

Explaining Secession¹

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14 Simultaneously destroying and creating order, secession is a watershed event 14
15 marked by significant political change: the rise and fall of regional and global powers, 15
16 new patterns of international and domestic alliances, and sudden opportunities for 16
17 states and groups to improve or defend their relative positions. Secession stands 17
18 solidly at the intersection of domestic and international politics. It is therefore 18
19 hardly surprising that secession is a subject of interdisciplinary interest, and has 19
20 been analyzed from the perspectives of political science, economics, sociology, 20
21 philosophy, and law. Finally, secession is not simply of academic interest, but 21
22 concerns policymakers and governments around the globe which must cope with 22
23 it on a frustratingly frequent basis. 23

24 At one level, the problem of secession is philosophical—do groups have a 24
25 right to self-determination that trumps states' rights to territory integrity, and if 25
26 so under which conditions? At another level, it is an empirical question—why do 26
27 ethnic groups attempt to secede in some places and not in others, at some times 27
28 and not at others? Why do some secessions turn violent? Why do some secessions 28
29 succeed in establishing states, while others fail, and still others settle into *de facto* 29
30 sovereignty through territorial control? Why do some post-secessionist states 30
31 establish the conditions for peace, while others only exacerbate ethnic tensions, 31
32 and engender further violence? What role does state policy—whether it takes 32
33 the form of repression or accommodation—play in propelling and subduing 33
34 secession? What roles do external actors play—and why do some try to prevent 34
35 ethnic violence while others do nothing, or even actively encourage it? In short, 35
36 how do we explain secession? 36

37 When it occurs, secession is a practical, humanitarian issue, for it often entails 37
38 considerable violence, destruction and tragedy. Violent secessionist conflicts 38
39 account for the deaths of tens of millions, not to mention the brutal mistreatment 39
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1 of many more people (Isaacs 1975: 3; Horowitz 1985: xi; Gurr 2000; Brancati 2006). 1
2 These conflicts are also widespread. According to one estimate, no more than 25 2
3 member states of the 196 member United Nations can claim to be free of such 3
4 conflicts (Zarkovic-Bookman 1992: 7). The Stockholm International Peace Research 4
5 Institute (SIPRI) data indicate that only five of the 23 major armed conflicts were 5
6 non-ethnic in 1994, and only two of 26 in 1998 (Hechter 2000a, 2000b). Even these 6
7 two exceptions—Ethiopia/Eritrea and India/Pakistan—were the direct result of 7
8 earlier secessions. According to Fearon and Laitin’s 2003 data, about half of the 8
9 civil wars since the end of the Cold War have been driven by rebels aiming for 9
10 secession or autonomy. Sambanis (2001) shows that roughly 70 percent of civil 10
11 wars since 1945 have been ethno-nationalist wars. Whichever period or metric we 11
12 choose, it is clear that a sizable portion of armed conflicts are related to secession. 12

13 The tremors from the disintegration of three federal republics—the Soviet 13
14 Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia—contributed to renewed interest in 14
15 this profoundly political problem. All told, the last two centuries have seen the 15
16 emergence of at least five to six dozen *de facto* and *de jure* independent secessionist 16
17 states in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania, dozens more secessionist 17
18 movements that failed and disappeared, and still more that remain engaged in 18
19 efforts to break away from their host states (see Part II and Part VI). 19

20 Historically, even if only a small portion of declarations of secession or 20
21 independence have come to fruition, their incidence is not diminishing over time 21
22 (Armitage 2007). Indeed, since World War Two, the creation of new states through 22
23 secession, including decolonization, has been on the rise (Fazal and Griffiths 2008). 23
24 The threat of secession is not only a problem for developing countries (e.g., Georgia, 24
25 Moldova, Nigeria, Russia, and Indonesia), but also for developed countries (e.g., 25
26 Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) (see Part VI). The fact that 26
27 secession is at the core of political conflict in dozens of countries, afflicting both 27
28 the developing and the developed world, provides solid ground for comparative 28
29 analysis and theoretical synthesis. The events of the day also present the need for 29
30 such an analysis. Although secession has long been a staple of the interstate system, 30
31 only recently have social scientific efforts arisen to theorize and explain secessions 31
32 in diverse places such as Abkhazia, East Timor, Eritrea, Kosovo, and Somaliland. 32

33 As with the study of any multidimensional phenomenon, the explanation of 33
34 secession involves multiple issues, actors, and logics. Some of the core questions 34
35 include: 35

- 36 36
- 37 1. Why do secessionist movements emerge among some groups, but not others? 37
- 38 2. What explains the timing of secession—why do ethnic groups pursue 38
39 secession at certain times, but not others? 39
- 40 3. Why are some secessionist movements able to command extensive public 40
41 support, while others only receive marginal support? 41
- 42 4. Why do some secessionist movements endure for many years, while others 42
43 dissipate over time, ultimately disappearing altogether? 43
44 44
45 45

- 1 5. Why do some secessionist movements engage in violence against the 1
2 government and other non-state actors, while others pursue non-violent 2
3 strategies? 3
- 4 6. Why do some secessionist movements succeed in becoming independent 4
5 states, while others fail, achieving only *de facto* independence or less? 5
- 6 7. Why do some host states pursue accommodation, while others opt for 6
7 repression in responding to ethnic group claims? 7
- 8 8. What role do external actors, such as neighboring states, diaporas, international 8
9 organizations, play in triggering secessionist violence, prolonging it, curbing 9
10 it, and ending it? 10
- 11 9. Why do some states that emerged through secession establish peaceful 11
12 internal and external relations, while others are almost immediately involved 12
13 in intrastate and interstate conflicts? 13
- 14 10. What policy tools are available to governments, interested states and 14
15 international organizations to tame secessionism? 15

16
17 Each question in this admittedly non-exhaustive list focuses on a distinct level of 17
18 analysis and temporal phase within the political life-cycle of secession. A review 18
19 of the relevant literature reveals that it can be fruitfully divided into three groups, 19
20 according to the unit of analysis: the first set of studies focuses on the secessionist 20
21 movement or ethnic group as the key actor; the second set concentrates on state 21
22 behavior toward minorities; and the third set addresses the role of external actors 22
23 or foreign powers. This tripartite structure provides a framework, or what Sartori 23
24 (1970: 1039) called “data containers,” into which our theories and empirical 24
25 observations can be fitted (see also Horowitz 1985: 16). 25

26 In this review, the levels are separated for analysis, with a final section 26
27 considering the aftermath of secession. The section on ethnic groups organizes the 27
28 literature according to main issues that drive grievances and facilitate collective 28
29 action. This is followed by a discussion of state-centric approaches, which focuses 29
30 on state capacity and state behavior towards ethno-nationalism within its borders. 30
31 The third layer in the analysis is composed of international approaches to explaining 31
32 secession, which includes a discussion of the main causes and consequences of 32
33 external involvement in secession along with several conjectures. The final section 33
34 is different, but represents an obvious and natural extension because it considers 34
35 the crucial question of whether secession should be seen as a solution to ethnic 35
36 conflict by analyzing secession’s aftermath. 36

37 It will be useful for the reader to keep in mind that explaining secession requires 37
38 integrating this triadic structure at the core of the secession generating process. 38
39 Any coherent explanation for secession will need to account for the interactions, 39
40 examining how groups and states bargain, fight, negotiate, and kill, along with 40
41 how and why foreign powers—states, diaporas, international organizations— 41
42 become involved, altering the domestic balance of power, and profoundly affecting 42
43 the dynamics of secession. 43

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1 **Ethnic Groups** 1

2 2
3 The most natural level on which to begin thinking theoretically about secession is 3
4 the group level, where secessionist sentiments are born, and sometimes take root. 4
5 Two questions have driven the literature: one, where do secessionist sentiments 5
6 come from and, two, how do they become politically mobilized, morphing into 6
7 separatist movements? (see also Chapter 11). Three broad answers to these questions 7
8 can be delineated: (1) political grievances, (2) economic inequality, and (3) ethnic 8
9 demography/geography (Hewitt 1977; Levine 1996). While these answers can be 9
10 usefully separated for the purpose of analysis, equally important in understanding 10
11 their causal effects is to theorize their interactions, including but not limited to 11
12 substitution and reinforcement effects. 12

13 Political grievances are generally understood as barriers to entry or obstacles 13
14 to social mobility, accompanied typically by some disproportionality between 14
15 “deserved” and “achieved” political power, where “deserved” is usually defined 15
16 relative to ethno-demographic features such as relative ethnic group size and 16
17 spatial concentration but may also be interpreted historically. “Achieved” is often 17
18 understood relative to some metric of political influence, such as the proportion of 18
19 legislative and administrative positions occupied by co-ethnics. As Wimmer (2002: 19
20 5) demonstrates, “modern institutions of inclusion are systematically tied to ethnic 20
21 and national forms of exclusion. Correspondingly, ethnic conflicts ... are integral 21
22 parts of the modern order of nation-states.” 22

23 However, sometimes political grievances are placated by a group’s advantage 23
24 or preponderance in other less political spheres, particularly in the economic realm, 24
25 recognizing that there is often a division of labor among ethnic groups (Horowitz 25
26 2000: 108–35). Other times, political and economic power go hand in hand, 26
27 reinforcing minority political exclusion with economic inequality (Breton 1964). 27
28 Once introduced, inequalities can be fortified through discriminatory legislation 28
29 and language policy, which translates directly into educational disparities that 29
30 reproduce political and economic inequality. Not surprisingly, this dynamic bodes 30
31 poorly in the long run for the “out-group” and it begets resentment over perceived 31
32 status inequalities, which bodes poorly in the long run for the “in-group” (Petersen 32
33 2002). In the Soviet context, this dynamic created demands from some regional 33
34 minorities within union republics for an elevation of their status to autonomous 34
35 provinces and republics, since autonomy implies power, prestige, and opportunities 35
36 that are perceived as having been denied (Roeder 1991; Treisman 1997; Cornell 36
37 2002; Giuliano 2006). 37

38 Similar grievances can be identified in the economic realm, but with important 38
39 differences. General inequality between groups in economic attainment, cost 39
40 sharing, and redistribution benefits, arguably possess a curvilinear relationship 40
41 with the disposition to secede. On the one hand, many theorists posit that relative 41
42 economic deprivation increases the likelihood of secession, because opportunity 42
43 costs are low when poverty is high, as in Bangladesh, Southern Sudan, and the case 43
44 of Muslims in Thailand (e.g., Horowitz 2000). But others argue that impoverished 44
45 groups stand the most to gain from remaining inside the state and the most to 45

1 lose by exiting. Relatively wealthier groups also possess formidable grounds for 1
2 complaint, because they often subsidize the less prosperous groups and therefore 2
3 bear a disproportionate share of the economic cost of maintaining the state, as in 3
4 Northern Italy, Slovenia, or Tatarstan (e.g., Hale 2008). This has led some to believe 4
5 that both extremely impoverished and overly wealthy groups are most likely to 5
6 secede, whereas those groups at relative parity with the average national income 6
7 are the least likely to pursue secession (Stewart 2009; Cederman, Gleditsch, and 7
8 Weidmann 2010). 8

9 Ethnicity and economics were already central in Horowitz (1985), who conceived 9
10 of secession as a mix of economic calculation and fear. Analyzing secessionist 10
11 movements in newly independent states in Africa and Asia, Horowitz focuses on 11
12 the economic disparity between the secessionist group and the central government 12
13 to explain the timing of secession, but recognizes and incorporates the role played 13
14 by fears of political exclusion and cultural extinction, which he couches in terms of 14
15 anxiety about relative worth. He writes: “separatism results from varying mixes of 15
16 sheer economic interest and group apprehension” (Horowitz 1985: 259). Horowitz’s 16
17 theory conceives of groups and regions as either backward or advanced, relative 17
18 to the mean levels of prosperity in the country as a whole. This produces four 18
19 ideal types: backward groups in backward regions, advanced groups in backward 19
20 regions, advanced groups in advanced regions, and backward groups in advanced 20
21 regions. Each type follows a distinct causal logic that can be deduced from relative 21
22 regional and group position (Horowitz 1985: 233ff). The relative weight attached 22
23 to ethnic anxiety and economic calculation varies by group: backward groups in 23
24 backward regions tend to give more weight to ethnic anxiety and less to economic 24
25 costs and benefits, and it is precisely this type that is most likely to secede and 25
26 to do so earliest after independence. The advanced groups in advanced regions 26
27 are least likely to secede. When they do, secession is likely to be later rather than 27
28 earlier. Since Horowitz also believes that there is likely to be less infighting (and 28
29 more subgroup amalgamation) among advanced groups, secessionist movements 29
30 among advanced groups are also likely to be more cohesive. 30

31 These background conditions, and many others that we could enumerate, 31
32 require triggers to set secession in motion—to make it appear attractive relative to 32
33 less extreme alternatives. The alternatives need to be credible, and often enough 33
34 the potential secessionists see signals that they are not. Such signals can come in 34
35 the form of unilateral actions from the central government, including legal changes 35
36 that affect the region or group adversely, or culturally-oriented prohibitions on 36
37 the legality of dress, language, and ritual. They may also emerge from signs that 37
38 the central government is unstable, and may not even exist long enough to follow 38
39 through on its promises. Ethnic riots, unpunished looting, and armed groups 39
40 not under the government’s control serve to indicate the government’s inability 40
41 to provide security to the region, and to suggest that alternatives to secession, 41
42 which entail remaining in the state, are not truly viable (cf., Pavković with Radan 42
43 2007: 173ff). 43

44 Economic grievances between ethnic groups are pervasive, but when class is 44
45 coterminous with ethnicity, the impetus to secede is more powerful, since there 45

1 are fewer cross-cutting cleavages to undermine the impulse to exit and less 1
2 fragmentation within groups to divide a secessionist movement. When ethno- 2
3 economic discrimination is coterminous with minority status solutions such as 3
4 positive discrimination for minorities, which implies negative discrimination for 4
5 the majority, are often proposed. Although these can minimize ethnic minority 5
6 alienation, they can also exhaust majority tolerance, making the competition 6
7 for resources between ethnic groups into a salient political issue. Such anti- 7
8 discrimination measures may lead to the perception of disadvantage among the 8
9 majority population, and even to status reversal in some sectors, augmenting 9
10 animosity towards the “privileged” minority. 10

11 Economic wealth can of course come from greater productivity, but it may also 11
12 result from exploiting the presence of raw materials, especially oil reserves and oil 12
13 pipelines, as in Katanga, Bougainville, Chechnya, and Biafra. Mineral resources, 13
14 as in northern Kosovo, Tatarstan, and Siberia, serve a similar function (see also 14
15 Chapter 10). Grievances can result for both reasons, which boil down to a claim 15
16 that the group is receiving less than “its fair share.” This line of reasoning bears 16
17 some similarity to work by scholars who believe internal rebellions, of which 17
18 secession is one type, are driven by greedy motives. This literature implies that 18
19 secession is likely driven by “atypical (economic) opportunities for building a rebel 19
20 organization” (King 2001; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). These atypical opportunities 20
21 include controlling, looting, and exploiting valuable resources, especially primary 21
22 commodities (diamonds, timber, cocaine, minerals). 22

23 Some scholars have sought to apply this framework to explain the duration 23
24 and persistence of separatist conflicts long after the major violence has ended in 24
25 an effort to understanding the material benefits of ethnic wars (King 2001). King 25
26 explains the duration of secessionist conflicts by focusing on the benefits that all 26
27 sides reap from its duration. Since separatists become state-builders, “ending the 27
28 conflict” is less about conflict resolution, he argues, and more about reintegration 28
29 of “two functionally distinct administrations, militaries, and societies.” Resolving 29
30 secessionist conflict in these cases involves the unification of two states, one *de jure* 30
31 and the other *de facto* (Coggins 2006). 31

32 Few actors possess an incentive to end the conflict. The rebel government and 32
33 the official government exploit the territory’s ambiguous legal status for economic 33
34 gain, mainly through smuggling, laundering, and tax evasion. Eliminating this 34
35 ambiguity would necessarily entail an economic loss for several key stake holders, 35
36 whereas prolonging the *status quo* facilitates resource extraction, tax evasion, and 36
37 enduring economic benefits, hence its duration. 37

38 In addition to such political and economic motives, ethnic demography and 38
39 geography figure prominently into the decision to secede, since ethnic mobilization 39
40 and collective action demand both the desire and the capacity, the willingness 40
41 and the opportunity, to act. As a result, many theorists would agree that, when 41
42 it comes to secession, “size matters” (Leff 1971; DeNardo 1985; Tarrow and Tilly 42
43 2006; cf. Horowitz 1972; Hechter and Okamoto 2001). One reason is that numbers 43
44 are themselves arguments, buttressing group claims and counter-claims to power, 44
45 status, and prestige (Siroky 2009). Though commonly treated as static, numbers can 45

1 have a past, present, and future. Majorities that have become minorities remember 1
2 the golden era, however distant, and majorities that can foresee the impermanence 2
3 of their numerical superiority, provided that birth and death rates are forecasted 3
4 correctly, have reasons for preemptive action to avert status reversal. 4

5 Demographics can also become politically relevant by more deliberate and 5
6 sudden means, for example, through government-sponsored migration policies 6
7 and settlement schemes that encourage members of one ethnic group (usually the 7
8 majority) to settle areas occupied by large numbers of another ethnic group (usually 8
9 a minority). The goal of such policies is clear—to dilute the power of a population 9
10 pocket that is believed to possess dubious loyalty to the state. This strategy, whether 10
11 performed through settlement policies or ethnic gerrymandering, is also intended 11
12 to undermine any future claim to the territory or its infiltration by a foreign power 12
13 using locals as a fifth column. China's efforts to dilute the populations in Tibet and 13
14 Xinjiang fit this pattern, as do Georgia's redistricting of Javakheti, an Armenian 14
15 province, to include a neighboring Georgian-majority district, Samtskhe, and 15
16 attempts to dilute the Russian population in Crimea by encouraging the settlement 16
17 of more loyal Tatars. 17

18 Demographic dynamics of this sort, when mixed with policies that favor the 18
19 newcomers over current residents, can trigger secession because inaction begets 19
20 adverse material consequences for the minority's employment, economic, and 20
21 education opportunities. Besides the material consequences, which are significant, 21
22 demographic changes have deleterious ideational effects, spreading fear, 22
23 exacerbating security dilemmas, and ultimately radicalizing actors. 23

24 Wrapped in the garb of selective histories that include glorious battles lost, 24
25 sacrifices made, and subsequent subordination, ethnic groups seek redemption. 25
26 In its extreme form, this requires laying claim to a separate state; but lesser forms 26
27 include obtaining credible commitments to increase ethno-regional power and 27
28 prestige. Secessionist leaders and their separatist movements do not possess fixed 28
29 demands, but rather adjust the extent of their demands on the central government 29
30 along a spectrum from moderate demands such as cultural rights all the way to 30
31 independence (Horowitz 1985: 13). As Jenne (2007) has shown, this fluctuation in 31
32 the extent of ethnic group demands over time and between groups is a form of 32
33 bargaining leverage, the true extent of which is determined by previous autonomy, 33
34 territorial concentration and access to resources, both internal and external. 34

35 Demographic factors are important in more direct ways. Most scholars recognize, 35
36 for instance, that a territorially concentrated minority is more likely than a spatially 36
37 dispersed one to form a serious secessionist movement (Toft 2002, 2003; Collier 37
38 and Hoeffler 2004). The mechanisms that have been suggested for the association 38
39 between secession and spatial demography are sundry, and include the fact that 39
40 concentration reinforces ethnic identity, facilitates collective action, minimizes 40
41 internal opposition, and enables ethnic mobilization. The most appropriate means 41
42 of measuring ethnic demography—in particular how to summarize it into a single 42
43 index—remains the subject of considerable debate, however (Posner 2004; Siroky 43
44 2007; Chandra and Wilkinson 2008). 44

45

1 The vast majority of large-N studies that would be relevant to this debate 1
2 employ the same measure of ethnic diversity—ethno-linguistic fractionalization 2
3 or ELF—originally calculated in 1960 by Soviet researchers for 129 countries by 3
4 summing the squared shares of “ethno-linguistic groups.” According to a large 4
5 body of theory on violent conflict, however, it is not ethnic “fractionalization” (a 5
6 large number of small, splintered groups) that should be associated with conflict, 6
7 but a small number of large, internally cohesive groups. There is a lot of evidence 7
8 and theory suggesting that ELF is not the appropriate measure of the theoretical 8
9 concept (Horowitz 1985; Esteban and Ray 1994, 2008; Collier 1998; Collier, Hoeffler, 9
10 and Soderbom 2001; Ellingsen 2000; Reynal-Querol 2002; Sambanis 2002; Sambanis 10
11 and Doyle 2006; Alesina et al. 2003; Fearon 2003; Cederman and Girardin 2007; 11
12 Siroky 2007; Chandra and Wilkinson 2008). Although discontent with ELF is high, 12
13 alternatives are still few and far between. 13

14 One noteworthy exception is proposed in Reynal-Querol (2002), which offers a 14
15 measure of ethnic polarization to capture how far a country diverges from the case 15
16 of two equally sized groups (e.g., split 50/50). One important limitation, however, 16
17 is that not all countries look like Cyprus, Estonia, and Belgium; many have more 17
18 than two relevant groups. Theoretically and empirically, we also expect more 18
19 conflict for three large groups (e.g., Iraq, Gambia, Benin, or Bosnia) or four (e.g., 19
20 Nigeria, Bolivia, Kenya, or the United Arab Emirates). This may be one reason that 20
21 it has not been widely used. Until there is more work on the measurement—and 21
22 new measures that match particular theories are created—progress on this front 22
23 is likely to be slow. Missing from this discussion of size, however, is space—or 23
24 any indication of where the region/group is located. Whether it is inland or on 24
25 the periphery can be crucial for the viability of a secessionist movement. Most 25
26 secessionist movements, but not all, occur in peripheral regions. Cederman et 26
27 al. (2009) have demonstrated empirically that separatist conflict is significantly 27
28 more likely in regions near the state border and at a distance from the capital than 28
29 revolutionary conflicts, which tend to occur closer to the capital. 29

30 At the most basic level, geographic proximity is thought to influence the behavior 30
31 of the central government, its military, and the insurgents (Sprout and Sprout 1956; 31
32 Jackson 1958; Diehl 1991; Gleditsch and Ward 2001). The use of geography in the 32
33 limited sense of distance is more a proxy of logistical interaction opportunities than 33
34 an attempt to model the impact of geography on actors’ behavior and strategies 34
35 of conflict. Beyond distance, the most natural feature to think of in the context of 35
36 secession is terrain. Terrain may influence strategy, and could affect the decision 36
37 to continue fighting for secession rather than to negotiate, and therefore influences 37
38 the duration of the secessionist conflict. 38

39 For example, Fearon and Laitin (2003) have argued that, since insurgencies thrive 39
40 in weakly accessible areas such as dense forests or mountainous terrain, where 40
41 offense advantages are minimized and defensive tactics have an edge, countries 41
42 with these features are more likely to experience insurgent, often secessionist, 42
43 civil wars (see also Fearon 2004a). Collier and Hoeffler (2004, 2009) find only 43
44 marginal support for the mountainous component and no support for the forest 44
45 component of the hypothesis. Current cross-sectional efforts to test this idea using 45

1 the percentage of the country covered by mountain or dummy variables represent 1
2 only crude approximations. Few studies, however, take full advantage of GIS and, 2
3 as a result, geographic analysis tends to consider only very rough geographic 3
4 measures of borders, proximity, and terrain. Efforts using GIS generated data will 4
5 help to bridge the currently large gap between measurement and theory, here as 5
6 in other areas, and will emphasize important interactions, such as those between 6
7 geography, ethnicity, and conflict (Cederman, Buhaug, and Ketil Rod 2009). 7

8 In particular, more precise geo-coded data will enable us to examine theoretical 8
9 propositions at their appropriate level. Often, the appropriate level of measurement 9
10 is not the country *per se*, but the limited area in which the conflict occurs. Thus, 10
11 slippage between measurement and theory is potentially considerable. For 11
12 example, if mountains are hypothesized to influence the duration of secessionist 12
13 and insurgent conflict, then it would make good sense to measure the terrain in 13
14 the region of potential conflict rather than as a percentage of the entire country's 14
15 territory for the simple reason that there is no obvious correspondence between the 15
16 regional topography and the country's average topography. 16

17 The same goes for many other variables—including ethnic heterogeneity, 17
18 geography, and inequality, which should be understood at the local level for 18
19 regionally-based secessionist conflicts rather than solely at the national level. 19
20 Sambanis and Milanović (2004) offer an insightful analysis using regional inequality 20
21 data. But local data on ethnic heterogeneity are hard to come by for a large sample 21
22 of states. Even such data at the national level are far from abundant and are often 22
23 problematic (Siroky 2007). Despite data limitations, demographic and geographic 23
24 features of the conflict deserve closer theoretical scrutiny and closer measurement 24
25 than has been standard practice to date. It seems fair to presume that many 25
26 characteristics of conflict zones are not necessarily well represented by features 26
27 of the country as a whole. At the same time, characteristics of the region relative 27
28 to the features of the country as a whole are most relevant to understanding some 28
29 of the sources of secessionist conflict, especially economic and political grievances 29
30 (Stewart 2009; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Weidmann 2010). Buhaug et al. (2009) 30
31 have taken up this task in relation to the relative economic prosperity of regions, 31
32 and have shown that, for civil wars, absolute poverty increases the probability 32
33 of conflict in specific areas, but that relative wealth increases the probability of 33
34 conflict only in poor states. An improved effort in this domain will also have 34
35 payoffs for related questions, such as the causes and consequences of the spread, 35
36 diffusion, and escalation of secessionist conflict within and across borders (see 36
37 also Chapter 12). 37

38 This is why speaking of ethnic demography requires a parallel discussion of 38
39 ethnic geography. Territorially dispersed ethnic groups, of whatever size, are less 39
40 likely to engage in secessionist activity, because collective action is more difficult to 40
41 achieve, ethnic ties are generally weaker, and internal opposition from other ethnic 41
42 groups is likely to be greater. Ethnic groups that fit this pattern tend to pursue 42
43 policies that redress the discrimination they face within the context of the existing 43
44 state, seeking voice rather than exit (Hirschman 1970). Similarly, the discussion 44
45 of ethnic demography and ethnic geography also must deal with the issue of 45

1 ethnicity itself to show why it is ethnic groups, rather than some other collective 1
2 identity, that seek secession. Hale (2008) has offered a creative psychological 2
3 explanation for why ethnicity offers such a powerful strategy for mobilization, by 3
4 separating ethnicity, which is viewed as an uncertainty-reduction technique and 4
5 not necessarily a motive for behavior, from ethnic politics, which is about interests. 5
6 This theoretical move places ethnicity on firmer ground, provides leverage in 6
7 explaining why ethnicity is sometimes, but far from consistently, associated with 7
8 conflict, and shows how ethnicity can resolve collective action problems faced by 8
9 potential secessionist movements. 9

10 All of these explanations—political, economic, demographic, and geographic— 10
11 focus on the ethnic group/region as the unit of analysis. They assume that the 11
12 ethnic group is a more or less unitary actor, an assumption that should be relaxed 12
13 to analyze particular settings (Kitschelt 1989; Stedman 1997; Gorenburg 2000; 13
14 Cunningham 2006; Kalyvas 2008; Bueno de Mesquita 2008; Christia 2008; Pearlman 14
15 2008; Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2010; Lawrence 2010; Staniland 2010) (see 15
16 also Chapter 11). A direction for future research, then, involves examining how 16
17 micro-level and intra-ethnic differences influence macro-level behavior, such as 17
18 foreign policy. For example, how does the salience of differences between Gheg 18
19 and Tosk Albanians influence the likelihood of a pan-Albanian movement aimed at 19
20 uniting Albanian-inhabited lands in Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece 20
21 with Albania proper? Second, future research should exploit more vigorously the 21
22 increasing precision of information available through GIS and geo-coded data of 22
23 ethnic groups and conflicts. Third, ethnic group-level explanations often fail to take 23
24 the state sufficiently seriously, ignoring the state’s characteristics, behavior, and 24
25 strategy. The next section redresses this omission by focusing squarely on the state. 25

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29 **The State** 29 30 30

31 Despite the centrality of the state, a good portion of the literature depicts secession 31
32 in a seemingly stateless political space. Ironically, one way in which the state has 32
33 been brought into the analysis is through its absence in studies of state weakness, 33
34 state failure, and state capacity. In the case of state failure, the state cannot prevent 34
35 secessionist sentiments from escalating into sustained movements—it is not what 35
36 the state does, but what it does *not* do that matters. Fearon and Laitin (2003), among 36
37 others, provide empirical evidence that poorer states are more prone to all forms 37
38 of civil war, including separatist civil war, than are their wealthier counterparts 38
39 (cf. Young 2009; Hechter, Quinn, and Wibbels 2004; Siroky 2007) (see Chapter 12). 39
40 Theoretically, this correlation is sometimes interpreted as the effect of low state 40
41 capacity—since weak states are unable to deter insurgencies, civil wars are more 41
42 likely to erupt. 42

43 These indicators of state capacity—GDP per capita, mountainous terrain, oil 43
44 revenue dependence—are all believed to make insurgency easier. We can theorize 44
45 another mechanism, however. Secessionists gain popular support and are sustained 45

1 by offering what weak states cannot—protection of property and provision of 1
 2 services—the basic elements of governance. Rebel rule, or guerilla governance 2
 3 as it is sometimes called, supplants the official government in some region of the 3
 4 country (Wickham-Crowley 1987, 1992; Kasfir n.d.). In winning the battle to protect 4
 5 and provide, rebel groups succeed in establishing states, albeit inside other states. 5

6 In some cases, rebels are merely following the lead of the (host) state, which 6
 7 itself was formed through secession. The prior secession provides a convenient 7
 8 example and an obvious language in which to voice minority grievances (Beran 8
 9 1984; Pavković 2007; Siroky 2009). When the size of the political unit shrinks, intra- 9
 10 group distinctions can become more politically salient, and ethnic competition at 10
 11 lower levels generally increases. Relations within groups that were once tempered 11
 12 by competition between groups in a larger polity are subject to reevaluation. 12
 13 Once other groups are out of the picture, smaller differences can assume greater 13
 14 importance, making ethnic co-existence less attractive and secession more so. 14

15 We have many examples of this phenomenon in Europe and Eurasia. Bosniak 15
 16 leaders, for example, were motivated in good measure to pursue secession after 16
 17 Croatia and Slovenia broke away, which left them in a smaller political unit in which 17
 18 the relative size of Bosniaks to other ethnic groups was much larger. Similarly, 18
 19 after Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina seceded from Yugoslavia, everything, 19
 20 changed for Serb minorities in these new states, arguably for the worse, prompting 20
 21 recursive secessionist conflict to surface in Krajina and Republika Srpska (see 21
 22 Chapters 8 and 12 and Part VI). Georgia's secession from the Soviet Union, too, was 22
 23 soon followed by recursive secessionist violence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. 23
 24 When Moldova broke away from the Soviet Union, Transdniestria claimed a right 24
 25 to remain part of the Soviet Union, ultimately producing a *de facto* independent 25
 26 statelet, sponsored by Russia, on the West Bank of the river Dnistr (see Part VI). 26

27 Likewise in Africa, once Somaliland broke away from Somalia, Puntland 27
 28 attempted to secede from Somaliland, leading yet another territory, Maakhir 28
 29 state, to proclaim independence in response to overlapping claims from Puntland 29
 30 and Somaliland (see Part VI). When Katanga declared its intent to leave Zaire, 30
 31 the Baluba in North Katanga saw that life was about to take a turn for the worse, 31
 32 and decided to get out while their window of opportunity remained open. And 32
 33 in South Asia, once Bangladesh left Pakistan, a Sindhi movement emerged for 33
 34 autonomy from both Punjabi and Muhajir dominance. Zulfi Bhutto's government 34
 35 then aided the Sindh in the 1970s, which facilitated Muhajir mobilization against 35
 36 Sindhi dominance. In short, when minorities exist in the new state, as they almost 36
 37 always do, reciprocal separatism can emerge even where such sentiments did not 37
 38 previously exist or were only latent. One scholar explains this phenomenon matter- 38
 39 of-factly: "one group's independence is another's servitude" (Horowitz 1985: 278). 39

40 The state is sometimes directly responsible for ethnic minority mobilization, as 40
 41 when the state initiates or prevents violence for political purposes (e.g., Wilkinson 41
 42 2004). According to a domestic version of diversionary war theory, for example, 42
 43 governments militarily target disliked (and preferably defenseless) ethnic groups 43
 44 at home, blaming them for domestic shortcomings, creating an in-group, out- 44
 45 group distinction, and scapegoating to elicit public support (Coser 1956; Glaser 45

1 1958; Gagnon 1995; Tir and Jasinski 2008). Domestic diversion, it is argued, has 1
2 many of the same benefits as international diversionary war, and some that it does 2
3 not have, such as ethnic outbidding, but has far fewer costs and consequences 3
4 (DeVotta 2005; Filippov 2009). It also has the benefit of being a strategy that is 4
5 broadly available to most leaders, since most possess multiple ethnic groups, at 5
6 least some of which offer low-cost opportunities for domestic diversionary conflict 6
7 (Snyder and Ballentine 1996; Tir and Jasinski 2008). 7

8 State repression, more generally, can include non-violent policy, such as 8
9 changing laws that adversely affect minorities, forbidding minority political 9
10 parties, removing forms of positive discrimination that were in place, or it can be 10
11 more aggressive, and involve jailing charismatic leaders, confiscating property, 11
12 assassinating leaders (Davenport 1995; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999; Moore 2000; 12
13 Mylonas 2008). The risk associated with this form of repression is that it can 13
14 backfire, causing latent, divided, and unorganized groups to mobilize, thus 14
15 escalating tensions which were previously mild (Lichbach 1987). To avoid backlash, 15
16 some have suggested that leaders seek defenseless (but despised) ethnic groups 16
17 to achieve the effect without the attendant risk of escalation. Defenseless groups 17
18 also tend to lack ethnic kin states that could intervene or support their brethren 18
19 if threatened, but even groups with kin states may be targeted, provided that the 19
20 kin states remain relatively uninterested in coming to their aid. The psychology 20
21 of aggression literature, however, fairly thoroughly refutes the assumption that 21
22 defenseless groups are more likely to be victimized by the states in which they 22
23 reside than are strong groups (Horowitz 2001: 135–50) (see Chapter 12). 23

24 This relates to the more general question of whether repression works. Gurr, 24
25 Tilly, and others sometimes identified with theories of “relative deprivation” tend 25
26 to focus on state repression as the critical force driving group mobilization, so the 26
27 answer is clearly no from the state’s viewpoint (Gurr 1970; Tilly 1978; Eckstein 27
28 1965: 154; Lichbach 1987: 269). However, “resource mobilization” theorists argue 28
29 that repression deters group mobilization by increasing the costs of organizing and 29
30 decreasing the leader’s capacity to do so (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Although it 30
31 may exacerbate grievances, repression makes group violence against the state less 31
32 likely. Lichbach attempts to resolve this “paradox” by suggesting that there is a 32
33 key omitted variable—the consistency of the government’s policy. Both consistent 33
34 accommodation and consistent repression work to reduce violent ethnic group 34
35 activity, whereas inconsistent policies generally increase ethnic group activity 35
36 (Lichbach 1987). 36

37 The question of repression’s effectiveness is also central to the closely related 37
38 literature on the effectiveness of indiscriminate violence in counterinsurgencies. 38
39 Downes (2007, 2008) questions the conventional wisdom that violence against 39
40 noncombatants must be selective or risk alienating the population, and explores 40
41 the conditions under which such violence can be effective. Downes finds that 41
42 repression and indiscriminate violence are more effective when the geographic area 42
43 and the size of the underlying population supporting the insurgents are smaller. 43
44 Rather than alienating the local population, Downes argues, repression and 44
45 indiscriminate force are sometimes needed to prevent the local population from 45

1 supporting the separatists and insurgents. Downes and Cochrane (2010) present 1
2 tentative evidence that repression and civilian victimization may help states win 2
3 wars, especially against smaller targets, but also raise some important concerns 3
4 about endogeneity and selection effects. 4

5 Lyall (2009) also questions the notion that indiscriminate violence and 5
6 repression is necessarily counter-productive in terms of inciting insurgent attacks. 6
7 Across matched pairs of similar shelled and non-shelled villages, Lyall shows 7
8 that the shelled ones experienced a 24 percent reduction in post-treatment mean 8
9 insurgent attacks relative to control villages. Lyall (2010) builds on this result 9
10 and presents compelling evidence that ethnicity is also critical to understanding 10
11 whether repression works to reduce violence in civil wars through its effect on 11
12 the information available to co-ethnic pro-state counter-insurgents. Using evidence 12
13 from the Second Chechen war, Lyall demonstrates that co-ethnics make more 13
14 effective counterinsurgents, reducing subsequent insurgent attacks by about 14
15 40 percent after pro-Russian Chechen sweeps relative to similar Russian-only 15
16 operations. Intra-ethnic networks and prior experience as an insurgent serve to 16
17 reduce subsequent insurgent attacks by providing better information, which allows 17
18 counterinsurgents to correctly identify the insurgents within the population, to 18
19 issue more credible threats against civilians for noncooperation and to convert or, 19
20 if necessary, to kill any fighters and their supporters. 20

21 The discussion of state behavior toward secessionists would be incomplete if 21
22 it focused solely on repression and violence, and failed to consider the possibility 22
23 of accommodation and the most common institutional solutions. There is a 23
24 lively debate about which institutions work, what incentives they engender, and 24
25 what effect they have on the propensity to mobilize and seek secession. Federal 25
26 institutions, and decentralization more generally, are sometimes thought to be 26
27 slippery slopes leading to secession (Roeder 1991; Bunce 1999; Cornell 2002). 27
28 Others contend, however, that such institutions actually satisfy, rather than 28
29 whet, separatist appetites (Diamond 1999; Stepan 1999; Bermeo 2002; Bermeo 29
30 and Amoretti 2003). Scholars have made headway in unpacking this “paradox,” 30
31 and analyzing the conditions under which decentralization has one effect rather 31
32 than the other, and the tradeoffs that stem from choosing between repressive and 32
33 responsive policies (Hechter 2000a; Kohli 1997; Lustick, Miodownik, and Eidelson 33
34 2004; Bakke and Wibbels 2006; Brancati 2006, 2008). 34

35 Hechter (2000a: 10), for example, offers the following reconciliation of the 35
36 two arguments in the literature, specifically with respect to federalism as one 36
37 responsive policy with ambiguous effects: “Whereas decentralization may provide 37
38 cultural minorities with greater resources to engage in collective action ... at the 38
39 same time, it may also erode the demand for sovereignty.” Kohli (1997) makes a 39
40 related argument about accommodation from a strong state increasing instability 40
41 in the short term, but decreasing it in the long term. 41

42 Lustick, Miodownik, and Eidelson (2004) provide an agent-based model 42
43 of secessionism to explore these possibilities and find support for the views of 43
44 Hechter and Kohli: “increasing representativeness,” they write, “in fact decreased 44
45 secessionist activity ... representative institutions, even if not fully autonomous, 45

1 thus seem to inhibit secessionism." At the same time, the authors argue that rigorous 1
2 repression can prevent mobilization, but only in the short term, "at great cost and 2
3 without eliminating the threat of secessionism" (Lustick, Miodownik, and Eidelson 3
4 2004: 223). Power-sharing, they claim, can be more effective in the long term, yet 4
5 it also tends to encourage larger minority "identitarian movements" and faces 5
6 risks from spoilers (Stedman 1997; Sisk 2003). Northern Ireland, Fiji, and Papua 6
7 New Guinea are often cited as power-sharing successes because they reduced the 7
8 risk of spoilers by integrating and including them in decision-making (Horowitz 8
9 1985; Reilly 2001). Nigeria, Lebanon, and Cyprus, by contrast, are reminders that 9
10 even carefully designed power-sharing institutions are far from a panacea, and can 10
11 sometimes exacerbate problems in divided societies (Seaver 2000). 11

12 Bakke and Wibbels (2006) propose a different reconciliation of federalism's 12
13 heterogeneous effects, contending that its ability to mitigate political and secessionist 13
14 violence is contingent upon regional inequality and ethnic diversity. Specifically, 14
15 they argue that fiscal decentralization increases the likelihood of ethnic rebellion 15
16 when there are wide disparities in income across region. In addition, they find that 16
17 when a strong national party excludes ethnic regions from national governance, 17
18 ethnic conflict is more likely. Essentially, Bakke and Wibbels show that the effect 18
19 of federalism is contingent on underlying societal features, especially ethnic group 19
20 concentration and regional economic inequality. 20

21 Institutional arguments, such as those associated with federalism, also raise 21
22 a number of important questions, including (1) why, despite decades of federal 22
23 arrangements, secession happens at certain junctures, but not at others and (2) why 23
24 secession occurs in the absence of federal arrangements, or how it helps to explain 24
25 why secession happened in pre-federal times, say from the Habsburg and Ottoman 25
26 Empires, where none possessed federal institutions and very few possessed any 26
27 form of autonomy. In the post-Soviet context, it raises three key questions: (1) how 27
28 to explain cases with autonomous status that did *not* experience violent conflict, (2) 28
29 why cases with marginal levels of autonomy engaged in violent conflict *before* cases 29
30 with actual autonomy, and (3) how to incorporate endogenous institutions, or the 30
31 origins of autonomous arrangements, which often followed, rather than preceded, 31
32 violent conflict (Saparov 2010). 32

33 These challenges aside, this literature pushes us to think harder about the 33
34 heterogeneous effects of state policy on mobilization and separatism by specifying 34
35 non-linear and dynamic relationships between rebel groups (dissidents, insurgents, 35
36 and separatists) and the state (the central government, its armed forces) (Lichbach 36
37 1987; Rasler 1996; Gartner and Regan 1996). One conclusion that emerges clearly is 37
38 that secessionists act and react to the state's actions, both present and past, and not 38
39 only to the state's inaction and weakness. We therefore need to better understand 39
40 the endogenous sources of variation in state minority policies and the conditions 40
41 under which states pursue assimilation, inclusion, repression, cleansing, and killing 41
42 (Mylonas 2008). Whether policy tends toward inclusion, the *status quo*, or exclusion 42
43 is likely to sway minority leaders' calculus closer or farther from secession versus 43
44 a less radical strategy (Bunce 2005). The state, its past and likely future behavior, 44
45 45

1 must therefore be brought back into the analysis of secession to understand why 1
2 and when some ethnic groups secede (see Chapters 11 and 12). 2

3 Walter (2006a) has done this in a framework that focuses on the government's 3
4 past behavior toward ethnic groups and its likely future behavior. In particular, 4
5 she shows that ethnic groups are considerably more likely to mobilize for self- 5
6 determination, all else equal, when the government is unlikely to face additional 6
7 ethnic challengers in the future and when it has a history of concessions to earlier 7
8 ethnic separatist demands. Walter argues that understanding ethnic secession 8
9 involves examining the past and future interactions between the state and its ethnic 9
10 groups—in short, analyzing retrospective and prospective calculations—rather 10
11 than merely focusing on the immediate structural conditions such as the state's 11
12 capacity or topography. Incorporating this information into the analysis represents 12
13 an advance on purely structural accounts, and adds a much needed dose of strategy 13
14 and dynamism to explanations of separatist activism. 14

15 Walter (2006b) builds on this logic to explain why governments fight some 15
16 separatists but not others. Drawing on a reputational mechanism, Walter shows that 16
17 governments are less likely to pursue responsive policies and more likely to engage 17
18 in repressive ones when the state faces multiple future ethnic challengers. She also 18
19 shows that repression appears to work in the sense that governments which failed 19
20 to accommodate one ethnic challenger were less likely to confront additional ones 20
21 in the future, thus offering a causal link between the future and present behavior of 21
22 strategic actors (see also Walter 2009; and, for a skeptical view, Evangelista 2002). 22
23 Barktus (1999) explains this aspect of state behavior using a materialist logic and 23
24 focusing on the strength of the disputants and the resources involved. Griffiths and 24
25 Fazal (2008) focus on institutions, and argue that democracies are more likely to let 25
26 secessionists leave peacefully, but that the administrative organization of the state 26
27 determines who they can release without fear of setting a precedent, and who they 27
28 must fight to maintain their reputation. Butt (2011) brings in an international angle, 28
29 and argues that the government's response depends on its perception of whether 29
30 the new state is likely to be a rival in the future, which is contingent on regional 30
31 security dynamics. 31

32 This state-oriented secession literature usefully focuses our attention on how 32
33 rebel ethnic groups and their host states interact strategically. Just as studies 33
34 of secession focusing solely on ethnic group grievances, economic inequality, 34
35 demographic and geographic factors will miss the crucial role of the state, so 35
36 studies of state repression and accommodation must simultaneously account for 36
37 the behavioral foundations of the ethnic group behavior (see Goodwin 2001, for a 37
38 thorough treatment of state-centric approaches to revolutions). Incorporating the 38
39 strategic interaction of states and groups enhances our ability to explain secession, 39
40 but more must be done to capture the dynamics of secession. Hechter (1992), for 40
41 example, advances a model of secession in this spirit in which four processes— 41
42 some focused on the host state's decision, and others focused on the collective 42
43 action problem faced by the population of the territorial sub-unit—work together 43
44 to make secession unlikely among most regions. 44

45

1 Up to this point, the analysis at the group and the state level has bracketed 1
 2 out everything going on *outside* the state. If secession is a political phenomenon 2
 3 distinguished in part by being situated at the intersection of domestic and 3
 4 international politics, then a theoretical account of secession must also address 4
 5 the international dimensions of ethnic secessions, and the critical role played by 5
 6 foreign powers in escalating and suppressing secession. 6

7
 8
 9
 10 **(Some Conjectures about) Foreign Powers** 10

11
 12 Even though secessions occur within states, which is where most of the literature 12
 13 has focused its attention, they cannot be understood fully without accounting for 13
 14 the actions and actors outside the state (see Chapters 13 and 14). Bracketing the 14
 15 international context and international actors from the analysis does not merely 15
 16 provide an “incomplete” picture. It is inferentially problematic in the sense that 16
 17 important aspects of secession elude explanation, including the onset, duration, 17
 18 and termination of secessionist conflict (see Chapter 12). A purely domestic story 18
 19 also risks falsely attributing to domestic politics what is driven by international 19
 20 affairs and world politics. 20

21 The existing literature at this level of analysis has focused on explaining the 21
 22 fundamental causes and consequences of external involvement. Indeed, external 22
 23 support for secessionists is one of the primary ways in which external actors 23
 24 influence the dynamics of secession and make it more likely to erupt into violence 24
 25 (Heraclides 1990; Jenne 2007; Saideman and Ayres 2008). External support can run 25
 26 the gamut from diplomatic and rhetorical support, to border lenience, or providing 26
 27 sanctuary for fighters, to explicit material support, which can include financial 27
 28 support, arms sales, military training, and even direct military involvement. How 28
 29 much support ensues will influence minority group–state bargaining dynamics, 29
 30 including whether secession even emerges as a serious possibility (see Chapter 14). 30

31 It is therefore not especially surprising that the actions of foreign powers 31
 32 have a direct bearing on the *success* of separatism. As the constitutive theory of 32
 33 statehood has long recognized, recognition by foreign powers is the *sine qua non* 33
 34 of secessionists’ efforts to become new states (Crawford 2005) (see Chapter 13). 34
 35 Even when secessionist movements do not gain wider recognition, as in Northern 35
 36 Cyprus or Abkhazia, a minimum requirement for their success and sustenance 36
 37 seems to be that at least one state is willing to offer its support. Cetinyan (2002) 37
 38 shows that such external support, if and when it exists, can cast a long shadow 38
 39 over the domestic actors; some forms of support, Kuperman (2008) and Grigoryan 39
 40 (2010) argue, may even create moral hazards for insurgent groups, and increase the 40
 41 likelihood of escalation. 41

42 Drawing attention to the importance of international actors raises important and 42
 43 difficult questions that do not fit neatly into the group–state framework, including 43
 44 how to capture the heterogeneous effects of external actors on secession and how to 44
 45 explain third-party involvement in the first place. Introducing a third player alters 45

1 the balance of power between the central government and the minority group and 1
2 influences whether the group will remain silent, revolt and be crushed, receive 2
3 some form of autonomy, or seek to exit the state altogether. As a result, bringing 3
4 in a third player enables us to explain why, among diverse states with very similar 4
5 endowments (i.e., structural conditions, ethnic composition, state capacity), some 5
6 escalate into secessionist violence, while others do not. Since external involvement 6
7 is highly variable and volatile, not only across cases but within them over time, 7
8 it provides some leverage in explaining variation within cases over time, which 8
9 is something that static and structural factors are not well equipped to do (see 9
10 Chapter 13). 10

11 To the extent that the presence of third parties shifts the balance of relative 11
12 power toward one party and away from the other, any model that ignores this shift 12
13 will inaccurately evaluate the game being played and will misjudge the outcome. 13
14 Unlike individual or elite theories that are also dynamic, however, external support 14
15 directly affects relative power, and therefore enables scholars to explain why 15
16 some groups (possessing all or some of the above mentioned attributes) engage 16
17 in secessionist violence, at certain times, and why these secessionist activities wax 17
18 and wane over time. 18

19 Jenne (2004, 2007) shows that the inclusion of the external dimensions of 19
20 secession can also potentially explain why the *same* group shifts its demands over 20
21 time, sometimes advancing more moderate claims, such as language rights, and at 21
22 other times making more radical demands, such as secession. Jenne's theory of these 22
23 dynamics explains why minorities shift their demands over time. The basic idea is 23
24 that minority groups radicalize their demands when they enjoy significant external 24
25 support, even when the central government has committed to protecting minority 25
26 rights. Conversely, minority groups temper their demands, even if the central 26
27 government pursues repression, when outside support is minimal or non-existent. 27
28 This reasoning provides a compelling alternative to explanations based on credible 28
29 commitments, security dilemmas, structural and historical factors, and casts some 29
30 doubt on theories that focus on the host state's policy in explaining secession (see 30
31 also Jenne, Saideman, and Lowe 2007 for a quantitative test; Saideman and Jenne 31
32 2009) (see also Chapter 14). 32

33 Closely related to the literature on the effects of external involvement is 33
34 scholarship addressing its causes: why do some external actors involve themselves 34
35 in the secessionist struggles of their neighbors, while others refrain, or even actively 35
36 discourage separatism? If the involvement of external actors explains important 36
37 aspects of secessionist dynamics, then what explains why external actors become 37
38 involved in the first place? 38

39 Saideman (1997) takes this important question head on, challenging the 39
40 prominent "vulnerability" argument, which has been used to explain the restraint 40
41 of foreign powers in aiding secessionists in neighboring countries, and, most 41
42 notably, in accounting for Africa's so-called "secessionist deficit" (see also Chapter 42
43 14). Vulnerability to secession at home has allegedly inhibited African states from 43
44 supporting secessionists abroad (Herbst 1989, 1992; Englebort and Hummel 2005). 44
45 As one scholar put it: "the greatest deterrent to territorial revision has been the 45

1 fear of opening a Pandora’s box. If any boundary is seriously questioned, why not 1
 2 [question] all the boundaries in Western Africa?” (Zartman 1966: 109; Jackson 1990, 2
 3 1992; Saideman 1997: 722). Other scholars have sought to extend this logic to the 3
 4 European context (Nakarada 1991; Steinberg 1993; Woodward 1995). 4

5 Despite its plausibility, the theory has received relatively little empirical support, 5
 6 in part, perhaps because its predictions are indeterminate for states that are not 6
 7 “vulnerable” to secession. It is unclear how the theory can explain why states that 7
 8 are vulnerable to secession at home have engaged in overt and tacit support for 8
 9 insurgents in neighboring states through the horn of Africa, as well as in Central 9
 10 and West Africa (Saideman 1997: 724–6). Empirically, many states that intervene 10
 11 in their neighbors’ secessionist conflicts have separatists in their own front yard 11
 12 (Heraclides 1990). Russia is a multiethnic state whose secessionist insurgency in 12
 13 Chechnya has done little to dampen its support for separatism in Transnistria, 13
 14 Abkhazia, Crimea, and South Ossetia at various times. 14

15 The theory of ethnic ties, which stands as the main alternative, argues that 15
 16 ethnic affinity between external states and host state minority groups increases 16
 17 the likelihood of support. According to Saideman, in its extreme form, support 17
 18 stemming from ethnic ties can assume the form of irredentism, but lesser forms of 18
 19 support (diplomatic support, arms sales, subsidies, border lenience) can be critical to 19
 20 the success of a secessionist movement and are certainly also worthy of explanation. 20
 21 Unlike vulnerability, which merely explains the absence of interference, ethnic ties 21
 22 have the advantage of serving both to compel and to constrain states that may be 22
 23 considering involvement in other states’ secessionist struggles. The theory of ethnic 23
 24 ties predicts that support for the secessionists will follow from states in which the 24
 25 ruling elite’s constituency has ethnic ties to the secessionists. By contrast, states in 25
 26 which the ruling elite’s constituency has ethnic ties to the state, support for *the host* 26
 27 *state* is predicted to follow. Cases in which the ruling elite’s constituency has ethnic 27
 28 ties to both or neither, support is predicted for both sides or neither side (Carment 28
 29 1994; Saideman 1997: 728; Saideman 2002, 2007) (see also Chapter 14). 29

30 Carment (1994: 577–8, n.130) argues that 30

31
 32 *... defining transnational affinity is difficult, however, because there is more 32*
 33 *than one way to establish ethnic identity. Race, religion, tribal (kinship) and 33*
 34 *linguistic cleavages may not coincide, so affinity in one area (linguistic) 34*
 35 *may be at odds with another area (kinship). Moreover, elites can attempt to 35*
 36 *mobilize other transnational identities (pan-Arabism as opposed to Islam, 36*
 37 *for example) or cultural subsystems at the expense of transnational ethnic 37*
 38 *affinities. In sum, ethnic linkage with a group in another state does not 38*
 39 *guarantee mutual interest.* 39

40
 41 It is therefore not surprising that the ethnic ties logic may over-predict foreign 41
 42 interference where ethnic ties exist, and under-predict it when such ties do not 42
 43 exist. 43

44 Many states have ethnic kin on the other side of their border with neighboring 44
 45 states—in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and elsewhere—yet only *rarely* do these 45

1 ethnic ties produce support for secessionists, or host states. Even less frequently 1
 2 do such ethnic ties lead to irredentism, which one scholar called “the prerogative 2
 3 of the few” (Horowitz 1985, 1991; Saideman and Ayres 2008). Sometimes states 3
 4 with strong ethnic ties to a minority on the other side of their border act with 4
 5 intense restraint, even actively detaining individuals promoting separatism, while 5
 6 strongly supporting its ethnic kin in other states (Siroky 2010). Cases like these, 6
 7 which abound in other parts of the world as well, are difficult to explain within the 7
 8 context of the ethnic framework. Finally, states *without* ethnic ties to either the 8
 9 secessionists or the host states sometimes become involved but the theory does not 9
 10 illuminate these cases. 10

11 It stands to reason that advancing this debate requires expanding the scope of 11
 12 vulnerability to include non-secessionist forms of vulnerability, including political 12
 13 and economic vulnerability at the interstate level, and also extending the idea of 13
 14 ethnic ties to incorporate non-ethnic ties, particularly “strategic ties.” Strategic ties 14
 15 are those links between states—economic, political, and military—that determine 15
 16 the overall level of incentive-based cooperation between states. This feature of state- 16
 17 to-state relations subsumes vulnerabilities to secession at home and can supersede 17
 18 ethnic ties in some cases. In addition to interference in the presence of ethnic ties, it 18
 19 can also predict interference in the absence of ethnic ties, and can predict restraint 19
 20 even in the presence of ethnic ties. It can also explain cases that the logic of ethnic 20
 21 ties, which stands as the main alternative framework, may not be able to explain 21
 22 because either (1) ethnic ties exist but the external actor is inactive, or (2) there are 22
 23 no ethnic ties, but the external actor is nevertheless engaged. 23

24 The first prediction from this strategic perspective would be that a foreign state 24
 25 with strong strategic ties—which stems from economic dependence or geographic 25
 26 necessity—is highly unlikely to support secessionists in the host state, even if 26
 27 ethnic ties are present and domestic vulnerability is absent. The foreign power is 27
 28 likely to support the central government, provided that it becomes involved at all, 28
 29 when strategic ties (a form of interstate vulnerability) are significant. By contrast, 29
 30 strong strategic enmity—resulting from regional balance of power considerations, 30
 31 discrimination of ethnic kin, or the strategic value of territory—increases the 31
 32 probability that the foreign power supports secessionists in the host state over the 32
 33 central government. The extent and duration of support, and whether it assumes 33
 34 an ideational or material form, will depend not only on group characteristics but 34
 35 on the salience of these strategies ties with the host state. 35

36 This theoretical framework takes account of an important empirical fact—that 36
 37 external support for secessionists can come from all sorts of states, whether or not 37
 38 they possess ethnic ties, and regardless of their domestic vulnerability to secession 38
 39 (Byman et al. 2001; Siroky 2010). Support for Eritrean secessionists came from 39
 40 China, Kuwait, Libya, South Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, and the USSR. 40
 41 Explaining the interference of this motley crew requires a framework that extends 41
 42 beyond ethnic ties and vulnerability to include classic international relations 42
 43 considerations like strategic interest, supporting the enemies of one’s enemy, 43
 44 spreading one’s own ideology, and gaining an advantage in regional rivalries (for 44
 45 a further discussion of these issues see Chapter 14). 45

1 Ethnic ties seem to promote restraint as much if not more than they promote 1
2 intervention, much to the dismay of the separatists with limited options of outside 2
3 support. In instances in which irredentist states become involved in separatist 3
4 conflicts, one might contend that these cases should be analyzed separately, since 4
5 they possess distinct motives. Yet there is good reason to believe that irredentist states 5
6 are similarly propelled and constrained by international political considerations, 6
7 even when they are cloaked in the garb of redeeming ethnic kin (Saideman 2000; 7
8 Saideman and Ayres 2008). States considering intervening or supporting separatists 8
9 will frequently face multiple, often competing, considerations, domestic and 9
10 international, ethnic and strategic. It is not my contention that strategic interests 10
11 are the only consideration, but that they tend to trump others in the calculus of 11
12 confrontation. It predicts that states with strong strategic ties to the host state will 12
13 generally refrain from supporting separatists, at a minimum, and will support the 13
14 central government, if needed, even in the face of ethnic ties. 14

15 In contrast to arguments that focus on the role of domestic ethnic politics, the 15
16 strategic ties logic is explicitly an international theory, one that moves the focus 16
17 away from group characteristics and host state behavior to include international 17
18 relations and foreign policy objectives. This framework enables us to predict 18
19 the full range of theoretically possible and empirically relevant outcomes, and 19
20 is valid for all states, not only states which are vulnerable to secession, or states 20
21 which possess ethnic ties. It allows us to explain the full array of external action, 21
22 including behavior that is unexpected and cannot be derived from either domestic 22
23 vulnerability or ethnic ties theories. 23

24 Take the South Caucasus region, a veritable laboratory of overlapping ethnic 24
25 groups, separatist sentiments, and revisionist states. How can we explain Armenia's 25
26 strong support of its ethnic kin in Azerbaijan, but its suppression of separatism 26
27 by its ethnic kin in Georgia? The strategic ties perspective highlights Azerbaijan's 27
28 interdependence with Georgia—mainly resulting from its geographic dependence 28
29 on Georgia as a transit route to the sea and to its main trading partner, Russia. 29
30 One reporter noted that “[the Georgian–Russian crisis] once again highlighted 30
31 Armenia's economic and transit dependence on Georgia. Just a few days and 31
32 weeks of internal instability in Georgia was enough to create a shortage of essential 32
33 goods in our country” (Hakobyan 2008). 33

34 Armenian behavior is therefore restrained in Javakheti, because of its strategic 34
35 ties to Georgia, but not in Karabakh, because strategic ties with Azerbaijan are 35
36 fewer, and direct ties between Yerevan and Stepanakert in Karabakh are significant. 36
37 The ethnic ties logic cannot explain this variation, since ethnicity is constant across 37
38 the cases. Similarly, Russian involvement in Ossetia and Abkhazia cannot be 38
39 explained by ethnic ties or by reference to the vulnerability argument, which would 39
40 counsel against supporting more separatism in the Caucasus, especially in view of 40
41 Chechnya and, to a lesser extent, Tatarstan (Frombgen 1999; Sharafutdinova 2000). 41

42 The above discussion of external forces and foreign powers is not intended 42
43 to exhaust the range of approaches to the international dimensions of secession, 43
44 which is a burgeoning area of research, but only to outline a few important 44
45 arguments, explanations, and debates, and to suggest some promising avenues for 45

1 current and future research. Some important issues associated with foreign powers 1
 2 and secession have been neglected due to space constraints, but represent other 2
 3 international approaches to understanding and explaining secession: some of these 3
 4 issues include the international politics of secessionist state recognition, the spread 4
 5 of secession and the issue of diasporas (Brubaker 1995; King and Melvin 1999; 5
 6 Fox 2001; Shain 2002; Saideman 2002, 2007; Belanger, Duchesne and Paquin 2005; 6
 7 Carment, James and Taydas 2006; Coggins 2006; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006; 7
 8 Gleditsch 2007; Gleditsch, Salehyan and Schultz 2008). 8

9 Future theoretical and empirical work on secession should aim to further 9
 10 integrate the three levels of analysis highlighted in this essay, exploring the complex 10
 11 interaction of domestic and international politics that ultimately explain secession. 11

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 15 **After Secession** 15
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17 Explaining secession is not only about the struggle for separation and cohesion 17
 18 in a united polity, but also about what happens after secession achieves its target 18
 19 and creates two states where previously there was only one. This dimension of 19
 20 separatism has produced a vigorous debate in the literature that goes to the heart 20
 21 of what social science can contribute to policy toward secession, which oscillates 21
 22 between a belief that secession may be a solution to ethnic conflict, “when all 22
 23 else fails,” and a conviction that secession is more likely to be the source of new 23
 24 conflicts, even if it “resolves” old ones. In this more skeptical view, secession, much 24
 25 like partition after civil war, does not resolve ethnic conflicts, but merely reorders 25
 26 them and creates new forms of violence. 26

27 There are numerous reasons why post-secessionist states may find themselves 27
 28 embroiled in violence, and there are several forms that the violence may assume. 28
 29 Some of the literature has focused on the problem of interstate conflict after 29
 30 separation, whether between the new state and the rump state, or with a new 30
 31 neighbor (Tir 2003, 2005). These studies show that ethnically based territorial 31
 32 disputes play a much greater role in conflict onset than do their economically or 32
 33 strategically based counterparts, and that peaceful secessions are, perhaps not 33
 34 surprisingly, more likely to lead to peaceful relations than violent secessions. Others 34
 35 have focused on the problem of civil war recurrence after partition (Sambanis 2000), 35
 36 finding that partition may reduce residual violence, but does not reduce civil war 36
 37 recurrence (Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009). 37

38 Just as critical to evaluating the effects of separation on conflict reduction is the 38
 39 problem of recursive secessionist conflict, that is, the prospect of a new secessionist 39
 40 civil war (Beran 1984; Pavković 2000; Siroky 2010). More often than not, new 40
 41 states are heterogeneous—minorities are part of the package: some supported 41
 42 the movement for independence, others opposed it, but both must confront the 42
 43 prospect of living in the new state under new rules. If what may have appeared as a 43
 44 unified and more or less homogenous polity, may seem less so after independence 44
 45 is achieved. One reason is that the division of the spoils in the new state creates 45

1 incentives for new groups to form and mobilize. Another is that individuals often 1
2 possess more than one (sometimes overlapping) ethnic identity from which to 2
3 choose, which is likely to be influenced by the new institutional setting (Posner 3
4 2005), and the aggregation of these choices may make a country look quite different 4
5 than it did before independence. 5

6 The problem of accommodating ethnic groups, whether long established or 6
7 newly constructed, is not to be taken for granted in new states. Indeed, it is usually 7
8 little more than an after-thought and an unwelcome guest at the table of many 8
9 new nation-states. "Nationalizing states," as Brubaker (1995) calls them, can make 9
10 life for new minorities so unbearable that the risky struggle to fight their way out 10
11 through secession becomes relatively attractive. In a sense, then, these recursive 11
12 secessionists are merely following the example set for them by their host states, 12
13 which recently seceded themselves. Needless to say, post-secessionist host states 13
14 see the comparison differently. 14

15 Nonetheless, the pattern is a familiar one: oppressed nations pursue independent 15
16 statehood to ensure their survival, and achieve independence only to oppress their 16
17 own minorities. For this reason, recursive secessionist conflict presents one of the 17
18 greatest threats to the emerging state's stability, security, and prosperity. Although 18
19 recursive secession constitutes a persistent pattern worthy of explanation, 19
20 discussions of secession have devoted surprisingly little attention to this specific 20
21 form of violence (for an exception, see Pavković 2000). Investigating this violence 21
22 can advance the current state of debate over secession's aftermath by identifying 22
23 the conditions under which secession and partition reorder conflicts or are able 23
24 to resolve them. It also speaks to the literature on democratic politics in divided 24
25 societies and to debates on the effectiveness of repression, accommodation, and 25
26 indiscriminate violence in counterinsurgency campaigns. 26

27 The debate on whether partition and secession represent peaceful solutions 27
28 to ethnic conflict can be crudely divided into two camps. The first argues that, if 28
29 the groups cannot get along, then the best way forward is to let them simply part 29
30 ways, separating the warring parties into defensible enclaves (Mearsheimer and 30
31 Pape 1993; Mearsheimer and Van Evera 1995; Kaufmann 1996, 1998; Tullberg and 31
32 Tullberg 1997; Downes 2004; Johnson 2008). In this view, secession and partition 32
33 are policy solutions to "intractable" domestic-level disputes. 33

34 Other scholars disagree (Kumar 1997; Sambanis 2000: 479ff; Horowitz 2003). 34
35 Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009) provide compelling large-N evidence that 35
36 partition does not prevent civil war recurrence. Scholars also contest some of the 36
37 assumptions on which the policy of redrawing borders is based—that secession 37
38 can actually produce "homogeneous homelands." "Neither secessionist nor rump 38
39 states are homogenous," writes one scholar, "... there is no clean break ... what 39
40 looks homogenous today in an undivided state in which large groups oppose each 40
41 other can look quite different after a secessionist state establishes itself" (Horowitz 41
42 1998: 191). This is both because borders cannot be redrawn so as to include only 42
43 one group and exclude all the others and also because even groups that look 43
44 homogeneous before the break can look fractionalized, heterogeneous, or divided 44
45 in the new political setting. 45

1 Conceding this critique, some proponents of secession have suggested 1
2 “population transfers” to ensure a “clean cut” after secession: “facilitate the 2
3 dismantling of war-torn multiethnic states and the transfer of populations into 3
4 ethnic enclaves, or homogenous homelands” (Kaufmann 1996: 137). When secession 4
5 seems to lead to further conflict, it is argued, this is only because the cut was not 5
6 clean in the first place (Johnson 2008; Johnson, Horowitz and Weisiger 2009); and 6
7 that is why it is sometimes necessary to move populations and not only borders. 7
8 But, as others have noted, “population transfer only *sounds* hygienic” (Horowitz 8
9 1985: 592). The major historical example of it—the exchange of Greeks and Turks 9
10 provided for in the “Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish 10
11 Populations,” signed in Lausanne (1923)—was an ugly affair and does not bode 11
12 well as a general policy prescription. 12

13 Though there are clear limits to what can be learned from a single case, Lausanne 13
14 demonstrates that moving populations, even if planned with cold precision, can be 14
15 a bloody affair. The transfer of Indians in the early American Republic, or Sudeten 15
16 Germans from Czechoslovakia after World War Two, are unlikely to be used as 16
17 best practice templates any time soon. 17

18 It could be countered that future ethnic violence may ensue if populations are 18
19 *not* moved; we can of course never know for certain whether there would have 19
20 been more or less violence had those same groups stayed within that same state, 20
21 but this line of reasoning is less of an argument for population transfers than it 21
22 is an effort to trade in counterfactual futures of human suffering—exchanging 22
23 the alleged elimination of uncertain bloodshed in the future for the certainty of 23
24 (presumably less) suffering in the present. Trading off uncertain future suffering 24
25 for certain present suffering is a tradeoff few would be willing to make. Phrased 25
26 in this manner, moreover, the policy is unlikely to appeal either to the populations 26
27 involved or to international organizations which would presumably have a large 27
28 role in any international transfer of peoples. 28

29 Put differently, secession may not be the political analog of marital divorce, and 29
30 a “clean cut” may be nothing more than a nice phrase (Buchanan 1991; Tullberg 30
31 and Tullberg 1997: 4; Horowitz 1998: 191; Aronovitch 2000). There are also practical 31
32 issues that make such an analogy flawed: the number of states is in the hundreds, 32
33 but the number of current “nations” is in the thousands (Van Evera 1994; Laitin 33
34 1995). Some scholars have therefore suggested that efforts should be focused upon 34
35 internal rearrangements, such as designing institutions to increase the satisfaction 35
36 of minorities in existing states (Hechter 2000a), rather than breaking up states in 36
37 a Sisyphean attempt to make nation and state tantamount (Horowitz 1998: 191; 37
38 Horowitz 2003). Needless to say, incentives to implement accommodative policy 38
39 options would be significantly diminished by supporting secession as a general 39
40 solution to ethnic conflict, and could possibly create moral hazard problems that 40
41 encourage rather than reduce violence by promising intervention to promote 41
42 partition (Fearon 2004b; Kuperman 2008). 42

43 Proponents of partition and secession might retort that institutions rarely have 43
44 any significant impact on reducing conflict, especially at the international level 44
45 (Mearsheimer 1994/95). Secession or partition, however unpleasant, is really the 45

1 only way to solve deep ethnic conflicts, and is therefore also the most humane 1
2 (on recent attempts to apply this logic to Iraq, see Cockburn 2006; Kaufmann 2
3 2006; Galbraith 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Gelb 2003, 2006). However contentious this 3
4 argument remains at the interstate level, it has far fewer adherents at the sub- 4
5 national level, where institutions are widely believed to influence the behavior of 5
6 individuals and groups (Lijphart 1977, 1995, 2004; Lustick 1979; Horowitz 1990; 6
7 Lustick, Miodownik, and Eidelson 2004; Posner 2005). 7

8 Of course, this debate would be moot if states could more or less peacefully 8
9 agree to part ways, as did Norway–Sweden, Slovakia–Czech Republic, or Iceland– 9
10 Denmark (see Part VI). But states willing to part peacefully with a portion of 10
11 their territory are rare. More common is a violent struggle over separation that is 11
12 unlikely to result in the creation of a new state. Even when a new state emerges 12
13 through secession, as it has several dozen times over the past two centuries, the 13
14 incidence of various forms of violence after secession—including ethnic riots and 14
15 protests, center-seeking civil wars, recursive secessions, and interstate militarized 15
16 disputes—is far from negligible (Siroky 2009). Secession rarely marks the end of 16
17 ethnicity or violence. 17

18 Recent research on secession has benefited from systematic studies of the 18
19 reasons why, and the conditions under which, each variety of violence is likely to 19
20 ensue in the aftermath of partition and secession. Additional work might profitably 20
21 pursue comparisons between the fates of partitioned places, secessionist states, and 21
22 decolonized countries, a task that is both called for by the apparent similarities and 22
23 riddled with difficulties by the clear differences. 23

24 It is unlikely that we have seen the end of secession as a problem in world affairs, 24
25 so additional work on this subject is not only needed to advance understanding of 25
26 secession as an historical phenomena but also to craft more effective strategies for 26
27 confronting the challenge of separatism and related phenomena. 27

28 28
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31 **Conclusions** 31

32 32

33 Secession is a thorny political topic. As a subject of scholarly inquiry, it is filled with 33
34 intense nuance, and therefore worthy of the sort of multidisciplinary attention that 34
35 it has received in this volume. As a problem that is unlikely to disappear anytime 35
36 soon, explaining secession is necessarily concerned with understanding historical 36
37 data and with current political developments. Secession is also possible to evaluate 37
38 out of humanitarian concern to reduce human suffering and tragedy where 38
39 possible. As a complex problem, it is appropriate that it is being approached from 39
40 the perspectives of philosophy, politics, economics, sociology, and psychology. 40
41 To organize some of this sundry scholarship involves recognizing that explaining 41
42 secession involves modeling the interaction of interest and passion among multiple 42
43 strategic and interdependent actors (groups, states, and foreign powers). 43

44 The purpose of this chapter has been two-fold: first to take stock and examine 44
45 what we know about secession, while providing the basis for an analytical and 45

1 theoretical framework to explain secession, and second to highlight several 1
 2 important directions in recent research and to make some conjectures that might 2
 3 be helpful for future research. The framework offered in this chapter is a multilevel 3
 4 one, organized around the political actors most clearly involved in secession: ethnic 4
 5 groups, host states, and foreign powers. By dividing and organizing the literature 5
 6 in this way, we can more easily understand how scholars have framed the issues 6
 7 and drawn attention to different aspects of the problem, thus enabling us to see 7
 8 secession as the consequence of many actors' interactions. 8

9 The basic framework has three levels, according to the unit of analysis. The 9
 10 first level includes studies that focus on the secessionist movement or ethnic group 10
 11 as the key actor; the second concentrates on state behavior toward minorities 11
 12 and state-level characteristics; and the third set addresses the role of external 12
 13 actors and foreign powers. This tripartite framework provides a simple structure 13
 14 that is parsimonious but still able to arrange seemingly disparate studies and to 14
 15 underscore their similarities. 15

16 At the ethnic group level, the literature identifies political grievances, economic 16
 17 inequality, ethno-demography, and ethno-geography as key factors in explaining 17
 18 secession. Other studies at the host state level focus on the dynamics of repression, 18
 19 violence, dissent, and accommodation along with institutional characteristics of 19
 20 the state, including its relative strength and capacity. At the third level are studies 20
 21 that examine the behavior and effect of external powers on secession. 21

22 Although the levels are separated for analysis, each highlighting different 22
 23 dynamics, one cannot help but notice important interactions between levels. 23
 24 Explaining secession, I have suggested, requires understanding this triadic structure 24
 25 at the core of the secession data generating process, but a coherent explanation for 25
 26 secession must account for interactions. There is little doubt that much important 26
 27 work remains to be done to further our understanding of secession and to enhance 27
 28 our ability to explain, predict, and address it (see also Chapters 10–15). 28

29 While much of this chapter has taken the literature apart, it also has suggested 29
 30 several ways in which future work might judiciously put it back together. Progress 30
 31 on this front should be both theoretical—linking actions and incentives at different 31
 32 levels through causal mechanisms—and methodological, combining sub-national, 32
 33 spatio-temporal, and relational data, connecting micro-level data to macro-level 33
 34 events, matching measurement to theory, in order to explain secession's emergence, 34
 35 endurance and escalation. 35

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