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Minority Politics in Ethnofederal States: Cooperation, Autonomy or Secession?

by

Valerie Bunce

Abstract

Leaders of minority communities in multinational states have taken one of three positions when interacting with their central governments. They have accepted the institutional status quo; they have pressed for moderate changes, such as increased cultural and political autonomy; or they have demanded a state of their own. What explains this variation? The purpose of this paper is to develop an answer by comparing political dynamics from 1989-2003 in nine regions located within three postcommunist ethnofederations: Georgia (Southern Ossetia, Abkhazia and Adjara), Russia (Chechnya, Dagestan and Tatarstan) and Serbia-Montenegro (Kosovo, Montenegro and Vojvodina). Two conclusions are drawn. First, while many familiar economic, cultural and historical factors fail to explain differences across country and over time, two short-term political factors seem to be influential. One is variations in international support for minority leaders and their political agenda. The other is variations in the outcome of regional struggles for power once communism and the state unravel. As a result, in postcommunist ethnofederal states, increasing political competition creates a dilemma for new states in transition to democracy. While competition at the center seems to encourage democratization, competition in the regions threatens the state.

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The Importance of Minority Politics¹

Specialists in both comparative and international politics have devoted considerable attention to minority politics—for example, such issues as identity formation, the rise and impact of nationalist movements, the political consequences of institutional design in divided societies, the politics of secession, the sources of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation, and peace-making and democracy-building after internal wars. Scholarly preoccupation with such topics is not surprising. The vast majority of states in the international system are multinational and/or multi-religious, with many minorities in these settings sharing attributes that are widely-thought to politicize diversity and thereby provide significant challenges to the survival of both regimes and states—for instance, a history of tensions between minorities and majorities, territorial concentration of minority communities within states, asymmetric distributions of political power and socio-economic resources that favor some cultural communities over others, location of minorities on the perimeters of the state, and the existence of co-nationals in neighboring states (Horowitz, 1985; Brubaker, 1996; Bunce, 2006a, 1999b; Toft, 2003; Barany, 2002; Varsnhney, 2002).

What also seem to politicize diversity are two other conditions well-represented among countries around the globe: weak states that lack capacity to control borders, collect revenues and monopolize the use of violence, and authoritarian regimes that are giving way to more competitive orders, but in fragile political contexts where authoritarian rule had segmented cultural communities, played favorites among them, and used violence against some others (Beissinger, 2002; Bunce, 2006a, 1999b; Conversi, 1993). Indeed, it is in part because of the presence of both of these factors, combined with some of the variables mentioned earlier, that the American-led military intervention in Iraq has led to internal war (Bunce, 2006a; Diamond, 2004).

A second factor prompting widespread interest in minority issues among policy-makers, as well as scholars, is the widespread assumption that the stability of the international order rests in part on unchanging state boundaries. This is an argument, for example, that has been used to explain the “long peace” in Europe (at least its western half) during the Cold War (Gaddis, 1986). International stability is necessarily threatened when minorities reject existing state boundaries and either try to establish a state of their own or merge with a neighboring state. In either case, the usual consequence is both violent conflict between minorities and the state and the involvement of neighboring states in these conflicts. These dynamics often play out, because states are jealous of their territory (because they fear a “bank run,” lose access to vital resources, or fear that their neighbors will exploit the situation), and they have the military means to stop territorial leakage. In addition, fluid boundaries draw neighboring countries into the ruckus, because minorities tend to span state boundaries; because internal wars generate substantial refugee populations; and because both central governments and secessionist groups seek external allies to support their divergent political projects (see, for example, Jenne, 2006). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that secessionist regions are rarely recognized as states by dominant actors in the international system

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Yet another factor enhancing interest in minority politics is the changing character of war. It has been widely assumed that the end of the Cold War led to a sharp increase in intra-state wars, with most of these wars caused by conflicts between dominant cultural communities and other communities co-habiting the same state. However, both arguments are problematic. Internal wars have been in fact *the* dominant form of war since 1945, with the frequency of such conflicts relatively steady over the entire post-World War II period (Laitin and Fearon, 2003). At the same time, the relationship between internal wars and ethnic conflict needs to be more precisely-stated. While internal wars do not by any means always originate in tensions among nations sharing the same state, they nonetheless have a marked tendency to evolve over time into conflicts that play out along cultural lines (see, especially, Gagnon, 2005). Thus, what is important is less the causes of these wars than the nature of the war itself and its *politicization* of cultural difference. Also important is the fact that such wars, again in comparison with conflicts between states, are unusually long-lasting and unusually resistant to durable settlement (Walter, 2002; Hartzell, 1999; Hartzell, et.al., 2001).

Finally and not surprisingly, given these considerations, minority politics has become a central issue for American foreign policy—whether policy-makers have confronted this point directly or paid a price (as have the target populations) by overlooking its centrality. With the end of the Cold War, the end as well of a paralyzed Security Council in the United Nations, and growing American commitment to democracy promotion since the 1980s, the United States has become far more willing and able to intervene in the domestic politics of multinational states (see, especially, Bunce, 2006a; Finnemore, 2003). While the reasons behind American involvement in Bosnia, Serbia-Montenegro, Afghanistan and Iraq, together with smaller-scale engagements in Liberia and Haiti, have varied, the dilemmas posed by these interventions for American foreign policy-makers have been remarkably similar—and similarly intractable. How can viable states and democracies be constructed in multinational settings where inter-group trust is low, a history of democracy is virtually non-existent, and national minorities are shared among neighboring states, with most of those states weak and most of their regimes either authoritarian or hybrid (that is, featuring a mixture of democratic and authoritarian elements) (see Diamond, 2002; Schedler, 2002; Bunce, 2006a; Levitsky and Way, 2006)? The United States, moreover, is likely to revisit these problems in the future—not just because *all* of the interventions since 1995 have fallen short of their goals and thereby invited new pressures for subsequent actions, but also because it is in precisely these kinds of settings where terrorists can find both refuge and recruits. Moreover, in a purely statistical sense (given the composition of most states in the international system): the more willing the United States is to intervene abroad to promote its values and interests, the more likely it will have to confront—whether American policy-makers recognize this or not—the constraints imposed by heterogeneous cultural contexts that have been politicized.

The Puzzle of Minority-State Relations

The interest of both the scholarly and policy-making community in minority politics, therefore, is both ample and understandable. Despite the considerable literature on this issue, however, we still lack compelling answers to what is perhaps the most

fundamental question about the political behavior of minorities in relationship to the states in which they reside: *why* have minority leaders embraced such different political agendas, with variation in this instance present not just across multinational states, but also among regions within the same state and even over time (see, especially, Jenne, 2006). Put simply, what we see time and again throughout the world are three different trajectories. One is where leaders of minority communities accept the status quo, and another is where such leaders seek moderate changes, such as greater cultural and political autonomy and/or expanded representation in central-level political institutions. In both cases, state borders remain intact—though the pursuit of change often generates tensions between the state and minority communities.

However, there is a third option, and one that, while less common in practice, has nonetheless generated the most attention by both scholars and policy-makers, largely because of its destabilizing consequences for both states and international regions. Here, I refer to the secessionist option. Thus, leaders of minority communities can take the radical step of rejecting existing state borders and demanding a state of their own. Once embraced, secessionist demands have two common consequences. One is that they tend to lock into place, in part because struggles for political domination within minority regions have empowered coalitions that depend upon a radical political stance in order to stay in power, and in part because such demands are often both preceded and followed by actions on the part of the state and the international community that *increase* local grievances and thus local support for secessionist politics. For example, the central government can deploy military force to punish secessionist regions; the international community can provide weapons and signal support to these regions; or the international community can be too divided, given power and sovereignty concerns, to function as effective peace-makers. Whatever the dynamic, however, secessionist agendas, as a result, rarely moderate—as we see, for example, with Kosovo’s slow, but by now inevitable move towards independence; the outcome of the May, 2006 referendum in Montenegro, which has led to the creation of an independent Serbia and an independent Montenegro; and the continuing failure of Mikheil Saakashvili, the new President of Georgia who enjoys a substantial popular mandate, to bring Abkhazia and southern Ossetia—the two regions of Georgia most committed to independence-- back into the Georgian state. However, under exceptional circumstances, secessionist agendas can be defeated--if political leaders at the center have substantial military resources at their disposal, substantial domestic political support for aggressive interventions, and an international community that functions as bystanders to the carnage. This is the story, for example, of Chechnya and the Russian Federation—though it is unclear whether the “solution” to this very long conflict is merely a hiatus in the struggle or a fall-scale reintegration of this region into the Russian state.

Their variable origins aside, however, secessionist demands on states usually lead in the short-term to war. This is largely because of the peculiar calculus of states. As Ruth McVey (1984: 13) has succinctly summarized: “The nation-state clings above all to territory; one of its paradoxes is that, for all its stress on the people as its basis, it will give up population, but not land.”

There are, in addition, some further considerations that render these three scenarios of minority leader demands on the state even more puzzling. One is that minorities sharing the same state and, indeed, even sharing a number of other similarities

that would seem to predispose them to like behavior, seem to pursue, nonetheless, quite different political agendas. Why, for example, have some leaders of the Basque nation put forward more radical demands than their counterparts in Catalonia; why have the leaders of Chechnya embraced far more radical goals than the leaders of Tatarstan, also in the Russian Federation and sharing a number of similar characteristics; and why do we see such a clear contrast between the politics of Northern Ireland and the politics of Scotland (see Conversi, 1993; Medrano, 1995; McGarry and O’Leary, 2002; Moreno, 2001; Evangelista, 2002)?

Equally puzzling is that regional demands can change over time—whether or not there is a turnover in regional leadership. Here, the example of Montenegro is instructive. Once a firm ally of Serbia (the status quo option), the Montenegrin leadership split over this issue by the second half of the 1990s. A turnover in political leadership then led to a two-stage process of change, in which the first stage involved demands for greater autonomy within rump Yugoslavia and the second stage increasingly radical demands that by 2003 began to speak of independent statehood.

Most studies of minority-state relations, however, have not been designed to tease out the sources of variations—over time and across countries and regions—in minority leader demands on the state. By ignoring such variations with respect to both the object of study and the design of the research, scholars have generated a series of arguments about minority demands within multinational states that may very well be flawed—in terms of the variables identified and with respect to their applicability across time and space. As a result, studies of interactions between minority leaders and their states feature three types of problems. One is failure to specify what demands mean. As we know from detailed case studies of relations between minority regions and the central government, it is misleading to characterize the dynamic as one of minority *groups* making demands on the state (see, especially, Csergo, 2007; Gagnon, 2001, 2005). This framing is simply too aggregated to be of much analytical use; it often confuses the consequences of bargaining with its causes (for example, demands versus the conflicts that ensue); and it overlooks the fact that the key issue is interactions between two sets of political leaders: those who speak for minorities and those who speak for the central government.

A second problem in this literature is a version of parallel play. Thus, there is a considerable literature on all the issues related to the demands for and the establishment of autonomy, yet a quite separate literature that explores questions related to secession (compare, for example, Karklins, 1999; Kaufman, 2001; Csergo, 2007; Buchanan, 2004). There is little recognition, therefore, that both of these options are connected to one another—in the sense that they address the same overarching question of the political management of diversity and majority-minority relations, and in the sense that they are located, albeit in different places, along the same continuum of choice running from full support of the status quo to full rejection of the status quo.

Indeed, it is striking that most work on minority demands on the state has tended to privilege one option: secession. This is a problem in part because secessionist demands are in fact exceptional. Thus, like the work on revolutions, so the work on secession has tended to generate more theories than cases. In addition, secessionist demands are usually preceded by more moderate demands that for a variety of reasons have escalated over time—thereby rendering the analytical focus on secession both ahistorical and too limited in its temporal horizons to account for change. At the same time, the absence of variation

in the dependent variable—or the types of minority leader demands on the state-- clutters causality (as in Kaufman, 2001). How can we generate compelling explanations of secession without using alternative types of demands to help us pinpoint those factors that are particularly critical for the development of a secessionist dynamic?

There are some studies that have surmounted these deficiencies by comparing inter-ethnic cooperation versus conflict (see Evangelista, 2002; Alekseev and Troyakova, 1999; Fearon and Laitin, 1996; Cornell, 2001c, 2002; Toft, 2003). While illuminating, these studies have the common problem of focusing on only two of the three dynamics discussed above. In doing so and often for reasons of simplifying the decision tree, they tend to reduce minority positions to a dichotomous choice. In practice, this means that they often exclude one extreme, such as the absence of demands for change; the middle ground of pressing for moderate change; or collapse the two into one category, cooperation. Moreover, some of these studies have an additional problem. In treating states as the unit of analysis and engaging in inter-state comparisons of minority political processes, they leave the mistaken impressions that: 1) there is little variance within states; 2) the agenda of minority leaders is stable over time, and; 3) dynamics within minority regions are less important than “state-level variables.” These deficiencies are particularly costly when the analysis focuses on states where there are multiple minorities and where these minorities pursue in fact different political agendas (see, for example, Fearon and Laitin, 2003; and for critiques of the state focus, Varshney, 2002; Wilkinson, 2004; Medrano, 1995; Guibernau, 1995).

The deficiencies in both how we have conceptualized the issue at hand and how we have conducted our studies together mean that we know surprisingly little of a systematic nature about why minority leaders behave in different ways when interacting with the leaders of their central governments. To develop more compelling answers to these questions, we need to design studies that accomplish two objectives. First, they need to address the “triad” of possible minority leader demands—that is, decisions that support the status quo, press for greater autonomy, or call for independent statehood. Second, they need to recognize the “triple variation” in demand contexts—that is, regional, state-level and temporal differences.

The Design of this Study

The purpose of this monograph is to take these methodological concerns into account and thereby build a more compelling explanation of why minority leaders choose particular demands over others when interacting with their states.² In particular, I will compare the political demands of leaders in nine minority regions from 1989-2003³

² As noted earlier, it is critical to separate the issue of demands from reactions by the center and consequences for subsequent interactions, including violent conflict. However, it is fully recognized that minorities have multiple leaders, especially when authoritarian regimes are in transition. Thus, we are over-simplifying minority politics in this study (as will be recognized later in this monograph), and only a close reading of the literature on each case, as well as interviews conducted in the field, can identify who the dominant leader is and primary demand that is processed by the center.

³ The dates selected for this study reflect several considerations. First, while the focus is on post-independence Georgia, Russia and Serbia-Montenegro, the dynamics of center-regional bargaining begin as the Soviet and Yugoslav states begin to unravel at the end of the 1980s. Second, 2003 is a useful common endpoint, because relations between the center and the regions in both Georgia and Serbia-Montenegro

located in three postcommunist states: Georgia (Abkhazia, Adjara and southern Ossetia), Russia (Chechnya, Dagestan and Tatarstan)⁴ and Serbia-Montenegro (Kosovo, Montenegro and Vojvodina).⁵ These three countries and these nine regions (see Figure 1) were selected for study for several reasons. First, these three states share a number of commonalities that are widely recognized as influencing the politics of majority-minority relations in multinational states. These include, for example, a common regime past (or communism, in this instance) that took a distinctive ideological and institutional position on cultural diversity; recent establishment as sovereign states as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia (where they had all been republics); contested transitions from dictatorship to democracy; a majority nation; multiple minority communities exhibiting differences from the majority in language, religion and/or ethnicity; economic decline (even before internal wars, which broke out in all three states of interest); and nationally-differentiated incomes per capita. Most of these similarities, moreover, have one over-arching theme. They are widely-thought to provide an unusually supportive environment for the generation of secessionist political agendas (see, for instance, Bunce, 1999b; Gorenburg, 2003; Barany, 2002; Collier and Sambanis, 2005a, 2005b).

The Debates Over Ethnofederalism

There is, in addition, a final important similarity among these three states, and one that allows us to enter into a larger debate among scholars and policy-makers about the optimal design of institutions in divided societies—whether in the absence of internal war or in its aftermath. Georgia, Russia and Serbia-Montenegro are all ethnofederal states and, before independence in 1991, had been ethnofederal republics nested within the ethnofederal states of either Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union.⁶ Ethnofederalism is a particular form of federalism. Thus, added to the familiar defining characteristics of federalism—or states that include geographically-defined political subunits, with these subunits enjoying certain powers, rights and forms of representation independent of the center, while at the same time sharing certain powers with the central government—is a

change substantially over the course of these years in response to major changes in not just governments, but also regimes. In the discussion, however, I will bring in more recent developments.

⁴ The regions selected for both Serbia-Montenegro and Georgia are the only ethnically-defined subunits within these two ethnofederations. In the case of Russia, I selected three minority regions, each of which has identical administrative status in the federation and each of which represents one type of minority-state dynamic as detailed in the discussion that follows. While there are many examples of “cats that didn’t meow” in the Russian Federation, the case of Dagestan seemed to be an unusually important one, given its proximity to Chechnya and its many similarities with that rebellious republic, including extraordinary poverty and Islamic religious identity. Dagestan is also of interest, because it is the only case in the postcommunist region of a consociational polity.

⁵ The analysis that follows will also bring in, where helpful for analytical purposes, a fourth case from the region: Azerbaijan. While this state shares a number of similarities with the other three, including ethnofederalism, it was not treated in a systematic way because it features only one minority-defined subunit.

⁶ What we find, in short, is a long legacy of ethnofederalism that spans communism and postcommunism and the transition from a republic to independent statehood. Having ethnofederal institutions in place prior to short-term and dramatic changes in politics, such as regime and state transition, is critical for our purposes, because these institutions have already set the stage in many respects for secessionist politics—as I will elaborate in the discussion (and see Bunce and Watts, 2005).

national principle underlying some or all of the geographically-demarcated subunits comprising the state (and see Moreno, 2001). Thus, on the one hand, the logic behind ethnofederalism is the same as federalism; that is, a spatial division of the state that enables political subunits to exercise some of their own powers and, in the process, to enhance the quality of democracy by reducing the distance between government and citizens, lowering the ratio between representatives and citizenry, and limiting the powers of the center. However, ethnofederalism adds the argument that at least some of the subunits exist for the purpose of representing and empowering specific cultural communities. Ethnofederation, therefore, guarantees that some cultural communities sharing the same state will have at their disposal both geographical and institutional platforms for the expression of their interests and the exercise of political power (see, especially, Brubaker, 1996; Bunce, 1999b; Beissinger, 2002; Roeder, 2006; Roeder and Rothchild, 2005). In this sense, ethnofederalism is not just a type of federalism; it is also a type of power-sharing for divided societies, with the similar argument that political institutions must carry some guarantees of representation of cultural groups. Unlike the more familiar version, or consociationalism, however, ethnofederalism is a form of power-sharing that is geographical and vertical, rather than positional and horizontal (on these distinctions, see especially Roeder and Rothchild, 2005).

But why is ethnofederalism such an important factor to address in a study of minority interactions with the state? The answer leads to a contradiction that nonetheless highlights the importance of this institutional consideration. On the one hand, there is widespread agreement among both policy-makers and political scientists that a critical, if not the critical, factor shaping politics in multinational states (whether democracies, dictatorships or hybrid regimes, or whether relatively stable polities or polities emerging from war) is the institutional design of the state. While this can mean attention to both constitutions and electoral systems, this primarily refers to an overarching choice between a unitary state versus various forms of power-sharing and the consequences of that fundamental choice for relations among nations co-habiting the same state (see, for example, Bunce, 2006a, 2005, 2004b, 1999b; Roeder and Rothchild, 2005; Anderson, 2001; but see Vujacic, 2004). This seeming consensus about the importance of state design, however, obscures a fundamental divide. For some analysts, political leaders of divided societies and for most of the international community, the common argument is that power-sharing arrangements, including ethnofederation, promotes inter-group cooperation and political stability by legitimating and empowering cultural differences (Bajpai, 1997; Lijphart, 1996). However, there is growing evidence that the opposite is in fact the case. Ethnofederalism seems to generate a number of costs, including segmenting nations; kindling distrust among them; encouraging corruption; escalating tensions; and, more generally, producing unstable regimes that often fail to reproduce themselves over time (see, for example, Horowitz, 1985; Bunce, 2006a, 2005, 2004b, 1999b; Roeder and Rothchild, 2005; Roeder, 2006; Varshney, 2001, 2002; Gorenburg, 2003; Croissant, 1998; Petersen, 2001; Amelin, 2001; Cornell, 2001a, 2001c, 2002; Barany, 2002; Csergo, 2006; Melvin, 2000; ICG, 2001).⁷ As evidence, these analysts note that, just as the long-term costs of ethnofederalism are widely viewed as key reasons why the Yugoslav, Soviet and Czechoslovak states dissolved from 1991-1992, so ethnofederal states after

⁷ There are also differences of opinion regarding the economic costs and benefits of federal systems (see Weingast, 1998; Aslund, 1999).

communism seem to feature more problems with stability, inter-ethnic cooperation, and democratization than their unitary counterparts—even when the two sets of states are similar with respect to diversity, the age of the state, a history of inter-group conflict, and the like (see Bunce, 1999b; Bunce and Watts, 2005).

Thus, to explore variations in minority politics in ethnofederal states is to go to the heart of a heated debate over the costs and benefits of what Philip Roeder (2006; Roeder and Rothchild, 2005) has termed “segmented institutions” for multinational states. It is also to move the debate away from some broad-based and bipolar generalizations—for example, that ethnofederalism is either desirable or disastrous—to more nuanced understandings—for example, the conditions under which ethnofederalism has lower or higher costs. Indeed, the postcommunist world is an ideal place to explore these questions, given, for example, its unusually long history with ethnofederalism (the Bolsheviks, for example, were largely responsible for inventing this form of state in the 1920s); the cultural diversity of many of the region’s states (excepting, for example, Albania, Armenia and Poland); and regimes in transition.

Variation

The three states analyzed in this study and their nine regions also provide us with some important contrasts—again in areas that are deemed important for minority political behavior. For example, the Russians are more dominant in percentage terms than either the Georgians or especially the Serbs in their respective states; both Russia and Serbia, but not Georgia, served as the center of the old federations (though this was expressed in different institutional ways) and functioned, therefore, as the obvious target of nationalist mobilization as the state dissolved; and the Georgian opposition, far more than either their Serbian or Russian counterparts, mounted a large and sustained nationalist challenge to the old communist state. Just as important for analytical purposes are the variations among minority regions. Thus, the nine regions diverge from one another with respect to the size and geographical concentration of the titular nation; location within the state and the presence or absence of a diaspora community; their language, religion, and/or ethnicity as compared to the majority; economic development relative to the state average; and historical experiences, such as prior statehood and patterns of cooperation and conflict with the center (see, for example, Bunce, 1999b; Toft, 2003; Barany, 2002; Horowitz, 1985). The cases selected for this study, therefore, whether with reference to states or their federal units, allow us to assess in relatively rigorous fashion how a variety of variables affect bargaining dynamics.

This is particularly the case, given significant variation in the dependent variable: the preferences of regional political leaders.⁸ Various studies of these countries and

⁸ I am assuming here that the key issue is the preferences of minority leaders, not their followers. As a number of studies have suggested, it is not just that bargaining between the state and minority regions is between the leaders of each side (see, for example, Bunce, 1999b; Hechter, 1992), but also that what minority leaders demand—and how states respond—has far more to do with elite concerns about power, money and policy than with either their reading of what their followers and allies want or any commitment they might voice about representing their constituencies. Moreover, in at least some cases, the assumption that, because there are nationalist leaders, there must be a nationalist movement, can be misguided—an observation that reminds us once again of the importance of leaders, rather than “followers” (see Gagnon, 2005).

regions, together with forty interviews conducted by the author in both Serbia and Georgia in 2005, reveal examples of each of three types of minority leader preferences discussed earlier in this monograph.⁹ Thus, we find a number of examples of acceptance of prevailing political practices—which I term *status quo politics*. There are many reasons why this position materializes. It can reflect, for example, either satisfaction with existing arrangements or the absence of opportunities for change (see Jenne, 2006 on the latter in particular). Thus, local leaders can derive important benefits from cooperating with the center, especially when politics becomes more competitive, or highly repressive states can block both popular mobilization and empowerment of more radical local leaders. What can also prevent local challenges is a united center that offers limited room (or allies) for political maneuver in the regions, or the absence of international support for significant challenges to the status quo.

Less variable, however, are the consequences of cooperation. A status quo position is associated with peaceful relations between the center and the region. In this study, the status quo scenario captures regional-center dynamics in Dagestan throughout the entire period under study; Montenegro (1989-1997); and Vojvodina (1989-2000) (on these cases, see Chenciner, 1997; Devic, 2001; Jenne, 2003, 2006; Kisriev, 2000; Kerchov, et.al., 1990; “The Situation,” 2000; Walker, 2001; Ware and Kisriev, 1999, 2001; Ware, et.al, 2003; Aliev and Jusopova, 2000).¹⁰

A second situation is where regional leaders demand significant changes, while nonetheless accepting the existing borders of the state. These changes can include the establishment of greater economic, political and economic autonomy, and they can include (though this was less evident in the postcommunist cases, excepting Montenegro 1997-2003) increased representation of the titular nation at the center of the state. In our cases, these demands had a common consequence: relatively tense bargaining that threatened at times to escalate into the much more radical proposition of local sovereignty (but with sovereignty defined in ways that fell short, nonetheless, of a call for independence). I term this dynamic *reform*, because in every case there were demands for modest and sometime significant changes, but within the parameters of existing state borders. The cases that fit this characterization include Adjaria,¹¹ Montenegro (1997-

⁹ In the cases of interest in this study, the preferences of minority leaders seem to produce rather predictable political dynamics between the center and the regions. Thus, the status quo option produces cooperation; a reformist agenda produces compromise; and secessionist demands produce (less surprisingly) violent conflict.

¹⁰ The placement of Vojvodina from 1992-2000 in this category is somewhat debatable, since one can discern from 1990-1993 growing political support for increased regional autonomy (Jenne, 2003, 2006). However, in contrast to Jenne, I read the demands during this period (as opposed to what developed, beginning in 2000) as largely concerned with restoring the autonomy that had been in place from 1974 to the Serbian Party leadership takeover of Vojvodina in 1999. I do not see these demands, therefore, as either unprecedented or involving significant changes (see Devic, 2001). In addition, I see significantly greater continuity than does Jenne in the constraints on politics in Vojvodina from 1992 through the fall, 2000.

¹¹ In 2004, Adjaria was successfully reincorporated into the Georgian state—a development that reflected the fall from power of Shevardnadze and the victory of the liberal opposition in 2003, coupled with the subsequent willingness of Adjarians to mobilize against their long-serving and authoritarian regional leader (who had enjoyed the support of Shevardnadze, particularly as his power weakened and he needed allies). However, the terms of reintegration did not allow for virtually any regional autonomy. This sent a warning signal to the leaders of the two remaining culturally-defined regions of Georgia, where leaders had adopted a far more radical stance from the beginning and where wars, as a result, had been fought during the

2002), Vojvodina (2000-2003) and Tatarstan (see Guiliano, 2000; Graney, 1998, 1999; Kaplan, 1998; Isaev, 1998; Sagitova, 2001; Kondrashov, 2000; Derluguian, 1998, 2001c; Suny, 1999a, 1999b; Cerovic, 2001; Simic, 1997; “Politicheskii landshaft, “ 1996; Roeder, 2006; Jenne, 2006).

The final alternative is *secession*. This is where local minority leaders demand that the state give up their subunit, with the goal of either forming an independent state or joining a neighboring state (as with Kosovo and Albania at certain points and Nagorno-Karabagh and Armenia for a considerably longer period of time). In every one of these cases, not surprisingly, the result was a war between the center and forces representing the minority region. Until very recently, all of these situations led to a similar result: frozen conflicts that left these regions positioned between juridical independence and reintegration with the state (Lynch, 2004; King, 2001). Their limbo status reflected two developments. One was the unwillingness of the international community, in these situations as well as in most others since World War II, to recognize new states formed from popular rebellion (see Marshall and Gurr, 2003: 29). At the same time, their ambiguous status served the interests of not just regional leaders, but also some other actors as well. Thus, leaders of neighboring states and central-level leaders of the state in question colluded with regional leaders to exploit the opportunities for personal enrichment presented by porous boundaries and political and economic segmentation (King, 2001).¹² The secession cases¹³ in this study include Abkhazia, Chechnya, Kosovo and southern Ossetia, together with Nagorno-Karabagh in Azerbaijan (see Billingsley, 1997; Cornell, 2001 a,b,c; King, 2001a; Chrvonaya, 1994; Suny, 1999a, 1999b, 1994; Stefes, 2002; Lieven, 2000, 2001; Dale, 1993, 1996; Derluguian, 2001a, 2001b; Dunlop, 1998; Garb, 1998; Goltz, 2001; Jones, 1997; Fuller and Parish, 1997; Lapidus, 1998, 1999; Lieven, 1998; Evangelista, 2002; Croissant, 1998; Musabekov, 2001; Papazian, 2001; Saroyan, 1990, 1999; Duijzings, 2000; Judah, 2000; Pula, 2001; Gagnon, 2001, 2005; Malcolm, 1998; Prifti, 1999; Ula, 2001; Rupnik, 2000; Vickers, 1998; Poulton and Vickers, 1997; Kosovo’s Final Status, 2002).¹⁴

Our three-fold distinction among minority leader’s demands on the state is summarized in Table 1. Two important implications can be quickly drawn. First, these

transition to Georgian statehood. Moreover, considerable Russian involvement in both Abkhazia and southern Ossetia—for example, the distribution of Russian passports, financial assistance, and even in southern Ossetia the prominence of Russian Ossets in powerful political positions in that region--has also made their reintegration into Georgia far more difficult. At the same time, the Saakashvili regime is facing increasing demands for greater autonomy from the Armenian minority in Georgia.

¹² This dynamic—of purported enemies cooperating for purposes of rentseeking—is hardly unique to these cases. This is precisely what happened with Milosevic and Tudjman during the first half of the 1990s, when they cooperated with one another to carve up Bosnia.

¹³ Because this study ends in 2003, the shift to secessionist demands in Montenegro (at least by Djukanovic) will not be addressed in this study. However, it is important to recognize that the divisions in this republic over the question of independent were clear even in the May, 2006 referendum. Only fifty-four percent of the voters supported independence.

¹⁴ Kosovo presents more variation than the other cases. One can detect, for example, a more moderate period from 1993-1997 (Jenne, 2003). However, my reading is that Serbian repression, which was particularly marked from 1993-1997, masked what was widespread and growing support for independence—support which had begun to develop in the early 1980s. Here, I have been influenced by the analysis of Besnik Pula (2001) and by developments in Kosovo following Tito’s death and prior the dissolution of the Yugoslav state.

distinctions provide greater precision to the question at hand. The goal of this study is to account for status quo, reformist and secessionist demands. Second, these three options can be arrayed on a scale from less to more; that is, from no demands for change in minority relations with the state to moderate demands to the extreme position of contesting state borders.¹⁵ The ordinal nature of these categories is analytically useful, because it makes explanation both more difficult and more subtle. It is more difficult, because we cannot follow the common practice in comparative case analysis of locating causality in the presence or absence of certain factors. It is more subtle, because ordinal outcomes are best explained by variables that can also be expressed in an ordinal way; that is, in terms of less and more.

Hypotheses

What factors might account for variations in minority leader preferences? We can begin to answer this question by dividing the literature on minority politics into three explanatory families. The first targets characteristics of the state, the regime and the majority nation. Here, it can be suggested that certain kinds of state settings are more supportive of the development of secessionist minorities—for example, states that are ethnofederal, new, and weak; that have thin dominant nations that are combined with large minority populations with strong identities and access to institutional resources; and that are mountainous and therefore both more supportive of distinctive minority identities and more difficult for the center to control, whether in the present or the past (see Bunce, 1999b; Beissinger, 2002; Roeder, 1998, 2000; Toft, 2003; Cornell, 2001a, 2001c; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). On the regime side, a key issue seems to be the weakening of authoritarian rule and the likely rise, as a consequence, of both opportunities for political change and political competition (Bunce, 1999b; Conversi, 1993). At the same time, certain characteristics of the majority nation may lay some groundwork for minority mobilization—such as whether the majority pursues an assimilationist agenda (which can be hidden in language seeming to call for a civic definition of the nation—see McGarry and O’Leary, 2002) and whether the majority, because of its size or other considerations, is insecure and therefore jealous of its powers and suspicious of minority demands for political change.

In many ways, the argument here is a variant on the security dilemma (Posen, 1993; Lake and Rothchild, 1996; Fearon, 1998). Where majorities are mobilized, but insecure, their leaders tend to pursue policies with respect to minorities that are seen as both necessary and defensive in nature. In response, also insecure minorities can code the actions of the majority as both unnecessary and aggressive. Minority leaders then respond by engaging in behaviors that they also see as both necessary and defensive, but which majorities perceive as threatening. As a result, mutual insecurity leads to actions that are intended to be defensive and to increase security, but which have the opposite and related effects of appearing to the other side as aggressive actions that reduce their security. A spiral of conflict, therefore, is unleashed.

¹⁵ Just as interesting, though falling outside the parameters of this study, is another contrast that can also be arrayed on a continuum from less to more—in this case, from less to more conflict with the state.

A second family of arguments shifts our attention from the state and its dominant nation¹⁶ to characteristics of subunits and minorities. Here, there are a host of demographic, cultural, economic, geopolitical and historical factors. For example, it has been suggested that minorities will have more radical agendas, if they are large and geographically concentrated; if they have large diasporas in neighboring states; if they have strong identities, access to their own institutions and substantial representation in local political institutions; if they are richer or poorer than the majority (with these differences exacerbated by economic liberalization); and if they have a history of independent statehood or conflictual relations with the majority (see, for instance, Alekseev and Troyakova, 1999; Barany, 2002; Bunce, 1999b; Brubaker, 1996; Jenne, 2003, 2006; Toft, 2003; Cornell, 2001a, 2001c; Beissinger, 2002; Horowitz, 1985).

The final group of causes concentrates on short-term developments—though recognizing in most cases that these are joined with some long-term factors that together increase the likelihood of certain political scenarios. Such developments include outcomes of the struggle for power at the center and in the regions; whether minorities have lost key allies in the processes of both state dissolution and regime change; and whether the transition to both a (somewhat) more liberal political order and statehood has undermined economic performance, especially when the costs are nationally-differentiated. Thus, it has been suggested that minorities are more likely to pursue a radical course when the ideological composition of coalitions governing the center threaten the political security of coalitions governing the regions; when minorities have been abandoned by their former protectors in the larger state and, at the same time, are supported in their projects by rhetoric and weapons provided by outside actors; and when the economy of the state collapses and minorities in particular suffer the consequences (see, for instance, Horowitz, 1994; Jenne, 2003, 2006; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Bunce, 1999; Jenne, 2003; Hechter, 1992; Csergo, 2007; Suny, 1994, 1999a, 1999b; McGarry and O’Leary, 2002; Petersen, 2002; Hartzell, et.al., 2001; Robinson, 2001; Samuel, 2001; Gurr, 2000; Gorenburg, 1999, 2003; Fearon, 1998; Laitin, 1999a, 1999b; Chua, 2003). When combined, these and other arguments about the effects of short-term political and economic change share a common claim. With higher political stakes, malleable politics, insecure majorities and fearful minorities, the stage is set for radicalization of both minorities and majorities—and not necessarily in that sequence and certainly not in isolation from one another.

Before we turn to an assessment of these alternative explanations, several cautionary notes are in order. First, this study is shooting at a moving target. Minority political dynamics are inherently complex, and extreme care needs to be taken when assigning minority leader preferences, especially according to specific blocks of time. While this study is based upon both a large number of studies of these cases and interviews conducted in Georgia and Serbia in 2005 with various actors involved in these dynamics, this analysis is nonetheless based upon making some difficult coding decisions. What makes these decisions all the more problematic is that we are dealing not just with domestic orders in flux, but also an international system in flux. Indeed,

¹⁶ In this study, the dominant nation is both a numerical majority and the most powerful group within the state. However, these measures of dominance can diverge—for example, in states, such as Kazakhstan, where Kazakhs are the titular nation, but smaller in size than the Russians. Similar tensions between size and political power are present in a variety of other postcolonial states in the international system.

precisely for the latter reason, we terminate the study in 2003 (though bringing in more recent developments in the discussion). This is because, beginning in 2004, both the United States and the European Union broke with past practices when interacting with the states and regions of interest here and began to take some important steps in the direction of supporting—or at least tolerating—the possibility of independent states forming in Montenegro and Kosovo.¹⁷

We must also be careful about attributions of causality. It is one thing to show that some factors are more consistently related to our dependent variable, but quite another to draw the conclusions that: 1) these variables “explain” minority leader demands, and; 2) the remaining variables, lacking this consistent linkage, are irrelevant to minority politics. It is likely, of course, that the key factors that emerge from well-controlled comparisons, such as this one, do indeed play a key role. However, at the same time, one cannot assume that such factors constitute a “smoking gun.” In every study, important influences are overlooked, whether through ignorance or difficulties in measurement; there are likely many roads to the development of such complex scenarios as minority leader demands for secession, reform and the like; and the factors that “wash out” in the analysis, especially given the focus on such fluid political environments, may in fact play important roles in some cases, but not others. For example, as we will see below, Abkhazia and southern Ossetia in Georgia seemed to have been influenced by a few factors that were also in play in our other cases. However, it is fair to say that these two regions were in addition influenced by some factors that “failed” to demonstrate consistent impact across the entire group—for example, location on the perimeter of the state, the proximity of these two regions to Russia and its “problem area,” the Caucasus, and the loss in both instances of Russian protection and favoritism, once the Soviet Union unraveled and Georgia moved to independent statehood. Thus, our goal in this study is more modest than one of either asserting causality or the elimination of a host of causes. Instead, it is to identify in a very crowded theoretical field through a complex set of controlled comparisons a subset of factors that account in a consistent way for variations in what minority leaders demand from their states.

These observations remind us that the very logic of selecting Georgia, Serbia-Montenegro and Russia (together with references to Nagorno-Karabagh in Azerbaijan) was premised on two arguments—most obviously, that these cases allow us to control for a variety of causes, and, less obviously, that they share a number of characteristics that increase the likelihood that minorities will be tempted to challenge the status quo. Thus, controlling for such factors as territorially-concentrated minorities, who have access to substantial institutional resources, and political leaders who operate in an unusually fluid political context cannot eliminate these factors as having causal influence so much as help us isolate some variables that may, under these enabling conditions, either move minority leaders in the direction of accepting the status quo or encourage them to press for significant changes in the status quo.

Here, two additional considerations must be kept in mind. As noted above, there are a number of recent studies that demonstrate a linkage between ethnofederalism and

¹⁷ Strictly speaking, however, this step goes beyond the interests of this study—which is with the rise of secessionist agendas, rather than the less likely consequence of successful state formation. However, in the future, the formation of independent states in these two cases will provide further incentives for secessionist demands in other contexts. In this sense, international support is always critical.

other forms of power-sharing arrangements, on the one hand, and a pronounced tendency by minority leaders to escalate their demands for more autonomy from the state (see, for example, Brass, 1991; Roeder, 2006; Treisman, 2003; Bunce and Watts, 2005; Beissinger, 2002; Bunce, 1999b). This is one reason, for example, why all of the states in this study have had to contend with secessionist demands. This is also one reason why, more generally, such institutional arrangements have proven to be highly unstable, especially in the absence of an external guarantor—with the latter associated in turn with limitations on both sovereignty and democratic rule. The long history of power-sharing in Lebanon is a case in point (Zahar, 2005).

At the same time, the costs associated with ethnofederalism appear to be most pronounced when the transitions to independent statehood and/or democracy take place within a well-ensconced ethnofederal political context. It is precisely this combination of ethnofederal legacies and simultaneous transitions to both new regimes and states that differentiate, for example, the cases of Georgia, Serbia-Montenegro, Russia and Azerbaijan from two other ethnofederations that made seemingly similar transitions, but with different outcomes; that is, Spain and India. In Spain, the sequence was a long-established unitary state that became in the mid-1970s the site for a transition from dictatorship to democracy—a transition that subsequently led to some important political innovations, such as regional autonomies. In India, the transition to both independence and democratic transition took place simultaneously, as in the postcommunist cases, but in the different context (as in Spain) of a unitary institutional structure. Once the dual transition had progressed in India, however, a decision was made by Nehru and his allies to introduce linguistically-defined ethnofederation of the Indian state.

In both cases, therefore, the key point is that ethnofederation *followed*, rather than preceded the transitions to statehood and/or democracy. This is a sequence that invested in democratization and, in the case of India, state-building as well. This is because, in contrast to Georgia, Serbia-Montenegro, Russia and Azerbaijan, the struggle for democracy in India and Spain and for a sovereign state in India as well was far less segmented along national and regional lines; because reforms in the institutional structure of the state were crafted in ways that made autonomy conditional, among other things, on “good cases” for autonomy and clear commitment to both the state and a civic definition of the nation; and because both minorities and their leaders could argue that their situation improved over the past with respect to not just living within a democratic order, but also gaining in the process expanded legitimacy, autonomy and empowerment with respect to their cultural community in particular. By contrast, in our postcommunist ethnofederations, precisely the opposition situation played out. For example, ethnofederation segmented political projects and political alliances during the transition to democracy and statehood; sensitized many groups to the possibility of losing, rather than gaining legitimacy and power; and created both the resources and the incentives for some minority leaders at least to challenge both the new regime and state. Thus, ethnofederalism is particularly costly when it serves as the point of departure for the rise of both democracy and the state.

State-Level Similarities and Differences

With these considerations serving as a backdrop, let us now turn to the results of our comparison. On Table 2, I have provided a summary of plausible causal factors related to the first group of explanations; that is, those that highlight characteristics of the state and their dominant nations. Because of variations in minority preferences and minority-state bargaining both over time and within our three states, however, these factors are too fixed in character to provide much leverage with respect to explaining variations in minority leader demands on the state. That obvious point recognized, however, it is still useful to work briefly through these factors, if for no other reason than their centrality in many studies of both nationalism and secession.

As Table 2 indicates, the first eight factors are common to Georgia, Russia and Serbia-Montenegro, whereas the remaining factors listed on this table differentiate among these states. In all cases, however, the conclusion is the same. Whether we look at commonalities, such as regime transition, territorially compact minorities, and regional variation in income, or at differences, such as the existence of a majority nation's diaspora, the size and religion of the majority, the timing of nationalist mobilization, or an historical precedent of statehood, they fail to provide many insights into what we want to know: why minority leaders put forward different demands on the state. Just as striking is the seeming unimportance of a factor absent from Table 2. Russia is the only country in the postcommunist region that emerged from communism and from a larger state with an inclusive definition of citizenship in its constitution. This reflects, in part, the absence during the Gorbachev and Yel'tsin eras of an aggressive and assimilationist nationalism in Russia—in direct contrast, for example, to the nationalist tenor of Georgian politics from the second half of the 1980s (and even earlier, when circumstances permitted) through the mid-1990s (see Brudny, 1998, 2001 and Tishkov and Olcott, 1999; Vujacic, 1996, 2001 on the Russian case). However, this has not freed the Russian central government from combative (literally) relations with Chechnya, beginning with the first war launched by Russia in 1994. However, it is nonetheless interesting to note in passing that a much larger percentage of Russia's minority-defined regions have been cooperative with the center and that, after the turbulent politics of the first half of the 1990s and the evident weakening of the Russian state during that entire decade, Moscow's relations with its eighty-seven "subjects" has tended to improve somewhat over time—though this may reflect the signals provided by two wars in Chechnya and Putin's centralization of power and the reduced room, as a result, for local maneuver within the Russian Federation (see Lysenko, 1998; Koslov, 1998; Lanina and Chirikova, 1999; Fish, 2005; but see Stoner-Weiss, 2006).

Let us now turn to a more likely set of candidates: important characteristics of the subunits. Once again, however, a number of plausible explanations fail to help us differentiate in a consistent way among the dynamics represented in this study.

Demographic, Economic and Cultural Perspectives

In Tables 3 and 4, I compare the regions of interest according to a variety of variables. Let us turn, first, to demographic considerations (Table 3). If the relative size of the minority within the subunit were critical, with the assumption that larger minorities

are more likely to rebel than smaller ones, then we should see similar scenarios for Vojvodina and Abkhazia—two republics in Serbia-Montenegro and Georgia, respectively, where the titular nation is in fact unusually small (less than twenty percent of the subunit's population at the time of transition) in comparison with the other republics in our group, and, just as importantly, where the largest nation within the republic is the majority nation of the state (with Serbs an absolute majority within Vojvodina and Georgians, until the war, comprising nearly a majority in Abkhazia). However, Vojvodina is an example of status quo politics (though it moves eventually into the reform camp), whereas Abkhazia is an example of secession—from the beginning of our analysis to its end (and continuing after the fall of Shevardnadze, in part because of Russian support, including the provision of Russian passports to residents within Abkhazia, as well as southern Ossetia). Despite their similarities with respect to size, however, these two regions occupy nonetheless the opposite ends of the bargaining continuum.

However, before we dismiss this factor, we need to look at the opposite situation; that is, where the titular nation is an easy majority. Here, we find three of our four conflict cases; that is, Kosovo (where Albanians constituted approximately eighty percent of the population prior to the 1991-1995 wars of Yugoslav dissolution), Chechnya (where Chechens comprised seventy percent of the population—a situation that is quite unusual for the ethnically-defined Russian republics, regions and oblasts), and southern Ossetia (where Ossets have constituted approximately sixty-six percent of the population). In addition, this pattern is repeated in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan, where Armenians comprised about seventy-five percent of the population before the outbreak of war. Finally, it is interesting to note, especially in view of limited regional challenges to the Russian institutional status quo, that virtually all of the minority-defined republics and oblasts in the Russian Federation—with the glaring exception of Chechnya—feature in fact titular minorities that comprise a minority of the subunit's populations. This unusual pattern is testimony, among other things, to the use of boundaries during Soviet rule to enhance Russian domination in the Soviet heartland by giving the appearance, not the reality of minority empowerment; by fragmenting larger minority communities; and, more generally, by multiplying the number of subunits and thereby making coalitions among them harder to forge.

At the very least, then, it can be suggested that, while minority size does not guarantee conflict (as Abkhazia reminds us) and while it is, arguably, misplaced arrogance for social scientists to use the term, “guarantee,” large titular minorities may in fact increase the likelihood of secessionist politics. For this to happen, however, it would seem to be helpful for other factors to be added to the equation. These can include, for example, increased insecurity on the part of both minorities and majorities in the context of regime and state transitions, and the absence of international pressures on majorities to be more inclusive in their politics.¹⁸ Also important is ethnofederalism. Here, it is interesting to bring in another set of cases from the postcommunist region: Estonia and

¹⁸ Here, it is interesting to note that the titular nations of both Adjara and Montenegro dominate their republics in numerical terms, and that their leaders did become more radical in their goals over time. However, both of these cases are distinctive in featuring unusually small cultural differences between titular minorities and the state's majority population. Thus, many Montenegrins consider themselves Serbian, just as most Adjars identify as Georgians.

Latvia. In both of these states, the Russian minority is quite large and, in the early years of the transition to democracy and statehood, was often resentful of discriminatory citizenship policies and economic opportunities. However, pressures from the European Union—which were unusually influential, given the perceived benefits for Latvia and Estonia of accession to the EU—nudged laws about citizenship in a more egalitarian direction and, more generally, invested in more cooperative relations between titular nations and the Russian minority (see Bunce and Watts, 2005; Vachudova, 2005).

Perhaps the most striking finding on Table 3 (column 2), however, is that economic differences fail to have any clear relationship with minority leader preferences—an argument which would also hold, if we were to add to the factors listed on Table 3 the impact of economic reforms (as suggested by Chua, 2003) and regional differences in the impact of economic decline (with economic decline, we must remember, a constant for all our states).. It has been argued, on the one hand, that richer republics or regions are more likely to defect from the state—largely because they have subsidized other units within the state and because they are well-positioned to construct a viable state. On the other hand, it has been suggested that poorer areas attribute their condition to exploitation and, at the very least, have a longstanding set of grievances against the center (see Horowitz, 1985, 1994; Medrano, 1995; and Jenne, 2003 on both perspectives). However, the economic development of the republic relative to the state as a whole does not predict behavior in our cases. For example, to focus on the conflict dyads, Chechnya and Kosovo are unusually poor, whereas Abkhazia and southern Ossetia, by the standards of their states, are unusually rich. Similarly, in the “reformist” camp, Tatarstan and Adjara are above their state average, whereas Montenegro is somewhat below the state average. Finally, even within the category of supporting the status quo we find economic extremes. While Vojvodina is the richest part of Serbia-Montenegro, Dagestan is (along with Chechnya) the poorest republic within the Russian Federation.

The failure of economic factors to shed some light on our patterns, however, is not so surprising. One problem is that economic factors may work in different ways in different places—as the competing theories about economic influence imply. Moreover, we must remember that, while economic factors figure prominently in both theories of minority politics and majority-minority relations, as well as studies of individual cases, they seem to fare less well in both quantitative studies and in more controlled, multiple case comparisons (compare, for example, Chua, 2003; Herring, 2001 versus Ballentine and Sherman, 2003; Collier and Sambanis, 2005a; Roeder, 2006). Indeed, economic considerations were not very helpful in explaining, for example, inter-republican variations in the nationalist mobilizations that led to the dissolution of the Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak states from the mid-1980s to 1992 (Bunce, 1999b; Beissinger, 2002; but see Youngs, 2004 on other cases).

A variety of cultural and geographical arguments (represented in columns 3-7 on Table 3) also seem limited in their differentiating power—in particular, cultural cleavages between the majority and the minority with respect to language, ethnicity and religion; whether the minority has a significant diaspora population; and whether the minority is a majority in a neighboring state (Brubaker, 1996; Laitin, 1999a, 1999b; Lake and Rothchild, 1998). For example, the titular nation in both Kosovo and Tatarstan (as in Abkhazia, Chechnya, Dagestan, and Vojvodina) is different from the state’s majority

nation in language and religion, yet secession emerges in the first case and reform in the second. Moreover, the remaining cases exhibit no clear pattern. In southern Ossetia, the key distinction is language; in Adjara it is religion; and in Montenegro it is neither language nor religion—though under the banner of autonomy, Montenegro did recently establish its southwestern dialect of Serbian as the official language and re-establish a Montenegrin Orthodox Church, which had been eliminated in 1920 in deference to the Serbian Orthodox Church.

At the same time, while southern Ossetia, Kosovo and Chechnya (all secessionist cases) have significant diasporas outside the republic, as does Nagorno-Karabakh, the same is also the case for Dagestan—an example of status quo politics—and even more so for Tatarstan—an example of reform throughout the entire period of this study. In fact, in the final case the diaspora is unusually large. Tatars are the largest minority within Russia; only twenty-five percent of all Tatars live in Tatarstan; and, even more striking, more than a million Tatars (more than in Tatarstan) reside in neighboring Bashkortostan, where they significantly outnumber the titular nation, the Bashkirs. Finally, representation as a majority in a neighboring state or republic within that neighboring state does not help us differentiate between the cases of Kosovo (Albania) and southern Ossetia (northern Ossetia in Russia) versus Vojvodina (Hungary). Thus, just as with the demographic and economic variables, so the cultural variables are not particularly helpful in differentiating among our three types of minority leader preferences.

Geopolitical and Historical Considerations

It has been argued that regions are far more likely to secede when they are located on the periphery of the state (see column 1 on Table 4). This is a common observation, for example, in comparative studies of the Russian Federation (see, especially, the analyses in Alexseev, 1999; Graney, 1998; McAuley, 1997). What is striking about our cases, however, is that, while all five secessionist regions (bringing Nagorno-Karabagh into the picture) are located on the borders of the state (though with corridors in many cases populated by either the majority, or, as with Nagorno-Karabakh, another minority, the Kurds), the same is also true of an additional four cases. Tatarstan is the only example in our group of a minority-defined region that is fully enclosed by the state—a factor that no doubt helped temper some demands in this specific case, but that lacks broader applicability. However, what is puzzling about Tatarstan, given its location, is how radical Shaimiev's demands were (bordering, for example, on secession, given his talk of "sovereignty") and how successful he was in bargaining with Moscow and carving out significant autonomy for his region (Roeder, 2006).

On Table 4, I have also assessed several historical factors, predating the state socialist period, that might explain the differences among our cases (though if they do, they open up the problem of how such factors managed to be influential over long periods of time). The first variable (column 2) is whether the region's incorporation into the state was violent or peaceful. In our cases, there are only two peaceful examples—Vojvodina and Montenegro. By contrast, *all* the remaining regions were violent—though both Kosovo and especially Chechnya were unusually so, with resistance continuing on and off through both the pre-communist and communist eras. In column 3 on Table 1, I compare the timing of incorporation into the state. Here, the extremes are represented by

Montenegro, which joined also independent Serbia in forming, along with some imperial remnants of both the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires, the Yugoslav state at the end of World War I and, second, Tatarstan, which has been part of Russia for hundreds of years. Both of these cases are examples of the reform scenario.

Yet another factor highlighted on Table 4 is whether the republic was once a state—an argument that has been used to explain, for instance, the early appearance of Baltic protests during the Gorbachev period and the strong commitment of the Baltic peoples to independent statehood. The problem here is that there are only two examples of independent statehood in our group: Tatarstan (albeit before the Western concept of the state made its appearance and with such different boundaries that the state legacy claim is weak) and Montenegro. What is puzzling about this pattern is that statehood should, in theory, predict secession, not reformist, let alone status quo politics. However, it is also important to recognize that by 2004, key parts of the Montenegrin political leadership (though in the absence of easy majoritarian support by Montenegrin citizens) embraced a secessionist position. Their stance, however, may reflect far more growing competition for power within the republic; the momentum in support of secession that grew as a result of earlier support for such a position on the part of the West; and the institutional logic of an independent Montenegro. After all, Montenegro is the only “region” in our group of nine (or ten, if we add Nagorno-Karabagh) that had been a full-fledged republic during the communist era, rather than a subunit within a republic. In this sense, until the pivotal referendum in May, 2006, Montenegro could be characterized as the final republican holdout to the dissolution of the Yugoslav, Soviet and Czechoslovak states into their republican parts from 1991-1992.

Historical Factors During the Socialist Era

It is far easier to construct a line of explanation for variations in minority leader demands on the state, if we focus on more recent historical developments—in our case, political developments during the communist period. Here, four factors emerge as plausible ways to distinguish among our cases. One is whether the center was allied with the subunit against the republic, with the result that any weakening of the center and any strengthening of the republic would be viewed as threatening by the subunit (see column 4 on Table 4). This dynamic, plus an aggressive nationalism on the part of the dominant nation, has been analyzed as a problem of credible commitment (see Fearon, 1998). This argument seems to have some explanatory power in the case of the Yugoslav dissolution and in two of the cases of concern here—Georgia and Serbia-Montenegro. For example, it is evident that during the Soviet period, Moscow, ever-concerned about Georgian nationalism, allied with Abkhazia and southern Ossetia against Georgia. At the same time, while Tito was alive, unrest in Kosovo, while suppressed militarily (though less violently than was the case after Tito died) was followed by expanded cultural rights, educational opportunities, economic subsidies and Albanian representation in political posts. Many members of the Serbian political leadership considered this threatening, which in some ways was precisely Tito’s goal, not just when introducing these policies, but also in fashioning the 1974 Constitution, which enhanced the power of Kosovo close to the level of a republic, as opposed to a province. Indeed, Tito had also used other pretexts, such as the rise of Croatian nationalism in the early 1970s, to discipline the

Serbs and thereby limit their power as the largest of the Yugoslav nations and as the group most over-represented in the officer corps of the Yugoslav National Army and the Secret Police.

When Tito died in 1980 and later in the decade, when both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia began to unravel, these regions lost their protector—while gaining an enemy, or Serbia and Georgia, respectively. Many Serbs and Georgians were resentful, given the perception that their nation had been discriminated against while the minority region had been favored. At the same time, the leaders of these two new states, Milosevic and Gamsakhurdia, were quite powerful, because of statehood and because they played successfully to resentments among Serbian and Georgian elites and intellectuals.¹⁹

All that said, however, this line of argument seems to be less useful for the Russian case. Chechnya had no protector and, indeed, resisted Moscow's control, whether during Russian or Soviet imperial times. Moreover, powerful political and economic posts within this republic went to the Russians—even though they were a minority of the population. This was in sharp contrast to Abkhazia and southern Ossetia in particular.

A second factor, which highlights institutional resources as well as favorable or unfavorable comparisons with other groups sharing the republic and later state, is *where* the subunits were located within the institutional hierarchy of the ethnofederal communist states (column 5 on Table 4). This is an argument that was mentioned in passing in the discussion above of Montenegro as a republic that moved more slowly than the others to independence.

The institutional distinction prompts two related arguments. One is that nations without institutional status and nations with institutional status, but lower in the hierarchy, are less likely to demand independent statehood and will press, instead, for higher status and/or greater autonomy. This argument, for example, helps explain patterns of secession at the end of the communist era, when the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia unraveled, and, later, in the successor state of the Russian Federation (see Bunce, 1999b; Beissinger, 2002; Treisman, 1997; Barany, 2002). At the same time, it can be argued that having the highest category within the federation—for example, republican as opposed to provincial status within Yugoslavia—might tempt local leaders in a climate of change and growing insecurity to carry their autonomy one step further. This logic, once again, played out earlier in patterns of nationalist mobilization in the dissolution of the Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak states.

If we look at the final column on Table 4, however, we do not find a clear pattern. All nine of our regions, of course, had institutional identity during communism—which suggests that such identities and institutional resources are better understood as helpful, but far from sufficient conditions for mobilization against the state. The rebellious behavior of the Russian minority in the Crimea in Ukraine and in Transnistria in Moldova also points to the limits of a purely institutional account—or, for that matter, a purely

¹⁹ The Serbian case is more complex, not just because Milosevic was a communist, whereas Gamsakhurdia was an intellectual defying the party, but also because Milosevic in fact represented a position mid way between the extremes of rejecting a nationalist agenda (as did his predecessor, mentor and eventual victim, Stambolic), and embracing an aggressive, if not fascist nationalist agenda (Seselj). Moreover, the nationalist following of Milosevic has been exaggerated, whereas his success in demobilizing the liberal opposition—a key to his consolidation of political power—has been ignored (see Gagnon, 2005).

domestic account. For example, it is striking how important Russian help was for encouraging the nationalist revolts in both the Crimea and Transnistria. Also striking is that, in comparison with the regions of interest in this study, the crisis in the Crimea in particular was surprisingly amenable to resolution—an argument that again reminds us of the costs of ethnofederalism for safe-guarding state boundaries (Bunce and Watts, 2005).²⁰

At the same time, the propensity of minorities to rebel does not correlate with their position in the administrative hierarchy of the communist era. For example, Montenegro is the only case of a region that had republican status during the communist period, and Abkhazia, Vojvodina and Kosovo were all of lower status than the remaining subunits in our group (although how one reads both Vojvodina and Kosovo is complicated by how one interprets the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution).

A related factor is whether there were changes during the communist period in administrative status (column 5 on Table 4). Given the importance of such status for cultural rights, political power and access to economic resources, all of which were critical for bargaining between regions, on the one hand, and the republic and the center before 1991 and, after that, the new state, it can be suggested that a downgrading of such status would correlate with subsequent mobilization against the successor state. However, this hypothesis does not hold. While the status of Montenegro remained constant (as did Nagorno-Karabakh) and the status of both Abkhazia and Chechnya were downgraded (which prompted in both cases considerable lobbying at the center to return to the earlier designation), the status of Kosovo, Vojvodina, and southern Ossetia were upgraded over the course of communist rule. Again, the cases do not array themselves in a pattern that would account for variable minority leader preferences.

Finally, there is the question of representation and power. It was commonly asserted by the communist party leaders of the Soviet and Yugoslav ethnofederations that the administrative design of the state was premised upon the commitment to promoting representation of minorities in important political and economic posts. However, the commitment to “korenizatsiia” (nativization of cadres) varied over time, across country and within country. For example, in the post-Stalinist era in the Soviet Union, it became common practice for the first secretaries of the republic to come from the titular nation. By contrast, following the crisis in Croatia in the early 1970s in Yugoslavia, the representation of Croats within the Croatian political leadership declined significantly—to the advantage of the Serbs. The Serbs were also over-represented, as noted earlier, in the Secret Police and the Yugoslav National Army. Similarly, in the Soviet Union, the upper reaches of the party apparatus and the military were dominated by Russians.

There are good reasons to posit that representation of the subunit’s titular nation in important economic and political posts during the communist era would shape the subsequent behavior of the subunit when both the regime and the state unraveled. One can imagine, in particular, two contrasting lines of argument. On the one hand, it can be suggested that under-representation would generate accumulated grievances, especially if

²⁰ This does not mean, however, that the Crimea, with its majority Russian population, does not continue to pose problems for Ukrainian politics. It was this area, in combination with the Donbas region, for example, that provided substantial support to Yanukovych during the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections. In fact, once the official outcomes of the election were challenged, leaders of both regions were quick to hint at secession.

the beneficiaries of this asymmetry were from the republic's titular nation and especially if this asymmetry was built upon a history of long term conflict and violent incorporation of the area into the state. On the other hand, over-representation of the minority would produce resentment on the part of other nations within the subunit—a particularly explosive situation if those disadvantaged were from the republic's titular nation. Moreover, such over-representation would have another consequence that could, logically, lead to conflict. The titular nation of the subunit—and its leaders in particular—would have substantial resources for mobilization against the republic, and would be very inclined to do so, if as with state dismemberment, they faced the unhappy prospects of losing their patron and, thus, their privileged position, while being blocked from upward political advancement within the new state. At risk, therefore, was a change in local hierarchies, the importance of which has been examined in other contexts by Roger Petersen (2002).

The patterns in our data, however, do not support either set of arguments. While the titular nation was over-represented both politically and economically in some of our conflict cases (Abkhazia and southern Ossetia), it was under-represented—indeed, significantly so-- in others (as in Chechnya and in Kosovo, excepting improved representation in the latter during the second half of the 1970s). In addition, whereas in Dagestan and Tatarstan, representation in important economic and political posts during the communist era seems to have come relatively close to the ethnic distribution of the population, in Adjara and Montenegro the titular nation seems to have been somewhat over-represented. In the case of Vojvodina, there is some evidence to suggest that the Hungarian minority was somewhat under-represented in politics, but over-represented in the economic realm. Indeed, aside from the Slovenes, the Hungarians were the richest ethnic group within Yugoslavia—even richer than the Croats (see Mertus, 1999).

Political Struggles During the Transition

In Table 5, I have listed four factors that focus on political dynamics during the transition from state socialism and to independent statehood. In column one, I compare patterns of nationalist mobilization by the titular nation of the republic. It is striking how in all three of our states, the weakening of their former states was accompanied by the rise of nationalist elites at the republican level—a pattern that cannot be generalized for all the republics that made up Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union. Indeed, it is fair to argue that Georgian, Russian and Serbian leaders played a key role in the dissolution of these two states. The first secessionist constitution in Yugoslavia, for instance, was crafted not in Slovenia or Croatia, but, rather, in Serbia—Milosevic's rhetorical attacks on these “hostile” regions and his verbal support for the Yugoslav state notwithstanding. However, if our interest is with explaining variation within states, the comparisons drawn in column one provide little purchase.

The same can be said, moreover, if we shift our attention from the rise of majority nationalism in the republics to the rise of minority nationalism in the regions. It is true that national identities and an agenda of reducing external control over the region were both early developments in all of the secessionist cases. For example, in 1964 and 1965, the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh sent a petition to Khrushchev and Brezhnev, respectively, criticizing Azerbaijani rule and requesting a merger with Armenia.

However, the remaining cases of status quo and reformist demands fail to arrange themselves in a systematic way, once we focus on temporal patterns in the development of nationalist protest.

This leads to column two on Table 5, where the focus is on the struggle for political power at the center when the Soviet and Yugoslav states and regimes began to dissolve. Here, our three states provide three alternative outcomes—continued power, until the watershed Serbian presidential elections of 2000, of the ex-communists in Serbia, a mixed case in Russia (where victorious forces included both ex-communists and the opposition and where the ex-communists at certain points in the 1990s and consistently thereafter played a central role in the Parliament and also served as President), and the rise to power of the nationalist, non-communists in Georgia, followed by a mixture of the two groups, once Shevardnadze returned to power (which has been followed, since the parliamentary elections of late 2003 and the presidential election of early 2004, by the rise to power of the Georgian liberal opposition). It is not surprising that these differences in struggles between nationalists, communists and various combinations of the two are not very helpful for our purposes. They can hardly account for the variable demands on the state extended by regional political leaders—though they do, it must be admitted, say something about why all of these ethnofederal states faced secessionist pressures during regime and state transition.

In the remaining two columns on Table 5, however, we finally find some factors that seem to go much further in *differentiating* in a systematic way among our three bargaining trajectories. One such factor is the availability of international support for secessionist demands on the state (see Jenne, 2003, 2006; Laitin, 1999a; Hechter, 1992; Bunce and Watts, 2005). Here, we can note, for example, Russian support of Abkhaz and southern Ossetian secessionists (which has, if anything, increased following the fall of Shevardnadze in 2003); Albanian support of Kosovar Albanians (though partially passive, given leakage of arms across a common border, beginning in 1997), together with the NATO bombing campaign in 1999; support from a variety of quarters outside Russia for the Chechens; and, finally, Armenia's involvement, beginning during the Gorbachev era in the secessionist politics of Nagorno-Karabakh and the important role as well of Russia in this conflict, again dating from the Gorbachev era and continuing to the present (and helped by the role of Armenia as the last fully obedient ally of Russia in the Caucasus). The role of international support can be seen most clearly, however, when we track changes in Montenegro.

While Montenegro, like Vojvodina and Kosovo, was taken over by the Serbian party leadership on the eve of the end of Yugoslavia, groups within Montenegro—despite the deep cultural ties of this republic to Serbia—were nonetheless somewhat divided over their alliance with Serbia. Two issues were of concern—Serbia's attacks on Bosnia and then Kosovo and the Serbian leadership's resistance to economic and political reforms. In 1997, Milo Djukanovic, an ex-communist, was elected president on a platform involving commitment to reform, greater political and economic autonomy from Serbia, and peace within the region. As a means of expanding his own power in a highly competitive political environment, Djukanovic reached out to the West—which was only too glad to respond, since Djukanovic was widely viewed as a useful ally who could possibly help constrain the political power of Milosevic. However, in the fall of 2000, the Serbian opposition finally succeeded—through votes and then massive political protests—to

topple Milosevic through a well-planned electoral revolution (Bunce and Wolchik, 2006). Thus, the possibility of a democratic and peaceful Serbia finally materialized—a possibility that seemed all the more likely, given the death of Croatia’s Franjo Tudjman in 1999, the liberalization of Croatian politics early the following year, and the diffusion of electoral revolutions from Slovakia to Croatia and then to Serbia (Bunce and Wolchik, 2006). At that point, the West changed its position, encouraging Montenegro to stay within the Yugoslav federation of Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo. From the West’s perspective, the key issue was supporting democratic developments in Serbia and building peace within the region—a peace that would be threatened, it was assumed, by weakening the Serbian government, by opening up the question of border changes (including Kosovo), and by creating a series of small and weak states in the Balkans (as opposed to the ideal of a strong Serbia and Croatia balancing each other).

The result was an agreement in the spring, 2003, forced in effect by the European Union in collaboration with the United States, that created a new state—Serbia and Montenegro—that was considerably decentralized in both political and economic terms (including a separate currency for Montenegro), but that remained nonetheless—at least in the eyes of the international community-- a single unit.²¹ The parallels to the old Yugoslav state, of course, were both striking and distressing. However, as promised by the EU in the agreement reached in 2003, Montenegro was allowed to hold a referendum on independence three years later—which it did on May 21, 2006. The majority of voters supported independence. From the Serbian perspective, this was an outcome that had the decided benefit of finally liberating Serbia in an institutional sense to carry out in expeditious fashion needed political and economic reforms. However, whether Montenegrin democratization will survive the loss of secession as *the* focus for its domestic and international politics is another question. Moreover, Serbian democratization, while most likely aided by the subtraction of Montenegro, may be undermined in the future by the much less domestically popular decision to lose Kosovo as well (though there are reasons to think that the salience of this issue is exaggerated—see, for example, Goati, 1996; Djordjevic, 2005).

What the Montenegrin story suggests is not just that the West is fickle, depending upon its interests at the moment—a hardly startling observation. It is also that international alliances and international actions more generally can have a wide range of consequences. They can fuel secession and its opposite—the latter by ignoring aggressive behavior on the part of the center (the costs of inaction—which are often ignored by analysts); supporting dominant nations; or, more generally, providing verbal and other support for existing state borders. One example is Western policy towards Russia and the Chechen crisis (Evangelista, 2002). But perhaps the best example is what has happened to all of our secessionist regions from the late 1980s to 2003; that is, their limbo status and the incentives for leaders of both the majority nation and minorities to prolong this peculiar state of affairs and the international community either to do the same (as with

²¹ In this sense, while I have coded Montenegro as a case that moved from cooperation to compromise, a more detailed reading might suggest a shift to a secessionist dynamic, beginning in 1997. Moreover, while war did not break out between Serbia and Montenegro, the outcome—or such segmented politics and economics that the state became largely a fiction--resembles our other conflict cases.

Russia in Abkhazia, southern Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabagh) or simply to tolerate semi-states for reasons of sovereignty, oil or fear of destabilizing regional powers (see Lynch, 2004; King, 2001).

International support, therefore, is quite variable and needs to be contextualized (Chervonnaya, 1994; Barbarosie, 2001; Lynch, 2004; Jenne, 2006). There are a number of international players, including the West (which is not always consensual) and regional powers, such as Russia, and they can use their power either to maintain or undermine the state. Moreover, international support, we must remember, was present not just in the secessionist cases, but also in Adjara (Turkey) and Montenegro (from 1997-2002). A closer look at these examples points us to two helpful refinements of the claim about the importance of external support.

One is to focus less on the presence or absence of such support than to assess differences in the access of minority populations to weaponry. This was a key factor explaining why the disintegration of Yugoslavia, but not the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, was violent—in particular, because of the existence of well-armed regional militaries and the politicization of the Yugoslav National Army (Bunce, 1999b). This factor has also emerged in other studies of ethnic conflict, where the key issue appears to be the presence of guerilla war conditions, including rough terrain and small, armed groups (Fearon and Laitin, 2003).²² It is striking that *all* of our conflict cases feature access to weapons, whether supplied by the Russians (as in Abkhazia and southern Ossetia, along with one case not analyzed here, Transdniestria in Moldova), by the Albanians (as in Kosovo, but not deliberately), or leakage from the Soviet military, as in Chechnya (including the “leakage” of one Soviet general, Dudayev, who served as a nationalist leader of the republic) (Barbarosie, 2001; Dunlop, 1998). By contrast, such access seems to have been absent in our status quo and reformist categories.

A second amendment is to suggest that the impact of international support for secession can be understood as not just providing incentives for elite support for secession, but also as shaping both political agendas and struggles for power within regions by providing incentives for adoption of more radical positions and/or selection of more radical leaders—whether that means in the particular regional context leaders supporting greater autonomy (as with Vojvodina from 1990-1993, when the Forum-led government in Hungary flirted with the Hungarian diaspora), significant autonomy (as with Adjara), or outright independence (as with Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and southern Ossetia). International support for minority concerns, therefore, may not “produce” secession; it may simply move subunit leaders in a more radical direction or empower more radical leaders in their competition with less radical leaders. This observation leads, in turn, to the final column in Table 5, where we focus on variations among our regions in the outcomes of struggles for power during the transitions to new regimes and states. As we will see, to borrow from Tip O’Neill’s (the former Speaker of the House of Representatives) famous adage: all politics is indeed local.

²² It is helpful to recognize that, while all of our conflict cases feature rough terrain, the same is also true for both Dagestan and Montenegro.

The Local Politics of Transition

There were three kinds of political situations that developed in our minority regions as the Georgian, Serbia-Montenegrin and Russian republics made their transition to independent statehood. Indeed, these are precisely the three scenarios that summarize, more generally, the political trajectories taken by the twenty-seven regimes that emerged from communism and communist states from 1991-1992 in east-central Europe, the Balkans, and Eurasia (Bunce, 1999a; Bunce, 2006). One dynamic was where the communists were able to continue in political power, largely because movements that might counter them—liberal, nationalist or some combination of the two—were weak and divided, with both deficits reflecting opposition development during the last decades of the state and communism; the divisive impact on the liberal opposition of heated debates, particularly evident in ethnofederal contexts, about state borders, national identities, and the security of cultural communities; and the clever politics of some communist leaders when confronting a more competitive political landscape (see, for example, Bunce and Wolchik, 2006). In this situation, leaders of minority-defined regions were relatively secure, and they had few incentives, as a result, to incorporate either nationalist or democratic issues into their political appeals. Indeed, to have done so would have been to admit some political vulnerability; to empower segments of the opposition; and to open up the possibility of considerable intra-regional conflict (since most regions, we must remember, were quite heterogeneous, with significant representation in most of our cases of the state's dominant nation).

As communists, moreover, they had little personal commitment to either a nationalist or a liberal project (though there were, of course, reform communists throughout the postcommunist region who were able to transit gracefully to liberal values). Ideology, in short, can matter, along with interests. In addition, because of continuity in institutions and personnel in this scenario of “communist continuity,” these regional leaders also had considerable resources in place to build (or augment existing) political machines. Thus, regional communist leaders who were politically secure were in a strong position to keep both nationalists and liberals at bay.

In the early years of the transitions from communism and communist states, this scenario proved to be in fact the most common one. It describes, for example, most of the republics that became states in the Soviet Union (Bunce, 1999a). Returning to our cases, the “communist continuity” dynamic summarizes developments in Dagestan, Montenegro (up to 1997), and Vojvodina (especially from 1993 to 2000), where the common stance by regional leaders was support of the status quo. What is also striking in these regions is the close alliance between local communists and the “new” center—for example, Russia and Dagestan and Serbia, on the one hand, and at various points both Montenegro and Vojvodina. For the center, the most important issue, whether or not communists were also at the helm there, was the ability of the local communists to maintain stability in their area of the state. This was even the case for Adjara, where a local communist—perhaps best termed a despot-- confronted first a nationalist leader at the center, then an ex-communist, and beginning in late 2003 a leader of the liberal opposition.²³ What all this suggests is a point already made: variations in politics at the

²³ It is telling that, of the three types of leaders who have come to power in Georgia since independence, the most threatening one, from the perspective of the long-serving leader of Adjara, Abashidze, was the current

center, surprisingly enough, seemed to have been less important for subsequent developments in center-regional relations than patterns of political change or continuity in the minority regions.

The second variant of political struggle in the regions at the end and after state socialism—and the one that describes what happened in all of the reform cases—was where the communists confronted a strong nationalist movement, competed with them for power in their locality, and eventually succeeded in fending off the nationalist challenge. These communists, therefore, managed to dominate the local political scene during transition, but only after a difficult political struggle. In these contexts, the communists had the benefit of some continuity in local personnel and institutions. However, for coalitional reasons, the victorious communists had stronger incentives than the communists in the first scenario to embrace parts of the nationalist agenda. Thus, they called for regional sovereignty (often using vague language that made the center nervous, but local constituencies reassured), and they supported cultural, political and economic autonomy.

Leaders in this political context, such as Shamiev in Tatarstan, Abashidze of Adjara, and Djukanovic in Montenegro, were the proverbial communists who for political reasons became nationalists. This self-serving ideological transformation, however, was in fact the political exception, not the rule—whether we focus solely on the states and regions of interest in this study, or, more generally, on the politics of transition in the postcommunist region as a whole. In addition, for those communists who were willing and able in the face of credible threats to their political and economic monopoly to rapidly redefine their “hearts and minds,” the consequence was not always, as is commonly assumed, to embrace illiberal nationalism. Some communists, such as Kucan in Slovenia, Kwasniewski in Poland, and Horn in Hungary, moved quickly and with considerable popular support from being communists to being both liberal and nationalist. In all of these cases, however, the transition to liberalism and nationalism was facilitated by the reformist culture of their communist parties during the communist era. Such a culture, it is easy to forget, was also present in the Serbian party apparatus, but lost out to other groups over the course of the 1980s.

The final political scenario is what happened in the secessionist cases. Here, the communists invariably lost to the nationalists, and the leaders of the nationalist groups, lacking much opposition and facing institutional and economic disarray with the collapse of local communist rule, were free (and perhaps forced) to pursue a radical agenda that focused on secession as the “solution” to the region’s considerable problems. In Abkhazia, southern Ossetia, Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechnya, politics from the beginning of the regime and state transition was unusually turbulent—a situation hardly helped by the availability of arms in each of these cases and the breakdown of any consolidated political authority within the region. Whether the nationalists or the

incumbent, Mikheil Saakashvili, who came to power on a wave of support for democratization of Georgian politics. In 2004, Saakashvili was able to draw upon considerable popular support in both Georgia and Adjara to end the despotic rule of Abashidze and soon thereafter reintegrate Adjara into the Georgian state. Also telling is that Adjara ended up losing considerable autonomy in the process—even in comparison with its status during the communist era. This is not an outcome on offer either to Abkhazia or southern Ossetia, in part because of their secessionist history, in part because of Russian support of these areas as a way of countering Saakashvili’s alliance with the U.S.; and in part because of the fears raised by the degree of recentralization that took place with respect to Adjara.

communists maintained power at the center, however, was irrelevant in how politics developed within these secessionist regions. What invariably transpired was an attack by the center on regions that were at once recalcitrant and chaotic. This attack, moreover, had the predictable effects of locking in two destabilizing dynamics. One was the privileging of both a secessionist agenda and leaders who promoted such an agenda. This was despite the fact that in many cases the original call for secession was little more than a symbolic threat meant to weaken local opponents and extract some benefits from the center. This was similar to what happened in the case of Slovakia, when, after the 1992 elections, Vaclav Klaus (the leaders of the Czech Republic) called Vladimir Meciar's bluff (the leader of Slovakia), and the state split into two parts (Bunce, 1999b). The other destabilizing dynamic locked in by aggressive actions on the part of the center was a conflict spiral built upon a security dilemma. As noted earlier, the problem was that defensive actions are interpreted as aggressive and contribute to escalation of conflict, when the players involved share the characteristics of being both insecure and co-dependent.

What emerges as critical in differentiating among our three scenarios, therefore, is the character of local politics when regimes and states were both in transition. This line of argument seems to provide us with a relatively strong explanation, because, unlike the role, for example, of international support and the availability of weaponry (and many other factors addressed in Tables 3-4), this explanation has the distinctive virtue of allowing us to link variations in political outcomes with variations in the extent of change sought by minority leaders. Just as demands on the center for change can be arrayed in ordinal fashion from minimal to extensive, so the outcomes of the politics of transition in the regions can also be arrayed in an ordinal way—from communist continuity to full-scale defeat and from political stability to chaos.

The relationship between minority leader demands and the character of local politics can be phrased in several ways. Most succinctly: the more successful the local nationalists were in competing with the communists, the higher the probability that minority leaders would demand significant changes in their region's relationship to the state. This relationship, however, can be framed in another way: the greater the local political break with the communist past, the greater the propensity of local leaders to embrace a more radical agenda calling for local sovereignty. Finally, there is a third way of expressing the relationship this study has uncovered—a version of the argument that has the helpful consequence of widening in a geographical sense the applicability of this study. It can be argued that, when authoritarian rule weakens and a political transition begins, the more competitive the local arena becomes, the more predisposed minority leaders are to demand greater autonomy, if not independence for their regions (and see Roeder, 2006). Competition in the particular setting of the subunits nested within ethnofederal states, therefore, can be quite costly insofar as both peace and the stability of state borders are concerned.

Explaining the Explanation

As Table 5 documented and as the discussion above elaborated, there seems to be a systematic relationship between the variable outcomes of local political struggles during transition, on the one hand, and variations in the kinds of demands local leaders

make on their ethnofederal states. Moreover, this relationship is all the more compelling, given two other considerations. One is that it survives the “ordinal test,” thereby allowing us to correlate issues of less and more in the independent and the dependent variables. The other is that the relationship makes sense from the standpoint of the interests (and sometimes the values) of local politicians when confronting a less secure political environment.

However, there is, nonetheless, an obvious problem with attributing so much explanatory power to the contrasting political trajectories of the regions. Is it not tautological to argue in effect that secessionist demands materialize when nationalists win political power in minority regions? I think not—for several reasons. First, the causal factor of interest here, or how local communists fared in their struggle with local nationalists, does not just account for secessionist scenarios; it also differentiates between the two remaining scenarios, or status quo versus reformist political preferences. Indeed, once we bring into the picture the latter two categories, we find little support for a tautological claim. There is no compelling reason to assume that communists winning easily at the local level would behave any differently than communists who had greater difficulty defeating the nationalists. For example, one might expect that, just as easy communist dominance would limit local demands on the state for change, so would a bare victory over the nationalists—the latter because the communists, being more vulnerable politically, might seek a close alliance with the center to keep local nationalists weak. At the same time, one would expect this calculus about appeasing the center versus appeasing local nationalists to vary, depending upon political outcomes at the center. Here, it is important to remember that the reform scenario occurs, whether the communists lose power at the center (as with Georgia and its relationship to Adjara) or maintain that power (as with Serbia-Montenegro and its relationship to Montenegro).

If we return to the secessionist cases, moreover, we can counter the tautological interpretation by bringing in another consideration that is easily overlooked. We know from comparative studies of nationalism and nationalist movements that nationalists do not by any means invariably coalesce around a radical agenda (Gorenburg, 2000, 2003; Bunce, 2005; Abdelal, 2001). Like all social movements, nationalist movements are loose coalitions among people who join for a variety of reasons, only some of which correspond to a nationalist motivation. Moreover, such movements form around some broad agreements, especially in the face of a common enemy, about certain goals, but who vary from one another, nonetheless, in their interests, ideologies, repertoires of political behavior, and preferred strategies for change. In addition, goals are quite changeable and highly reactive, given the behavior of the center and the hothouse of local politics. The victory of local nationalists, in short, does not predict necessarily—or, indeed, even usually-- the rise of secessionist political agendas.

The understandable variation in the kinds of goals nationalist movements and leaders embrace notwithstanding, one can still argue that regional nationalists in the particular context of new states with a legacy of ethnofederalism would be more likely than most nationalists to take a radical position—which is precisely why we find the association in our cases between nationalist victories and secessionist politics. New states are nervous states. If we add to this other characteristics, such as the fact that these states were carved out of larger states and these states have multiple minority communities, with many of those communities located on the perimeters of the state and benefiting

from access to substantial institutional resources and already considerable investments in local autonomy, we can conclude with some confidence that these states were—and are—unusually jealous of their territory. In addition, since political dynamics in a more competitive environment rarely legitimate demands for less autonomy than in the past, nationalist leaders in the regions in ethnofederations are more likely to go one step further than in the past; that is, to press for independence, rather than reform. This approach is all the easier to imagine, given the recent and successful precedent of such developments when republics moved to statehood.

The leaders of Georgia, Serbia and Russia, therefore, found it quite easy to fear minority unrest, to assume that it would spread, and to use military force to demobilize minorities and maintain borders. Aggressive centers, in turn, laid the groundwork for empowering local radicals, while encouraging more generally an escalation of local demands. What I am suggesting here is some sensitivity to sequencing. Nationalist leaders in the postcommunist region often embraced a secessionist agenda in part because central-level leaders, themselves nationalists as well as nervous state-builders, pushed them in that direction—in part by weakening both the case for more modest goals and the constituencies supporting less radical outcomes. This is an argument, moreover, that can be applied not just to relations between our nine regions and the Russian, Georgian and Serbian states. It can also be applied to the dynamics underlying the dissolution of the Yugoslav, Soviet and Czechoslovak ethnofederations.

There are some good theoretical and empirical reasons, therefore, to stick with the interpretations that emerged on Table 5. Differences in how local politics played out after the dissolution of communist states seemed to have played an important role in influencing whether local leaders in our nine regions supported the status quo, sought greater autonomy from their ethnofederal states, or took the extreme step of demanding a state of their own. At the same time, differences in international support for various regional agendas also played a role, whether the West and Russia acquiesced to developments in these three states or took strong stances either in support of existing boundaries or in support of challenges to those boundaries. Indeed, looking at the region after 2003, it is clear that secession can only lead to statehood if the international community supports that outcome.

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this monograph has been to compare minority politics in Georgia, Russia and Serbia-Montenegro from 1989-2003 in order to answer a fundamental question about minority politics within multinational states. Why do minority leaders vary—within country, over time and across country—in what they demand for their regions from their central governments? Three types of minority demands were compared, with the differences based upon the degree of change sought by minority leaders. One scenario is status quo politics. This is where minority leaders accept prevailing practices and where relations with the state, as a result, are unchanging. Another is where minorities press for significant changes, but not to the point of rejecting state boundaries—the reformist scenario. Finally, some minority leaders put forward a secessionist agenda.

A number of causal factors were evaluated, including political, economic and cultural variables, factors that are likely to affect the central government or the regions, and long-term versus short-term influences on relations between the center and minority regions. Rather than repeat each assessment, let us divide the factors into three groups. The first are arguments that proved to be largely irrelevant in the sense that they seemed to lack any consistent relationship either to variations in minority leader demands on the state and even a subset of those demands. Examples here include the outcome of political struggles at the center and economic factors. The second are explanations that appear to have some explanatory power, but only in some instances. Here, we can highlight the tendency of leaders of large minorities to embrace secessionist agendas. Finally, several factors emerged as unusually helpful in differentiating among minority leader agendas: the positions adopted by international actors (whether engaged or acquiescent and whether supportive of minority leaders seeking change or of continuity in both prevailing institutional practices and state boundaries) and, just as important, the outcomes of struggles for power within the regions. Put simply: the greater the international support for minorities and changes in the status of their regions in the direction of less central control *and* the greater the local power of the nationalists as opposed to the communists, the more likely minority leaders will reject the status quo and seek significant changes in the autonomy, if not the independence of their region (and see Jenne, 2006 for a related argument).

This explanation, in turn, leaves us with an important question, as well as a number of useful implications. Can we apply these arguments to other times and places, or are they relevant only to postcommunist ethnofederations in a time of regime change and state formation? To answer this question, we must confront a common dilemma in comparative case analysis: controlling for a number of factors helps isolate some of the likely causal factors at work, but the very process of looking at similar contexts may also limit the reach of the conclusions drawn. Thus, in constructing controlled comparisons, case selection can become quite unrepresentative of the world at large—even though we “pretend” that this is not so by controlling for some distinctive features. Does this mean, as a result, that the arguments that emerged in this comparative study are only relevant to the postcommunist region and, indeed, to ethnofederations within that region? Such a limitation, moreover, would seem to follow necessarily from an argument that privileges competition between local communists and local nationalists?. What makes this problem all the more acute are two other considerations—the seeming dissonance between the role of competition in our cases versus its more positive role in other studies that focus on related (albeit not identical) questions (see Wilkinson, 2004); and the dissonance as well between our explanation and explanations regarding variations in regime trajectories in the postcommunist world. In particular, it is striking that, while communists losing the struggle for political power is a dynamic that seems to invest in democratic politics in the postcommunist region, precisely the same factor at the local level seems to disinvest in the state.²⁴

There are several reasons, however, to posit the possibility that the findings reported here may have relevance to other political contexts. One is that, while this study

²⁴ What this seems to suggest is that the key commonality is the relationship between the outcome of political competition and subsequent change. Just as communists maintaining power invest in regime and boundary continuity, so their loss of power leads to both regime change and border challenges.

has been littered (perhaps too liberally) with references to the specifics of the postcommunist experience, the conclusions drawn can be recast in ways that expand generalizability. In particular, there are a number of studies, using different methods and different cases, that also attribute considerable importance to the role of international actors, including their rhetoric and their weaponry (Jenne, 2006). Second, we can reframe the argument about the struggle for power between communists and nationalists—in two ways. First, it may be that regime transition provides a very different dynamic than more settled political situations. Second, it can be suggested that the greater the competition for political power in minority areas and under conditions of regime change, the higher the probability that minority leaders will embrace a radical political agenda. Whether this larger and one can argue, “de-communized” claim, is accurate will depend, of course, on assessing its validity in contexts outside the postcommunist region.

Let us now conclude this study by drawing some implications. One is that a large number of the variables often thought to be related to radicalization of minority demands fail to have a consistent or sizeable impact. This is important, but not because this study has eliminated these factors. “Elimination” is a term that is too insensitive to the limits of this study, as well as the limits, more generally, of establishing causality in the social sciences. Rather, what these “failures of explanation” suggest is that future studies cannot take for granted that these variables are pivotal. Indeed, by discovering some important and plausible sources of variation that are often overlooked, this study suggests that future work should give them some priority. Thus, future studies of minority politics and the demands of minority leaders on the state should pay attention to the role of international actors and the internal politics of minority regions (and see Csergo, 2006 for a similar point).

A second implication is that short-term forces in general and processes of competition and political change in particular may be more critical in shaping minority demands and, as emphasized above, majority behavior as well than, say, longer-term considerations and, for that matter, cultural and economic variables. Put simply, this study speaks to the primacy of politics and political struggle and to the considerable influence of short-term changes in the political environment. In this sense, the insights that have emerged in this comparative study resonate well with emphases in studies of recent democratization, where short-term effects—for example, the distribution of power at the end of the authoritarian era and struggles for power, once political monopolies are deregulated—play a critical role in the direction taken in the transition from authoritarian rule (for a summary, see Bunce, 2003). It must be admitted, however, that the importance of such factors makes the job of an analyst very difficult. It is far easier to identify historical legacies, for example, given the benefits of the passage of time and the accumulation of studies than to read with confidence variations in fast-breaking developments.

The literature on democratization also reminds us of a third implication. In that literature, there is a consensus, particularly for analysts of the postcommunist region, that competition is critical for the rise and sustainability of democracy. In this sense, competition is invariably a positive development, primarily because it speaks to constraints on authoritarian leaders in settings where they are losing power. However, while competition also features prominently in this study, it plays a different role. If one assumes that the dissolution of states, all else being equal, undermines international

stability, then the scenario of regional cooperation with the center, as opposed to the dynamics associated with autonomy and especially secession, are preferable. Cooperation, it must be noted, is closely associated with the continued local hegemony of the communists. Moreover, it can also be argued that many of the regions in this study that moved in a secessionist direction fall far short of certain desirable dynamics, such as local stability, good economic performance, and liberal local politics. The point here is that, while one can support the right of minorities to have more rights and autonomy, both the attempts to create new states and success in doing so do not necessarily produce outcomes that serve minorities well.

Finally, as noted throughout this analysis, this study has been designed to shed some light on an issue in heated debate among scholars and policy-makers; that is, whether ethnofederal states and other forms of institutional power-sharing contribute to inter-group cooperation and democratic politics or in fact undermine both developments. On the one hand, the very fact that minority regions featured very different kinds of relationships to their central governments remind us that arguments emphasizing either extreme—that is, either the high costs or the considerable benefits of ethnofederation—are necessarily over-stated and over-simplified. This is hardly surprising. While political institutions are important, they do not stand alone. The details of how they work and the factors that combine with them to exaggerate or limit their costs and benefits are all important considerations. Just as important are two other factors that have received limited attention: the behavior of the center and the local politics of the region. The design of the state, of course, places certain parameters on both sets of factors. Thus, the center in ethnofederations, especially when the state and regime are new and ethnofederal arrangements are long in place, has a marked propensity to be nervous about its territory. At the same time and for similar reasons, minority-defined regions within new states that are well-established ethnofederations are likely to gravitate towards the goal of greater political and cultural autonomy. In this sense, ethnofederation, especially when it precedes regime and state transition, does not just reassure groups; it also tempts majorities to embrace aggressive nationalism, if not assimilationism and to resist at all costs further decentralization of the state and minorities to guard their autonomy at all costs and to define greater autonomy as both a worthwhile and necessary endeavor.

These costs seem to be particularly pronounced in the particular and perhaps peculiar context of both communism and postcommunism. Where ethnofederations were nested (that is, where ethnofederal republics were located within ethnofederal states), as they were in all of the cases analyzed in this study, nationalist agendas very easily translated into secessionist agendas—especially since other alternatives, such as liberal nationalism or even liberalism, have been squeezed out. It is not accidental, therefore, that democratization has faced the greatest obstacles in the postcommunist region in two settings—where the communists stayed in power (as they did in most states in the region, old or new) and in those new and multinational states that inherited ethnofederalism from their communist past.

Here, again, we find an interesting tension that harkens back to the discussion about competition and its relationship to minority leader agendas. Ethnofederalism may not have led in every case to secessionist politics, but ethnofederal regimes in the first decade of transition in the postcommunist world were associated with both escalation of nationalist violence and either fully authoritarian regimes or regimes caught between

democracy and dictatorship. In this sense, ethnofederalism, especially when it is in place when transitions to democracy and statehood commence, can be a serious problem for both democracy and the state. However, these problems, we must remember, do not by any means dictate outcomes. Just as some regions in this study challenged state borders, others did not. Moreover, just as both Georgia and Serbia have moved in a more democratic direction over the past few years, so Russia and Azerbaijan have drifted in the opposite direction. In this sense, the impact of ethnofederation on both regimes and states depends not just on the institutional design of the state, but also other variables. With respect to democracy, the key issue has been the willingness and capacity of the liberal opposition, assisted by the international community, to carry out electoral revolutions that replace illiberal leaders with their liberal counterparts. With respect to the state and variations in the demands minority leaders place on the state, two critical factors matter: the role of the international community and the outcomes of struggles for power within the regions.

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Figure 1

Ethnofederations and Regional Subunits

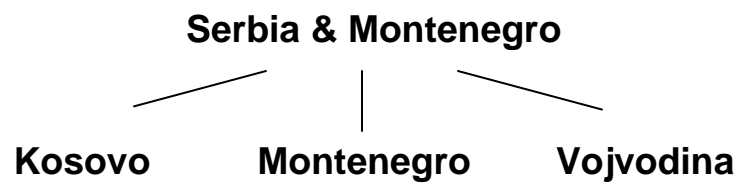


Table 1

**Variance in Subunit-Center Bargaining
(1989 - 2003)**

<u>Status Quo^a</u>	<u>Reform^b</u>	<u>Secession^c</u>
Dagestan	Adjaria	Abkhazia
	Kosovo (1989-1997)	
Montenegro (1989-1997)	Montenegro (1997-2003)	Chechnya
		Kosovo (1997-2003)
Vojvodina (1989-2000)	Vojvodina (2000-2003)	
	Tatarstan	S. Ossetia

^a Where the subunit leader accepts the existing center-regional relationship. The state is not in question.

^b Where the subunit leader demands moderate to significant and unprecedented political/cultural/economic autonomy (including sovereignty claims in some cases). The state is not in question.

^c Where the subunit leader declares independence.

Table 2

Competing Explanations: State-Level and Majority Variables

	<u>Georgia</u>	<u>Russia</u>	<u>Serbia-Montenegro</u>
Ethnofederation	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Socialist Legacy	Yes	Yes	Yes
New State	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regime Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Capacity	Low	Low	Low
Territorially Compact Minorities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mobilization Against Former State ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regional Variation In Income	Large	Large	Large
Timing of Mobilization ^b	Early	Late	Middle
Size of Dominant Nation	68%	82%	63%
Center/Periphery of Former State	Periphery	Center	Center
Diaspora of Dominant Nation	Small	Large	Large
History of Resistance? ^c	Yes	No	No
Prior Independence? ^d	Yes	No	Yes
Communists Maintain Power?	No	Mixed	Yes
Majority Religion	Christian	Christian	Christian
Minorities of Other Religions	Yes	Yes	Yes

^a The distinction here is between those republics within Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union that exhibited nationalist mobilization against the state versus those that did not (see Beissinger, 2002; Bunce, 1990).

^b Early refers to nationalist mobilization before the 1980s; middle refers to mobilization during the 1980s; and late refers to mobilization during the disintegration of communist party hegemony. For Serbia-Montenegro, the focus is on Serbia, though with the recognition that protests in Belgrade in the early 1980s were both liberal and nationalist and primarily the former (see Gagnon, 2005).

^c The key issue here is whether the state, then republic, resisted incorporation into the Soviet or Yugoslav state.

^d Of course, Georgian independence was short-lived (a reaction to the Bolshevik revolution), whereas Serbian independence was much longer in duration.

Table 3

Competing Explanations of Subunit Behavior Divided into Status Quo, Reform and Secessionist Demands: Demographic and Cultural Variables

	<u>Minority Size</u>	<u>Relative Wealth of Region</u>	<u>Religious Difference</u>	<u>Linguistic Difference</u>	<u>Ethnic Difference</u>	<u>Diaspora</u>	<u>Majority in Neighboring State</u>
Dagestan	Moderate *	Poor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Montenegro (1989-1997)	Large	Slightly Below	No	No	No	No	No
Vovjvodina (1989-2000)	Small	Rich	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjaria	Large	Rich	Yes	No	No	No	No
Kosovo (1989-1997)	Large	Poor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montenegro (1997-2003)	Large	Slightly Below	No	No	Yes	Small	No
Vovjvodina (2000-2003)	Small	Rich	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tatarstan	Medium	Rich	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No**
Abkhazia	Small	Rich	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Chechyna	Large	Poor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Kosovo (1997-2003)	Large	Poor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nagorno-Karabakh	Large	Similar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
S. Ossetia	Large	Rich	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

* Dagestan is unusually diverse. Avarsi, the largest group, is 28%; Dargintsi – 16.3%; Russians – 12.5%; and Dezginy – 12.2%

** In Tatarstan, Tatars are a majority in the neighboring subunit, Bashkortostan. Tartars are also the largest minority in the Russian Federation and are quite dispersed. Ossets have a neighboring subunit, N. Ossetia in the Russian Federation composed of the same nation.

Table 4

**Competing Explanations of Subunit Behavior Divided into Status Quo, Reform and Secessionist Demands:
Geopolitical and Historical Features**

	<u>Geopolitical Location</u> ^a	<u>Violence in Encorporation</u> ^b	<u>Prior Statehood</u> ^c	<u>Subunit Alliance</u> ^d	<u>Institutional Status in Former State</u> ^e	<u>Local Representation</u> ^f
Dagestan	Perimeter	Yes	No	No	Changed (-)	Medium
Montenegro (1989-1997)	Perimeter	No	Yes	No	Stable	Medium
Vojvodina (1989-2000)	Perimeter	No	No	No	Changed (+)	Low / Medium
Adjaria	Perimeter	Yes	No	No	Stable	Medium
Kosovo (1989-1997)	Perimeter	Yes	No	No	Changed (+)	Low/Medium
Montenegro (1997-2003)	Perimeter	No	Yes	No	Stable	Medium
Vojvodina (2000-2003)	Perimeter	No	No	No	Changed (+)	Low
Tatarstan	Enclosed	Yes	Yes	No	Stable	Medium
Abkhazia	Perimeter	Yes	No	Yes	Changed (-)	High
Chechnya	Perimeter	Yes	No	No	Changed (-)	Low
Kosovo (1997-2003)	Perimeter	Yes	No	No	Changed (+)	Low/Medium
Nagorno- Karabakh	Close to Perimeter	Yes	No	Yes	Changed (+)	Medium
S. Ossetia	Close to Perimeter	No	No	Yes	Changed (+)	Medium

a The argument here is that subunits on the border of the state are more likely to secede.

b The argument here is that early resistance provides a basis for later secession.

c The argument here is that prior statehood provides a basis for secession.

d The argument here is that, when the center of the former state allies with the subunit against the republic, that subunit is more likely to secede.

e All of these subunits had administrative identity during the communist period. However, their rankings in some cases changed. The argument is that change is critical, with upgraded status “tempting” statehood and downgraded status producing resentment.

f The concern here is the degree to which the titular nation in the subunit was well represented in political and economic posts within the subunit during the communist period.

Table 5

Competing Explanations: Political and Military Factors during Transition

	<u>Nationalist Movements in Republics ^a</u>	<u>Communists Retain Power in New State ^b</u>	<u>International Support for Autonomy/Secession ^c</u>	<u>Communists Retain Power in Region? ^d</u>
Dagestan	Yes/ Late	Divided & Dominant	No	Yes
Montenegro (1989-1997)	Yes/Early	Divided & Dominant	No	Yes
Vojvodina (1989-2000)	Yes/Early	Yes, But Less From 1997-2000	No	Yes
Adjaria	Yes/Early	No	No	Competitive
Kosovo (1989-1997)	Yes/Early	Yes	Yes*	Competitive
Montenegro (1997-2003)	Yes/Early	No	Yes, Then No	Competitive
Vojvodina (2000-2003)	Yes/Early	No	No	Competitive
Tatarstan	Yes/Late	Divided	No	Competitive
Abkhazia	Yes/Early	No	Yes**	No
Chechnya	Yes/Late	Divided	No**	No
Kosovo (1997-2003)	Yes/Early	Yes/No (2000)	Yes**	No
Nagorno-Karabakh	Yes/Very Late	Yes	Yes**	No
S. Ossetia	Yes/Early	No	Yes**	No

¹ The question here is whether the republic's titular nation (Russians, Georgians, and Serbs) mobilized against the larger state (the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia) and, if so, before or during state dissolution. The assumption is that earlier mobilizations produce a more exclusivist and illiberal nationalism which in turn pushed the subunit to rebel.

^b There are 3 possibilities here: divided power among liberals and communists (Russia); dominance of communists (Azerbaijan, Serbia & Montenegro up to 2000, though less 1997-2000); and defeat of the communists followed by a mixed communist/nationalist alliance (in Georgia to 2003), and liberals and nationalists (Serbia-Montenegro, 2000-2003).

^c International support can be purposive or accidental (for example, Russian support of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia vs. leakage of armaments from Albania to Kosovo), and intervention can be of a regional power (Russia) or the international community (as in the Montenegro case.) Those with one asterisk seek autonomy; those with two asterisks seek secession.

^d The question here is whether the communists, the nationalist opposition or competition between the two dominated political developments in the subunit during the specified period. However, in Adjaria and Tatarstan (in the middle category or reform) communist power was more significant.