



Unification and Secession: How do Votes in International Organizations influence Cost-benefit Analysis?

Research Article

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Unification and Secession: How do Votes in International Organizations influence Cost-benefit Analysis?

Alban Lauka*

Unification or secession efforts, especially those based on nationalistic principles, have been made continuously since at least the 19th century, but the way states exert their influence on the international arena has undergone major transformations. Could these transformations change the motivation of certain states to unify or that of different regions to secede? What is the benefit of having one or more additional state representatives in international organizations? To answer these questions, this paper examines the importance that voting processes in international organizations can have for the cost/benefit calculations of states or particular regions in their national unification or secession efforts. After conceptually isolating the impact of state votes in international organizations as an instrument of foreign policy, the votes are calculated for the four case studies in their current state as well in case of potential unification or secession. The results suggest that, while votes in international organizations do award additional international influence to internationally recognized statehood, today this added value does not constitute an unaffordable cost for unification agendas.

Keywords: Unification, Secession, International Organizations, Votes

Introduction

Centralizing and decentralizing forces changing international borders have shaped international relations throughout history, and a transformation of these forces is inherently a transformation of the manner in which international relations unfold. For example, the emergence of a nationalistic conceptualization of collective interest has created competing agendas of national unification with the purpose to create a nation-state that includes all the members of that nation in one independent country, to increase both domestic economic wealth and the international standing of the country. Especially after the French revolution, unifications, decolonization and secessions have taken place continuously with virtually no costs in terms of international influence for the newly created states.

In the meantime, the way states exert their influence abroad has undergone major transformations. The salience of international organizations as common channels for the conduct of foreign affairs has changed the role of

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internationally recognized statehood in international affairs. Through votes in International Organizations, even relatively uninfluential states, in Latin America, South-East Asia, or any other part of the globe, can have an impact on events in the Middle East and elsewhere. But what exactly is the value of statehood in terms of votes, and could it affect the motivation of certain states to unify or that of different regions to secede?

An early case of the influence of international organization votes in changing sovereignty is the willingness of the Soviet Union to make sacrifices for a large voting bloc as the creation of the United Nations was being discussed by the Allies near the end of WWII. The Soviets attempted to secure international representation for all its sixteen republics, in clear contradiction with its quite extreme political and economic centralization in general, even providing a legal basis for the Republics to enter into direct diplomatic relations with other states.¹

Today, a plausible claim circulating among Albanians argues against the unification of Albania and Kosovo because of the expected decrease of the overall Albanian (Albania + Kosovo) votes in international organizations, which would weaken the international influence of Albanians in a global or regional context. In the last decade, this number of 'Albanian' votes in international organizations has indeed been given particular attention in every discussion in the media about a possible Albania-Kosovo unification. In the last two years, several politicians and political analysts have argued against unification with the main argument being that Albanians should retain as many votes as possible in IOs.² One Albanian politician has even gone as far as to predict an EU-driven Albanian unification to prevent the overrepresentation of Albanians in EU institutions.³

This paper tries to examine how important voting processes in international organizations (IOs) can be to the cost/benefit calculations of states or particular regions in their national unification or secession efforts. In terms of votes in IOs, what is the benefit of having one or more additional state representatives? How does this enhanced voting power fit within the general international influence of a state or people? All other considerations aside, is it enough to discourage ethnic groups in different *states* from seeking national unification? Is it enough to prevent unified international representation for regional or continental bodies, such as the European Union? In regions where international organizations such as the EU can take binding decisions, should we expect a shift of nationalist ideologies away from their original goal of national unification? This paper attempts to answer all these questions through a comparative analysis between the international influence - and more precisely in the voting power context in IOs in the case of two separate states and that of a potential unified one.

¹ Dallin, Alexander. 1959. *The Soviet View of the United Nations*. Cambridge, MA: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 84.

² Nazarko, Mentor. n.d. Mbledhja e Prizrenit si një fillim. *Panorama*, n.d. (accessed: 3. March 2014); Pacolli, Behgjet. 2012. Shqiptarët de jure dy shtete, një de facto *Oranews*, 23. November 2012 (accessed: 28. April 2016); Spahiu, Kreshnik. 2012. Bashkimin do e vendosin vetë shqiptarët. *Panorama*, 04. January 2012 (accessed: 28. April 2016).

³ Spahiu. *Bashkimin*.

In order to perform the analytical test, I select four peer countries, all of which share dominant ethnic groups, namely Albania and Kosovo, dominated by ethnic Albanians; Greece and (southern) Cyprus, dominated by ethnic Greeks; Romania and Moldova, dominated by ethnic Romanians, and East Germany and West Germany, both dominated by ethnic Germans. Of those four cases, only the latter achieved national unification; for the previous ones, other political considerations block the road to unification, if it would be possible at all. Therefore, the goal here is not to argue for or against unification, but to analyze whether such unification, with its result of losing one or more voting members in IOs, would result in diminishing voting power for the whole case in IOs where they participate, and if this cost lowers incentives for unifications.

The first part of this paper will look at votes as one state instrument in foreign policy, putting the issue into a wider perspective and discussing its limitations. Furthermore, the paper will highlight the conditions in which the difference between the votes of a unified state and those of two independent ones could be effective. The second part of the paper will calculate the exact voting difference in several international organizations for four cases of study. Finally, the third part will interpret the gathered data, and evaluate the outcomes by incorporating them into the discussion presented in the first part, in order to draw the conclusion and provide answers to the research questions.

Voting in IOs as incentives for independence

Since the goal of this paper is to examine the potential of votes in international organizations as negative incentives in potential unification cost/benefit analyses, it is important to understand what place such analyses have among other incentives for secession, or against unification.

Previous research on secession has successfully identified a number of important factors which could explain, at least partially, the motivation to secede. Saideman and Ayres list group size and characteristics, relations with ethnic kin, geopolitical position, or the political system of the state, among others, as factors that could cause groups to seek independence.⁴ Power relations within the mother state have also been proposed as a variable explaining separatist desires.⁵ Pierre and Hummel find cultural heterogeneity to be one of the factors that can explain patterns of secessionist conflicts in Africa.⁶ Adding to these findings, Siroky and Cuffe provide evidence as to how changes in autonomy levels with the mother state might affect groups' capacity and motivation to secede.⁷ Besides the power relations of cultural and ethnic

⁴ Saideman, Stephen M., and R. William Ayres. 2000. Determining the Causes of Irredentism: Logit Analyses of Minorities at Risk Data from the 1980s and 1990s. *The Journal of Politics* 62(4), 1126-44.

⁵ Jenne, Erin K. / Stephen M. Saideman and Will Lowe. 2007. Separatism as a Bargaining Posture: The Role of Leverage in Minority Radicalization. *Journal of Peace Research* 44(5), 539-58.

⁶ Englebert, Pierre and Rebecca Hummel. 2005. Let's Stick Together: Understanding Africa's Secessionist Deficit. *African Affairs* 104(416), 399-427.

⁷ Siroky, David S., and John Cuffe. 2015. Lost Autonomy, Nationalism and Separatism. *Comparative Political Studies* 48(1), 3-34.

identities in mother states, however, secessionist movements may also be fuelled by more pragmatic agendas. In fact, Bartkus adds cost/benefit analyses as a crucial factor in incentivizing secession for both elites and peoples.⁸ This view is further reinforced by Sorens, who uses a similar, mainly economic, analysis as a determining factor for voter choices regarding secessionist parties.⁹ This paper's contribution consists in establishing the added value that votes in international organizations bring to internationally recognized statehood, and assessing the potential impact of this value on cost/benefit analyses regarding secessions and potential unifications.

Voting in IOs: Theory and Practice

The role of IOs in international relations has increased steadily since the end of WWII. Whether it is in the EU, G20 or Security Council, states often vote on binding decisions. In this context, having a vote in international organizations has more powerful prerogatives than only a few decades ago. After the Lisbon Treaty, for example, EU Member States can be outvoted in the Council and still be expected to cooperate. Of course, as explained in the following sections, the weighing of votes is partially determined by factors that do not depend on the number of independent states involved, such as population, but statehood certainly has a voting weight in its own right. In such conditions, could two German states supporting each other have been more influential than the unified Germany we see today? So the question remains: does a higher number of votes in IOs make unification unattractive? The question is applicable to all cases of existing or potential emergence of national unification agendas, such as Albania and Kosovo, Romania and Moldova, North and South Korea, several potential combinations of Arab countries, Greece and Cyprus, to name only some of the cases, as well as possible cases of collective international representation, such as the EU and its Member States.

A review of the existing literature reveals the institutional context in which numeric votes may win over other power leverages and decision making mechanisms, as well as the very framework of a given IO, in promoting states' interests on the world stage. Firstly, for the voting to have any effect, the organizations in which the states retain their rights to vote should have an important role in world politics. The nature of these organizations, their influence or the purpose they serve is a matter of discussion between authors representing different schools of thought. According to Hurd, international organizations can act as forums, as independent actors, or as mere instruments to other actors in international affairs.¹⁰ While each of these possibilities assigns a different share of international decision-making to international organizations, states also interact through bilateral or multilateral relations, regular or ad hoc, formal or informal meetings, or even without their representatives meeting each other at all. International organizations represent only a part of state interaction, and as such, they only partially

⁸ Bartkus, Viva Ona. 1999. *The Dynamic of Secession*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

⁹ Sorens, Jason. 2005. The Cross-Sectional Determinants of Secessionism in Advanced Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies* 38(3), 304-26.

¹⁰ Hurd, Ian. 2011. Choices and Methods in the Study of International Organizations. *Journal of International Organization Studies* 2(2), 7-22.

influence world politics. Thus, the benefits of a state's voting power in IOs are limited to within the boundaries of international influence it can exert through IOs. Having said that, because unifications and secessions involve very high stakes, they will not be influenced by voting in international organizations that only have limited power to enforce decisions. Therefore, I frame my analysis only within the cases of actual or potential member states of the European Union, which, in this aspect, has relatively little trouble with decision implementation.

Secondly, within these IOs, the voting process should be decisive. The power of votes in international organizations is not only limited by the organizations' influence, but also by their structure and the type and power of voting procedures. Barkin discusses the agenda setting, institutional, negotiating, and soft power as ways in which states can exert influence within international organizations.¹¹ These structural relations dynamics bypass or at least distort the voting procedure to some extent. In the World Trade Organization (WTO), for example, the most powerful states do not usually face serious obstacles when promoting their own agenda.¹²

Thirdly, for the added number of votes to be effective, all state representatives should vote in a unified bloc. Some argue that this is only to be expected from states with the same ethnic majority that can combine voting power to maximize their collective influence.¹³ This claim is based on the assumption that different states sharing the same ethnic majority also share the same international interests. Concerning votes in international organizations, a certain level of cultural solidarity is observable, although it is far from being a guarantee for the creation and persistence of ethnic or cultural voting blocs.¹⁴ Maybe the greatest risk of enhancing voting power through multiple representation of the same ethnic group is the possibility that those countries might vote differently. Distinct representation in international organizations could create opportunities for one country to be able to promote interests that could very well conflict with those of the rest of the same ethnic background, as the case of East Germany and West Germany during the Cold War illustrates, and this division could have a negative impact on that ethnic group's overall international influence. Instead, such a dissent could undermine solidarity within and the very identity of the ethnic group it was supposed to serve. Moreover, cultural or ethnic affinity has not stopped states from going to war (sometimes it has even been a catalyst), taking opposing stances to one another in important international issues, or even developing distinct foreign policy cultures and identities. The Iraq War of 2003 offers a meaningful illustration of interest diversion overcoming cultural affinity. Denmark and Kuwait were among the main supporters of the intervention, while all the countries

¹¹ Barkin, Samuel. 2006. *International Organization: Theories and Institutions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹² Schott, Jeffrey and Jayashree Vata. n.d.. [Decision-making in the WTO](#). *PIIE* (accessed: 3. March 2014); Interagency [Memorandum](#) on the Need to Improve Internal Transparency and Participation in the WTO.

¹³ Nazarko. *Mbledhja e Prizrenit*; Behgjet. *Shqiptarët*.

¹⁴ Hosli, Madeleine. 2008. *Coalition-Formation, Cleavages and Voting: Behavior in the Council of the European Union*. Paper at the CONNEX Final Conference, Mannheim, 6-8. March; Kaeding, Michael and Tornsten Selck. 2005. Mapping Out Political Europe: Coalition Patterns in EU Decision-Making. *International Political Science Review* 26(3), 271-90.

surrounding them opposed it. Another example is the clear distinction between Norway on the one hand, as an important military actor in foreign affairs, and its staunchly pacifist neighbors on the other. By the same token, in the last five years of voting in the Council of Ministers, Greece has been ranked as the fourth country with the most frequently matching votes to Cyprus, although the difference is minimal, with both higher and lower ranked EU Member States. On the other hand, Austria and Germany have been among each others' fiercest opposition in the votes of the Council.¹⁵ While it can be argued that in some cases a national consciousness precedes the state, it is often the states that create national identities.¹⁶ States with populations of the same ancestry or language, such as Germany and Austria, all the countries of Latin America, and to different degrees, the countries serving as case studies for this paper, demonstrate how state identity can be the first step toward a gradual process of a new national identity.¹⁷

Finally, for a unification cost too great to ignore, the joint votes should be both considerably greater than the vote of a unified state and enough to have a chance of decisiveness for the whole voting process. If the vote gains are close to zero, and the chances for this difference to overturn the tables in a future vote are also close to zero, they would likely not affect the unification/secession processes at all. For this purpose, the final representation of the vote differences in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 is shown as a percentage of the total vote.

The Vote Difference Factor (Or the Lack Thereof): Argument and Methodology

The argument that more than one state representation translates into a more comfortable international position through votes rests on the assumption that those states will create a solid block of votes in IOs. Solidarity based on identity, however, is not guaranteed. Multiple states could trigger further divisions in political and national identity in the future. Keeping this limitation in mind, this section takes four case studies to measure the difference between the voting power of one and two states with the same ethnic majority, and compares the difference between the actual realities of votes in various international organizations on the one hand, and on projections for potential national unifications on the other. The only exception is Germany, which will serve to show how much, if at all, the Germans have lost in overall votes due to their already completed unification. The three other case studies, Albania and Kosovo, Romania and Moldova, and Greece and Cyprus, will be contrasted to their potential unified states. The goal is not to draw conclusions strictly limited to ethnic groups, nations, or any particular definition of a group of people, but to generalize to all kinds of communities that could unify into one state or split into more: the choice of the case inclines toward communities who perceive themselves as belonging to the same or kin ethnic groups, as they are usually more attracted to national unification temptations, and could exhibit a

¹⁵ VotewatchEurope. n.d. [Compare votes cast by \[Member State\] with those of the other Member States in the Council of Ministers of the EU](#). (accessed: 3. March 2014).

¹⁶ Poggi, Gianfranco. 2011. *The nation-state*, in *Comparative Politics*, edited by Daniele Caramani. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 63-79, 69.

¹⁷ Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, New York, NY: Verso, 48.

degree level of solidarity in voting in IOs, therefore providing a possible argument against unification, which is tested below.

An additional reason for the choice of these particular cases is the fact that all these states are in Europe and have become, or could become members of the EU in the future. This purposeful case choice intends to keep other historical and contextual variables constant as much as possible, in order to facilitate the analysis of shared ethnicity as a key independent variable. The most powerful international bodies in terms of enforcing decisions upon member states, as well as the voting processes of EU institutions, offer a great opportunity to observe the difference in voting power, if there is such, between one or two states dominated by the same ethnic group. The European Parliament (EP) and the European Council are selected as the most powerful European bodies to use voting procedures for political decision-making as different from the more technical and communitarian nature of decisions in other EU institutions. Those peer countries' votes in some of the most influential international organizations with close ties to global membership such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank (WB), and the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, will also be calculated.

Another merit of the selected peers is their various compositions versus EU membership: in the case of Cyprus-Greece, both countries are EU members; in the case of Moldova-Romania, only the latter is an EU member; in the case of Albania-Kosovo, none of these countries are currently EU members. Such a selection blends together in an unusual way descriptive inference and counterfactual experimental thought. Thus, while Greece and Cyprus are both members of the main European and global international organizations, the other two cases require counterfactual reasoning for calculations based on projections of membership. For example, the tables below show figures of Moldova's voting power in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Since the number of seats in the EP depends on the ratio of the population of the country to the total population of the EU, the total figure has been adjusted to include Moldova's population as well. The same method has been used for Albania and Kosovo. To highlight the decisiveness of the vote differences, the final figures are shown as percentages of the total number of votes in a given institutional procedure.

The International Monetary Fund

In the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, where all the countries taken as case studies are members, voting is not based on the one-country-one-vote principle, but mainly on a weighted vote that reflects the financial contribution of each member state. The total number of votes for each country is determined by quota subscription and the basic votes are calculated as 5.5402 percent of total votes.¹⁸ Accordingly, the United States has 421,965 votes (16.76 percent of the total), and Tuvalu has 759 votes (0.03 percent of the total).¹⁹ The basic votes constitute the difference between two states and one

¹⁸ IMF. 2014. *IMF Members' Quotas and Voting Power, and IMF Board of Governors*. (accessed: 28. April 2016).

¹⁹ IMF. 2014. *IMF Members' Quotas*.

state with the same quota, and the basic votes in the IMF are close to 0.03% of the total. That means that if Romania and Moldova decide to unify, without changing their subscriptions, their total number of vote shares will drop by approximately 0.03% of the total vote in the IMF.

The World Bank

The factors that determine the vote weight for each country in the World Bank are similar to the ones at the IMF, but the percentages vary according to the four institutions. In the Boards of Governors, each state is represented on its own, while in the Boards of Executive Directors six countries (USA, Japan, Germany, France, China, and the UK) appoint their own directors, but most countries are represented collectively as constituencies. For example, Albania, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Timor-Leste (East Timor) all elect one representative, voting based on their respective quota. In this particular case, Italy has 82,142 votes out of 105,0589.²⁰ The Boards of Governors decide on matters such as membership, article amendments, or the compositions of the Boards of Executives, while the Boards of Executive Directors treat issues regarding loans and guarantees, effectively acting as the executive branch.

So in the Board of Governors, the difference between a unified state and two separate ones is around 0.003% as in the IMF, but in the Board of Executive Directors there is no benefit to having two states unless they vote in the same constituencies. Romania and Moldova are one such case, both voting together with Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Israel, Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Ukraine and the Netherlands. In the International Finance Corporation, for example, unification would lower the overall votes of Romania and Moldova by 0.03%, while the total share of this group is 3.56% or 96,542 votes.²¹ In the same constituency, the Netherlands have 56,931 votes, constituting 58.9% of the votes of the group, or 2.14% of the total. Within the group, Romania and Moldova would lose 0.03% out of 3.56% (0.84% of the group vote), leaving the Dutch majority untroubled. For the rest of the countries, unification would actually increase voting power by allocating all the votes to the same constituency. In this case the total number of votes would be equal to the sum of the existing ones, minus the standard 0.03% for each member state.

The World Trade Organization

Every member state has one vote in the WTO, although larger, more powerful countries have been more successful in imposing their agenda or achieving their goals.²² Formally, two separate states could have two votes, compared to only one vote for a unified nation-state. In percentages, this would translate into 1.25% and 0.625% of the total vote respectively.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

In NATO, decisions are taken by consensus. There is no formal voting process, but decisions depend on the objection of the states in the discussion preceding

²⁰ WorldBank. 2014. [International Finance Corporation Voting Power of Directors](#). (accessed: 28. April 2016).

²¹ WorldBank, *International Finance*.

²² Jeffrey and Jayashree, *Decision-making in the WTO*; Interagency Memorandum on the Need to Improve Internal Transparency and Participation in the WTO.

them. Since consensus is required, each member state has veto power,²³ which means that the position of every single state is just as important as that of two or more. There might be differences in the power to set agendas or in administrative power, but in terms of votes, a greater number of states is not translated into greater influence.

The United Nations

In the General Assembly every Member State has one of 193 total votes,²⁴ while in the Security Council there are five permanent, veto-wielding countries, and ten temporary voting ones. In the General Assembly, every additional state means an additional vote, but these voting procedures do not have binding force on the Member States. The existence of two or more states of the same ethnicity could, however, enhance the chances of representation as a temporary member in the Security Council.

The European Union

Among some of the main institutions of the European Union, the European Council, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, votes are cast to represent Member States, or at least a part of their electorates. Of course, two states would appoint more representatives in the Commission, in the Court of Justice, etc., but since this paper aims to differentiate in state voting power, it will focus on the cases where state representatives are expected to promote the interest of the state or its people (or part of it, as in the European Parliament) in relation to the rest of the EU.

In the European Parliament, every Member State has a fixed number of seats (depending on population figures) which are distributed to the national parties according to the result of the EU elections. The numbers of potential seats in the EP for Albania, Kosovo, Moldova and East and West Germany have been estimated by comparing the population of these countries with EU Member States with similar figures and their respective Member of European Parliament (MEP) per capita. For example, Latvia and Estonia, having very similar population numbers with Albania and Kosovo, currently have 8 and 6 seats in the European Parliament, so 14 seats in total. As a single state, Albania and Kosovo would have a total population of 4.6 million, almost exactly the population of Ireland, which has 12 seats in the EP. The difference between one or two states with an Albanian majority population is two votes out of 751, or 0.25%. The same method of calculation has been applied to the other cases.

In the Council of Ministers the Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) voting procedure takes into account the votes of every state as well as the population represented by it.²⁵ In the first case, the voting difference is 1 out of 28 (around 3.5%), while in the second there is no difference. Although this is the standard procedure of voting in the Council, there are cases when decisions are taken based on simple majority or unanimity. The figures remain the same, although in the latter case the vote of every single state is reinforced by veto. Finally, in the European Council, Member States usually vote by consensus. Again, the

²³ N.N. 2014. Consensus Decision-Making at NATO. *NATO* (accessed: 28. April 2016).

²⁴ United Nations. 2014. Functions and Powers of the General Assembly. (accessed: 28. April 2016).

²⁵ Council of the European Union. 2014. The Voting System at the Council of the EU. (accessed: 30. December. 2014).

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veto power enables any single state to block decisions just as effectively as two or more.

Table 1: Albania and Kosovo

		Albania	Kosovo	The Sum	Unified	Difference
Population (in mill)		2.8	1.8	4.6	4.6	
IMF		0.05%	0.05%	0.10%	0.07%	0.03%
WB	Boards of Governors ²⁶					0.03%
	Boards of Directors					0 (unless in the same constit.)
WTO		1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 + veto (0.63%)
NATO		veto	veto	veto	veto	0
UN General Assembly		1	1	2	1	1 (0.51%)
EU - Council	Population	2.8	1.8	4.6	4.6	0
	Votes	1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 (3.33%)
EU - Parliament		8	6	14	12	2 (0.27%)

Source: Author's own work.

Table 2: Germany

		West	East	The Sum	Unified	Difference
Population (in mill)		67.5	14.3	81.8	81.8	0
IMF						0.03%
WB	Boards of Governors					0.03%
	Boards of Directors					0 (unless in the same constituency)
WTO		1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 + veto (0.63%)
NATO		veto	veto	veto	veto	0
UN General Assembly		1	1	2	1	1 (0.51%)
EU - Council	Population	67.5	14.3	81.8	81.8	0
	Votes	1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 (3.34%)
EU - Parliament		74	26	100	96	4 (0.53%)

Source: Author's own work.

²⁶ Fort the tables 1 to 4 Boards of Governors and Boards of Directors of IBRD & IFC.

Table 3: Greece and Cyprus

		Greece	Cyprus	The sum	Unified	Difference
Population (in mill)		10.9	0.9	11.8	11.8	0
IMF		0.46	0.09	0.55	0.52	0.03
WB	Boards of Governors					0.03%
	Boards of Directors					0
WTO		1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 + veto (0.63%)
NATO		veto	veto	veto	veto	0
UN General Assembly		1	1	2	1	1 (0.51%)
EU - Council	Population	10.9	0.9	11.8	11.8	0
	Votes	1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 (3.57%)
EU - Parliament		21	6	27	21	6 (0.80%)

Source: Author's own work.

Table 4: Romania and Moldova

		Romania	Moldova	The sum	Unified	Difference
Population (in mill)		20.0	3.5	23.5	23.5	0
IMF		0.44	0.08	0.52	0.49	0.03%
WB	Boards of Governors					0.03%
	Boards of Directors					0.03% of the total, 0.84% of the constit.
WTO		1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 + veto (0.63%)
NATO		veto	veto	veto	veto	0
UN General Assembly		1	1	2	1	1 (0.51%)
EU - Council	Population	20.0	3.5	23.5	23.5	0
	Votes	1 + veto	1 + veto	2 + veto	1 + veto	1 (3.34%)
EU - Parliament		32	11	43	36-37	6-7 (0.80-0.92%)

Source: Author's own work.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

Firstly, the tables above show that, with everything else remaining constant, the difference in votes between a single state and two states with that same population do exist, but they vary from close to nothing to remotely influential. Table 1 presents the calculations of voting sizes of the Albania-Kosovo case, both separated and unified (estimate). Albania and Kosovo, if both were members of the EU, would have eight and six MEPs (Member of European Parliament) respectively, while as a unified state they would be represented by twelve. The difference of two MEPs means the unification cost for these countries would be less than 0.3% of the total number of votes in the EP. In the Council, they would each have one vote as separate states, and one single vote as a unified one, but the population count would remain the same. The difference is equal to 3.33% of the total state votes, and zero in terms of population represented. Because the double majority voting procedure requires the approval of at least 55% of the Member States, but also that these Member States represent at least 65% of the total population of the EU, there seem to be no tangible potential influence in the Council of one additional state vote (without any added value for population count). In NATO every country has a veto power, which means that, either as one state or as two separate countries, Albania and Kosovo would have the same voting power. In the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations General Assembly, the difference between one unified Albanian state and Albania and Kosovo as independent states is less than 1% of the total votes. In the IMF and WB, Albania and Kosovo do not even belong in the same constituency, which would make it virtually impossible to support each other through votes.

Both Greece and Cyprus are Member States of all the International Organizations listed above, so the calculations are very straightforward. As per Table 3, if Greece and Cyprus support each other in the Council of Ministers, they will have two votes out 28, instead of the single vote that their unified state would have. There is no difference in population represented, while the one additional vote is equal to 3.5% of the total votes (28). In the European Parliament Greece is represented by 21 MEPs, and Cyprus by six. If these countries unified, they would still be represented by only 21 MEPs, but the difference of six MEPs is equal to only about 0.8% of the total. Like Albania and Kosovo, Greece and Cyprus are in different constituencies in the IMF and the World Bank, which means that they participate in two different voting procedures for the composition of the Boards of Directors. Even if taken together, however, the votes of Greece and Cyprus in the IMF and WB, as well as those in the UN General Assembly and the WTO are larger than the votes that a unified state would have, but only by less than 1% of the total number of votes in these organizations. In NATO, veto power makes the number of states representing Greeks irrelevant.

Germany is the only case that allows the calculation of the voting cost of a past unification. Today, Germany is represented by 96 MEPs, but if it had remained divided into two states, they would have a total of 100 (Table 2). The difference is equal to 0.53% of the total number of votes in the EP. In the Council,

Germans would be represented by one more state (3.34%), but the same population. In the UN General Assembly, NATO, the WTO, the IMF and the WB the situation is very similar to that of Albania-Kosovo and Greece-Cyprus. The number of votes each states has in the IMF and the WB, without subscriptions, is around 0.03% of the total. This means that two German states would have 0.03% more votes than the percentage Germany has now, but as Germany is one of the countries that appoints its representative to the Boards of Directors, the difference would be irrelevant in this case. The cost for German unification in terms of votes in IOs is four MEPs, 3.34% of the states' votes in the Council, and 0-1% in other international voting procedures.

As Table 4 shows, Romania and Moldova have the highest unification costs. In the EP, they would have six or seven more MEPs as separate members of the EU than as one unified country. While that is a considerable loss when compared with the total number of Romanian and potential Moldovan MEPs, when put as a percentage of the total EP seats (0.8-0.92%), it is clear it would be unlikely to turn the tables in any vote. Romania and Moldova also belong in the same consistency in the IMF and the WB. In this constituency, their combined votes account for around 0.84% greater than the voting percentage of a possible unified state. In the Board of Governors, the difference remains 0.03%. In NATO, WTO and the UN General Assembly, the difference is less than 1% of the total vote.

These four case studies clearly show that the difference in votes between one unified state and two independent ones would be only remotely, if at all, influential to the voting processes in international organizations. The most striking finding to support this conclusion is the difference expressed as a percentage, which rarely surpasses 1% of the total vote. Second, the effect of this difference is often limited due to the structure of each international organization and its decision-making process. One of those restrictions is veto power in NATO and sometimes in the European Council and in the Council of Ministers, which relies on the whole, rather than the majority, making the number of votes at the disposal practically irrelevant. Another is the double majority in the Council of Ministers, which confines the effect of having one additional state vote to only one of the two majorities required. Even more detrimental is the voting procedure in the IMF and the World Bank, where states cannot combine their votes for the Boards of Directors if they do not happen to be in the same constituencies. Finally, as noted above, although a certain degree of cultural or ethnic solidarity can be observed in international organizations, there is no guarantee that these states will always support each other to combine their vote powers.

Conclusions

Thus, to return to the original research question, does an argument based on voting power consideration hold against ethnonationalist claims for national unification of countries dominated by the same ethnic group? An analysis of some major IO-s gives very weak empirical evidence for such claims. Voting in international organizations has had an increasing impact in recent decades, especially in the EU. But do these votes turn the tables of the cost/benefit analysis when states consider unification or secession? The idea that states

might refrain from national unification in order to retain or enhance their international position with, more votes in international organizations at their disposal, ignores more traditional ways of exerting influence or power in foreign affairs, which often bypass international organizations, and it fails to take into account states' non-voting influence within these organizations. Furthermore, for the total number of votes to be higher than that of a unified country, the separate states are expected to join their votes, which is not always necessarily the case. Finally, the whole idea rests on the claim that the difference in votes is quite substantial, which this paper has found largely unfounded. The votes in various international organizations might have grown increasingly efficient (from unanimity to QMV), but representation and vote weighting now usually undermines the 'one country-one vote' principle. In fact, in most cases the number of states is not equal, and sometimes not even related, to the vote weighting in international organizations.

From the four cases analyzed in this study, the Romania-Moldova case seems to be the most negatively affected, in this aspect, by a hypothetical unification, especially in the number of their European Parliament representatives, but even this change would have very little chance of decisiveness in an EP vote. The most important impact would be manifested by the potential voting of two countries in the Council of the EU, although even in this case the difference is only 3.34%. Therefore, even as international organizations build on their already crucial role in providing regulated processes and mechanisms to channel multilateral interstate negotiations, and votes in international organizations might represent greater costs in the future, we can expect any existing efforts for national unification or secession to remain virtually unaffected.

As a final note, this paper holds no normative claims and does not represent a normative argument for the national unification of countries sharing the same dominant ethnic groups. Often, historical legacies, other relevant demographic dynamics and international alignments might make the prospect of a peaceful and successful change of borders impossible. The paper takes issue only with a single argument, and tests it against the analysis of voting power realities in some major international organizations. As votes in international organizations such as the EU gain prominence, future reconsiderations of the argument presented here would be of particular interest in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the political costs and benefits associated with unification and secession.

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