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Globalization, secessionism, and autonomy

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the relationship between the persistence and growth of secessionist parties in democratic countries and economic globalization, controlling for political and economic factors. The implications of secessionist persistence for decentralization are also examined. The paper finds that globalization is positively related to secessionist vote growth, while there is some evidence that economic conditions also impact secessionist parties in systematic ways. Secessionist support is also substantially affected by policy changes. Central governments have offered autonomy more often to regions with secessionist parties than to regions without such parties, though often the offers take the form of symmetrical country-wide decentralization.

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Recent decades have seen a more or less continuous rise in electoral support for secessionist parties in Western democracies, with the exception of a temporary decline in the early and mid-1980s in the cases best known to English-speaking political scientists: Scotland, Wales, and Quebec. This secular increase has led researchers to examine whether secessionism bears any systematic relationship to another time-variant phenomenon, economic globalization, understood as the worldwide increase in foreign trade and capital mobility. Both economists and political scientists have addressed the issue using different methods. Economists have addressed the issue in terms of the “equilibrium size of nations”, arguing that globalization has induced a reduction in that quantum. Empirically, they have lumped together secessions and decolonizations in their research, phenomena with different causal explanations. Political scientists came to the issue around the same time as economists and have addressed it from the angle of political strategy, emphasizing the fact that

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globalization allows minority nationalist groups to forge economic ties with other states and territories, thereby increasing their functional autonomy from their own states.

To date, these theories have not been adequately tested, nor is the theoretical picture complete. We need to bring central government response to secessionism into the picture, as well as other variables besides globalization that should influence secessionism over time. This paper finds that secessionism has increased over time in 15 western regions in a manner consistent with the progress of globalization. In addition, secessionist vote share in a region often decreases when a region's economy is weak in absolute terms, increases when a region's economy is notably weaker than that of the country as a whole, and increases when a region's per capita income relative to the rest of the country increases, while policy changes, especially unexpected ones, can also have a significant impact on secessionist support. Furthermore, regions that have well-established secessionist parties enjoyed a greater increase in political autonomy over the 1980–2000 period than regions without such parties.

The first part of the paper deals with the existing literature on globalization and secessionism, presenting the growing consensus that economic integration can induce political disintegration. The second part presents additional hypotheses about the determinants of secessionism over time. The third section describes the dependent variable (secessionist vote share), the independent variables, and the methodological strategy for the quantitative tests. The fourth section presents the quantitative results, the fifth presents qualitative evidence from Scotland and Quebec, and the sixth section concludes.

1. Theories of globalization and secessionism

The old view among political scientists was that secessionist movements are inherently hostile to globalization, seeing it as corrosive of traditional values and an impediment to grand political projects. Thus, Keating argues that minority nationalisms are “dangerous” to business because they are “linked to social concerns and the desire to recover a domain of effective political action” (Keating, 1996). Therefore, minority nationalists are, he asserts, opposed to decentralizing the welfare state for fear of a “race to the bottom” as newly independent states compete for capital. This analysis is best applied to regionalist movements, such as those in Valencia (Spain) and southern Italy, movements that oppose the secession of wealthier regions and lobby for greater fiscal transfers from those regions. By contrast, secessionist parties by definition favor decentralization of most policies, including fiscal policies. In many cases, secessionist parties do favor independence within a customs union arrangement, as the Scottish National Party (SNP) proposes with respect to the European Union, and the Parti Québécois (PQ) with respect to Canada (“sovereignty-association” is the term the PQ has employed).¹

¹ In the 2003 election the PQ moderated its stance on secession, favoring “confederation” over “sovereignty”.

Likewise, Zirakzadeh associates secessionist parties with protectionist economics and attempts to link their electoral success positively with unemployment (Zirakzadeh, 1989). However, his evidence is based solely on the Basque provinces and Scotland, and even there it does not seem to support his thesis. For example, unemployment increased from 4.0 to 8.2% in Scotland between 1974 and 1978 (figures for 1979 were unavailable), but SNP vote share declined dramatically from 30.4% in October 1974 to 17.3% in 1979.

Since about 1996, a number of studies have come out noting that major secessionist parties tend to be favorable to the global marketplace. Meadwell and Martin (1996) note that both the PQ and their non-sovereigntist opponents, the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ), supported NAFTA, and that support for the agreement was higher in Quebec than in the other Canadian provinces. In Catalonia support for European Union (EU) membership is strong, and the SNP supports “independence in Europe”, having removed the protectionist clauses in their platform in 1983. They argue that “institutionalized interdependence” not only allows the international trading system to support smaller-sized units, as the economic theories canvassed below suggest, but also reduces the risk of protectionist retaliation against small units.² Shulman (2000) argues based on evidence from Quebec that secessionist nationalists have a strong incentive to diversify economic ties as a way of pursuing political autonomy. Newman (1997) argues that liberal secessionism is the new ideological trend among nationalist parties due to the rise of the global market and the fact that secession reinforces tax-cutting fiscal competition among governments. Nevertheless, most secessionist parties remain on the left, a fact that makes their nearly uniform support for globalization even more interesting. A quotation from Alex Salmond, former leader of the decidedly left-wing SNP, illustrates the logic nicely:

People say, “What’s a wee country like this going to do for an army? Who’s going to do food and drug testing? Who will issue the patents?” And people worry about the money, you know: “We’ll have a Scottish currency that nobody wants and a central bank that nobody listens to”. The whole debate on independence has been changed by a single idea, and that’s the European Union.³

There is by now a large economic literature on the effects of economic globalization on the equilibrium size of countries (in terms of population). The core idea is that free trade renders secession less inefficient, because under global free trade small countries no longer need to be self-sufficient—they can exploit their comparative advantage without being part of a larger political unit. The argument seems first to have been proposed by Polèse, but it has been formalized in a series of recent articles (Polèse, 1985; Wittman, 1991; Bolton et al., 1996; Alesina and Spolaore, 1997; Bolton and Roland, 1997; Alesina and Wacziarg, 1998; Alesina

² The authors note moreover that the PQ places a greater emphasis on the institutional guarantees of free trade than does the autonomist but anti-secessionist PLQ.

³ Quoted in Reid, 2000.

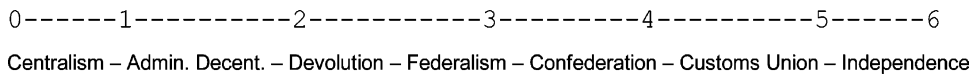


Fig. 1. Centralism-Independence Continuum.

et al., 2000). The progress of the European Union seems to contradict the argument that globalization induces political disintegration, but Alesina et al. suggest viewing the European Union as a case of “deep economic integration” rather than of political integration (Alesina et al., 2000). An alternative argument might be that globalization increases the economic efficiency of, and popular support for, secession, but also increases elites’ political incentives to create larger political units in order to “hold capital hostage”⁴ Alesina et al. (2000) predict that “if the process of political separatism continues, and average country size declines, more and more ‘players’ in the international arena have an interest in preserving free trade, thus reinforcing the movement toward trade liberalization that may have influenced their decision about secession in the first place”.

The new conventional wisdom is thus that globalization increases the appeal of secessionism and decentralization short of secession, and that secession should in turn reinforce globalization, possibly requiring secessionist parties to move to the free-market right. On the other hand, the cross-national evidence on globalization suggests that there remain differences among countries’ political-economic strategies, some continuing to pursue a state-interventionist model, while others pursue a relatively liberal path.⁵ If globalization does not require economic liberalism, then the left-wing, pro-globalization secessionist party may remain a sustainable category. The conclusion that does seem to be supported by both theory and evidence is that secessionist parties are notably friendly toward international markets.

If globalization increases the efficiency of independence and thus makes the exit threats of peripheral regions more credible, we should find central governments responding with offers of autonomy in order to forestall more radical outcomes, a hypothesis that remains under-investigated.⁶ Offers of autonomy should forestall secessionism if some voters are “conditional secessionists”, preferring independence to the status quo but not to substantial autonomy. Fig. 1 demonstrates the rationale.

⁴ This reasoning seems to be behind the pronouncement of Joschka Fischer, Green Foreign Minister of Germany, that “Europe is an objectively left project” (translation from interview given to Profil, June 29, 1997).

⁵ See, for example, Garrett, 1998; Drezner, 2001; Vogel, 1996; Boix, 1998; Hall and Soskice, 2001. These works are just a sampling of the revisionist literature on globalization.

⁶ Treisman finds that fiscal appeasement has worked to limit secessionism in Russia, while fiscal appeasement was not practiced in the post-Soviet states that broke up the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, data on fiscal appeasement are not widely available over time for most countries—and those measures that do exist are the object of great controversy in regions with secessionist parties. This paper therefore focuses more on autonomy arrangements as a method of appeasement (Treisman, 1999).

Assume the ideal point for the median legislator in the governing coalition in the central-state legislature lies at 1. There is a secessionist party in region A, which takes position 5. The median voter in region A lies at point 4. Preferences are estimated by a negative loss function:

$$U(x_i) = -a(|P_j - I_i|)^2 \quad (1)$$

where $U(x_i)$ represents the utility of player x_i , a is a constant, P_j is the point where a current or proposed policy j resides, and I_i is the ideal point of player x_i . This situation approximates a typical situation in a European country within the EU dealing with a surge of secessionist sentiment: the situation with regard to the United Kingdom and Scotland, for example.

Assume further that a majority vote in region A for independence of any kind is sufficient for secession to occur.⁷ The secessionist party may propose a referendum of this kind at any time. Assume that the status quo is at point 1, the ideal point of the median central-state legislator. Suppose then that the secessionist party proposes a referendum on its ideal point: point 5, which I have interpreted as independence under a customs union, though the substantive interpretation is not material to the model.⁸ The median voter in region A will vote for the referendum because it is closer to her ideal point than the status quo:

$$|P_5 - P_4| < |P_1 - P_4|. \quad (2)$$

Now suppose, more realistically, that the central-state legislature is the first mover. The central-state legislature will set a new policy P_N that approaches the following equality:

$$|P_N - P_4| = |P_5 - P_4|. \quad (3)$$

The left-hand term will be infinitesimally smaller than the right-hand term, just enough to make the median voter in region A prefer the new policy to the secessionist referendum.⁹

⁷ This assumption is not unreasonable for advanced western democracies, where a majority victory in a secession referendum is usually assumed to signal the beginning of negotiations for independence (e.g. Quebec). On the other hand, some democratic constitutions specify supermajority requirements for secession. Nevis' secession from St. Kitts was foiled by just such a provision: a referendum on secession in 1998 gathered 61.7% of the vote, shy of the two-thirds requirement (Premdas, 2000).

⁸ Surveys show that in almost all peripheral regions around the world there are few people whose ideal point is 6. Most people seem to be willing to take a "good deal" in terms of autonomy and fiscal incentives over the uncertainty of full independence.

⁹ In an iterated scenario, of course, secessionist leaders would respond with another referendum, the government would compromise again, and the referendum would fail again. Ultimately, policy would approximate the median voter's ideal position. However, if regional legislatures promote confidence in independence in the long run, voters' ideal points would continue moving to the right on the centralism-independence scale, all other factors being held constant.

The picture is now complete. If the expansion of world trade moves the median voter from left to right on this scale, then the median voter becomes more likely to vote for secession than before, assuming that the status quo lies to the left of the median voter's position. To ensure that the median voter prefers the (new) status quo to secession, the central government could implement a policy further to the right on the spectrum.¹⁰

Recent significant decentralization in Belgium, Spain, and the UK—along with more tentative efforts in France and Italy—seem to support the hypothesis that globalization induces a general increase in regional autonomy arrangements. Whether this phenomenon is related to secessionism is an open question in the literature: perhaps decentralization is a purely functionalist response to globalization, a means of ensuring institutional flexibility and promoting economic growth.¹¹ If this alternative hypothesis were true, then increases in autonomy should be proceeding at a roughly even rate in regions that have secessionist parties and regions that do not.

2. Other time-variant determinants of secessionism

Globalization and autonomy offers are of course not the only variables affecting popular demand for independence and support for secessionist parties. Variables affecting which regions are likely to develop secessionist tendencies include the existence of a minority language, a history of independence, and so on. However, this paper deals only with the over-time determinants of secessionism. It does not seek to address the cross-sectional determinants of secessionism: that is, the “risk factors” that may make some regions more inclined to secessionism.

Economic conditions should have a significant effect on support for secessionist parties, just as they do on support for other parties. *Zirakzadeh (1989)* argues that unemployment increases secessionist vote share because secessionist parties are supposed to offer economically reactive, autarkic policies—but as we have seen, the theory and evidence for this view are meager. In a research note, *Stéphane Dion (1996)* suggests that there are “fear-confidence antithetical effects” on issues like unemployment. High unemployment may stimulate discontent with or fear of the current political union, but it also undermines confidence in independence. Low unemployment gives the region confidence but eliminates the fear that makes secessionism relevant. Perhaps we can parse Dion's “fear” and “confidence” effects in the fol-

¹⁰ Actual secessions can occur if the costs of additional autonomy are higher for the central government than the costs of secession, and therefore the central government is unwilling to compromise. An example might be that of the Conservative Governments in the UK from 1979 to 1997: they had little political incentive to retain heavily Labour-voting Scotland and Wales in the UK and therefore had no reason to offer them devolution. Actual Scottish secession is less likely under a British Labour Government than under a British Conservative Government.

¹¹ Hueglin argues for example: “[H]ierarchically centralized systems pass from the complex to highly complex stage of organization, and there the efficiency benefits of centralized systems' control and regulation may be superseded by the costs of system maintenance” (455) (*Hueglin, 1986*).

lowing way: an unemployment rate that is higher in the region than in the rest of the country gives a secessionist party an important issue on which to campaign, but an unemployment rate—and we might add inflation rate—that is high in absolute terms reduces observed electoral secessionism not just by reducing confidence in independence but by making the secessionist option appear less important. In hard economic times voters tend to be concerned more with quick policy fixes than with constitutional reforms. Put another way, during recession the left-right ideological divide on economic policy grows in importance, while the up-down decentralization–centralization dimension lessens in importance.

More affluent regions—regions where the ratio of regional GDP per capita to countrywide GDP per capita is higher—are more likely to support more successful secessionist parties, presumably because such regions tend to pay more in taxes to the central government than they receive in expenditure. The effect is quite strong in cross-sectional regressions, but it may be quite a bit less strong in the time-series regressions of this paper, for two reasons: the variation in GDP ratio over time is noticeable but not great, and voters' perceptions of its significance for secessionism may change only slowly.

Policy changes also have a major impact on secessionist support. One such policy change is an offer of autonomy. If a central government offers a regional legislature to a region that did not previously have one, or concedes further powers to an already existing regional legislature, the spatial model above suggests that many voters in the region will feel satisfied that the new arrangements are sufficient. These voters, best thought of as “conditional secessionists”, will in the near term no longer vote for the secessionist party. By contrast, if a promised offer of autonomy falls through, dashed hopes may lead to greater resentment than would have existed if the offer had never been considered, and the secessionist alternative may benefit.

This paper uses large-N quantitative methods to assess these hypotheses. This paper is the first to study electoral secessionism over time with a large sample.¹² Most of the regressions in this paper include as data panels 15 regions with well-established secessionist political parties; regions with sporadic or no secessionist electoral activity are included in only one analysis.

3. Variables and methodological strategy

The dependent variables in this paper are constructed from secessionist party vote share. Secessionist party vote share presents several advantages as a measure of secessionist support in a region. It is a continuous variable with low

¹² One cross-national study of autonomy demands is that of Pieter van Houten (2001). He finds that region-level globalization variables fail to account for “variation in autonomy demands across regions” (1). This result is perhaps to be expected, as international openness matters more for secessionist movements than does existing regional openness. Van Houten does find, as does this paper, that “globalization and European integration have changed and reinforced autonomy demands in already assertive regions” in the six European countries studied.

measurement error. The variable is comparable across regions and over time, and indeed there are significant and interesting differences in secessionist votes across regions and over time. For a well-defined set of countries (western democracies), voting for secessionist parties is the major method of expressing support for the goal of secession or wide-ranging autonomy.

The regressions in this paper cover the years for which data are available—generally 1980 to 2000, for 15 regions.¹³ The regions included are: Scotland, Wales, Quebec, Euskadi (País Vasco), Navarre, Catalonia, Balearic Isles, Liguria, Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Faroe Islands, Puerto Rico, and Flanders. In all these regions a secessionist party has existed almost throughout the entire 1980–2000 period (only some of the Italian regions lacked a secessionist party in the early 1980s). Corsica has also had secessionist parties almost throughout this period, but it was eliminated for lack of sufficient data. The same is true of Sardinia, but it was eliminated because it has not had a single secessionist party through the period of investigation, but several, who appeared and disappeared at various times. Finally, Canadian-level elections for Quebec were eliminated because, apart from some abortive attempts, a federal sovereigntist party did not exist in Quebec until 1993. The regressions include both parties that explicitly advocate independence and those that generally avoid the issue, while promoting additional autonomy (these parties pursue a moderate electoral strategy, but could easily become independentist if their aims are frustrated). Regional parties that explicitly oppose independence are not included.

Examples of independentist or “radical” secessionist parties include the PQ, SNP, Flemish Bloc (VB), Faroese Republican Party, Catalan Republican Left (ERC), and Herri Batasuna (HB).¹⁴ Examples of autonomists or “moderate secessionists” include the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), Convergence and Unity (CiU), and the Northern League and its predecessors (LN).¹⁵ In one case, two formerly moderate parties, the People’s Party and the Home-Rule Party in the Faroes, campaigned on a platform of independence along with the Republican Party in the 1998 elections. The dependent variable uses regional vote share¹⁶ for both kinds of secessionist parties. This variable was called *VOTE*. Table 1 presents a view of the dataset’s treatment of Scotland. “Natelec” is coded 1 for countrywide elections, 0 for regional elections; “Provelec” is coded in inverse fashion.

¹³ In addition, Puerto Rican elections back to 1972 are included because data on all the independent variables are available. This is the only region for which data on all the independent variables are available before 1980.

¹⁴ The PQ went through a brief period in the mid-1980s when it rejected sovereignty, but it never contested an election on this platform (Cook, 1986).

¹⁵ The Northern League advocated an independent Padania during the period after the 1996 election until the end of 1998, but no elections were contested during this period (Cento Bull and Gilbert, 2001).

¹⁶ Vote share is measured from elections to the lower house of the relevant parliament (countrywide or regional). For Italian regions only ballots for proportional representation constituencies are used. For Puerto Rico votes for resident commissioner were used to calculate the electoral variables in countrywide elections, while votes for governor were used to calculate the electoral variables in regional elections.

Table 1
Dataset Treatment of Scotland

Region	State	Year	Natelec	Provelec	Vote	Lnvote
Scotland	UK	1983	1	0	11.8	2.69
Scotland	UK	1987	1	0	14.0	2.83
Scotland	UK	1992	1	0	21.5	3.20
Scotland	UK	1997	1	0	22.0	3.22
Scotland	UK	1999	0	1	28.8	3.46

VOTE is the dependent variable in the 15-regions analysis; *LNVOTE* is the dependent variable in the all-regions analysis described below. To create *LNVOTE*, the logarithm of *VOTE* was taken, in the following way:

$$LNVOTE = \ln(3 + VOTE)$$

The regressions use a fixed-effects specification. Fixed-effects specifications use dummy variables for all the panels (in this case, the 15 regions). They thus control for all the essentially time-invariant explanations of variation in secessionist vote share across regions (language, population, electoral system, and so on). What the independent variables explain in this regression is the change in secessionist votes over the entire period.¹⁷ If the new conventional wisdom on globalization and secessionism is correct, the globalization variable should be clearly associated positively with the dependent variables.

To predict the variation in secessionist votes over roughly the 1980–2000 period, it is necessary to take into account only factors that vary significantly from year to year. Cultural factors like language, demographic factors like population, and political institutions that do not change very often, like electoral systems, should not be used, even if changes in these variables might have long-run effects.¹⁸ The variables that should influence secessionist votes over time are: relative economic conditions, absolute economic conditions, relative affluence, globalization, and recent changes in political autonomy.¹⁹

Relative economic conditions are measured by regional unemployment rate minus countrywide unemployment rate (*UNEMDIFF*), the coefficient on which should be positive, and absolute economic conditions are measured by regional unemployment rate plus countrywide inflation rate (*MISIND*), the coefficient on which should be negative. For the creation of this “misery index”, it would have

¹⁷ It would invite bias to include a lagged dependent variable in a fixed-effects regression, as this specification creates a correlation between the lagged dependent variable and the error term. See Nickell, 1981.

¹⁸ Another reason for not using a variable on political multi-partism in a short time-series regression is that changes in secessionist electoral support will be reflected in the independent variable for multi-partism, thus generating a spurious correlation.

¹⁹ There is probably no way to develop a quantitative measure of “policy changes” or “setbacks to the autonomy process” in general; thus, these factors are addressed in the case-study portion of the paper.

been desirable to use regional inflation rates, but these are not published regularly (or at all in some countries).²⁰

Another economic variable that has been included in the regressions is *GDPRATIO*. This variable measures regional per capita GDP divided by countrywide per capita GDP. It is thus a measure of the region's relative affluence—and presumably whether the region is net subsidized or a net taxpayer.

The final economic variable to be included is, of course, a globalization variable (*GLOB*). *GLOB* measures the overall openness of the international system as world merchandise exports divided by world production, transformed into an index in which the 1990 value of the variable is set at 1.²¹ For a given year, the value of *GLOB* is thus constant across the panels. A problem with this specification is that the globalization variable is essentially a year counter, and it may pick up other omitted variables that vary by year. If secessionism is simply an idea that has been diffusing around the world, then the globalization variable might capture that effect. To take care of this problem, a year counter has also been introduced as an independent variable. Thus, if secessionism is increasing linearly over time that fact should be captured by the year variable and not *GLOB*. At the same time, globalization should be significant if, and only if, secessionism has been increasing exponentially over time at roughly the same rate of increase as globalization. Of course, there may still be some omitted variables that really account for this exponential increase, but pending their identification the globalization hypothesis seems most reasonable.

To account for the political environment two variables have been used: *PROVELEC*, the dummy for regional elections described above, and *DAUTO*, a variable for change in regional autonomy. The construction of this variable deserves some elaboration.

DAUTO specifically measures the change in *PROVAUTO*—a regional autonomy variable—from one election to the next. *PROVAUTO* is a composite variable constructed in the following way:

- +1 if the region has an elected executive;
- +1 if the region is legally superior to geographically lower-level political units (that is, it has the right to create, alter, and abolish them);
- +1 if the regional government enjoys both legislative and administrative powers (that is, it may assume powers not expressly delegated to it by the central government);
- +1 if the regional government derives more than 25% of its operating budget from own-source taxes (the provincial government having control over both rates and types of taxes).

²⁰ The fact that they are not published may mean that voters and interest groups themselves take regional unemployment combined with countrywide inflation into account when formulating responses to political parties' proposals at election time.

²¹ World production is different from world GDP in that it excludes construction and services.

Table 2
Hypotheses and controls

Hypothesis	Variable	Expected sign
Globalization	Glob	+
Absolute economic conditions	Misind	–
Relative unemployment	Unemdiff	+
Change in relative affluence	Gdpratio	+
Regional election	Provelec	+
Change in autonomy	Dauto	–
Controls		
Year counter	Year	

PROVAUTO thus measures various aspects of a region's electoral, legislative, and fiscal autonomy. The variable can range from 0 to 4. In this dataset the 4 score is achieved by the Faroes, Quebec, and Puerto Rico, while Scotland and Wales score 0 before 1999, and Navarre and the Balearic Isles score 0 before 1983, the year when their autonomous communities were established. *DAUTO* measures changes in *PROVAUTO* between one election and the next. Flanders scores 1 on *DAUTO* in 1980 and again in 1995, Corsica (which is not used in the regressions) scores 1 in 1982, the Balearic Isles score 3 in 1983, Catalonia scores 3 in 1980, Euskadi scores 3 in 1980, Navarre scores 3 in 1983, Scotland scores 3 in 1999, and Wales scores 3 in 1999; all other values are 0. *DAUTO* is expected to have a negative coefficient: offers of autonomy should decrease support for secessionist parties (Table 2).

A word about selection bias: it might seem that the regressions must suffer from this problem, since they include only those regions that had secessionist parties in the early 1980s. Selecting on the dependent variable has been shown to reduce coefficients and the likelihood of finding significant relationships.²² However, in this case selecting on the dependent variable is justified because the goal is not to uncover the latent factors that encourage the existence of secessionism, but the determinants of year-to-year variation in secessionist vote share. It would not make sense to include regions with zero secessionist votes in a regression in which economic variables are supposed to explain the ups and downs of secessionist electoral success. Similarly, it appears that globalization has an effect only in those regions where secessionism is a viable option; it does not encourage secessionism to arise.

This last finding is based on a regression in which regions without secessionist parties were included. For the purposes of this regression, all democratic countries with significant sectional variation were included, and the data panels are, as throughout this paper, the geographically highest-tier substate territorial units, capital regions excluded.²³ The countries and regions included are: Australia (seven

²² Good introductions to the problems of selecting on the dependent variable are Berk (1983) and Geddes (1990).

²³ Examples of countries that lack sectional variation are Jamaica, Iceland, and Austria.

Table 3
Regression Results

Variable/Spec.	All regions ^c	15 Regions	Autonomy
Specification	F-E Tobit	F-E LS	ordered probit
Dependent var.	Invote	vote	dauto2
Provelec	0.3137 (0.06) ^b	2.4595 (1.24) ^a	
Year	0.0115 (0.01)	−0.365 (0.34)	
Dauto	0.0865 (0.05)	0.4712 (1.23)	
Glob	0.5991 (0.40)	27.846 (10.4) ^b	
Misind		−0.112 (0.23)	
Gdpratio		82.483 (19.7) ^b	
Unemdiff		0.7115 (0.46)	
Provauto			−2.13 (0.33) ^b
Lnvote			0.637 (0.21) ^b
_cons	−22.7921	631.33	
R-sq.	75.57% (pseudo)	35.4% (within)	27.7% (pseudo)
N	2227	123	125

Standard errors in parentheses.

^a Statistically significant from zero at the 95% confidence level (two-tailed test).

^b Statistically significant from zero at the 99% confidence level (two-tailed test).

^c A model with a dummy variable for EU/EC membership was also tried, with no difference in results.

states), Belgium (two regions), Canada (12 provinces), Denmark (14 counties and one dependency, the Faroes), Finland (four administrative regions and one autonomous region, Aaland), France (15 regions), Germany (10 *länder* before 1990, 15 after), Greece (12 administrative regions), Italy (19 regions), Japan (42 prefectures), Netherlands (10 provinces), Norway (18 counties), Portugal (two autonomous regions and four administrative regions), Spain (17 autonomous communities), Sweden (20 counties), Switzerland (26 cantons), United Kingdom (three nations), United States (50 states and one commonwealth, Puerto Rico).²⁴ A fixed-effects format is used, just as in the regression on the 15 regions with secessionist parties. Because of this format, those panels without at least four observations were omitted, so that the statistical model could be identified. The regression uses the Tobit procedure, which is the appropriate procedure when the dependent variable is censored (secessionist vote share cannot fall below zero), and as mentioned above, the dependent variable is *LN*VOTE rather than *VOTE*, to reduce skewness. The results of this regression are presented in Table 3 below.

These results show that globalization does not have a discernible positive effect on secessionism over a “global” sample. We shall see, on the other hand, that globalization does have a discernible effect in those regions that already had secessionist movements in the early 1980s. This result is not terribly surprising, for we should not expect that a mere reduction in the costs of independence should

²⁴ Capital regions are not included: they range in size from the District of Columbia and the Australian Capital Territory to England and Île-de-France. Dependencies judged to be of a “colonial” nature are also excluded (Greenland, Bermuda, etc.).

actively encourage the development of secessionist movements where the base conditions for pro-independence sentiment do not exist.

This paper also addresses the implications of secessionism for autonomy arrangements. It does so partly by means of another regression, in which increase in the regional autonomy variable over the entire 1980–2000 period is the dependent variable. The independent variables are level of regional autonomy in 1980 and (logged) average secessionist vote share 1980–2000. The dataset includes the same “global” sample of well-established democracies with sectional variation; however, each region has just a single observation—it is a purely cross-sectional analysis. The goal of this empirical test is to examine whether regions with secessionist parties have received more concessions of political autonomy recently than regions without such parties, controlling for “starting point” in terms of regional autonomy.

4. Results

Table 3 presents the results for all regressions. The first column lists the results for the regression containing all regions in established democracies. The second column lists the results for the regression containing regions with secessionist parties. The third column lists the results for the regression in which increase in autonomy is the dependent variable.

The results from the second column demonstrate that globalization is positively associated with secessionist vote growth (while “Year” is actually negative), and that growth in relative regional GDP is also associated with higher secessionist vote share. The secessionist parties under analysis also do better in regional elections. However, we see very little evidence to suggest that high unemployment and inflation depress secessionist vote share in this sample. On the other hand, there is even less support for the hypothesis that poor economic conditions stimulate secessionist support. There is some weak evidence that secessionist vote share is higher when *relative* regional unemployment is higher. The result on this variable (*UNEMDIFF*) may have been depressed by the fact that its correlation with the highly significant *GDP RATIO* is -0.84 , even though both variables were expected to have the same sign.

The “within” *R*-squared of 35.4% means that a little over a third of the variance in secessionist vote share is explained by the seven variables included. This result is interesting when one considers that party strategy, popularity of incumbent party or coalition, media favorability, and other non-quantifiable factors are not even considered. In fact, if data were available for 2001–2003 it is possible that the results of the regression would have been less striking, for the Lega Nord suffered a major electoral setback in 2001, mostly due to its infighting and ideological lurch to the far right, factors that could not have been included.²⁵ On the other hand, the results on the economic variables may have been more significant if consistent

²⁵ On the rise and fall of the LN, see Cento Bull and Gilbert, 2001.

data from the 1970s could have been included, as SNP and PC vote share declined proportionately with the economy during this period.

Interestingly, we see no evidence from the 15-regions analysis that new autonomy decreases secessionism at the first subsequent election. There could be several reasons for this lack of a finding: the data do not include offers of autonomy that failed referenda, the data do not account for the possibility that the effects of new autonomy reach over several elections, and perhaps most importantly, the data do not account for new electoral systems used in autonomous elections—most obviously, the proportional election system used in the 1999 Welsh Assembly election should be held responsible for part of the PC's gain in that election, but in the regression this gain is implicitly attributed to Wales' new autonomy.

At the same time, the flip side of the autonomy issue—the hypothesis that secessionist success draws forth autonomy—receives strong support from the data. The strongly positive coefficient on *LNVOTE* in the ordered probit analysis indicates that regions with higher average secessionist vote share received more autonomy over the 1980–2000 period.²⁶ Because of the ordered probit format, it is difficult to quantify how much more autonomy secessionist regions received than non-secessionist regions, but an ordinary least squares regression using a dummy variable for regions with well-established secessionist parties indicates that such regions moved up the scale on *PROVAUTO* 1.5 points more than other regions.

In fact, we could say that countries with significant secessionist parties are more likely to decentralize, rather than placing the emphasis on regions, for there typically are not great differences in autonomy among regions within the same country. In Spain, for example, the regions most inclined to secessionism, the Basque Country and Catalonia, received their autonomy first, but the other regions of Spain soon followed, and differences between the powers of the Basque and Catalan autonomous communities and the powers of the other autonomous communities are not great. In France, Corsica received a regional parliament first, but the other French regions soon followed. Great Britain's approach is the most notable case of asymmetric autonomy: Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have been given parliaments, but England (or the regions of England) have not. What the above results indicate, then, is not necessarily that secessionist regions have been targeted for appeasement through autonomy offers, but that countries with secessionist regions were more likely to undertake comprehensive decentralization. There are two main reasons why decentralization is usually symmetrical: regions left out of the process protest, and the central government does not wish to appear to reward

²⁶ Note that regions scoring 2, 3, or 4 on *PROVAUTO* in 1980 had to be eliminated for the ordered probit model to be identified, because none of them received any autonomy over the next 20 years. In effect, then, this regression analyzes the variables increasing autonomy for those regions that started out with low autonomy in 1980 (0 or 1 on *PROVAUTO*).

secessionism or to be responding too obviously to the pressures of secessionist movements.²⁷

5. Case evidence

We thus have evidence that governments offer autonomy to regions to reduce the appeal of secessionist parties. So far we lack evidence to indicate that governments are correct in their assumptions: that offers of autonomy really do reduce secessionism. If we can find that voters in potentially secessionist regions do react to policy changes proposed by the central government in ways that have systematic implications for secessionist movements, we would at least have evidence that the logic of policy proposal and regional response holds true.

What we see is that offers of autonomy are risky for the central government. Sometimes such offers can defuse secessionism; at other times, they may inflame it, if they are viewed as insultingly cautious. Moreover, once proposed, such offers become the baseline for expectations, and if they are subsequently withdrawn or defeated, a public outcry is predictable.

Let us look first at Quebec.²⁸ Support for full independence was low in the 1970s, growing from 18% in 1973 to 19% in 1976, while support for “sovereignty-association”, independence with a customs union, hovered below 35%. The governing Liberals passed the first language law in Quebec’s National Assembly in 1974. Bill 22 made French the sole official language of Quebec; among other things, this status entailed that all government-funded schools for French-speaking and immigrant children would be French-medium. Though support for sovereignty remained low, support for the Parti Québécois (PQ) rose as voters became frustrated at the Liberals’ apparent incompetence in economic management. Thus, the election of a Péquiste majority in 1976 was not a mandate for sovereignty, but for a change in economic policy direction. Nevertheless, general approval for the PQ administration did translate into growing support for sovereignty in the late 1970s. The PQ passed Bill 101, forcing large corporations to use French in intra-office communication and establishing Quebec’s notorious sign regulations on private businesses. Clift (1980), Corbeil (1990), Macmillan (1990) and others attribute the eventual decline in support for sovereignty to these language laws, as they made Quebec Francophones feel secure about the future of their language.

Nevertheless, in the 1980 referendum, 41% of Quebecers voted to open negotiations on sovereignty, while 59% opposed the move. (The vote was on a proposal to begin negotiations toward sovereignty with the federal government, and once the

²⁷ If the logic of this paper is correct, central governments do offer autonomy because of secessionist pressures, but they hope that autonomy will work to reduce secessionism without having to make it known that secessionist movements have pressured them into the offer.

²⁸ Sources for the following analysis include: Cornellier, 1995; Güntzel, 1993; Esman, 1994; Martin, 1997; Clift, 1980; Corbeil, 1990; Cook, 1986; Jacobs, 1980; LeDuc, 1977; Macmillan, 1990; Newman, 1996.

negotiations were concluded, another referendum was to be held.) This year also represented the Canadian government's first attempt at appeasing sovereigntist sentiment. A "beige paper" issued by the Prime Minister's office advocated increasing inter-regional redistribution and stronger pan-Canadian bilingualism. It was not well received in either English Canada, which resented official bilingualism in majority-English provinces, or Quebec, which worried it would lose its identity under pan-Canadian policies.²⁹ After the referendum, the PQ won re-election in 1981 by promising that they would continue their economic policies and that there would not be another referendum.

Following the election, sovereignty support declined, and so did the popularity of the PQ as an economic crisis deepened.³⁰ Though federal constitutional reforms passed in 1982 angered Quebec because they did not recognize Quebec's status as a "distinct society", the PQ could not capitalize on the issue given the economic problems under their administration. The PQ lost power to the Liberals in 1985, and longtime Péquiste leader René Lévesque resigned. For a time the PQ adopted an anti-independence, regionalist stance, but by the 1989 provincial elections sovereignty was on the table again. The Liberals won re-election on the basis of their 1987 negotiation of substantial constitutional reforms with a favorable Progressive Conservative administration in Ottawa.

These reforms were embodied in the Meech Lake Accord, which required the unanimous approval of Canada's provincial governments within 3 years for ratification. Manitoba failed to approve the agreement in 1990, and support for sovereignty immediately rose. Several Progressive Conservative MPs from Quebec resigned the party whip and became independents. In September 1989 only about 39% of Quebecers favored sovereignty, about the same as the figure from a decade before, but by June 1990, 57% favored sovereignty. Perhaps the biggest coup for sovereigntists was the change in the attitudes of small businessmen. Formerly opposed to sovereignty, in 1990, 60% of Chamber of Commerce members favored sovereignty should the Meech Lake Accords fail.³¹ Robert Bourassa's Liberal administration threatened to hold a referendum on sovereignty in 1992 unless a new agreement could be worked out. The result was the Charlottetown Accords, which were supported nationally only by the Progressive Conservatives and in Quebec only by the Liberals. They were defeated with 55% of all Canadians and 57% of Quebecers voting "no".

For the 1993 federal elections a sovereigntist party was formed, mostly by former Progressive Conservative MPs. It was known as the Bloc Québécois. At first it

²⁹ The PQ and the federal government also disputed the benefits Quebec received from federalism. The PQ claimed a net revenue loss of C\$4.3 billion over the previous 15 years for Quebec; the federal government said it was a C\$1.7 billion gain (Corbeil and Montambault, 1990).

³⁰ A SORECOM poll in April 1984 showed 14% favored sovereignty-association, and a CROP poll in January 1985 reported 15% in favor (Macmillan 1990: 117).

³¹ Part of this change in business attitudes may have been due to the new logic of globalization, but it also may have been a result of the realization that Quebec secession could reduce many duplicate bureaucracies (see Desrochers and Duhaime, 1998).

resisted cooperation with the PQ, but the relationship between the two parties deepened over time. In the 1993 federal election the BQ won 49% of the vote in Quebec. In 1994, 54% of poll respondents favored independence.³² The PQ won back a majority in Quebec's National Assembly with 45% of the vote.³³ A new referendum on sovereignty was proposed, this one more radical than the last, in that a "yes" vote would entail an immediate declaration of independence rather than a beginning of negotiations toward independence. It barely failed, by a vote of 50.6% to 49.4%. In an attempt to forestall another referendum, the federal government in 1996 requested that the Canadian Supreme Court issue an opinion on whether the unilateral secession of Quebec would be legal under the Constitution.

The resulting opinion, issued on August 20, 1998, split the difference. The Supreme Court declared that separation could not occur unless there were a "clear majority" to a "clear question". Furthermore, secession would require a constitutional amendment, which could only be effected through bilateral negotiation between the federal government and Quebec. In these respects, the decision fortified the federalist position, but its requirement that the federal government negotiate in good faith following a "yes" vote was a victory for the nationalists. Prior Canadian governments had hinted that if Quebec voted to secede, they were under no obligation to negotiate a currency union or any other arrangement that might mitigate adverse economic effects of secession on Quebec. The federal government decided to press its advantage in December 1999, however, proposing the "Clarity Bill", which would give the federal House of Commons the right to determine what counts as a "clear question" and a "clear majority" in any future referendum on independence, effectively giving the Canadian government a veto over Quebec independence. The PQ government in Quebec was outraged and passed a bill of its own declaring that only the people of Quebec may determine the "political regime and legal status" of Quebec. Polls showed a majority of Quebecers opposed to the federal Clarity Bill and a small bump in sovereigntist support in early 2000, but most Quebecers continued to be preoccupied with economic issues, and there has been no lasting benefit for the PQ.³⁴ If the Clarity Bill were ever actually used against a referendum, however, we could probably expect confusion and massive protest.

After the 1995 referendum, Jacques Parizeau resigned the leadership of the PQ and was succeeded by Lucien Bouchard, who migrated from the Canadian Parliament and left his post as leader of the BQ. Despite his immense personal popularity and the re-election of a Péquiste majority in 1998 (Bernard Landry took over from Lucien Bouchard as Premier in March 2001), Quebec voters consistently

³² Montreal Gazette, January 21, 1994, A5.

³³ A new, somewhat more moderate sovereigntist party also contested this election, the Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ).

³⁴ For a discussion of the Clarity Bill and its effects on Quebec popular opinion, see <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indepth/clarity/>.

respond to survey questions that they do not want another referendum on sovereignty.³⁵ There seems to be a certain fatigue with the issue, despite the fact that Quebec has never received the additional autonomy it has desired for so long.

Premier Landry has taken note of the mood and has proposed a “confederal union” with a common Canada–Quebec parliament as a more modest option to full sovereignty. This proposal did not increase PQ support in the polls, and in April 2003 the PQ won only 33.2% of the vote and was ousted from power, with the confederalist, libertarian ADQ winning 18.2%.

The Quebec experience seems to show that when autonomy offers fail due to external factors, support for sovereignty increases. On the other hand, when a referendum on sovereignty fails, support for sovereignty declines thereafter. Perhaps this decline is due to a sense that the issue is settled for the near term, or it could be that feelings of national solidarity decline when the province is so obviously divided over such an important issue of national self-assertion. It could also be that Quebecers are content with the knowledge that they have the—admittedly contested—right to secede when they so choose, and an occasional referendum is enough to demonstrate this right.

Let us examine another relevant case, that of Scotland.³⁶ The first serious attempt to address Scottish concerns in the light of growing nationalism came in the run-up to the October 1974 election, though a Conservative Government had proclaimed theoretical support for Scottish home rule in 1970. Labour’s election manifesto for October 1974 included promises of discrimination in favor of Scotland on employment premiums, civil service jobs, and industrial development certificates. Thus, the large majority of Scottish voters believed SNP advances had been good for Scotland. The SNP continued to climb after the October 1974 election, especially when the government’s White Paper on devolution was released in 1975. Its advance was among “radical devolutionaries” who did not favor independence, but were extremely disappointed with the government’s proposals, which did not include legislative powers for the Scottish assembly and allowed a government veto on all Scottish legislation. The SNP was at this time fully committed to “genuine” devolution proposals and said that it would participate in a “real Scottish parliament”.

The White Paper was heavily criticized in Scotland, and by December 1975 support for independence and near-independence³⁷ stood at 49%, while support for the SNP was at 37%. A Glasgow *Herald* poll showed 37% satisfied with the government’s devolution proposals, 48% dissatisfied. Of those dissatisfied, 92% wanted

³⁵ A May 2002 poll by Léger Marketing shows support for “sovereignty-partnership” at its lowest point in years: 37.7% for, 55.2% against. See http://www.cric.ca/en_html/sondages/issues/sovereignty.html.

³⁶ Sources for this section include: Levy, 1986, 1990; Miller et al., 1977; Harvie, 1994; Newell, 1998; MacIver, 1982; Newman, 1996; Taylor et al., 1999).

³⁷ Specifically, “a Scottish Parliament responsible for all Scottish affairs including economic ones, independent of Westminster which would be responsible for defence, foreign and international economic affairs” (Levy, 1990:64, 70).

“more powers or complete independence” (Levy, 1990:71). Beginning in 1976 SNP conferences started to take a harder line on devolution, indicating mere “acceptance” of an assembly as a “possible stepping-stone” to independence (Levy, 1990). However, the worsening economic situation diverted voters’ minds. Support for the independence and near-independence options fell to 40% in February 1977, and only 43% of SNP supporters favored full independence. The failure of the first Scotland and Wales bill in early 1977 led to a temporary jump in SNP support in the polls to 36%. The SNP meanwhile adopted the slogan, “Independence—Nothing Less”, while party leaders strove to project a moderate image, and the parliamentary group cooperated with the Labour government. By 1978 their support in the polls had fallen to about 20%.

The SNP campaigned for “Yes” in the referendum in 1979, as did Labour and the Liberal Democrats. A majority of those casting ballots approved the plan, but their numbers fell short of the requirement that 40% of the entire electorate approve devolution. The second Scotland and Wales Bill died, and the SNP voted to bring down the government. In the ensuing election campaign, they were forced to run on economic issues (given the failure of devolution), which were not considered their strong suit. After the election the party was for quite some time riven by factionalism. By 1983 support for independence among SNP voters stood at 34% and among all Scots at 13%.

Things began to change with the unpopularity of Margaret Thatcher’s policies in Scotland. The Labour Party in Scotland began to radicalize and reaped most of the benefits of the leap in support for devolution among Scottish voters. The SNP realized that to succeed, they would need to fight Labour on their own ground. The party moved sharply leftward in 1987, putting out a Workers’ Charter in that election campaign and adopting the policy of “independence in Europe”, first floated by the breakaway Scottish Labour Party in 1979. Polls at the time showed about 20% support for “independence” and 35% support for “independence in Europe”.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1992 election and a fourth consecutive Conservative victory, support for independence rose to over 50% in some polls. Some Labour activists even talked of extra-constitutional action for the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. Labour joined the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, and MPs signed a declaration acknowledging the “sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of government best suited to them” (Newell, 1998:111). When Labour won in 1997, a referendum on substantial devolution was a certainty.

The proposed powers for Scotland in the devolution legislation were much more extensive than the proposed powers for Wales. The new parliament was to have legislative power in those areas formerly assigned to the Scottish Office. In addition, the Scottish parliament was granted the residual power—the authority to legislate in areas not specifically reserved to Westminster. However, the parliament’s financial autonomy was severely limited: its budget was to come from a block grant determined by the Treasury, and there was to be a second referendum

question on whether the parliament was to have the right to raise or lower income taxes by three pence.

After the referendum, in which 74.3% voted for a Scottish parliament and 63.5% voted to give it tax-varying powers, a poll showed that 60% of Scottish voters thought Scotland would become “completely independent from the United Kingdom” in the next 20 years (SurrIDGE and McCrone, 1999). Of those who expected independence, two-thirds were not opposed to the idea. An ICM poll for *The Scotsman* in June 1998 showed 56% saying they would vote for independence in a referendum (35% against). This support for independence declined slightly over the course of the year, in the run-up to the elections to the Scottish Parliament. Another interesting finding is that in April 1999 a majority of people across Britain supported Scottish independence and expected it to happen within 10 years.³⁸

SNP support dipped around the time of those elections, and the party received only 28.8% of the vote. After the election, support for the party rose again. An ICM poll in January 2000 showed 47% supporting independence (43% opposed), and support for the SNP (Scottish election preferences) stood at 34%, or 27% for a Westminster election.³⁹ Support for the SNP increased throughout 2000 as the Westminster Labour Government declined in popularity, in part due to its handling of the protests over fuel costs. SNP support peaked at 38% in early March 2001, but thereafter declined as the general election campaign got underway. The SNP received a somewhat lower vote share than polls predicted in the 2001 election, and in the 2003 Scottish election polls again overpredicted the SNP vote, with the party ultimately winning just 20.9% of proportional list votes (the pro-independence Scottish Socialist Party won 6.7%, and the independent nationalist Margo MacDonald won 1.4%, bringing the total pro-independence vote to 29%).

In Scotland we see rising nationalism through the 1980s and early 1990s with every Conservative election victory. In the 1970s, we see spikes in support for the SNP whenever a devolution initiative in the Commons failed or was seen as too weak. After the 1979 referendum, support for independence and for the SNP plummeted. The result of the devolution referendum in 1997 seemed to give an immediate boost to the confidence of Scottish voters in their nationhood and consequently to the fortunes of the SNP. Since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, however, the SNP has remained in the doldrums. Part of the reason may be the departure of its popular leader, Alex Salmond, and increasing party debate over the process to independence. (The current policy of the SNP is similar to that of the PQ in 1980: two referendums will be held once the SNP wins a majority in the Scottish Parliament, one to initiate negotiations and one to ratify their results.)

The evidence from both Quebec and Scotland suggests that voters in potentially secessionist regions care a great deal about central government autonomy policies. However, the relationship between autonomy offers and secessionist support is complex. Secessionist vote share rises when autonomy offers fail due to external

³⁸ See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605,307194,00.html>.

³⁹ See <http://www.mori.com/polls/trends/scotrend.shtml>.

causes, and secessionist vote share falls whenever a referendum on autonomy or independence fails. In the one case in which such a referendum has succeeded, secessionist vote share has remained steady or declined slightly, while belief that independence is an eventual likely outcome has increased among voters.

6. Conclusion

Political scientists are not generally able to predict year-to-year variation in vote percentages for all political parties in all countries of a certain type using common factors. About the best we can usually do is to predict incumbent support based on economic conditions, challenger ideology, and the like. This paper, however, attempted to predict secessionist party vote share over time with a parsimonious political-economic model. The results were mixed. There is strong evidence that secessionist growth is stimulated by globalization—but only in those regions that already have secessionist parties. There is also considerable evidence that relative regional economic growth promotes secessionism, but the evidence that relative regional unemployment promotes secessionism is weak. There is no solid evidence to support the hypothesis that secessionist parties do worse when absolute unemployment and inflation are high. Secessionist parties generally do better in regional elections, an unsurprising finding. Qualitative evidence suggests that short-term secessionist electoral success is strongly correlated with unexpected advances or setbacks for autonomy proposals.

Additionally, we see that secessionist regions are much more likely to receive autonomy than non-secessionist regions (although the form decentralization takes is usually symmetrical over all a country's regions), indicating presumably that central governments believe autonomy can dampen electoral secessionism. Since externally generated failures of autonomy proposals have historically heightened support for secessionism in Quebec and Scotland, proposing new autonomy for a potentially secessionist region seems to be a risky strategy unless passage of the measure is assured.

The implications of these findings for the future of the international order are interesting. Most of those 17 regions with well-established secessionist parties should see secessionist vote share continue to rise, assuming that globalization continues apace. Some of these areas may even take the full step of secession in the next few decades. Already, an independentist coalition in the Faroese parliament is assuming functions from the Danish government in preparation for full independence, which will have to be ratified by referendum.⁴⁰ Quebecers nearly voted for secession in a 1995 referendum; today, talk of sovereignty is muted, but the issue is likely to arise again. In northern Italy, where secession was not even considered before the 1980s, one 1997 survey showed about 20% of northerners favoring independence (Diamanti, 1997). There talk of independence has died down as its pri-

⁴⁰ The Faroese government's website on the independence process can be found at <http://www.fullveldi.fo>.

mary mouthpiece, the LN, has suddenly dropped the issue completely in favor of anti-globalization populism (Beirich and Woods, 2000). Nevertheless, until the Italian government implements full fiscal federalism, it is likely that anti-center discontent will resonate in the north.

In those regions that do not secede, we should see continuing pressure for decentralization. Among western democracies, both secessionist and non-secessionist regions have received autonomy, but the pressure has been stronger in secessionist regions. It seems likely that this trend will continue.

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Appendix: Data sources

Regional boundaries were derived from *The Times Atlas of the World, Tenth Comprehensive Edition* and maintained consistently throughout the entire time period.

Variable: *VOTE*

Description: Secessionist party vote share

Units: Percentages (0–100 scale)

Sources: Coded by the author from Elections Canada website; Elections Quebec website; Frank B. Feigert, *Canada Votes: 1935–1988* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989); *Elecciones Generales 1989* (Barcelona: Department de Governacià, 1989); *Elecciones Generales, 1982: Congreso* (Madrid: Ministerio del Interior, 1982); *Elecciones Generales, 1979: Congreso* (Madrid: Ministerio del Interior, 1979); <http://www.eleweb.net>; *Elezioni della Camera dei Deputati e del Senato della Repubblica: 14 Giugno 1987* (Rome: Istituto Centrale di Statistica, 1989); *Elezioni della Camera dei Deputati e del Senato della Repubblica, 26 Giugno 1983: Dati Sommari* (Rome, Istituto Centrale di Statistica, 1984); *Elezioni Politiche 1979* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1982); *Elezioni Politiche, 21 Aprile 1996* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1996); *Risultati delle Elezioni della Camera dei Deputati del 27 e 28 Marzo 1994* (Rome: Camera dei Deputati, 1994); *Risultati delle Elezioni della Camera dei Deputati del 5 Aprile 1992* (Rome: Camera dei Deputati, 1992); Ministero dell'Interno (Italy) website; statistical yearbook of Italy; *Élections Législatives, Résultats des Élections du 24 Novembre 1991: Renouveau Intégral de la Chambre des Représentants* (Belgium: Directie Verkiezingen en Bevolking, 1991); *Élections Législatives, Résultats des Élections du 13 Décembre 1987: Renouveau Intégral de la Chambre des Représentants* (Belgium: Directie Verkiezingen en Bevolking,

ing, 1988); *Élections Législatives, Résultats des Élections du 13 Octobre 1985: Renouvellement Intégral de la Chambre des Représentants* (Belgium: Directie Verkiezingen en Bevolking, 1986); *Élections Législatives, Résultats des Élections du 8 Novembre 1981: Renouvellement Intégral de la Chambre et du Sénat* (Belgium: ?, 1981); *Élections Législatives, Résultats des Élections du 17 Décembre 1978: Renouvellement Intégral de la Chambre et du Sénat* (Belgium: ?, 1978); statistical yearbook of Belgium; <http://www.vub.ac.be/POLI/elections/Browser.html>; *Statistiske Efterretninger: Befolkning og Valg* (Copenhagen: Danmarks statistik, 1983–1988); *Folketingsvalget den 11 Marts 1998: Danmark, Færøerne, Grønland* (Copenhagen, Indenrigsministeriet, 1999); *Folketingsvalget den 21 September 1994: Danmark, Færøerne, Grønland* (Copenhagen, Indenrigsministeriet, 1995); *Folketingsvalget den 12 December 1990: Danmark, Færøerne, Grønland* (Copenhagen, Indenrigsministeriet, 1991); Colin Rallings, *British Electoral Facts, 1832–1999* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000); Robert Garner and Richard Kelly, *British Political Parties Today* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998); <http://www.electionworld.org>; <http://eleccionespuertorico.org>; <http://clerk-web.house.gov/elections/elections.htm>.

Variable: *LNVOTE*

Description: Logarithmic transformation of above

Units: Logarithmic transformation of percentages

Sources: See above.

Variable: *GDPRATIO*

Description: Regional GDP per capita divided by national GDP per capita

Units: Ratios

Sources: Calculated by the author from Eurostat REGIO dataset; Economagic website (<http://www.economagic.com>); statistical yearbooks of Spain, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark; Statistics Canada website (<http://www.statcan.ca>); Census Bureau website (<http://www.census.gov>).

Variable: *UNEMDIFF*

Description: Regional unemployment rate minus national unemployment rate

Units: Percentages (0–100 scale)

Sources: Calculated by the author from Eurostat REGIO dataset; Economagic website (<http://www.economagic.com>); statistical yearbooks of Spain, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark; Statistics Canada website (<http://www.statcan.ca>); Bureau of Labor Statistics website (<http://www.bls.gov>).

Variable: *MISIND*

Description: Regional unemployment rate plus national inflation rate

Units: Percentages (0–100 scale)

Sources: Calculated by the author from Eurostat REGIO dataset; Economagic website (<http://www.economagic.com>); statistical yearbooks of Spain, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark; Statistics Canada website (<http://www.statcan.ca>); World Development Indicators 2002 CD-ROM.

Variable: *GLOB*

Description: World merchandise exports divided by world production

Units: Index scale (1990 = 1.0)

Sources: Calculated by the author from World Trade Organization, “International Trade Statistics 2001”.

Variable: *PROVELEC*

Description: Regional election = 1; national election = 0

Units: Dummy variable

Sources: See under “*VOTE*”.

Variable: *YEAR*

Description: date

Units: integers

Sources: Coded by the author.

Variable: *PROVAUTO*

Description: Level of regional autonomy, 0–4 scale

Units: Step scale

Sources: Coded by the author from OECD, “Managing across Levels of Government” (1997), <http://www1.oecd.org/puma/malg/malg97/toc.htm>; for the Faroe Isles from Benoît Raoulx, *Les Îles Féroé* (Caen Cedex: Centre de Publications de l’Université de Caen, 1992); for Flanders and Wallonia before 1995: John Fitzmaurice, *The Politics of Belgium: A Unique Federalism* 2nd ed. (London: Hurst and Co., 1996) and Liesbet Hooghe, *A Leap in the Dark: Nationalist Conflict and Federal Reform in Belgium*, occasional paper number 27 (Ithaca: Western Societies Program, Cornell University, 1991).

Variable: *DAUTO*

Description: Change in regional autonomy since last election, 0–4 scale

Units: Step scale

Sources: See above.

Variable: *DAUTO2*

Description: Change in regional autonomy, 1980–2000, 0–4 scale

Units: Step scale

Sources: See above.

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