

# Adventures in the Second Image

## The Intervention-proneness of Ethnically Dominant States

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### **Abstract**

In a continuing effort to determine the ethnic correlates of third-party interventions in civil wars, this paper probes questions of whether particular structural relations between ethnic groups in potential interveners affect their inclination to intervene. I have argued in an earlier paper that transnational ethnic affinities cause interventions through a range of cross-border power configurations. Here, I investigate the proposition that ethnically dominant states are more prone to intervene than ethnically pluralist states, given that their dominant ethnic group has ethnic kin in the target country. The hypothesis is tested on data on third-party interventions in civil wars in Eurasia and North Africa 1944-1994. I alternately apply nine different measures of ethnic domination or polarisation typically used in the quantitative literature on the onset and incidence of civil wars. The statistical analyses suggest that the measures with the strongest theoretical foundation best express the effect of ethnic domination on intervention-proneness. Under the specified conditions, ethnically dominant states are indeed more likely to intervene than their ethnically pluralist counterparts.

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## Introduction

Interventions in civil wars are for the adventurous. Being as they are costly undertakings, it is not surprising that the quantitative literature on interventions tends to focus on material factors. Immaterial factors, such as ethnic affinities and other aspects of ethnic relations, are – with notable exceptions – largely absent. In cases where ethnic relations with respect to interstate conflict and interventions are addressed, relations of power are underspecified, both across borders and within states.

This paper is part of a wider effort to evaluate the consequences of ethnic relations, and particularly ethnic power relations, for the likelihood of third-party interventions in civil wars<sup>1</sup>. Rather than dealing with ethnic relations across borders, my concern is with ethnic relations within potential interveners. More particularly, I investigate whether variation in the domestic political predominance of ethnic groups in power, as well as polarisation between ethnic groups, explain variation in states' propensity to intervene in civil wars. Do particular configurations of ethnic power relations within potential interveners make them more adventurous? Are ethnically dominant states more likely to intervene? Adventures in the second image are IR from the inside out, for – 'according to the second image, the internal organization of states is the key to understanding war and peace' (Waltz 1959: 81).

As it turns out, states in which the ethnic group in power is domestically predominant are indeed more likely to intervene in civil wars than ethnically pluralist states, given that the dominant ethnic group has ethnic kin in the target country. In terms of operationalisation, one measure recently developed to express ethno-nationalist exclusion (Cederman & Girardin

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<sup>1</sup> In an earlier paper, I focused on transnational ethnic affinities between potential interveners and civil war countries (Austvoll 2006). I argued that ethnic affinities cause interventions, not only in circumstances when an ethnic majority comes to the aid of a beleaguered ethnic minority, but also when intervener and target country have the same ethnic minority, when an ethnic majority intervenes in a country with a fellow majority, and even when the intervener only has an ethnic minority with affinity for the majority in the target country. The lesson, more broadly, is that configurations of power between ethnic groups matter, and that for transnational ethnic affinities, it is necessary to consider the range of configurations of ethnic groups and power in order to understand the circumstances in which transnational ethnic affinities cause interventions.

*forthcoming*) is particularly appropriate, yet measures of ethnic polarisation (Reynal-Querol 2002) also fare well.

This paper is organised in twelve brief sections. Below, I provide a cursory summary of current findings on the causes of interventions. Ending on the note that ethnic power relations within potential interveners ought to be measured and statistically applied, I present the argument, forcefully made by Carment & James (1995, 2000), that ethnically dominant states are more likely to intervene. I then develop a contrasting argument, suggesting that internal ethnic power configurations are of no consequence for interventions in civil wars. Then I test the opposing hypotheses using nine different measures of domination and polarisation, and find that the measures with the most solid theoretical foundation perform best, predicting interventions as expected by the alternative hypothesis. Following a brief discussion of the results, I argue for the need to make ethnicity endogenous to our studies of conflict, and conclude.

### **The lacuna for ethnicity**

A growing quantitative literature on the causes of foreign interventions in civil wars provides us with a deeper understanding of why states intervene (Aydin 2005; Lemke & Regan 2004; Pickering 2002; Regan 2000). Regan (2000: 57) finds that low-intensity civil wars with overall many casualties are more likely to attract interventions. Civil wars during the Cold War were also more intervention-prone. Lemke & Regan (2004: 161) expand on these findings and demonstrate that states more likely to interact regularly with the country in civil war are also more likely to intervene, such as neighbours, allies, and former colonial masters. Further, interventions are more likely to occur in ethnic or ideological wars, and wars that generate many refugees. Pickering's (2002: 310, 315) focus is regime type, and while he suggests that democracies are as likely to intervene as any other regimes, democracies are very rarely the target of interventions. Aydin (2005: 20), on the other hand, deals with macro-economic factors, and finds that the probability of intervention rises with the trade interdependency of potential intervener and civil war state. Cursory as

this summary is, it still suggests that the existing literature on interventions is preoccupied with material factors.

Possible immaterial factors, such as ethnic affinities, are largely absent from quantitative studies of interventions in civil wars. This is not due to lack of a rationale. Theoretical, anecdotal, and comparative work such as Mitchell (1970), Suhrke & Noble (1977), Heraclides (1990), Cooper & Berdal (1993), Carment & James (2000), and Ganguly (1998) are abundant with arguments and evidence suggesting that the statistical testing of hypotheses on ethnic affinities and interventions is a desirable exercise. Perhaps the lacuna for ethnicity – as with so many other gaps in the quantitative literature – may be explained by a lack of good data.

Notable exceptions to this pattern are quantitative studies of interstate conflict and interventions using data on ethnic groups from Minorities at Risk (Gurr 1993, 2000), such as Davis et al. (1997), Davis & Moore (1997), and Saideman (2002). Davis et al. (1997: 158) find that conflict levels between two countries are higher when there are ethnic ties between a minority at risk in one country and an ethnic group in power in a contiguous country. Davis & Moore (1997: 179) replicate this finding. Saideman (2002: 40) similarly finds that minorities at risk are consistently more likely to receive broad and intense support when ethnic kin dominates neighbouring states. While they contribute significantly to understanding the ethnically affective dynamics of conflictual interstate interaction, they suffer from particular limitations in research design and theory.

In terms of research design, a sole focus on interaction between contiguous states disregards the possibility of conflictual interaction and interventions across longer distances. Such efforts to create samples of politically relevant dyads may result in selection bias and biased coefficients because the criteria by which dyads are selected – typically distance and power – are themselves correlated with conflict and intervention (Clark & Regan 2003: 97). These studies are also limited with regard to temporal domain. Davis et al. (1997) and Davis & Moore (1997) study only one year of dyadic interactions, 1978 (Caprioli & Trumbore 2003: 7), and Saideman (2002) presents results for only three years, 1990, 1994 and 1998 – all following the

end of the Cold War. The extent to which their results are generaliseable thus depends on the extent to which their sample years are representative (Caprioli & Trumbore 2003: 7). Selection bias, in short, may follow both from their sampling of cases and periods. This study attempts to improve somewhat on these shortcomings by treating all countries as potential interveners, by including determinants of political relevance in the models rather than the selection procedure, and by studying data on civil wars and interventions 1944-1994.

In terms of theoretical limitations, Davis et al. (1997), Davis & Moore (1997), and Saideman (2002) suffer from a disregard for the range of possible power relations between ethnic groups – across borders and within countries. The central government in war-ridden states is usually an important party to conflicts, and the central government in potential interveners is decisive to effecting state intervention. So is the ethnic group that controls it. Ethnic groups' access to formal power is an important factor in both potential intervener and target state, and ought to be accounted for in order to understand the dynamics of transnational ethnic affinities. In the words of one authority on ethnicity and civil war, 'it is high time to bring the state back into our theories about ethnic conflict' (Cederman & Girardin *forthcoming*: 5).

In Austvoll (2006) I took some preliminary steps to address the significance of the state, particularly in the context of transnational ethnic affinities and their effect on the likelihood of intervention. As a conceptual building block I used Cederman & Girardin's (*forthcoming*) dichotomous distinction between 'ethnic groups in power' (EGIP) and 'marginalised ethnic groups' (MEG). An ethnic group in power was operationalised to be a group whose 'leaders serve (at least intermittently) in senior governmental positions, especially within the cabinet', or a group favoured by specific institutional arrangements, 'such as different types of power sharing and consociationalism' (Cederman & Girardin *forthcoming*: 12). Groups not enjoying such privileges – a residual category – are MEGs. Using the EGIP-MEG dichotomy, I defined four types of transnational ethnic affinities, determined by whether affinities ran between an ethnic group in power in the potential intervener and a marginalised ethnic groups in the target state,

MEGs in both states, EGIPs in both states, or a marginalised ethnic group in the potential intervener and an ethnic group in power in the target state. Supported by statistical analyses, I argued that interventions may occur as a consequence of any type of transnational ethnic affinities. The results lent some weight to a critique of studies based on Minorities at Risk for their sole concern with transnational ethnic affinities where the EGIP in potential interveners has ties with an MEG in conflict countries.

What has been lacking thus far, is a treatment of ethnic power relations *within* countries, particularly in potential interveners. Explicitly articulated by Carment & James (1995, 2000), there is an argument that states are more likely to intervene the more predominant their main ethnic group is in domestic politics. One will see that this is not the argument, for instance put forward by Caprioli & Trumbore (2003), where foreign policy belligerence is a positive function of domestic ethnic discrimination. Rather, the argument concerns the very structure of inter-ethnic relations in potential interveners, emphasising the capability to dominate or to challenge domination, irrespective of actual discrimination or conflict.

Below, I review the argument about the interventionism of ethnic predominance. I then formulate an alternative argument, suggesting that domestic ethnic power relations are irrelevant to foreign policy adventurism. It all precedes a consideration of different measures of ethnic dominance and polarisation, tested empirically on data on ethnic groups, civil wars, and interventions in Eurasia and North Africa 1944-1994.

### **An interventionism of ethnic predominance?**

$H_{alt}$ : *States are more likely to intervene when they are ethnically dominant than when they are ethnically pluralist, given that their ethnic group in power has ethnic kin in the target state. The consequence for the measures of ethnic domination, when interacted with EGIPaffinity, should be such that their effects are as follows<sup>2</sup>:*

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<sup>2</sup> All measures are presented in detail in pages 12-14.

- a)  $N^*$  – negative,
- b)  $IRC1$  – negative,
- c)  $IRC2$  – positive,
- d) *Ethnic heterogeneity* – negative,
- e) *Ethnic dominance* – positive,
- f)  $FL$  – negative,
- g)  $E$  – negative,
- h)  $MEG_{max}$  – negative,
- i)  $ELF$  – negative.

The case for this alternative hypothesis is made by Carment & James (1995, 2000), whose concern is with the structural relations between ethnic groups in potential interveners. Ethnic domination, they argue, exists when ‘a single group claims control over the decision process on issues concerning other groups’, and when ‘leaders can improve the standing of their own ethnic group without depending on others’ (Carment & James 2000: 177). The emphasis is on the capability to dominate, rather than the actual repression or persecution of ethnic minorities. The argument is about position rather than behaviour.

Ethnically dominant states are more likely to intervene, one learns, because institutional mechanisms for inter-ethnic conflict management may be underdeveloped. There may in other words be neither institutional capacity for compromise on ethnic issues, nor a culture of bridge building to go with it. As a consequence, ethnic issues in the foreign policy domain, such as internal conflicts in other states involving ethnic groups for which one has affinity, become particularly important. Under such conditions, an elite that seeks support and legitimacy in its own dominant ethnic group may estimate that the utility of employing successful ethnically directed interventionist policies is higher. Also, the elite may frame interventionist policies in ethnic terms in order to lower the costs of intervening by mobilising support from the masses, or public pressure may have the same effect (Carment & James 2000: 177). In cases where a dominant ethnic group controls an ethnically homogenous military, group symbols may be manipulated in order to

mobilise the population. Ethnic issues are often portrayed as redistributive, that is, to the benefit of the dominant ethnic group. Hence, interventions are less costly and ethnically oriented foreign policies become more likely (Carment & James 2000: 181).

Another mechanism of ethnically dominant interventionism concerns countries with higher institutional constraints. A constituency consisting of a dominant ethnic group that transcends national borders may create particularly favourable conditions for ethnic outbidding. This theme of 'ethnic outbidding' (Lake & Rothchild 1996: 54) among political entrepreneurs, and their precursors – the ethnic activists – is taken up by both Suhrke & Noble (1977: 12-13) and Lake & Rothchild (1996: 53-54). Lake & Rothchild quite clearly highlight ethnic activism and political entrepreneurship as factors that may increase the salience of ethnic politics and the likelihood of intervening in ethnic conflicts. They emphasise the role of ethnic activists in the context of social polarisation (Lake & Rothchild 1996: 53), but there is every reason to believe that such activists in general would increase the salience of ethnicity in politics, inclusive of foreign policy, lower the audience costs of, for example, intervening in an internal conflict to the advantage of ethnic brethren, and simultaneously increase the utility of successful intervention. Political entrepreneurs may likewise put pressure on the political community to adopt ethnic policies by using ethnicity as a 'key marker' in order to 'build constituencies for attaining or maintaining political power' (ibid.: 54). Moderate politicians may feel forced to adopt a stronger ethnically based position, engaging in a form of 'ethnic outbidding' (ibid.). Ethnic policies become more important, including foreign policies, and ethnically motivated third-party interventions become more likely.

In short, under conditions of ethnic domination in potential interveners, political parties, including the governing party, may be induced to outbid each other with increasingly aggressive ethnic foreign policies, increasing the utility of successful intervention, thereby leading to a heightened likelihood of intervention (Carment & James 2000: 183).

In contrast to ethnically dominant countries, potential interveners with ethnic pluralism find that ethnically based support provides an insufficient



constituency for the policy-making elites (Carment & James 2000: 178). Issues exclusive to one ethnic group may only give small political dividends. The audience costs of intervening are potentially much higher. An ethnic foreign policy is risky because it may split a ruling elite when it is ethnically mixed, or divide government and military when they are controlled by different ethnic groups (Carment & James 2000: 182). Elites will have incentives to downplay ethnicity as a source of foreign policy in order to avoid factional conflict and loss of consensus over foreign policy (ibid.: 183). Support must be based on identities that cut across ethnic cleavages. As a consequence, ethnically motivated interventions are less likely (ibid.: 178).

Are ethnically dominant states more likely to intervene in civil wars? Not so, one may alternatively argue. As the null hypothesis states,

$H_0$ : *Ethnic domination in potential interveners is of no consequence for the intervention-proneness of states.*

The argument about the interventionism of ethnic predominance is in essence that ethnic groups in power with the capacity to play solo also tend to do so. However, one may argue that domestically predominant groups – groups claiming ‘control over the decision process on issues concerning other groups’, and whose leaders ‘can improve the standing of their own ethnic group without depending on others’, as Carment & James (2000: 177) put it – if they actually wield their predominance, then give rise to grievances among ethnic minorities that may be domestically destabilising. The prospects of instability at home may discourage dominant ethnic groups from pursuing adventures abroad. According to this argument, domestic ethnic predominance does not cause interventions in civil wars.

Control of the state is a coveted good, because the state controls the access to scarce resources and the future income that flows from them, and because the state may dictate the terms of the competition over resources (Lake & Rothchild 1998: 9). As a consequence, ethnically divided societies typically have competing policy preferences (ibid.: 10). In their survey of the mechanisms by which strategic interactions between ethnic groups may lead

to violent conflict, Lake & Rothchild (1998: 11) argue that competition only turns violent when at least one of three strategic dilemmas arise: information failures, problems of credible commitment, or the security dilemma. Assuming that it is in the interest of ethnic groups in power to avoid violent conflict, it follows that it is in their interest to prevent any of these strategic dilemmas from arising. As I will argue, domestically predominant ethnic groups that execute interventions in civil wars abroad, may run the danger of creating problems of credible commitment at home, thereby raising the stakes of competition over resources, and ultimately raising the prospect for domestic violence.

Problems of credible commitment arise when an ethnic group in power can no longer effectively reassure other ethnic groups that it will not violate agreements and exploit its position at some point in the future (Lake & Rothchild 1998: 13). Relations between groups are often regulated by an 'ethnic contract' that stipulates rights and responsibilities, political privileges, and access to resources (ibid.). When ethnic groups in power force interventions abroad, they run the danger of upsetting the ethnic contract. Junior parties may legitimately ask themselves if foreign policy adventurism will acquire a counterpart at home. Given that the terms of the ethnic contract reflect groups' beliefs about the intentions and likely behaviour of one another (ibid.: 14), then the contract may unravel as those beliefs change. If, by intervening abroad, dominant ethnic groups put themselves in a position where they can no longer credible guarantee the rights and security of ethnic minorities at home, then the attendant feelings of insecurity may motivate minorities to take up arms now rather than risk exploitation later. In short, the fear of instability at home may dissuade dominant ethnic groups from pursuing interventions in civil wars. According to this argument, measures of ethnic domination should have no significant effect.

## **Data**

The hypotheses are tested on data based on the interventions data set analysed in Lemke & Regan (2004). To that I have added data on ethnic

configurations in potential interveners and transnational ethnic affinities, as well as data on capabilities and geographical proximity. I adopt Lemke & Regan's (2004: 155) data design, whose unit of analysis is the civil war dyad. Each country with civil war paired with each other country in the international system is thus taken as one observation, irrespective of how long the internal conflict has lasted, or whether it is ongoing. The data set includes all civil wars that began between 1944 and 1994, beginning with the Greek civil war, 1944 - 1949, and ending with the conflict over Chechnya, 1994 and ongoing (Regan 2000: 153-158). Civil wars are defined as 'armed combat between groups within state boundaries in which there are at least 200 fatalities', intended to capture the seriousness of a conflict, yet to exclude events like 'bloodless' coups, riots or demonstrations (Regan 2000: 21). Below, I present the dependent variable, the ethnicity variables, and the control variables in turn.

### **Dependent variable – intervention**

Conceptually, interventions are cases in which states mobilise significant resources in order to influence the course and outcome of civil conflicts (Regan 2000: 9). The operational art is in distinguishing cases of real intervention from mere attempts at influence (ibid.). The decisive two criteria are that interventions break with the conventions of international relations, and that they are designed to change or preserve the authority structures in the target state (ibid.). Accordingly, Regan (2000: 10) register as interventions 'convention-breaking military and/or economic activities in the internal affairs of a foreign country targeted at the authority structures of the government and opposition forces.' 'Intervention' is a dichotomous variable in the Lemke & Regan data set, indicating whether the potential intervener meddled in the target state within a civil war dyad.

### **Measures of ethnic domination**

In order to test the null hypothesis against the alternative hypothesis about an interventionism of ethnic predominance, I take the model of interventions in

Austvoll (2006) as a starting point and add in turn nine different measures of ethnic domination in potential interveners. They all have in common that they at various points have been designed to predict the onset or incidence of civil wars. They also share the feature, emphasised in the discussion above, that they measure structural relations between ethnic groups, typically using demographic size as a starting point, and not actual discrimination or conflict between ethnic groups. Most closely proxying the concept of ethnic domination considered herein, perhaps, is Cederman & Girardin's (*forthcoming*)  $N^*$ .

$N^*$ . Cederman & Girardin's index of ethno-nationalist exclusion has the virtue that it is state-centric in its conception of ethnic configurations, and that it presupposes group-level micro-mechanisms of mobilisation. The focus on access to power and collective action in the arguments about ethnic domination is well reflected in  $N^*$ 's basic assumptions: the state plays a central role for the evolution of conflicts, and civil wars proceed among groups as opposed to individuals (Cederman & Girardin *forthcoming*: 7). The index is useful for my purposes also because it emphasises the capabilities or opportunity for collective action, rather than level of grievances. Before I turn it on its head to represent ethnic domination, I present  $N^*$  as a measure of a country's propensity for civil war.

Assuming that one may identify all politically relevant ethnic groups, and that all groups have the motivation to engage in collective action (*ibid.*: 8),  $N^*$  places an ethnic group in power (EGIP) in the centre, surrounded by peripheral, or marginalised ethnic groups (MEGs). It is assumed that the EGIP interacts with the MEGs, but that there is no interaction between MEGs. The propensity for civil war in such a system may then be expressed as

$$N^* = 1 - \prod_{i=1}^{n-1} (1 - p_i),$$

where  $p_i$  is the probability of conflict between the EGIP and  $MEG_i$ . The probability of EGIP- $MEG_i$  conflict is measured as a positive function of the

MEG's capability to challenge the EGIP. Assuming that capabilities are distributed evenly on the population,  $p_i$  takes as its starting point a contest success function (see Hirshleifer 2000):

$$p_i = \frac{1}{1 + (r_i / r)^{-k}} \text{ and } r_i = \frac{s_i}{s_i + s_0},$$

where  $s_i$  is the relative demographic size of MEG<sub>*i*</sub> and  $s_0$  is the relative demographic size of the EGIP,  $r$  is a threshold value and  $k$  is a slope parameter.  $r$  is set to 0.5 and  $k$  is set to 5.

Turning on marginalised ethnic group's opportunity to fight,  $N^*$  increases as the size of the ethnic group in power decreases, or as its domination declines. If the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis stands, then  $N^*$  should have a negative effect on the likelihood of intervention. The index is calculated using Cederman & Girardin's (*forthcoming*) identification of EGIPs in Eurasia and North Africa, based on Fearon's (2003) list of ethnic groups.

**IRC1** and **IRC2**. Other measures of ethnic configurations that have performed well in models of civil war are Reynal-Querol's (2002) index of polarisation **IRC1** and her adaptation of Esteban & Ray's (1994) polarisation measure **IRC2**. Like  $N^*$ , they have the advantage that they imply mechanisms of collective action. Indeed, Reynal-Querol (2002: 32), as Cederman & Girardin (*forthcoming*: 5), criticises traditional fractionalisation indices for having scant – if any – theoretical support for their individualist assumptions. The measures of polarisation are based on the assumption that countries are most conflict-prone when they have two social groups of the same size. For my purposes, the point of maximum ethnic polarisation should be the point of minimum ethnic domination. The theoretical weakness of the polarisation indices is their disregard of ethnic groups' access to governmental power. They are simply sensitive to how a particular ethnic configuration deviates from a bimodal distribution (Reynal-Querol 2002: 33):

$$IRC1 = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^N (0.5 - s_i)^2 s_i / 0.25,$$

where  $s_i$  is the relative demographic size of each ethnic group, and  $N$  is the number of ethnic groups.

$$IRC2 = \sum_{i=1}^n s_i^{1+\alpha},$$

where  $\alpha$  is set to 1.5 (Reynal-Querol 2002: 35)<sup>3</sup>. As opposed to Reynal-Querol, who uses religion as the distinguishing trait of social groups, I calculate the measures of polarisation using Fearon's (2003) list of ethnic groups.

In addition to  $N^*$  and the indices of polarisation, I also apply less technically complicated measures of ethnic domination. Using Fearon (2003) and Cederman & Girardin's (*forthcoming*) coding of EGIPs as my operational starting point, I adapt them for my own purposes. Like Hegre et al. (2001: 37) I measure *ethnic heterogeneity* as  $1 - s_0^2$ , where  $s_0$  is the relative demographic size of the EGIP. Following Collier & Hoeffler (2004: 572), I test a dummy indicating whether the EGIP constitutes 45-90% of the population. I adapt Fearon & Laitin (2003: 78-79) by creating a dummy for the potential interveners in which the EGIP and the largest MEG exceed 49% and 7% of the population, respectively. I select two measures from Ellingsen (2000: 233): a dummy indicating whether the EGIP equals or exceeds 80% of the population, and a variable indicating the relative size of the largest MEG. Finally – applied as it is in much-sited models of civil wars (Collier & Hoeffler 2004; Fearon & Laitin 2003) – I include the index of ethno-linguistic fractionalisation *ELF*, measuring the probability that two randomly selected individuals from the same country are from different ethnic groups. Table 1 lists all measures of ethnic domination in potential interveners with summary statistics, and indicates whether their effects are expected to be negative or positive if the null hypothesis is rejected.

[Table 1 about here]

### **Transnational ethnic affinities**

In this tentative probe into the possible effect of ethnic domination, the alternative hypothesis suggests that ethnic domination is relevant when the EGIP in the potential intervener has affinity for an ethnic group in the civil war country<sup>4</sup>. In addition to including transnational ethnic affinities in the model of interventions, I also test for interaction between the measures of ethnic domination and a dummy indicating whether the EGIP in the potential intervener has ethnic kin in the target state.

I operationalise transnational ethnic affinities as dyads in which members of the same ethnic group reside in both potential intervener and target state. This operationalisation is based on the assumptions that transnational bonds between similar ethnic groups are politically relevant, and that transnational ethnic affinities only exist between groups with the same ethnic identity. Both assumptions are dubious. To resort to such an operationalisation is a pragmatic response to two factors: the meagre offerings of ready cross-sectional data on ethnicity, and the recognition that, as a shorthand, the identification of similar ethnic groups provides a rough measure of transnational ethnic affinities.

I code as dyads with transnational ethnic affinities pairs of states containing groups with the same ethnic identity according to Fearon's (2003) list of ethnic groups. In order to refine the measure somewhat, dyads in which the same ethnic group in both countries was part of a diaspora when neither country was the homeland were excluded. Thus Malaysia and Mongolia, for instance, were not coded as an ethnically biased dyad, even if both countries have a Chinese population. This move was based on the assumption that transnational ethnic affinities within diasporas, excluding relations with the

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<sup>3</sup> For a description of the somewhat different functional properties of *IRC1* and *IRC2*, see Reynal-Querol (2002). The two are at any rate highly correlated. In the present sample  $r = -0.92$ .

<sup>4</sup> In Austvoll (2006) I argued that transnational ethnic affinity in itself is an important correlate of interventions.

home country, are of no political relevance. Intra-diaspora transnational relations run mainly between home countries and areas of settlement (Van Hear 2002: 234-235), and diaspora cultures are as a rule not irredentist or separatist (Clifford 1994: 307-308). I treat the Romanies as a diaspora even if they have no contemporary home state (Chaliand & Rageau 1995: 96-110). The variable *transnational ethnic affinities* is a dummy indicating whether dyads are ethnically biased or not.

Recall that transnational ethnic affinities may exist in any of four power configurations, depending on whether they involve an EGIP or an MEG in intervener and target state. I disaggregate the variable *transnational ethnic affinities* into two dummy variables indicating whether ethnic ties involve an EGIP or and MEG in the potential intervener. They are named *EGIPaffinity* and *MEGaffinity*, respectively. I do so in order to facilitate interaction with the measures of ethnic domination.

### **Supplementary variables**

Interventions have been modelled with various sets of variables (see Aydin 2005: 23; Lemke & Regan 2004: 161; Pickering 2002: 308-309; Regan 1998: 772), and with varying emphases. My emphasis is obviously on ethnicity variables, yet I supplement them with three sorts of variables: variables that are central in my causal narrative, control variables intended to minimise correlation between residuals and independent variables, and variables found to have significant effects by Regan (1998), Pickering (2002), and Lemke & Regan (2004).

*Power asymmetry* is not included by any of the intervention studies referred to above, but a formal model of the choice to intervene developed in Austvoll (2005: 17-27) suggests that power asymmetry is a central correlate of intervention. Generally, the likelihood of intervention should be a positive function of the power of the potential intervener, *I*, because its capabilities indicate its ability to project power (Boulding 1962/1988: 231). The likelihood of intervention should be a negative function of the power of the target state, *T*, because interventions in relatively more powerful states are expected to be



more costly, *ceteris paribus*. The estimated probability of successful intervention should be greater the more power-preponderant *I* is. Hence, the probability of intervention should be positively related to  $\frac{capabilities_I}{capabilities_T}$ . I measure power asymmetry as the natural log of the ratio of CINC-scores, lagged by one year prior to the outbreak of civil conflict. The CINC-scores are taken from the Correlates of War 'Composite Index of National Capability', version 3.02 (Singer 1987; Singer et al. 1972).

*The capabilities of the potential intervener.* It is necessary to control for the size of the potential intervener in order to minimise omitted variable bias in the effect of power ratio. Hegre (2005: 14) demonstrates how severe such bias may be. In the context of interventions, power asymmetry as measured by power ratio must be controlled for the capabilities of *I* in order to exclude the suggestion that great powers would seize any opportunity to intervene in small countries. By holding the capabilities of the potential intervener constant, the remaining effect of power asymmetry is more due to variation in the size of the target state. I apply the natural log of the potential interveners' CINC-scores.

*Joint borders* and *distance* are necessary control variables for *transnational ethnic affinities*. A major proportion of any variance in ethnic affinities is likely to be accounted for by contiguity and proximity. Adjacent states are more likely to include the same ethnic group. Similarly, the density and reach of diasporas should roughly be a negative function of distance. The further states are from each other, the less likely they contain ethnic kin. Apart from their importance as control variables, both contiguity and distance are well established correlates of interstate interaction, war, and intervention (Boulding 1962/1988: 230; Clark & Regan 2003: 100; Diehl 1991: 20; Gleditsch & Singer 1974: 483-484; Regan 1998: 772; Starr & Most 1978: 451). *Joint borders* is a dummy variable indicating whether states are contiguous by land or not (Lemke & Regan 2004: 155). *Distance* is measured as the natural log of the distance between the capital cities of *T* and *I*. Data on distance was compiled as described by Gleditsch (1995: 305).

The full model of intervention considered here also includes:

- *Type of internal war – ideological war / ethnic war*, found to have a significant effect by Pickering (2002: 309). Lemke & Regan (2004) provide two dummy variables indicating whether a civil conflict was ideological or ethnic. The baseline category is religious conflict.
- *Conflict intensity*, measured by number of casualties per year (Lemke & Regan 2004: 154), and log-transformed.
- *Alliance* – a dummy indicating whether potential intervener and target state have entered a treaty that ‘would qualify it as a defense pact, neutrality or non-aggression pact, or an entente’ (Gibler & Sarkees 2004: 214; Lemke & Regan 2004: 155).
- *Colonial history* – a dummy indicating whether *I* was a previous coloniser of *T* or not. The variable is coded zero for all dyads in which *T* never was a colony (Lemke & Regan 2004: 156).
- *Cold War* – a dummy coded ‘1’ for all conflicts before 1 January 1989 and ‘0’ for all subsequent conflicts (Lemke & Regan 2004: 154).

## Results

Table 2 contains the coefficient estimates from a binomial logistic regression of interventions. Before I comment on the measures of ethnic domination, it is worth noting that all variables from the intervention model in Austvoll (2006: 17) perform as expected, from model 1 through model 9. Their estimated effects are in size only marginally different, yet in substance identical to my past specification. Interventions are more likely to occur within dyads with transnational ethnic affinities, whether they involve the ethnic group in power or a marginalised ethnic group in the potential intervener. It is no surprise that interventions in civil wars are more likely to occur when countries are contiguous by land – or at least near each other – and when potential interveners enjoy a certain power preponderance over conflict-ridden countries. As seen before, interventions are more probable when the potential

intervener has been an imperial power with regard to the target state, and interventions were particularly prevalent during that era of proxy super power confrontations – the Cold War.

[Table 2 about here]

The one ostensible exception to this pattern of replication is the effect of *EGIPaffinity* in model 3, deprived as it is of any asterisks. Yet, interpreted together with its interaction effect, which is significant with  $p = 0.060$ , the effect of *EGIPaffinity* is positive and significant also in model 3. Given that the minimum value of *IRC2* is 0.108, the effect of *EGIPaffinity* will never be lower than 0.261, and that is not adding the coefficient estimate for *EGIPaffinity*. At the mean value of *IRC2*, the effect of *EGIPaffinity* is likewise no less than 1.430.

Turning now to the matter of ethnic domination in potential interveners, table 2 has some interesting results to offer. In models 1 through 4, when interpreted together with their interaction effects, all measures of ethnic domination perform as implied by the alternative hypothesis (see table 1). Given that the ethnic group in power in potential interveners has ethnic affinity with an ethnic group in the target state,  $N^*$  has a negative effect on the likelihood of intervention, *IRC1* likewise has a negative effect, *IRC2* has a positive effect, and Hegre et al.'s (2001) measure of ethnic heterogeneity has a negative effect.

This is not the case for models 5 through 9. For most of the measures of ethnic domination with more dubious theoretical foundations, the logistic regression estimations return no significant effects.

Returning to models 1 through 4, one learns – given that the EGIP in potential interveners shares ethnic identity with a group in target countries – that states are more likely to intervene in civil wars when their dominant ethnic group is impervious to domestic challenges ( $N^*$ ), when potential interveners are less ethnically polarised (*IRC1* and *IRC2*), or alternatively when potential interveners are less ethnically heterogeneous. It is notable that

$N^*$ , which is the measure that is most carefully theorised, and which most closely proxies the concept of ethnic domination dealt with herein, also has the greatest effect. As these four measures approach 1, the effect of  $N^*$  approaches -1.571, whereas the effects of *IRC1*, *IRC2*, and *ethnic heterogeneity* approach -1.303, 1.174, and -1.395 respectively. According to model 1, a country with the highest possible level of ethnic domination ( $N^* = 0$ ) has an odds of intervening in civil wars that is 4.8 times higher than a country approaching  $N^* = 1$ , given that there is ethnic affinity between their EGIP and the target state. The corresponding odds ratio for model 3 (*IRC2*), for example, is 3.2.

## Discussion

The purpose of this paper has been to move beyond domestic grievances in potential interveners, and to investigate whether the mere existence of particular structural relations between ethnic groups may give rise to foreign policy belligerence. It has been demonstrated before that higher levels of discrimination of ethnic minorities may incline states to use force in interstate conflicts (Caprioli & Trumbore 2003). Here however, it is suggested that the domestic politics of ethnic power relations are enough. Emphasising the *capabilities* or *opportunity* of collective action, measures of ethnic domination and ethnic polarisation indicate that ethnically dominant states are more intervention-prone than ethnically pluralist states, when their dominant ethnic group has ethnic kin in the target state. This is notable, not only because no actual domestic ethnic mobilisation is presumed, but also because interventions in civil wars arguably are high-threshold acts. The projection of power within foreign countries typically requires more than meeting fellow countries half-way in interstate disputes. Even so, Carment & James' (2000) argument that ethnic domination gives rise to conditions and opportunities within countries that make them more adventurous in foreign policy, even to the point of intervening in foreign countries, would seem to be supported by the evidence. Whatever concerns dominant ethnic groups would have for the viability of their domestic ethnic contract seems not to be sufficient to deter

them from intervening abroad. In short, ethnic groups with the capacity to play solo do indeed tend to do so. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis stands.

I will not close this discussion by considering a set of the paper's immediate theoretical and methodological short-comings. Not that there are none. A somewhat roughshod theoretical setup, the operational difficulties with coding interventions, the incomplete data on the ethnic identity of fighting parties in target states, the fact that Fearon's (2003) list of ethnic groups provides only a snap-shot image of the early nineties and therefore does not provide for time-series data, the debatable analytical move of reifying ethnic identity, the tentative coding of ethnic groups in power, – all warrant thorough discussion. Rather, I will end by briefly considering the need to take the endogenous nature of explanatory variables in quantitative studies of conflict seriously. With regard to the ethnic sources of interventions in civil wars, it is time to reverse the second image.

### **Reversing the second image**

There is nothing novel about reversing the second image (Gourevitch 1978). I simply appropriate the concept, referring to an emphasis on the international sources of domestic politics, in order to argue that ethnic power relations – across borders and within countries – are endogenous to the nexus of internationalised civil wars and interstate conflicts, and ought to be studied as such. Ethnic power relations, in their domestic and transnational form, are at once a function of ethnic identity, the 'groupness' of ethnic categories, and the geographical location of group members.

Ethnic identity is in a general sense self-consciousness about belonging to a social category, defined by boundary rules and a particular conception of content (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 848). As such, ethnic identities are socially constructed. Political violence, such as foreign civil wars involving ethnic kin, may shape, re-shape and cement ethnic identities (Fearon & Laitin 2000: 853; Laitin & Posner 2001: 15; Somer 2005: 117), thus altering the terms of domestic

ethnic politics in potential interveners. Given such insights, much work on ethnic violence may be critiqued for assuming *ex ante* that ethnic identities are exogenous (Chandra 2001: 9). Yet the endogenisation of ethnicity ought to encompass more:

The 'groupness' of ethnic categories is endogenous to internationalised civil wars much like ethnic identity. The 'groupness' of an ethnic category refers to its politicisation – its potential for collective political action (Kasfir 1979: 373). An ethnic *group* has a higher level of collective self-consciousness than an ethnic *category* (Fearon 2003: 201). It follows that internationalised civil wars may politicise, or constitute the 'groupness', of ethnic categories to the extent that both domestic and transnational ethnic landscapes are significantly altered.

Finally, ethnic power relations may be changed by internationalised civil wars or interstate conflicts as population movement or the sudden redrawing of boundaries shift the ethnic balance in potential interveners (Lake & Rothchild 1998: 25).

It is not apparent that the research programme of which this paper is a part – the mainly quantitative comparative study of conflict – has addressed in any satisfactory way the degree to which ethnic configurations, though they may cause civil wars to break out and foreign interventions to be executed, are themselves continuously affected by the phenomena they explain. We do not know enough about how biased our findings may be due to the endogeneity of ethnicity. Reversing the second image, more than a novel phrase or an appealing analytical option, should become a priority for the field.

## **Conclusion**

This paper was introduced by noting that, in addition to the material factors commonly known to cause interventions in civil wars, transnational ethnic affinities may serve as conduits of external involvement. Such has previously been shown to be the case when ethnic bonds involve either an ethnic group in power or marginalised ethnic groups in potential interveners, and either an

ethnic group in power or marginalised ethnic groups in target states. Given that ethnic groups in power in potential interveners have ethnic kin in civil war states, it was asked, are ethnically dominant states more likely to intervene than ethnically pluralist states? Does a particular structure of ethnic relations make states more intervention-prone? So it would seem. Analyses of interventions in civil wars in Eurasia and North Africa 1944-1994 have suggested that states are more likely to intervene in conflict-ridden states containing ethnic kin when they are more ethnically dominant, or less ethnically polarised. Structures of domestic ethnic politics do matter. Under the conditions specified herein, there are indeed such things as adventures in the second image.

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**Table 1: Measures of ethnic domination in potential interveners: summary statistics and the expected signs of their effects on the likelihood of intervention.**

<b>Measure of Ethnic domination</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Expected sign of effect</b>
<i>N*</i> (Cederman & Girardin <i>forthcoming</i> )	0	0.987	0.076	-
<i>IRC1</i> (Reynal-Querol 2002)	0.005	0.952	0.504	-
<i>IRC2</i> (Esteban & Ray 1994/ Reynal-Querol 2002)	0.108	0.998	0.592	+
<i>Ethnic heterogeneity</i> (Hegre et al. 2001)	0.002	0.986	0.381	-
<i>Ethnic dominance</i> (Collier & Hoeffler 2004)	0	1	0.544	+
<i>FL</i> (Fearon & Laitin 2003)	0	1	0.427	-
<i>E</i> (Ellingsen 2000)	0	1	0.441	-
<i>MEGmax</i> (Ellingsen 2000)	0.001	0.625	0.127	-
<i>ELF</i> (Fearon & Laitin 2003)	0.004	0.886	0.306	-

**Table 2: Logistic regression estimates, probability of third-party interventions in civil wars**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	$\hat{\beta}$ (SE)	$\hat{\beta}$ (SE)	$\hat{\beta}$ (SE)	$\hat{\beta}$ (SE)
$N^*$	0.798 (0.919)			
$N^* \times \text{EGIPaffinity}$	-2.369* (1.381)			
<i>IRC1</i>		1.409** (0.678)		
<i>IRC1</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity		-2.712** (1.261)		
<i>IRC2</i>			-1.242** (0.537)	
<i>IRC2</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity			2.416* (1.285)	
<i>Ethnic heterogeneity</i>				1.149** (0.538)
<i>Ethnic heterogeneity</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity				-2.544** (1.155)
EGIPaffinity	2.686*** (0.464)	3.993*** (0.906)	1.152 (0.740)	3.545*** (0.728)
MEGaffinity	1.140*** (0.437)	0.951** (0.430)	0.945** (0.409)	0.946** (0.411)
Joint borders	1.845*** (0.431)	1.997*** (0.416)	2.017*** (0.413)	1.996*** (0.418)
$\ln$ Distance	-0.648*** (0.213)	-0.596*** (0.212)	-0.602*** (0.213)	-0.606*** (0.216)
$\ln$ Power ratio	0.546*** (0.133)	0.551*** (0.136)	0.552*** (0.137)	0.558*** (0.136)
$\ln$ Capabilities <sub>i</sub>	0.047 (0.156)	0.037 (0.156)	0.024 (0.157)	0.016 (0.156)
Ethnic conflict	-0.554 (0.402)	-0.550 (0.395)	-0.591 (0.398)	-0.615 (0.396)
Ideological conflict	0.165 (0.445)	0.139 (0.435)	0.124 (0.426)	0.098 (0.428)
$\ln$ Conflict intensity	-0.063 (0.077)	-0.060 (0.078)	-0.056 (0.078)	-0.057 (0.078)
Allied	-0.240 (0.531)	-0.241 (0.515)	-0.250 (0.532)	-0.211 (0.535)
Colonial history	1.505*** (0.576)	1.540*** (0.566)	1.637*** (0.579)	1.630*** (0.586)
Cold War	0.962*** (0.323)	0.945*** (0.337)	0.957*** (0.331)	0.972*** (0.336)
Constant	-0.664 (0.323)	-1.861 (2.274)	-0.472 (2.210)	-1.629 (2.296)
N	3900	3900	3900	3900
Log pseudo-likelihood	-194.329	-193.734	-193.775	-193.428
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.426	0.428	0.428	0.429

\*:  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*:  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*:  $p < 0.01$  (robust standard errors, clustered by civil war).



**Table 2 continued**

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	$\hat{\beta}$	$\hat{\beta}$	$\hat{\beta}$	$\hat{\beta}$	$\hat{\beta}$
	(SE)	(SE)	(SE)	(SE)	(SE)
<i>Ethnic dominance</i>	0.345 (0.468)				
<i>Ethnic dominance</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity	-0.490 (0.658)				
<i>FL</i>		-0.082 (0.446)			
<i>FL</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity		0.134 (0.588)			
<i>E</i>			-0.012 (0.353)		
<i>E</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity			-0.772 (0.671)		
<i>MEGmax</i>				0.436 (1.626)	
<i>MEGmax</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity				-2.587 (1.994)	
<i>ELF</i>					1.196* (0.596)
<i>ELF</i> $\times$ EGIPaffinity					-0.934 (1.271)
EGIPaffinity	2.810*** (0.617)	2.452*** (0.496)	2.846*** (0.565)	2.826*** (0.519)	2.983*** (0.660)
MEGaffinity	1.123** (0.443)	1.178*** (0.437)	1.111*** (0.401)	1.131** (0.446)	0.944* (0.489)
Joint borders	1.938*** (0.411)	1.909*** (0.396)	1.974*** (0.401)	1.843*** (0.430)	2.281*** (0.468)
<i>ln</i> Distance	-0.640*** (0.203)	-0.652*** (0.201)	-0.648*** (0.210)	-0.657*** (0.208)	-0.671*** (0.239)
<i>ln</i> Power ratio	0.538*** (0.137)	0.533*** (0.135)	0.548*** (0.135)	0.542*** (0.133)	0.560*** (0.159)
<i>ln</i> Capabilities <sub>1</sub>	0.060 (0.159)	0.058 (0.162)	0.013 (0.161)	0.032 (0.163)	0.024 (0.196)
Ethnic conflict	-0.476 (0.406)	-0.492 (0.407)	-0.565 (0.384)	-0.539 (0.400)	-0.485 (0.432)
Ideological conflict	0.225 (0.441)	0.233 (0.438)	0.141 (0.425)	0.167 (0.440)	-0.015 (0.494)
<i>ln</i> Conflict intensity	-0.063 (0.075)	-0.063 (0.074)	-0.059 (0.075)	-0.065 (0.077)	-0.001 (0.081)
Allied	-0.338 (0.530)	-0.329 (0.529)	-0.211 (0.540)	-0.231 (0.526)	-0.882 (0.619)
Colonial history	1.410*** (0.608)	1.526** (0.646)	1.460** (0.612)	1.484*** (0.569)	1.625** (0.677)
Cold War	0.896*** (0.325)	0.928*** (0.319)	0.955*** (0.339)	0.946*** (0.330)	0.968** (0.393)
Constant	-0.834 (2.242)	-0.528 (2.162)	-0.821 (2.204)	-0.634 (2.199)	-1.627 (2.645)
N	3900	3900	3900	3900	3413
Log pseudo-likelihood	-195.264	-195.644	-194.640	-194.631	-156.336
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.424	0.422	0.425	0.425	0.445

\*: p<0.10, \*\*: p<0.05, \*\*\*: p<0.01 (robust standard errors, clustered by civil war).