level for Djibouti's democracy was 0/10. Therefore, we conclude that Djibouti is not a democracy. Moldova is a more difficult case to classify. In 1989 it was not yet a country, since it was part of the Soviet Union and it only obtained its independence on 27 August 1991. However, in 1994, Moldova's level of democracy was 7/10. As a result, we infer that Moldova formed a democratic republic after its independence and we list it as such in our database.

21 A detailed explanation of the steps undertaken to construct this variable and the result of our investigation are available from the authors.

22 Leeds and Davis (1999) and Leeds (1999) show that pairs of democracies engage in more cooperative behaviours than other types of political dyads, and we were concerned with the possibility of a high correlation between our variable measuring the level of cooperation/conflict between pairs of countries and our dummy variable representing democratic dyads. In our dataset, the correlation between the two aforementioned variables is only .046. In fact, none of our variables are highly correlated with another variable; the highest correlation being −.37 between "democratic dyads" and "autocratic dyads."

23 More information on KEDS is available at http://www.ukans.edu/~keds.

24 On the general relationship between regime maturity and conflict participation and the debate surrounding this issue see Braumoeller (1997); Enterline (1996, 1998a, 1998b); Kozhmemiakin (1998); Mansfield and Snyder (1996, 1997); Maoz (1998); Oneal and Russett (1997); Rousseau (1997); Russett and Oneal (2001); Thompson and Tucker (1997a, 1997b); and Ward and Gleditsch (1998).

25 The variable is defined in the following way: "The number of years since the most recent regime change (defined by a three-point change in the POLITY score over a period of three years or less), the end of transition period defined by the lack of stable political institutions (denoted by a standardized authority score), or the year 1900, whichever came last. In calculating the DURABLE value, the first year during which a new (post-change) polity is established is coded as the baseline « year zero » (value = 0) and each subsequent year adds one to the value of DURABLE variable. Values are entered for all years beginning with the year 1950, all years prior to 1950 are blank" (Marshall and Jaggers, 2000: 15).

26 To control for heteroskedasticity across cases we made use of the Huber-White standard errors correction technique. We also controlled for selection biases, with different model specifications, but found that, for our models, the decision to give support to a group did not affect the intensity of support for an ethnic group. These results are available from the authors.

27 A level of statistical significance refers to how often one would uncover a positive or negative relationship between two variables in a sample if such a relationship did not exist in the full universe of cases. For instance, a level of significance of .01 means that there is one chance in one hundred that no relationship exists between our two variables.

28 This statistical technique is used in conjunction with the logistic model, but it could also be used with the ordinary least square specification. However, substantial interpretations with the latter would be meaningless.

29 In statistical terms the baseline model takes on the following values: democratic dyad = 0, autocratic dyad = 0, vulnerability = 0, ethnic affinity = 0, cooperation/conflict level = 0, contiguity = 0, alliance = 4 and regime durability = 25.

30 This value should not be confused with the actual percentage of instances of external support in our dataset, which is approximately 9 per cent.

31 In Table 5, the discussion of insignificant variables is considered, but the results must be interpreted carefully. Since it is not possible to tell whether a coefficient is different from zero, it opens the possibility that the marginal impact of the variable on external support is also zero. Hence, the interpretation of the marginal impact of insignificant variables is open to discussion.

32 This corresponds roughly to the proportion of external support across democratic dyads in our sample. These occur five times in our dataset (type of support indicated in parentheses): Austrian support for South Tyroleans in Italy (ideological encouragement), Turkish and Lithuanian aid to Chechens in Russia (nonmilitary financial assistance and ideological encouragement respectively), Bangladeshi assistance to Tripuras in India (military training in exile), and Russian cooperation with Slavs in Moldova (active combat units). In contrast, there are 11 cases of external support across autocratic dyads in our sample, and the level of support is generally more extensive. The complete results are shown in Table 3.

33 The cases of Bosnia, Cyprus and Macedonia were dropped due to missing data on external support. Some states, such as Indonesia, are facing more than a single secessionist group (Timorese and Papuans), while some groups, such as the Kurds, are seeking secession in more than one state (Turkey and Iraq).

34 The meaning of each of the 14 codes is listed in the MAR's codebook under the variable "external support."

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