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IS PANDORA'S BOX HALF-EMPTY OR HALF-FULL?
The Limited Virulence of Secessionism and the Domestic Sources of Integration

Stephen M. Saideman

Abstract

Is secession contagious? If so, can it be contained or quarantined to limit its spread? These two questions must be addressed to understand the challenges posed by ethnic divisions within and between states today. The end of ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union has not ushered in an era of global peace, but instead a period characterized by ethnic conflicts within many states. The coincidence of the disintegrations of the Soviet, Yugoslav, and Czechoslovak federations suggests that secession does spread with potentially nasty consequences. Further, there seems to be more secessionism today than ever before.[1] Consequently, we need to comprehend the processes through which separatism within a particular state may or may not spread, causing conflicts within and between neighboring states. This paper will argue that secessionism is less contagious than currently thought, as this phenomenon is driven primarily by domestically based dynamics, as the events and institutions within the boundaries of states greatly shape the incentives of politicians and the fears of ethnic groups.

Not all ethnic groups desire to create their own states on the territory they inhabit: some seek to emigrate, some seek to take control of the state in which they reside, and others want to increase their autonomy within the existing state, but secession is an important phenomenon as recent events have shown, challenging the existing boundaries of multiethnic states in Africa, South Asia, Europe, and North America. While the broader question of whether all types of ethnic conflict are contagious is interesting, the argument here will be more limited, as it considers whether separatism in one state will lead to separatism in other states.[2] By restricting the study to secessionism, rather than the full spectrum of ethnic conflict, this paper will evaluate some conventional beliefs concerning secessionism, develop initial arguments about the important dynamics and processes at work, and posit alternative approaches to the international politics of secessionism. The implications of this study beyond secessionism will be drawn in the conclusion of this paper.

The processes through which secession may or may not spread will be examined to determine whether ethnic conflict is contagious, and if so, how the "disease" is communicated from one victim to another.[3] The heart of the argument here will be that secessionism is less contagious than previously thought between states, though it may spread quite rapidly within a state. Because not all states have suffered from secessionism, it is necessary to account for why some states are more or less vulnerable. Another way to consider arguments about the external and internal sources of secessionism or about any process that is considered to be contagious is to take seriously the forest fire analogy that is used widely in these debates (Fearon 1995, 5). While forest fires may generate processes that cause them to spread, such as creating extraordinarily hot winds that carry sparks, such fires only start and expand when the conditions are right: dry tinder and the like. Separatist crises may generate dynamics that encourage separatism elsewhere, but to understand where it will spread, we must study the conditions that foster separatism: conditions that encourage politicians to mobilize ethnic groups for political gain and that decrease the security of ethnic groups.

Regardless of whether secessionism and ethnic conflict are as infectious as believed, this paper will try to determine whether fears of contagion inhibit behavior believed to encourage the spread of ethnic conflict: supporting secession and violating boundaries. An alternative approach

to his question will be presented, focusing on two interacting domestic processes: the use of ethnic identities by politicians to gain and maintain power and the ethnically defined security dilemmas faced by politicians' constituents. While complete analyses of the breakups of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union will require in-depth investigation in future books, this paper will isolate and compare some of the crucial events and dynamics driving the disintegrations of these multiethnic states. This study will indicate the contagion at work was not secessionism, but the processes spawned by the end of the Cold War: democratization and economic transition. While the spread of these phenomena needs greater explanation,[4] their relevance here is the impact these two contagious processes have upon the interests of politicians and the fears of their constituents. Finally, this paper will draw some conclusions about whether the United States can or needs to contain ethnic conflicts in Europe and elsewhere.

Do Ethnic Dominos Fall?

Conflict centered on ethnic identities (racial, linguistic, kinship, and/or religious identities) is not a new problem, nor are fears of contagious separatism. Secession, and fears of it, have haunted Africa since before many of its states gained their independence. Due to the weakness of the new African states and because of their perceived artificiality of their international boundaries, a belief developed: any change in existing boundaries to reflect more accurately the distribution and demands of ethnic groups would challenge the legitimacy of all African boundaries. This fear has many names, including Pandora's box, balkanization,[5] and the ethnic domino theory.[6] There are two facets of this belief that are relevant for this discussion: that secessionism was thought to be very contagious; and that fears of such contagion inhibited leaders and states from supporting secessionist movements or boundary alterations in Africa. This paper will take issue with both aspects of the ethnic domino theory.

Within the ethnic domino theory, the constraints limiting the spread of separatism are described more clearly than the processes by which it is feared to expand (Rosberg and Jackson 1982; Jackson 1990). Demonstration effects and precedent-setting are usually the processes offered by ethnic domino theorists. Precisely how these dynamics function is rarely developed, so approaches to diffusion and contagion developed for the study of war and other processes will have to be considered and then applied to secessionism.

The Logic of Contagion: Conceptual Clarification

It has long been recognized that processes within and between states may not be independent of each other.[7] Some phenomena may be contagious: the occurrence of a particular event may change the likelihood of subsequent occurrences. This sparse definition includes both positive and negative diffusion: an event may make similar subsequent occurrences more or less likely (Midlarsky 1970, 75). Though the focus is usually on positive diffusion, an event making subsequent occurrences more likely, both kinds of diffusion may matter.

A second distinction is also relevant for this study: diffusion may occur over time or space. A phenomenon may spread within a state or repeat itself over time, or it may spread beyond the boundaries of a state. When the first distinction concerning the direction of effect is combined with this second distinction, four possible diffusion dynamics result:

1) *Positive Reinforcement: an event within a system **increases** the probability of similar events occurring subsequently **within the system**.*
2) *Negative Reinforcement: an event within a system **decreases** the probability of similar events occurring subsequently **within the system**.*
3) *Positive Spatial Diffusion: an event within a system **increases** the probability of similar events occurring subsequently **elsewhere**.*
4) *Negative Spatial Diffusion: an event within a system **decreases** the probability of similar events occurring subsequently **elsewhere** (Siverson and Starr 1991, 12).*

While contagion is often considered to consist of the latter two dynamics, all four generally matter. This paper will assert that *positive reinforcing* dynamics developed within Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia, but that direction of spatial diffusion was not so clearly positive as is often argued. In other words, secessionism within each state increased the probability of more secessionism within each state, but that the consequences of secessionism within one state for the chances of separatism in other states were not (and are not) so clear as the effects of positive and negative spatial diffusion may cancel each other's effects.

While these distinctions help to clarify what diffusion is, they do not explain how a phenomenon--war, riots, policy innovations, etc.--spreads. Again, there are two ways to consider how a political phenomenon spreads: through processes generated by its occurrence and through the lessons drawn by others from observing the occurrence. While others have differentiated between contagion and diffusion (Vasquez 1992, 162), this paper will use the two terms synonymously, but attention will be paid to how something diffuses: through direct effects of the phenomenon or by lessons learned by outsiders.

To argue that secessionism diffuses would require showing that there is some process inherent within secessionist crises that causes it to spread beyond the boundary of a state. For instance, secessionist conflicts generate refugee flows that tend to destabilize the population balances of neighboring states, increasing ethnic tensions beyond the state (Robertson 1995). Refugees act as sparks generated by the fire of secession, causing the phenomenon to spread. The millions of Bengalis fleeing from East Pakistan into northeast India in 1971 certainly upset the political balance within that region, increasing pre-existing separatist sentiment. This is an example of positive spatial diffusion. A different kind of diffusion dynamic may also be inherent in secessionism: unless the seceding region is very homogeneous, the attempt at secession threatens the security and livelihood of minority groups within the region, causing them to also consider secession. This example of diffusion is one of positive reinforcement. The discussion of the Soviet and Yugoslav cases below will illustrate this latter dynamic. If secession, because of something inherent in the process, causes itself to diffuse, then there may be very little that can be done to limit its spread once it occurs.

Another means by which a phenomenon spreads is through the lessons learned by policy-makers, activists, and ethnic groups elsewhere. Outsiders observe a particular secessionist conflict (or a number of them), causing them to revise evaluations of their circumstances. Observing a successful secession may cause elites and populations elsewhere to reconsider their chances of success, to develop better strategies, and to become more or less inhibited with regards to secession. Stuart Hill and Donald Rothchild have argued that "a spreading of political conflict is best understood as a process of social learning and social action" (1986, 717). Political conflict in one state provides information to elites and their supporters elsewhere, including ideas that affect the collective identities of potential supporters and possible strategies for organizing and mobilizing those supporters. Hill and Rothchild are careful to argue that the political conflict will only spread to particular states that are particularly susceptible to political conflict. Further, they argue that, since it is driven by the provision of new information, whether political conflict "spreads depends on the quality and access to information" (1992, 193). This, in turn, depends on the development of the media and on the level of control governments has over the media. If secession is contagious, i.e., it spreads by causing politicians and constituents to re-evaluate their chances of success (or even causing them to re-consider their identities), then we can think theoretically about the conditions that limit or exacerbate this contagion.

The logic of contagion presented by Hill and Rothchild suggests that a couple of conditions matter most: information flows and the interests of politicians and followers.[8] As they argue, an event can only have contagious consequences, causing individuals elsewhere to re-consider their situation when they learn of the event. If an event occurs, but no one outside the country knows about it, then no lessons can be drawn. Thus, information flows do matter. One would expect more diffusion of a variety of political phenomena today than in the past due to increased literacy, access to radio and television, and improved telecommunications technology. However, increases in data or information do not necessarily imply that everyone draws from that information similar conclusions or any at all.

Any event provides a great deal of data to observers, who can then absorb a variety of lessons from the event. Arguments concerning diffusion tend to assume that politicians and followers will learn certain kinds of lessons-those that encourage further political action, leading to repeated occurrences of the first event, i.e., positive spatial diffusion. Reality is not so simple, as different individuals can consider the same event and draw completely different conclusions. Was the legacy of Vietnam that the U.S. should not or could not intervene abroad or that it could be successful if it followed a different strategy? Are observers of Yugoslavia's disintegration encouraged by Slovenia's relatively easy escape or discouraged by the plight of Bosnia?[9] The lessons people learn may be dependent on their preferences and interests before the observed event.[10] Indeed, Hill and Rothchild argue that a variety of pre-existing conditions may need to exist for the expected lessons (those causing more conflict) to be learned, including the disaffection of a group, a latent sense of collective identity, and a previous consideration of possibly taking political action (Hill and Rothchild 1986, 720).[11]

The impact of an external event will vary from state to state as politicians and potential followers differ in their inclinations to learn particular lessons: positive ones encouraging behavior that leads to the creation of more such events; negative ones that discourage such behavior; or mixed lessons that have inconsistent behavioral consequences. Thus, an argument can be made that the predispositions of elites and constituents matter more than external events.

Applying the Logic of Contagion to Secessionism

While there are many possible processes through which ethnic dominos may fall, two will be considered here.[12] First, a successful secessionist movement may demonstrate the feasibility of secession, encouraging other secessionist movements whose desires now seem realizable. Second, a violation of the territorial integrity of a state may set a precedent, causing states to doubt the legitimacy of the boundary regime or the future viability of the regime, lessening the inhibiting effect of the regime itself until it collapses.[13]

Successful Secession: Do Demonstration Effects Matter?

Is successful secession contagious? Do political entrepreneurs and their followers learn from the success of one secessionist movement that they can achieve similar success? It has been argued that "pure contagion plays an important role in spreading communal conflict through demonstration effects. . . ." (Vasquez 1992, 165) Given the relatively simultaneous breakups of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia, it would not be unreasonable to argue, as many did in the contexts of Africa and South Asia (Rizvi 1981, 152), that the success of individual secessionist movements encourages other movements with similar aims to act more aggressively as their goal becomes more realistic, and as states become viewed as being less antagonistic to separatism and less supportive of the international norms of territorial integrity (Young 1992). The timing of the breakup of these three federations would suggest that either one helped to cause the others (contagion) or that their causes are related. The contagious effects of successful secession will be delineated here, focusing on whether and how successful secessions encourage ethnic groups to become secessionists or more active and successful in their efforts. The logical weaknesses of the contagion argument will then be clarified, while the empirical flaws will be revealed through the study of the Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, and Soviet cases further below.

A successful secession may demonstrate many different things, providing many lessons, including the gains and/or costs of trying to secede; the probability of success; and the willingness of other states to support or oppose the secession, causing elites leading ethnic groups elsewhere to change their beliefs. For a successful secession to encourage (rather than discourage) secessionist efforts by others, one or more of the following must be true:

The successful secession shows that the gains of seceding are greater than previously believed or that the costs of seceding are less than expected.

The successful secession indicates that success is more likely than previously believed.

The successful secession indicates that some, many, or key states are less hostile to secessionism, so that one's efforts will probably face less international opposition.

When a secessionist movement does indeed secede, it may provide one or more of the above lessons to potential separatists elsewhere. The relatively low costs of the disintegration of the Soviet Union may have encouraged others. Though the Baltic Republics did not gain independence quickly or with costs, relatively few lives were lost and relatively little damage was done,[14] compared to the secessionist efforts of the Biafrans, the Bengalis, the Croats, or the Bosnians. Even before the attempted coup of August 1991, it was recognized that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were going to be independent. The relatively low costs with which they seceded may have encouraged Slovakia to secede from Czechoslovakia, and it certainly encouraged other states within the Soviet Union to seek more autonomy.[15] However, the severe costs incurred by Croatia and Bosnia as they sought to secede from the Yugoslav federation provides an important counter-demonstration, indicating that secession can be tremendously costly. The logic is not clear why outside observers would choose to learn from those that seceded on the cheap, rather than learn from those that bore high costs for their efforts.[16]

Potential separatists may be encouraged to secede if their perceived likelihood of success is changed by a successful secession (Jackson 1990, 190). "If they can do it, so can we." The mere fact that a state could successfully secede probably has a huge impact on potential secessionists because success has been so rare since World War II: only Singapore and Bangladesh until 1991.[17] The breakup of Yugoslavia and of the Soviet Union, as well as the recognized secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia, indicated that what had previously been impossible could now be achieved. Like the wall falling down in Berlin, the success of others encourages one's efforts as the estimated probability of attaining independence increases.[18] Of course, not all recent secessionist movements have been successful in attaining independence. Bosnia certainly has not yet attained success despite international recognition, since the government controls less than half of the territory that it claims to govern. The plight of Georgia also indicates that recognition may not mean independence, as it has been coerced and dominated by Russia (Hill and Jewett, 1994). The Republic of Somaliland provides another discouraging, though different, example, as it has gained de facto independence from Somalia, but no state has recognized it. These counter-examples do not indicate that secession has been less successful recently than in the past. Instead, they indicate that potential secessionists have plenty of data to use to re-evaluate chances for success, and that it is not clear what path potential separatists will choose unless other factors are considered since conflicting data exist. Moreover, while few separatist movements succeeded before 1990, the failures of many groups did not discourage others from attempting to secede.

Perhaps the biggest perceived sea-change in the international politics of secession, and the most encouraging one for potential secessionists, is that states are less opposed to secessionism than in the past. Before the end of the Cold War, few secessionist movements received significant support and were rarely given diplomatic recognition. Since 1991, all the constituent Republics of the Soviet Union have been recognized, Eritrea is now considered a state by the international community, and three former Yugoslav republics have received recognition and varying levels of material support.[19] Potential separatists may now believe that their cause will receive assistance, or at least, face less opposition, from the major powers in the international system. Thus, the less hostile international environment may encourage ethnic groups to secede.

However, the record of opposition to secessionism before 1990 has been greatly exaggerated (Heraclides 1992, 415). In general, while secessionist movements did receive considerable opposition from most states before the Cold War's end, several groups did get significant support. Katanga's attempt to secede from the Congo was abetted by arms, finances, and mercenaries provided by Belgium, France, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and South Africa. Biafra received arms from France and the People's Republic of China through

Gabon, the Ivory Coast, and Tanzania, as well as recognition from the latter three states plus Zambia. Bangladesh's secession was made possible through India's indirect assistance and direct intervention, and was facilitated by the Soviet Union's support at the United Nations. These cases are not meant to suggest that the international community encouraged secessionist movements, but that recent changes are less drastic than commonly thought. Though potential secessionists of the 1990's may believe they will face less opposition than in previous decades, the difference is one of degree and not orders of magnitude.

The experiences of recent secessionist movements do present many lessons for elites and ethnic groups considering secessionist strategies, but these lessons are ambiguous at best. Recent events suggest that both positive and negative spatial diffusion dynamics may be at work. Whether they cancel each other out is not clear. While some ethnic groups were able to succeed with relatively few costs incurred, Croatia, Bosnia, and even Eritrea[20] should serve as cautionary tales that may discourage as much as the other cases encourage. While the number of recent successful secessions is quite amazing and may encourage dissatisfied ethnic groups to secede, many other secessionist movements continue to make little or no progress toward their goals, including the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Moros in the Philippines, and the various secessionist movements in India and Pakistan, to name just a few. The most encouraging development for potential separatists has been the increased apathy and/or agnosticism of the international community towards secessionism. This, however, is tempered y the inability (or unwillingness) of the international community to stop the inheritors of the disintegrating state's institutions and resources from preying on other states that seceded from the broken state, i.e., Serbia's conquest of portions of Croatia and Bosnia and Russia's coercive diplomacy in its "Near Abroad."[21] Though the many counter-examples do not provide proof that secessionism will not spread, they do show that recent events may discourage secessionism as much as encourage it.

While demonstration effects may be positive or negative (or both), encouraging or discouraging imitators, arguments based on the influence of demonstration effects upon separatism have a critical flaw: they ignore or gloss over the causal processes within states that drive some groups to secede while others do not try or do not achieve success. Not all ethnic groups seriously consider secession; a change in the perceived probabilities and costs of secession (the demonstration effect) is not the only causal force at work. Why do ethnic groups seek to secede? Why do politicians take strong stands in favor of separatism? Focusing on the incentives of elites and the threats perceived by ethnic groups may provide a causal model that can start to answer these questions and explain whether secessionism is contagious.

New Precedents Challenge the Boundary Regime

"In the wake of the astounding events of the past three years, one can detect a weakening in the existing taboo against secession, indeed the signs of an emerging paradigm shift whereby secession will no longer be treated as unthinkable by the international system" (Heraclides 1992, 399). This quotation reflects the conventional wisdom that ethnic conflict has been contained in Africa in part by an international regime embodying principles and norms that preserved the existing boundaries (Herbst 1989; Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Consequently, anything that might cause the regime to break down is seen as a potential catalyst for the spread of secessionism.[22] In particular, if a state violates the norm of territorial integrity-respect for existing boundaries, then a dangerous precedent is set that may lead to states assisting other boundary changes. Just as a successful secession may change the perceived costs and probabilities of success for potential separatists, the act of recognition or support by one state (or more) for a secessionist movement decreases the expectation that states will obey existing international norms and lessens the perceived costs of supporting secession. Rather than secessionism being contagious, this argument focuses on how support for secessionism may spread spatially.

However, past support for secession by some states did not cause other states to support secessionist movements that they had not previously supported. India's support for the creation of Bangladesh did not cause other states to support separatists that they had not helped before. Pakistan has supported various separatist movements in India, but this started long before the secession of Bangladesh. It is true that the recognition of the Baltic republics by a few states after the August 1991 coup was followed by a flood of other recognitions. Nevertheless,

since one of the first recognitions was by the governing body of the Soviet federation (Hazard 1993, 130), it is hard to argue that the precedents of others caused the recognitions as much as a change in the potential costs of offending the Soviet Union. Certainly, the prohibition against recognizing secessionist movements is not as strongly felt or respected as it was in the past. The question remains whether this change is a reaction to the precedents set by various states or caused by changing political realities, particularly when states faced faits accompli in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.

Do Fears of Falling Ethnic Dominos Deter?

The method by which the proliferation of ethnic conflict has been prevented in Africa has been presented more clearly than the processes by which ethnic dominoes are supposed to fall. "The greatest deterrent to territorial revisionism has been the fear of opening a Pandora's box. If any one boundary is seriously questioned, why not all the boundaries in Western Africa?" (Zartman 1966, 109). This argument is the heart of the conventional wisdom for understanding African boundary politics as a whole: policymakers are inhibited from supporting secessionism in other states, and have strengthened the norm of territorial integrity and built an international institution, the Organization of African Unity [OAU], because their states are vulnerable to secessionism.[23] Most African states face ethnic conflict along racial, religious, tribal, and/or linguistic divides, so separatism is a serious threat. It is feared that once one tenuous, artificial African boundary is questioned, then all the boundaries would be subject to challenges. Some have even argued that boundary changes outside Africa set precedents that may undermine border stability in Africa.[24] Thus, states refuse to set precedents by supporting secessionist movements; instead, they build a regime to codify norms that maintain the boundaries. Considering this argument is necessary for understanding whether ethnic conflicts are contagious and what may impede their spread.

Regardless of whether ethnic dominoes really fall, the belief that they do may influence the behavior of states, deterring them from supporting secessionist movements. "Because of the falling dominoes theory, opposition to secessionist self-determination is deeply implanted in Africa, and it matters little whether the fears of accelerated disintegration by precedents are rational or irrational" (Neuberger 1986, 97). There are two problems with this argument: the logic is not necessarily correct, and the evidence, including that usually cited by balkanization theorists, does not support the hypothesis that vulnerability deters support for secessionism.

Mutual vulnerability does not necessarily mean that states will pursue identical solutions to shared problems, as vulnerability may present different politicians with varying interests.[25] Leaders of some states may pursue strategies that use alternative ethnic identities to build broader coalitions and bases of political support, even though this might threaten other states' boundaries. Kwame Nkrumah's efforts to develop a Pan-African ideology and to call for greater federations and fewer boundaries were part of a larger political strategy to deal with Ghana's ethnic divisions (Nkrumah 1970; Smock and Smock 1975). Similarly, in 1971, India resisted several secessionist movements, but supported the Bengali secessionist movement. While a variety of motivations help to explain India's support, in part India abetted the creation of Bangladesh because the Bengali's secular ideology meshed neatly with that of India's ruling party, the Indian National Congress. The secession of Bangladesh from an avowedly Muslimstate lent legitimacy to the Congress's and India's secular nationalism. Thus, support for secession can serve domestic political interests, even in a state fighting multiple secessionist movements.

Empirically, the argument that vulnerability inhibits support for secessionist movements simply does not hold true. The exception that was supposed to prove the rule, Somalia (Touval 1972, 33-34), actually does not do so. Because states vulnerable to secession could not support it elsewhere, only states that did not have to worry about such threats could support secession or be irredentist. Somalia's apparent homogeneity seemed to provide evidence to back this claim: that the African state most supportive of separatism was not vulnerable to secessionism. However, even before recent events, Somalia faced serious ethnic divisions. Despite a shared language, a common race, and a single religion, Somalis have long been divided by kinship cleavages-specifically, clan divides. Even as Somalia became independent in 1960, clan identity and separatist sentiment threatened to tear the newly united Republic apart. Within the first three

years of independence, the northern region of Somalia voted overwhelmingly against the new constitution, there was an attempted coup by officers from the North, and a rebellion broke out (Morrison et al. 1972, 342; Touval 1963, 121). The most visible manifestations of this secessionist sentiment were less obvious after 1963, but re-emerged as opposition to leader Siyad Barre grew after the disastrous war with Ethiopia in 1977-78. The Somalia National Movement, drawing support mainly from a single clan-family in the northern region, became openly separatist in the late 1980's. Though it is not recognized by the international community, the northern region of Somalia has seceded, and is now the Republic of Somaliland.[26] Thus, Somalia is not, and has never been, invulnerable to ethnic conflict or secessionism. Somalia supported separatism in its neighbors despite divisions within itself. The exception does not prove the rule.

Further, Somalia is not that exceptional a case. More than a handful of states have recognized and/or materially assisted secessionist movements even though they were vulnerable to secessionism. Belgium gave Katanga significant help despite facing growing secessionist sentiment at home, and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland also supported Katanga, foreshadowing its breakup shortly after Katanga was defeated. Of Biafra's four Black African supporters, three (Gabon, Ivory Coast, and Zambia) were dealing with actual or potential secessionist movements (Saideman 1993, chap 5). If one considers Kosovo and Vojvodina to be integral parts of Serbia, as the Serbs do, then Serbia's efforts to change by force the boundaries of Bosnia and Croatia also contradict arguments asserting the inhibiting influence of falling domino fears. Likewise, if vulnerability to secessionism truly inhibited a state from assisting separatists in other countries, fears of Russian efforts to further the disintegration of various former Soviet Republics would be ill-founded. Sadly, they are not, as the Russian government has either assisted or condoned the arming of secessionists in the Trans-Dniester region of Moldova, in both Georgia's South Ossetian and Abkhazian regions, and in Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh oblast (Hill and Jewett 1994), despite facing secessionist movements in several of its own, most notably Chechnaya. While many states vulnerable to ethnic conflict and secessionism have avoided supporting (or have actively opposed) secessionist movements, many states in similar circumstances have given significant assistance to such groups, requiring new approaches to understanding when and why ethnic conflict might or might not spread. If the spread of ethnic conflict is not inhibited by vulnerability, boundary regimes, or other factors asserted by the onventional wisdom, the question of whether ethnic conflict is contagious assumes even more significance as quarantines appear to be less effective than thought.

The Individual Pursuit of Power and the Collective Search for Security

Because the preceding analysis casts doubt upon whether secessionism is contagious, it is necessary to consider what kinds of processes caused three federations to disintegrate. Many states have met with two distinct dynamics, to varying degrees, that often interact, intensifying ethnic conflict: politicians using ethnic identities to mobilize support to maintain and/or improve their positions; and the self-reinforcing fears of insecurity of ethnic groups, also known as ethnic security dilemmas. Studying the former dynamics focuses attention on competition within an ethnic group for political support, and analyzing the latter deals with competition between ethnic groups.[27] These two kinds of competition will interact, increasing the intensity of both kinds of competition. The transition from communism and authoritarianism to market capitalism and democracy caused competitive processes to intensify by creating opportunities for political entrepreneurs to use ethnic identities for political gain and by increasing the level of threat sensed by ethnic groups. Below, I will sketch out the two distinct dynamics, ethnic politics and ethnic security dilemmas, show how they interact, and then suggest how these interacting processes may cause or prevent the spread of ethnic conflict.

Ethnic Politics

Ethnic identity often presents political entrepreneurs seeking to enhance or maintain their positions with tantalizing opportunities and/or tight constraints.[28] The existence of ethnic diversity means that policies can be aimed at helping certain groups and gaining their support, at the

expense of others. The ethnic composition of a politician's pool of potential supporters greatly shapes the likely ethnopolitical strategies that can be followed.[29] By specifying a few assumptions, the core dynamics of ethnic politics can be delineated. First, before maximizing any other interest, politicians must care about gaining and maintaining power, as this is the prerequisite for almost all other goals attainable through politics.[30] The second assumption is that each politician requires supporters to attain and maintain their desired positions-the supporters forming the constituency of the politician. Leaders cannot rule without some support. How the constituency supports an elite varies, depending on the type of regime and on existing political institutions. In a democracy, the constituency's support comes through voting for individuals and parties (as well as campaign contributions and the like). In an authoritarian regime, the constituency of the leaders generally consists of those who control the means of repression, such as the officer corps of the military, the security apparatus, and/or the party (Stepan 1988).

Once in positions of power, democratic and authoritarian elites care about preventing these supporters from leaving their coalition, i.e., exiting (Hirschman 1970). When a politician's supporters exit from his or her coalition and support another one, the politician may become less able to maintain his or her political position. Thus, the possibility of supporters exiting is a crucial constraint for the incumbent politician and a vital opportunity for those who are out of power. The degree to which exiting is a threat to a politician's position depends upon how the constituents support the politician. If constituents support politicians with votes, then the question becomes: how much do the votes matter? Votes matter the most, and the political system is the most competitive, when the gain or loss of relatively few votes greatly changes the balance of political power.[31] Likewise, if the constituency of a politician is the army, then its preferences are very constraining, particularly when there is someone else or some policy option around which the military can rally.

Responses to actual or potential exiting depend upon who is exiting and who might do so. Policies aimed at attracting exiters or avoiding the alienation of potential exiters require identification of these individuals or groups and their interests. Ethnic identity serves as one way politicians distinguish between actual, potential, and wavering supporters and their preferences.[32] People will care about policies that affect the group to which they belong. Politicians, therefore, will try to develop policies that favor groups to which their constituents belong and avoid policies that hurt their constituents' groups.[33] Consequently, the ethnicity of the politician's constituents[34] is a key determinant of who might exit, why they should wish to do so, and what kinds of policies politicians may seek to avoid or embrace to prevent exiting.

Political entrepreneurs will thus take positions and follow policies that emphasize a particular ethnic identity if it binds their supporters together. A politician needing the votes of a religiously homogenous military will often stress that religion to keep the key constituency together. Ethnic cleavages can also serve as a constraint upon politicians, making some policies politically difficult to advocate, and politicians will try to avoid taking positions that might offend some ethnic groups in their constituencies even if such positions are favored by other constituents. For instance, politicians who need to gain the votes of both blacks and whites will try to avoid the issue of affirmative action, for almost any position taken on that issue will surely alienate one set of potential supporters or both.

However, how strongly politicians care about their constituents' ethnic identities depends upon the degree of competition the politician faces for the support of his or her constituents. If a leader does not have to worry about her supporters exiting, then she does not have to worry as much about alienating those constituents. On the other hand, if the exit of supporters crucially weakens the politician and strengthens the competing politician (i.e., significant competition), then each politician will be compelled to take increasingly strong stands in favor of policies that match the constituency's preferences, a process known as ethnic outbidding (Rothschild 1981; Horowitz 1985). Ethnic outbidding is a situation where competing elites try to position themselves as the best supporter of a particular ethnic group's interests, each accusing the others of being too weak on ethnic nationalist issues. When conditions exist that foster ethnic outbidding, exit of ethnically defined supports can change the balance of power domestically; most, if not all, politicians will be compelled to take extreme stands in favor of the key ethnic group's interests.

This discussion of ethnic politics helps us to understand under what conditions ethnic conflict and secessionist sentiment develop. When governments discriminate against particular

ethnic groups and in favor of others, interethnic violence may develop. Therefore, we should expect to see ethnic conflict where politicians follow extreme policies favoring some ethnic groups at the expense of others--when ethnic outbidding exists. Political competition for the support of specific ethnic groups will often cause ethnic conflict to increase, because the competition forces politicians to support policies that hurt the economic opportunities, and sometimes physical security, of the other ethnic groups in the polity. Sri Lanka is the model of this dynamic as competition between Sinhalese politicians for Sinhalese voters produced policies that increasingly marginalized and disenfranchised the minority Tamils, creating a very violent secessionist movement. Thus, the conditions under which ethnic outbidding develops are some of the conditions that foster ethnic conflict. In particular, when politicians face severe threats of exit by ethnically defined constituents to other politicians also seeking support from members of the same ethnic group, ethnic strife may follow. Where ethnic outbidding develops among politicians representing an ethnic group that is out of power and is the subject of discrimination, the outbidding process frequently leads to demands for autonomy and secession. One of the big assumptions of ethnic politics models in general, and this paper's specifically, is that individuals determine their interests through their ethnic identities and ties. This may be a huge assumption, but is less heroic in contexts of ethnic insecurity.

Ethnic Security Dilemmas

"The proximate source [of extreme ethnic nationalism] is fear. It is fear for one's property and family, for one's ancestral graves and one's history, that leads people to 'cleanse or be cleansed.'" (Bookman 1994, 33).[35] This fear or insecurity is not supposed to exist at the level of domestic politics and society, but it is usually considered a normal condition for international politics. When this insecurity does exist, however, domestic politics can become like international relations: "cleanse or be cleansed." In this section, this statement will be unpacked and developed to show why individuals and ethnic groups might support outbidding politicians.

The difference between international politics and domestic politics, it is usually argued, is the existence of a government in the latter that can adjudicate disputes and assure security for all citizens. International politics is a system of self-help, but domestic politics is supposed to be different. However, the definitional and theoretical distinction between international politics and domestic politics may be drawn so starkly that it obscures similarities between the two realms. The conflicts between states on one hand and between ethnic groups on the other do share some qualities so that theories developed to understand the former can be applied to the latter. Barry Posen (1993) has taken the security dilemma and applied it to the relations between ethnic groups in collapsing empires. The approach taken here also applies the security dilemma to domestic ethnic politics, but differs from Posen's by focusing on the continued existence of varying levels of authority and hierarchy, rather than Posen's interest in the translation of traditional military-strategic variables.

The security dilemma in international politics refers to the situation in which states, having no higher authority to protect them, have to take measures to ensure their security. These measures are seen as threatening by neighboring states, forcing them to respond, causing all states to be less secure (Herz 1959; Jervis 1976; Waltz 1979). Posen argues that similar dynamics develop when empires collapse, as neighboring ethnic groups view each other as potential threats, and the more a group coheres and mobilizes, the greater the threat it poses to others. He then applies several variables central to international security analysis to the politics of imperial decline: the offense-defense distinction and advantage, the effects of military technology and of geography, windows of opportunity and power differentials. While his discussion of these variables does present some interesting insights, Posen's approach may be less useful for understanding the ethnic security dilemmas that exist before empires completely collapse and within existing states because he omits the state and existing authority from his discussion.

To understand the ethnic security dilemmas in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere, we must consider the role of the state in mediating or influencing the competition by ethnic groups for security.[36] In an ideal state, there is no such competition because the state monopolizes the means of violence, and all ethnic groups are guaranteed security and fair adjudication of disputes. Where no state exists, as Posen portrays, ethnic groups compete with

each other as if they were states, engaging in arms races, using worst-case analyses and acting according to their military advantages. In between these two extremes, states do exist and do shape the course of ethnic politics. In many political systems, the state may be biased toward or against particular ethnicities, so competition is waged among different ethnic groups for control of the state. If my group does not capture the state, someone else's will, and then we will be at the mercy of the state. Because of the state's resources, it can be an ethnic group's greatest ally or adversary. This is the heart of the ethnic security dilemma within existing states. If the state cannot protect the interests of all ethnic groups, then each group will seek to control the state, decreasing the security of other groups and decreasing the ability of the state to provide security for any group. Consequently, many of the dynamics present in international politics emerge domestically.[37] For instance, each group will consider their interests and actions to be limited and benign while those of other groups are seen as irreconcilably hostile (Jervis 1976, chap. 3).

It is important to consider what is meant by security and insecurity in this context. Members of ethnic groups may be insecure about many things, but, for this argument, security will refer to economic, physical, and political security.[38] Economic security refers to a variety of issues shaping one's life-chances, including income, inflation, employment, and investment in one's region. Where ethnic differences already exist, economic competition can be perceived as a competition between ethnic groups for economic opportunities and resources,[39] and "when economic conditions deteriorate, competition becomes more ferocious and fuels nationalist ideology" (Bookman 1994, 6). Ethnic groups that do better than average feel that they are being pulled down by the other groups, subsidizing the others, and contributing too much to the center. Ethnic groups that do worse than average are insecure as they feel exploited. Any economic improvement by one ethnic group frequently is perceived as an example of favoritism by the center: the ethnic security dilemma has an economic component as all sorts of motives and fears are read into any change in the economic status of each ethnic group. Of course, the economic insecurities will be most intense when a group has little control over the government and fears that the group's economic well-being depends on the will of others.

Like economic security, physical security ultimately depends on whether an ethnic group has some control over the state. Physical security refers to the more basic aspects of life-chances: is my life at risk? Will my ethnic group survive (Horowitz 1985, 175-181)? While economic insecurity may be the product of inflation, unemployment, or external shocks, fears about physical security are most concerned with (a) the perceived intentions and capabilities of other ethnic groups and (b) the ability and resolve of the state to restrain the other ethnic groups and to protect one's own group. Ethnic insecurity will increase if leaders of ethnic groups threaten to expel members of other ethnic groups; if ethnic groups arm and form militias; if the state is perceived as being unable to stop violence that is perceived to be ethnically motivated; and/or if the state takes sides, abetting the efforts of one ethnic group and deliberately not protecting others. While an ethnic group will become insecure if the outbidding politicians of other groups advocate threatening policies, this insecurity will greatly intensify if the group also has no control over the state. If it can block efforts by the state to abet other groups, then ethnic security exists. If the ethnic group has no such capability, it will seek it. Thus, like economic security, the question of physical security rests upon whether groups have political security: can they shape the decisions of the state?

Ethnic groups will feel most secure if they have control, or share control, over policies that affect them, i.e., political security. Political insecurity will be most extreme when (a) a particular ethnic group captures the state; (b) an ethnic group is denied access to the state; or (c) the state is not yet captured, but can be seen as susceptible to domination by one group.[40] When a single ethnic group gains control of the state apparatus, all other ethnic groups will become highly threatened as they can no longer rely upon an impartial adjudicator of disputes or an unbiased protector. The army, the secret police and the state bureaucracy may discriminate at will against the ethnic groups out of power in favor of the one that is in power. For instance, Russians and Ukrainians in Latvia became increasingly insecure as the Latvian government sought to establish strict citizenship rules that would prevent most non-Latvians from gaining voting and property rights, creating separatist sentiment within the Russian community and irredentism sentiment within Russia's political system.

A similarly insecure situation exists when a single ethnic group is excluded from power, even if the regime itself is multiethnic. Pre-1971 Pakistan exemplifies the insecurity of excluded ethnic groups as the Bengalis had no voice in the government nor high-level officers in the military. After the results of the 1970 election, which would have given the Bengalis a dominant role in the government, were contested by the military and the West Pakistanis, the only remaining solution for the Bengalis was to secede. The Isaak clan-family, which now leads the secessionist Somaliland, was also excluded from power in Somalia, except for the last democratic government between 1967 and 1969. Secession is one solution to exclusion: it is very difficult to be excluded from your own government.

FIGURE 1: Ethnic Politics, Ethnic Insecurity and Ethnic Conflict

		Ethnic Security	
		Relatively Insecure	**Relatively Secure**
Threat of Supporters Exiting from Politician's Constituency[41]	**High**	1 High Conflict*	2 Politicians are ignored, or increased insecurity
	Low	3 Strategies change, or security may develop	4 No or low Conflict*

The third situation, in which the state may be captured, is as prevalent today as it was during the period of decolonization. During transition, it is not necessarily clear which groups will rule, which ones will be excluded, whether old guarantees will endure, and whether institutions designed to resolve or mediate conflict will operate successfully. The cases discussed below fit into each of these categories, but particularly into the last one as the economic and political transitions of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia tended to increase the insecurity felt by all ethnic groups, including those that were numerically, economically, and politically advantaged. In such situations, it makes sense for one group to try to gain control over the state. The logic of the situation may become "cleanse or be cleansed" (Bookman 1994, 33).

Interaction Between Ethnic politics and Ethnic Insecurity

Ethnic politics and ethnic insecurity will interact, reinforcing the other as the preferences of potential constituents, and thus the preferences and strategies of politicians, are shaped by their perceived security. Moreover, the ethnic security environment of a state depends crucially on what politicians are doing: if politicians take radical stands favoring some ethnic groups at the expense of others, the security climate will deteriorate. On the other hand, if politicians downplay ethnic identities, building multiethnic constituencies and developing civic or other non-ethnic ideologies, then ethnic groups will feel more secure. Using a two-by-two matrix, we can focus on four possible outcomes produced by the interaction of these two processes.[42]

The two processes produce two relatively "stable"[43] outcomes, and two outcomes where either the security of groups or the strategies of political entrepreneurs are likely to change. In cell 1, politicians, fearing the exit of their supporters, emphasize ethnicity that reinforces the existing context of ethnic insecurity and vice versa. Politicians will opt for ethnically oriented policies as the preferences of their supporters will be quite intense due to their perceived insecurity. These policies will then favor some groups at the expense of others, causing the losing groups to seek more political power to ensure their security, and causing the winning groups to be more dependent upon the state and upon their politicians for protection. As a result, conflict between ethnic groups will probably escalate. This is a "stable" situation because politicians will face little incentive to change their strategies and because the security of ethnic groups will not improve.

In cell 4, the two dynamics produce a more appealing and benign stable outcome: relatively little conflict. Again, the two dynamics will tend to reinforce each other. Politicians will be

less interested in emphasizing ethnic identities and ethnically oriented policies if their constituents are relatively less interested in such issues, which will be the case if their ethnic groups are secure economically and politically. Politicians avoiding ethnic identity will support policies that favor all or most ethnic groups, building a more ethnically secure environment.

In cell 2, politicians will try to use ethnic identities to mobilize support even though ethnic security exists. This is not a stable outcome, because either the politicians will not be successful in their efforts as potential constituents do not care that much about ethnic identities, or the politicians' efforts will alter the context of the society, making ethnic identity an issue and ethnic groups increasingly insecure.

Cell 3 is not a stable situation either: where politicians avoid ethnic identity despite existing ethnic insecurity. This particular circumstance is unlikely to last long. Politicians will be tempted and perhaps even compelled to engage in ethnic politics when their potential supporters face extreme insecurity because of their ethnic identities. They will demand that their politicians protect them, or find ones that will. Or politicians avoiding ethnic identities will create policies that alleviate the perceptions of ethnic insecurity, changing the state's political climate for the better.

Figure 1 is an idealized representation of the possible ways ethnic politics play out. Of course, neither cell 1 nor cell 4 is so stable that states would never go from no conflict to high conflict or the reverse, but such change will be more likely and "easier" in situations that are represented by cells 2 and 3. Recent events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union will show how these dynamics play out and interact, causing ethnic conflict to break out in several states somewhat simultaneously without ethnic conflict itself being very contagious, though these dynamics do cause ethnic conflict to diffuse over time, exemplifying positive reinforcement.

Is Separatism Contagious in Eastern Europe?

Did any of the breakups of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia cause the others?[44] The answer seems to be no, secession did not spread from the first to the second to the third state like a virus. Instead, separatism diffused like cancer, moving quickly within each state, but not spreading from one state to another. Different states were subject to the same carcinogens- the end of Communism, democratization, economic liberalization. Because the same initial conditions were present in each state, these three processes sparked similar processes in each state, ethnic politics and ethnic insecurity, spreading from one part of each state to the entire political system without infecting anyone else.

Applying the distinctions and arguments drawn earlier will help illuminate the key causal processes at work. What kinds of diffusion dynamics were at work in Eastern Europe in the late 1980's and early 1990's? As will be seen below, the dynamics of ethnic political competition within ethnic groups (ethnic politics/outbidding) and between ethnic groups (ethnic security dilemmas) did have diffusing effects over time in the form of positive reinforcement. The outbidding of politicians created and sustained the fears of ethnic groups, and the insecurities of ethnic groups resulted in outbidding politicians getting support, gaining power, and following through on their promises. Reinforcement also occurred, as the attempted secession of one group from a particular state changed the interests of other groups within that state because the balance of power within the state and the security of all remaining ethnic groups were altered. Further, when Slovenia and Estonia started the process of secession from Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union respectively, other groups within each federation could draw direct lessons about the center's capacity and resolve for resisting secessionism, and could also benefit from the increased weakness of the state.

Positive spatial diffusion of secessionism is hard to disprove, but was probably not as significant a force pushing events in the three disintegrating federations. Did elites and ethnic groups reconsider their chances for success and the benefits of secession as they evaluated what was going on elsewhere? Such an argument might be able to deal with Czechoslovakia's disintegration since the processes that drove the Czechs and Slovaks apart largely began after the breakups of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were well underway. However, the positive spatial diffusion approach is less credible when applied to the breakups of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, as the disintegrations of both were the products of a long series of policies, crises,

and events combined with the effects of similarly designed political institutions. The disintegrations of both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were largely driven by elites and followers whose attention and interests were focused on dynamics internal to their state. The boundaries between states mattered for two reasons: (1) each ethnic group's greatest threats were internal to their respective states--frequently the state itself; and (2) politicians and movements were interested in gaining and maintaining power, which generally meant focusing on domestic institutions and constituencies-voters and other potential constituents largely resided within existing boundaries.

The disintegrations of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia indicate that the contagious processes that did extend across the boundaries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were democratization and economic liberalization. These changes did spread from the Soviet Union to throughout Eastern Europe and back, undermining the old order, causing politicians to consider different strategies for maintaining their positions, and intensifying the fears of ethnic groups about their future life chances (economic opportunities and physical security). The end of communism meant that elites needed new ways of mobilizing support. Elections compelled elites to compete with each other for the support of particular groups, leading to political campaigns that promised to use the state to benefit certain groups economically and politically at the expense of others, which, in turn, intensified the security dilemmas facing ethnic groups. Economic liberalization threatened great harm to groups that had been favored by the old system and posed new opportunities to ethnic groups that had not done so well previously, increasing the value of gaining control over the state, or creating new states to govern over one's territory. The cases below will show how ethnic politics and ethnic security dilemmas combined to cause secessionism to spread within states from republic to republic, but not between states.

The Worst-Case Scenario: Yugoslavia

The 1990's have not been very kind to Yugoslavia, as war and ethnic cleansing continue with little hope for resolution. Previously considered the ideal of ethnic accommodation with high rates of intermarriage and power-sharing institutions, Yugoslavia's carnage has alarmed Europe and the world. The original dispute between Serbia and its autonomous republic of Kosovo increased tension between Serbia and Yugoslavia's other constituent republics, leading Slovenia to secede after a short battle with the Yugoslav army and catalyzing a war between Croatia and Serbia that spread to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The concerns now are how to limit the damage and whether the war will spread to Macedonia or Kosovo, potentially drawing in neighboring states, such as Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, or Turkey. The destruction of Yugoslavia shows how the incentives of politicians and the insecurities of ethnic groups can interact in ways that hurt the interests of nearly everyone.

While the various combatants in the Yugoslav conflict can trace their disputes back to World War II and before, the pivotal period leading up to the war was the mid-1980's. The circumstances were ripe for politicians to engage in ethnic politics. Economically, two factors essentially invited politicians to engage in ethnic politics: the extreme decline of Yugoslavia's economy in the 1980's and the uneven development of Yugoslavia that corresponded with republic boundaries. Indeed, the distribution of wealth, jobs, technology, and future economic growth was more uneven in Yugoslavia, with Slovenia, Croatia, and Vojvodina being much better off, than in any other socialist country (Bookman 1992, 58). This inequality created resentment for the favored, feeling that they were being dragged down by the others, and for those who were doing poorly, causing all groups to develop strong but conflicting preferences about the direction and pace of economic reform. Fears of physical security could be manipulated due to the memories of atrocities during World War II. Politically, incentives existed for elites to take advantage of ethnic identity. Because power was regionally focused, each republic having its own party system, resources, and political institutions, it made sense to play to a limited audience: only the key supporters within the existing republic boundaries. This particular federal structure meant that politicians could gain and maintain their positions if they attracted support from only one ethnic group: Serbs in Serbia, Croats in Croatia, and Slovenes in Slovenia.[45]

Specifically, the stage was set for the rise of Serbian nationalism, which resulted from Slobodan Milosevic's efforts to gain power in Serbia. In 1987, the League of Communists of Serbia was divided, facing the difficult problem of maintaining legitimacy in the face of economic disaster. Milosevic found a successful formula for providing the party with a mission and for his leadership of the party: defending Serbs in Kosovo against the Albanian majority. The approaching 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo gave Milosevic the opportunity to take stands on the Kosovo issue, creating a supporting coalition of nationalists and conservatives. Because Kosovo has a critical role in Serbian history and nationalism, Milosevic was able to purge the party of those who opposed his nationalist strategy, gaining control of the Serbian Communist party (Gagnon 1991, 21; Magas 1993).

"Having seen how successful he was in winning Serbian support with a nationalist policy of suppressing Kosovo, Milosevic next fanned the more general dissatisfaction that Serbs were feeling over their role in the federation" (Mihaljlov 1991, 82). Milosevic's successful use of the Kosovo issue to build a nationalist coalition had two important effects upon the politics of Yugoslavia. First, it created an increased sense of insecurity for non-Serbs in Yugoslavia, particularly as Milosevic's statements and actions threatened to alter the existing institutions that gave other ethnic groups some control over Yugoslav economic and political decision-making. Reasserting Serb control over Kosovo threatened to alter the balance of power within federal institutions, as Serbia could add Kosovo's vote to Montenegro's and its own (and later, Vojvodina's), giving Serbia the ability to block decisions at the federal level. Indeed, the final straw that broke the back of the Yugoslav federation was Serbia's obstruction of the presidency's normal rotation to a Croatian politician in May 1991, triggering the secession of Slovenia and Croatia a month later. It was also felt that the policies taken toward Kosovo were part of a larger effort to re-centralize the Yugoslav political system, which would lessen the ability of the various ethnic groups to control their destinies. The sense of growing insecurity in each republic was revealed by the success of politicians promising extreme policies to support their particular ethnic groups.

The second effect of Milosevic's use of the Kosovo issue was to demonstrate how successful a nationalist strategy could be in Yugoslavia, so that Milosevic continued to pursue nationalist policies, and politicians in Yugoslavia's other constituent republics began to emphasize nationalisms of their own (Lendvai 1991, 259). In the election campaigns following Milosevic's rise, competing politicians promised to follow chauvinist policies to defend their ethnic groups against the others in Yugoslavia to build bases of support. "The results of the first free elections in Yugoslavia since World War II, held in 1990, set the stage for the civil war that broke out in summer and fall 1991. In those elections, strongly nationalist parties or coalitions won in each of the republics" (Hayden 1992, 654; Hayden 1993, 2). Each of the winning parties or coalitions then followed through on their promises. Once in power, Croatia's Franjo Tudjman began using various symbols of Croatian nationalism, including those from the fascist Ustashe regime, and ceased to recognize the existence of minorities within Croatia, particularly the Serbs (Larrabee 1992, 36). This, in turn, reinforced the threat perceived by Serbs living outside Serbia.

Politicians engaged in competition to be the best nationalists, leading to policies that threatened the livelihood, rights, and security of minorities within each republic. The increased insecurities of ethnic groups led to greater support for politicians promising protection of certain groups, including secession as means of assuring security. Ethnic politics and ethnic insecurity reinforced each other, causing the conflict to escalate. Remaining within the federation was no longer possible for Croatian and Slovenian politicians because they had based their political ambitions on promising secession and because their supporters were increasingly alarmed by the rise of Serbian nationalism. Over the course of six months in 1990, support for secession within Slovenia went from 28 percent of the population to be favored quite clearly by the majority (Bookman 1992, 96).

Ethnic conflict did spread swiftly within Yugoslavia because changes in the federal structure influenced the security of all ethnic groups. Slovenia and Croatia were threatened by any increase of Serbia's influence at the federal level, and they also wanted to protect their economies from the spiraling Yugoslav economy (Bookman 1992, 95-96). Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia felt insecure in a Yugoslavia without Croatia and Slovenia, compelling them to also secede. However, ethnic conflict has not been as virulent as often

feared. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this crisis is that it has not yet spread beyond the boundaries of what was Yugoslavia. While refugees flow into neighboring states and sanctions have hurt neighboring states (despite attempts to evade them), armed conflict has still respected Yugoslavia's boundaries. Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, and Turkey have stayed out of the conflict.[46] The Yugoslav case indicates that secessionism does tend to spread within the body politic, but not necessarily beyond it. Positive reinforcement occurred within Yugoslavia as the various efforts of each group to improve their security decreased the security of the others, intensifying the ethnic security dilemma for all ethnic groups, causing a cascade of seceding territories.

Sudden Disintegration: The Soviet Union

The breakup of the Soviet Union is such a large and complex event that it cannot be done justice within the confines of this paper. Instead, this section will focus on how the central questions of this paper apply to the Soviet Union's disintegration: were the dynamics of ethnic politics and ethnic insecurity important? How did secessionism spread within the Soviet Union?[47] Though the specific events and processes were not identical among the fifteen constituent republics, the politics and conflicts of many of them were shaped by changing political opportunities, economic fortunes, and the security of ethnic groups caused by Gorbachev's three key reforms: glasnost, perestroika, and democratization. These three reforms gave politicians greater incentives to use ethnic identities to mobilize support, increased the economic stakes involved, and exacerbated the threats felt by many ethnic groups, particularly minorities in various republics. In this section, some of the major events and processes of the Soviet Union's disintegration will be discussed, with the emphasis on the experience of the Baltic republics, as each of them led independence efforts at different times.

As the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were the last to be incorporated into the Soviet Union, it makes sense that they were the first to try to leave it. Indeed, the process by which they "joined" the USSR eventually catalyzed the process that ended in their independence. The arrival of glasnost in the Soviet Union resulted, among many other things, in the release of information about the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that divided Poland between Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union and gave Stalin the Baltics. The inclusion of the Baltics in the Soviet Union required forceful exportations and executions that also became public knowledge with glasnost (Lieven 1993, 222). Shortly thereafter, popular movements arose and began to organize protests on anniversaries of the pact and of other salient events. Initially, the demands of Baltic popular fronts, and those in other republics, focused on economic and environmental issues. Chernobyl was a catalyst, causing each republic, particularly those which suffered most from radioactive fallout (Ukraine and the Baltics), to seek greater control over its environment and economic development. Glasnost mattered because it gave individuals more information about the past and about ongoing events within the Soviet Union and within Eastern Europe, and it allowed individuals to organize and voice their protests (Gellner 1992, 249). The success of some individuals and groups within the Baltics to voice their demands without repression demonstrated to potential activists elsewhere in the Soviet Union that the government was not going to repress dissent as much or as forcefully as it had in the past.

Similarly, *perestroika* increased the interest each ethnic group had in gaining more autonomy.[48] *Perestroika* was the effort to reform the economy, which would have distributive consequences, hurting some groups more than others. For instance, because of the peculiar division of labor, a new project in Estonia might require immigrants from other republics, especially Russians. Such projects stimulated opposition because of the increasingly perceived threat that the titular nationalities of the Baltics, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians (especially the latter two), were being overwhelmed demographically by other ethnic groups, especially Russians. This was both an economic threat and a political threat, because changes in the demographic balance might prevent the "native" ethnic groups from winning elections in a more democratic system if such changes were allowed to continue. Perestroika increased the tensions between the Baltics and Moscow by creating economic hardships as inflation accelerated and shortages of various goods developed. The Baltic countries began to demand their own currencies to buffer themselves from Soviet inflationary pressures and pushed for a more rapid

pace of reform so that the center's control over trade, which was blamed for shortages, would be removed (Bookman 1992, 99-100). These economic demands reinforced the Baltics' desire for more political control.

The third key reform was democratization, where the constituency of politicians changed from the party apparatus to the citizens of each republic. Rather than appealing to those higher up in the party, politicians increasingly had to appeal to masses of citizens participating in the political process (Roeder 1994). "Under these conditions, rational politicians aim to maximize their own power at the local level. If this requires them to pursue a more conciliatory approach towards nationalist movements, to champion initiatives that the center finds offensive or destabilizing, then that is the price they must pay for political survival" (Furtado and Hecter 1992, 190). While the competitiveness of elections varied among the republics, the results of elections mattered within the Baltic republics, causing incumbents to lose and nationalists to gain seats in legislatures. Because of past events and ongoing economic problems, those politicians who took stands in favor of nationalist interests tended to do well in elections. Sajudis, the Lithuanian Reconstruction Movement, was formed in 1988 and called for sovereignty in February 1989. It won 36 of Lithuania's 42 seats in the Soviet Union's Congress of People's Deputies and dominated the 1990 elections by winning 80 percent of the seats in Lithuania's Supreme Soviet (Krickus 1993, 157-181).

Elections in the Baltics and elsewhere not only meant that politicians and parties (or nationalist fronts) had to gain popular support votes, but they had to compete with other parties and politicians for such support. Elections caused each nationalist front to take increasingly extreme positions, eventually resulting in declarations of independence. In Latvia, the Popular Front for Latvia [LTF] faced competition from other nationalist groups, including Helsinki '86, Latvia's National Independence Movement, and the Environmental Protection Club. "The leaders [of the LTF], however, were generally more moderate than the membership at large. Their room for maneuver was constrained, not only by their program and radicalized membership, but also by the more militant groupings on their political flanks who were quick to cry 'Betrayal!' at the first sign of compromise by the Front" (Muiznieks 1993, 199). The Estonian Popular Front [EPF] also faced ethnic outbidding, as a competing institution developed-the Congress of Estonia (Furtado and Hecter 1992, 196). Because its supporters were exiting to support a competitor, the EPF tried to outbid the competition, pushing for independence. Even the local Communist Parties tried to take stands on nationalist issues to regain legitimacy and support (Lieven 1993, 220; Kaplan 1993).

Ethnic outbidding and the combination of political and economic insecurity thus produced independence movements that won elections and gained power in the Baltics. The tremendous popular support for these efforts and the unsuccessful efforts to use force to repress these movements led most observers, as well as participants in Russia's political system, to acknowledge that the Baltics could and would become independent. Their secession did not mean that the Soviet Union was no longer viable, but did spur a set of processes that resulted in 15 independent states standing in the wreckage of the Soviet Union. The separatist efforts of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania encouraged the efforts of activists in other Soviet republics as well as forcing Soviet officials to consider a new Union treaty, which, in turn, set the stage for the August coup of 1991.

Many of the events and reforms pushing the Baltics towards independence also influenced the politics of other Soviet republics. The combination of glasnost and Chernobyl energized opposition to the Communist Party and the Soviet Union in the Ukraine and elsewhere. The ability of Baltic movements to organize and protest demonstrated to Ukraine activists what was possible in Gorbachev's Soviet Union (Krawchenk 1993, 75). Unlike other reputed "demonstration effects," there was a clear, positive lesson to be learned, which influenced the actions of activists because the same federal government that allowed the Baltics to speak more freely also ruled the Ukraine. Indeed, some of the compromises made by the Soviet government with the Baltics were then generalized to the rest of the republics, including greater economic control (Hazard 1993, 120). The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh became a crucial issue within Armenia because glasnost, perestroika, and democratization allowed information about the plight of Armenians there to be known and to be used by opportunistic politicians for their gain (Dudwick 1990). The path chosen by Georgian elites to political success and independence was not

particularly democratic, but was still influenced by the same forces shaping the other separatist movements. "Perestroika and glasnost intensified ethnic anxieties in the republic. The economic crisis and the absence of central power, the emergence of ethnically based political parties and the rehabilitation of bitter national memories raised the stakes of ethnic competition" (Jones 1993, 294). As a result, Georgian political movements competed with each other in their efforts to exclude the other minorities in the republic, including the Abkhazians and the South Ossetians, which would have severe consequences for the newly independent Georgia.

The most significant challenge to the integrity of the Soviet Union was Russia's quest for autonomy. While the Soviet Union could have existed without the Baltic Republics, Georgia, or Moldova, without the Russian Federation, there would be no Soviet Union. Before Gorbachev's reforms, the Russian Republic lacked most of the institutions that the other republics had, including a republic-level Communist Party and KGB. This was part of an effort to have Russians identify themselves with the Soviet Union and to be the glue of the entire Soviet federation (Dunlop 1993, 43). Once Boris Yeltsin gained power as the chair of the Russian Federation, he engaged in state-building, developing institutions that the other republics already had. By doing so, he was creating a perception that the Russian Federation was a different political entity from the Soviet Union (Dunlop 1993, 51-53). Yeltsin, along with leaders of other republics, engaged in a "war of laws," with the republican governments passing laws that were to supersede the mandates of the Soviet government.

To deal with the demands of the republics, Gorbachev negotiated a treaty to determine the powers and rights of the republics and the new Union of Soviet Sovereign States, which did not include the Baltic republics, Georgia, or Moldova. This treaty was to be signed on August 20, 1991. However, the day before the planned signing, forces within the Soviet Union seeking to maintain its integrity launched a coup to prevent the signing of the Union treaty. Their failure delegitimated key federal institutions, the last remaining ties holding the Soviet Union together, and increased the threat felt by each republic's titular nationalities. While many did not like the pace or content of Soviet reforms, the possibility of finding themselves in a Soviet Union ruled by conservatives and nationalists was too much, intensifying the ethnic security dilemma. The first act of the State Council, a body including the presidents of the republics and the president of the USSR, was to recognize the independence of the Baltics (Hazard 1993, 130). After the coup, attempts to develop a new Union treaty were blocked by the republics as each made new demands. Once the Ukraine held its elections on December 1, 1991, resulting in majorities favoring independence, even in the predominantly ethnic Russian Crimea, the Soviet Union's end was near (Krawchenk 1993, 92). The Minsk meeting of the presidents of Belarus, the Ukraine, and Russia created the Commonwealth of Independent States, essentially replacing the Soviet federation with a weakly developed alliance of successor states.

While the levels of physical insecurity varied among the republics, ethnic outbidding was consistently present once politicians had to appeal to voters and had to compete with others for those votes. Increased political competition by itself was not the cause of the Soviet Union's disintegration, but the strategies used by politicians and the preferences articulated by the masses did help cause the collapse, because they largely focused on the rights and interests of ethnic groups. The first parties to organize were devoted to protecting the interests of various national groups, as the "western" model of parties competing on a left-right spectrum made little sense in a "classless" society.

Ethnic insecurity also developed in several other republics as the independence movements progressed. Minorities within these republics had relied upon the Soviet government to guarantee their security. With the decline of the center and the rise of politicians making their careers by promising to favor the titular nationalities, Russians outside of Russia, Abkhazians and South Ossetians in Georgia, Gagauz in Moldova, and the Chechens in Russia, to name just a few, had much more to fear. While they might not have been very happy under the old Soviet Union, these minorities did not have to worry as much about the state being used by an ethnic group to deprive them of their land, their jobs, or their political rights. Now the old guarantees are gone, the states that have replaced the Soviet Union are not seen as impartial adjudicators of potential disputes, and so the ethnic security dilemmas have become acute, leading to separatism within the successor states.

The Velvet Breakup: Czechoslovakia

The disintegration of Czechoslovakia is remarkable for its nonviolent history. Not only was force not used to maintain the integrity of the state, but the seceding ethnic group, the Slovaks, did not really perceive a physical threat. However, they certainly did perceive an economic threat, which helped to motivate both voters and politicians. Since Czechoslovakia was the last of the three Eastern European federations to break up, it is plausible that actors within this state were influenced by the examples set by separatist movements in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. They may have been encouraged by the success of the Baltics to secede from the Soviet Union with relatively little violence and by the ability of Slovenia to secede from Yugoslavia with only a month of battles. However, the experiences of Georgia, Armenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina should have discouraged separatists in Slovakia. It is not clear which lessons should have been more applicable, without considering the political, economic, and ethnic structures within Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia faced similar problems in reforming their polity and economy as the Yugoslavia and Soviet Union. Reforming the economy had very clear distributional consequences as the Slovaks were certainly going to bear the brunt of the pain, because their region contained most of the obsolete factories and industries. Reforms exacerbated existing resentment over policies that were perceived to favor the Czech lands at the expense of Slovakia. Investment by Czechoslovakia in Slovakia was primarily focused toward two industries, raw materials and the defense sector, while final production and high tech industries were concentrated largely in the Czech lands, appearing to limit Slovakia's industrial development (Bookman 1992, 97-98). The combination of a poorly developed economy and economic reform that would hurt Slovakia's economy caused economic insecurity as Slovaks feared for their jobs.

The threat of economic insecurity caused Slovak voters to support those parties that promised to slow the reform process and protect the interests of Slovaks. In the Czech lands, popular sentiment favored a relatively faster pace for reform efforts to create links with Western Europe. The election of 1992 produced results that could not be reconciled into a stable government. Vladimir Meciar led the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, promising to increase Slovakia's autonomy and to slow the pace of economic reform. Vaclav Klaus led the conservative, pro-market reform Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic. These two parties won pluralities of seats in their respective republics, leaving little room for forming coalitions due to their differences on market reform and on the degree of federalism or confederation of the constitution. Meciar sought a confederation with an essentially sovereign Slovakia, while Klaus favored either a federal state or two independent states. After a series of meetings, the two leaders agreed on June 20, 1992, to divide Czechoslovakia into two independent states. They also agreed not to hold referendums on this issue. Once the issue of secession was decided, they were able to negotiate the split fairly easily with no violence at all (Pehe 1993, 84-88).

The one lesson that actors within Czechoslovakia may have learned from external events was that nationalism was a useful tool for gaining political office. Meciar's campaign was not unlike those of politicians in Soviet republics or Yugoslav republics, as he emphasized the rights and insecurities of Slovaks, seeking to gain the votes of that one ethnic group. Consequently, he alienated the Czechs who were more influential in the federal system and offended the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Though the Slovaks did not fear the Czechs as much as the Croats feared (and continue to fear) the Serbs, the ethnic outbidding by Meciar and Klaus, along with the perceived bias of economic reforms, did poison the political atmosphere, making compromise impossible and disintegration more likely. Again, the promises and actions of politicians created insecurities, increasing the incentives of politicians to use ethnic politics: the dynamics reinforced each other, causing ethnic conflict to intensify, leading to demands for autonomy and secession.

Comparative Disintegration

Because the breakups of the Yugoslav, Soviet, and Czechoslovak federations occurred within a span of a single year, it is plausible that the first secessionist efforts encouraged or created favorable conditions for later separatist movements.[49] While this is clearly the case within each

country, it is not the case that separatism and ethnic conflict within one state greatly encouraged or exacerbated similar processes within other states. The rise of nationalism within Serbia did foster nationalism and secessionism in Slovenia and Croatia, which, in turn, caused Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to secede as well. The separatist efforts of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania did encourage each other and help to foster similar movements in other Soviet republics. It is probably also true that the secession of Slovakia has inflamed the nationalism felt by its Hungarian minority. However, the disintegration of Yugoslavia did not cause or catalyze the breakdown of the Soviet Union or vice versa. The federal government of each state did not disappear overnight as it became clear that federations in Eastern Europe were becoming an endangered species. Instead, each state broke apart after a series of events and rising nationalism dating back to the mid-1980's, which were produced by ethnic politics and ethnic insecurity. The parallels between these states, particularly between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, are products of these states facing similar political problems in similar circumstances: specifically, how to re-create polities, economies, and societies after the collapse of communism and how to maintain power by gaining support within the region.

There was a contagious dynamic at work in Eastern Europe: the delegitimation of communism and authoritarianism. The fall of the Berlin Wall challenged existing notions of what was possible and what was probable. With the threat of Soviet intervention declining, old regimes collapsed and fledgling democracies took their place. Old ways of organizing politics, including forming parties based on class divisions, were illegitimate. Basing party platforms on the promises of economic reform has been difficult since reforms tend to cause severe short-pain and do not guarantee long-term prosperity.[50] As a result, politicians competing for office had to seek new ways of tying themselves to voters. One of the simplest ways is to appeal to particular ethnic groups for support. Rather than trying to create party identification, it was easier to use existing identities for mobilizing support, and this dynamic played itself out throughout Eastern Europe.

Perhaps the key reason why Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union fell apart almost simultaneously was the timing of the first rounds of relatively competitive elections.[51] Yugoslavia's first fairly free elections were in 1990; the various Soviet republics held elections between 1989-1991; and Czechoslovakia's federal elections in June of 1992 were its last. "In the more democratic environment, nationality leaders, armed with the structural resources control of the union republics provides, have greater incentives to actively mobilize their ethnic constituencies, and in turn face new pressures from them" (Young 1992, 92). Elections meant new opportunities for new politicians and movements, increased competition for political support, and decreased security perceived by ethnic groups, which now had to worry about who would govern them, but might be able to do something about it. In each country, incumbent politicians and nationalist upstarts faced similar political dilemmas and resolved them with comparable strategies. Proposed economic reforms and other policies were designed to favor certain ethnic groups at the expense of others, to create ties between those who would benefit and the politicians espousing the policies. Moderation tended to be punished as those who weakly supported nationalist causes faced serious competition by activists and movements promising to better defend the nationality's interests. Ethnic outbidding was particularly intense in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Estonia, Latvia, Georgia, Russia, and Slovakia, to name just a few.

Politicians seeking to outbid incumbents and competitors on ethnically oriented issues were successful because changing political institutions and the perils of economic reform caused most ethnic groups to perceive threats to their economic, political, and physical well-being. Once they acted to protect themselves, other ethnic groups within their political systems felt threatened. Policies favoring Serbs caused Croats and Slovenes to feel less secure, as well as making other minorities within Serbia more fearful. Policies promised and enacted by Croatian and Slovenian elites to favor the titular nationalities made the Serb diaspora feel insecure, causing them to rely upon Serbia's protection, which exacerbated the insecurity of each of Yugoslavia's ethnic groups. Likewise, the attempts by the Baltic ethnic groups to gain control over their governments increased the insecurity of minorities in the region, including Russians. This has become an issue that nationalists within Russia have recently used to criticize Yeltsin and his foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev. These criticisms have occasionally pushed Yeltsin to make statements about protecting the rights of Russians in the near abroad, which, in turn, tend to make those ethnic groups governing the near abroad feel less secure.

The political strategies of politicians worked because the masses of voters, who could now reasonably threaten to exit to competitors, perceived themselves to be insecure. The promises kept by winning politicians to seek autonomy and/or develop discriminatory economic and other policies reinforced existing fears. Each of these three states faced (and many of their successor states continue to face) similar political and economic problems left in communism's and authoritarianism's wake, providing incentives for politicians to continue to emphasize ethnic identities and creating ethnically oriented insecurities in the minds of potential voters.

The boundaries of states largely contained these processes because elites and ethnic groups were responding to threats and opportunities that were within state boundaries. While elites could learn lessons from the experiences of other states, their incentives were shaped by existing international and republican boundaries. With the onset of democracy (or at least semi-democratic processes), politicians had to focus on new constituents, either voters or the remnants of the state, who largely lived within pre-existing boundaries.[52] Thus, they paid more attention to cues from within the state than from outside it.

Ethnic threats are also largely, though not entirely, confined to within state boundaries. The worst thing that can happen to an ethnic group is for the state within which it resides to be captured by an adversarial ethnic group. Hungarians in Slovakia are much more concerned with the behavior of the Slovakian majority and the state they dominate than Serb actions in Vojvodina, because Slovakia's state apparatus can be directly used against them. The Slovakian government can: distribute economic resources away from Hungarians; change laws to reduce the ability of Hungarians to compete economically or politically; or use force to repress or expel the Hungarians.

Finally, the nature of secession itself implies that the focus of movements will be on the behavior of the state itself and not on external actors. Secession is an attempt to separate an ethnic group and its territory from an existing state. Thus, the first question one must ask of any secessionist movement is why they would want to leave that state, and the answer invariably will focus on the previous abuses and potential policies of the state within which they reside. These threats they are influenced by the interaction of ethnic politics and the ethnic security dilemma. Secession will not occur simply because a politician or a group realizes that it is more possible or less costly now rather than before. While elites and ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia certainly were aware of events in other Eastern European countries and may have consciously adopted strategies that were similar to the more successful movements, their desires to secede were largely determined by events, opportunities, and institutions within their respective states.

Conclusion: Good News and Bad News

Secessionism is probably not as contagious as it is often portrayed, and the mechanisms by which it is thought to spread need to be seriously reconsidered. Contagion, in the form of demonstration effects and precedent-setting, does not have the clear consequences analysts often argue. The lessons to be learned from the Yugoslav crisis may or may not encourage potential separatists, depending on whether potential separatists consider themselves to be more like Slovenia or Bosnia, which in turn partly depends on their predispositions. Similarly, for the Soviet Union's breakup to foster more secessionism, separatists would have to consider whether they are like Lithuania or Georgia. Instead, ethnic conflict and secessionism tend to be generated and reinforced by the internal interacting dynamics of ethnic politics and ethnic security dilemmas. This offers both good news and bad.

Because demonstration effects and precedent-setting dynamics are clearly not as influential as often perceived, secessionism is not as contagious as commonly thought. Ethnic strife can be managed by states if they ameliorate the insecurities perceived by existing ethnic groups and give politicians relatively few incentives to play the ethnic card. Such states will not break apart merely because they contain ethnic groups, who might observe such events occurring elsewhere.

The bad news is that ethnic conflict and separatism spreads quickly within states and is hard to cure. Because the existence of ethnic conflict tends to reinforce existing insecurities and

provide politicians with additional incentives to gain support through mobilizing ethnically defined supporters, it tends to spread within the state as it causes ethnic groups to seek control of the state or opt out of it. Clearly, Serbian nationalism caused Slovenian and Croatian politicians to use nationalism and to be successful in gaining power, and their success, in turn, reinforced the influence of Serb nationalists within Serbia and the rest of Yugoslavia. Likewise, the Soviet Union's responses to the challenges posed by the Baltic republics influenced the perceptions of ethnic groups and the opportunities of politicians in other Soviet republics. Efforts to use Slovakian nationalism to gain power within Czechoslovakia's federal institutions intensified Czech nationalism and exacerbated perceptions of insecurity by Hungarian minorities in Slovakia. Ethnic politics feeds ethnic insecurities, which then reinforces ethnic politics and conflict. Unless it is treated quickly, such ethnic conflict can spread within the body politic so that it soon becomes unmanageable.

This analysis suggests more bad news: contagions can be quarantined, but the causes of ethnic conflict and secession are more complex and harder to eliminate. How can international organizations and states prevent ethnic conflict from getting out of hand in various states? If the processes by which ethnic conflict spreads are ethnic politics and ethnic insecurity, there are some possible institutional solutions that might be recommended. The approach taken here on ethnic politics focuses on the imperatives of political competition between and among ethnic groups. While the obvious answer would be to advise repression, that may merely delay the onset of conflict, as the Eastern European experience testifies. Instead, there are two very different methods to deal with ethnic politics in democracies: compel politicians to rely on more than one ethnic group for support (vote-pooling) or create a single party for each ethnic group (consociationalism). Vote-pooling works by causing politicians to appeal to more than one ethnic group, forcing them to moderate their positions and creating disincentives for ethnic outbidding (Horowitz 1985, 1991). Consociationalism works by limiting the ability of supporters to exit and by giving each ethnic group a share of power. If the only other parties are those representing other ethnic groups, there is little interest in exiting, and if each ethnically defined party controls some of the reins of the state, each group feels more secure. This allows elites within each ethnic group to bargain and compromise, as they will not greatly fear being outbid or losing supporters (Lijphart 1977, 1985, 1990). Unfortunately, neither school has gained ascendance over the other. Perhaps the South African experiment will indicate which approach works better.

There may be more that external actors and international organizations can do, but because the key dynamics are related to the interests of politicians and the insecurities of ethnic groups within states, the proposed international efforts must focus on these dynamics. Instead of arguing for truthful textbooks (Van Evera 1990/91) or teaching intellectuals not to be nationalists (Snyder 1990), the United States, its allies, and international organizations must offer incentives to politicians to moderate their policies and assurances to ethnic groups that they need not fear for their security. Recent efforts to tie membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace program and preferential access to the European Union to good treatment of ethnic minorities may help to finesse the ethnic security dilemmas in Eastern Europe and parts of the former Soviet Union. Of course, recommending international involvement now suggests that external intervention might have worked to prevent the war in Yugoslavia. The questions then become, could the U.S. and others really have provided credible reassurances to protect any ethnic group in Croatia or Bosnia? Could outsiders have altered the domestic political incentives facing Milosevic, Tudjman, and the others?

More work needs to be done to fully determine not only the possible domestic institutional solutions and efficacious international involvement, but also the dynamics that caused Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia to fall apart. This study is clearly just a start in understanding these recent events. This paper's purpose has been to question existing understandings of how ethnic conflict spreads and to develop an alternative understanding that places the key sources of ethnic conflict within the confines of each state. Contagion from external events matters less than the interests of opportunistic politicians and the insecurities of ethnic groups who will selectively learn lessons from abroad depending on their pre-existing situations.

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NOTES

1. The question remains whether there is more secessionism today, and how much of it is new. Excluding the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and excluding all secessionist movements that began before 1989 (before the post-Cold War Era), may leave very few new secessionist movements. A more thorough study of the data is needed to verify this assertion.

2 One of the general comments made concerning an earlier draft of this article was that separatism may encourage ethnic conflict elsewhere in forms other than secessionism, and vice versa. While this may be true, this article will take a more limited approach to isolate some crucial dynamics that can then be generalized.

3 The disease metaphor that will be used occasionally in this paper is not meant to categorize secession as always a detrimental or negative phenomena. The disease metaphor is used because the concept of contagion is inherently linked to images of disease. The literature on the war as a contagious process also relies on disease imagery. "From an epidemiological perspective diffusion is key-it provides a way of thinking about the processes by which states not at war catch the disease; a way of thinking about how war may be infectious or spread through contagion of some sort from states at war to states at peace" (Siverson and Starr 1991, 17). Emphasis is added. Also, see Vasquez (1992, 162).

4 The quick spread of democratization and economic reform in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have been and will continue to be complicated subjects that will require much analysis. For an interesting collection of such analyses, see "Liberalization and Democratization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," a special issue of World Politics 44, no. 1 (October 1991).

5 Balkanization referred to the creation of many states from the remnants of the Austria-Hungary empire.

6 The domino theory is also known as the fear of infinite divisibility (Heraclides 1992, 408).

7 Sir Francis Galton first raised this issue in 1889 (Ross and Homer 1976).

8 Their emphasis is largely on information flows, while this article focuses on the interests of politicians and followers.

9 There is some recent evidence to suggest that elites within Eastern Europe perhaps are being discouraged because of the horrors of Bosnia. Prominent Hungarian and Bulgarian elites have toned down their nationalist appeals and have worked toward agreements that pledge respect for minority rights (New York Times, 3/26/95, H4).

10 For a good start toward understanding the cognitive political psychology that may be at work, consider Jervis (1976, chap. 4).

11 In their later study, Hill and Rothchild assert that "the propensity to engage in protest is structured by past conflict and cued by current protest events" (1992, 195-96). This opens up the question about whether the process at work is reinforcement or spatial: is it the past conflict causing present conflict or the external events?
12 Three other processes may also matter, but will not be considered here: direct backlash or revenge against those who support secession; refugee flows; increased salience of ethnic identities. For a discussion of the effects of population movements, see Robertson 1995. For an argument concerning how ethnic conflict or secessionism in one state increase the salience of ethnic identities elsewhere, see Kuran 1995.
13 Astri Suhrke and Lela Garner Noble argue, "This may well be too facile an assumption" (1977, 13-14). For a more thorough critique, see Kamanu 1974.
14 This relative ease is called "inconceivable only yesterday" by Alexis Heraclides (1992, 399).
15 As will be discussed further below, the ramifications of a successful secession are much clearer and more direct for ethnic groups within the same state than for ethnic groups in other states. That is, reinforcement processes are clearer and stronger than spatial diffusion processes.
16 See Fearon 1995, for a brief survey of demonstration effects arguments and their tendency to omit countervailing forces.
17 Singapore may not really count since it was essentially pushed out of Malaysia, rather than fighting for its independence.
18 Of course, the fall of the Berlin wall had more direct implications for the other states within the Soviet bloc: if the Soviet Union was not going to use force to put down the rebellion/revolution in East Germany, they were probably not going to use force to put down similar movements in other states within the Soviet bloc. Potential activists within East Europe had to consider the identical constraint, the Soviet Union, while the same is not as true for ethnic groups seeking to secede from different states.
19 Recognition of Macedonia has not been delayed by respect for international norms, but because of Greece's persistent efforts within the European Community and elsewhere to deny recognition to Macedonia.
20 While Eritrea is now independent, it required a costly struggle lasting thirty years and achieving success only because the "mother" state was falling apart. Somaliland's experience is similar.
21 While potential separatists may be discouraged by fears of what the inheritors might do, the policies of the "centers" of disintegrating federations may also be a force for further secessionism, such as Russia's assistance to Abkhazian separatists in Georgia. Stuart Kaufman is to be thanked for this insight.
22 Crawford Young is a partial exception as he argues that states have been inhibited by mutual vulnerability, but that the norms are not that fragile and could survive a few violations (1991, 346).
23 For example, see Buchheit 1978; Foltz 1991; Herbst 1989; Jackson 1990; Neuberger 1986; and Touval 1972.
24 Analysts have considered the conflict in Yugoslavia to have opened up Pandora's box in Europe, potentially challenging the boundaries of former Soviet Republics, Eastern European states, and even France, Spain, and Great Britain. For such claims, see Nakarada 1991, 373-4.
25 This criticism has also recently been applied to Neo-Realist explanations of wars (Schroeder 1994, 119).
26 For an interesting discussion of an often-ignored secession, see Omaar 1994.
27 One question that is frequently asked is: why ethnicity? The primary reason why ethnicity is considered here is that the focus of the project is why ethnic conflict spreads and the focus of this paper is how secessionism, which is usually ethnically defined, spreads. Still, the question also applies to why politicians choose to use ethnicity rather than some other division or group to gain power. First, according to the definition used here, ethnicity includes ties of race, kinship, language, and religion, so it includes a variety of ties that may be used to bind constituents to politicians. Second, politicians may have few alternatives from which to choose. In less developed states, class may not be a particularly important divide within the society. For the former communist states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, class has, to a certain degree, been discredited by the old regimes so that politicians might encounter unwanted

associations with the old Communist parties if they resorted to mobilizing along class lines. For a similar argument, see Frye 1992, 605-606.28 For a similar argument about ethnic mobilization, see Roeder 1994.
29 Indeed, the particular design of federalism within Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia may help to explain their disintegrations as the way the boundaries within theses were drawn greatly shaped the pool of potential supporters for politicians.
30 See Mayhew 1974, for the classic discussion of this assumption, as applied to politicians in democracies. It is assumed here that elites in non-democracies will also be concerned with maintaining their positions, perhaps even more so than in democracies, as the consequences of losing power in an authoritarian state may be more severe.
31 This was the situation in Sri Lanka in the 1960's and 1970's, as after each election, one of the two Sinhalese parties would win huge majorities in seats without gaining majorities in votes, enabling them to re-write the constitution at will. Much of the current unrest in Sri Lanka today can be traced back to the ethnic outbidding during this period. See Horowitz 1989.
32 In many polities, it is difficult to determine the preferences of one's constituents. However, the ethnic identity of likely or actual supporters can be seen as a cue used by politicians to calculate the preferences of potential constituents.
33 There is some debate as to whether politicians have to follow through on their promises. My view toward this debate is that, as the possibility of exit becomes more threatening, politicians will be compelled to back up their words with policies that discriminate in favor of those who are likely to exit.
34 The focus here is on the ethnic composition of a politician's supporters, not of the entire country. This is an important distinction, which has significant policy consequences. Sometimes, a politician's constituency accurately reflects the ethnic composition of an entire country, making the distinction less important. However, by focusing on the ethnic composition of a politician's supporters, the approach taken here can apply to those situations in which the politician's supporters do not reflect the ethnic composition of the entire society.
35 This discussion is largely a logical extension of Horowitz's (1985) understanding of ethnicity and role of insecurity within it, though his discussion of secessionism differs from mine.
36 The approach I take here was initially developed in reaction to the existing literatures on ethnic politics and on institutional solutions to ethnic politics. See Saideman 1990.
37 For instance, see James Fearon 1995.
38 This definition excludes, for the purpose of clarity, emotional well-being, the survival of one's culture, and other ways of thinking about the fears of ethnic groups.
39 This tends to assume that a state's economy is zero-sum, and this is not always true. I would suggest that the rise of anti-affirmative action movements in the U.S. during a time of growth indicates that perceptions of "zero-sum-ness" do develop even during prosperity.
40 Political security will be greatly affected by the structure of political institutions, particularly a state's constitution, which may or may not give minority ethnic groups some insurance in the forms of federalism, minority vetoes, electoral laws that help minority parties, and the like (Lijphart 1977).
41 The threat of supporters' exiting is high when there is at least one alternative competitor to which exiters can go and when their exit can change the balance of political power. The threat of supporters' exit is low when there is no alternative competitor or when the nature of the political system (e.g., electoral institutions) means that their exit cannot change the balance of political power.
42 Of course, these four outcomes represent ideal points, as neither of these processes can be sliced neatly into dichotomous variables.
43 Stability here means that the two dynamics reinforce each other, so that the patterns of behavior are likely to remain consistent over time. The word "stability" may seem strange here as a situation characterized by extreme ethnic insecurity and ethnic outbidding may not seem stable in the conventional sense, but can be considered stable in the sense that politicians and their supporters will replicate their behavior over time. For instance, the conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese can be considered a relatively stable situation, where a high degree of violence exists over a long period of time.
44 For one typical reference, see Brown 1993, 72.

45 The only place where boundary lines meant that politicians had to play to a multiethnic audience was Bosnia, which did develop a multiethnic government.
46 This may, of course, change, if Macedonia becomes embroiled in conflict with Serbia or if the Albanians in Kosovo actually attempt to secede from Serbia.
47 The logic of this approach may also help in explaining why secessionism continues to be a problem in Russia and the other former Soviet Republics.
48 It must be noted that the economic interests of the 15 republics varied quite considerably, so some were not as motivated by economic motives to secede, and some were not as motivated to secede at all.
49 Marijke Breuning pointed out to me that diffusion need not be fast and that the relative simultaneity of the breakups may actually indicate that something more than simply diffusion was going on.
50 The perils of reform are not new, as Machiavelli argued that "there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order ...." (1950, 21).
51 Donald Rothchild also emphasizes the role of elections as "consciousness-raising experiences" and as part of a battle for state control (1995, 63).
52 Emigres did play some role in helping to fund separatist movements and push politicians, but the key constraints were those within the state. There were elements of the center that existed beyond the center's boundaries or even the state's: namely, the military, as units of the Yugoslav army were based beyond Serbia, and units of the Soviet army were still being withdrawn from Eastern Europe at this time.