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Rules of Recognition? Explaining
Diplomatic Representation in the Long
Nineteenth Century.

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Rules of Recognition?

Explaining Diplomatic Representation in the Long Nineteenth Century¹

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the establishment of diplomatic representation as a measure of *de facto* recognition by other state units, and to explain its causes in the “long 19th century” (1817-1914). The premise of the paper is that, at least before the advent of broad-ranging legitimizing international organizations such as the League of Nations or the UN in the 20th century, sending a diplomatic mission to another country can be interpreted as an act of “*de facto* recognition.” Drawing on an expanded and updated version of the COW diplomatic exchange data (Bayer 2006), the paper then explores the underlying drivers of dyadic such acts of recognition. When and why did some countries establish diplomatic links to some other countries but not others? Preliminary findings show that recognition of other states was in the 19th century based on at least one more general principle: that of recognizing other *de facto* states. Other than that, it can best be explained by regime affinity combined with strategic and self-interested behavior, where states recognize others based on prestige, signaling and economic national interest.

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I Introduction

In April, 1782, the Dutch Republic, as second only to France, recognized the United States of America by accepting John Adams as minister plenipotentiary, that is, as a diplomat resident in the country. In failed attempts to gain recognition from Britain, the envoys of the United Provinces of Venezuela in 1811 were denied admittance to London and Washington. Russia were among the first to recognize the Kingdom of Italy by returning its diplomatic envoy to Turin in mid-1862 (Fabry 2010, 33, 52, 54, 91). As these examples testify, the act of dispatching or receiving a diplomatic representative to or from another country is an act of wider significance (Hall & Jönsson 2005). Symbolic or superficial at face value, it conveys the status of recognition. Without such status, a state cannot carry out international relations and will stand the constant risk of being eradicated or extinguished from the map.

The purpose of this paper is threefold. The first is to relate the literature on state recognition in international relations theory to the concept of sovereignty and thereby the discussion of “statehood” or “stateness” in the literature on state-making within comparative politics. I shall argue that the extent to which a state is recognized by other states reflects the degree to which that state enjoys the status of external sovereignty in the international system (Finer 1997, 2f; Jönsson and Hall 2005, 126; Fabry 2010, 7). Being recognized is in this sense a dimension of state-making; it is constitutive of what it means to *be* or *become* a state. Unlike the traditional constitutive theory of recognition advocated by certain scholar of international law, however, this conception of recognition as constitutive is not fixed to a binary distinction between either being or not being recognized. Similar to Bremer (2003), I shall propose that states can be more or less recognized; recognition, and hence external or international sovereignty, is a matter of degree.

Second, I will purport to measure recognition by looking at diplomatic representation during the “long 19th century” (ca 1789-1914). Diplomatic recognition will thus serve as my proxy for *de facto* state recognition. This is not to argue that dispatching and receiving diplomatic envoys is (or was) the sole mode of international recognition. Signing treaties or diffusing declaratory statements are other, probably equally fundamental, means through which a state can enact its recognition of another state (Fazal 2007). What makes diplomatic representation preferable as a lens to pry into the black box of

recognition is the fact that it is observable, particularly over long stretches of time.² And although not a necessary condition, it does arguably work as a sufficient condition for recognition. This would arguably be particularly be the case during the long 19th century, recently exposed as a century in which world politics experienced one of its greatest transformations ever (Buzan and Lawson 2012, 2015; Osterhammel 2014). What sets the 19th century apart in terms of modes of recognition is that, despite foundational examples such as the European Concert (Schroeder 1986, 1994; Mitzen 2013), there was no global institution such as the League of Nations or UN to provide international recognition of states (Singer and Small 1966). This implies that acts of recognition undertaken by individual states can be attributed greater significance.

Thirdly, I shall explore the determinants of recognition. Why is it that some states choose to dispatch diplomatic emissaries to some countries but not to others, at different points in time? Did this practice follow certain established rules, such that it can be explained, or was it a haphazard or unstructured process? Following Fabry (2010), I will thus attempt to uncover such rules by studying diplomatic representation as a practice evolving over time. Unlike Fabry (2010), however, I will attempt this uncovering by drawing on statistical methods, looking at the determinants of diplomatic recognition in a directed dyadic dataset of 85 state units at 21 time point between 1817 and 1914. This empirical investigation draws on Neumayer (2008) and Kinne (2014), but extends their analysis back in time and also looks into hitherto unstudied determinants. By studying the act of recognition in a network of relations, this paper thus also contributes to the nascent literature on network analysis in international relations (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009), as well as “relationalism” more generally (Jackson and Nexon 1999; Nexon 2009).

In brief, I find that recognition of other states in the international system was in the 19th century at least based on one general “rule”: that of recognizing other *de facto* states. Other than that, it can best be explained by regime affinity combined with strategic and self-interested

² Although Fazal (2007) uses data on treaties to update the Correlates of War criteria for membership in the interstate system, she only considers treaties signed with Britain or France, and even this seems to have required on considerable archival work to unearth (2007, n. 21, p. 249). To the best of my knowledge, there exist no standard list of international treaties among a global set of geopolitical entities comparable to the sources on diplomatic representation described below.

behavior, where states recognize others based on prestige, signaling and economic national interest.

The paper is organized as follows. I start by elucidating the connection between recognition and state making (section 2). I then present my theoretical argument as to what might affect why a state recognizes another (section 3), followed by data and research design (section 4) and the first preliminary empirical results (section 4). I end by discussing some possible next steps for this paper (section 5).

II Recognition, Sovereignty and the State

The concept of recognition has for a long time been derided by a conceptual dispute among scholars of international law. According to one conception, termed the *declaratory* theory of recognition, the act of recognition as such has no legal status or consequences. For the purpose of accounting for whether a state exists as a legal category or not, according to this theory, recognition is neither here nor there. A state instead comes into existence on account of living up to certain internationally established conventions such as the Montevideo criteria (permanent population, defined territory, government and capacity to enter relations with other states; see, e.g., Fazal 2007, 14). According to the opposite view, however, recognition by other states is a key criterion for being defined as a state in the international system. This, the constitutive theory of recognition, thus argues that until there is international recognition, there is no state (Jönsson and Hall 2005, 125-6; Fabry 2010; Agné 2013; Bartelson 2013).³

I shall propose to argue in favor of the constitutive theory of recognition, but partly based on a body of literature located outside mainstream international relations. In the foreground stands a question as ancient as the study of politics itself: what is a state? Following Nettl (1968), I argue that this is not an either or question, nor is it a question of variation along a single dimension. The degree of “stateness” (or “statehood”, which I for practical purposes use as a synonym) can vary by

³ As Agné (2013) points out, there is also a more novel literature on recognition within the field of international political sociology (e.g., Lindemann and Ringmar 2011). I agree with Agné (2013, 100-3) in arguing that the very openness (others would say vagueness) in arguments about what constitutes an act of recognition (or non-recognition) within this field makes it less useful for present purposes: to assess the determinants of specific *acts* of recognition.

degree, and in several dimensions. One such dimension is of course Weber's (1978) stress on the monopoly of violence within a bounded territory, but as Levi (2002) argues, this is a feature which can be fulfilled to varying degrees, not a categorical either/or condition. My argument is similar when it comes to recognition by other states. Whereas the Weberian aspect concerns the state's capacity to project power domestically, however, recognition implies autonomy from external state actors. Both can be satisfied to varying degree, and both are arguably equally important in establishing the extent to which a particular polity or unit in the international system is or should be considered a "state" (Bremer 2003).

Now, I am obviously not the first to make this argument (cf. Lindvall and Teorell 2016). Samuel Finer (1997, 2-3), for one, in his grand history of government throughout the history of mankind, takes the fact of being "recognized by other similarly constituted states" as one of the defining criteria of a state. Similarly, Jönsson and Hall (2005, 126), writing within the tradition of international relations, argue that "a state's existence depends in large measure on the collective judgment of its peers." What connects these two strands of literature, and the domestic versus international dimension of state-making, is the concept of sovereignty. As has been repeatedly pointed out, sovereignty has both an internal and an external dimension. *Internal* sovereignty means "supremacy over all other authorities within that territory and population," whereas *external* sovereignty denotes "not supremacy but independence of outside authorities" (Bull 1977, cited in Krasner 1999, 47; also see Hinsley 1986, 158). Fabry (2010) spells out the connection most eloquently:

Sovereignty, just like state borders, has developed into both a national and international category: it simultaneously pertains to the state and to the society of states... The nexus linking the "inside" (or the internal aspect of sovereignty) with the "outside" (its external aspect) is recognition. State recognition is thus a constitutive, foundational practice of modern international society (p. 7).

In what follows, I will go even further by arguing that the relationship between the internal and external aspect of state-making may even be causal in nature, in that international recognition is oftentimes granted or withheld on the basis of an assessment of domestic sovereignty. This leads us to the question of what explains recognition.

III What Affects Recognition?

In theorizing the act of extending recognition to another state, the first issue to ponder is who makes the decision. After all, a state as such cannot act or make decisions; someone has to make the decision in the name of the state. Although the actual decision-making process is most likely more complicated, I will here make the simplifying assumption that the ultimate decision of whether to recognize another state can only be made at the apex of the state's decision-making machinery. In other words, I will assume that the decision is up to the state's executive branch (cf. Fabry 2010, 8).

I will then explore four different but not incompatible grounds on which we may expect this decision to be made. We may call these four: *principle*, *affinity*, *strategic adaptation* and (national) *economic interest*. Let us explore each in turn.

To base the decision on *principle* is to refer to some formal or informal legal principle. I am here fortunate enough to be able to draw directly on Fabry's (2010) excellent treatment of the norms or criteria adhered to in the practice of state recognition since the American and French revolutions. At around the turn of the 19th century, Fabry argues, "[u]he only acceptable method of transferring sovereignty or territory was by freely given consent of the legitimate crown." What Fabry then convincingly shows is that this traditional principle of recognition, which he calls "dynastic legitimism," during the course of the 19th century gave way to a new principle based on the idea of *de facto* independence of the state in question. This principle was crafted by England and the United States in relation to demands for recognition by the newly formed Latin American states. It then took hold also among the old monarchies in the recognition of newly formed European states, such as Belgium, Greece and then on the Balkans (cf. Haldén 2013). What the principle claimed, in essence, was that a state acquired a natural right of recognition to the extent that it was able to effectively act like a state. This in particular implied the existence of an effective government in control of its own territory, in terms of having been able to successfully cast off both former (colonial) forces and other potential domestic parties claiming right of possession to substantial parts of that territory (Fabry 2010, 10, 30-1, 68-9). The principle of *de facto* statehood thus comes very close to Weber's definition of a state as one that claims a monopoly of

force over a territory, and hence to what Jackson and Rosberg (1982) famously called “empirical statehood.”

We may thus, based on this principle, form our first hypothesis:

H1: States are more likely to be recognized, the more they are in control of their own territory.

It is noteworthy that this first hypothesis takes no heed of any properties of the recognizing party. What matters is only the characteristics of the state being recognized; it is in other words a monadic conjecture. The second ground on which recognition may be extended, *affinity*, is however explicitly dyadic in nature. This notion posits that like units tend to recognize like units. Some further clarifications are however in order as to what relevant properties might define “likeness.” “Ideological affinity,” argues Neumayer (2008, 231), “typically leads to friendly relations as sharing a particular view of the world generates a sense of belonging to the same group.” During the cold war, for example, we might expect Western countries to share similar standards, but Communist countries other standards, and this sharing of standards in itself could enhance the probability that one state recognizes another within each group. But what would be the relevant “standards,” shared or not, that most importantly affects affinity during the long 19th century? As today, one thing that most likely mattered was domestic regime type. Monarchs would for example be more likely to recognize other monarchs, presidents of republics other republics, and so on, but as pointed out by Osterhammel (2014, 579), monarchy was still in the late 19th century the modal form of government. A more pertinent regime dimension seems to have been the degree to which there were checks on executive power (ibid., 575; also see Congleton 2011). Adherents of liberal-constitutionalism would thus be more likely to recognize other similar adherents, as opposed to tyrants or usurper states that oppress their population or do not respect a constitution.

My second hypothesis is thus:

H2: A state is more likely recognize another state, the more similar their domestic regime.

The third ground on which practices of state recognition may occur pertains to *strategic adaptation*, or more precisely: signaling and prestige in the state system. I here follow closely to Kinne's (2014) theory and argument about diplomatic recognition, but by generalizing it to (a) the act of recognition in general, as well as to (b) the long 19th century. Assume, to begin with, that recognition is costless and that every state has perfect information about the nature of all other states. Even in such a state of the world, we should expect states to condition recognition on the recognition of other states. This could first be argued with respect to the convention of reciprocity: that you recognize a state by which you are yourself recognized. But even beyond that simple statement, there is a strategic element to recognition. First, states should prefer to recognize other states that are more prestigious, and a simple way of determining prestige in the international system is to assess how widely recognized the other state is. Great powers, for example, are often recognized by multiple others; that is in part what lends them prestige in the system. A simple implication of this is a bandwagon effect, through which even more states should recognize these great powers in an effort to share parts of that prestige (or at least to avoid missing out on it). Secondly, recognition and non-recognition works as a signal in the state system. By extending recognition to a newly formed state, for example, you thereby signal to your partners (those with whom you already experience mutual recognition) that this is a preferred cause of action. By implication, the more states that recognize a state, the more likely that other partner states will also extend recognition to that state.

As argued by Kinne (2014), this argument makes even more sense if one assumes that recognition is costly and that the decision to recognize another country is made under information uncertainty. States face resource constraints and must for that reason be selective in whom they recognize. "At the same time, they lack valuable information about [what acts of recognition] are likely to yield benefits and which are instead likely to provoke retaliation from third parties" (Kinne 2014, 247). For both these reasons, states are likely to pick up cues from the behavior of other states in determining whom to recognize. The 19th century certainly fits the assumption of costly recognition. By the early 19th century, the world's physical infrastructure was still made up of horsepower and sailing ships. Although that changed dramatically over the course of the century with the unraveling of the industrial revolution, the time it took for personnel and information to travel was still far longer than in the 20th century. In Buzan and Lawson's (2015, 69) words:

“A journey half way around the world would have taken a year or more in the sixteenth century, five months in 1812, one month in 1912, and less than a day in the contemporary world.” These slow means of communication also inserted a substantial amount of information uncertainty.

At the most general level, my third hypothesis is thus:

H3: To what extent a state recognizes another state depends on the recognition of other states.

The three grounds hitherto referred to has been introduced in increasing order of the extent to which self-interest is involved. The first hypothesis pays no explicit attention to national self-interest at all. The second could be based on self-interest, but not necessarily so (affinity, after all, could be a pure emotional mechanism). The third hypothesis does refer to national interest, but not defined in material terms. “Prestige” is largely a symbolic asset (Dafoe et al. 2014); “benefits” can be defined in other than economic terms. What distinguishes the fourth and final ground on which recognition can be extended is exactly this: it refers not only to national interest, but the national *economic interest*. Simply put, a pertinent reason to recognize another country could be to further economic interactions with that country. Reflecting on 19th century developments, Anderson (1993, 107) thus argues that “with the non-European world in general ... Europe’s relationship was still very largely an economic one based on the increasing flows of intercontinental trade” (also see Hamilton and Langhorne 2011, 121-4). Although it has been argued, at least on post-WWII data, that “trade follows the flag” rather than the opposite (Neumeyer 2008, 230), we could thus for at least the historical period consider the conjecture that:

H4: A state is more likely recognize another state, the more that serves the state’s economic interests.

IV Data and Measurement

The core measurement idea underlying this paper is that recognition in the international system can be proxied by the sending of diplomatic envoys. State A is assumed to recognize state B if state A has a

diplomatic envoy at the level of chargé d'affaires or higher present in state B. The data is based on the Correlates of War (COW) “Diplomatic Exchange Data Set” (Bayer 2006), but complements, revises and extends that data to other state units and for relevant states units back in time.

The COW data captures diplomatic representation at the level of chargé d'affaires, minister, and ambassador between members of the Correlates of War interstate system from 1817-2005 at roughly 5-year intervals. The basic coding unit is state-dyads, so the COW data records at what level France is represented by a diplomatic mission in Brazil and vice versa; at what level Sweden is represented by a diplomatic mission in Russia and vice versa; and so on, at each given time point. This was one of the very first empirical COW projects, initially designed as a way of measuring status order in the international system. As a direct result of this coding project, moreover, COW settled on a rule for what counts as “system membership” (prior to 1920, when the introduction of League of Nations changed the practice): a population larger than 500,000 and to have diplomatic representation at the level of chargé d'affaires or higher from London and Paris (Singer and Small 1966). This rule has then stuck through the years, and is still the criterion for even being included in the COW data in the 19th century. This at times produces some odd results. Argentina, for example, grew out of the United Provinces of Rio de La Plata, established in 1810, first declaring independence in 1816. But since both France and England did not establish diplomatic representation in Buenos Aires until 1841, Argentina does not “exist” according to the COW system rules before that year. The first rationale for revising these data is thus to complete the dyadic data on diplomatic representation also among state units who have not yet received a diplomatic mission from London and Paris. The extended sample covers 85 state units chosen so as to include all those that were (a) sizeable (population > 250,000), (b) sovereign in the pre-1900 era (either in the formal-juridical or the de facto sense), and that (c) match present-day state units, using Gleditsch and Ward (1999) as our main point of departure.⁴

⁴ This is the sample of the “Historical Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)” project, which with some exceptions plus additions comprises the set of 74 states (counting Great Colombia and Colombia as one) that gained independence prior to 1900 according to the list provided by Gleditsch and Ward (1999). Five Gleditsch and Ward (1999) states were omitted, two because they in 2016 (when the project started) had not been funded for data collection by the twentieth-century V-Dem project (Luxembourg and Oman), and three because they do not match any contemporary state entities (Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Zanzibar). In turn, Historical V-Dem covers an additional 16 state entities not covered by Gleditsch and Ward (1999), the inclusion of which is based

The underlying data is, as was the case for COW, drawn on the *Almanach de Gotha*, which includes lists of all diplomatic missions, in principle covering the globe but in practice most likely dependent on sources or correspondents in major European languages. This turned out to be a second rationale for (re)collecting these data: the discovery of a fair amount of inaccuracies in the correlates of war data (for state units already covered). As long as one of the two parties are of European or American origin, the *Almanach* is probably fairly accurate. But the extent to which “non-Western” (in this wider sense) state units recognized each other is probably underreported. This is an issue we shall probably want to return to in later iterations of this data collection project.⁵

In relation to the original COW data (Bayer 2006), we should expect two major differences in the pattern of diplomatic representation evolving during the long 19th century. First, since our new list of state units is much larger than that of COW, we should expect to record more frequent instances of diplomatic recognition overall. Second, however, since our new list is based on a minimum threshold of domestic, but not international, sovereignty, quite a few of the new state units were dependencies or even colonies, implying they were not in control of their own external relations (cf. Griffiths and Butcher 2013). This implies that out of the total *possible* (asymmetric) pairwise relationships among all state units, we should actually observe a lower share of ties signifying recognition. As it were, the “mass” of recognition should thus be higher, but its “density” lower, as compared to the COW data.

on three different criteria. First, we include seven states that match contemporary states and that wielded enough *de facto* domestic sovereignty to be treated as a state unit despite the fact that their international sovereignty was compromised prior to “independence” (Norway, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Hungary and Yemen). This group also includes two “precursor” states of contemporary states whose borders do not quite fit the latter (Nejd/Saudi Arabia, Bukhara/Uzbekistan). Second, we include the two largest colonies by population: British India and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), both of which had considerable domestic autonomy. Third, due to a particular extra funding source, we include five pre-unification German principalities that did not meet Gleditsch and Ward's (1999) population criterion (Brunswick, Hamburg, Oldenburg, Nassau and Saxe-Weimar). In total, this means we are covering 85 state units (74-5+16=85)

⁵ These is in effect a potential doubly Eurocentric bias to the data: on the hand, as mentioned, the source (*Almanach de Gotha*) is Euro-centric; on the other the list of state units, by excluding units that cannot be matched with present-day borders, leaves out a large number of pre-colonial states (cf. Griffiths and Butcher 2013).

Figure 1. Mass and density of diplomatic recognition, 1817-1914

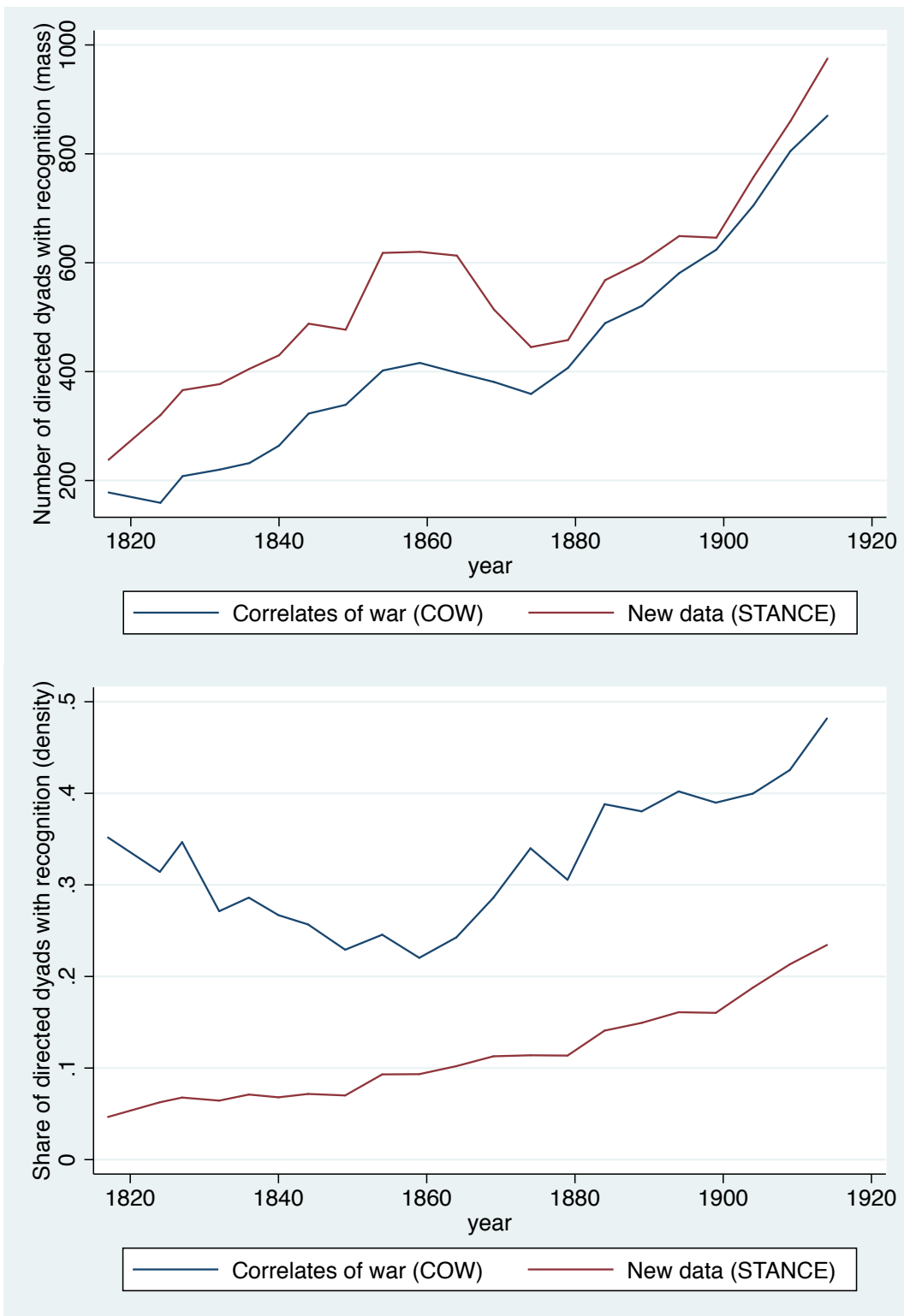


Figure 1 shows that both expectations are born out by the data. The new data set, with its wider inclusion criterion, records far more acts of recognition than the original COW data, particularly in the beginning of the observations period when the COW restriction that a state has to

have received a diplomatic mission from both France and Britain has its widest impact (upper panel). On the other hand, out of the possible dyadic ties, a smaller share are connected (lower panel). The development of the density of diplomatic recognition also shows diverging trends depending on the data in use. According to COW, density actually decreased until the mid-19th century, but this is most likely due to the fact that fewer German principalities prior to unification are recognized as state units by the COW criteria. According to the fuller data set, density is continually on the rise all the way up to 1914.

To test the four hypothesis on the rules by which states recognize each other, I also need systematic data on explanatory variables. Starting with the principle of recognizing *de facto* states, one aspect of this is already picked up by the criteria for inclusion in the sample of state units. To be even considered as a potential object of recognition, a state must “exist” in the minimal sense of having, for example, defined borders (even if imprecise or under dispute); a capital, that is, a single locus of claimed sovereignty; a person or body that exercises executive powers – that is, a head of state and/or head of government; as well as self-rule, at least with respect to domestic affairs (Coppedge et al. 2017a). But even with this set of minimal criteria fulfilled, there is arguably variation in the extent to which a state can claim control over its entire territory. Our first measure to test *H1* will therefore be a direct measure of exactly this, drawing on expert assessments in the so-called historical Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project (Knutsen et al. 2017), an extension of the contemporary V-Dem data (2017b).⁶ The extent to which a central government was in full control of its territory might however not have been fully observable to external parties, particularly not during the 19th century. A signal that is more likely to have come through is the occurrence of a civil war, particularly one incurring a high number of battle-related deaths. This is therefore my second indicator to test *H1*, with data taken from the COW project (Sarkees and Wayman 2010).⁷

In order to test *H2*, we could (as noted) rely on a wide array of potential characteristics to measure affinity between two state units. The one we have judged to be most pertinent during the long 19th century is however the regime’s degree of “polyarchy” (Dahl 1971), indicating the

⁶ The question posed to one country-expert per country unit was: “Over what percentage (%) of the territory does the [state](#) have effective control?”

⁷ More precisely, the civil war dummy is recorded as 1 if a civil war broke out in the time period between the last observation and the current or if it was still ongoing.

extent to which multiparty elections with universal suffrage are held, in combination with freedoms of organization and expression. The measure is taken from the historical V-Dem data (Knutsen et al. 2017). Since H2 is a dyadic hypothesis, we should expect a significant and negative effect of the *difference* in polyarchy scores between state A and B, while controlling for the level in state B (such as that democracies are more likely to recognize other democracies, autocracies other autocracies).

In testing *H3* I will adhere closely to Kinne (2014) in developing three measures of strategic recognition. The first is simply the degree to which the recipient state is already being recognized, as measured by the share of other states already recognizing the country in question; this indicator is supposed to capture the effect of prestige. The second is the number of other states, which a state already recognizes, that in turn already recognize the recipient state in question; this indicator is designed to capture signaling. To clarify, assume that there are three states (A, B and C) in a system. State A already recognizes state B, but not C, and state B already recognizes state C. According to the signaling hypothesis, this signals to state A that it should also recognize state C, since that would make state A's behavior consistent with its partner B. More generally, the more such third party states a state has that already recognizes another state, the more likely a state will be to also recognize that state.⁸ The third way in which I capture strategic recognition is by simply looking at whether the state in question is already being recognized by the other state. As Neumeyer (2008) and Kinne (2014) point out, the convention of reciprocating diplomatic missions in modern times is so strong as to almost wash out the effect of any other covariates. We cannot know for sure however whether this was also the case in the 19th century, when resource constraints on smaller states may have forced in particular smaller states to delay their reciprocation (cf. Singer and Small 1973, 586). Since all three indicators of strategic recognition are potentially highly endogenous (by in various ways including the dependent variable in their measurement), and since they also by logic implies a temporal dimension, we have lagged them one time period.

Our test of *H4* is the one where we run into the worst problems of data scarcity. Our most direct proxy is bilateral trade: the sum of imports

⁸ One could also consider defining a partner state as one that recognizes (rather than as is being recognized) by the first state (cf. Kinne 2014, n. 25, p. 251). I have still not had the time to explore this possibility, but since around 75 % of all states in my sample on average reciprocates recognition, it should make little difference to the results.

and exports between the two countries in question expressed as the log of its value in current US dollars (Barbieri, Keshk and Pollins 2012). This data series only starts in the 1870s, however, and it covers preciously few observations even in them time period after that (overall around 98 percent of all country dyads in our dataset has missing data). To avoid endogeneity concerns (that trade follows the flag rather than vice versa), we again lag this variable one period. Somewhat broader coverage is offered by data on the size of the countries economy, as measured by the log of its GDP (data from Maddison 2001). This is however a very crude measure of the potential economic interests at stake in state recognition. Results pertaining to this hypotheses must thus be interpreted with extra caution.

There is finally reason to contemplate the need for control variables. Although the hypothesized four grounds for recognition are fairly encompassing, other non-random drivers could of course exist. One particularly important such could be related to costs and resources, particularly when considering the empirical indicator of recognition at hand, that is, the sending of diplomatic envoys. As argued by Neumeyer (2008), geographic proximity both raises the benefits from diplomatic representation and lowers the cost. That diplomatic recognition thus should be decreasing in relation to the distance between the two parties is almost tautologically true. Still, we need to assess the other hypotheses while taking this constraint into account (data from Kristian Gleditsch: <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data-5.html>). The same goes for the standard IR proxy for “power”: the Correlates of War project’s Composite Index of National Capacity, which comprises a set of indicators on military capacity, population size and economic modernization (Singer, Bremer and Stuckey 1972). That state power in the international system is both a reflection of and reflects upon the decision to dispatch diplomatic envoys is again almost true by definition. The fact that the index also has a materialistic bent and includes proxies for the size of the economy implies that it should work as a further control for resource constraints among the sending parties.

V Results

In order to test the four hypothesis, I will rely on logistic regression analysis with the data ordered as directed dyads, so that each pair of states in the system is entered twice at each time point: whether A recognizes B and whether B recognizes A. To correct for the extent to which a country's decision to recognize another country is time-dependent, I have estimated standard errors clustered on state dyads. The results of a first cut at the data are presented in Table 1. To sensitize the results to the missing data problems, each hypothesis will first be tested independently without any controls. I then proceed by successively adding the control variables and the proxies for previously tested hypotheses.

The first model shows that, as argued by Fabry (2010), recognition in the 19th century was at least in part based on having acquired the status of *de facto* independence. Simply put, the larger share of its territory a state controls, the more likely that it will be recognized by other states. Similarly, and also statistically significant, states ravaged by civil war are less likely to be recognized. The former but not the latter result holds even when controlling for distance between and the power status of the two parties (model 2). The substantive effect is at least moderate: the likelihood of recognition increases by 16 percentage points when comparing a country such as Colombia, at times in control of little over 20 percent of its territory, to a country in full control of 100 percent of its territory (estimate based on model 2).

We next explore the extent to which affinity affects recognition (model 3). It turns out that, as expected, the larger the (absolute) difference in polyarchy scores between A and B, the less likely it becomes that A will recognize B (and vice versa). This thus both means that closed autocracies were less likely to recognize more liberalized regimes, and that the latter were less likely to recognize closed autocracies. The effect of however not very substantial: increasing the difference in polyarchy between two states by one standard deviation (.137 on the 0-1 V-Dem polyarchy scale) only reduces the likelihood of recognition by 2 percentage points. Net of this affinity effect, which also holds when controlling for distance and power (model 4), there is also a significant tendency recognize more liberalized states. In this sense, autocracy in itself was a barrier to being recognized in the international system of the 19th century.

Table 1. Determinants of Diplomatic Recognition, 1817-1914

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Control over territory (in b)	0.013 ^{***} (0.002)	0.013 ^{***} (0.002)				-0.004 (0.003)		0.014 (0.009)
Civil war (in b)	-0.927 ^{***} (0.061)	-0.049 (0.077)						
Degree of polyarchy (of b)			3.235 ^{***} (0.277)	2.589 ^{***} (0.353)		0.717* (0.429)		-1.647 (1.123)
Difference in polyarchy (between a and b)			-1.461 ^{***} (0.325)	-0.880 ^{**} (0.373)		-0.439 (0.416)		-1.956 (1.220)
Extent of recognition (of a) at $t-1$					0.836 ^{***} (0.312)	0.487 (0.556)		1.863 (1.642)
Extent of recognition of b among a's partners at $t-1$					0.411 ^{***} (0.009)	0.268 ^{**} (0.012)		0.234 ^{***} (0.040)
Reciprocation at $t-1$					2.788 ^{***} (0.071)	2.158 ^{***} (0.096)		1.061 ^{***} (0.339)
Trade volume (logged) at $t-1$							0.625 ^{***} (0.055)	0.545 ^{***} (0.077)
Distance between capitals (logged)		-0.825 ^{***} (0.048)		-0.824 ^{***} (0.055)		-0.652 ^{***} (0.062)		-0.268 (0.177)
Power of a		12.074 ^{***} (1.067)		12.035 ^{***} (1.268)		5.856 ^{***} (1.494)		0.067 (3.085)
Power of b		17.254 ^{***} (1.197)		17.158 ^{***} (1.310)		13.198 ^{***} (1.201)		7.409 ^{**} (3.754)
Constant	-1.624 ^{***} (0.188)	4.587 ^{***} (0.460)	-2.186 ^{***} (0.055)	5.329 ^{***} (0.464)	-4.427 ^{***} (0.050)	2.168 ^{***} (0.586)	1.701 ^{***} (0.147)	-0.023 (1.493)
Observations	27677	18732	53190	14340	99752	14169	2482	2142
Pseudo R^2	0.044	0.247	0.033	0.256	0.607	0.553	0.169	0.385
Log likelihood	-16886.470	-9544.114	-21707.318	-7344.559	-13775.094	-4359.589	-514.786	-275.521
Wald's chi-square	240.310	577.922	178.238	436.944	6316.665	2000.340	130.297	123.673

Note: Entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard errors, clustered on dyads, in parentheses.

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

We now turn to the strategic interaction, where all hypothesized effects are statistically significant when controls are not in place (model 5). It should be noted that the overall explanatory performance of the model increases substantively once strategic interaction is accounted for. First, the more a state was already recognized in general at time $t-1$, the more likely it will be recognized at time t . Since it could be argued that this effect already picks up an aspect of “power” (as prestige), it may seem unsurprising that it drops from statistical significance when controlling for (material) power of the recipient country (model 6). The two other effects however remain robust to controls. The more a state was recognized by a state’s diplomatic partners (those whom it recognizes) at time $t-1$, the more likely it will be further recognized at time t . Imagine two countries whom the hypothetical state A have not yet recognized. One of these, state B, is also not recognized by any other state that A recognizes, while there are 8 other states, recognized by A, that also recognizes C. In this scenario, which is not entirely unrealistic given that the average extent of recognition of another country among a state’s diplomatic partners is around 8, the probability for state A recognizing C is 27 percentage points higher than the probability of A recognizing B.

Reciprocation also exerts a strong effect already in the 19th century. The protocol of exchanging diplomatic envoys symmetrically had thus to a large extent already evolved. Overall the support for *H3* is strong and consistent.

We need to exercise some caution in interpreting the results for *H1* and *H2* when assessing *H3* simultaneously. As can be seen, neither control over territory nor affinity are in model 6 statistically significant, and the level of polyarchy in the recipient country is only marginally significant. However, this does not have to imply that de facto statehood or regime affinity were not drivers of recognition. The reason is that de facto control over territory, as well as regime affinity, could be what was driving the recognition by other states at time $t-1$. Strategic interaction could thus be part of the mechanism explaining how the de facto principle spread through the state system. In a similar vein, affinity could be a precondition for strategic interaction. (Or, in technical parlance, to control for *H3* when assessing *H1* and *H2* could incur post-treatment bias.)

We finally test *H4*, although as previously noted the data is very limited (in our estimation sample only covering 46 countries in 1874-1914). The effect of trade as such is both positive and statistically significant, and almost unaffected by the inclusion of controls (models 7-8). The

resulting sample of observations however almost exclusively includes states that all fully recognize each other (the mean density increases from .11 in the general sample to .94 in this restricted sample). It should thus come as little surprise that the substantive effect of trade volume is rather limited. An increase from 1 to 2 in the log of trade volume (close to the average of 2.37), which is roughly tantamount to an increase from 2.71 to 7.38 thousand US dollars, only increase the chances of one state recognizing the other by 2.0 percentage points. This also implies that we should not expect much of an effect from the other variables in this restricted sample. The fact that the two strategic effects actually hold water is rather telling of their degree of robustness.

As far as our control variables are concerned, they fare exactly as expected, with the exception of the extremely limited sample model (8). That is, states have a tendency *not* to dispatch diplomatic envoys to states that are far away. And power cuts both ways: more powerful states are more likely to both receive and dispatch diplomatic missions.

VI Discussion

In terms of statistical significance, all four hypotheses seem to be supported. States are more likely to be recognized, the more they are in control of their own territory (*H1*). They also tend to recognize states that are similar to them themselves in terms of their regime (*H2*). To what extent a state recognizes another state also depends on the recognition of other states (*H3*). Finally, a state is more likely to recognize another state, the more that serves the state's economic interests (*H4*), at least as proxied by the amount of trade among the two states.

The preliminary results point toward a series of issues that need to be dealt with in future iterations of this paper. The first is to try to get a handle on the extent of and consequences of the Eurocentric bias present in the data. Recall that there are two sources of this: on the one hand the units included in the sample, on the other hand the data source as such (*Almanach de Gotha*). The first is easier to deal with, since results can be rerun on the smaller subset of the sample that was already present in the Correlates of War version of the data, as well as the larger subset that is included in Griffiths and Butcher (2013). More problematic

is how to correct for the possible sources of error in the underlying data. At present I can only hope to attempt this on a case-by-case basis.

Second, related to this is thus huge amounts of missing data in the explanatory variables. The irony has probably not escaped the reader that a move away from the correlates of war sample ended up with that exact same sample as soon as explanatory variables were brought into the picture. This problem can partly be amended with the help of multiple imputation. But for some hypotheses, most importantly the one on economic interest, other possible data sources might have to be explored.

Third, as became apparent in the testing of multiple hypothesis at once, I need a clearer theory on direct and indirect effects. Most importantly, the extent to which the strategic effects merely proxy for the mechanisms of the other more substantive effects, particularly when those derive from the recipient country, need further exploration.

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