DE FACTO STATES AND INTER-STATE MILITARY
CONFLICTS

A Ph.D. Dissertation

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To My Family

DE FACTO STATES AND INTER-STATE MILITARY CONFLICTS

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of

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ABSTRACT

DE FACTO STATES AND INTER-STATE MILITARY CONFLICTS

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The end of the Cold War has given rise to the number of non-state political actors such as *de facto* states. While scholarly attention has been given to the concept of sovereignty and to empirical analyses of *de facto* statehood, *de facto* states as influential non-state political actors remained theoretically under-studied. This dissertation tackles the research question of how an issue that *de facto* states causes affects the likelihood of conflict between a parent and an external state. I examine the "opportunity and willingness" pre-theoretical framework of Most and Starr (1989) in order to comprehend how *de facto* states cause inter-state military conflict. I argue that the process of fighting for *de facto* statehood and the outcome of becoming a *de facto* state both create opportunity for the parent and external states. Moreover, internal dynamics in a state are important to understand whether the states are willing to exploit the interaction opportunity *de facto* states generate. I especially examine regime type and levels of democracy in parent, external and *de facto* states and argue that when these are all democracies,

likelihood of militarized disputes decrease. Using the comparative method and most similar systems design, I analyze two cases: Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq, Turkey and South Ossetia, Georgia, Russia. Both cases support the arguments of the dissertation. I conclude with a brief summary and implications of the findings for future scholarship.

Keywords: De facto state, armed conflict, militarized dispute, Kurdistan Regional Government, South Ossetia, opportunity, willingness, democracy, democratization.

ÖZET

DE FACTO DEVLETLER VE ULUSLARARASI ASKERİ ÇATIŞMALAR

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Soğuk Savaş'ın bitişi ile beraber, *de facto* devletler gibi birçok devlet dışı siyasi aktörün sayısında artış olmuştur. Akademik ilgi egemenlik kavramına ve *de facto* devletlerin ampirik analizlerine odaklanırken etkili bir devlet dışı siyasi aktör olan *de facto* devletler kuramsal olarak daha az çalışılmıştır. Bu çalışma *de facto* devletlerin sebep olduğu sorunların ana devlet ile dış devlet arasındaki çatışma ihtimaline yapacağı etkileri çözümlemeye çalışmaktadır. *De facto* devletlerin, devletler arası çatışmaya yaptığı etkiyi anlamak için Most and Starr'ın (1989) "fırsat ve istek" ön-kuramsal çerçevesi incelenmektedir. Bu çalışmada, *de facto* devlet için verilen mücadele aşamasının ve *de facto* devletin kurulmasının hem ana hem de dış devlet için fırsat yarattığı iddia edilmektedir. Bunun ötesinde, devletlerin iç dinamikleri, onların *de facto* devletler tarafından yaratılan etkileşim fırsatlarını değerlendirip değerlendirmeyeceğini anlamamız için önemlidir. Bu tezde ana devlet, dış devlet ve *de facto* devletin rejim tipleri ve demokrasi seviyeleri özellikle ele alınmakta ve bu yapıların hepsinde demokrasi olduğunda

askeri çatışma ihtimalinin düşeceği düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışma, karşılaştırmalı yöntem ve benzer sistemler dizaynı tekniğini kullanarak Kürt Bölgesel Yönetimi, Irak ve Türkiye ile Güney Osetya, Rusya ve Gürcistan olay incelemelerini analiz etmektedir. Her iki olay incelemesi de çalışmanın argümanlarını desteklemektedir. Çalışma, kısa bir özet ve gelecek çalışmalardaki bulgulara ışık tutacak sonuçlar ile noktalanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *De facto* devlet, silahlı çatışma, askeri çatışma, Kürdistan Bölgesel Yönetimi, Güney Osetya, fırsat, istek, demokrasi, demokratikleşme.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concept of state sovereignty has been questioned since the end of the Cold War. However, the studies on sovereignty rather focus on how globalism weakens the traditional Westphalian understanding of state sovereignty. When Soviet Union and Yugoslavia disintegrated, complex federal structures of these states produced *de facto* states such as Nagorno-Qarabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria and Kosovo. On the other hand, the First Gulf War paved the way of *de facto* statehood for the Kurdish rebels in Iraq in 1991, which later established the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 2003. Consequently, the number of *de facto* states has sharply increased since the 1990s leading to sovereignty problems between *de facto* and parent states. While these developments increased the scholarly attention given to issues such as eroding sovereignty, empirical analyses of *de facto* statehood dominated the field. As a result, *de facto* states as influential non-state political actors remained theoretically under-studied.

De facto states are simply regarded as domestic sovereign political authorities functioning within a certain territory. Yet, they have no international legal recognition. On the other hand, parent states are political units that have international legal recognition. Nevertheless, these parent states are unable to

exercise authority over a particular region of their territory. The struggle between *de facto* and parent states is internationalized when an external state is influenced in negative or positive ways by the sovereignty problem between the first two actors. This struggle caused by the *de facto* state often lead to military conflicts between the parent and external states.

Grand theories of IR discipline do not focus on *de facto* states as a cause of war. Neither do the conflict studies scholars. As examined in the literature review in Chapter 2, grand theories have dealt with how non-state actors affect inter-state conflicts. However, *de facto* states have unique characteristics. They are state-like units but members of the international society do not recognize them as states. Therefore, conflict studies need to be supported with a theoretical framework that explains the role of *de facto* states in inter-state military conflicts. In this dissertation, I bridge the theoretical gap in the conflict studies literature as well as in grand theories.

This study aims to provide a theoretical framework for cases in which *de facto* states cause military conflict between states. Thus, in Chapter 2, I examine the "opportunity and willingness" pre-theoretical framework of Most and Starr (1989) in order to comprehend how *de facto* states cause inter-state military conflict. According to the "opportunity and willingness" approach, there are macro level factors, which represent opportunity and micro level factors, which represent willingness. Although, these micro and macro factors vary in

accordance with different contexts, the concepts opportunity and willingness remain in order to explain conflict.

The theoretical contribution of this dissertation to the international relations discipline is the application of the "opportunity and willingness" framework on inter-state conflicts, which are the products of non-state actors, in particular of *de facto* states. I argue that non-state actors such as *de facto* states are very important opportunity generators in military conflicts between states. There are two elements of the causal mechanism that I examine. The first stage is about the process, in which communal strife develops into a civil conflict to establish *de facto* statehood apart from the parent state. The second stage is the outcome of establishing a *de facto* state despite the resistance of the parent state. The capability of independent foreign policymaking of the established *de facto* state creates an opportunity for conflict between states.

In regards to willingness, once again the process and outcome matter. During the process of establishing a *de facto* state, democracy levels of parent state and external state determine whether states are willing to exploit the opportunities. While the struggle for becoming a *de facto* state continues, democracy level of the communal group is not relevant because communal groups are generally organized around an authoritarian leadership during the civil conflict. However, *de facto* states tend to have established political regimes when the process ends. Therefore, regime type becomes a determinant for their relations with the parent state and the external state. Consequently, the democracy level of

the *de facto* state also shapes the willingness of all the states in the triad. While I lay out several hypotheses in the next chapter, the most important argument is related to willingness: as the democracy level of *de facto*, parent and external states decreases, I expect military conflict to be more likely in the triad.

I use the theoretical underpinnings of Bueno de Mesquita (1999, 2003) to understand how regime type affects foreign policy decisions. According to Bueno de Mesquita's selectorate theory explained in detail in Section 2.4.2.2.1, leaders are constrained by the size of their winning coalition. While in democracies the winning coalition is large, in autocracies the size of the winning coalition is small. Thus, I argue that the leader's choice of initiating a conflict will change depending on the type of goods (public or private) that the leader has to provide to the winning coalition. It is less risky for autocracies to fight a war and stay in office than for democracies. Chapter 2 connects this theoretical argument to the willingness of parent, *de facto* and external states to escalate problems into militarized disputes, during the process and outcome stages.

Chapter 3 explains the research design, operationalizes the variables used for measuring opportunity and willingness and discusses case selection in detail. To test the relevance of the theoretical framework and the hypotheses derived from it, this dissertation uses the comparative method by implementing most similar systems design (Przeworski and Teune 1970) to the population of cases. The design leads to the selection of two triads: Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq-Turkey and South Ossetia-Georgia-Russia.

Chapter 4 examines to what extent the process and the outcome of the Kurdish communal strife caused Turkey and Iraq to experience militarized disputes. Accordingly, the Iraqi Kurdish insurgency, which lasted between 1932 and 2003, led to 15 Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs) between Turkey and Iraq. In this period, there are a total of 17 MIDs between Turkey and Iraq. That is to say, Iraqi Kurdish insurgency became the main conflict opportunity between Turkey and Iraq in this period. Moreover, the willingness of Turkey and Iraq to exploit the conflict opportunities stemming from the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq has been high. Although Turkish democratization process often fluctuated, as explained in detail in Section 4.1.1.4, Iraq has been a rather stable autocracy until 2003. In other words, Turkey and Iraq never had democratic governments at the same time in this period under analysis.

The outcome section of Chapter 4 shows that establishment of the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 generated several conflict opportunities between Turkey and Iraq. Between 2003-2009, Turkey and Iraq experienced 4 MIDs and all of these MIDs were related to the presence and actions of the *de facto* Kurdish state. In these years, Turkey had a relatively democratic regime while Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government were anocratic polities, which is a stage between autocracy and democracy. The relations between Turkey and Iraq inclined to ameliorate as the level of democracy increased in Iraq and KRG. Thus, no MID was experienced between Turkey and Iraq after March 2008. This case supports the hypotheses derived

from the theoretical framework and shows that first the Kurdish rebellion then the *de facto* state of KRG created an interaction opportunity between Turkey and Iraq. Moreover, the democracy level of the actors in the triad motivated the actors to solve their problems through conflict rather than cooperation.

Chapter 5 deals with the process and the outcome of the South Ossetian struggle for *de facto* statehood. The South Ossetian insurgency, which started in 1989 right before the collapse of Soviet Union, escalated in 1991 when Georgia became an independent state. The civil strife between the South Ossetian and the Georgian forces resulted in the intervention of Russia, which produced a MID between Russia and Georgia in 1992. This was the only MID that Russia and Georgia experienced during the process stage of the South Ossetian rebellion. The dispute was a result of the South Ossetian insurgency. In 1992, Russia and Georgia were willing to use the conflict opportunity because their regimes were under the influence of post-Soviet legacy, far from liberal democracy.

The *de facto* South Ossetia, which was established in 1992, continued to be an opportunity for conflict between Russia and Georgia until 2009. In this period, the *de facto* state of South Ossetia led to 8 out of 14 MIDs. Disputes were especially intensified after 2004, when Mikheil Saakashvili came to office in Georgia. In this period, Russia viewed the *de facto* South Ossetia as a card to intimidate the pro-western foreign policy orientation of Saakashvili. Thus, the *de facto* South Ossetian state produced opportunity for conflict between Russia and

Georgia. On the other hand, parties in the triad were willing to risk conflict because they never had democratic regimes concurrently.

Chapter 6 concludes the analysis with a summary of the theoretical framework, the argument and the findings derived from the two case studies. A brief comparison of the cases is followed by a discussion of implications of the study for future scholarship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theoretical Explanations on the Causes of Inter-State Military Conflict

A review of grand international relations theories shows that inter-state military conflicts produced by the presence of *de facto states* are rather under-studied. Neo-liberal, neo-realist, constructivist and critical theories and approaches have been widely used to study the sources of inter-state military conflicts, both theoretically and empirically. In the following sections, a review of the literature will seek to comprehend the effect of *de facto* states on producing inter-state military conflicts. Identification of the gaps in the literature will demonstrate why a new theoretical approach is needed to explain the role of *de facto* states in inter-state military conflicts.

2.1.1 The Realist Explanation

Political realism concentrates on state behaviors, based on pursuit of power politics for national interest (Donnelly in Burchill, 2005: 30). The realist view of international relations features states as the main agents of the international system, which is inevitably and permanently anarchic. The characterization of anarchy from a realist point of view refers to the absence of legitimate authority that overarches the states in the system (Starr, 1999: 94). Thus, absence of a world government paves the way of anarchy that leads states to pursue power and security to guarantee their own survival.

Classical realists make the first remarkable contribution to the realist tradition. Thucydides, who examines the Peloponnesian War between Athenians and Spartans, argues that power is distributed unequally among the units of international relations. Consequently, all states, large or small, must adapt to the given reality of unequal power distribution and conduct themselves accordingly. In the case of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides shows that war was the product of the rising Athenian power, which caused Spartans to perceive threat (Cawkwell, 1997: 20). In other words, theoretically, Thucydides first points out the uneven distribution of power among states. Secondly, he regards power as a dynamic concept, which can rise or decline. Thirdly, Thucydides assumes that a state perceives threat from the increase in power of another state. Consequently,

for conflict to emerge, Thucydides, as a classical realist, highlights the disequilibrium of power and capabilities among states (Satana, 2010).

Morgenthau (1967: 4-14), another prominent figure in classical realism, makes more scientific attempts to understand how foreign policy behaviors of states cause inter-state conflict. He highlights the concepts "power" and "national interest," and suggests focusing on these concepts while theorizing on international politics. If we assume that a statesman thinks and acts in the context of power and national interest, we can understand how this statesman acted in the past, is acting now and will act in the future. Therefore, foreign policies of units are motivated by the willingness to increase power and maximize national interest. Inter-state war is expected when the balance of military, economic, social and political capabilities between states shifts in favor of one of the parties because states always perceive threat against rising powers. Thus, inter-state war can be averted only when capabilities are equally distributed and the aggression of states can be deterred when the balancing alliances are formed (Walt, 1987).

In sum, the major cause of military conflict is power struggle in classical realism. The theory in general has little room for actors other than the rational and unitary nation-state. Consequently, more recent phenomena such as the presence and prominence of non-state entities in international relations are not often studied in classical realism. Moreover, *de facto* states are not theoretically tackled in the classical realist literature.

Nevertheless, many non-state actors are central to international affairs in the contemporary world. Social movements, economic relations and the activities of political groups are also the determinants of foreign policy making. Thus, the mainstream classical realist arguments on balance of power theory, and assumptions on power struggle leading to conflict are insufficient to explain the causes of inter-state conflict. Yet, not all classical realists solely focus on the state.

In fact, Wolfers (1962) stresses non-state actors to explain the connection between the means and goals of foreign policy. To Wolfers, states use various means to reach their ultimate goal, which is power. Asymmetric relations between states and non-state agents are one of these means. For example, Soviet Union, as the leader of the communist world, supported revolutionary movements, political parties and organizations in Europe in order to bolster its security and sphere of influence. Thereby, although the Soviet Union seemed to formulate its foreign policy on ideology and asymmetric relations, the achievement of communist organizations in European countries serves the fulfillment of Soviet Union's ultimate goal (Wolfers, 1962: 67-80).

Wolfers' means-goal framework, thus, comes close to analyzing the role of *de facto* states in shaping foreign policies of states and producing inter-state conflicts. Accordingly, *de facto* states trigger competition among states, which aim to gain more power. States consequently interact with *de facto* states. Classical realism suggests that states might adopt various strategies and means of foreign policy in order to reach their goal of increasing power. Thus, asymmetric

and crosspiece relations between states and non-state actors, including *de facto* states, do not point to a fundamental change in the causes of inter-state war. All in all, states pursue power and inter-state war emerges since pursuit of power shifts the balance of power between states.

The research question of this dissertation seeks to find out how *de facto* states affect the probability of military conflict between two states**.** A brief review of the literature on classical realism shows that *de facto* states are not considered as decisive actors in international relations in general and inter-state conflicts in particular. Although some scholars of classical realism recognize the relationship between states and non-state agents, such relationships are regarded as the means of power politics between states.

In addition to classical realism, structural realism also explicates the behaviors of states and the role of *de facto* states in inter-state conflicts. While Morgenthau highlights individual level analysis and argues that statesmen conduct balancing strategy in order to maximize power or provide survival (Schweller in Elman and Elman, 2003: 311-347), structural realists do not prioritize the abilities or perceptions of individuals in explaining the foreign policies of governments.

The basic principles of neo-realism, especially "the structure dictates policy" approach,[1] help us to understand how neo-realist theory explains conflict

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[1] Waltz acknowledges anarchy as *a priori* and deep structure of the international system. He posits that all states function similarly in order to survive. To him, states cannot survive if they do not help themselves as much as other states do. Neo-realist theory argues that the international system functions as long as states have the will for survival. Such survival endeavor requires states to emulate each other. Otherwise, they perish. Since the fate of each state depends on their ability to react to the actions of other states, a competition between states automatically prevails. At the end

and cooperation. Waltz posits that anarchy is the essential structural quality of the international system. Anarchy refers to the absence of central monopoly of legitimate force. Conflict and competition among states are the products of living under anarchy (Waltz, 1988: 618).

Structural realists use the polarity as a concept to predict the possibility of international conflicts (Satana 2010). Structural realism considers polarity as "a basic structural element of international system" (James, 1995: 184). It is defined as "resource and power distribution and number of autonomous powers in the international system" (Bueno de Mesquita, 1975: 1978). In bipolarity, two superpowers control the concentrated power while a group of states have relatively equal military and political power in multipolarity (Waltz 1979). According to Waltz, unipolarity, which refers to concentration of power in the hands of one state, is the least stable type of polarity. Since no state can ever be certain about the intentions of the super power, attempts to balance the system will make unipolarity temporary. Multipolarity is prone to inter-state conflicts because it creates miscalculations and complicated alliance ties in the foreign policies of states. The most stable type of polarity, according to Waltz, is

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of the day, competition produces similarities among states. If any state defects from the rules of the competition, anarchy does not tolerate such deviance (Waltz and Quester, 1982: 45-46). Waltz finally discusses the distribution of capabilities among units. To him, 'distribution of capabilities' is the dynamic principle that determines the characteristics of the international system. Since anarchy is constant and functions of states are similar, structure of international systems are shaped by distribution of capabilities among units (Yalvaç in Eralp, 1996: 154-156). Waltz argues that states are positioned differently in the structure in accordance with their material capabilities and such difference explains the behaviors of states (Waltz, 1990: 31). Thus, interaction of the units produces international structure and structure constrains the units in turn (Little, 2007: 173).

bipolarity because there is less uncertainty and fewer miscalculations due to the presence of two super powers (Waltz, 2004: 4-5).

In sum, the Waltzian realism suggests that the emergence of inter-state conflict is systemic. For states to engage in conflict there is not any superior cause than the influence of the structure of the system. In other words, structural realism explains how external forces shape the behaviors of states but tends to overlook the effects of internal forces (Waltz, 2004: 2).

In line with this standpoint, structural realism attempts to explain the occurrence of problems that are produced by non-state actors. Waltz acknowledges the existence and influence of non-state actors operating within the international system. However, Waltz assumes that structure dictates the actions of these non-state actors (Little, 2007: 179). Waltz maintains a state-centric approach and regards non-state actors as extensions of the international structure. In sum, Waltz recognizes that *de facto* states exist but he leaves little room for these actors to individually produce conflict between two states. According to Waltz, conflict is the product of the structure even if non-state actors play an important role in the emergence of the conflict. The issue is more a level of analysis issue for the structuralists since the analysis is mostly systemic.

In conclusion, the realist view of international relations recognizes the existence of non-state political actors but does not attribute them any prominent role in generating inter-state conflict. *De facto* states, the topic of this dissertation, are regarded either as a means of rational foreign policies of states or as a passive

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actor limited by the structural dynamics of the international system. In the following section, I review the liberal international relations literature to examine whether a theory that deals with several state level actors fares better in addressing the research question.

2.1.2 The Liberal Explanation

The liberal theory of international relations ascribes a remarkable role to non-state actors compared to realism. In other words, liberalism objects to turning international relations into politics among states. Accordingly, security concerns of governments are not the sole factors that shape world politics. There is also room for non-state actors in contemporary international relations.

The classical strands of liberalism assume that foreign policy behaviors of states are strongly influenced by domestic actors and structures (Panke and Risse in Dunne, Kurki and Smith, 2007: 90). In the conflict studies literature, classical liberalism emphasizes domestic actors and structures such as regime type and liberal ideas (Satana, 2010). For example, Russett (1993) proposes that democratic states are less likely to fight against each other.[2]

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[2] The philosophical tradition of liberal approach in international relations starts with Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace argument. In his study, Kant discusses how permanent peace could be built between states. Kant maintains that international conflicts are produced by states, which are not

Maoz and Russett (1993) examine two explanatory models to show why democracies rarely clash with one another. Accordingly, the normative model rests upon the assumption that norms of compromise and cooperation prevent conflict of interests between two democracies turning into violent clashes. Alternatively, the structural model is based on the assumption that complex political mobilization processes produce institutional constraints on the decision makers of two democracies (Maoz and Russett, 1993: 625-626). In other words, it is not internal constraints that limit the democratic decision maker as in the normative approach, but it is the institutions in a democracy that externally constraints the leader.

Nevertheless, institutional or normative constraints that democratic peace proposition highlight do not consider the *de facto* states that this dissertation deals with. Doyle (2005: 463-466) implies that the existence of republican representative democratic government, constitutional rights and free market give rise to the occurrence of non-state domestic restraints such as social, political and commercial organizations. However, democratic peace proposition does not specifically focus on the role of *de facto* states in inter-state relations and conflict.

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constitutional republics. He argues that citizens are naturally cautious in initiating a war because they are subject to the perils of war such as higher taxes and compulsory military service. Thus, the ruling elite cannot easily declare war in constitutional republics because the consent of the public is required to do so (Reiss, 1991: 93-115). The standpoint of Kant is based on the constitutional character of the state. Kant highlights the regular rotation of the ruling elite as the only way to pursue peaceful foreign policy. Although Kant does not suggest a systemic model for peace and conflict, rotation of the elite principle helps us understand whether a state is prone to conflict. The democratic peace hypothesis argues that democracies are not monadically peaceful; they only seek peaceful solutions to conflicts with other democracies.

Unlike classical liberals, neo-liberal theorists acknowledge the potential influence of non-state political actors over inter-state military conflict. Accordingly, growing interdependence does not necessarily promise cooperation. As Keohane and Nye (2001: 9) contend, children fight over the size of slices no matter how large a pie is. That is to say, although neo-liberals admit the presence and potential effect of non-state actors in shaping world politics, they remain skeptical on the role of non-state actors and their capacity to produce unconditional cooperation.

In Milner and Moravcsik (2009: 3-31), Milner argues that non-state actors play a key role in certain issue areas, which bridge public-private relations. In other words, actions of non-state actors shape the behaviors of states in specific issues such as private economic organizations and international intellectual property rights. Thus, states and non-state players become interdependent. For example, if a software company operating in accordance with the laws of state A has the property rights of a computer program and if people living in state B do not respect the property rights of the software company, state A may ask state B to implement intellectual property laws on behalf of the company. In that case, a non-state player becomes a problematic issue between two states.

All in all, neo- liberalism supports the notion that non-state players affect inter-state relations and conflicts. Consequently, both classical liberalism and neo-liberalism highlight the function of non-state actors in inter-state relations. However, liberal theory does not specifically address *de facto* states. *De facto*

states have distinctive characteristics compared to other non-state actors such as political parties, media organizations, non-governmental organizations and companies that neo-liberalism focuses on. *De facto* states, as I argue in Chapter 2, do not have a state identity but they function as states do in many ways. These entities have domestic social, economic and political structures and foreign policy goals. Therefore, the contribution of this dissertation to the present literature is to improve the existing liberal approach on non-state actors' role in conflict studies by a new theoretical framework that specifies the effect of *de facto* states in inter-state military conflicts.

2.1.3 Non-Traditional Approaches to Conflict: Constructivism and Critical Theory

Although the conflict studies literature has developed around the realist-liberal debate and most empirical studies stress these grand theories, there is a growing literature on non-traditional approaches to conflict. In this section, I briefly review constructivist and critical approaches to conflict to identify whether there is value in incorporating these approaches to the study of *de facto* states and their role in inter-state conflict.

Constructivism, in general, highlights the importance of identities and norms in analyzing the behaviors of states. Wendt (1992: 391-425) criticizes

Waltz's definition of structure, which homogenizes the foreign policy actions of states. According to Wendt, anarchy and distribution of power are not the sole factors determining the calculations of states. Distribution of knowledge, which refers to social structure, paves the way of acquiring identities and shapes the foreign policy interests of states. Thus, states conduct foreign policy in accordance with their identities.

The question about the role of *de facto* states is related to the second pillar of constructivism, which is interaction. According to Wendt (1992: 391-425) identities and interests of states are not as constant as the neo-realists argue. As states interact, their ideas about security evolve. In other words, identities and interests transform as the practices change.

So far, non-state actors do not seem to be the main focus of constructivist studies. Nevertheless, constructivist theory regards non-state actors as a means of interaction between states. Contrary to statist constructivists, who primarily focus on public actors, liberal constructivists examine non-state actors (Cowles in Jones and Verdun, 2005: 33). Therefore, non-state actors potentially affect the social structure, which eventually influences the behaviors of states. However, constructivists do not imply that the activities of non-state actors produce unconditional cooperation between states. For example, Mercer (1995: 229-252) examines how social identity needs of individuals and ethnic groups trigger international conflicts as they interact.

Although constructivism acknowledges that non-state actors can produce international conflicts, it does not explicate the role of *de facto* states. Constructivism focuses only on how non-state actors alter the social structures between states and it disregards the material variables of conflict. In that sense, this dissertation integrates the material properties of *de facto* states with identities of states and non-state actors to explain the role of *de facto* states in conflict and cooperation.

Another non-traditional approach, critical theory, regards the Westphalia system as a source of international conflicts. Linklater (2007: 1) argues that political organizations bind the members of political communities together and simultaneously separate them from the rest of the human race. At the end of the day, the bounded communities produce the modern state system, in which states competitively pursue power. According to Linklater (1998: 31), monopoly of states, high levels of national cohesiveness and clearly defined territories pave the way of armed conflict. Nevertheless, critical approach is rather interested in changing the Westphalia state system than theorizing on inter-state conflicts, which are produced by *de facto* states, which this dissertation set out to achieve.[3]

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[3] However, critical approach rejects the examination of international relations in a positivist manner. Critical approach criticizes the theory-making process of traditional theories, which regards object-subject distinction as *a priori*. According to the traditional theories, there is an external and given social world waiting to be discovered. On the other hand, critical approach argues that knowledge is constructed through history by human beings. Therefore, the attempts to understand and explain the social world objectively legitimize the inequalities of the social world, which is made subjectively (Devetak, 2005: 145-178). As Robert Cox (1981) contends, "theory is always for someone and for some purposes."

In conclusion, several theories of international relations explain how non-state actors potentially generate inter-state military conflicts. Realist theories argue that non-state actors are not major actors for inter-state conflict. According to classical realism, two states in power parity are more likely to fight when their relations tense up because of non-state actors. Structural realism, on the other hand, contends that inter-state conflict can be possible only when the structure allows it. Thus, non-state actors are not regarded as one of the main actors in conflict studies. Therefore, issues related to non-state actors cannot be the main causes of inter-state conflict.

Alternatively, liberal theories acknowledge the presence and influence of non-state actors in international relations and they attribute a greater role for these actors in conflict studies. Classical liberals argue that non-state actors may produce cooperation between states whereas neo-liberal theory remains skeptical. Accordingly, activities of non-state actors with each other or with states can drag two states into conflict.

Constructivist approach, in general, studies how non-state actors affect the social structure between states. Consequently, activities of non-state actors help the transformation of identities and interests of states. Still, the approach does not focus on *de facto* states as a cause of conflict. Critical approach, on the other hand, argues that any attempt to theorize the role of non-state actors in inter-state military conflicts legitimizes the Westphalia system, which in itself is the source

of international conflicts. Once again, de facto states are not widely tackled in the critical literature.

In sum, none of the theories analyzed properly deal with *de facto* states that this dissertation seeks to comprehend. Although the literature deals with the activities of non-state actors, they do not specifically focus on the problems that are produced by *de facto* states. The liberal theory comes closest among others to scrutinizing non-state actors multidimensionally. However, as the next section will reveal, the task is not fully achieved thus far. The theoretical framework of this study will attempt to fill the gap in the literature that has been analyzed through a new model of the role of *de facto* states in international conflict.

2.2 The Need for a New Theoretical Framework

As reviewed in the previous section, grand theories of international relations seek to produce general patterns, which are supposedly valid across time and space, yet fail to address particular actors and cases. For example, in regard to war, realist and liberal theories suggest concrete conditions for independent variables to cause dependent variables. However, these theories tend to overlook the fact that the motivations, logics and actions of states vary. Hence, similar factors can produce different consequences and different factors can produce similar consequences.

Therefore, general and concrete explanatory variables that grand theories suggest, fail to explicate the occurrence of dependent variables.

According to Most and Starr (1989: 99-100) "general" and "universal" models, which only operate under certain explicitly prescribed conditions, do not suffice to generate a systemic understanding of foreign policy decisions and international phenomena. For grand theories to fill the gap between general patterns and particular cases, Most and Starr (1989: 107) propose that grand theories should stress what each behavior represents rather than asking middle range questions about specific empirical phenomena. Accordingly, since the general patterns of grand theories are inadequate to explain the particular foreign policy behaviors of states, especially inter-state conflicts, Most and Starr suggest the use of a pre-theoretical framework, regardless of the theory one uses to analyze international phenomena, in any level of analysis.

The pre-theoretical framework of "opportunity and willingness," which Most and Starr develop, produces a general model of analysis to analyze world affairs. This model applies even when the particular concrete conditions of the cases vary. Therefore, the "opportunity and willingness" framework does not highlight any concrete factor such as power preponderance, regime type, and composition of elite or polarity as a condition for war. Instead, "opportunity and willingness" is more interested in what these factors represent and how these factors shape state behaviors. In other words, the "opportunity and willingness"

framework suggests a model that still enables generalizations but also has power to explain particular cases.

This dissertation contributes to the conflict literature by applying Most and Starr's pre-theoretical framework of "opportunity and willingness" to *de facto* states in order to explain how they connect to international conflicts. Therefore, I initially examine the propositions of "opportunity and willingness" approach. Next, I discuss to what extent the "opportunity and willingness" framework is relevant to inter-state conflicts in which *de facto* states are involved.

In the following sections, I apply this framework to international conflict to narrow down the liberal literature of conflict studies to comprehend how actors other than the nation-state, particularly *de facto* states, have transformed contemporary world affairs. In the rest of the dissertation, I test the propositions derived from this framework through case studies of the Turkish-Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraqi relations as well as Georgian-South Ossetian-Russian relations.

2.3 Opportunity and Willingness as a Pre-Theoretical Framework

The general notion of "opportunity and willingness" derives from the "ecological triad" concept of Harold and Margaret Sprout. World politics is composed of

ecological relations between entities and their environments (Sprout, 1968: 11-21). Thus, the concept of ecological triad suggests examining the ongoing decision-making or policy selection procedures within the entity, then the environment of the entity and finally the interaction between an entity and its environment (Most and Starr, 1989: 26-27).

The "opportunity and willingness" pre-theoretical framework includes micro and macro level approaches. Opportunity is about the macro level structural factors and refers to the total set of environmental constraints and possibilities for an entity. Willingness, on the other hand, stresses to explain the micro level factors and refers to the choices and choice processes from a range of alternatives. In other words, willingness conveys eagerness to exploit available capabilities to select some policy options over others (Most and Starr, 1989: 23).

Most and Starr's "opportunity and willingness" pre-theory essentially aims to explain the causes of war. Accordingly, the concepts opportunity and willingness do not lead to war individually. In other words, neither opportunity nor willingness provides sufficient explanation for the occurrence war. In their model, Most and Starr discuss four hypotheses on war, of which they find only one plausible:

First Hypothesis: Capabilities of states and environmental conditions, opportunity (O) in general, are sufficient variables for states to participate in war (Y).

Second Hypothesis: Increasing war moods, namely willingness (W) of states to fight, lead to increasing war participation (Y).

Third Hypothesis: Opportunity (O) or willingness (W) leads a state to participate in war (Y).

Fourth Hypothesis: War occurs when opportunity (O) *and* willingness (W) emerge jointly (Most and Starr, 1989: 69-70).

According to the first hypothesis, when a state has capabilities and the structure allows for war, having these opportunities are sufficient conditions to go to war. The same is true for the second hypothesis because high willingness (war moods) is sufficient to go to war. In the third hypothesis, the presence of either opportunity or willingness leads to war. These hypotheses are derived by Most and Starr from the conflict literature that is predominantly realist. The fourth hypothesis predicts that opportunity and willingness emerge simultaneously for war to occur. In other words, there are cases, which cannot be explained by the first, second, and third hypotheses because sufficient factors are not enough to cause war. Thus, Most and Starr suggest a new model with the fourth hypothesis, which they maintain is logically plausible.

Figure 1. Opportunity, Willingness and War
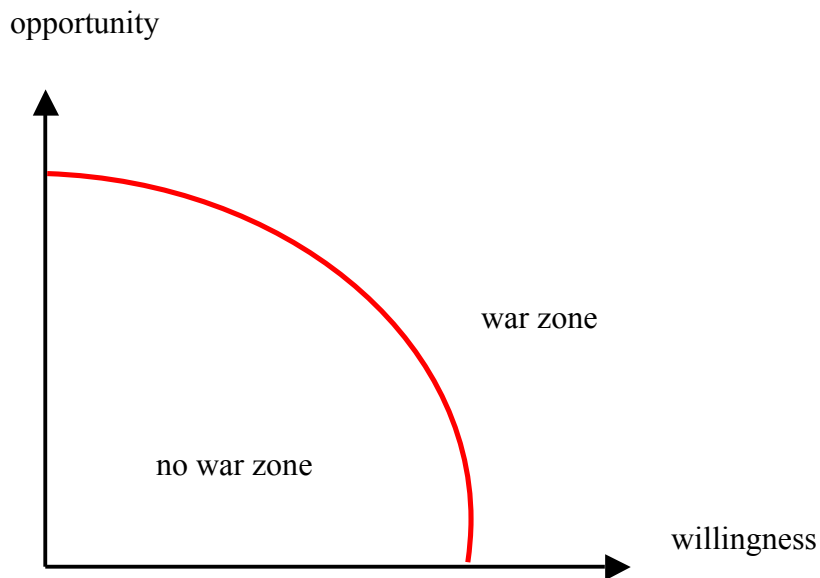
opportunity

Following this framework, I argue that opportunity or willingness can be regarded as independent variables, which are *necessary but not sufficient conditions*. Therefore, states must have opportunity *and* willingness to become involved in a conflict.

2.3.1 Opportunity

David Singer (1970: 537) argues, "a nation must, in a sense, be in the 'right' setting if it is to get into war." Opportunity, thus, refers to the right setting, which is created by the systemic environment. According to Most and Starr, there can be several forms of opportunity. Realist theories feature configuration of power distributions, and substantive anarchy in the international system, alliances, proximity, contiguity and interaction possibilities. For example, contiguity has been empirically studied in the conflict literature as a factor that leads to inter-state war (Goertz and Diehl, 1992). According to Most and Starr (1989: 30), contiguity, on its own, can only be an "interaction opportunity" as it increases the likelihood of interaction between two states. Yet, having borders with another state does not necessarily lead to conflict. In fact, recent studies using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology show that high interaction opportunities may lead to cooperation as well as conflict. Starr (2006: 7) finds that "European Union dyads have the highest weighted averages in terms of ease of interaction: Belgium-France, Belgium-Netherlands, Germany-Netherlands, and France-Luxembourg." Nevertheless, these countries are very unlikely to fight against one another although they have interaction opportunity.

Another example for opportunity in a realist framework comes from structural realism. Waltz (1979) argues that anarchy is the ordering principle of the international system. Thus, existence of anarchy is sufficient to produce

opportunity for conflict. Furthermore, polarity becomes another systemic factor that creates opportunity for major powers to cooperate or go to war.

Alternatively, it is possible to interpret liberal arguments in the opportunity framework. For example, international organizations assist states in interacting with each other. The United Nations creates an opportunity for states to discuss their issues in a common platform. Thus, if opportunity on its own is sufficient for conflict, member states that interact more should be more likely to fight. However, liberals argue that international institutions such as the United Nations bolster peace since more interaction does not necessarily lead to conflictual relations. In that sense, sole opportunity is a necessary but not sufficient factor and willingness should also be examined to understand why conflict occurs.

2.3.2 Willingness

According to Most and Starr, willingness refers to the perceptions in the decision making process, which are also tackled by Jervis (1976). Thus, willingness suggests a variety of cognitive, socio-psychological and perceptual factors, which affect the way human beings perceive their environment. While opportunity is rather about the environment of the decision-maker, willingness is related to the mental processes the decision-maker goes through before making a foreign policy decision. The interaction between decision makers and their environment shapes

their image of the world, which can be regarded as the dynamics of their choices (Most and Starr, 1989: 34-35). Most of the time, the decision-maker decides to go to war because after evaluation of several options, war becomes the only acceptable one. In other words, willingness to go to war increases when the decision-maker perceives war as the only viable option. For example, Kaiser of Germany develops willingness for war as he realizes that the Russians have already mobilized; hence, the level of threat that he perceived increased considerably. In contrast, decades ago, Bismarck's willingness was rather low to go to war since he wanted to consolidate the newly founded German state.

In classical realism, willingness is related to the personal abilities of statesmen because they are responsible for making rational decisions. Waltz's first image deals with human nature, where willingness to go to war is always present because human nature is inherently aggressive. Moreover, opportunity according to the realist paradigm is often sufficient for participation in war and willingness, most of the time, emerges if opportunity exists. In other words, willingness is dependent on opportunity (Most and Starr, 1989: 35).

On the other hand, liberal international relations theory has dealt with war in a willingness framework more often than realists have. Willingness includes calculations of domestic costs and thus stresses the reactions of domestic actors such as electors, the media, non-governmental organizations and commercial circles when state leaders tend to go to war. For example, Most and Starr (1989: 38-39) exemplifies willingness as rather low for the decision-makers in the United States towards the end of the Vietnam War. The reasons for that are manifold. First, civil activities such as the resistance of the draftees reduced willingness of

the state to continue war. Second, interest groups such as lobbyists and single-issue groups have changed foreign policy decisions of the state through their influence on the willingness of the leaders. In other words, the liberal understanding of conflict is more related to willingness than opportunity.

2.4 States, *De Facto* States and Military Conflict

As examined in the previous section, Most and Starr's "opportunity and willingness" framework has often been applied to grand theories of international relations and foreign policy analyses. The model argues that both opportunity and willingness should jointly emerge so that war will occur. The actors in the model are nation-states even when a liberal framework is used. Also, the model is largely applied to inter-state war, although the authors mention that there are several other forms of military conflict with which the model would soundly work.

   While the model is useful, the nature of contemporary armed conflict has changed from inter-state wars to other forms of conflict. The lack of traditional inter-state wars after the end of the Cold War is exemplified by Williams (2009). According to Williams, "between 1997 and 2006 there were relatively few inter-state wars: Ethiopia vs. Eritrea (1998-2000), India vs. Pakistan (1997-2003), DRC and allies vs. Rwanda and Uganda (1998-2002), US-led coalition vs. the *de facto* regime in Afghanistan, the US-led coalition vs. Iraq (2003), and Ethiopia vs. the *de facto* authorities in Somalia (2006)." This shows that inter-state war is in

decline and other forms of conflict should be the topic of research in conflict studies.

Moreover, the actors involved in other types of armed conflict have changed. States are still decisive actors in armed conflict; however, they are not the only ones. As the literature review chapter shows, non-state actors are indeed influential in international relations. Nevertheless, contemporary military conflict requires that non-state actors should be better specified and thoroughly studied.

In this dissertation, I argue that Most and Starr's "opportunity and willingness" framework is useful to extend liberal theory by better specifying not only non-state entities and their natures but also inter-state military conflict. Accordingly, the role of *de facto* states as a type of non-state actor in inter-state conflicts is the major puzzle of this dissertation. In other words, the dissertation aims to find out the conditions, which pave the way of conflict between two states that share a non-state issue deriving from autonomous foreign policy activities of a *de facto* state. In this respect, the concepts such as state, *de facto* state as a non-state actor and conflict should be comprehensively defined and discussed. The following section conceptualizes these terms in depth and builds towards a new model of inter-state military conflicts caused by *de facto* states.

2.4.1 *De Facto* States as a Non-State Actor

When a student of international relations looks at the world political map, s/he sees the clear-cut borders of the equal and sovereign states. Each of the countries

is featured with different colors and that is a conscious choice in order to highlight the limits of the sovereignty of each state. However, there are also political entities, which are ignored by cartographers. These entities have no clear borders, no color on maps and no recognition as states. They are seemingly represented by another state but they claim sovereignty over a territory.

Although political maps disregard these entities, international relations discipline has to deal with them since concepts such as state sovereignty have become widely disputable (Camillieri and Falk, 1992; Biersteker and Weber, 1996). While some argue that sovereignty is eroding in the contemporary world, others maintain that sovereignty is still the main pillar of the current international system. This debate stems from defining sovereignty in different ways. Thomson (1995: 219) finds that neither realist nor liberal definitions of sovereignty explains the concept properly since the former focuses on external and the latter focuses on internal aspects of sovereignty. Thus, she defines sovereignty as "the recognition by internal and external actors that the state has the exclusive authority to intervene coercively in activities within its territory." In this definition, recognition, the state, authority, coercion and territory are especially emphasized.

The seminal work of Jackson (1990), on the other hand, focuses on negative and positive aspects of sovereignty. Jackson argues that positive sovereignty includes the capacity of a state to govern efficiently in its territory; thus, sovereignty includes provision of basic services such as human rights and security that a state offers to its citizens. Alternatively, negative sovereignty refers to being free from external intervention and interference so that the state can survive on its own. Jackson's understanding of sovereignty is important since he

argues that the third world countries, especially the former colonies suffer from lack of both aspects of sovereignty. This leads to an emphasis of actors other than sovereign states. Consequently, Jackson names these states as quasi-states, which do not have the capacity to govern themselves although the international community recognizes their existence. Jackson further distinguishes between *de jure* and *de facto* states in that *de jure* states are internationally recognized even if they are in fact quasi-states that do not have effective governments.[4] *De facto* states, on the other hand, are not states with sovereignty; however, they are fully able to perform a state's functions.

While most realist and liberal studies focus on the state in the way Thomson's definition does, non-state actors such as quasi-states and *de facto* states are under-studied in the conflict studies literature. Lemke (2003) finds that *de facto* states are indeed non-state actors that are a different category, with their own governments and foreign policies. Lemke argues that the lack of theoretical and empirical studies on non-state actors such as *de facto* states negatively affects conflict studies, in particular and other fields in international relations, in general. To fill this gap in the literature, I conceptualize *de facto* states as non-state political entities, which are a major actor in contemporary world politics.

One of the most comprehensive works on *de facto* states, Pegg (1998: 26) defines *de facto* states as follows:

> A *de facto* state exists where there is an organized political leadership, which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capability, receives popular support; and has achieved sufficient capacity to provide governmental services to a given population in a specific territorial area, over which effective control is maintained for a significant period of time. The *de facto* state views itself as capable

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[4] Thus, the difference between a quasi state and *de facto* state is mainly the former's failed capacity to provide services while the latter is capable but still not internationally recognized.

of entering into relations with other states and it seeks full constitutional independence and widespread international recognition as a sovereign state. It is, however, unable to achieve any degree of substantive recognition and therefore remains illegitimate in the eyes of international society.

Pegg's definition on *de facto* states posits that such organizations should organize and function as a governing entity on a particular piece of land. A *de facto* state is a political apparatus and organized leadership that aims to provide and maintain governmental services in a long time period. Furthermore, *de facto* states and the population it represents seek constitutional independence, not a role within a federal system. Another requirement for the emergence of *de facto* states is the absence of peaceful negotiations when *de facto* states run a campaign for secession. Pegg lastly emphasizes the non-existence of widespread recognition of *de facto* states. Widespread recognition requires fulfillment of some conditions such as recognition from some of the major powers or majority of the countries in the United Nations General Assembly consisting of 192 states (Pegg, 1998: 28-38).

The definition of a *de facto* state requires the elaboration of what "stateness" means. In the classical Weberian sense of stateness, a state is composed of a territorial base and population living under a monopoly of political unit that has coercive power to use force legitimately. Thus, a state ideally owns the capacity to protect its borders against external and internal rivals. However, after the end of the Cold War, many states in the developing world had problems maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of their own citizens. These states, such as Somalia, experienced internal clashes and transformed into "failed" states. In

other words, they have become quasi-states, nevertheless, retained recognition from the international community.

According to Charles Tilly (1985), state formation in the West is a gradual process of war making where the war makers penetrate the society and in return become more and more efficient in performing functions expected from them as the rulers. According to Kingston (2004), the process that Tilly identified for the West has worked differently in the developing world. The states of the third world have not been able to develop a working state mechanism; instead, their rivals initiated their own movements, which led to "states-within-states." "Indeed, in some cases, one sees the emergence of political entities that are in sharp and favorable contrast to the juridical states that rule above them—especially in their capacity to control defined pieces of territory, collect taxes, and conduct business with international and transnational actors." (Kingston, 2004: 1) Thus, non-state actors such as *de facto* states have become a major competitor that challenges the legitimacy of sovereign states.

As mentioned before, sovereignty has become a major norm in the international system. Nevertheless, its definition and importance have considerably changed in the last few decades. According to Krasner (1999: 3-4) there are 4 elements of sovereignty that a state possesses. First, international legal sovereignty refers to the juridical independence and international recognition of a state by other states. All rulers seek international legal sovereignty because it provides juridical equality and access to international law. Second, Westphalian sovereignty means that the domestic decisions made by internal authority structures are free from interference of external actors. Third, domestic

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sovereignty is the ability of the domestic political authority to exercise effective control within its borders. Finally, interdependence sovereignty is concerned with how public authorities are able to regulate the flow of information, ideas, goods, people and capital across the borders of their state.

These four elements of sovereignty do not necessarily coexist in all states, less so now than during the Cold War. A state can have international legal sovereignty but lack domestic sovereignty or vice versa. For example, failed states such as Sudan have international recognition but do not have sufficient ability to exercise full control within their own territory. On the other hand, any political authority that is able to exercise full domestic sovereignty can be deprived of international legal sovereignty. Krasner's analysis is in line with Kingston's in that "states-within-states" are competitors to juridical states that they compete with and the competition is about international legal sovereignty.

In this dissertation, I use *de facto* state as a non-state actor in this context. In Pegg's definition, seeking full constitutional independence is regarded as a necessary condition to be a *de facto* state. However, while some *de facto* states fight for independence, others do not. All have domestic sovereignty but lack international legal sovereignty. Some reside under federal governments and some are autonomous regions in centralized governments. In that sense, the definition I use is more comprehensive than Pegg's. What matters is whether these entities indeed have an independent foreign policy-making capacity in addition to domestic capacity. As a result, I define *de facto* state as follows:

> Any political authority within a given territory that has the capability to provide an effective and legitimate domestic order, exercises the functions of any state and sets and follows up an agenda for its foreign relations.

Now that the definition of *de facto* states is clarified in the context of their formation processes, the causes of inter-state military conflicts, which are produced by the foreign policy activities of *de facto* states, are examined in the following section.

2.4.2 Theoretical Framework: *De Facto* States and Inter-State Military Conflict

As explicated earlier, Most and Starr's "opportunity and willingness" model offers a good framework to assess opportunities and factors that arise willingness for states to go to military conflict. I argue that, in addition to the usual suspects such as contiguity and power struggle that Most and Starr elaborate in their book from realist and liberal perspectives, non-state actors in general and *de facto* states in particular generate opportunity and willingness for conflict between states. In the following sections, using the opportunity willingness framework, I develop the causal mechanisms of how *de facto* states affect the likelihood of conflict between states. I especially highlight the conditions when *de facto* states increase the probability of a militarized conflict and when they lead to cooperation.

2.4.2.1 Opportunity

According to Most and Starr, opportunity is related to the environment that creates and constrains conflictual actions. Therefore, opportunity refers to

possibility of interaction (Most and Starr 1989, 29-30). I argue that non-state political entities such as *de facto* states are very important opportunity generators in military conflicts between states. There are two elements of the causal mechanism that I examine. The first one is about the *process*; in which the *de facto* state develops into an autonomous entity within the juridical state. This has been tackled in the civil conflict studies literature to a large extent. The second one is about the *outcome*; the capability of independent foreign policymaking of the established *de facto* state. This issue has been under-studied in the literature and the main theoretical contribution of this dissertation is elaboration of this stage of how *de facto* states (in-the-making and afterwards) relate to military conflict.

2.4.2.1.1 Opportunities in the Process of Establishing a *De Facto* State

Wilkenfeld and Brecher (2000) argue that a state consists of several identity groups and crises often arise between these groups. Consequently, due to lack of communication, mutual distrust develops and violence becomes more likely. Identity, in this context, is not necessarily ethnic or religious identity. It may very well be ideological identity. In that sense, every state includes groups of people that become majority and minority from different identity standpoints.

The seminal work of Ted Gurr (1970) builds on the concept of "relative deprivation," which addresses the root causes of conflict within a state from a psychological perspective. Satana (2010) explains "relative deprivation as a

person's recognition of discrepancy between her value expectations and the potentiality of the circumstances one lives in (value capabilities). In other words, when one compares his/her surroundings and opportunities to those who seem to be more fortunate, and feels that s/he does not get what s/he is entitled to, frustration emerges. A feeling of deprivation manifested in aggression consequently leads to conflict." Gurr and many other civil conflict scholars believe that mobilization of the group is very important for the frustration to turn into outright rebellion. In short, no matter what kind of identity the group has, if it is deprived of what it desires, and if it is properly mobilized, likelihood of civil conflict increases.

Alternatively, the World Bank scholars such as Paul Collier and his colleagues argue that the cause of civil wars is not related to identity at all. Collier and Hoeffler (2002) carry out quantitative studies and find that civil conflict is a negative result of economic development. They argue that regardless of what the identity of the rebelling group is, the group is economically deprived. Those states with low GNPs are more prone to civil conflict.

This literature shows that some states are more likely to experience civil violence. In fact, Harbom and Wallensteen (2005) find that a total of 118 armed conflicts have been recorded since the end of the Cold War, of which the majority are intra-state conflicts. Many of these intra-state conflicts are indeed internationalized. In other words, civil wars, regardless of their causes, become an international issue and furthermore lead to conflict between the parent state[5] and an intervener state[6].

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[5] In this study, I use the terms parent state, mother state and metropole state interchangeably.
[6] In this study, I use the terms intervener state, third party state and external state interchangeably.

Gurr (1993: 8) deals with the influence of communal groups over international relations. He initially argues that the members of these groups within states share a distinctive and persistent collective identity (Gurr in Midlarsky, 1993: 3). According to Gurr, there are several types of these communal groups and "nations without states" are one of them. Gurr defines "nations without states" as "large, regionally concentrated identity groups that have never been effectively subordinated to or incorporated in the modern state system, and whose leaders actively seek to (re)establish their political autonomy, preferably as independent nation states." Moreover, "these groups usually have institutionalized authority structures, control substantial territory, and are capable of mobilizing people and resources for sustained conflict (Gurr in Midlarsky, 1993: 8)." As a result, these conflicts produce international problems such as military and diplomatic interventions. Zartman (1993: 27) also examines the foreign relations of such groups and units, affirming that communal groups seek support of neighboring countries when they experience a conflict with their home government.

While these scholars do not elaborate on *de facto* states, they examine groups and their struggles before they eventually become *de facto* states. For that reason, it is important to examine the *process*. I argue that these groups, as they try to establish their own autonomous structures, create an opportunity of conflict between the state they struggle against and other intervener states. This likelihood increases, especially if the group reaching for *de facto* statehood and the external state share a common identity. Tamil Eelams in Sri Lanka are a case in point. The Tamils had various issues such as ethnic, religious, language-based and

ideological grievances, which affected their access to governments and education as well as the economic activities of the state (Laitin, 2000). Their riots starting from the 1950s, right after Sri Lanka's independence in 1948, led to a process where the Sinhalese state had to fight a fierce war against the Tamils. India, a neighbor of the Sri Lankan state, intervened in the conflict in 1987 to protect the Tamils, which share a Hindu Tamil identity with the state of Tamil Nadu in India. While the intervention was at first perceived as war between the two states, it soon became a peacemaking mission of India in Sri Lanka after both sides signed an accord (Cooper and Berdal, 1993). Nevertheless, the struggle of guerilla groups led by the Tamil Tigers has created an opportunity of interaction between India and Sri Lanka, which was rather conflictual.

The case of the Tamils is quite common in the international arena particularly since the end of the Cold War. The events following September 11, 2001 drew the international community's attention to third party involvement in internal conflicts. External actors actively involved in the internal conflicts of Afghanistan and Iraq show that civil wars are easily internationalized (Harbom and Wallensteen, 2005). In fact, most civil conflicts in the last 50 years have been solved with the help of a third party intervener (Walter in Walter and Snyder, 1999). Moreover, some of these conflicts restarted after ongoing negotiations and they turned into protracted conflicts.

Non-state political actors such as communal groups and guerillas as in the case of Sri Lanka generate an opportunity of conflict (or cooperation) especially when the intervener and the state experiencing civil conflict are neighbors. As realist and liberal literatures on conflict argue, contiguity creates opportunity. It

helps the conflict to militarize more expeditiously and military forces to deploy more easily, especially in cross border operations. Therefore, when two states share an issue caused by a communal group, opportunity is further enhanced. Thus, sharing borders may not otherwise be problematic, but if the two states share such an issue, the likelihood of conflict increases. Indeed, the literature shows that most interveners in other states' conflicts are either major powers or neighbors (Harbom and Wallensteen, 2005).

This finding brings us to the opportunity generating value of non-state actors for major powers. In Most and Starr's framework power struggle and capability of states were pointed as an opportunity. I argue that even a major power needs justification of its intervention in another country and most of the time the presence of a non-state actor becomes that opportunity for justification. The Allied intervention in Iraq in 1991 is a case in point. While the Iraq-Kuwait conflict was the official cause of intervention, the Kurdish conflict within Iraq became a humanitarian issue in the world.[7] Therefore, while the realists interpret the intervention as an Allied attempt at securing the Middle Eastern oil, the intervention to the Kuwait-Iraqi conflict became a humanitarian intervention from a liberal perspective (Tyler, 1991).[8] Gurr (1993: 16) would agree with this argument in that he stresses assistance of a third party to an insurgent group in the forms of "diplomatic initiatives, open political support, clandestine provision of

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[7] For example, the Security Council Resolution No. 688 dated April 5, 1991 "condemns the repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas, the consequences of which threaten international peace and security in the region."

[8] The international newspapers of 1991 highlight the 'intervention' as an 'intervention of the U.S. to the Kurdish refugee crisis.' See for more detail, Patrick Tyler "AFTER THE WAR; Bush's Plans for Kurds Stir Fears of Indefinite Military Role in Iraq" New York Times, April 21, 1991. The same article reveals the first footsteps of a *de facto* Kurdish state.

supplies and training, military assistance, cross-border attacks and provision of sanctuary."

On a different note, the realist literature would argue that capability of any state (not only major powers) creates an opportunity for conflict. However, one can argue that conflict may still occur when a country lacks the capability to directly intervene in another state. Non-state political entities in the process of building their structures to become *de facto* states generate the opportunity of conflict between an incapable external state and the parent state. In other words, the communal strife within a state becomes the tool of an intervener state to pursue its goals without getting into a major conflict. Syrian-Turkish relations can be an example of this kind of interaction. While the Kurdish separatist movement led by the terrorist organization, PKK has not been able to establish a *de facto* state, during their struggle from the 1980s on; Syria has provided not only financial support but also a safe haven to the Kurdish guerilla (Sayarı, 1997). In other words, a terrorist organization with the aim of founding a *de facto* state became an issue of conflict between Turkey, the parent state and Syria, an external state.[9]

In sum, I argue that non-state political entities lead to interaction opportunity between two states. Theoretically, the interaction possibility increases under 4 conditions when the states own an issue that stems from a non-state actor: when they share a border, when they share a common identity, when the

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[9] This relates to the emerging asymmetric balancing literature as well. Similarly, Lieber and Alexander (2005) argue in their asymmetric balancing theory that rogue states do not have enough capacity to challenge the U.S. in traditional balancing terms. So, they have only two options in order to maintain their survival. They either engage in terrorism to break out the support of American citizens for the U.S. military presence abroad or seek to acquire nuclear weapons to deter the U.S.

intervener is a major power and when uneven distribution of power is present between two states.

Non-state political entities such as communal groups go through a long period of struggle in the juridical state that they want to part with. Most of the time, these non-state political entities fight with the military of the state for a long time as they simultaneously create their own armed forces, economic and political structures and learn how to function as a state. Some entities succeed in becoming a *de facto* state, while others do not. In the following section, I deal with non-state political entities that indeed achieved the establishment of a *de facto* state, which owns domestic sovereignty; however, lacks international legal sovereignty.

2.4.2.1.2 Opportunities after a *De Facto* State is Established

Following a Weberian notion of 'stateness,' a state is supposed to have monopoly of power and it should be legitimate in the eyes of a population residing over a territory. However, as the previous section elaborated, some states lose that monopoly and legitimacy at least for part of its population. This starts the process of building a *de facto* state and in the process the rebelling group develops state-like abilities.

Before the world wars, *de facto* states existed but sovereign states mostly ignored their presence while after 1915 the phenomenon became so common that

states had to deal with the issue (Baty, 1951).[10] It took a longer time for the international relations discipline to start studying *de facto* states and their relation to conflict. Douglas Lemke is among the select few. Lemke (2003, 133) argues "many of the nonstate actors existing as *de facto* states are involved in military conflict with the recognized governments legally in authority over all the territory of the official state." Moreover, Lemke posits "if *de facto* states are international actors, then their wars against other international actors (whether arbitrarily "recognized" by the international diplomatic community or not) are *international* wars." Lemke further criticizes international relations researchers for pretending that "these are civil wars due to their tendency to ignore international actors lacking sovereignty." Lemke's argument is based on his analyses of *de facto* states in Africa but the argument can be extended to other parts of the world. Lemke's solution to the 'wrong actors' problem inherent in most conflict data sets is "to include such actors around the globe, while also including information about how those actors are organized politically, the resources they control, how many people are under their authority, and their ties to foreign firms, to other nonstate actors, or to other official states - whether ties of alliance or of overt conflict." (Lemke, 2003: 134)

Accordingly, *de facto* states, after their long struggles, establish autonomous foreign policy decisions and behaviors. I argue that these behaviors generate interaction opportunity between these entities, their parent states and other states. When a *de facto* state challenges the foreign policy making monopoly

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[10] Baty (1951: 166) notes that Confederate States of America was, in fact, a *de facto* state, which ruled considerable territory in the United States for four years. Nevertheless, European and South American states never acknowledged the presence of a *de facto* state in the U.S. and they would accept this situation as "an international chimera or griffin," which is completely unacceptable.

of its juridical state and pursues its own foreign policy agenda, this might produce either positive or negative relations with other states. In one scenario, there is a positive relationship between the *de facto* state and an external state. The parent state might be intimidated by the external state's autonomous relationship with the *de facto* state. In that case, conflict is likely between the two sovereign states due to the *de facto* state's presence and autonomous policies. For example, China-U.S relations have at times come to the brink of military conflict because of the *de facto* state of Taiwan, which has established positive relations with the U.S. since the fleeing of its administration from mainland China and settlement in the island of Taiwan. In 1996, when People's Republic of China (PRC) carried out military exercises and missile testing near the Republic of China (ROC - official name for Taiwan), the U.S. deployed two aircraft carriers in that region to signal support for the ROC (Ross, 2002: 48). This confrontation was only one instance where the friendly relations between the *de facto* state of Taiwan led to crisis between two sovereign states. U.S. diplomatic ties with Taiwan intimidate PRC, no matter if they are carried out through the American Institute of Taiwan, instead of an official embassy. The PRC regards the American behavior as well as the Taiwanese as breach of its sovereignty.

Another example for such an interaction comes from the status of the Palestinian Authority. Palestine's *de facto* statehood is one of the least debated among others. Its status is a part of international law after the Oslo peace process and although the majority of the UN General Assembly does not accept it as a state, its recognition is more widespread than i.e. Somaliland. Nonetheless, Palestine is not accepted as a sovereign state in the international system. In that

sense, Palestine fits the definition of a *de facto* state in this dissertation.[11] Accordingly, Palestine has been the major point of controversy in the Middle East since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. In line with the argument, Palestine has established amicable relations with Arab states, which, in turn have been against Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Furthermore, Arab states led by Egypt have fought against Israel because of the *de facto* state, Palestine and to make things more complicated, Israeli state has been a *de facto* state for them while the Palestinian state is the parent state. Once again, Israel is intimidated by the foreign policies of the Arab states and the Palestinian *de facto* state, which breach its sovereignty. It goes without saying that Palestine feels the same way about its own situation.

Another scenario emerges when the relations between the *de facto* state and the external state have difficulties, which results in conflict between the parent state and the external state. In that case, the external state regards the *de facto* state as a political authority that carries out its own autonomous foreign policy. This, in turn, creates an interaction opportunity, which leads to conflictual relations. Thus, any attack from the external state towards the *de facto* state means the violation of both domestic sovereignty of the *de facto* state and the international legal sovereignty of the parent state. For example, Napoleon III's efforts to control the Mexican administration during the American Civil War frustrated the Confederacy because Napoleon's policy was a direct violation of

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[11] Pegg (1998: 39) does not accept Palestine or the Kurdish Regional Government as *de facto* states, since their 'relative' recognition is higher than others. I do not make such a distinction since I believe that Pegg's definition is too narrow and the similarities of the population of cases make them comparable with one another.

the Monroe Doctrine.[12] French intervention in Mexico also deteriorated the relations between the United States and France. As noted by Baty (1951), the Confederacy can be regarded as a *de facto* state. Therefore, although Napoleon's policy threatened the sovereignty of the Confederacy, U.S. Secretary of State Seward urged the European powers not to intervene in the Civil War (Blumenthal, 1966: 167).

In sum, theoretically a non-state actor can trigger an inter-state conflict either by inviting an external state to intervene in the internal conflict or through the assaults of the external state. Alternatively, the *de facto* state can emerge as the common enemy of the parent state and the external state, which leads to cooperation between the two against the *de facto* state. As Zartman (1993: 31) posits, such a situation turns into a complex and trilateral game. For example, cooperation between Russia and Moldova increased in the 1990s due to the Russian efforts to mediate the conflict between the Transnistrians and the Moldovan state (Vahl and Emerson, 2004).

According to Most and Starr's opportunity and willingness framework, for conflict to emerge, both macro and micro level factors should coexist. Opportunity is a necessary condition for conflict but it is not sufficient. A state should also have the willingness to go to military conflict with another state. In the following section, I argue that non-state political entities in general and *de facto* states in particular increase the willingness of states to initiate conflict, as they increase opportunities for conflict.

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[12] President James Monroe set the foundations of "American diplomatic ideals such as disentanglement from European affairs and defense of neutral rights," which is known as the Monroe Doctrine. http://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/Monroe (Last Access: March 1, 2010).

2.4.2.2 Willingness

Willingness simply refers to the choice and decision making process of a government. The dynamics of choice is shaped by the decision maker's image of the world or definition of the situation. Accordingly, the behaviors of governments are directly related to how decision makers perceive environmental factors. In regards to conflict, decision makers calculate and anticipate the costs and benefits of exploiting the opportunities for war (Most and Starr, 1989: 34-35).

I account for domestic factors, such as regime type as factors that raise willingness for conflict or cooperation. For that purpose, I discuss the context that I use the term democracy by briefly reviewing the comprehensive democratization literature.

According to Schumpeter (1991: 60), democracy is "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the elections of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will." However, Diamond (1999) argues that Schumpeter devotes much attention to selection and competition. Diamond, believes that the definitions of democracy, which descend from Schumpeter, only stress electoral democracy.

Diamond (1999: 10) criticizes the states violating human rights to be regarded as democracies just because they have competitive electoral systems. According to the minimalist definition of Schumpeter, states such as Russia, India, Sri Lanka and Columbia are qualified as democratic although these states abuse human rights. Consequently, Diamond highlights the gap between electoral

and liberal democracy. Therefore, scholars defining democracy explain the additional components in order to fill the gap between electoral and liberal democracies (Zakaria, 2003).

The seminal work of Lipset (1959: 71) defines democracy as "a political system, which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials." He presents two structural characteristics of society for the maintenance of democracy. Firstly, Lipset examines the economic development including indices of wealth, industrialization, education and urbanization. Secondly, he scrutinizes the legitimacy and effectiveness of the political system. Accordingly, legitimacy occurs when the political system is capable of maintaining the belief that existing political institutions are the most proper ones for the society. A political system is effective if it satisfies the expectations of most members of the society in performing basic functions of government (Lipset 1959, 86). In sum, Lipset points out how economic conditions, legitimacy and effectiveness of a political system serve to support the survival of democracy.

Linz and Stepan (1996: 3), on the other hand, argues that democratization is a process, which includes transition and consolidation phases. Democratic transition is complete first when there is sufficient agreement on the political procedures that produce an elected government. Second, free and popular vote determine who will come to power. Finally, the elected government has the authority to generate and implement new policies and when there is no *de jure* intervention of other bodies into the exercises of executive, legislative and judicial powers.

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Linz and Stepan also suggest five reinforcing conditions for the consolidation of democracy. First, a free and lively civil society is required because civil society helps social groups that are autonomous from state to articulate the demands and criticisms through the various kinds of associations. Second, democratic consolidation entails a political society, which has serious organizations and institutions such as political parties, elections, electoral rules, interparty coalitions and legislatures. Political society enables the challenges and reactions of civil society to transform into a more organized way. Third, rule of law that is guaranteed by constitution is an indispensable condition for a consolidated democracy because constitutionalism is necessary for democracy not to turn into a majoritarianism. Fourth reinforcing condition is the existence of state bureaucracy, which is supposed to exercise the basic functions of a modern state such as protecting the rights of citizens, paying for police, judges and basic services. Incompetence of state in exercising monopoly of legitimate use of force within the country means that citizens cannot effectively demand respect for their rights. Finally, economic society and institutionalized market economy, which is regulated by a set of norms, regulations and institutions, are necessary conditions for a consolidated democracy. Accordingly, there is a direct relationship between economic and political freedoms (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 3-13). As Steven Fish (1998: 237) argues, economic liberalization lets citizens express their discontents and dissatisfactions without fear of loss of the means of subsistence.

In sum, democratization of a state is a process where both transition and consolidation require various elements.[13] Theoretically I argue that his process in

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[13] I will operationalize each of these elements in Chapter 3 while I discuss the methodological issues.

a state affects not only domestic political decisions but also foreign policymaking such as initiating a war or establishing peaceful relations with another state.

In the following sections, I first examine the decision-making dynamics in a democratic or autocratic parent state during the process of a communal group's gradual transformation into a *de facto* state. Next, I examine the decision-making dynamics in a democratic or autocratic parent state after the *de facto* state is established. Willingness of the external party in both phases also examined through a democratization framework.

2.4.2.2.1 Willingness in the Process of Establishing a *De Facto* State

As noted in the previous sections, *de facto* states emerge as a result of a process. The frustration of minority groups at times leads to their mobilization under a capable leadership. The idea of 'relative deprivation' explained in Section 2.3.2.1.1 encourage these groups to challenge the sovereignty of parent states and, at the end of the day, civil war between parties may arise. As Sarkees, Wayman and Singer (2003: 58) argue, civil wars are "fought within the 'metropole' of a member state of the system by forces of the regime against an insurgent group." Consequently, the process, which paves the way of establishing a *de facto* state, begins through internal communal strife. This section seeks to comprehend what shapes the willingness of the rebel group, the parent state, and the external state, if a civil war becomes internationalized.[14]

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[14] In this section, I use "third party" to refer to the external state since the literature on interventions uses the term third party.

To exploit the opportunities stemming from a civil conflict, I argue that domestic factors such as the democracy level of a state create willingness for the, rebel group, parent state and the third party. The causal mechanism is complex, thus, I examine the actors separately.

Democracy, Parent State and Civil Strife

Democracy level of the parent state has an impact on the probability of civil conflict between the communal group and the state. The assumption is that communal groups are generally autocratic as they fight and institutionalize in the process of becoming a *de facto* state. For example, Harff and Gurr (2004: 104) argue that cohesion of a challenging ethnic group is the major determinant of the occurrence of ethno-political conflict. Cohesive groups concentrate within a region, accept the social order within the group and accept the autocratic leadership. Since, challenging ethnic groups are organized around an autocratic leadership in order to preserve their cohesiveness; these groups are not expected to have democratic systems. I maintain that a similar logic applies not only to ethnic communal groups but also to any sort of group.[15]

Accordingly, Hegre et al. (2005: 43-45) highlight the level of democracy in a state as a factor influencing the behavior of that state, especially during civil war periods. Hegre et al. argue that strictly authoritarian regimes and advanced democracies are less prone to civil conflict than transitional regimes. Rebel groups are better organized in semi-democracies (or semi-autocracies), in which

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[15] According to the Minorities at Risk project on minorities worldwide, there are several types of identity such as ethnonational, religious, sectarian, ideological etc.

repression produces grievances whereas some political openness allows rebel groups to mobilize. Therefore, the parent states, which experience a civil strife in their territory, are not always mature democracies. In fact, most of the time they are transitional democracies as Linz and Stepan (1996) call them.

Querol (2005) examines whether democracy can avert the occurrence of civil conflict. In addition to democratic character, level of inclusiveness of political system is required to diminish the probability of civil wars. According to Querol, communal groups who are excluded from decision-making process create social and political unrest. Exclusion refers to the "distance of the location of each group with respect to the location of the policy implemented." In order to prevent the exclusion of some groups, Querol suggests that instruments of political system such as electoral system should be regulated in more inclusive ways.

Unlike Querol, Gurr (2000) regards the inclusive character as a *sine qua non* condition for democracy. He argues that democratic regimes implement more inclusionary policies and create fewer radicalized elements. Therefore, democracy brings a resolution of civil conflict. According to Gurr (2000), promotion of democratic institutions and practices has two reflections. First, democratic countries implement less repressive policies against internal opponents. Second, modern democracies are less prone to fight one another. Consequently, democracy prevents the occurrence of civil war and its internationalization.

According to Diamond (1999: 6), "democracy involves processes of bargaining, accommodation, consensus building and political learning that are not unknown authoritarian regimes but are much more likely to exist in democracies." Hence, internal conflicts are settled peacefully, if democratic institutions work

efficiently. Thus, I argue that level of democracy in the parent state determines the initial process of the rebel groups' mobilization and finally of becoming a *de facto* state.

Democracy, Parent State and the External State

As a civil strife is under way in the parent state, which is most likely in a transitional regime, internationalization of the civil conflict becomes highly likely. In that case, the democracy level of both the parent state and the third party affect the internationalization process of the civil conflict.

In consideration of how domestic politics affect internationalization of a communal strife, Satana (2006: 8) argues that Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s (1999, 2003) selectorate theory is useful to understand the actions of the parent state and the third party. The theory examines the causal relationship between domestic political institutions and policy choices of the leaders. In democracies, citizens have influence to select government leaders by the help of these institutions. Therefore, leaders take the foreign policy expectations of their supporters into account while they make policy, since they want to be re-elected. Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1999) argue that regimes always have a winning coalition, which enjoy a share of private goods provided by the leadership. For example, a leader gets the support of a group of people and in return he bestows certain goods and services to this group. This relationship is present regardless of regime type of the state.

There is a large winning coalition in democracies whereas autocracies have

smaller winning coalitions. Since the winning coalition is generally large in democracies, it is hard to allocate private goods to the members of the coalition. Therefore, leaders in democracies usually prefer to provide public goods for everyone since public goods are accessible for any citizen no matter s/he is a member of the winning coalition or not. For example, Bueno de Mesquita (2003, 29) points to public goods in foreign policy domains such as "the promotion and exportation of a state's religious or cultural beliefs or the enhancement of national security." He also exemplifies public goods in domestic domains as policies on the rule of law or even-handed police services. Private goods, on the other hand, could be tax benefits or trade privileges for certain groups.

In sum, selectorate theory leads to two conclusions relevant for this discussion. First, the large size of the winning coalition in democratic states reduces the exclusion of a variety of social groups and compels leaders to allocate the public goods in more egalitarian and effective ways. This, by and large, should prevent a civil strife. However, if the group is sufficiently motivated and mobilized, it will not. Consequently, democracies are more selective in initiating wars against other states than autocracies because leaders of democratic states lose the support of large winning coalitions if public goods are not well supplied during a war. Thus, a democratic state in a civil strife should be less likely to get in a war as the strife internationalizes. Conversely, autocracies are not as selective as democratic governments in picking wars because private goods allocated for small winning coalitions remain stable during the war. Naturally, failure in the delivery of public goods is not as consequential in an autocracy as it is in a democracy. Thus, one might infer that autocracies, which are more likely to

experience communal strife, when they do, will be more likely to get in wars with other states due to internationalization of the communal strife.

Mansfield and Snyder (1995) examine how democratization affects the occurrence of inter-state wars. Although they acknowledge that peace is more likely between mature democracies, Mansfield and Snyder argue that countries, which are in the transitional phase of democracy, are more aggressive and prone to inter-state war. This supports the argument that transitional regimes will be more likely to fight when a civil strife is internationalized. Rotation of the elite system of democracy produces a competition between the elite of old regime and rising democratic forces. In order to succeed, contending elites use all the resources including nationalist policies to appeal to masses. Accordingly, transitional democracies have electoral democracies but the elite centralize the system by exploiting the nationalist discourse and populist policies.

The third party is not immune from the effects of its domestic politics. Regan (2002: 41) argues that as domestic and international constituency costs increase, the leader will choose a non-intervention policy, and the increase in the political benefits to the leader will result in an intervention. Satana (2006) and Regan (2002) acknowledge the national interests of the third party as an important factor in the decision to intervene. Nevertheless, both scholars find that regime type of the intervener is an influential variable in the decision-making process. Satana (2006) finds that when the third party is democratic and shares a common identity with the rebels in the parent state, it insists that the rebels should be treated democratically. Thus, when the third party is democratic and the parent state is not, I expect that internationalization of the civil strife will be more likely

and intervention will take place, which will lead to an inter-state conflict between the intervener and the parent state. Similarly, if the parent state is non-democratic and the non-democratic intervener wants to protect the group fighting against the parent state, conflict is more likely. Only when both parent and the external states are democracies, peaceful solution of the crisis is possible. For example, interventions of European countries and the U.S. in the civil strife between the Catholics in Northern Ireland and the U.K. did not lead to inter-state conflict due to the willingness of all democratic parties to solve the conflict through peaceful methods. However, as the previous Sri Lanka example demonstrates, the same is not true when the parent state is autocratic.

As a result, in the process of establishing a *de facto* state, civil strife is almost always experienced. It is previously noted that the parent state does not want to share domestic sovereignty with the rebels. Regime type of the parent state becomes crucial in the process of the strife, which eventually results in the intervention of a third party. The regime type of the third party is decisive for the decision to intervene, since democratic third parties can claim the rights of the rebels for them or an autocratic third party can try to collect the benefits of an intervention to provide its winning coalition with private goods. While regime type increases willingness to go to war during the *process* of the rebels to become a *de facto* state, once the *de facto* state is established, regime type becomes even more important for conflict and cooperation. The following section will elaborate on this next stage.

2.4.2.2.2 Willingness after a *De Facto* State is Established

A long civil strife period between rebels and parent state may lead to the establishment of a *de facto* state. While most civil conflicts become intractable conflicts that endure for a long time, a few turn into a struggle between a *de facto* state and the parent state and sometimes end in *status quo*. Foreign policy activities of *de facto* states generate complex relations between the parent state and the external state, which has separate relations with the *de facto* state. In the previous section, I examined how democratic institutions of the parent state and the third party may prevent civil conflict from turning into an inter-state war, during the process of establishing a *de facto* state. However, once the *de facto* state is established, democratic characters of the 'metropole' state and the third party do not suffice to produce peace. That is to say, the probability of conflict between states is affected by their separate relations with the *de facto* state. Consequently, I analyze the triadic relations between the *de facto* state, the parent state and the third party to examine why domestic constrains such as regime type affect the relationships.

Democracy and the De Facto State

I argue that level of democracy, similar to the process of establishing a *de facto* state, is the major determinant of the willingness of states when a civil war ends in the parent state. While in the previous section I only examine the parent and the external states, willingness of the *de facto* state has a capital importance in this

section. A *de facto* state ultimately has a developed political regime, which affects its foreign policy behaviors. Moreover, the democracy level in a *de facto* state influences the willingness of the sovereign states in the game.

Caspersen (2008: 115-116) argues that the internal dynamics of *de facto* states such as state building processes and democratization have not been systematically analyzed. She posits that unrecognized states are "commonly viewed as criminalized, warlord-controlled, ethnic fiefdoms that constitute a risk to individual, regional and perhaps even international security." Yet, *de facto* states are in a transitional phase of state building. As Caspersen (2008) maintains, democratization has become a tool for *de facto* states to legitimize their existence and to finally receive international recognition as a state. *De facto* states such as Abkhazia and Nagorno-Qarabakh experience an ongoing and gradual democratization process in transitional parent states (Caspersen, 2008). Furthermore, arguably, Kosovo's independence and recognition as a sovereign state in 2008 set an example for other unrecognized states to democratize and gain international approval.

Similarly, King (2001: 525) argues that territorial separatist groups in Eurasia of the early 1990`s, such as the Abkhaz, have gradually built *de facto* states, which have armed forces, control their own territory, provide education for their children and maintain local economies. In other words, state-building processes continued in *de facto* states while state failure has become the norm in parent states. While an autocratic leadership during the civil war is more likely to lead to successful establishment of a *de facto* state, after state institutions are in place, democratization becomes important for legitimacy as Casperson argues.

Although leaders seek to strengthen the internal cohesion during the civil war, relative stability of these states reduces the power of the military and creates opportunities for political opposition. Following selectorate theory, in a democratic *de facto* state, the winning coalition would be larger and this would reflect on foreign policy decisions as well as domestic political decisions. Consequently, the democratization process in *de facto* states has a positive impact on their foreign policy behaviors (Caspersen 2008, 123).

As the *de facto* state becomes more democratic, not only do the chances of international recognition increase but also if the level of democracy increases in the parent state and the external state, settlement of crises becomes easier. The next section discusses the dynamics of the relationships considering all three actors and their regime types.

Democracy, De Facto State, Parent State and the External State

The causal mechanism between democracy and conflict *before* a *de facto* state is established has been discussed in section 2.3.2.2.1. A similar logic applies to the process *after* the *de facto* state is established. However, this time I also regard the *de facto* state as a regime where regime type should be considered to understand its foreign policy behavior. The definition of a *de facto* state, which I laid out earlier, notes that *de facto* states behave like sovereign states in their internal affairs. Thus, a *de facto* state should be treated in the way sovereign states are in terms of their foreign policymaking.

According to the 'selectorate theory' of Bueno de Mesquita (2003), as discussed previously, the size of the winning coalition determines the characteristic of a regime. Since democracies have large winning coalitions, governments cannot allocate private privileges to its supporters, which are the members of the winning coalition. Thus, leaders who want to stay in office aim to provide public goods as efficient as possible. Consequently, leaders pursue less aggressive foreign policy because initiating war can cause the decline of the allocation of public goods. In regards to the relationship between states and *de facto* state, the size of winning coalition matters. The institutional impact of democracy is also examined by Dassel (1997: 407) who argues, "democracies have political institutions that subject foreign policy makers to checks and balances; that they possess non-violent form of domestic conflicts that are carried over to international relations; or both." In short, the *de facto* state, which tries to democratize in order to gain international recognition (as in the case of Kosovo), is constrained by democratic institutions for the decision to go to war.

Other than this institutional explanation of democratic peace by Bueno de Mesquita (2003), Maoz and Russett (1993: 625-626) suggest that the normative model of democratic peace assumes that norms of compromise and cooperation prevent conflict to emerge between two democracies. Similarly, Levy and Vakili (1993: 123) argue that ideological reasons affect the decisions of democracies on taking military action because leaders of democratic regimes need domestic support to initiate conflict. According to Levy and Vakili, if Argentina had been governed by a democratic regime, Prime Minister Thatcher of Britain would not have initiated military action against Argentina in 1982. In other words, from a

norms-based approach as well as an institutional standpoint, democratic *de facto* states are constrained in their decisions to fight. As laid out earlier, the parent and the external state also are constrained in the same way.

The relationship between democracies and non-democracies is another dimension of democratic peace proposition, which studies regime type in a dyadic level. In other words, the theory does not claim that democracy by itself is sufficient to produce peace. Russet (1993: 11) proposes that democratic organization of political systems creates constraints and compels them to have peaceful relations with other democracies. However, Russet also explains that democracies do not necessarily have peaceful relations with other types of political regimes.

Following this literature, I theorize that non-democratic regimes of sovereign states and *de facto* states are the determinants of conflict. Lack of democratic norms and institutions paves the way of conflictual relations between states sharing an issue produced by the *de facto* state. In that sense, one should consider a triad where the relations between the *de facto* state, parent state and the external state (third party) all matter.

Observations from the real cases are helpful to demonstrate the dynamics of the relationships in the triad. The Basque region and Nagorno-Qarabakh crises show how democracy and peaceful settlement of sovereignty problems are interconnected. In 1988, difficulties between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Qarabakh resulted in military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Cornell, 1998). In this case, none of the states in the game have democratic political systems and all the actors still had Soviet style governments. On the other hand, the diplomatic

negotiations between Spain and France in regards to the Basque region and the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) activities in the region symbolize how democratic governments mediate their conflicts. Accordingly, probability of conflict between Spain and France reduced when domestic politics of Spain has de-militarized after the end of Franco regime and after the leadership of the Basque Nationalist Party has declared its adherence to the ideas of the European Union. Consequently, democratization of the parties paved the way of peaceful settlement of the conflict and cooperation between parties radicalized ETA (Preston, 1986).

In sum, the literature on the causal connection between democracy and conflict shows that development of democracy is a major determinant of peaceful relations between states. However, there is a gap in this literature in that *de facto* states have been under-studied. In this section, I added *de facto* states to the triadic relations and showed that once *de facto* states are also in the process of democratization, willingness of all the three actors increase to maintain peaceful relations. As Diamond (1999: 18) argues "democracy should be viewed as a developmental phenomenon." Accordingly, democratic institutions can be deepened and consolidated even though a country is above the threshold of electoral democracy. Therefore, gradual democratization of parent and external states and the *de facto* state reduces the willingness of parties to take the advantage of the situation, which offers opportunities for inter-state military conflict.

Next, I enumerate the hypotheses that are derived from this theoretical framework.

Hypotheses on Opportunity & Conflict

H1: All else being equal, in the process of group's fighting for *de facto* statehood, the opportunity of conflict increases between the parent state and the external state.

H2: All else being equal, once the *de facto* state is established, presence of the *de facto* state increases the opportunity for conflict between the external state and the parent state, if the external state supports the *de facto* state.

H3: All else being equal, once the *de facto* state is established, presence of the *de facto* state increases the opportunity for conflict between the external state and the parent state, if the external state is against the *de facto* state.

H4: All else being equal, once the *de facto* state is established, presence of the *de facto* state decreases the opportunity for conflict between the external state and the parent state, if the external state is against the *de facto* state but allies with the parent state.

Hypotheses on Willingness & Conflict

H5: All else being equal, in the process of group's fighting for *de facto* statehood, the willingness for conflict decreases if the levels of democracy of the parent state and the external state increases.

H6: All else being equal, once the *de facto* state is established, the willingness for conflict decreases if the level of democracy of the *de facto* state, parent state and the external state increases.

The causal mechanism in this dissertation is based on Most and Starr's opportunity willingness framework as previously explained. Opportunity or willingness is individually necessary but not sufficient conditions for military conflict. However, if they coexist, conflict is more likely. Accordingly, I expect if both opportunity and willingness that the *de facto* state creates are present, military conflict is more likely.

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology are explained. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework are tested through two cases using the comparative method.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In Chapter 2, the causal relationship between presence of *de facto* states and inter-state military conflict has been examined. This chapter discusses the research design, and further conceptualizes and operationalizes the variables.

3.1.1 Dependent Variable

Inter-State Military Conflict. In the conflict studies literature, conflict is defined in different ways. For example, according to Gurr (1980 in Wilkenfeld and Brecher 2003: 271), conflict is "the overt, coercive interactions of contending collectivities, involving two or more parties using coercion to injure or control their opponents."

Bremer (1995: 3-4), on the other hand, posits that arising conflicts between states may be the product of political, economic, military, social and geographic conditions. Although many of these problems are settled by peaceful negotiations, some of these conflicts of interest are seen as irreconcilable by at least one of the parties. Thus, states occasionally use force as a way to pursue their goals through the conflict. The militarization of the conflict is assumed to be a threshold for inter-state conflict to transform into a Militarized Inter-state Dispute (MID). Furthermore, Bremer argues that there is a substantial agreement on the definition of militarized inter-state disputes. Accordingly, a militarized inter-state dispute refers to a conflict in which one or more states threatens, displays or uses force against one or more states (Bremer, 1995: 5).

This dissertation uses two indicators of military disputes. The first one is the highest level of action and the second one is the hostility levels of the states on the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set (v3.10) in the "Correlates of War Project."[16] There are several other indicators of military conflict such as the intensity of it, which can be measured by using fatality. However, the theoretical argument points to increasing or decreasing level of conflict and cooperation between the parent and the external states; thus, the hostility level between two countries provides a valid measure to capture changing levels of conflict. Similarly, highest action in the conflict makes it possible to follow the course of the conflictual relations between the parent and the external state.

MID data set operationalizes hostility in five levels:

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[16] The data set and the codebook explaining the variables in detail are available at: http://www.correlatesofwar.org/ (Last Access: March 2, 2010).

Hostility level of the incident and the states (HostLev):

1   No militarized action

2   Threat to use force

3   Display of force

4   Use of force

5   War

MID data set operationalizes highest action in the conflict in great detail as follows:

Highest action in dispute and taken by the states [bracketed numbers refer to corresponding hostility level] (HiAct):

0   No militarized action [1]

1   Threat to use force [2]

2   Threat to blockade [2]

3   Threat to occupy territory [2]

4   Threat to declare war [2]

5   Threat to use CBR weapons [2]

6   Threat to join war [2]

7   Show of force [3]

8   Alert [3]

9   Nuclear alert [3]

10   Mobilization [3]

11   Fortify border [3]

12   Border violation [3]

13   Blockade [4]

14   Occupation of territory [4]

15   Seizure [4]

16   Attack [4]

17   Clash [4]

18   Declaration of war [4]

19   Use of CBR weapons [4]

20   Begin interstate war [5]

21   Join interstate war [5]

-9   Missing [-9]

The MID data set includes only extra-systemic (colonial) conflicts, intra-state and inter-state disputes. The data are available from 1816 to 2001. However, since the conflict scholars have recently started studying *de facto* states, a listing of non-state wars are added to the traditional COW war categories up until 2007. Nevertheless, further data are not available yet. For that reason, I examine the case study literature on the two comparative cases to sort out the non-state conflicts from others using the COW's updated list.

3.1.2 Explanatory Variables

3.1.2.1 Independent Variables

De Facto **State's Presence and Autonomous Foreign Policy Attempts in the**

Parent State. As explained in detail in Chapter 3, I build on Pegg's (1998) work

and expand his definition of a *de facto* state as "any political authority within a

given territory that has the capability to provide an effective and legitimate

domestic order, exercises the functions of any state and sets and follows up an

agenda for its foreign relations." I argue that *de facto* state's establishment process

and the outcome create opportunity for the parent and external states. Thus, I

observe the presence of *de facto* states and create a list of all *de facto* states in the

world in section 3.2.

Speeches of the officials and official texts are analyzed for the

identification of an autonomous foreign policy of the *de facto* state.

Level of Democracy of Parent, External and *De Facto* States. In regards to

democracy, this dissertation uses the conceptualization and operationalization

criteria of the "Polity IV Project," "examines concomitant qualities of democratic

and autocratic authority in governing institutions, rather than discreet and

mutually exclusive forms of governance. This perspective envisions a spectrum of

governing authority that spans from fully institutionalized autocracies through

mixed, or incoherent, authority regimes (termed "anocracies") to fully institutionalized democracies." The Project (directed by Ted Gurr himself for a long time) covers "all major, independent states in the global system (i.e., states with total population of 500,000 or more in the most recent year; currently 163 countries) over the period 1800-2008."[17]

The data set consists of six component measures that include "key qualities of executive recruitment, constraints on executive authority, and political competition. It also records changes in the institutionalized qualities of governing authority." Unfortunately, the Polity data does not include information on the regime types of the *de facto* states. The data set records "information only on the institutions of the central government and on political groups acting, or reacting, within the scope of that authority." Nevertheless, the data set includes a "fragmentation" variable where I am able to find data on state failure and internal strife. To supplement these data, I carried out field research in one of my cases and consulted secondary sources in the other case to determine the democracy level of the *de facto* states in these cases. For the level of democracy data on the parent and external states, I rely on the Polity IV data set.[18] The data include transition information of the regimes as well, which is also relevant for the testing.

The six components are operationalized as follows:

1) Regulation of chief executive recruitment refers to extent to which a

polity has institutionalized procedures for transferring executive power.

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[17] The data and individual country reports are available at the data set web page:
http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm (Last Access: February 20, 2010).
[18] I use Polity IV data set instead of the "Freedom in the World" data of the Freedom House Organization because the latter is arguably biased according to the democratization scholars.

2) Competitiveness of executive recruitment refers to the subordinates to have equal opportunities to become superordinates.

3) Openness of executive recruitment measures whether recruitment of chief executive is open for politically active population.

4) Executive constraints are about a stable and institutionalized check and balance system over the decision making process.

5) Regulation of participation aims to measure the binding rules on the expression of preferences.

6) Competitiveness of participation refers to the extent that alternative preferences for policy and leadership can be pursued in the political arena.

The Polity IV Project has a 21-point scale ranking from -10 to +10. Each polity that is analyzed in accordance with the variables above has its own score. The scores of polities can be converted to regime categories. According to the categorization of Polity IV, -10 is hereditary monarchy, polities between -10 and -6 are autocracies, polities between -5 and +5 are anocracies, polities between +6 and +10 are democracies and +10 is consolidated democracy. These numerical values are supported with qualitative data on each country. According to Polity IV project (Marshall and Cole 2009), the definitions of these concepts are as follows;

- **Consolidated Democracy (+10):** A consolidated democracy has institutionalized procedures for open, competitive, and deliberative political participation; chooses and replaces chief executives in open, competitive elections; and imposes substantial checks and balances on the powers of the chief executive.

- **Democracy (+6 to +10):** A democracy may have weaker checks on executive power, some restrictions on political participation, or shortcomings in the application of the rule of law to opposition groups.

- **Autocracy (Hereditary Monarchies) (-10):** In hereditary monarchies, citizens' participation is sharply restricted or suppressed; chief executives are selected according to clearly defined (usually hereditary) rules of succession from within the established political elite; and, once in office, chief executives exercise power with no meaningful checks from legislative, judicial, or civil society institutions.

- **Autocracy (-10 to -6):** This refers to less institutionalized forms of autocracies. The rules of succession are less clearly defined. Less-institutionalized autocracies may allow some space for political participation or impose some effective limits on executive authority.

- **Anocracy (-5 to +5):** is characterized by institutions and political elites that are far less capable of performing fundamental tasks and ensuring their own continuity. Anocratic regimes very often reflect an inherent quality of instability or ineffectiveness and are especially vulnerable to the onset of new political instability events, such as outbreaks of armed conflict, unexpected changes in leadership, or adverse regime changes.

While these data are useful to operationalize institutional characteristics of regimes, I also consider economic liberalization as part of the democratization process in the theoretical framework of the dissertation. Existence of an economic society, which refers to the institutionalization of market economy through a set of norms, institutions and regulations, is regarded as a requirement for consolidation of a democracy (Fish, 1998; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Diamond, 1999). Thus, the position of polities on the economic freedom index provides a better understanding in analyzing the democracy level of states. In measuring the economic freedom level of polities, the annual Economic Freedom of the World reports collected by CATO Institute, are used. In the reports, economic freedom is evaluated by examining five areas:

1) size of government: expenditures, taxes and enterprises,

2) legal structure and the security of property rights,

3) access to sound money,

4) freedom to trade internationally,

5) regulation of credit, labor and business.

Economic Freedom Index of the CATO Institute has 10 points ranking from 0 to 10. According to the categorization of the CATO Institute, maximum score for economic freedom is 10 whereas the minimum is 0.[19]

3.1.2.2 Control Variables

Power Distribution. The realist literature argues that uneven distribution of capabilities between states is a factor that influences states to become involved in military conflict with each other. For example, Small and Singer (1982) argues that major powers are more likely to get involved in inter-state conflict since they have uneven capabilities with the state that they intervene. Thus, uneven distribution of capabilities should be controlled for. The data on capabilities of each state are available in the Correlates of War Project. There are six indicators to measure the composite index of national capabilities (CINC). These are energy consumption, iron & steel production, military expenditure, military personnel, total population and urban population (Singer, 1987: 115-132).

Contiguity. Geographical proximity is another opportunity for the interaction between states. Vasquez (1993) argues that territorial contiguity increases the

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[19] The reports are available at the official web site of the Institute: http://www.cato.org/pubs/efw/ (Last Access: January 9, 2010)

possibility of interaction, states sharing border are more prone to have conflictual relations. Thus, I control for this variable. The Correlates of War Project Direct Contiguity Data set provides the information of contiguity (Correlates of War Project Direct Contiguity Data, 1816-2006. Version 3.1).

There are five types of contiguity. First, border, which is separated by a land or river, is coded as (1). Second type of contiguity refers to the separation of borders by 12 miles of water and less. It is coded as (2). If the border is separated by 24 miles of water or less (but more than 12 miles), it is coded as (3). In the fourth type of contiguity, which is coded as (4), borders are separated by 150 miles of water or less (but more than 24 miles). Finally, when the borders are separated by 400 miles of or less (but more than 150 miles), It is coded as (5) in the data set.

3.2 Methodology and Case Selection

3.2.1 Methodology

When one works with *de facto* states, the population of cases that can be studied is not very large. Nevertheless, using my definition of a *de facto* state, I identify 15 *de facto* states in the world. These are as follows;

Table 1. The Population of *De facto* States and Parent States

De Facto State	Parent State
Nagorno-Qarabakh	Azerbaijan
Abkhazia	Georgia
South Ossetia	Georgia
Turkish Republic of North Cyprus	Republic of Cyprus
Kurdistan Regional Government	Iraq
Somaliland	Somali
Transnistria	Moldavia
Basque Region	Spain
Taiwan	People Republic of China
Eritrea	Ethiopia
Palestine	Israel
Tamil Eelam	Sri Lanka
Bougainvillea	Papua New Guinea
Kosovo	Serbia
Confederacy	United States of America

I use the comparative method in order to test the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework. In doing so, two cases are selected by using most similar systems design.[20] These cases are Turkey-Iraq-KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) and Russia-Georgia-South Ossetia triads. The cases that have been selected to test the theory will be analyzed since 1991 because South Ossetia

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[20] Most Similar Systems Design is a method, which is usually undertaken by the researchers of comparative politics. The aim is to select cases that have similarities in as many ways as possible in order to get control variables (Guy, 1998: 36-41). As Przeworski and Teune notes "common systemic characteristics are conceived of as "controlled for," whereas inter-systemic differences viewed as explanatory variables. Accordingly, most similar systems design produces two theoretical implications. First, the behaviors that are being explained are not determined by the factors that are common to the cases because different patterns of behaviors are observed among systems that share common factors. Second, explanatory variables can be regarded as set of variables that differentiate these systems in a manner and influence the behaviors of them (Przeworski and Teune, 1970: 34-35).

became a *de facto* state after the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991 and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was established after the First Gulf War in the same year. In examining the control and explanatory variables, the period between 1991 and 2009 is taken into consideration.

Table 2. Case Selection: Most Similar Systems Design

Cases/Variables	Turkey-Iraq-Kurdistan Regional Government	Russia-Georgia-South Ossetia
IV. Level of Democracy of Parent, External and *De facto* States	Increasing	Decreasing
CV1. Power Distribution	Uneven	Uneven
CV2. Contiguity	Yes	Yes
DV. Likelihood of Inter-State Military Conflict	Decreasing	Increasing

Since the cases are selected depending on the independent variable, they are already satisfying the independent variable where in the triad, there is a *de facto* state, which carries out autonomous foreign policy decisions. Table 2 is the summary table of how control variables are kept constant in case selection, while the independent and dependent variables vary, as Przeworski and Teune (1970) recommend. The factors that are common to the cases are uneven distribution of capabilities between states and contiguity. The influence of these variables is controlled in order to be sure that there is a causal relationship between the explanatory variable and dependent variable. As Lijphart posits, control variables

provide a *ceteris paribus* condition to test the influence of explanatory variable(s) (Lijphart, 1971: 683).

3.2.2 Comparability of the Cases of Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia

3.2.2.1 Control Variables

To control for the effect of contiguity, I use the Dyadic Direct Contiguity Data set collected by the Correlates of War (COW) Project, which includes annual records for each pair of states in the world, which are directly contiguous. In the data set, the contiguity of Turkey and Iraq is identified between the years 1932 and 2006. In accordance with the classification of the Correlates of War Project, there is contiguity between Iraq and Turkey. The type of contiguity is coded as 1, which refers to the border separated by a land or river (Correlates of War Project *Direct Contiguity Data, 1816-2006*, Version 3.1).

In regards to the uneven power distribution between states Composite Index of National Capacity (CINC) of Correlates of War Project provides information about the material capabilities of Turkey and Iraq by examining military, demographic and industrial indicators. By this way, symmetric or asymmetric nature of power distribution between these states can be measured. According to CINC, military personnel and military expenditure are regarded as the subcomponent of the military indicator. In terms of demographic indicator,

total population and urban population factors are focused. Finally, industrial indicator includes primary energy consumption and iron and steel production (Singer, 1987).

The dyadic data set indicating the national capabilities between Turkey and Iraq encompasses the years between 1932 and 2001. Accordingly, national capabilities are unevenly distributed between Turkey and Iraq until 1980, when Iran-Iraq War started. By the means of Iran-Iraq War and Gulf War, power capabilities of Iraq gradually rise and achieve the balance with Turkey in 1990. Nevertheless, national capabilities of Iraq sharply decrease after the defeat of Gulf War, while Turkey's power smoothly increases during the 1990's. In 2001, national capabilities of Turkey are more than two fold of Iraq (Correlates of War, National Material Capabilities, Version 3.02).

Although, Correlates of War National Material Capabilities data set does not cover the years between 2002 and 2009, the proportion of national capabilities between Turkey and Iraq remains asymmetric because of the UN sanctions and US -led invasion of Iraq. Accordingly, UN sanctions has eroded the military capabilities of Iraq and reduced the revenues, which are supposed to finance the defense sector (Lopez and Cortright, 2004). In post-Saddam period, on the other hand, the problems of the transitional phase have been experienced. Military, economic and demographic indicators of Iraq are still below Turkey's national capabilities.

For example, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) disbanded Iraqi army in order to exclude the Ba'athist officials from the public sphere (O'Leary, 2009: 7). Then, CPA undertook a tough mission and started from scratch to rebuild a

new Iraqi army. However, training program for the New Iraqi Army could not produce properly trained and committed soldiers and prevent the rise of insurgency (Pollack, 2006). On the other hand, economic capabilities of Iraq are also problematical because violence, crime and instability undermined the market driven investments to settle down and deteriorated the economy of Iraq (Looney, 2006).

Turkey and Iraq have never experienced symmetric power parity except the years between 1980 and 1990, when there was a state of war in Iraq. Increasing numbers of military personnel and booming military budget of Iraq created a balance between Turkey and Iraq in 1980's. However, the defeat of Gulf War, UN sanctions and US invasion to Iraq cut the claws of Iraq. Consequently, distribution of national capabilities among Turkey and Iraq continued to be uneven since 1991.

The contiguity and power distribution between Russia and Georgia is rather stable. According to the Dyadic Direct Contiguity Data set of Correlates of War Project, Russia and Georgia are contiguous since 1991. The border between them is coded as 1, which means that the border is separated by a land or river (Correlates of War Project *Direct Contiguity Data, 1816-2006*. Version 3.1). On the other hand, power is unevenly distributed between Russia and Georgia. In regards to Composite Index of National Capabilities, there is asymmetry between Russia and Georgia (Correlates of War, National Material Capabilities, Version 3.02).

In conclusion, both cases selected for testing the theoretical framework are comparable in terms of the control variables. Both cases are contiguous and in

both cases one side is decisively more capable than the other for most of the years under consideration.

3.2.2.2 *De Facto* Statehood

This study regards the Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia as sovereign but unrecognized states. One can ask whether these entities both have the characteristics of a *de facto* state. In this part, I examine how Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia are compatible to compare as *de facto* states.

As noted in the theory chapter, a *de facto* state refers to any political authority within a given territory that has the capability to provide an effective and legitimate domestic order, exercises the functions of any state and sets and follows up an agenda for its foreign relations but lacks international recognition. According to this definition, both Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia can be regarded as *de facto* states.

There is a *de facto* Kurdish state, which can provide effective domestic order and public services in Northern Iraq since 2003. The first steps for the *de facto* Kurdish state were taken after the army of Saddam Hussein withdrew from the north of 36th parallel upon the "no fly zone" policy of United States. Furthermore, Saddam Hussein imposed economic blockade against Kurdish areas and withdrew the civilian officers appointed by Baghdad government. Nevertheless, after the establishment of the *de facto* Kurdish state in 1991,

conflict between Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan erupted. Although KDP and PUK managed to exercise the functions of a sovereign state and provide basic public services within the territories that they controlled, the unified and institutionalized *de facto* Kurdish state could be established in the post-Saddam period after 2003. Although the new constitution of Iraq, which is accepted in 2005, regards Kurdistan Regional Government as a federal unit of the country, special articles on regional governments highlight the self-government principle, which makes KRG a *de facto* state rather than a federal unit. Accordingly;

- The regional authorities shall have the right to exercise executive, legislative, and judicial authority in accordance with this constitution, except for those powers stipulated in the exclusive powers of the federal government. (Article 117, Episode 1).[21]

- In case of a contradiction between regional and national legislation in respect to a matter outside the exclusive powers of the federal government, the regional authority shall have the right to amend the application of the national legislation within that region (Article 117, Episode 2).

- The Regional Government shall be responsible for all the administrative requirements of the region, particularly the establishment and organization of the internal security forces for the region such as police, security forces and guards of the region. (Article 117, Episode 5)

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[21] See official web site of "Kurdistan Regional Government"
http://www.krg.org/articles/detail.asp?rnr=160&lngnr=12&smap=04070000&anr=15057 (Last Access: 23 May, 2010)

However, the Iraqi constitution does not specify the limits of Kurdistan Regional Government's sovereignty. Thus, the issues such as Kurdish foreign oil contracts, redistribution of oil revenues, the role and size of the Kurdish peshmerga (militia) forces, the growing debate over centralization and federalism and article 140 of the Iraqi constitution dealing with disputed territories are still unresolved. The main concern of Kurdish officials is the solution of these problems by preserving the sovereignty of KRG. Thus, the Kurdish officials argue that they will defend their sovereignty over the political system, natural sources and military forces of KRG in case Baghdad government calls for centralization (Mardini, 2009).

One can ask whether the involvement of Kurdish politicians in the Baghdad government undermine the sovereignty of Kurdistan Regional Government. According to Kutschera (2002: 21), Kurdish politicians behave pragmatically in order to preserve their sovereignty. He notes "the Kurds have finally understood that they should exert power in the capital if they are to have it in their region". In other words, the Kurdish role in the Baghdad government means that constitution, which guarantees the sovereignty of KRG, cannot be changed without the consent of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

In sum, the officials of Kurdistan Regional Government extremely stress to keep the sovereignty of the region. Although Iraqi constitution defines the Kurdistan region as a federal unit, Arbil government insists on behaving as a sovereign state. The issues, which remain unsolved between Arbil and Baghdad, derive from the policies of Kurdistan Regional Government to maintain its *de facto* independence from Baghdad.

On the other hand, the evaluation of the situation in South Ossetia is quite simple. The government of South Ossetia could provide effective domestic control after its struggle ended against Tbilisi in 1992. After this period, any attempt of Georgian government to restore its authority over South Ossetia was nullified by the help of Russia. This means that, the authority of Tbilisi did not shadow the sovereignty of South Ossetia since 1992. Moreover, the *de facto* state of South Ossetia gained recognition from a few countries such as Russia and Nicaragua.

In regards to the state building process, South Ossetia started to build all the structures of statehood after it declared independence in 1992 (Lynch, 2004: 31). According to King (2001) South Ossetia managed to fulfill statehood after a devastating struggle against Tbilisi. After South Ossetia emerged as a *de facto* state, it became a self-sufficient actor, which controls its territory, has a trained military, facilitates services such as education and maintains a local economy.

Consequently, both Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia are *de facto* states, which are compatible to compare. They are sovereign units, which provide domestic order and public services effectively and have foreign relations with other states. Furthermore, the people of both entities voted in favor of independence. In the referendum that was held in January 2005, 98,8% of the Kurdish voters favored an independent Kurdistan (Rafaat, 2007: 270), while 99% of South Ossetians supported the idea of independence in 2006 referendum (Coppieters, 2007: 25). Finally, both Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia lacks widespread international recognition.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I examine how the activities of Kurdistan Regional Government and South Ossetia, before and after *de facto* statehood, affect the occurrence of international conflicts between 1932 and 2009 for the KRG case and between 1989-2009 for the South Ossetian case. For that purpose, the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework of this study are tested in accordance with the suggested methodology.

CHAPTER 4

THE CASE OF KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT-TURKEY-IRAQ

"We will turn over not a single Kurd to Turkey, in fact, not even a Kurdish cat. The PKK leaders are living in the rugged mountains of Kurdistan. Despite all of its strength and its latest technology, the Turkish military has not been able to wipe them out or capture them. How it is that we are now supposed to turn them over to Turkey?" said the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani in a press conference on October 22, 2007 (Güneş, 2007). Talabani was answering questions on whether the Iraqi Kurds would help the Turkish military in capturing Kurdish separatist PKK terrorists operating from Northern Iraq.

This is just one example where one can often see the names of Iraqi Kurdish political leaders in the Turkish newspapers. The speeches of these leaders create remarkable repercussions among the political elite and occasionally intimidate the public opinion in Turkey. The question of what makes the words of these politicians so noteworthy for Turkish decision makers is an important one. In other words, why do Turkish governments regard the activities of Kurdish political groups (and the Kurdistan Regional Government after 2003), as a factor in its foreign policymaking, especially towards Iraq?

As noted in the previous chapters, this study seeks to comprehend the role of *de facto* states, before and after their establishment, in generating inter-state military conflicts. According to the theoretical premise of this study, for military conflict to occur between states, two independent variables are examined. The first variable is *opportunity*, which refers to available options imposed by environmental factors. Autonomous foreign policy activities of *de facto* states increase the possibility of interaction between states and create an opportunity for conflict between them. Also the process of becoming a *de facto* state might lead to conflict opportunities. The second variable is *willingness*, which deals with the incentives for action. Accordingly, levels of democracy of the actors in the game create willingness to exploit opportunities of interaction.

In order to test the theoretical propositions of this dissertation, I initially analyze to what extent the process and outcome of Kurdish state-building in Northern Iraq creates an opportunity between Turkey and Iraq. I first examine the Kurdish rebels' struggle against central authority and the *de facto* state building process until 1991. Second, I examine the transition period between 1991 and 2003 as the Kurdish groups experienced struggle among themselves and finally consolidated power in a pact in 2002. Next, I examine the conflict opportunities created by the establishment of the *de facto* Kurdish government after 2003 and later the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 2006. Finally, I examine whether the level of democracy of the sides affect the willingness of Turkey and Iraq for conflict.

4.1 Independent Variables: Opportunity and Willingness in the Kurdish Case

As argued in Chapter 2, a *de facto* state emerges as a result of civil conflict between communal groups and the parent state. Hence, in the following sections, I examine the influence of the independent variables in two stages: the process and the outcome. I analyze the influence of opportunity and willingness variables over the relations between Turkey and Iraq during the struggle of the Iraqi Kurdish rebel groups for *de facto* statehood and after the *de facto* Kurdish state is established.

4.1.1 Opportunity and Willingness during the Process of Becoming a *De Facto* State

4.1.1.1 Historical Background

The history of the Kurdish secessionism in Iraq can be traced back to the final stages of the Ottoman rule in the region by the end of the World War I. When the British rule was established in Iraq, Sheikh Mahmud[22] was appointed as the governor of Sulaymaniya district and the head of the South Kurdish Federation on December 1, 1918. The policy of Britain was known as the "Sandeman system,"

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[22] Sheikh Mahmud was the leader of Barzinja Sheikh family. In Kurdish political culture, Shakyks are landowners, religious leaders and political rulers of a certain territory. (Jwaideh, 2006: 49-52)

which was based on indirect rule. Accordingly, a native leader is subsidized in order to bring the wild and mountainous region within the system of the British rule (Jwaideh, 2006: 165).

However, the relations between Sheikh Mahmud and the British officials deteriorated when he consolidated his power. Sheikh Mahmud centralized the system immediately and a wave of nepotism followed his rule. Furthermore, he highlighted his personal cult and laid loyalty oath down as a condition for inauguration. Even the British officials and conscripted soldiers had to defer to Mahmud's rule (McDowall, 2004: 220).

It was apparent that British officials and Sheikh Mahmud had different plans. The main goal of Sheikh Mahmud was to establish his absolute authority over the Kurdistan region without any restriction imposed by Baghdad, namely the British administration. In other words, only complete independence of Kurdistan could satisfy Sheikh Mahmud. On the other hand, Britain's policy involved the incorporation of Southern Kurdistan into Iraq. Thus, the authority of Sheikh Mahmud had to be undermined (Tahiri, 2009).

British troops defeated Sheikh Mahmud on May 23, 1919 and sent him into exile. However, Sheikh Mahmud was needed again when the Turkish intentions were revived in the region. According to the British administration, Kurdish nationalism and Sheikh Mahmud could bring the Turkish propaganda toward Southern Kurdistan to an end. Mahmud was appointed as the head of Sulaymaniya parliament in September 1922. However, Sheikh Mahmud promulgated himself as the "King of Kurdistan" in return for his resistance against Turkish activities (McDowall, 2004: 226). Sheikh Mahmud's policy of

independence and his resentment of British restrictions resulted in another battle between Baghdad and Sulaymaniya. In May 1924, Iraqi army destroyed the headquarters of Sheikh Mahmud and established the authority of Baghdad over Sulaymaniya (McDowall, 2004: 228).

Sheikh Mahmud's struggle for independence is the first phase of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq. His ideas were dominated by the self-determination principle, which ruled that Kurds could have their own sovereign state (Jwaideh, 2006: 175). However, the plans of Britain for Iraq were different and the Kurdish districts remained as a part of Iraq by the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923. According to Polk (2007: 92) petroleum changed the destiny of the Kurds in Iraq. The discovery of petroleum reserves in the Kurdish regions of Iraq impeded the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. On the other hand, Galbraith (2007: 143) argues that Kurds were attributed the role of counter-balancing the Shiite Arabs in Iraq, which are the majority population in the country. Therefore, the coalition of Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurds could avert the Shiite domination in Iraq.

No matter what the reason behind the British plans on Iraq was, the Kurdish groups rebelled many times in the following years of Sheikh Mahmud's struggle. Economic grievances also fostered the issues besides ethnic identity among Kurds as much as rising nationalist ideology (Harris, 1977). Consequently, ethnic conflict between Kurds and Arabs in Iraq resumed.

In the second phase of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq, the Barzani clan headed the resistance against the central government in Baghdad. In the eve of the recognition of Iraq by the League of Nations in 1932, Kurds

demanded to establish local autonomy, use Kurdish as the language of education and get greater share from the Iraqi budget for the development of the Kurdish regions (Harris, 1977: 118). Soon, the problems between the Kurds and the central government turned into a civil conflict in April 1932. Hostility between the Kurds and the government was settled only when the British Royal Air Forces suppressed the Kurdish rebellion in June 1932 together with the Iraqi ground forces. At the end of the day, Sheikh Ahmed Barzani, his brother, Mullah Mustafa, and other members of the family were forced to reside in Sulaymaniya.[23]

Congruency of feudal leadership and Kurdish identity was a problematic issue for the Kurdish national movement in Iraq. Apart from the tribal leaders, there was not any systematic political doctrine and organization among the Kurdish society. For example, in 1936, there were only five Kurdish-led organizations among the 150 associations operating throughout Iraq (McDowall, 2004: 386). However, land reform had paved the way of urbanization in the Kurdish society. Peasants migrated to cities in the region and formed the basis of a small Kurdish working class. Since the economic activities of the Kurds in the oil and construction industries required educated classes, the newly emerging Kurdish intelligentsia was composed of professionals such as lawyers, teachers, engineers, bank managers, doctors and journalists (Hassanpour, 1994).

The transformation of the society affected the Kurdish political life. Secret nationalist organizations such as Komala Brayati (Brotherhood Association),

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[23] Upon the entry of Iraq to the League of Nations in 1932, Baghdad government declared that it would respect minority rights. Accordingly, Kurdish was regarded as the second official language in the Kurdish districts and officials appointed to the Kurdish districts were selected among Kurds. However, the Baghdad government fulfilled its undertakings just until the outbreak of the Second World War and the grievance and dissatisfaction of Kurdish districts remained due to the lack of basic public services such as education, roads and health services (Elphinston, 1946: 98-99).

Darkar (Woodcutters), Hiwa (Hope), Shurish (Revolution) and Rizgari Kurd (Kurdish Salvation) were established and organized in the Kurdish-populated cities such as Arbil and Sulaymaniya. The impact of these organizations became apparent when Mullah Mustafa Barzani decided to establish the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which was similar to the KDP of the Mahabad Republic.[24] (McDowall, 2004).

The KDP's first congress was held on August 16, 1946. Its program highlighted nationalism based on the free will of the Kurdish people. The participation of political organizations such as the Kurdish sects of Iraqi Communist Party, Shurish and Rizgari in the Kurdish Democratic Party helped the Kurdish nationalist movement to institutionalize (McDowall, 2004). Consequently, Kurdish nationalist movement formulated a political, economic and social program produced by an institutionalized leadership.

1958 coup d'état of General Abdulkerim Kasım became a breaking point of the Kurdish struggle for self-determination. The civil conflict between the Kurdish peshmerga (fighter in Kurdish) controlled by Mullah Mustafa and the central government of General Kasım started in 1961 and continued after the coup d'états in 1963 and 1967 (Polk, 2007). According to Entessar (1984: 917), the relations between the Kurds and General Kasım flourished in the first years of the 1958 coup d'état. For example, General Kasım allowed the exiled Kurdish leader, Mullah Mustafa, to return to Iraq. However, after Mullah Mustafa solidified his power in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, he requested further autonomy for the

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[24] The Mahabad Republic was founded in 1946 in Iran by the open support of the Soviet Union. However, upon the withdrawal of the Soviet support, Iranian army re-established its authority over Mahabad in 1947.

Kurds, which was unacceptable for General Kasım. Thus, the relations between the Kurds and Baghdad deteriorated.

The civil war between the Kurds and the Iraqi central government came to an end by the "March Manifesto" of Saddam Hussein, the Assistant Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party and the Vice President of the Republic. The document, which was issued by the Kurds and Baghdad on March 11, 1970, includes provisions such as "the recognition of Kurdish as the official language in areas where a Kurdish majority was in existence, appointment of a Kurdish vice-president, self-rule, and the creation of national administrative units in the Kurdish region, and the constitutional recognition of the equality of the Kurdish nation in bi-national Iraq." (Entessar, 1984: 918-919) Moreover, the Manifesto included "the establishment of a Kurdish academy of letters and a Kurdish university at Sulaymanieh, the appointment of various ministers and governors of Kurdish origin, the formation of the Duhok governorate encompassing the Kurdish province of Mosul, and implementation of a major land reform program in Kurdistan. In return, the Kurds would relinquish their heavy arms to the government and dissolve their clandestine broadcasting station." (Entessar, 1984: 919).

The Kurdish autonomy law and related constitutional amendments were unilaterally signed by the Iraqi President Hasan al-Bakr on March 11, 1974 (Entessar, 1984: 920). Nevertheless, there were still unsettled issues between the KDP and the government. The friction between them centered on the extent of the autonomy of the government in Kurdish areas, especially on the status of Kirkuk, and the control of oil resources and revenues (MERIP Report, 1974).

The March Manifesto and the Kurdish autonomy law could not end the tension between the KDP and the central government. The Shah of Iran explicitly encouraged Mullah Mustafa to carry on the Kurdish rebel. The Shah was against the consolidation of the Ba'athist regime by peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question in Iraq. Consequently, KDP did not compromise over the problematic issues and Kurdish rebellion was maintained by the support of Iran. However, the Kurdish national resistance ended when the Shah cut the support for Kurds upon an Iran-Iraq agreement in March 1975 (Galbraith, 2007: 141).

The last phase of the Kurdish national movement in Iraq took place between 1975 and 1991. After Mullah Mustafa declared the end of the armed struggle, thousands of peshmergas either surrendered to the Iraqi forces or fled into Iran. Upon the collapse of resistance, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was formed under the leadership of Jalal Talabani in June 1975. PUK was a coalition of leftist politicians who criticized the traditional and authoritarian leadership structure of the KDP and finally split from the party (Hassanpour 1994). The clash between the Kurdish groups deepened upon the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq in 1980. While the KDP aligned with Iran, PUK was in contact with the Saddam government (Galbraith, 2007: 145).

PUK's demands, in return for its support, concerning financial autonomy, control of the Kirkuk oil fields and local control of security forces in the Kurdish region frustrated Saddam Hussein and the PUK-Baghdad cooperation ended in 1985. The efforts of Iran, which was in a long and exhausting war with Iraq, to mediate the conflict between KDP and PUK succeeded. Consequently, Saddam lost his control over the Kurdish districts as a result of the cooperation between

KDP, PUK and Iran. In 1987, when Iran withdrew its support from the Kurds in Iraq, Saddam reasserted his control over the Kurdish region and initiated the violent *al-Anfal* campaign[25] (Tripp, 2002a: 244).

By the end of the Iran-Iraq War in August 1988, the Iraqi army attacked Kurds and destroyed more than 1000 Kurdish villages. Furthermore, Saddam Hussein forcibly deported up to 250,000-300,000 Kurds from their homes in the northern provinces (Olson, 1992: 477). In 1988, KDP, PUK and other smaller Kurdish movements formed the Iraqi Kurdistan Front, which could operate only from the mountainous terrains of the Kurdish region until 1990. Jalal Talabani and Mesud Barzani, the son of Mullah Mustafa, first fled to Syria, then to Iran (Galbraith, 2007: 145).

The bad fortune of the Kurds was coming to an end by the beginning of the 1990s. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait caused a US-led coalition to mobilize for getting Iraqi army out of Kuwait in 1990. The Gulf War resulted in the clear-cut defeat of the Iraqi forces. The failure of Saddam Hussein paved the way of secessionist movements in Iraq. Shiite and Kurdish minorities separately rebelled in March 1991. Although the Iraqi army clearly suppressed the unorganized Shiite insurgency, the Kurdish rebel groups managed to resist the Iraqi forces (Polk, 2007: 174-175). However, Iraqi army's march toward Kurdish regions led thousands of Kurdish civilians to escape to Turkey, which provided camps for the refugees. Upon the tragedy of the Iraqi Kurdish people, President George Bush issued an order to establish a safe haven for Iraqi Kurds and a no fly

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[25] During the Al-Anfal Campaign, Iraqi forces attacked Halabja, a small town in northeastern Iraq, with mustard gas on March 16, 1988 and thousands of Kurdish civillians died. Iraq became the first government using chemical weapons against its own people. While this was not the only attack on the Kurds by Saddam, it was one of the worst. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4877364.stm (Last Access: April 23, 2010).

zone in the north of the 36th parallel. At the end of the day, US policy compelled the Iraqi army to withdraw to the south (Galbraith, 2007: 61).

Two concrete developments were important steps in creation of a *de facto* Kurdish state in Iraq in 1991. First, the UN Security Council Resolution # 688 of April 5, 1991 demanded Iraq to end repression of the Iraqi civilian population especially in the Kurdish populated areas and requested Turkey's cooperation and protection of these people. Second, Saddam Hussein imposed an economic blockade against the Kurds on October 23, 1991 (Gunter, 1993: 295). Saddam withdrew the Iraqi forces and the civilian officials from Arbil and Sulaymaniya. In doing so, he contemplated to intimidate the Iraqi Kurdish groups and re-establish Baghdad's authority over the Kurdish populated areas (Galbraith, 2007: 62). By the end of 1991, political, administrative and economic ties between Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad completely severed and gave way to a transition period as the Kurds started working for founding a *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq.

According to Gunter (1993), two conditions reinforced the legitimacy of a *de facto* Kurdish state. The first condition was the al-Anfal campaign, which aimed the mass murder of the civilian Kurds. The dire consequences of the al-Anfal operation, thus, were perceived by the Kurds as a legitimate cause for a separate Kurdish state. The second condition Gunter asserts was the democratic and competitive elections that were held in 1992 in Northern Iraq. By this first legislative election supported by the US and UK, the Kurds showed that they are committed to a democratic government with their newly earned autonomy[26] – no matter if democracy was a means or an end.

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[26] See http://www.britannica.com/worldsapart/3_timeline_print.html for a timeline (Last Access: May 2, 2010).

However, hopes for a stable *de facto* Kurdish state collapsed when the two major parties, which previously cooperated in the Iraqi Kurdish Front in the struggle against Saddam, started to clash with each other for dominance in this new autonomous structure. The KDP and PUK initiated a fight against each other in May 1994. The struggle over economic sources was the reason behind this civil strife between Mesud Barzani and Jalal Talabani. During this period, the Kurdish groups occasionally aligned with Iran, Turkey and the Baghdad government in order to have an edge over each other (McDowall, 2004: 508-521). Until 1998, when United States arbitrated and settled the conflict between the KDP and PUK, the institutions of the developing *de facto* Kurdish state remained fragmented and fragile. Nevertheless, the 1998 treaty called the Washington Accord did not produce an absolute unity in Northern Iraq. Internal conflict ceased but fragmentation continued. According to the treaty, the KDP ruled Arbil and Duhok while the PUK reigned in Sulaymaniya region. In spite of this fragmentation, both the KDP and PUK functioned as capable administrations within their territories and exercised basic services such as education, health and agriculture (Galbraith, 2007: 148).

Clearly, the civil war between the Kurdish groups and the central government of Iraq continued from 1932 until 1991. A new era started when the Kurdish regions in Northern Iraq gained autonomy in 1992. While this could be the beginning of a *de facto* state, internal strife between the two major parties, KDP and PUK delayed the establishment of a *de facto* state, as defined in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation. The third phase, which ended in the foundation of the Kurdish *de facto* state started in October 2002, when the KDP

and PUK joined in the unified Kurdish National Assembly for the first time since 1994 (Gunter, 2004: 202). Nevertheless, I argue that the *de facto* state was not fully established until the US-led invasion of Iraq and the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. Still, another transition period from 2002 to 2003 showed that political stability and unity in Northern Iraq was under way. By the help of this recently attained cohesiveness, the Kurdish groups carried out a more coordinated policy in the post-invasion period.

As this brief historical background shows, the Kurdish national movement escalated into an ongoing civil conflict in Iraq between 1918 and 1991.[27] In this period, the struggle between the Kurdish political groups and the government in Baghdad was mostly for obtaining a degree of autonomy in the Kurdish populated districts in Iraq. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was the moment that the Kurds have been waiting for in their quest for autonomy. However, internal struggle delayed the establishment of a *de facto* state by the Kurdish groups until the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In the following section, I first analyze how cooperative or conflictual the relations have been between Turkey and Iraq until 2003 during the Kurdish-Iraqi civil strife and afterwards. Later, I discuss whether the case lends support for the hypotheses on opportunity and willingness driven from the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 2.

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[27] I deal with the struggle for *de facto* statehood after 1991 in the following sections since the Kurdish movement after 1991 experiences a transition phase of state-building until a *de facto* state is established after the American occupation of Iraq in 2003.

4.1.1.2 Inter-State Military Conflict between Turkey and Iraq during the

Kurdish Struggle

As argued previously, fighting of a communal group for autonomy and *de facto* statehood often creates opportunity for conflict between the parent state and the external state. In the example given in Chapter 2, India acted as a protector for the Tamils living as a minority in Sri Lanka. However, the Kurds in Iraq has had no such guardianship. On the contrary, the Turkish government was dealing with separatist PKK terrorists from 1984 on in the Southeast of Turkey. This reality had a particular effect on Turkish-Iraqi relations, which I trace using the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set of the Correlates of War Project. In other words, the Kurdish case is theoretically different than the Tamil case.

As stated in the Methodology chapter, I operationalize conflict as hostility level of the two states in the dispute per year as well as the highest action in the dispute taken by each state in the dyad. An overview of the data shows that from 1932 to 1990, there are only 7 MIDs between Turkey and Iraq in 59 years. The MIDs take place in 1958, 1962, 1965, 1984, 1985, 1987 and 1990. The overall hostility level of the dispute changes from 1 to 5 in these MIDs until 1990, which refers to "no military action" and "war." The highest action in this period changes from 8 to 20, which refers to "alert" and "begin interstate war." These data show that fewer conflicts took place between Turkey and Iraq during the civil war period in Iraq compared to the period after 1990. One needs to examine these MIDs to understand whether they are in any way related to the *process* of becoming a *de facto* state of the Kurds in Iraq.

Between the years 1932 and 1957, the MID data set codes hostility level of the incident and the two states as 0, which refers to absence of hostility (and MIDs) between Turkey and Iraq. This is not surprising considering the struggle in Iraq at the time is solely domestic and the Turkish government in this period had to focus on consolidation of its own regime. Thus, there is yet no repercussion of the Kurdish problem on relations between Turkey and Iraq.

The relationship between Turkey and Iraq deteriorated upon the subversion of the Iraqi monarchy by the coup d'état of General Kasım in 1958 (Armaoğlu, 2004: 513). MID data set codes Turkey's hostility level toward Iraq as 3 while hostility level of Iraq toward Turkey is coded as 1. Turkey's highest action in the dispute is coded as 8, which refers to alert, whilst the highest action of Iraq is coded as 0. This means while Turkey displayed force by alerting its forces, Iraq did not take any action in the dispute. The Menderes government contemplated to intervene militarily in Iraq to subvert the Kasım regime since General Kasım was viewed as a Soviet ally. Consequently, Menderes informed the UK and US that Turkey might take unilateral action in order to restore the former regime. In doing so Menderes asked the material and moral support of especially the United States. Although Turkey's intervention was averted by the efforts of its western allies due to the fear of a Soviet retaliation, Turkey urged its western allies not to recognize the new Iraqi regime (Sever, 1998: 84-85).

The efforts of Adnan Menderes to isolate the General Kasım regime in Iraq because of its Soviet support seem to be the main cause of this dispute between Turkey and Iraq in 1958. However, once the background of the conflict is scrutinized in the archives, it becomes clear that the Kurdish struggle in Iraq

was a decisive cause of Menderes' objections to the General Kasım's regime. According to Hür (2008), the coup carried out by General Kasım was perceived as a threat by Turkey since Mullah Mustafa was invited to Iraq from USSR and was promised autonomy by General Kasım. The perception of threat could be especially reinforced by the legalization of Barzani's KDP by Kasım and the peaceful relations between Kasım and the Kurds lasted for a while. In this time period, Kasım used Barzani clan to fight against the Turkmens in Kirkuk (McDowall, 1992: 30-31).

Four years later, in 1962 and later in 1965, the hostility level between Turkey and Iraq escalated again. The violation of Turkey's airspace by Iraqi air forces, which was fighting against the Kurdish rebels, deteriorated the relations between the parties in 1962 (Türkmen, 2010: 19). Therefore, the MID data set codes the hostility level of Turkey and Iraq as 4 (use of force) in 1962. There is also another MID coded between Turkey and Iraq in 1965, when an aircraft of Iraqi Air Forces bombed the Turkish village, Çukurca in Hakkari. Accordingly, hostility levels of Turkey and Iraq are coded as 1 and 4 respectively. Upon the bombing, Iraqi Embassy in Ankara stated that the damages would be compensated.[28] The apologetic statement of the Iraqi Embassy and Turkey's rather low level of hostility led to compensation of the casualties by the Iraqi government and the conflict ended. Ilter Turkmen argues that the 1962 dispute was directly related to the Kurdish rebels. The Milliyet archives from 1962 on often mention the bombing of Kurdish villages by General Kasım. Although the 1965 MID is not discussed in the newspapers in detail, it is safe to assume that the

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[28] See
http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/RrKtV46pP7XfH_x2F_EXkMpcxg_x3D__x3D _ (Last Access: April 6, 2010).

bombardment of Çukurca was directed once again against the Kurdish villages on the other side of the border.[29]

Turkey and Iraq experienced a period of peace according to the MID data set until 1984, when Iran-Iraq War was underway. In the 1984, 1985 and 1987 MIDs, the hostility level of Iraq toward Turkey is coded as 4 (use of force). In these years, Turkey's hostility level toward Iraq is quite low and coded as 1 (absence of militarizet action). The highest actions of Iraq in these MIDs are coded as 16, which refers to "attack" while the Turkish highest action is 0. Both in 1984 and 1985, Turkish oil tankers were attacked by Iraqi aircrafts around the Persian Gulf. The conflicts between Turkey and Iraq were mediated without any military action of Turkey.[30-31] Although there is little written on these two disputes, newspapers of those years indicate that these are isolated incidents tied to the Iraqi bombardments of oil tankers in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war. Consequently, these 2 disputes are accepted as not related to the Kurdish insurgency in Iraq.

There is another MID in 1987 between Turkey and Iraq. This dispute is once again the consequence of the military operation of Iraqi forces against Kurdish rebels in Northern Iraq.[32] According to this news piece, "two Iraqi warplanes bombed a Turkish settlement near the border today, apparently in error,

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[29] For example on January 3, 1962 the Associated Press quoted in Milliyet newspaper argues that the Iraqi government forces use fighter planes against the Kurds. Similar news are reported until the 1965 MID took place.

[30] See http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/RrKtV46pP7XfH_x2F_EXkMpcxg_x3D__x3D (Last Access: May 3, 2010)

[31] See http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/RrKtV46pP7XfH_x2F_EXkMpcxg_x3D__x3D (Last Access: May 3, 2010)

[32] See http://www.nytimes.com/1987/08/22/world/two-iraqi-warplanes-bomb-border-settlement-in-turkey.html?scp=7&sq=turkey+Iraq&st=nyt (Last Access: May 3, 2010)

and slightly wounded one person" on August 21, 1987. The bombing took place very close to the border, thus it is very possible that the target was the Kurdish village at the border. As stated in the historical background section, from spring 1987 to fall of 1988, several bombardments of Iraqi fighter planes targeted civilian Kurdish villages, including Halabja. In this dispute, Turkey did not take any military action against Iraq since the perception was that the bombing was accidental.

In 1990, Turkey and Iraq experienced another MID in the beginning of the Gulf War. Upon the invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqi army, the Gulf War started and Turkey joined the US-led coalition fighting against Iraq. Although Turkey's army did not actively fight against Iraq, Turkey fortified its southern border and held up eight divisions of the Iraqi army, which was supposed to resist in the southern front (Hale, 2003: 235). In 1990, Iraq's hostility level against Turkey is coded as 5, which refers to war. On the other hand, Turkey's hostility level is coded as 3, which means that Turkey displayed force against Iraq. The highest level of action in the dispute is 7 (show of force) for Turkey and 20 (begin interstate war) for Iraq. According to Morad (1992: 123) Iran-Iraq war and later the Gulf War gave the Kurdish insurgency in the region the chance to spread and strengthen, especially in the Southeast Turkey. For that reason, the 1990 MID between Turkey and Iraq can be attributed partly to the Turkish concerns in the region stemming from the Kurdish insurgency both in Turkey and in Iraq and partly from its alliances within the UN coalition force.

According to the MID data set, there are two disputes in 1991 between Turkey and Iraq. In the first dispute, the hostility levels of Turkey and Iraq in

1991 are coded as 4 and 1 respectively. Starting from August 1991, The Turkish troops crossed the border to Iraq and carried out three operations of which the last two took place in October 11 and 25 (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2006: 555). According to Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, the Iraqi Kurds claimed that the Turkish operations were not aiming the PKK terrorists; instead, the goal was to eliminate the Kurdish insurgency in Northern Iraq so that they would stop aiding the PKK. The Iraqi government, exhausted after fighting in multiple borders, did not respond to the operation except for a formal protest.[33] The second MID is part of the Operation Provide Comfort carried out in April 1991 after the Kurdish uprising in Northern Iraq. The operation was undertaken by eleven countries including US and Turkey in accordance to the UN Security Council Resolution 688 (O'Leary, 2002). Once again the MID was a result of the Kurdish struggle in Iraq, to provide a safe haven for them in the region.

In 1992, 1993 and 1994 no dispute is coded by the MID data set between Turkey and Iraq.[34] However, between the years 1995 and 2001, Turkey and Iraq experienced hostility *per annum*. In these disputes, hostility levels of Turkey and Iraq are constantly coded as 4 and 1. In these years, highest action changes from 14 to 16, which refer to occupation of a territory and attack. In other words, Turkey was attacking Iraq without much response from the Iraqi government. According to the MID narratives of Correlates of War Project, Turkey's fight

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[33] Nevertheless, according to Recber (2007, 21) until the Gulf War, Turkey had the right to these operations as a result of a bilateral Protocol with Iraq and after the annulment of that Protocol before the Gulf War, the UN declaration of a safe zone (#688) was used to legitimize these cross border operations.

[34] I found cross-border operations in that period that were not coded by the MID data set. For example, according to Keskin (2008), "the first extensive trans-border operation, which was not based on the right of hot pursuit was started on March 1, 1992. It was an air operation against the PKK camp at Hakurk in northern Iraq. The Iraqi government protested this operation, but Turkish officials refused to accept their protest." Keskin also mentions two other extensive operations in 1995 and 1997, which are coded by the MID data set.

against Kurdish insurgency is the cause of the MIDs between Turkey and Iraq (Correlates of War MID 3,0 Narratives). This insurgency does not only refer to PKK's actions but also to the Kurdish insurgency in Iraq. As noted in the historical background, almost all of the 1990s in Northern Iraq witnessed a civil strife between the PUK and the KDP. The terrorist organization, PKK had an opportunity to move into camps in Northern Iraq during the Iraqi Kurds' internal reckoning. While the Iraqi Kurds fought among themselves, at times the PKK also got in the fight. Consequently, Human Rights Watch (2000) notes, "Turkish government troops launched repeated military incursions into northern Iraq in pursuit of PKK members. In December 2000, Turkey deployed several thousand troops near the Iran-Iraq border, in order, the Turkish prime minister said on January 7, 2000, to provide 'technical support' to PUK forces that had been engaged in military operations against the PKK since September 2000."

The MID data set ends in 2001. For that reason, I undertook an extensive search of the military conflict situation in year 2002.[35] After Bush's January 29th speech in which he calls Iraq as "axis of evil" along with Iran and North Korea, Turkey showed its concern about a war against Iraq by the West. In fact, shortly before Bush's speech, former Prime Minister Ecevit visited US on January 16 and discussed his reservations about the Turkish stance for the territorial integrity of Iraq in case of a military operation (Ergin, 2002). This concern was mainly due to the already autonomous structure of the Kurdish region after the Gulf War. Also in 2002, PUK and KDP's internal war came to an end (Jenkins 2008) and the Turkish government suspected that a new war against Iraq would strengthen the

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[35] I will discuss the situation after 2003 in the following sections since that year the Kurdish *de facto* state is established and I take that period as "outcome" while these sections cover the "process."

Kurdish struggle for *de facto* statehood. As a result, "tensions surfaced between Turkey and the KDP in August 2002 over the latter's draft constitution for a federal Iraq in which the Kurds would have greater autonomy and control of oil-rich Kirkuk. In reaction, Turkey closed the Habur border gate, cutting the KDP's revenue sources by restricting the "semi- illicit flow of diesel fuel from northern Iraq into Turkey." (Migdalovitz, 2002: 2) On August 22, according to Brayati, KDP's newspaper, Mesud Barzani stated that the Kurds would turn Mosul and Kirkuk into a graveyard if the Turkish military steps in these regions.[36] This statement outraged the Turkish government and on August 30, Minister of Defense Sebahaddin Cakmakoglu harshly argued that Northern Iraq was historically Turkish soil and Iraq's territorial integrity could not be impeached by the Kurds, threatening the Kurds by sending troops to Mosul and Kirkuk if necessary (Nureddin, 2002). On September 6, Barzani's response to that was a threat of war between the Kurdish forces and Turkey, after declaring that the Kurdish people have respect for PKK's activities.[37] On September 9, 2002, the deputy minister of Saddam Hussein, Taha Yasin Ramazan was asked about this issue and he answered by stressing that Iraqi government was not content with Çakmakoğlu's threats to intervene in Iraq; and he further argued that Iraq's territorial integrity is to Turkey's benefit.[38] On September 26, Barzani changed

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[36] See http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Ara.aspx?&ilkTar=01.08.2002&sonTar=01.09.2002&ekYayin=&drpSayfaNo=&araKelime=barzani&gelismisKelimeAynen=&gelismisKelimeHerhangi=&gelismisKelimeYakin=&gelismisKelimeHaric=&Siralama=tarih%20asc&SayfaAdet=20&isAdv=true (Last Access: May 5, 2010)
[37] See http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/z50IRphY8058q_x2F_wSYbSyLQ_x3D__x3D__ (Last Access: May 5, 2010)
[38] See http://www.tumgazeteler.com/?a=229628 (Last Access: May 5, 2010)

course and affirmed the KDP's commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity and assurances for Turkey's national security and sovereignty.[39]

In addition to this crisis, Iraq complained about Turkey's cross-border operations to the UN Security Council through letters (S/2002/803) three times in that year (Keskin, 2008). In short, the relations between Turkey and Iraq was tense in 2002 with the expectation that an American intervention was going to take place soon as well as the Turkish concerns of Kurdish autonomy in Northern Iraq, including Mosul and Kirkuk.

In conclusion, this analysis finds that there are two periods in the process of the Kurdish struggle in Iraq. The first period, 1932-1990 shows that 7 militarized interstate disputes took place between Turkey and Iraq in 58 years. In other words, this first period of the Kurdish struggle experienced rather limited number of disputes. However, out of 7 of these disputes, 5 were clearly related to the ongoing Kurdish civil strife in Iraq. It is very telling that the Turkish-Iraqi relations were mostly cooperative except for the repercussions of the Kurdish struggle for Turkish foreign policy.

The second period, 1991-2002 shows that 10 militarized interstate disputes took place between Turkey and Iraq in 12 years. All of these MIDs were related to the Kurdish struggle in Iraq. This means that the struggle between the Iraqi central government and the Kurdish rebel groups affected the emergence of MIDs between Turkey and Iraq, which lends support for the first hypothesis of this dissertation. In the next section, I discuss the theoretical implications of these findings to explain why the Kurdish struggle increased opportunity for conflict.

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[39] See
http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/GununYayinlari/z50IRphY8058q_x2F_wSYbSyLQ_x3D__x3D
_ (Last Access: May 5, 2010)

4.1.1.3 Iraqi Kurdish Rebels as an Opportunity for Conflict?

As the empirical evidence in the previous section shows, the Kurdish struggle is correlated to conflict between Turkey and Iraq. In this section, I explain the theoretical reasons why the *process* of the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq created an opportunity for conflict between Iraq and an external state, Turkey. Clearly, there are no MIDs between 1932 and 1958, while afterwards; several conflicts take place between the two countries.

Bilateral and multilateral agreements are important to explain cooperation until 1958 and conflictual relations afterwards. As mentioned in the historical background the border between Turkey and Iraq was demarcated by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, which not only separated Turkey and Iraq but also the Kurdish population dispersed in the region. Both states regarded the Kurdish minority as a threat to their territorial integrity and tried to prevent Kurdish secessionism through bilateral agreements. Limiting the potential impact of the Kurdish issue was the main goal of Saadabad Pact (1937) and the treaties that were bilaterally concluded between Turkey and Iraq in 1979 and 1984 (Robbins, 1993: 671-672). Therefore, the two states tried to eliminate conflict using bilateral agreements to prevent the Kurdish nationalism from becoming an opportunity for conflict.

While Saadabad Pact could be influential to keep the signatory states from aiding each other's separatist movements, its effectiveness diminished since the Second World War started soon after. Baghdad Pact (1955) is cited as a cooperation agreement between Turkey and Iraq, however, the pact does not have the clear objective to deal with the Kurds as does the Saadabad Pact. Moreover,

Iraq withdrew from the Pact after General Kasım's coup in 1958 (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2006: 622-627).

The bilateral agreements of 1979 and 1984 on cross-border operations aimed to contribute to the cooperation between Turkey and Iraq. One could argue that the 1979 agreement was indeed successful for cooperation since there were no MIDs between 1965 and 1984 between the two states. In fact, Iraq allowed Turkey to fight against PKK terrorists in its territory in 1983. Turkey's first operation, which started on May 26, 1983, bombed the military camps of KDP and PUK as well as the PKK terrorists (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2006: 133). However, the 1984 agreement did not stop the 1984 and 1985 conflicts when Iraqi Air Force bombed Turkish tankers in the Gulf, although it did prevent the cross-border operations from becoming MIDs in 1986 and 1987. In other words, when multilateral and bilateral agreements were in effect and implemented in practice, the Kurdish struggle in Iraq did not create an opportunity for conflict. Considering these agreements were very few, it is not surprising that 17 MIDs took place between the two states.

I argue that the reason, which increases the occurrence of conflict opportunity between Turkey and Iraq after 1958, is the organizational capability of Kurdish groups in Iraq.[40] As noted in the military interstate conflict section, Iraqi Kurdish rebellion generated an opportunity in 1958, 1962, 1965, 1987, 1990, 1991 (twice), 1995-2001 (per annum). In line with the historical background, Kurdish groups were actively fighting against the Iraqi central authority in 1960s and 1980s. Thus, the escalation of the Kurdish secessionist movement became an

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[40] The organizational capacity of PKK may also be viewed as an opportunity.

opportunity of conflict when the central government in Iraq is strongly challenged by Kurdish groups. As stated above, Iraqi forces violated the Turkish borders while fighting against the Kurdish rebels. That is why there are no MIDs coded in 1970s, when Kurdish groups had surrendered once Iran's support was cut off.

On a different note, as previously mentioned, the Kurdish case is qualitatively different than the Tamil case since the Kurds do not have a state to guard their rights due to ethnic kinship. Instead, the Kurdish population is scattered in the region to several states including Iraq and Turkey. For this reason, each parent state had to deal with Kurdish separatism. In other words, the operational capability of the Kurdish separatism in Turkey has become intertwined with the capability of the Iraqi Kurds. This, by itself, affected the opportunity for conflict between Turkey and Iraq. Accordingly, the rising threat of the PKK in Turkey caused the MIDs to increase in the 1990s when PKK terrorism was at its peak. In this period, since the PKK was perceived as receiving help from the Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq, Turkey carried out cross border operations to the region. Turkey violated the territory of Iraq in order to intimidate both the PKK and the Kurdish groups trained in camps in Northern Iraq. For example, Turkey carried out three military operations to Northern Iraq in August and October 1991. Although these operations were against PKK terrorists harbored in Northern Iraq, the Turkish government tried to prevent the Kurdish groups from supporting PKK activities (Fırat and Kürçüoğlu, 2006: 555).

The reason why the Turkish government was so intimated by especially Barzani's KDP is that the Iraqi Kurdish struggle against the central government has inspired the Kurds in Turkey for secessionism. The Kurdish communal

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insurgency can be traced back to feudal challenges of Sheikhs in the first phase republican era, however, the first legal Kurdish organization, Doğu Devrimci Kültür Ocakları (DDKO – Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East), was established by an intellectual circle in 1969. The monthly bulletin of DDKO criticized the landlords, tribal leaders and violent practices of Turkish army units in Kurdish populated districts. Traditional Kurdish elite also formed Democratic Party Kurdistan (DPK) under the influence of Mullah Mustafa in Northern Iraq. DPK, towards the end of 1960s, developed a radical program and contemplated to carry out an armed insurrection in the Kurdish populated regions of Turkey (Bruinessen, 1984: 8).

The most radical group in Kurdish national movements, PKK, was founded in 1977 by Abdullah Öcalan and his followers who were known as "Apocular." By the coup d'état in Turkey in 1980, leaders of the PKK fled to neighboring Syria as well as Palestine and Lebanon for training in camps. In 1984, PKK initially attacked on military targets near Şemdinli, which was followed by attacks to civilian targets. Between the years 1984 and 1991, 1,278 civilians, 1,444 PKK terrorists and 846 security forces were killed as a result of the PKK attacks and clashes between the PKK and Turkish security forces (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997: 126-127).

On the contrary to the Iraqi policy, the Turkish state denied the existence of the Kurds as a distinct ethnic identity from mid-20s until the end of the 1980s (Yeğen, 1996: 216) and onwards up until 2000s. Turkishness was regarded as the condition for citizenship. The aim of the Kemalist elite was to create a western style homogeneous and unitary state (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 10-11). However,

the rising PKK activities from 1980s on, inspired by the longer struggle of the Iraqi Kurds, triggered consciousness and the politicization of the Kurdish identity.[41] (Bruinessen, 1998: 50). Thus, as much as the Iraqi government had to breach Turkey's borders chasing after Kurdish rebels, the Turkish government had to chase after the PKK terrorists back to their camps in Northern Iraq. The organizational capability of both Kurdish groups in each side of the border either increased or decreased the level of militarized interstate conflict. This, consequently, has become a very real and frequent opportunity for interaction between the two states over the years after 1958.

In conclusion, Hypothesis 1 of this study argues that in the process of group's fighting for *de facto* statehood, the opportunity for conflict increases between the parent state and the eternal state. The historical background of the Kurdish insurgency in Iraq and the analysis of the MIDs between Turkey and Iraq support the hypothesis and posit that the Kurdish insurgency struggling to establish a *de facto* state has become an opportunity for conflict between Turkey and Iraq since 1958 until 2003. Building on Most and Starr (1989), I argue that opportunity in itself is necessary but not sufficient, thus, I analyze how willingness of the parties affect the probability of military conflict in the next section.

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[41] The emphasis of PKK's discourse on ethnicity fluctuates from time to time. However, the fact that the leader Öcalan had met other Kurdish leaders to unite them under armed struggle before the organization was founded, shows that the organization intended to use Kurdish nationalism at the least for enrollment purposes.

4.1.1.4 Willingness of Turkey and Iraq for Conflict during the Kurdish Struggle

As noted in the theoretical framework, I argue that internationalization of an intra-state war heavily depends on the regime type of the parent state and the external state. In other words, a civil war may turn into an inter-state war when a third party state intervenes. According to the Hypothesis 5[42] of this study, peaceful solution of a crisis is more likely when the levels of democracy in the parent state and external state increase. In this section, I examine the level of democracy in Turkey and Iraq in order to comprehend whether depending on their domestic regime, these states were willing to exploit the conflict opportunities stemming from the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq between 1932 and 2003.

The proclamation of the republican system on October 29, 1923 did not produce a democratic regime in Turkey. The Republican People's Party (RPP) dominated the state system as a single party regime until 1946. During the single party regime in Turkey, the Polity IV data codes Turkey's polity score as -6 and -7, which refer to autocracy. In 1945, western states urged Turkey to carry out political reforms. Accordingly, Turkey could attend the foundation conference of the United Nations only if the country liberalized its political regime. On November 1, 1945, President İsmet İnönü stated that Turkey would be a pluralist democracy in which people are free to form political parties (Altan, 1986: 79). As a result of transition to pluralist democracy, multi party competition started. The

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[42] Hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 are related to the *outcome* of establishment of a *de facto* state. Therefore, they will be discussed in the following sections.

polity score of Turkey is coded as 7 between 1946 and 1953. In other words Turkey is regarded as a democracy in this period (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009).

Upon the transition to pluralist democracy, the Democratic Party came to power by the elections held in 1950. However, in time the personal rule of Adnan Menderes prevailed over the rule of law as the Democratic Party consolidated its power. After 1954 elections, the Democratic Party restricted the freedom of its political opponents in the opposition party, the institutions of state and universities (Zurcher, 2004: 232-233). Thus the polity score of Turkey sharply decreases in 1954 and Turkey is constantly coded as 4, which refers to anocracy, until 1960 (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009).

The democratic regime was restored by the military coup d'état on May 27, 1960. The military intervention dissolved the Democratic Party and suspended the political system. However, afterwards, the new constitution guaranteed not only the presence of a multi party system but also basic freedoms. The constitution, which was drafted after the 1960 coup d'état and approved by a referendum in 1961, aimed to create an effective "checks and balance system" by providing a bicameral parliament, a constitutional court and civil liberties (Ahmed, 1993: 129). Therefore, Turkey is coded as a democracy between 1960 and 1980. In this period, Turkey's polity score changes from 7 to 9 – the highest score Turkey could ever get in the data set. However, there are two exceptions in which Turkey's polity score is coded as -2 (anocracy) in this period. In 1971 the Turkish political life experienced another military intervention. On March 12, 1971, the Turkish Armed Forces issued a memorandum and demanded the formation of a strong and credible government that can implement the reforms

envisaged by the 1961 constitution. The military also forced Süleyman Demirel, the prime minister, to resign. Although the Turkish military did not dissolve the parliament, it determined who would be in the cabinet. In this period, the position of the state was strengthened against civil society and the leftist Workers Party of Turkey (TIP) and Islamist National Order Party (MNP) were dissolved. The shadow of the military over politics continued until 1973, when the general elections were held (Ahmed, 1993: 147-181). Turkey's polity score is coded as 9 between 1973 and 1980 upon the normalization of the politics (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009).

Turkey's polity score sharply decreases from 9 (democracy) to -5 (anocracy) by the 1980 military coup, which suspended the constitution, dissolved the parliament and closed all of the political parties and associations. Turkish military restored the democracy upon the approval of the 1982 constitution; however, stayed in politics through the National Security Council (MGK). In October 1983, the Motherland Party (ANAP) won the elections despite the military's anti-propaganda and Turgut Özal became the prime minister (Ahmed 1993, 92). After the normalization of the political regime in 1983, Turkey is constantly coded as a democracy (7) until 1989. From 1989 to 1993 the polity score is 9, from 1993 to 1997 as 8, and from 1997 to 2003 - the end of the period this section covers – it is coded as 7. All of these scores show that Turkey has been democratic since the 1980 coup. Nevertheless, the level of democracy constantly decreases in this period. Ergun Özbudun (1996) explains this situation with the use of a term borrowed from Latin American politics: "delegative democracy," which means the regime is ruled by an extremely personalistic

leadership that does not regularly consult the legislature or other state institutions. According to Özbudun, "Turkey's first trial of democracy, under Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (1950-60), was a typical delegative democracy that ended with a military intervention. The period since 1983 has also displayed strong resemblances to delegative democracy. Özal (first as prime minister from 1983 to 1989, and then as president between 1989 and 1991) and Çiller (as prime minister from 1993 to 1995) both showed a penchant for highly personalistic leadership. They often bypassed parliament through the use of law-amending executive decrees. Each made key policy decisions alone or with at most a few favorite ministers, sometimes without even bothering to inform the rest of the cabinet." This interpretation of democratization in Turkey explains the constant decrease in the coding of democracy scores by the Polity 4 data set from 1989 to 2003. The brief period between 1989 and 1993 is coded as 9 due to the free and competitive elections in 1989, the passing of presidency from General Kenan Evren to Turgut Özal and the lift in the bans of political leaders such as Süleyman Demirel (Özbudun, 1996: 123).

When we turn to Iraq's willingness to exploit opportunities for conflict, the story is shorter and rather bleak. Iraq is never coded as a democracy between 1932 and 2003. Iraq was a monarchy when it was founded in 1932 and its polity score is coded as -4 (anocracy) despite its British ties until 1936 and -3 until 1941. From 1941 to 1958, the coding was once again -4, until the coup d'état of General Kasım. The proclamation of a republic in Iraq by Kasım did not give rise to democracy. Instead, the polity score of Iraq worsened and is coded as -5 (anocracy) from 1958 until 1968 when the Ba'athist Party came to power. The

regime is coded as -7 (autocracy) from 1968 to 1979 and afterwards it is coded as -9 until the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Except for one time in this timeline, Iraq's democracy constantly deteriorates. Between 1936-1941, the score goes up from -4 to -3 because of Bakr Sidqi's regime that was based on sharing power, arguably modeled after Kemalism (Wimmer, 2003: 8). Sidqi was trying to share power between different ethnic backgrounds, however, his reign was short and afterwards, Iraq constantly becomes more autocratic (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009).

According to Bahgat (2005: 94), "a key characteristic of the Iraqi political system, both monarchical and Republican, has been the lack of institutionalization. As a result, there have been frequent and violent changes of power." Bahgat lists these changes as: "King Faisal I (1921–33), King Ghazi (1933–9), and Regent Abdullah bin Ali in the 1940s and early 1950s while King Faisal II (1939–58) was an infant. Abd al-Karim Qasim ruled from 1958 to 1963 under the republican system until he was toppled by Abd al-Salam Aref, who was himself killed in 1966 in a helicopter crash. Abd al-Salam Aref was succeeded by his brother Abd al-Rahman Aref, until he was in turn overthrown in 1968 by the Ba'ath party under the dual leadership of Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein. The latter declared himself president in 1979 and brutally ruled Iraq until his regime was toppled by an American-led international coalition in March 2003." In other words, Iraq has been "the least governable of the Arab countries" (Hudson, 1977: 267).

In the period between 1932 and 2002, economic freedom in Turkey gradually increased while the Iraqi state constantly kept its control over economy.

According to Boratav (2000), statism and protectionism were the main principles of the Turkish economy between 1930 and 1939. In this period, free market actors mainly became the subcontractor of the public investments. The extra-ordinary conditions of the World War II years also strengthened the position of the state. Thus, the shadow of the state over economy was considerably strong as the Second World War ended. The transition to pluralist democracy in 1946 triggered the abandonment of the statist and protectionist policies. The economic policy between 1946 and 1954 liberalized the foreign trade regime of Turkey and loosened the state control over prices. However, protectionism in foreign trade regime and the effective control over market re-emerged in 1954 and continued until 1980. Turkey experienced a transition to neo-liberal development model in 1980's by the reforms of Turgut Özal. After 1980, free market gained ground against a strong statist tradition (Öniş, 2004).

On the other hand, the patronage networks of Sunni Arabs drove Iraqi economy since the 1920s. Accordingly, patronage regimes based on corruption prevailed in the Hashemite monarchy, Kasım era and the Ba'athist period. For that reason, an institutionalized free market economy could not emerge in Iraq. Moreover, it should be noted that Iraq benefited from the booms in oil prices in the 1970s. After the nationalization of the oil reserves, Iraqi state consolidated the patronage mechanism and redistribution regime. In other words, incomes of the householders were provided by the state apparatus rather than the free market mechanism (Le Billon, 2005: 690-691).

In sum, Turkey and Iraq experienced 17 MIDs between 1932 and 2002. 15 of these disputes were related to the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq. In this period, Iraq

never had a democratic system while Turkey's regime type fluctuated from autocracy to anocracy and finally to democracy. For example, in 1958 MID, both Turkey and Iraq are coded as anocracies. In the 1962 and 1965 MIDs, Turkey was a democracy whilst Iraq was an anocracy. In 1984 and 1985 MIDs, Turkey was a democracy and Iraq was an autocracy. Finally, all the MIDs after 1987 were experienced between democratic Turkey and autocratic Iraq. The table below shows the MID years and the regime type of Turkey and Iraq as well as the conflict opportunity the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq provided.

Table 3. Militarized Inter-state Disputes (MIDs), Regime Types/Polity Scores of Turkey and Iraq and Opportunities for Conflict

MIDs	Regime Type Turkey	Regime Type Iraq	Type of Opportunity
1958	Anocracy (4)	Anocracy (-5)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1962	Democracy (9)	Anocracy (-5)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1965	Democracy (8)	Anocracy (-5)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1984	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Persian Gulf War
1985	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Persian Gulf War
1987	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1990	Democracy (9)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1991 (2)	Democracy (9)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1995	Democracy (8)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1996	Democracy (8)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1997	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1998	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
1999	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
2000	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
2001	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq
2002	Democracy (7)	Autocracy (-9)	Kurdish Rebellion in Iraq

As noted in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, I argue that levels of democracy of both the parent and the external state -during the process of a civil war in the parent state- can create willingness to exploit opportunities for conflict.

Theoretically, building on Bueno de Mesquita (1999; 2003), there are winning coalitions in every political system. The size of the winning coalition determines whether a system is democratic or autocratic. In autocracies, ruling elite needs the support of a small coalition. Governments provide private privileges in order to keep the loyalty of this small coalition and continue their dictatorships. However, elected governments need the support of public in order to stay in office. Since democratic government cannot provide private goods for every single citizen, they provide the public goods and services as egalitarian and effective as possible. Consequently, Bueno de Mesquita expects that democracies will be less likely to fight against other democracies since wars diminish the budget share of public goods in both democracies; while democracies will still be conflictual against non-democracies since an autocratic leader will be more willing to undertake risks such as wars.

In this context, it is important to comprehend what constitutes public and private goods for Turkey and Iraq so that the opportunity created by the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq is a risk that these countries can take. For Iraq, which has been authoritarian since 1932, public goods have never been as important for the leaders as private goods to stay in office. Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2001: 59) argue, "In a plurality-voting system like the United States, for example, Bill Clinton's 1992 winning coalition included about 43 percent of the electorate (or, perhaps, all of his supporters up to just beyond 38 percent, the share of the vote earned by George Bush). In an autocracy like Saddam Hussein's Iraq, by contrast, the winning coalition is tiny. Though Iraq has universal adult suffrage, keeping Hussein in power depends on the support of the Republican Guard and the Takriti

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Clan--that is, his close personal kinsmen, a small group indeed." Furthermore, according to Elphinston after 1932 (1946: 99), "the general administration of Kurdish districts was so neglected that there was much dissatisfaction, especially in regard to the maintenance of roads, health services and schools, all of which compared unfavourably with those in qadhas which were predominantly Arab." In other words, discrimination of the Kurds relative to the Arab population showed that economic public goods was limited to a certain population, which created relative deprivation as Ted Gurr (1970) argues. Moreover, other public goods such as human rights and political freedom were certainly not generously provided to the Kurdish (or the Shiite) population in Iraq. According to al-Khafaji (1992) private goods was the major cause of Ba'athist party's long reign in power. He gives Saddam's praetorian guard, Jihaz as one of the groups that is paid specifically to protect the regime: "The least known but most notorious of all the Ba'thi repression machines, the Jihaz al-Himaya al-Khas, illustrates how bribery, kinship and regional solidarities intersect to produce a cohesive organization." (p.19) The Jihaz members are not very educated but they are paid as much as a college professor. Moreover, al-Khafaji argues "Shi'a and Sunni alike had linked their fates to the regime's survival" since a small group of Arabs have become affluent not because of their skills but in return for their support of the oppressive regime.

Tripp (2002b: 26) calls the people who have a hold on the private goods "a network of privilege and patronage where real power lies in Iraq." Moreover, "in the case of Saddam Hussein, they are constituted by the Ahl al-Thiqa ('people of trust') generally comprising the families, clans, long-standing associates and

opportunists who have attached themselves to the president. They thrive on discriminations exercised against the majority of the regime, be these oil revenues or smuggling concessions." (Tripp, 2002b: 17) Accordingly, these networks plagued the Iraqi state and forced it to initiate long and risky conflicts, in this case as a result of the opportunity that the Kurdish rebellion provided.

In the case of Turkey, the only dispute that took place when both Turkey and Iraq were anocracies (non-democracies) was in 1958. As previously explained, Menderes government at that point was far from being democratic. The opposition was under attack, economy was failing due to overly ambitious spending, minorities were unhappy, the workers and bureaucrats were repressed and the students were protesting. Moreover, the military was becoming restless, as it was not one of the shareholders of private goods as were the wealthy landowners that supported Menderes since the beginning (Zurcher, 2004). The General Kasım coup in 1958 disturbed Menderes since there were coup plots in the country by the military, which could not be proved in court.[43] According to Criss and Bilgin (1997) "The Democrats also considered NATO membership a way of protecting themselves from a coup. When the Menderes government reacted to the Iraqi military coup (1958) by trying to convince the United States to intervene in Iraq, it was partly out of a desire to discourage potential coup makers in Turkey." In other words, in 1958, apart from the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq (opportunity) which would become worse once Kasım came to power, the DP was worried for its own ousting from office as a result of its reluctance to share public goods (willingness).

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[43] Although the 1955 event of the 9 officers was not proved in court, Menderes understood that he was right but it was too late.

After 1958, Turkey is more or less democratic except for the military intervention periods. The MIDs between Turkey and Iraq initiated by Iraq while following Kurdish rebels into Turkish borders in 1962, 1965 and 1987 led to disputes albeit not very serious ones. These actions of Iraq were not taken seriously since the Turkish government did not want to get into direct confrontation with Iraq and because the crisis was handled rather calmly through diplomacy. Iraq apologized and Turkey accepted the apology. Thus, it can be argued that the opportunity for conflict led to the militarized disputes, which in turn did not become an issue due to the democratic nature of the Turkish regime. The Turkish public was not interested in a conflict that could lead to a decline in economic and political development of the country.

The MIDs after 1990 when a safe haven was established in Northern Iraq are the product of Turkey's concerns over the increasing autonomy of the Iraqi Kurdish groups, which could stimulate and aid the Kurdish terrorist movement in Turkey. One of the public goods that a democratic government provides to its citizens is security. After 1984, PKK was first seen as a temporary issue; however, in the 1990s PKK terrorism became a very destructive problem for the governments who have come to power through democratic means and the Kurdish issue was used for gaining votes. For example, before 1994 municipal elections Tansu Çiller argued that the Kurdish Demokrasi Partisi (DEP) as PKK's legal branch and DEP deputies were prosecuted and imprisoned (Ergil, 2000: 129), followed by promises by Ciller to end PKK terrorism. In the elections, Çiller's party DYP gained the highest percentage of votes. Similarly, before the 1999 elections, the capture of PKK's leader Öcalan became an important tool of

election propaganda and aided Bülent Ecevit DSP's election success. Sarıkaya (1999) argues that the votes of Ecevit were already on the rise and Öcalan's capture led to the success of DSP in the general elections. These examples show that the promises of the Turkish politicians for ending PKK terrorism and providing security for all citizens became an important public good. Thus, the conflicts with Iraq after 1990s until 2002 were indeed generated by the willingness of democratic governments to stay in office.

In sum, the politically and economically non-democratic character of Iraq affected the willingness of Turkey and Iraq to exploit the opportunities of the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq. The MIDs that Turkey and Iraq experienced between 1958 and 2002 show that the lack of democratic institutions and norms in Iraq gave rise to the Kurdish secessionism. The methods of the Iraqi forces to restore Baghdad's authority over the Kurdish regions were undemocratic and caused MIDs between Turkey and Iraq. In return, Turkey responded to these attempts, and after 1990 Turkey's Kurdish question led to several disputes between the two states.

4.1.2. Opportunity and Willingness after the Kurdish *De Facto* State is Established

4.1.2.1 Historical Background

After the invasion of Iraq, the United States initially appointed Jay Garner then L. Paul Bremer, a retired diplomat, as the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority

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(CPA), which was envisaged to stabilize the country. In regards to political ground, Bremer aimed to dismantle the political network of Saddam Hussein. In the provisional term of Paul Bremer, de-Ba'athification process began in Iraq. Bremer purged thousands of Ba'athist bureaucrats and soldiers from the government. However, efforts of Bremer gave rise to a Sunni and Shiite insurgency. In this period between 2003 and 2004, even the capture of Saddam Hussein could not stop the violence in Iraq (El-Khawas, 2008: 47-48).

On June 28, 2004, Bremer resigned and Iyad Allawi was appointed as the prime minister of the interim government. The "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period" became effective on March 8, 2004. According to the Article 2, "the term 'transitional period' shall refer to the period beginning on 30 June 2004 and lasting until the formation of an elected Iraqi government pursuant to a permanent constitution as set forth in this Law, which in any case shall be no later than 31 December 2005, unless the provisions of Article 61 are applied." As promised, free and fair elections were held on January 30, 2005. The elections allowed Iraqis to decide who will join the National Assembly. Upon the boycott of the Sunni voters, Shiite United Iraqi alliance won 146 seats and Kurds won 75 seats and became the second largest group in the parliament.[44]

The parliament that was formed after the 30 January elections formed a commission to complete drafting the Iraqi constitution. On October 15, 2005, Iraqi constitution was confirmed by a referendum. According to McGarry and O'Leary (2007), the constitution of Iraq created a federation, confirmed the autonomy of the Kurdistan region and generated a consociation between diverse

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[44] See http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/01/20/iraq.main/index.html (Last Access: April 15, 2010).

communities of Iraq. After the approval of the constitution, new parliamentary elections were held on December 15, 2005 and the new government was formed in May 2006. Shiite Nouri Al-Maliki became the prime minister of the new government of national unity. It was a coalition, in which Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni ministers were included.[45]

In respect to the *de facto* Kurdish state, it would not be wrong to argue that the struggle of the Iraqi Kurdish political groups to establish a *de facto* state gained ground after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003 due to American invasion of Iraq. The Kurds welcomed the occupation of the United States-led coalition forces, which paved the way of another historical opportunity for Kurdish autonomy. According to Stansfield (2005), the Kurds of Iraq took progressive steps to consolidate their autonomy in post-Saddam Iraq. The Transitional Administrative Law, which was signed on March 8, 2004, defined Iraq as a federal system and recognized the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as a federal unit of Iraq (Stansfield, 2005: 195). The status of KRG continued after the installation of Iraqi constitution on October 15, 2005. Apart from institutional advantages, the Kurdish government had the political backing of the United States due to its aid to the coalition forces in the occupation process (Durukan, 2003).

The Kurdish political groups, mainly KDP and PUK, both consolidated the autonomy of the Kurdistan Regional Government and strengthened their positions in the central government during the immediate post-Saddam period. The Kurdish parliament attained the legislative authority on issues such as health services,

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[45] See http://www.iraqfoundation.org/iraqi_cabinet.htm (Last Access: May 10, 2010).

education and training, policing and security, the environment, natural resources, agriculture, housing, trade, industry and investment, social services and social affairs, transport and roads, culture and tourism, sports and leisure, ancient monuments and historic buildings in the Kurdistan region. Furthermore, although the Kurdistan parliament shares its legislative authority with the federal authority in the areas of customs, electric energy and its distribution, general planning, internal water resources, the priority is given to the Kurdistan Laws (Kurdistan Regional Government, 2010). This means that the power of the Kurdish parliament prevail over the authority of the Baghdad government. The Kurdish politicians are also actively involved in the Iraqi central government. For example, Jalal Talabani, the leader of the PUK, became the president of Iraq and the government, which had 32 seats, included eight Kurdish ministers after January 30, 2005 elections (Katzman and Prados, 2006: 38).

In addition to domestic affairs, the consolidation of the Kurdish *de facto* state created an intensive foreign policy agenda for the Kurdistan Regional Government after 2003. KRG established a department of foreign relations in order to strengthen its political, economic, social and cultural position with foreign countries. After 2003, KRG appointed representatives in the United States, European Union, Australia, United Kingdom, Iran, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Furthermore, the KRG president hosted and visited the presidents of other countries. For example, in October 2005, Mesud Barzani was invited to Washington and the U.S President George W. Bush addressed him formally as "Mr. President" (Çetin, 2008). Barzani administration has also

conducted active diplomacy in the region and visited Iran, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon (Güzel, 2010).

Another attempt of the KRG to consolidate its autonomy is the preparation of a constitution for the region itself. On June 23, 2009, the Kurdish parliament drafted a constitution, which primarily claimed Kurdish control over disputed territories and oil resources. However, the draft was not held by a referendum upon the friction between the Kurdish parliament and the central government (Katzman, 2010: 12). According to Natali (2010), Kurdish politicians are in a key position in the government-forming process in Baghdad after the March 2010 parliamentary election. Thus, they can use their position as a bargaining tool in order to get approval for the KRG constitution.

In sum, the fragile and fragmented *de facto* Kurdish state institutionalized after the U.S.-led operation to Iraq. In post-Saddam period, the *de facto* Kurdish state gained a legal status and became a federal unit of Iraq. Although, Kurdistan Regional Government was a part of unified Iraq, it managed to enshrine its autonomy. After 2003, KRG organized its government and became the ultimate authority in conducting policies for its people. Furthermore, the KRG administration has followed an intensive foreign policy agenda and established bilateral relations with global and regional actors.

4.1.2.2 Inter-State Military Conflict between Turkey and Iraq after the Establishment of the *De Facto* Kurdish State

The MID data set covers data only until 2002 for Iraq. Therefore, I use the literature to understand the hostility level between Turkey and Iraq in the post-Saddam period. Since the invasion made it impossible for Iraq to have an independent foreign policy from 2003 to 2005, the dispute between Turkey and Iraq could emerge only after 2005, when the transitional Iraqi government took office. After the interregnum period ended, Turkey and Iraq experienced militarized disputes in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

In 2006, the first MID of post Saddam period was experienced between Turkey and Iraq once again due to the Kurdish issue. The Turkish decision makers believed that rising PKK activities in Turkey were supported and aided by the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq. Moreover, the *de facto* nature of the Kurdish administration made the Turkish politicians and the media restless about the possibility of an independent Kurdish state. Thus, the cross-border operation option came to the forefront in Ankara's agenda. [46]

In April, Iraqi government sent a note to Ankara when Turkey fortified its borders. Upon the intensification of the military preparations of the Turkish military near the Iraqi border, the concerns of the Iraqi leaders about Turkey's cross-border operations increased (Bila, 2006). Hoshyar Zebari, the Iraqi minister of foreign affairs, stated that the attitude of Iraq would change if Turkey did not

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[46] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sinir-otesi--operasyon-havasi/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.06.2010/164537/default.htm (Last Access: April 6, 2010).

respect the sovereignty of Iraq by carrying out cross border operations.[47] Accordingly, in 2006 Turkey displayed force and Iraq threatened Turkey to use force. Thus, the hostility level of Turkey and Iraq can be coded as 3 and 2 respectively. The highest action of Turkey can be coded as 11 (fortify border) while Iraq's highest action can be coded as 1 (threat to use force).

In April 2007, crisis between Turkey and Iraq escalated upon the statements of Mesud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Barzani posited that the Kurds would intervene in Diyarbakır if Turkey started a cross-border operation against the PKK terrorists in Northern Iraq. The Turkish government sent a diplomatic note to Baghdad. Consequently, Turkey demanded the Iraqi government to end the presence of PKK in Iraq. In this note, Turkey explicitly highlighted that it would start a cross-border operation if Iraq did not fulfill its responsibilities regarding PKK terrorism.[48] In sum, Turkey's hostility level in April 2007 can be coded as 2 (threat to use force) while its highest action can be coded as 1 (threat to use force). On the other hand, Iraqi government did not take any action against the diplomatic note of Turkey. Thus, hostility level and highest action of Iraq can be coded as 0.

On December 1, 2007, the Turkish Air Forces crossed the Iraqi border and bombed the PKK camps in Northern Iraq.[49] The Second operation started on December 17 and 52 war crafts of Turkish Air Forces attacked the PKK camps.[50] The hostility level of Turkey can be coded as 4, which refers to use of force. The

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[47] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/zebari-den-sert-cikis/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.06.2010/163243/default.htm (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[48] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ankara-dan-irak-a-sert-nota/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.06.2010/195395/default.htm (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[49] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ordu-yetkiyi-aldi-ve-vurdu/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.06.2010/225803/default.htm (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[50] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ve-kandil-vuruldu/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.06.2010/228289/default.htm (Last Access: April 16, 2010).

highest action of Turkey can be coded as 16, which refers to attack. On the other hand, Iraqi government protested the air operation of Turkey and took no militarized action.[51] Thus, the hostility level of Iraq can be coded as 1 (no militarized action) while its highest action can be coded as 0 (no militarized action).

Finally, a MID between Turkey and Iraq was experienced in February 2008. Ten thousand soldiers of the Turkish Land Forces crossed the border of Iraq on February 21, 2008 and stayed in Northern Iraq until February 28, 2008. According to the military officials and the government members, the Turkish military attacked Northern Iraq to fight against the PKK terrorists. However, both the KRG government and the central government of Iraq opposed Turkey's cross-border operations.[52] Accordingly, Turkey's hostility level can be coded as 4 (use of force) and the highest action of Turkey can be coded as 16, which refers to attack. On the other hand, the hostility level of Iraq can be coded as 1. Iraq took no military action but sent a diplomatic note to protest Turkey.[53] Thus, Iraq's highest action can be coded as 0.

In sum, Turkey and Iraq have experience 4 militarized disputes in 2006, 2007 and 2008. All of these MIDs were the product of the activities of the *de facto* Kurdistan Regional Government and arguably its connection to the terrorist activities in Turkey. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Turkish-Iraqi relations ameliorated and no dispute was experienced between the parties when

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[51] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/talabani-ve-barzani-ayri-telden/siyaset/haberdetayarsiv/08.06.2010/229968/default.htm (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[52] See http://www.cnnturk.com/2008/turkiye/02/22/sinir.otesi.operasyonlar.1983te.basladi/430959.0/index.html (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[53] See http://www.radikal.com.tr/index.php?tarih=23/02/2008 (Last Access: April 16, 2010).

Turkish government finally established diplomatic relations with the KRG government in 2008 (Kohen, 2008). In the next section, I examine why the *de facto* statehood of KRG became an issue between the external state, Turkey and the parent state, Iraq.

4.1.2.3 The Kurdish *De Facto* State as an Opportunity for Conflict?

Hypothesis 3 of this study argues that, the presence of the *de facto* state increases the opportunity of conflict between the external state and the parent state, if the external state is against the *de facto* state. In this section, I examine whether *de facto* Kurdistan Regional Government produced a conflict opportunity between Turkey and Iraq.

Upon the subversion of the Saddam regime in 2003, the Kurdish communal movement has entered a new stage. The Kurdish administration, which was unified in 2002, strengthened its position in post-Saddam Iraq. According to Olson (2008), there are three conditions bolstering the Kurdish autonomy. Firstly, the Turkish parliament's counter-decision to the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq from Turkey and its rejection to join the U.S.-led coalition on March 1, 2003 impeded relations with the U.S. If Turkey had supported American policies in Iraq, the level of autonomy of the *de facto* Kurdish state would be limited by Turkey.[54] Secondly, the U.S. appreciated the contribution and assistance of the

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[54] Upon the decision of Turkish parliament on 1 March 2003, Kurdish groups took the advantage of their assistance during the operation against Saddam Hussein. As a result of these

Kurdish groups due to their active involvement in the American operations in Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit. Finally, the stability and a relative democratic governance in the regions, which were controlled by the Kurdish groups, showed how the Kurdish groups were capable of governing a state (Olson, 2008: 38).

On the other hand, Turkey's sensitivity toward a *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq dramatically increased after the fall of the Saddam regime. Emergence of this strong and stable *de facto* Kurdish state triggered the traditional concerns of Turkish security and foreign policy elite on transnational Kurdish nationalism. The major concern was that the PKK terrorists could get assistance from the sovereign and institutionalized *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq to establish their own *de facto* state on Turkish soil. Therefore, the *de facto* Kurdish state was regarded as a threat to the stability of Turkey and the region as a whole (Park, 2004: 22).

Turkey's concerns mounted when the Iraqi Constitution was accepted in October 2005. The new constitution of Iraq regards Kurdistan Regional Government as a federal unit of the country. Moreover, in the special articles on the Kurdistan Regional Government, self-government principle is highlighted. Consequently, the Kurds have gradually legalized and expanded their autonomy. As Henry Kissinger (2004) posits "Kurds define self government as only microscopically distinguishable from independence." These were very serious concerns especially for the nationalists in Turkey.

The relations between Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) slowly deteriorated as the KRG deepened its autonomy and PKK attacks

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developments, presence of Turkish military, which had deployed in order to keep the peace between KDP and PUK in 1998, in Northern Iraq ended.

in Turkey increased. Between the years 2003 and 2008, Turkish officials repeatedly accused the KRG of supporting the PKK terrorists. For example, Yaşar Büyükanıt, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff stated in 2007 that the PKK rooted in Northern Iraq and attained military equipment. The Iraqi Kurdish groups, who previously fought against PKK, has become the natural allies of the terrorist organization.[55] Abdullah Gül, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2005, warned the Kurdish politicians in Northern Iraq and asked them to stop supporting PKK.[56] On the other hand, Mesud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government, has also argued that Turkey's fight against the PKK targets the sovereignty of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Barzani stated that Turkey's cross border operations destroyed the infrastructure facilities of Iraqi Kurdistan. Moreover, Barzani posited that Turkey's operation could be aiming at the KRG rather than the PKK.[57] In sum, while the discussions on the cross-border operation of Turkey in Northern Iraq intensified, the statements of Yaşar Büyükanıt showed how the PKK problem and the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq are perceived to be interrelated. Büyükanıt further asked the civilian government to direct the army and clarify whether the Turkish military would fight only against the PKK or also against Barzani.[58]

Apart from the PKK, Turkey expressed its concerns on the status of Kirkuk and the problems of Turkmen society in Iraq. In other words, the Turkish concerns were not only the KRG's aid to PKK but also its other policies in Northern Iraq. During this period, politicians, military officials and columnists

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[55] See http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/405375.asp (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[56] See http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/347957.asp (Last Access: April 16, 2010).
[57] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/barzani--abd-izin-verdi--bagdat-seyirci-kaldi/guncel/haberdetayarsiv/01.06.2010/253348/default.htm (Last Access: April 18, 2010).
[58] See http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/6620181.asp?gid=180 (Last Access: April 18, 2010).

discussed Turkey's probable military intervention to Northern Iraq for these other issues as well. Consequently, Turkey-KRG relations between 2003 and 2008 were based on three main problematic issues, which inevitably influenced and tensed the relationship between Turkey and the newly founded Iraqi government.

Consequently, the *de facto* Kurdistan Regional Government became a conflict opportunity between Turkey and Iraq. As noted in the disputes between Turkey and Iraq in 2006, 2007 and 2008, the Kurdistan Regional Government played an important role. Although Turkey's military operation targeted the PKK camps and terrorists, the speeches of Turkish civil and military elite and the claims of Barzani show that the *de facto* Kurdish state often generates opportunity of conflict between Turkey and Iraq. Thus, Hypothesis 3 of this study finds support since the *de facto* statehood of the KRG increases the opportunity of conflict between the external state, Turkey, and the parent state, Iraq. On the other hand, this case does not test Hypothesis 4, which argues that opportunity for conflict decreases if the external state is against the *de facto* state but allies with the parent state. In this case, after the Kurdish *de facto* state is established, it always had peaceful relations with the parent state and thus Turkey and Iraqi central governments did not ally against KRG.

4.1.2.4 Willingness of Turkey and Iraq for Conflict after the Kurdish *De Facto* State is Established

This study argues that the level of democracy of a state affects its foreign policy behaviors as it creates willingness for the states to seize an opportunity for conflict. Once again building on the selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita (1999; 2003), I argue that the members of the winning coalition in autocracies are privileged and free from the devastations of an aggressive foreign policy. Thus, conflictual foreign policy is not a domestic issue in autocracies because leaders are able to keep their position as long as they get the support of their small winning coalition. For that reason, for an autocratic country getting into conflict because of a *de facto* state is easier than a democracy.

Unlike autocracies, democratic countries have large winning coalitions and it is hard to allocate private goods to the members of this winning coalition. Thus, leaders, who want to stay in the office, should take the expectations of people into account. In doing so, they seek to allocate public goods for any citizen no matter s/he is the supports the leader on power. Consequently, since war prevents public goods to be allocated efficiently, leaders in democratic regimes are reluctant to pursue foreign policy, which may lead to conflict. Levels of democracy in Turkey, Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government, therefore, matter in order to explain how these polities are willing to exploit the conflict opportunities.

Hypothesis 6 of this study argues that willingness for conflict decreases if the levels of democracy of the *de facto* state, parent state and the external state increase. Thus, in the following sections, I examine the level of democracy in Turkey, Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government in order test the Hypothesis 6.

4.1.2.4.1 Willingness of the Parent and External States: Regime Type in Turkey and Iraq

According to the Polity IV data, Turkey's polity score is constantly coded as 7 from 2003 to 2008, which means that Turkey is a democracy although its regime is not yet consolidated. Still, Turkey's ongoing accession process to the European Union (EU) and the changing nature of civil-military relations help with the consolidation of democracy in Turkey (Satana 2008). Turkish governments have pushed a number of reform packages in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria after the EU decided to accept Turkey's candidacy for membership in 1999 and accession talks between Turkey and EU started in 2004. Accordingly, the reforms on minority rights and civil-military relations accelerated political liberalization in Turkey. It is arguable to what extent the government implements these reforms and the grassroots support the values of the European Union (Kubicek, 2005: 361-362).

On the other hand, the nature of civil-military relations, which is regarded as a negative factor by Polity IV scholars, which affects Turkey's democratization

(Michael and Jaggers, 2009), started to transform in favor of civilian governments. According to Satana (2008: 367), Turkish military has complied with the constitutional reforms demanded by the EU, although these reforms curb its power and bring about a relaxed attitude in minority rights in spite of the continuing PKK attacks. Therefore, Turkish military's desire for membership despite losing power is further evidence for its gradual transformation. Consequently, Turkish democracy stepped forward after Turkey became a candidate for EU membership. The constitutional amendments to meet the Copenhagen criteria and the decreasing role of military in politics positively affected the democratization trends in Turkey especially in the last few years.[59]

In regards to Iraq, the collapse of the Saddam regime gave momentum to democracy in Iraq. Although the Polity IV data set does not code the polity score of Iraq after 2001 due to the ethnic and sectarian fragmentation in post-Saddam period, the first (International Mission for Iraqi Elections, 2006) and second (Campbell, 2010) elections that were held under the new constitution were considered as free and fair. Puddington (2009) argues that Iraq democratizes as a result of the U.S. aid to democratic governance. According to the regime trends data, polity score of Iraq sharply increases after the fall of Saddam regime although it is not yet accepted as a democracy.

According to the economic freedom report of CATO Institute (Gwartney, 2009), Turkey's rating increases from 5.17 out of 10 in 1990 to 6.43 in 2007 while

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[59] There is a very lively and controversial debate in the Turkish media that the incumbent AKP government is changing Turkey's not only foreign policy but also its prospects for democratization. Thus, some argue that the country is becoming less democratic while others argue that people have never been this free in saying and practicing what they think. I opt to exclude these every day debates and focus on objective and academic discussions of democratization scholars in Turkey.

there is not any data on the performance of Iraq. As noted previously, prior to the US-led operation, Ba'ath Party ruled Iraq on a socialist program. There was a centralized economy in which the state was the main pillar (Foote, Block, Crane, Gray, 2004: 48). In the post-Saddam period, on the other hand, as Diamond (2005: 13) argues, terrorism and insurgency undermined economic reconstruction of Iraq.

In sum, Turkey has been democratizing as shown by the level of political and economic freedom. On the other hand, the autocratic system of Saddam Hussein collapsed by the US-led invasion of Iraq. Although political and economic stability are not yet fulfilled, Iraq is in a transitional phase between authoritarianism and democracy. The tables below show the regime trends in Turkey and Iraq.

Figure 2. Regime Trends in Turkey between 1946 and 2008[60]

Authority Trends, 1946-2008: Turkey

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[60] See http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/tur2.htm (Last Access: April 20, 2010).

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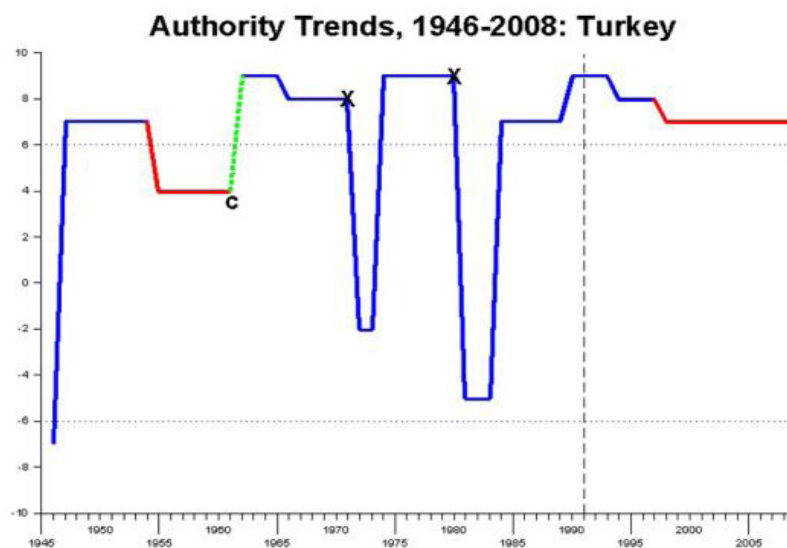
Figure 3. Regime Trends in Iraq between 1946 and 2008[61]

Authority Trends, 1946-2008: Iraq
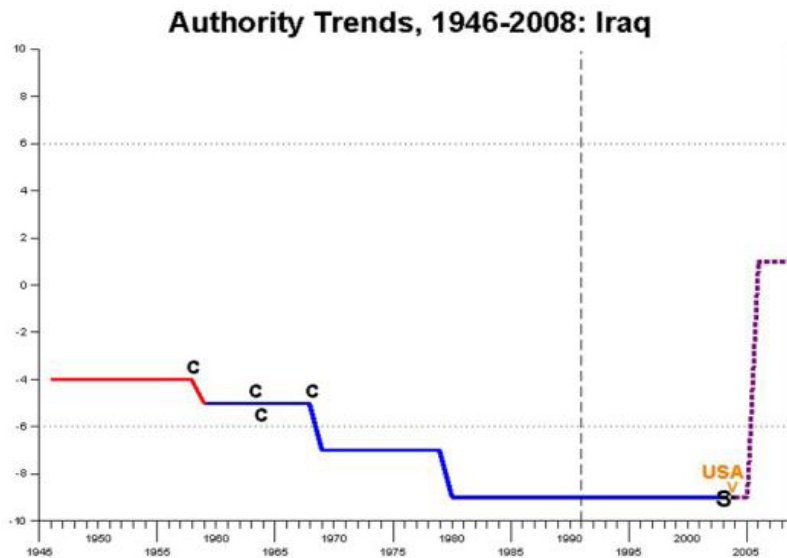
4.1.2.4.2 Willingness of the *De Facto* State: The Kurdistan Regional Government

The *de facto* Kurdish state, which is established in Northern Iraq after 2003, refers to political authority acting as a state within a given territory regardless of its lack of international recognition. Therefore, it is a polity that has a regime type. However, due to the state's *de facto* character, the Polity IV data set does not subsume the data on the level of democracy in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In this part of the study, I use two methods in order to comprehend the democracy and democratization trends in the *de facto* state of KRG. First, I examine the literature on the political and economic development of KRG.

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[61] See http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/irq2.htm (Last Access: April 20, 2010).

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Second, I analyze the data obtained during the field research that I conducted in KRG in June and July 2009.

To analyze the political situation in KRG, I use the conceptualization of the Polity IV data set for consistency. Accordingly, for a polity to be defined as democratic there are three indicators. Firstly, there should be institutions and procedures, which are necessary for citizens to express their preferences about alternative policies and leaders. Secondly, there should be institutionalized constraints when the executive branch exercises authority. Finally, civil liberties of all citizens, in their daily lives and political preferences, should be immune to any restriction (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009: 13). In addition to political freedoms, I analyze the economic freedom situation in KRG by looking at the size of the government, legal structure and security of property rights, access to resources, freedom to trade internationally and regulation of credits, labor and business. CATO Institute uses these criteria to measure the economic freedom situation of a country.

During my field research, I interviewed the members of three different groups. The first group was composed of the members of the government parties, KDP and PUK. Then, I had interviews with the members of several opposition parties such as Gorran and Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU). The members of final group were independent scholars from universities, newspapers and non-governmental organizations. During my field research, I asked interviewees the same questions to maintain consistency.

Democratic Institutions and Procedures

The first democratic elections in the *de facto* Kurdish state were held in May 1992. International observers also verified that the elections were free and fair. In the parliamentary elections, both KDP and PUK won 50 seats while smaller parties failed to get any seats due to the 7 % election threshold. The remaining 5 seats were allocated for the Christian minority living in the region (Gunter, 1993: 199).

However, hopes for a democratic *de facto* Kurdish state collapsed when internal conflict burst out between KDP and PUK in 1994. The Polity IV data set regards internal conflicts as serious problems for the durability of established authority. Therefore, if included, the Polity IV would code the civil war period in the *de facto* Kurdish state as a special period during which central political authority of the regime was suspended. The central political authority in the *de facto* Kurdish state was re-established in 2003. During the operation of the coalition forces led by the U.S. carried out against Saddam Hussein in 2003, the Kurdish groups were able to remain unified and behave like a state (Olson, 2008). That is to say, the *de facto* Kurdish state experienced no extra-ordinary period affecting its polity score in post-Saddam Iraq. Consequently, polity score of *de facto* Kurdish state can be analyzed beginning from 2003, although it exists in theory since 1991.

In order to comprehend the level of democracy in the *de facto* Kurdish state after 2003, I initially examine the presence of the institutions and procedures ensuring the competition of alternative groups and organizations. In the post-Saddam period, first parliamentary elections in Kurdistan Regional Government

were held on 15 December 2005. KDP and PUK, which ran on the same list (Kurdistan List), continued to dominate the Kurdish politics after 2005 elections. In 2005 elections, the total deputy number of KDP and PUK was seventy-eight out of 100[62].

The Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which was signed on March 8, 2004 by the Interim Governing Council of Iraq, requires free, fair and periodic elections. Thus, the election procedure in the Kurdistan Regional Government was conducted in accordance with TAL. However, during the elections in 2005, Kurdistan Islamic Union, strongest opponent of the KDP and PUK coalition, experienced difficulties. The International Mission for Iraqi Elections (2006) reports that the officials of the Kurdistan List accused those who did not intend to vote for them of treason. Furthermore, during the election rally, offices of the Kurdistan Islamic Union were burned down and some of the party members were killed or injured.

When I interviewed with a senior politician and official of the Kurdistan Islamic Union, he also affirmed the attacks. He argued that the Kurdistan Islamic Union remained as an alternative voice, although it was forced to join the Kurdistan List in 2005 elections. Thus, the KIU senior official highlighted that the ruling parties of Kurdistan (KDP and PUK) organized the assaults. Consequently, the violence against opposition groups shadowed the election process in 2005.

I was in Kurdistan Regional Government prior to the elections of July 25, 2009. Political atmosphere of the region was more colorful than 2005 due to the foundation of the Gorran List, which was headed by Nawshirwan Mustafa, ex-

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[62] See http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL8116418 (Last Access: May 1, 2010).

secretary general of PUK. Thus, the split of Gorran from PUK paved the way of competitive election process.

In June 2009, I interviewed Mom Rostam, the secretary general of Gorran, on the eve of the elections. He criticized the discriminatory policies of KDP and PUK. According to Mom Rostam, the government cut the salaries of state officials who have sympathy for Gorran. Furthermore, the promotions of soldiers supporting Gorran List were denied. Thus, there was an indirect pressure of the government over the opposition parties. Moreover, the senior official of the Kurdistan Islamic Union argued that the government might directly intervene the voting process. He highlighted that the upcoming elections would not be free and fair if international observers do not monitor the elections.

Contrary to the criticisms of the opposition parties, leading figures of the Kurdistan List argued that there is no abuse of the election process by the government. I brought up the complaints of opposition parties to one of the ministers in the KRG cabinet. He stated that there are certain legal procedures; what the government does is to implement the laws. Thus, he argued that there is no systemic abuse of power in KRG. Another prominent figure of the Kurdistan List, who became a minister in the cabinet founded after 2009 elections, argued that democracy is the main asset of KRG. Although the opposition parties complain about the government, KRG is aware of how democracy is a substantial element for its survival. Therefore, KRG benefits from free, fair and competitive elections.

Academics and representatives of local and international NGOs answered my questions moderately. One of the professors from Sulaymaniya University

contended that he bought the promises of the government to conduct free and fair election process. He showed me a columnist's article criticizing the government and advised me to watch the broadcasts of KNN, which is a Gorran sponsored TV Channel. According to the professor, freedom of propaganda is the proof of the competitive election process in KRG. However, he also pointed to the privileged position of some parties. He argued that the governing parties are more equal than the others in the propaganda process because they have the advantage of controlling the economic resources.

Another academic from the American University of Iraq - Sulaymaniya evaluated the level of democracy in KRG by comparing the Saddam and post-Saddam periods. He highlighted the gradual democratization of the region. According to him, presence of opposition and free propaganda show that there is no systemic pressure over opposition groups.

Similarly, the director of a Sulaymaniya based NGO, which is a partner institution of some international organizations in the region, acknowledged that democracy in KRG gradually increases. In regards to elections, the director contended that his institution seriously monitors the election process and evaluates the complaints. However, the director argued that they could find no serious abuse when they closely examined the complaints.

On the other hand, there are NGO leaders criticizing the election process and pointing to undemocratic practices in KRG. Arbil representative of a local NGO, which deals with the issues of human security, argued that there is a multi-party system in KRG but opposition parties have no chance to come into power. According to the representative, competition is not fair and elections are not free

because governing parties take the advantage of controlling the economic network. An Arbil representative of an international NGO, which specifically focuses on democratic development, posits that democratic tradition in KRG can be traced back to 1992. However, politics-economics and society overlapped in KRG depending on the extra-ordinary conditions experienced in the region. In this period, KDP and PUK consolidated their power and authority over society and economics. Consequently, although opposition parties freely operate they cannot compete with the ruling parties.

I monitored the elections on July 25, 2009 as an international observer, in Sulaymaniya, Dokan and Koya. I did not witness any election abuse or violation. The results also verified that the elections were free, fair and competitive. KDP-PUK coalition, Kurdistan List, lost ground and got fifty-nine seats while this number was seventy-eight in the previous term. Gorran List got twenty-five seats while the Islamist-leftist coalition and the Services and Reform List got thirteen seats. Interestingly, Gorran List won the majority of the votes in Sulaymaniya, where PUK has historically dominated.

In my field research, I observed that Kurdistan Regional Government is going through a transitional phase. There does not seem to be a serious violation of the democratic election law so far. Political parties have freedom to act in the legal framework. However, KDP and PUK are more equal than the others. They gain leverage due to their historical control over economics and the legacy of their struggle against Saddam. Therefore, elections in KRG are freely held but competitiveness and fairness are shadowed by the consolidated authority of the ruling KDP and PUK. At the end of the day, there is a developing democracy in

KRG after 2003 *vis-à-vis* the period between 1992 and 2002. There is no factionalism within the polity and the government obeys the rules of the election law. Consequently, democratic institutions and procedures started to improve in KRG after 2003.

Constraints on the Exercises of the Executive

After 1991, the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq needed to formulate a constitutional procedure in order to maintain its self-governance. The leadership of the *de facto* Kurdish state accepted the findings of the commission, which was composed of judges and lawyers. Although Kurdish administration rejected the idea that these regulations were attempts to build a constitution, these laws dealt with the organization of the state and the distribution of powers. Thus, these laws are also concerned with the relations between the legislative, executive and judiciary (Stansfield, 2003: 124 128). Law No. 44 (December 28, 1992) treats the judiciary as an autonomous establishment, which is free from the influence of all other institutions including political parties. In addition to this, establishment of a Supreme Court was affirmed (Stansfield, 2003: 141-142).

The separation of power principle continued in the post-Saddam period. Since the constitution of KRG was not ratified yet, the KRG government was still abided by the constitution of Iraq. However, KRG passed the Judicial Power Law of 2007 in order to create a more independent judiciary. Upon the codification of Judicial Power Law, the Justice Minister Faruq Jamil Sadıq stated, "the judiciary

have now been fully separated from the executive and had established its own administration" (UNHCR, 2009).

Nevertheless, independence of judiciary is violated at times in KRG. Amnesty International reports that there are concerns about the independence of the judiciary in the region governed by KRG. The pressures, interventions and threats on the *Asayish*[63] officials subordinate the judiciary to the requirements of *Asayish*. Accordingly, judges accept what Asayish interrogators tell them. As an additional note, the offices of investigative judges are located in the headquarters of Asayish in Arbil and Sulaymaniya although they are under the authority of the Ministry of Justice (Amnesty International, 2009: 25).

Another example is the arbitrary detainment of Kamal Said Qadir in October 2005, a Kurdish intellectual with Austrian citizenship, while he was on a visit to KRG. He was arrested due to his articles on corruption of the Barzani family and the ties between Mullah Mustafa and Soviet KGB.[64] He was sentenced to 30 years of imprisonment in December 2006 but he was released shortly after upon the rise of international campaigns and the efforts of Austria. According to Qadir (2007: 21) "the courts have become a tool for political parties to harass and oppress them." He adds that he suffered from the arbitrary and politically motivated judgments. Kamal Said Qadir also argues that judicial constraints over the executive are undermined by the security units of KDP and PUK. Lawyers who defend the victims of human rights violations have been threatened and judges investigating the financial crimes and drug trade have been gunned down (Qadir, 2007: 21).

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[63] Local Security Forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government.
[64] The article is available at this web site at:
http://www.antiwar.com/orig/qadir.php?articleid=9629 (Last Access: June 1, 2010)

In response, the officials of KRG acknowledge the need for judiciary reform. Dr. Yousif Muhammed Aziz, the Minister of Human Rights of KRG, concedes that the judicial system causes some violations of human rights. In addition to this, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani argues that more steps are required to establish the rule of law. Consequently, independence of the judiciary is guaranteed by Law No. 44 of the *de facto* Kurdish state established after 1991, by the constitution of Iraq and the Judicial Power Law of KRG passed in 2007. However, the governing parties apparently violate the independence of judiciary in practice. Several security units in KRG directly interfere in judicial affairs and subordinate the judiciary system to the ruling parties. Therefore, absence of an independent judiciary undermines the systemic constraints on the exercise of the executive disappear.

What distinguish KRG from the authoritarian regimes are the attitudes of the officials. Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Human Rights acknowledge the "rule of law" principle and highlight the need for further progress. Moreover, KRG is perceptive to the external dynamics such as the international campaigns, reports of international organizations and media. Public opinion of western countries discusses and criticizes the arbitrary implementations of the judiciary in KRG. Thus, KRG takes further steps to consolidate the independence of the judiciary in order to avert external criticisms since the Kurds are aware that their *de facto* statehood largely depends on international support.

Individual Freedoms

In regards to individual freedoms, there is also a gap between theory and practice or discourse and implementation. Although Masoud Barzani (2005) emphasizes the pluralistic, democratic and decentralized character of KRG, I was informed about several human rights violations during my field research. In this part, I analyze the freedom of press and expression, freedom of association, rights of women and rights of detainees in order to comprehend whether civil liberties are guaranteed.

In Sulaymaniya, I visited the editor of an independent newspaper. The editor used the term "independent" in order to clarify that there is no financial and political tie between the government and the newspaper. I asked him to interpret the freedom of press and freedom of expression in KRG. He initially classified the pressures of government into two categories. Firstly, he argued that there are legal difficulties restricting the freedom of media. For example, his newspaper was sentenced to pay 12.000 $ to government just because it published Michael Rubin's article criticizing the Kurdish government for corruption and over centralization. Secondly, the editor argued that there is a complex mechanism to suppress the criticisms of media. Accordingly, the KRG government, in return for business contracts, encourages private firms to place an ad in the pro-government newspapers. Thus, contrary to the independent media, supporters of the government in the media do not experience any financial difficulties. This means that the government indirectly intervenes in the media and undermines freedom of expression.

The editor of another newspaper defined his institution as an opponent rather than independent. However, he also acknowledged that his newspaper is the extension of an opposition party in KRG. He admitted that the survival of an independent newspaper requires strong financial infrastructure. For that purpose, they tend to align with the government and loose their independence at the end of the day. I asked him how they (opponent media) overcome financial difficulties. He explained that an opposition party supports the newspaper financially. Then, he added: "That is why we are not independent but opponent."

When I interviewed the Arbil representative of a Baghdad based NGO, she argued that civil society and civil liberties in KRG are stronger than other parts of Iraq. However, she also added "KRG protects basic rights so long as free speech does not criticize the government. In terms of civil society, she complained about the arbitrary funding of Nongovernmental Organizations. Since government unsystematically funds the NGOS, civil society functions as an extension of the government. Ironically, civil society, which is supposed to express diverse ideas, remains under the control of the central authority. Consequently, the legal guarantees for freedom of association do not pave the way of more colorful and diverse society and politics."

I examine the discrimination and violence against women as a sub-title of civil liberties. Therefore, I interviewed the head of an Arbil based women rights NGO. She argued that "there is not any legal obstacle in front of women but the problem is lack of implementation, which derives from mentality of men." She further stated, "Upon the pressure of the U.S a quota system for parliamentary elections was accepted in KRG. Accordingly, 30% of the regional parliament is

composed of women. However, these are cosmetic reforms because the quota system is not implemented in the cabinet." She was right. When I checked the cabinet list, I found out that there was only one female minister in the cabinet, which is composed of 19 members. In addition to that, the head of this NGO argued that political parties nominate women, who are a member of their families. Thus, women in the parliament are not the representatives of the women against the government. Conversely, they represent the government against women.

As discussed in the previous part, the detainment of Kamal Said Qadir is also an issue of freedom of expression and basic human rights. According to Qadir (2007: 21), torture is a method used in KRG to gain confessions from detainees. Amnesty International (2009: 25) also confirms the arguments of Qadir by comprehensively discussing the ill-treatment stories. Furthermore, both Qadir (2007) and Amnesty International (2009) note that there are serious difficulties in detainees' access to a lawyer.

Consequently, legal guarantees are necessary conditions for an effective checks and balances system to occur. Although, the KRG government is open to adoption of western style laws to consolidate democracy, there are problems in the implementation process. The main problem is the over centralization of the Kurdish regime. Ruling political groups, KDP and PUK, aim to curb attempts to check and balance the government. In doing so, they efficiently use their economic control on the society. Next section deals with economic freedom in the *de facto* Kurdish state.

Free Market Economy

On June 23, 2009, I was watching TV in my hotel room in Arbil. The Kurdistan TV propagandized about the Kurdistan List by broadcasting the historical struggle of the Barzani family all day long. I also monitored a defamation campaign against the Gorran List. I asked who the owner of the Kurdistan TV is to a senior official from KRG. He, as a professional and experienced politician, immediately understood what I meant. Indeed, I wanted to understand whether the state owns the Kurdistan TV. Then, I was going to ask how a state-owned TV could support a political party in the eve of the elections. He argued, "this is a very complex situation. During the war against Saddam in 1991 and the civil war period, there were extra-ordinary conditions. Therefore, the property of state and individuals overlapped."

The answer of the politician explained many questions about the economic freedom situation of KRG. Since the *de facto* Kurdish state was established as a result of a protracted and devastating communal strife in 1991 and experienced an interregnum process until 2002, KRG did not have an institutionalized economic structure. Thus, economic freedom level of KRG is far from the standards of western democracies.

Since there is no detailed data on the economic indicators, my analyses on the economic freedom of KRG are based solely on my field research. I attained comprehensive and scientific data from an interview with a senior bureaucrat from the Ministry of Trade. He objectively explained the economic overview of KRG. He confessed that the exact data on economic indicators are not available but KRG is moving its institutions to the level of other developed countries. The bureaucrat argued that KRG initially suffers from institutional problems. For

example, there is not an institutionalized insurance and banking system. Second problem is the size of government, which pays 90% of the employees in the KRG. In other words, the government is the main job provider instead of private companies in the KRG. Finally, corruption is a widespread issue. Scholars (Rubin, 2008; Chorev, 2007), who study the political economy of KRG, argue that KDP and PUK fail to exercise good governance due to corruption and nepotism.

During my field research, all of the interviewees agreed on oversize nature of the government. Opponent political groups posited that KDP and PUK monopolized the economy. According to a senior politician from the Gorran List, there is not a free and fair market economy in KRG. Governing parties organize and control the economy in order to exert power on the society. On the other hand, politicians from the Kurdistan List acknowledged the need for an economic reform and contended that there is a huge financial burden on the shoulders of the KRG government. Representatives of civil society and academics also define the size of government in KRG as a disastrous issue for economic development.

Still, the government, opposition and independent circles diversely interpret the large size of the government. According to the government, job provider role that it has to overtake prevents the government from implementing an efficient economic program. Thus, a market reform is indeed needed. On the other hand, the opposition argues that the active role of the government in labor market is a deliberate policy of the ruling parties in order to consolidate their political control over the society. Finally, the leaders of civil society and academics highlighted how socialist legacy of Saddam Hussein shapes the economic freedom of KRG: the Kurdish regions were ruled under Middle Eastern

socialism until 2003. However, in the post-Saddam period, while the free market prevailed, the state remained as the main employer. The lack of strategic and long term planning weakens the transition from socialism to capitalism.

Consequently, in terms of economic freedom, KRG experiences transitional problems such as the oversize of the government, the lack of economic institutions and corruption. These challenges are inherited from the Ba'athist state of Saddam. In other words, they are not produced by the current KRG government. On the other hand, notwithstanding the challenges, free market also gains ground in KRG. Its volume of international trade flourishes, especially with neighboring countries (including Turkey). Furthermore, the number of firms operating in KRG increased from 1870 to 8000 after 2003, as my interviews indicate.

In conclusion, according to my field research experience, the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq is a democratizing state; however, as of now I would call it an anocracy rather than a democracy. Political and economic freedoms have legal guarantees in KRG, but there are serious problems in the implementation process. Democracy is gradually becoming the only game in town.[65] The ruling elite of KRG has no resistance to adoption of the advices of western countries on the consolidation of democracy. On the other hand, opposition groups highlight their commitment to democracy. Consequently, transition process in KRG is a dynamic and increasing democratization process rather than a static authoritarianism as it had been in Iraq for decades. Thus, the

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[65] This is the definition of Linz and Stepan (1996). They argue that a democracy gets consolidated when all of the political groups adopt democracy as the only method to implement their policies.

willingness of KRG for conflict decreases depending on the increase in its level of democracy.

As noted in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, I argue that levels of democracy of the parent and the external state as well as the *de facto* state can create willingness to exploit opportunities for conflict. According to Hypothesis 5, as level of democracy increases in all the actors, conflict is less likely. The analysis above shows that Turkey has been a democracy for decades, although its level of democracy fluctuates from time to time. On the other hand, Iraq and KRG are democratizing entities after 2003 (or 2005 due to the invasion beforehand). Establishment of the multi party system and the adoption of the Iraqi constitution expedite the democratization process.

Accordingly, the relations between Turkey and Iraq gradually recuperated after Turkish diplomats got involved in diplomatic relations with the KRG government and the Baghdad government in October 2008.[66] Barkey (2010, 1) argues that Turkey implemented "a 180-degree turn in its policy toward KRG." The changing nature of civil-military relations in Turkey, the declaration of the Turkish military that the Kurdish issue cannot be solved only through military means and the changes in the perception of Turkish state of the Kurdish question produced official dialogue and agreements between Turkey and Iraq. Moreover, Barkey (2010, 5) highlights that Turkey appreciates the rise of Gorran List, which refers to a more differentiated society in Kurdistan Regional Government and wants a unified and pluralistic Iraq to survive.

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[66] See http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&Kategori=siyaset&KategoriID=&ArticleID=1002879&Date=14.10.2008&b=Gule%20Erbil%20Havaalani%20daveti%20Talabaniden.(Last Access: May 19, 2010).

After the establishment of the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq, Turkey and Iraq experienced 4 MIDs, which are all related to the presence of the *de facto* Kurdistan Regional Government. As shown in the table below, Turkey is democratic while Iraq and KRG are regarded as anocracies. In this period, Turkey sought to provide security for its citizens. According to the Turkish parliament, struggle against PKK, which was supported by KRG, was a security problem. Iraq, on the other hand, was autocratic and failed to provide basic services efficiently. According to the Reconstruction of Iraq Report of Global Policy Forum, Iraqi citizens suffered from the weak accountability of the government and from constantly growing corruption. Public funds were not provided for the basic services.[67] In the election watch analysis of International Republican Institute before 25 July 2009 elections, people of Kurdistan Regional Government also complained about the lack of transparency, corruption and difficulties in delivery of basic services.[68] Rubin argues that basic services are not provided for the Kurdish people since the Barzani clan corrupts the economic sources (Rubin 2008). Consequently, applying the selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita, Baghdad and Arbil governments do not need to provide public goods effectively in order to stay in office. Thus, they are more prone to go to war. The table below shows how the regime types of Turkey-Iraq and KRG affect the occurrence of MID between Turkey and Iraq.

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[67] See http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/168/37153.html (Last Access: May 19, 2010).
[68] See http://www.iri.org/explore-our-resources/election-watch/kurdistan-pre-election-watch-july-2009-regional-parliament-elec (Last Access: May 19, 2010).

Table 4. Militarized Inter-State Disputes (MIDs), Regime Types/Polity Scores of Turkey, Iraq and KRG and Opportunities for Conflict

MIDs	Regime Type Turkey	Regime Type Iraq	Regime Type KRG	Type of Opportunity
2006	Democracy (7)	Anocracy	Anocracy	KRG
2007	Democracy (7)	Anocracy	Anocracy	KRG
2008	Democracy (7)	Anocracy	Anocracy	KRG

In conclusion, further democratization of Turkey, Iraq and KRG at the same time after 2008 is a determinant of the ongoing peace process between Turkey and Iraq. Consequently, the declining willingness of Turkey and Iraq depending on the democratization of the external, parent and *de facto* states supports Hypothesis 6 of this study.

4.2 Conclusion

The Kurdish rebellion, which started at the final stages of the Ottoman rule in Iraq, resulted in the establishment of the *de facto* Kurdish state after the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. This chapter of the dissertation dealt with how the Kurdish rebellion and the *de facto* Kurdish state generated opportunity for conflict between Turkey and Iraq and which factors affected the willingness of Turkey and Iraq to exploit these opportunities. Accordingly, the struggle of the Kurdish groups against the Baghdad government between 1932 and 2003 caused the occurrence of 15 militarized interstate disputes between Turkey and Iraq out of

17. This finding supports Hypothesis 1, which argues that opportunity for conflict between parent and external state increases in the process of communal group's fighting for *de facto* statehood.

As noted in the theory chapter, according to "opportunity and willingness" pre-theoretical framework of Most and Starr (1989), for inter-state conflict to occur, willingness matters as well as opportunity. I argue that level of democracy affects the willingness of states to exploit conflict opportunities. According to Hypothesis 5, if the level of democracy of the parent and external state increases, the willingness for conflict decreases in the process of group's fighting for *de facto* statehood. During the Iraqi Kurdish insurgency, Iraq was ruled by authoritarian regimes and as an autocratic state did not refrain from getting into conflict with Turkey, which supports Hypothesis 5. The MIDs between Turkey and Iraq are the products of the jointly emergence of opportunity and willingness.

The establishment of the *de facto* Kurdistan Regional Government also created conflict opportunities between Turkey and Iraq. Turkey's threat perception from the transnational Kurdish nationalism shaped its policy toward the Kurdistan Regional Government. According to the Turkish political and military elite, Kurdish administration in Northern Iraq supported the PKK terrorism in Turkey. Thus, Turkey's relations with the Iraqi central government relapsed due to the tense relations between Turkey and KRG. This lends support to Hypothesis 3 of this study. Accordingly, presence of the *de facto* state increases the conflict opportunity between the parent state and the external state, if the external state is against the *de facto* state.

The relations between Turkey and Iraq ameliorated as the political life in KRG and Iraq led to pluralism develop in both places Turkey's changing agenda toward KRG and the peace period between Turkey and Iraq after 2008 provides evidence for Hypothesis 6, which states that, willingness for conflict decreases, if the level of democracy of the *de facto* state, parent state and the external state increases. This means that the democratization process in Turkey, Iraq and the *de facto* KRG decreases the willingness of states to exploit the opportunities stemming from the presence of the *de facto* state. Therefore, if this situation does not change in the future, I expect peaceful relations in the triad.

In sum, the case of the Kurdish insurgency against central government of Iraq and the establishment of the *de facto* Kurdistan Regional Government lends support for the hypotheses tested in this study.

In the following chapter, I examine how the process and the outcome of the South Ossetian rebellion for *de facto* statehood against Tbilisi government affect the relations between Russia and Georgia.

CHAPTER 5

THE CASE OF SOUTH OSSETIA-RUSSIA-GEORGIA

During the opening ceremony of Beijing Olympics in summer 2008, news agencies reported that the Russian troops invaded Georgia. In other words, the ongoing hostility between Russia and Georgia finally hit the peak and war burst out. The dispute between Russia and Georgia has centered on the status of the *de facto* state of South Ossetia. This chapter aims to comprehend how the *de facto* statehood of South Ossetia affected the relations between Russia and Georgia.

As discussed in the previous chapters, this study uses the "opportunity and willingness" pre-theoretical framework of Most and Starr (1989). Accordingly, there are two independent variables of inter-state war. The first one is opportunity, which refers to the set of options in the menu and the second one is willingness, which refers to the micro level factors affecting the decision making process. According to the theoretical framework of this study, *de facto* states create conflict opportunities between states. On the other hand, levels of democracy within states and the *de facto* state affect the willingness of the actors to exploit the opportunities for conflict. Therefore, I examine whether the *de facto* South Ossetian state generated a conflict opportunity between Russia and Georgia. Next,

I analyze the democracy level of Russia, Georgia and South Ossetia in order to understand the willingness of states.

5.1 Independent Variables: Opportunity and Willingness in the South Ossetian Case

A *de facto* state is established as a result of civil strife, which is fought between communal groups and the parent state. Therefore, in the following sections, I analyze two periods. Firstly, I examine the establishment process of the *de facto* South Ossetian state. Secondly, I deal with the period after South Ossetia is established as an outcome. In doing so, I discuss how South Ossetian communal challenge and the *de facto* South Ossetian state has created both opportunity and willingness for conflict between Russia and Georgia.

5.1.1 Opportunity and Willingness during the Process of Becoming a *De Facto* State

5.1.1.1 Historical Background

The roots of South Ossetian insurgency against Tbilisi can be traced back to the first years of the Soviet period. According to the 1924 constitution, Soviet Union was defined as a federation, which was composed of four constituent republics.

These were the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and Trans-Caucasian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic. In conformity with the treaty signed on March 12, 1922, Soviet Republic of Georgia, Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan and Soviet Republic of Armenia became the constituent republics of Trans-Caucasian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (Kelley, 1924: 63-66).

The complex administrative system of the Soviet Union inaugurated the discontent of South Ossetia, which was separated from Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia, within the border of Russia Soviet. The 1922 treaty regarded South Ossetia as an autonomous region within the borders of the Soviet Republic of Georgia. In spite of the discontent of South Ossetia, no internal conflict was experienced due to the strict control of Moscow over the Union. However, in November 1989, nationalism was revived in Georgia upon the decision of the Supreme Soviet of South Ossetia to upgrade its administrative status from autonomous region to autonomous republic, still within the Georgian Soviet (Lynch 2004, 30). In September and November 1989, the Georgian government issued a new program in order to increase the use of Georgian language in public life and rejected the demands of the local South Ossetian leaders to upgrade the administrative status of South Ossetia (King, 2001: 534).

Upon the reaction of Georgia, South Ossetia drafted a secessionist declaration, which deepened the crisis between the parties. On September 20, 1990, South Ossetia Regional Soviet declared its independence from Georgia. According to the declaration, the new republic was proposed to be an administrative unit of Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the Supreme Soviet of Georgia

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annulled the declaration on September 21, 1990 and abolished the "autonomous region" status of South Ossetia (Birch, 1999: 503).

After the political confrontation of Georgia and South Ossetia, military conflict began in January 1991. Georgian troops entered Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, and met with the resistance of the Ossetian forces. Fighting continued until Russian-led peacekeeping troops intervened and mediated the conflict in June 1992 (Corley, 1997: 270). According to the Sochi Accord signed on June 24, 1992, trilateral Joint Peace Keeping Forces (JPKF), which consist of Russian, Georgian and Ossetian troops, were deployed in the region. Furthermore, Russia, Georgia, North Ossetia and South Ossetia participated in the establishment of Joint Control Commission to monitor the implementation of the accord. After the terms of Sochi Accord were enforced, no military confrontation was experienced between Georgia and South Ossetia. However, although intervention of Russia ceased the war in 1992, the status of South Ossetia remained unsolved. In other words, sovereignty problems between Georgia and South Ossetia were frozen for a while (Jawad, 2008: 614-615). Consequently, peacekeeping operation of Russia protected South Ossetia from the attacks of Georgia and paved the way of the establishment and institutionalization of a *de facto* state in South Ossetia.

5.1.1.2 Inter-State Military Conflict between Russia and Georgia during the South Ossetian Struggle

As stated in the Methodology chapter, I operationalize conflict as hostility level of the two states in the dispute per year as well as the highest action in the dispute taken by each state in the dyad. According to the Militarized Interstate Dispute data set, the hostility levels of Russia and Georgia are coded as 4, which refers to use of force, in 1992.[69] The highest actions of Russia and Iraq are coded as 17, which refers to clash. The conflict between Russia and Georgia is the product of Russia's intervention into the civil war between South Ossetia and Georgia. Thus, Russia and Georgia get into a dispute in 1992 due to Georgia's resistance against Russia's efforts to mediate the civil conflict between the South Ossetian rebels and the Tbilisi government. In other words, from 1989 to 1992, the struggle of the South Ossetians led to a dispute once between the parent and the external state.

However, one can ask how a peacekeeping operation caused a MID between Russia and Georgia. After all, peacekeeping operations are supposed to bring ceasefire not additional conflicts. The first reason is the political agenda of Russia. In other words, the Russian peacekeeping operation was not an ordinary attempt to mediate the intra-state war in Georgia. The operation had other implications, which served the foreign policy agenda of Russia. Mackinlay and Sharov (2003: 72) argue that the causes of the Russian involvement were to impose the military presence of Russia in the region where there was an inter-

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[69] Although I take the struggle process of South Ossetia from 1989 on as the historical background shows, I take MIDs after 1991 since that is the year Georgia becomes independent. The MID data set has a hostility score for Georgia earliest in 1992.

ethnic conflict, to subordinate the control of the operation to Moscow, to create the military balance between the parties to the conflict by supplying arms to the favored side, to emphasize the role of Russia as an arbiter-mediator to defend the interests of Russia, and to create a trilateral peacekeeping force, which is supervised by Russia.

The reaction of the former Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze is the second reason explaining why the Russian peacekeeping operation led to a MID between Russia and Georgia. Shevardnadze defined the intervention of Russia as an aggressive military operation. On June 22, 1992, two days before the Russian peacekeeping operation was carried out, Shevardnadze accused the Russian troops of supporting the South Ossetian secessionists with helicopter fire. Furthermore, Shevardnadze called for the intervention of the United Nations instead of Russia (Erlanger, 1992).[70]

The conflict between Russia and Georgia continued even after the establishment of a joint peacekeeping force. In 1993, the diplomatic relations between Russia and Georgia ameliorated. The parties agreed on the diplomatic settlement of Abkhazia and South Ossetia problems. Although the parties reached no clear settlement of the conflict, the start of diplomatic negotiations ended the conflict between Russia and Georgia (UNHCR).

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[70] Generally a peacekeeping force is sent to obtain ceasefire when at least one of the states in a dispute accepts the force. In this case, Russia's intervention is not peacekeeping in a traditional sense.

5.1.1.3 South Ossetian Rebels as an Opportunity for Conflict?

The civil conflict that Tbilisi (the parent state) and Tskhinvali (rebels fighting for *de facto* statehood) experienced between 1989 and 1992 produced conflict opportunities between Russia and Georgia. Allison (2008: 1146-1147) argues that Russian intervention to mediate the civil war and the peacekeeping institutions established by the Sochi Accord served the *de facto* separation of South Ossetia from the rest of the Georgia. Therefore, Georgians never trusted in the impartiality of the Russian peacekeeping efforts. According to Allison, Russia's policy was based on expanding its sphere of influence by absorbing the *de facto* South Ossetia. For that purpose, Russia supported the friction between Georgia and South Ossetia.

Brzezinski (1994: 73-74) also proposes that civil conflict in Georgia creates an opportunity for Russia to pursue an imperialistic policy toward the former Soviet republics. According to Russian military and political circles, Russia has a *de facto* right to intervene in the former Soviet republics if Russia's interests and regional stability are threatened by the developments in these post-Soviet republics. Therefore, Russia's peacekeeping mission during the South Ossetian struggle helped Georgia's subordination to Moscow.

Similarly, according to Baev (1999: 83-84), building a sphere of influence over the near abroad became the milestone for Russian foreign policy after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Thus, Russia got involved in the conflict between the secessionist groups and the former Soviet Republics in order to preserve its vital national interests. In other words, Russia's peacekeeping

operation in South Ossetia aimed to restore Russia's dominance over its near borders.

Finally, Macfarlane (1997: 521-522) highlights the clear hegemonic aspirations of Russia in the former Soviet space. He argues that Russia's peacekeeping operations are the products of its "near abroad" policy. In parallel with this policy, Russia did nothing and allowed the conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali to escalate. In doing so, Russia waited for the right moment and aimed to expand its sphere of influence by deploying its military forces in Georgia. Thus, Russia manipulated the peacekeeping operation to keep the dependency of Georgia on Moscow.

A question that comes to mind, reviewing this literature, is why Russia is so keen on showing that the boss is to Georgia particularly. "Near abroad" policy does not explain why Georgia is the target in this case. According to Cvetkovski, "The leader of the independence movement (eventually the first president of Georgia) Zviad Gamsakhurdia, based his popularity on a nationalistic agenda. Primarily, it was directed against the imposed Soviet/Russian communist rule, but it also manifested itself as Greater Georgian nationalism at the expense of the minority groups of Georgia."[71] Apparently, the Soviet policy of Korenizatsiia (rooting or nativization), adopted at the Soviet communist Party's Tenth Congress in 1921, "promoted personnel from each unit's titular nationality into a program of training and recruitment for service in the political, economic, and cultural administration" (Saroyan, 1988: 222 cited in Cvetkovski, 1999). Moreover, "the policy of korenizatsiia (rooting/nativization) had immense consequences for the

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[71] See http://www.caucasus.dk/chapter4.htm (Last Access: June 2, 2010)

development in the respective federal units. Combined with modernization this policy can be characterized as an incubator of nationalism. The policy meant an ethnic consolidation of the titular nationalities, and the empowerment of their national leaderships and intelligentias. In Georgia it meant a gradual re-establishment of Georgian political control and ethnic dominance over their country, a process that hardly had begun during the brief independence period of 1918-21" (Suny, 1989: 298 cited in Cvetkovski, 1999).

If Cvetkovski is right, Georgian perception of minorities such as the South Ossetians is plagued with nationalist sentiments against Russian policies of the Soviet times. In other words, the Georgian government had an inherent suspicion toward the minorities and this led to strict minority policies in the country and finally to the South Ossetian crisis becoming an opportunity for conflict between Georgia and Russia.

Consequently, the internal conflict between the South Ossetian secessionist groups aiming for *de facto* statehood and Georgia gave birth to the conflict opportunity between Russia and Georgia. The so-called peacekeeping operation of Russia in 1992 not only ended the military conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali but also showed that no settlement can be achieved in Georgia without the approval of Russia. Put this way, Russia viewed the civil conflict in Georgia as leverage to restore its hegemonic position toward Georgia, which in turn increased hostile perceptions of Georgia against Russia.

In conclusion, as discussed in the theory chapter, inter-state military conflict is more likely to occur if opportunity and willingness jointly emerge. According to the Hypothesis 1, the struggle of communal group for *de facto*

statehood creates conflict opportunities between parent state and external state. Thus, the South Ossetian rebellion against Georgia lends evidence for Hypothesis 1 because it created an opportunity for conflict between Russia and Georgia during the South Ossetian struggle.

5.1.1.4 Willingness of Russia and Georgia for Conflict during the South Ossetian Struggle

This part of the study examines the levels of democracy in Russia and Georgia between the years 1989 and 1992. However, Georgia and Russia were the constituent republics of Soviet Union until 1991. Hence, I deal with the polity scores of Georgia and Russia in 1992, when they emerged as independent states.

Polity score of Soviet Union gradually increases after 1988. It is coded as -6 in 1988; -4 in 1989, 0 in 1990 and 0 in 1991. The progressive way of Russia and Georgia from autocracy to anocracy continues after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In 1992, Polity score of Russia is coded as 5, which means that Russia is an anocracy. On the other hand, polity score of Georgia is coded as 4, which also refers to anocracy. Nevertheless, according to the Polity IV Authority Trends Data set, both Russia and Georgia experienced a factionalist period in 1992, although their polity scores increased (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009).

In regards to economic freedom, CATO Institute does not code any data about Russia and Georgia until 1995. Still, both Russia and Georgia were in transitional phases moving from a centrally planned economy to free market

economy. For example, in 1992, Yeltsin administration liberalized the prices and implemented a mass privatization program (Shleifer and Treisman, 2005: 153). On the other hand, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who was a clear dissident of capitalism and governed Georgia between October 1990 and March 1992, and Eduard Shevardnadze, who was the Soviet Foreign Minister and came to office in 1992 by a military coup, were unwilling to push the economic reforms based on market principles. Therefore, Georgia suffered from hyperinflation until 1995 Nonetheless, share of the private sector in GDP sharply increased from 27,3% in 1991 to 49% in 1992. (Slider in Dawisha and Parrott, 1997: 190-193).

In sum, level of democracy in Russia and Georgia dramatically increased after the disintegration of Soviet Union. However, they faced serious problems in the first years of the transition phase. First, both Georgia and Russia experienced factionalisms, which refer to problematic situations for the durability of the democracy. Secondly, democracy requires a strong civil society and political culture. However, Russia and Georgia were the successor states of Soviet Union, which had an authoritarian political system. Thus, these countries could not immediately adopt a civic political culture, which embodies interpersonal trust, resolving political conflicts through compromise rather than violence and acceptance of the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Parrott, 1997: 21-27). Finally, although Russia and Georgia left Soviet style planned economic system; they did not have strong, independent and institutionalized free market actors to check the government. The table below shows the lack of democratic tradition in Russia and Georgia, which as a result generates a MID stemming from the opportunity the South Ossetian struggle provides.

Table 5. Militarized Inter-State Disputes (MIDs), Regime Types/Polity Scores of Russia and Georgia and Opportunities for Conflict

MIDs	Regime Type Russia	Regime Type Georgia	Type of Opportunity
1992	Anocracy (5)	Anocracy (4)	South Ossetian Rebellion

As a result, Hypothesis 5 finds support by this case since both Georgia and Russia are not democratic enough to avoid a conflict opportunity provided by the South Ossetian struggle for *de facto* statehood. Between the years 1991 and 1992, Russia and Georgia, are willing to take the risks of a militarized dispute since their clients at home are not the general public but only small groups of people that support the anacrotic regimes and that strive for private goods.

5.1.2 Opportunity and Willingness after the Establishment of the *De Facto* South Ossetian State

5.1.2.1 Historical Background

The cease-fire, which was concluded by Sochi Accord in June 1992, failed to produce a political solution, although it successfully suspended the military conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali. No clashes occurred between South

Ossetia and Georgia until the Rose Revolution, when Michael Saakashvili came to power in 2004 (Cheterian, 2008: 183-184). However, parties did not reach a comprehensive settlement over the status of South Ossetia. Moreover, the division of powers and responsibilities between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali remained unsolved (Herzig, 1999: 75).

According to King (2008), Russia's intervention into the civil conflict in Georgia has helped to cement the *de facto* status of South Ossetia in which Russian military personnel acted freely. King also highlights the *de facto* character of South Ossetia. Accordingly, although civil conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali was frozen, unrecognized South Ossetia started state building, by controlling its territory, constructing an armed force, educating its children and maintaining a local economy. Furthermore, South Ossetian highway police started to control the custom checkpoint with Vladikavkaz, the capital of the Russian Republic of North Ossetia (King, 2001: 525-537).

As noted previously, civil war between Georgia and South Ossetia ended by Sochi Accords in 1992 and a status-quo era began. Although international organizations such as UN, OSCE and CIS affirmed the territorial integrity of Georgia, Russia insisted on a settlement, which is based on mutually acceptable models for the parties. In the post-conflict period, Russia also dominated the negotiation process in Georgia by exerting its influence within the UN Security Council. However, Georgian leadership questioned the impartiality and reliability of Russia throughout the 1990s because they believed that Russia manipulated the settlement process and continued to support the secessionist movement of South Ossetia (Muzalevsky, 2009: 31-32).

On the other hand, Georgia's concentration on stabilization of its internal affairs of the country also caused conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali to stall. When Shevardnadze came to power in 1992, Georgia was a failed and impoverished state. Economy was in plight, there was not regular electricity even in Tbilisi and the government could not enforce rule of law especially over paramilitary groups and warlords. Shevardnadze implemented important reforms between the years 1992 and 1998. He restored the authority of government and built a stable state. Furthermore, under his leadership, Georgia was admitted to the Council of Europe and began the negotiation talks for NATO membership (Lanskoy and Arashidze, 2008: 156). Apparently, Georgia was already heading towards the west.

Nevertheless, state building process in Georgia failed by domestic turmoil between the years 1998 and 2003. In this period, the government experienced serious budget crises and corruption became a disaster for the country in this period (Papava, 2006: 660). Therefore, social, economic and political problems absorbed the energy of Georgia to deal with the secessionist problem in South Ossetia. According to Mitchella (2009: 173), insufficiency of resources and corruption in the Shevardnadze era weakened Georgia's military. Thus, military never had the power to recover from the loss of Georgian sovereignty over South Ossetia.

The succession of Michael Saakashvili in January 2004, as the president of Georgia, defrosted the frozen conflict between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali. Saakashvili had an assertive program to restore the authority of Tbilisi over secessionist regions including South Ossetia. According to Saakashvili, South Ossetian

government and volunteer guard units were illegal. Thus, Georgia's intervention to restore the constitutional order cannot be regarded as a war against a sovereign state (Kotlyarov, 2008). However, Saakashivili's efforts to abolish the *de facto* status of South Ossetia and to re-establish the constitutional order of the Tbilisi government in secessionist regions affected Georgia's relations with Russia. In Saakashvili's term, South Ossetia started to generate conflict opportunities between Russia and Georgia.

Not surprisingly, in the spring and summer of 2004, the relations between Russia and Georgia deteriorated. The assertive policy of Saakashvili brought Russia and Georgia to the brink of war. There were three causes of conflict in 2004. Firstly, Georgian and South Ossetian forces clashed after the Georgian government launched an operation to curtail smuggling across South Ossetia. Tbilisi aimed to establish its control by cutting off the economic lifeline of the separatist leaders of South Ossetia. Secondly, Saakashvili criticized the legality of the new checkpoints, which were controlled by the Russian peacekeeping forces. Finally, tension escalated when Georgian troops seized the Russian missiles en route to South Ossetia (Freese, 2005). President of Georgia was aware that any conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia would drag Russia into the game. Therefore, Michael Saakashvili stated on July 11, 2004, "Current crisis in South Ossetia is not a problem between Georgians and Ossetians. This is a problem between Georgia and Russia."[72] Nevertheless, Saakashvili did not take the risk of a war with Russia and the tension between Russia and Georgia defused upon the withdrawal of Georgian troops on August 19, 2004.

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[72] See http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav071204.shtml (Last Access: May 5, 2010)

In July 2005, Saakashvili presented a peace plan to South Ossetia. On the eve of the declaration of the plan, he posited, "The status quo cannot continue. I am not going to wait for the next 100 years to resolve these problems. Therefore, we will be very aggressive in seeking peace." The plan's provisions would fundamentally;

1) Ensure language rights and the preservation of cultural heritage.

2) Provide compensation for damages suffered during the 1990-1992 conflict with Georgia.

3) Create a truth commission to investigate alleged crimes against civilians.

4) Establish "a simplified border regime" for South Ossetians residing along the border with Russia.

5) Guarantee South Ossetian representation in the central Georgian government.[73]

However, the South Ossetian leadership rejected the peace plan of Saakashvili. The South Ossetian envoy to Russia, Dimitry Medoyev stated, "the incorporation of South Ossetia into Georgia is impossible under any conditions. South Ossetia has proved that it has built a state that survived several instances of Georgian aggression".[74] In regards to the statement of Medoyev, the rejection of South Ossetia is based on two reasons. Firstly, the South Ossetian leadership has self-confidence because *de facto* South Ossetia has managed to survive since

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[73] See http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav071205.shtml (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[74] See http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20050713/40900380.html (Last Access: June 1, 2010)

1992. Secondly, the South Ossetian leadership distrusts the Georgian government after several years of discrimination policies.

After Saakashvili's peace plan was rejected by South Ossetia, the tension between Russia and Georgia gradually mounted. In 2006, Russia implemented strict economic blockade against Georgia after Saakashvili government intensified its efforts to internationalize the Russian-led peacekeeping mission in South Ossetia and expelled six Russian agents. Accordingly, Russia's economic embargo included transportation and communication links. Sea, air, rail, road, postal and banking ties between Russia and Georgia broke off. Furthermore, Russia issued an import ban on Georgian wine and mineral water, which are vital for the Georgian economy. Finally, Russia intensified its military presence in South Ossetia and built a military base in the Java district, which is located in the north of Tskhinvali (Cornell, Popjanevsky, Nilsson, 2008: 6).

In 2007 and the first half of 2008, both Russia and Georgia withdrew from the legal institutions and obligations of the Sochi Accords. In May 2007, Georgia established a provisional administration in parts of South Ossetia, which have been under the control of Georgia since the 1991 cease-fire. Furthermore, Georgia, in March 2008, withdrew from the Joint Control Commission, which was composed of Russian, Georgian and South Ossetian forces. Instead, Georgia requested the EU and OSCE to play an active role in peacekeeping mission. On the other hand, Russia explicitly supported the secession and independence of South Ossetia, especially after Kosovo's declaration of independence. According to Moscow, recognition of Kosovo as an independent state inevitably paved the way of South Ossetia's independence. Furthermore, Russian President Vladimir

Putin issued a decree on the opening of political, social and economic relations with South Ossetia. Tbilisi argued that Putin's decree legalized the Russian annexation of South Ossetia (Cornell, Popjanevsky, Nilsson, 2008: 6).

The war between Russia and Georgia erupted on August 8, 2008. However, Russia's intervention was the product of the serious clashes between Georgian forces and the South Ossetian militias one week before August 8 (Allison, 2008: 1147). On August 7, Georgia started a massive artillery attack on Tskhinvali. The operation followed with a ground attack using armored vehicles. When the Georgian forces reached Tskhinvali, Georgian Defense Minister Mamuka Kurashvili stated that Georgian troops "restored the constitutional order" in South Ossetia. However, Russia immediately reacted and pushed Georgian forces out of Tskhinvali on August 10, 2008. During the war, Russia destroyed the aircraft defense systems, communication systems, radars and most of the naval forces of Georgia. On August 12, a ceasefire agreement was reached by the efforts of the French President Nicholas Sarkozy.[75] However, Russia withdrew its troops from South Ossetia only on October 8, 2008, when European Union Monitoring Mission was deployed in the region (Cheterian, 2009: 159-160).

According to King (2008, 6), the August War between Russia and Georgia made it clear that Georgia will never control South Ossetia again. In other words, Saakashvili's ill plan and ill military guaranteed that Georgian flag would never fly over South Ossetia. Furthermore, Moscow's policy, which was based on protecting the unrecognized regimes of the region, changed in favor of South

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[75] EU, UN and especially the US were very attentive from the beginning of the conflict. The Western media was outraged by the Russian "attack. See for example: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7550804.stm (Last Access: June 10, 2010)

Ossetia. Russia formally recognized South Ossetia as an independent state on August 26, 2008.

5.1.2.2 Inter-State Military Conflict between Russia and Georgia after the Establishment of the *De Facto* South Ossetian State

After the establishment of the *de facto* state of South Ossetia, Military Inter-state Dispute (MID) data set codes conflict between Russia and Georgia in the years 1993, 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2001. The data after 2001 are not yet available. The hostility levels of Russia and Georgia are reciprocally coded as 4 (use of force) in 1993. In this period, highest actions of Russia and Georgia are coded as 17, which refer to clash. However, the MID in 1993 is really the continuation of the MID in 1992, when Russians intervened in Georgia to mediate the civil war. Accordingly, Russia and Georgia continued to experience clashes during the settlement process of Russian-led peacekeeping mission. Thus, in 1993 the MID between Russia and Georgia can be regarded as the remnant of the civil conflict period between Georgia and South Ossetia.

The South Ossetia issue did not play any role in the emergence of the MIDs until President Saakashvili came to power in 2004. For example, in 1997, Russian forces moved into the Georgian border in order to prevent the illegal alcohol smuggling into Russia. In 1997, the hostility level of Russia is coded as 4, which refers to use of force while the hostility level of Georgia is coded as 1, which refers to no militarized action. The highest action of Russia in this MID is

coded as 14, which refers to the occupation of a territory. In July 1997, the Russian border guards began to enforce the new anti alcohol restriction law, which aimed to decline the high death rate from alcohol poisoning. The struggle of Russian border guards against smuggling unnerved the relations between Russia and Georgia.[76]

In 1999, 2000 and 2001, Russia conducted attacks against the Chechen rebels in Georgian territories. The MIDs in 2000 and 2001 are the continuation of the MID in 1999. In these disputes, the hostility level of Russia and Georgia is reciprocally coded as 3, which means that both of the parties displayed force. The highest action of the parties changes from 12 to 14, from border violation to occupation of territory. In these disputes, Georgia preferred to stay out of the conflict between Russia and the Chechen rebels in Shatili Mountains, where the conflict centered on. However, Russian military sought permission to open a new front in Georgian territory in order to fight against Chechnya. Eduard Shevardnadze opposed the proposal of Russia and stated, "It is very important for us to have good-neighborly relations with Russia, but good relations do not mean saying no to our principles. I am categorically opposed to having Russian and Georgian border troops jointly defend the border with Chechnya. And I am even more opposed to the idea of the Russian side using Russian bases in Georgia against Chechnya in a military campaign." By Russian bases Shevardnadze meant the Vaziani air base, which is 30 minutes from Tbilisi.[77] In line with the concerns of Shevardnadze, the Russian military campaign against Chechnya worsened the

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[76] See http://www.nytimes.com/1997/09/26/world/verkhny-lars-journal-vodka-bottleneck-contains-a-volatile-political-mix.html?pagewanted=2 (Last Access: June 3, 2010)
[77] See http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/17/world/georgia-trying-anxiously-to-stay-out-of-chechen-war.html?scp=1&sq=russia+georgia+chechen&st=nyt (Last Access: June 3, 2010)

relations between Russia and Georgia. For example, in November 1999, Russian helicopters violated the air space of Georgia and bombed Shatili in order to seal one of the routes from Georgia to Chechnya.[78]

There is another MID, which is again not related to the South Ossetia issue in 2001 between Russia and Georgia. On October 18, 2001, Georgia argued that Russian aircrafts violated the airspace of Georgia and bombed the Kodori Gorge twice. However, the Russian Defense Ministry claimed that their planes did not fly over this area. The MID dataset codes the hostility level of Russia as 3 (display of force) and Georgia as 1 (no military action). Highest action of Russia and Georgia is coded as 12 (border violation) and 0 (no militarized action) respectively.[79]

Since the MID data set ends in 2001 for these states, I analyze the conflict situation between Russia and Georgia after 2001 by examining the archives. In 2002, two MIDs were experienced between Russia and Georgia. The first dispute started when 78 well-equipped Russian soldiers were deployed in Kodori Gorge on April 12. Eduard Shevardnadze defined the deployment as incursion. Furthermore, the defense minister of Shevardnadze posited that Russian troops would face attack if they did not leave.[80] The dispute ended without any response or military action of Russia. Thus, the hostility level of Russia can be coded as 3 (display of force) while the reaction of Georgia can be coded as 2 (threat to use force).

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[78] See http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/24/world/russia-to-cut-its-military-forces-in-georgia.html?scp=2&sq=russia+georgia+chechen&st=nyt (Last Access: June 4, 2010)
[79] See http://www.preventgenocide.org/prevent/news-monitor/2001oct.htm (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[80] See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/13/world/world-briefing-europe-georgia-russian-soldiers-uninvited-arrive.html?scp=26&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)

The second dispute in 2002 between Russia and Georgia was experienced on July 31. The crisis between the parties mounted when Georgia accused Russia of violating its sovereignty while fighting against the Chechen rebels. Upon the allegations of Georgia, the Russian officials argued that Georgia was a harbor for Chechen rebels.[81] The incursions of Russia into the Georgian territory continued in August and September. Furthermore, Russian officials kept accusing Georgia of harboring Chechen rebels fighting against Russia in Chechnya.[82] The observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also confirmed that they saw strikes in Georgia.[83] On September 12, 2002, Russian President Vladimir Putin posited that Russia had the right to defend itself from terrorism and threatened to order military strike against Georgia.[84] The dispute between Russia and Georgia ended on the meeting of Putin and Shevardnadze on October 8, 2002. The parties agreed on cooperating against terrorism along Georgia's border with Chechnya.[85]

In 2003, there is no dispute that can be coded as a MID between Russia and Georgia. It was the year of parliamentary elections in Georgia and the leaders competing for presidency, both Shevardnadze and Saakashvili, sought the support of Russia. In this period, Shevardnadze signed economic cooperation agreements

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[81] See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/31/world/world-briefing-europe-russia-more-fighting-along-georgian-border.html?scp=41&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[82] See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/15/world/georgia-hearing-heavy-footsteps-from-russia-s-war-in-chechnya.html?scp=45&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[83] See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/24/nyregion/news-summary-547069.html?scp=53&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[84] See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/12/us/a-nation-challenged-849723.html?scp=62&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[85] See http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/08/world/world-briefing-europe-russia-putin-less-hawkish-on-georgia.html?scp=91&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)

with Russia[86] while Saakashvili stated, "For me the most important thing is to make normal relations with all nations, first of all with Russia." Moreover, Saakashvili said that Georgia would continue to be bound by the terms of international agreements with Russia.[87]

However, the hostility level between Russia and Georgia gradually increased after 2004 and hit the peak in 2008, when the August war between Russia and Georgia erupted. Between the years 2004 and 2008, Georgian government officials accused Russia of violating the airspace of Georgia many times (Akhmeteli, 2008).

In 2004, Russia and Georgia came to the brink of war when the Georgian government criticized the Russian peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia and seized the Russian missiles en route to South Ossetia.[88] In this MID, the hostility level of the parties can be coded as 4, which refers to use of force. The highest action of Russia can be coded as 14 (occupation of a territory) and Georgia's highest action can be coded as 15 (seizure). The MID in 2004 did not turn into a clash since Saakashvili gave in to prevent a war.

In 2005, there is no MID between Russia and Georgia. In this year, Georgian President Saakashvili attempted to settle the South Ossetia problem by using diplomatic methods. Georgian government drafted a peace plan, which

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[86] See http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/08/world/world-briefing-europe-russia-trying-to-mend-ties-with-georgia.html?scp=129&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 1, 2010)
[87] See http://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/27/world/georgian-opposition-unites-behind-a-single-candidate.html?scp=172&sq=russia+georgia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 2, 2010)
[88] See http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav071204.shtml (Last Access: June 2, 2010)

included autonomy for South Ossetia. However, the South Ossetia leadership did not accept the plan and insisted on full independence.[89]

In 2006, crisis mounted between Russia and Georgia. On July 15, the attack of Georgian forces killed two people and two other were wounded in South Ossetia. The Georgian government argued that this was a simple criminal event. The Russian Foreign Ministry accused Georgia of being aggressive and posited that these actions of Georgia would not remain unanswered.[90] In this dispute, the hostility level of Russia can be coded as 2 (Threat to use force) while Georgia did not take any militarized action. The highest action of Russia and Georgia can be coded as 1 and 0 respectively.

Another MID can be coded due to the economic blockade that Russia implemented against Georgia in 2006. On October 4, the Russian government decided to impose economic sanctions on Georgia. Accordingly, Russia suspended its transportation links and postal service with Georgia. Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia, stated that Georgia converted its economic power to finance its military build up. Furthermore, Georgia sought to restore its military control over Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which were supported by Russia. Therefore, the aim of the sanctions imposed by Russia was to cut off cash flow to Georgia.[91] By imposing economic blockade on Georgia, Russia's hostility level can be coded as 4 (use of force) and its highest action can be coded as 13

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[89] See http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1075580.html (Last Access: June 2, 2010)
[90] See
http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C07E1DC1F30F936A25754C0A9609C8B63&scp=1&sq=russia+georgia+south+ossetia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 3, 2010)
[91] See
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/04/world/europe/04georgia.html?scp=11&sq=russia+georgia+south+ossetia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 3, 2010)

(blockade). Upon the decision of Russian government, Georgia did not take any action.

On August 8, 2007, Russia and Georgia had a militarized dispute. According to Georgian officials Russian warplanes violated the airspace of Georgia and fired a missile, which dropped close to the capital. The NY Times argued that "the episode, apparently the second raid with sophisticated, Russian-made weapons on Georgian soil this year, inflamed tensions anew between the countries" [92] Thus, there are not one but 2 MIDs in 2007. After this last one, the Foreign Ministry of Georgia protested Russia by a formal note. Although Russia denied the claims of the Georgian government, Interior Ministry of Georgia presented the radar records to the UN. The motive behind the violation is unclear. However, the flight of Russian crafts might be a show of force against the Georgian government, which wanted to restore its authority over South Ossetia. In these two MIDs, the hostility level and highest action of Russia can be coded as 4 (use of force) and 16 (attack) while Georgia's hostility level and highest action can be coded as 1 (no militarized action) and 0 (no militarized action).

Finally, Russia and Georgia experienced war in 2008. The attempts of the Georgian government to restore its constitutional authority over South Ossetia by military ways resulted in the intervention of Russia. On August 8, Russian tanks arrived in South Ossetia and pushed the Georgian troops out of Tskhinvali.[93]

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[92] See
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/09/world/europe/09georgia.html?scp=6&sq=south+ossetia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 2, 2010)
[93] See
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/09/world/europe/09georgia.html?scp=4&sq=south+ossetia&st=nyt (Last Access: June 2, 2010)

Furthermore, Russia expanded its attacks on central Georgia as well.[94] In this MID, hostility levels of Russia and Georgia can be coded as 5 (war) and their highest actions can be coded as 21 (join interstate war). As a result of war, Russia became the security guarantor of the *de facto* South Ossetia by establishing military facilities in the region. The military presence of Russia in South Ossetia continues in 2009 as well.[95] Thus, another MID can be coded between Russia and Georgia. Accordingly, Russia's hostility level can be coded as 4 (use of force) and its highest action can be coded as 14 (occupation of territory) while the hostility level and highest action of Georgia can be coded as 1 (no militarized action) and 0 (no militarized action).

Consequently, there are 14 MIDs between Russia and Georgia between 1993-2009. 8 out of 14 MIDs are related to the South Ossetia issue. The MIDs in 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 (2 incidents) were experienced due to alcohol smuggling and Russia's fight against Chechen rebels. In sum, after 2004, Russia and Georgia experienced more often and high level MIDs related to the *de facto* state of South Ossetia. The hostility levels of the parties between 2004 and 2009 change from 1 (no militarized action) to 5 (war). The highest action, on the other hand, changes from 0 to 21, from no militarized action to joining interstate war.

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[94] See http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/11/world/europe/11georgia.html (Last Access: June 2, 2010)
[95] See http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/world/europe/03georgia.html?scp=39&sq=south+ossetia&s=nyt (Last Access: June 2, 2010)

5.1.2.3 South Ossetian *De Facto* State as an Opportunity for Conflict?

After Mikheil Saakashvili came to power in Georgia, he carried out an assertive political agenda both internally and externally. In domestic politics, Saakashvili initially aimed to restore the constitutional authority of Tbilisi over the secessionist regions, namely Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Saakashvili's foreign policy, on the other hand, was based on the membership of Georgia to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU). At the end of the day, the political goals of Saakashvili caused the South Ossetia issue to emerge as an opportunity for conflict between Russia and Georgia.

The basic logic of the western orientation of Saakashvili government, which came to power by Rose Revolution of late 2003, was to reduce Georgia's dependency on Moscow. In doing so, he attempted to recover the economy and highlighted Georgia's position on the route of new natural gas and petroleum pipelines, which could by-pass the role of Russia in energy politics. Then, Saakashvili deepened the contact of Georgia with NATO and EU (Indans 2007). In this period, Georgia was provided EU project funds and the enthusiasm of the Saakashvili government to join EU hit the peak. According to Saakashvili, membership to EU would provide economic and political stability for Georgia. The flag of EU hung next to Georgian flags shows the enthusiasm of the Saakashvili government for EU membership.[96]

The Saakashvili government also viewed NATO membership as a requirement for the national security of Georgia. In this period, Georgia managed

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[96] See http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/policybrief_georgia_sept05.pdf (Last Access: June 2, 2010)

to join NATO's Intensified Dialogue (ID) stage. According to Levan Nikoleishvili, First Deputy Defense Minister, NATO membership is the way of being a part of the 'civilized world'. Nikoleishivili also noted that national security and democratization are the reason why Georgia wants to join NATO. In Saakshivili's term, Georgia did not want to remain as a member of the Russian-led Commonwealth Independent States, which provided little benefit for Georgia (Jibladze, 2007: 46)

Expectedly, Georgia's assertive policy to join western institutions such as NATO and EU unnerved Russia. Accordingly, Russia clearly stated that he would not welcome a NATO member state in its near abroad. For example, Sergei Ivanov, Russian defense Minister, noted that Russia would do everything in order to protect its borders from the deployment of any potential enemy in Georgia (Jibladze, 2007: 45). The rupture between Russia and Georgia's foreign policy objectives caused the secessionist regions of Georgia to be an opportunity for conflict.

According to Dempsey (2008), Russian influence over Georgia ends if Georgia becomes a member of NATO. Thus, Russia backed the leadership of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in order to prevent Georgia's efforts to join NATO. Russia viewed these breakaway regions as a card to maintain instability in Georgia. In other words, Russia punished Georgia by providing economic and political support for Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In sum, the *de facto* statehood of South Ossetia and its foreign relations with Russia produced conflict opportunity between Russia and Georgia. After the *de facto* South Ossetian state was established in 1992, status quo between Russia

and Georgia was maintained. However, the relations between Russia and Georgia sharply relapsed after Saakashvili came to office in 2004. In other words, Saakashvili's efforts to restore the authority of Tbilisi over *de facto* South Ossetia, which has close relations with Russia, caused conflict opportunities to occur between Russia and Georgia. This finding supports Hypothesis 2, which argues that presence of the *de facto* state increases the opportunity for conflict between the external state and the parent state, if the external state supports the *de facto* state.

5.1.2.4 Willingness of Russia and Georgia for Conflict after the South Ossetian *De Facto* State is Established

5.1.2.4.1 Democracy in Russia and Georgia

According to the Polity IV data set, Russia's polity score is coded as 3 between the years 1993 and 1999. In this period, there is an anocratic regime in Russia. However, the polity score of Russia sharply increases as of 2000 and is coded as 6, which means that Russia is a relatively democratic country until 2006. However, the democracy score of Russia declines after 2006 and autocracy rises. Accordingly, the polity score of Russia is coded as 4 in 2007 and 2008, referring to an anocracy (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009). The table below shows the regime trends of Russia.

Figure 4. Regime Trends in Russia between 1946 and 2008[97]

Authority Trends, 1946-2008: Russia (and the Soviet Union)
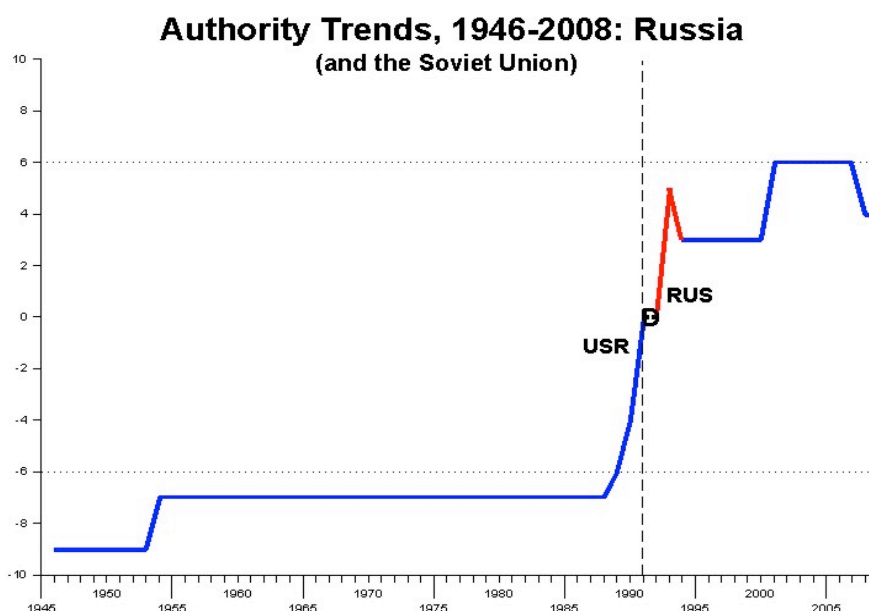
On the other hand, Georgia's polity score gradually increases between the years 1993 and 2006. Accordingly, Georgia's polity score is coded as 4 in 1993 and 1994. The polity score of Georgia increases to 5 in 1995 and is coded as 5 until 2004. In other words, there is not much of a change in the regime type for a decade. Georgia's polity score sharply rises after 2004 and it is coded as 7, which refers to democracy. However, as of 2007, similar to Russia, authoritarianism rises in Georgia. In 2007 and 2008, polity score of Georgia is coded as 6 (Marshall and Jaggers, 2009). The table below shows the regime trends in Georgia.

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[97] See http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/rus2.htm (Last Access: March 21, 2010)

Figure 5. Regime Trends in Georgia between 1991 and 2008[98]

Authority Trends, 1991-2008: Georgia
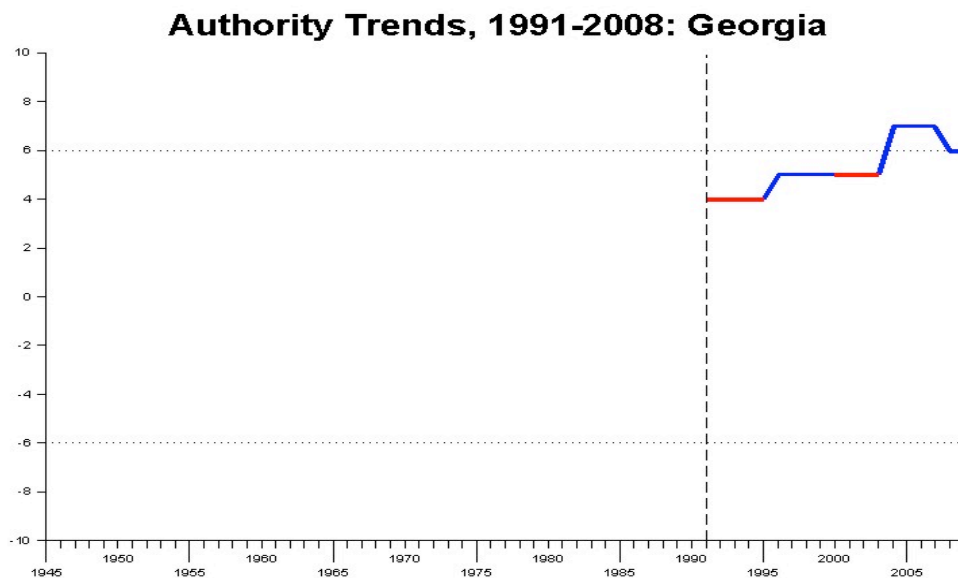
Economic freedom is another indicator determining the quality of democracy in Russia and Georgia. According to the Economic Freedom Index of CATO Institute, rating of Russia is given as 4,09 in 1995, 4,93 in 2000, 5,77 in 2004, 5,99 in 2005 and 5,91 in 2006. It should be noted that economic freedom in Russia slightly rises between the years 1995 and 2005. However, it decreases from 5,99 to 5,91 in 2006. On the other hand, Georgia's economic freedom rating, which starts in 2004, steadily and rapidly rises in comparison to Russia. Accordingly, it is coded as 6, 11 in 2004, 6, 52 in 2005 and 7, 18 in 2006. In sum, Georgia's economic freedom rating is higher and more stable than Russia in the years 2004, 2005 and 2006.

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[98] See http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/grg2.htm (Last Access: March 21, 2010)

Apart from these data sets, there is a comprehensive literature, which studies the rise of authoritarianism in Russia and Georgia. The discussions center on how elected governments of Russia and Georgia turned into authoritarianism. According to Zakaria (2003), authoritarianism in Russia dramatically escalated after the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Although elections are regularly held, there is a highly centralized system in Russia. In Putin's term, he tightened federalism in Russia, eliminated the opposition and established strict control over the independent media. In their piece at the Washington Post, two experts of Russian politics argue that even in 2006, Russia is no longer a democracy: "The debate is over: Russia is not a democracy. President Vladimir Putin has weakened checks and balances within the state, diminished political and legal transparency, and made it impossible for independent media, political parties or nongovernmental groups to flourish."[99]

In addition to the practical consequences of Putin's authoritarianism, Shevtsova (2004: 68-69) explains the reason behind this model of Putin. She argues that bureaucratization of the Russian politics made the system centralized in the country. Thus, Russian democracy is in setback after Yeltsin, who supported freedom of press, political competition and open public debate in order to choke off communist roots of the system. However, the presidency of Putin is based on bureaucratic authoritarianism, which leaves no room for chaos. According to Shevstsova, Yeltsin's chaotic governing style would allow for decentralization. Conversely, Putin adopted a systematic model that rests on the

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[99] See http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/07/AR2006040701972.html (Last Access: May 30, 2010)

state bureaucracy. In doing so, Putin made the bureaucracy including the secret police pillars of his government model.

Stoner-Weiss (2006: 104-107) argues that Russia experienced a clear turn away from democracy in Putin's term especially after 2005, when Putin enacted the law abolishing the popular election of the governors in Russia's 89 provinces. In addition to the narrowing of individual freedoms and the arbitrary seizures, elimination of elected governors is a step off the path of liberal democracy. Stoner-Weiss also highlights that Putin's centralization policy is the product of the Soviet legacy, which refers to a strong state and a weak society.

Furthermore, Russian democracy suffers from the lack of economic freedom. In Putin's reign, Kremlin increased its control over economic life in the country. Putin initially warned big business not to pursue any political agenda against the state. In his first term, Putin's main goal was to root out the oligarchy.[100] He rather relied on the power of the state bureaucracy including intelligence than independent courts. At the end of the day, over-involvement of the state distorted the economic sphere and freedoms in Russia (Sakwa, 2009: 85-86).

Shevtsova (2007: 895-896) defines the economic system in Putin's Russia as "bureaucratic capitalism." She argues that the active and overwhelming role of the state is the key problem of the Russian economy. The state regards itself as the regulator of economy but it does not respect the rule of law. In other words, the state implements arbitrary, unofficial and inconsistent rules in coordinating the

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[100] Oligarchs refer to the new group of Russian property owners, who derived from the late Soviet nomenklatura. Oligarchs were known as the richest and most influential group, which especially estalished a dominant position in the later years of Yeltsin's term (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2005: 293)

economy. The active involvement of state bureaucracy impairs a dynamic economy because the bureaucracy's main concern is to safeguard its own interests. Thus, the Russian bureaucracy obstructs any fundamental reforms on property rights, open courts, transparency in decision-making, business ethics and freedom of press for the sake of its survival. Consequently, according to Shevtsova, the booming economy of Russia under Putin's leadership depends on the high oil prices rather than a sustainable market mechanism.

On the other hand, in terms of political and economic development, Georgia experiences similar problems. According to Şir (2009: 65), Saakashvili's authoritarianism is based on two pillars; abuse of the election process and restrictions over media. He also argues that repressive policies of Saakashvili impede the rotation of elite in Georgia. Similarly, Nilsson and Cornell (2008) criticize the Georgian government's attitude during the election process in 2008 when the government issued unilateral and controversial amendments in order to bolster its position. Furthermore, administrative resources were used to serve the campaign of Saakashvili. Nilsson and Cornell (2008) further argue that elections were shadowed by the pressure on public sector employees and by intimidation of the opposition groups, although the OSCE international observer mission reported that there was no technical deficiency in the 2008 elections in Georgia.

There is substantial doubt that Georgian democracy sufficiently protects human rights. In the 2007 Report of the Amnesty International on Georgia, the ill treatment and excessive use of force of Georgian police is highlighted and criticized. The report also includes the concerns of the United Nations Human Rights Committee on torture and other human rights issues such as prison

conditions, interference with the independence of the judiciary, domestic violence, forced evictions of internally displaced people and violations of the rights of ethnic minorities in Georgia (Amnesty International, 2008).

In regards to economic freedom, it should be noted that the Saakashvili government implemented radical reforms in favor of free market economy in the post Rose revolution years. Saakashvili's economic policy was based on free market, foreign investment and membership to western economic institutions (Tatum, 2009: 167). Saakashvili's assertive agenda to establish a systemic economy aimed to eradicate corruption and oligarchy in Georgia. However, the opponents of Saakashvili accuse him of centralizing the economic system to control the corruption network in order to get political loyalty. Furthermore, Stefes (2008: 82) argues that Saakashvili disregards the rule of law in his struggle against oligarchs and corruption.

In conclusion, authoritarian governments came to power in Russia and Georgia in 2000 and 2004 respectively. Presidency of Vladimir Putin paved the way of centralization of state apparatus and bureaucratic authoritarianism whereas Michael Saakasshvili's leadership has been criticized for abusing the election process and violating basic human rights. At the end of the day, personal rules of both Putin and Saakashivili prevailed over the rule of law, democracy and human rights in Russia and Georgia for the time period under examination.

5.1.2.4.2 Democracy in the South Ossetian *De Facto* State

South Ossetia has been viewed as a source of conflict in the region. It has been regarded as a subject of inter-state competition or geo-political game between Russia and Georgia. In other words, academic studies, which are carried out on South Ossetia, disregard its internal dynamics. However, I argue that internal drives such as pluralism, constitutional rights, basic freedoms and market economy also affect conflict or cooperation between states. Thus, in this part of the dissertation, I examine the regime type of South Ossetia, which is by itself a contribution to the literature.

As discussed in analyzing the regime type of Kurdistan Regional Government, the Polity IV data set does not examine the level of democracy in *de facto* states. Therefore, I use the conceptualization of Polity IV data set in order to be consistent. Accordingly, there are three indicators of a democratic polity. These are free and fair rotation of ruling elite, institutional constraints over executive and civil liberties of all citizens. In addition to these three criteria, free market economy is required for a liberal democracy.

The literature on the democratization of South Ossetia is limited and there is a high security concern in the region, which made carrying out a field research impossible. Thus, I examine the historical archives, reports of international organizations such as the European Union (EU) and Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the analyses of non-governmental organizations such as the Amnesty International and think tanks.

Sabanadze (2002) argues that the collapsing state structures in South Caucasus are the products of post-communist legacy. Absence of democratic tradition in post-Soviet South Caucasus gave rise to communalism. In other words, ethnic affiliations prevailed over the basic norms of individual freedom and human autonomy in the region. The general problems of the collapsing states of South Caucasus also infected South Ossetia on its way to democratization.

First of all, there is not a strong pluralist tradition in South Ossetia. Although the constitution of South Ossetia, which was adopted by public referendum on April 8, 2001, states that it is a parliamentary democracy, the fairness and freeness of the elections are questionable.

After the establishment of the *de facto* South Ossetia, state building process continued. On December 23, 1993, South Ossetia issued its own constitution, which allowed the introduction of the presidential system. Ludvig Chibirov won the elections that were held on November 10, 1996. Until 1996, South Ossetia was governed by the legislature (South Ossetian Supreme Soviet) and Chibirov was the head of the legislature. The second elections were held in November and December 2001. Eduard Kokoity, who argued for developing closer ties with Russia, won 55% of the votes and came to office in South Ossetia (The Europa World Yearbook 2004, 1806).

According to Coppieters (2007), the next presidential elections that were held in 2006 created confusion about the voting system in South Ossetia. Accordingly, two alternative polls were organized and two candidates ran for presidency in November 2006. On the one hand, Eduard Kokoity claimed that he won 98 percent of the 55,163 registered voters. On the other hand, Dmitri

Sanakoev claimed that 96 percent of 57,000 registered voters participated and 94 percent of them expressed their support for Sanakoev. Moreover, both Kokoity and Sanakoev organized a referendum to reveal the choice of South Ossetian people on the status of the state. However, more than 99 percent voted for independence in Kokoity's election whereas 94 percent voted for re-integration with Georgia in Sanakoev's election. Consequently, Coppieters (2007) argue that there is an immature democratic institutionalization in South Ossetia.

Another problem of the 2006 elections in South Ossetia is the pressure over the international press. Matthew Collin, who is the correspondent of BBC in Tskhinvali, was not allowed to observe the alternative elections organized by the supporters of Sanakoev. The Tskhinvali government threatened to disband the accreditation of Collin. On the other hand, the election reports of international observers also bifurcated. There were 30 international observers ranging from Venezuela and Jordan to Latvia and Ukraine. Transdniestr and Abkhazia *de facto* states also sent representatives for the elections. None of the international observers reported any election abuse. However, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and United States criticized the dual elections. Upon the criticisms, officials of South Ossetia posited, "their own political interests in the Caucasus are more important than our fate."[101]

Another excruciating problem of South Ossetia on its way to democratization is the increasing power of President Eduard Kokoity. Sılaev (2009) argues that South Ossetian opposition and Russia are concerned about the

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[101] See http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav111306.shtml (Last Access: March 21, 2010)

personal power and authoritarian regime of Kokoity. Accordingly, some of the former officials of South Ossetia accuse Kokoity of creating an ironclad and personal rule and tyranny and of embezzling the humanitarian aids provided by Russia. According to Sılaev, political friction among the South Ossetian elite shows that the political regime in South Ossetia is not consolidated enough. Thus, prominent figures, which threaten the personal power of Kokoity, were often excluded from the political field.

Furthermore, Sılaev argues that Moscow is not happy with the political crisis depending on the increasing one-man rule of Kokoity. For this reason, Sergey Naryskhin, the head of Russian presidential administration, warned Kokoity not to violate the constitutional norms. The statement of Naryskhin can be interpreted as a warning against Kokoity's intentions to cancel the constitutional provision, which prohibits the same person to be elected as president for more than two terms.

Restrictions over the freedom of expression are further problematic for the South Ossetian democracy. As Gurr and Harff (2004: 124) propose, ethno-political leaders of communal groups seek to mobilize their followers in order to achieve independence. Therefore, strong commitment of followers produces success for independence. However, after the *de facto* state is established, state building process begins. In South Ossetia, although there is an organized polity, which constitutionally adopts the democratic principles, leadership still behaves in vigilance and bans the opinions defending the alternative arguments other than independence.

According to Coppieters (2007: 31), Tskhinvali government does not permit any arguments in favor of federalism to be expressed. Therefore, there is no open and pluralistic debate on this issue. Georgia Report of Amnesty International in 2007 also highlights that freedom of expression in South Ossetia is at risk. For example, in June 2007, mother of Alan Dzhusoity, who is a civil society activist, was dismissed from her job at a school. In doing so, the aim of South Ossetian authorities was to put pressure over Alan Dzhusoity to end his contacts with the civil society organizations in Georgia. The report argues that Eduard Kokoity summoned and warned Dzhusoity to end his contacts with the civil society institutions in Georgia (Amnesty International, 2007).

The final problem of democracy in South Ossetia is the absence of free market institutions. There are two troubles for the establishment of free market economy. First problem is smuggling in particular and illegal economy in general. Cornell (2006, 48) argues that the Georgian government lost control over Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which remained under the control of self-appointed separatist authorities. There was no accountability and rules of international law in these regions after 1991. Secessionist authorities were extremely involved in organized crime and smuggling activities. For example, South Ossetia became a channel for the transition of contraband goods from Russia to Georgia. Moreover, *Ergneti* market, which is controlled by the *de facto* South Ossetian government, is a free trade zone where all kinds of legal and illegal goods are available.

Second trouble for the economic development of South Ossetia is the absence of economic mechanisms and lack of professions. According to Sılaev (2009), the South Ossetian leadership failed to set up economic institutions to

regulate the economy. Furthermore, the leadership does not have enough experience to administrate the budget. As a result of this, as noted previously, opposition accuses the government of embezzling the funds provided by Russia. Consequently, failure of establishing economic mechanisms, which provide accountability of government, might undermine the state building process in South Ossetia. The worst of all, South Ossetian budget might be fully dependent on the inflows from Russia, if it does not have a well-functioning economic system.

To sum up, there are two factors that negatively affected the state building and democratization process in South Ossetia. First, there is no tradition of pluralism, civil society and dialogue stemming from the Soviet legacy. Second, civil conflict periods require the cohesiveness around the leadership. Thus, authoritarianism continues even after the civil war ended. In South Ossetia, lack of democratic tradition and syndrome of civil war converge on the same venue and produce problematic elections and the personal regime of Kokoity, the restrictions on individual freedoms and the absence of free market economy. In sum, South Ossetia has all the characteristics of authoritarian regimes rather than democracies or democratizing countries.

The data examined above show that the authoritarian regimes rise in Russia, Georgia and South Ossetia. Although elections are regularly held, the governments implement centralist and arbitrary policies in these polities. The relatively de-centralized Russia of Yeltsin and Georgia of Shevardnadze changed when Putin took over the office in Russia and Saakashvili came to the power in

Georgia. While the Polity 4 data set codes Russia and Georgia as democracies for very short periods, even then the regimes are far from being liberal democracies.

As noted previously, the civil war between the *de facto* South Ossetia and Georgia was frozen after Sochi Accord in 1992. However, the rise of authoritarian leadership pulled the trigger and the relations between Russia and Georgia gradually deteriorated after 2004. Consequently, the South Ossetia problem was revived due to the changing nature of the regimes in Russia and Georgia.

Bueno de Mesquita's "selectorate theory" once again is helpful to understand why the willingness of the leaders is high to fight against one another in these states. As comprehensively discussed previously, since leaders of democratic countries mostly stress to be re-elected, they seek to allocate the public goods to people as efficient as possible. Thus, democratically elected leaders avoid going to war because wars absorb the energy of state and suspend the quality and quantity of public goods. Consequently, leaders of democratic countries, who want to keep their popularity, rarely go to war in order to maintain the allocation of public goods. And when they do, the public should be supporting the war effort. In this case, the 2007 public opinion surveys gave the first signals of war at a time that both states were coded as democracies in Polity data set: "When Gallup asked Georgians in April/May 2007 for their perceptions of relations with Russia, 81% of residents said relations had declined. Sixty-eight percent of Russians, polled in August 2007, said relations had become worse. In contrast, large majorities of Georgians (75%) said relations with the United States and Ukraine had improved."[102] This is quite telling about when a democracy is

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[102] See http://www.gallup.com/poll/109423/georgian-russian-relations-sour-before-conflict.aspx
(Last Access: May 30, 2010)

more willing to go to conflict – although once again the quality of democracy in both countries in 2007 is very dubious.

Moreover, in regards to the efficient provision of public goods and the consolidation of democracy, Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2005: 77-78) oppose the conventional wisdom, which argues that economic development leads to democracy. Furthermore, they argue that incumbent authoritarian regimes can survive although they efficiently provide public goods such as primary education, public transportation and healthcare. Bueno de Mesquita and Downs argue that there are also "coordination goods," which refer to public goods that have ability to affect the political opponents to coordinate. Accordingly, political and individual freedoms and freedom of media are coordination goods. Thus, in the case of Russia, Kremlin has tightened the political restrictions, although economy has improved in Putin's term and public goods are efficiently provided. The problem in Russia is the government's resistance in providing coordination goods. The pressure of the Putin government over the independent media and opposition parties means that coordination goods are not available in Russia.

Finally, the highly authoritarian nature of the South Ossetian *de facto* state makes the triad a willing one for conflict even when Russia and Georgia are relatively democratic. As discussed comprehensively, coordination goods such as freedom of media, freedom of speech, are not effectively provided by Russia and Georgia after 2006 and by South Ossetia constantly.

The table below shows how the rise of authoritarianism makes Russia and Georgia willing to exploit the opportunities stemming from the *de facto* South Ossetia.

Table 6. Militarized Inter-state Disputes (MIDs), Regime Types/Polity Scores of Russia, Georgia, South Ossetia and Opportunities for Conflict

MIDs	Regime Type Russia	Regime Type Georgia	Regime Type South Ossetia	Type of Opportunity
1993	Anocracy (3)	Anocracy (4)	Autocracy	South Ossetia
1997	Anocracy (3)	Anocracy (5)	Autocracy	Alcohol Smuggling
1999	Anocracy (3)	Anocracy (5)	Autocracy	Chechen Rebels
2000	Democracy (6)	Anocracy (5)	Autocracy	Chechen Rebels
2001	Democracy (6)	Anocracy (5)	Autocracy	Chechen Rebels
2002 (2)	Democracy (6)	Anocracy (5)	Autocracy	Chechen Rebels
2004	Democracy (6)	Democracy (7)	Autocracy	South Ossetia
2006 (2)	Democracy (6)	Democracy (7)	Autocracy	South Ossetia
2007 (2)	Anocracy (4)	Democracy (6)	Autocracy	South Ossetia
2008	Anocracy (4)	Democracy (6)	Autocracy	South Ossetia
2009	Anocracy (4)	Democracy (6)	Autocracy	South Ossetia

The increasing willingness of Russia and Georgia for conflict supports Hypothesis 6 of this Study. Accordingly, willingness for conflict decreases if the level of democracy of the *de facto* state, parent state and the external state increases. In this case, willingness for conflict increases because the level of democracy of the parties in the triad constantly decreases.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion both the South Ossetian insurgency against Tbilisi government between 1989 and 1992 and the establishment of the *de facto* South Ossetia in

1992 generate conflict opportunity between Russia and Georgia. However, the hostility level between Russia and Georgia due to the presence of the South Ossetia problem increases only in certain periods, i.e. before 1997 and after 2004.

This study proposes that the inter-state conflict is more likely to occur when states are willing to exploit the opportunities for conflict that become available to them. As noted previously, I argue that level of democracy is a determinant of willingness of states. The more authoritarianism rises, the more states become willing to use the conflict opportunities. Accordingly, Russia and Georgia disputed due to the South Ossetia issue when the level of democracy in Russia and Georgia declines. The rise of authoritarianism in Russia and Georgia produces certain periods in which hostility level increases between the parties. Even when both states are relatively democratic, since the South Ossetian *de facto* state is autocratic, the relations between Georgia and South Ossetia tense up and lead to conflict between Russia and Georgia as Russia decides to protect the *de facto* state for several reasons as discussed above.

All the hypotheses laid out previously are supported by this case study. First, Russia intervened in Georgia in order to mediate the civil conflict between Tskhinvali and Tbilisi in 1992. This means that the South Ossetian struggle for the *de facto* statehood became an opportunity for conflict between the parent sate and the external state as Hypothesis 1 expected. Second, when Georgian government attempted to restore its constitutional authority over South Ossetia, the hostility level between Russia and Georgia gradually increased since 2004 and resulted in war in 2008. That is to say, the presence of the *de facto* South Ossetia led to conflict lending support for Hypothesis 2. The relations between the external and

parent states relapse since the external state supports the *de facto* state. In regards to willingness, both the process and the outcome of the South Ossetian communal insurgency support the Hypotheses 5 and 6. The willingness of Russia and Georgia increases when the level of democracy decreases in these polities. In respect to the theoretical proposition of this study, for inter-state conflict to occur, both opportunity and willingness are required. Consequently, certain periods in which Russia and Georgia get into disputes refer to the joint emergence of opportunity and willingness.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

When the complex administrative system of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia disintegrated, many unrecognized entities emerged in the post-communist space. The First and Second Gulf Wars also gave birth to the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. The presence of these *de facto* entities challenges the traditional sovereignty definition of the Westphalia System, which regards the state as a unitary actor over a certain territory. Accordingly, *de facto* states are the domestic sovereigns of a given territory, but another political authority in the international arena represents them. In other words, *de facto* states exercise effective governance within definite borders without international recognition.

This study aims to understand how *de facto* states affect the occurrence of inter-state conflicts. I argue that neither grand theories of the IR discipline nor the conflict studies scholars focus on *de facto* states as a cause of war. Thus, I contribute to conflict studies and grand IR theories by building a theoretical framework that explains the role of *de facto* states in inter-state military conflicts. In other words, I bridge the theoretical gap in conflict studies as well as the grand

theory literature. Moreover, I test the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework through the empirical analysis of two case studies.

The main contribution of this study is the application of the "opportunity and willingness" pre-theoretical approach of Most and Starr (1989) in order to understand the role of *de facto* states in inter-state military conflicts. According to Most and Starr (1989), for military conflict to occur between states, two independent variables are examined. The first variable is *opportunity*, which refers to available options imposed by environmental factors. The second variable is *willingness*, which deals with the incentives for action in decision-making processes.

In line with this pre-theoretical framework, I analyze the effect of *de facto* states in two stages: process and outcome. In the process stage, I argue that the process of becoming a *de facto* state might also lead to conflict opportunities. Accordingly, conflict opportunity between parent and external states increases during the struggle of a communal group for *de facto* statehood. In this process, states' willingness for conflict decreases if levels of democracy in parent and external state increase.

In the outcome stage, I argue that the presence of a *de facto* state increases the possibility of interaction and creates an opportunity for conflict between the parent state, in which *de facto* state is established, and the external state, which has positive or negative relations with the *de facto* state. In regards to willingness, levels of democracy of the actors, the parent state, external state and *de facto* state, affect the willingness of states to exploit the opportunities stemming from the presence of *de facto state*.

In Chapter 4 and 5, I tested the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework. Firstly, I examined how the process and outcome of Iraqi Kurdish communal strife affected the occurrence of Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs) between Turkey and Iraq. In doing so, I initially dealt with the period between 1932 and 2003, when the Kurdish insurgency was underway in Iraq. In this period, Turkey and Iraq experienced a total of 17 MIDs and 15 of them are related to the Kurdish secessionist movement. That is to say, the process of the Kurdish groups becoming a *de facto* state generated opportunities between Turkey and Iraq between 1932 and 2003. Unsurprisingly, the level of democracy in Turkey and Iraq did not simultaneously increase in this period. As Iraq remained a non-democratic state and Turkey a democratizing one, conflict opportunities were exploited by both states.

The establishment of the *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq after 2003 created further opportunity for conflict between Turkey and Iraq. The sides got into 4 MIDs in the post-Saddam period because of the de facto state of KRG. The failure of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to build a democracy right after 2003 increased the willingness of Turkey and Iraq to exploit conflict opportunities. Nevertheless, after 2008, when both KRG and Iraq started to improve their democratic institutions, and as Turkey democratized by limiting the influence of the military in its decision-making, relations in the triad ameliorated.

The second case that I analyze is the *de facto* state of South Ossetia, which caused the occurrence of the Russia-Georgia War in 2008, just when IR scholars had started to believe that inter-state war is becoming obsolete. The process and the outcome of the South Ossetian struggle against the Tbilisi government

generated conflict opportunities between Russia and Georgia. Accordingly, Russia and Georgia experienced a MID in 1992 upon the efforts of Russia to mediate the civil conflict between South Ossetia and Georgia. In 1992, both Russia and Georgia suffered from the effects of the Soviet legacy during their democratization process. After the *de facto* South Ossetian state was established in 1992, there were 14 MIDs between Russia and Georgia until 2009. 8 out of 14 MIDs are related to the South Ossetia issue. 7 of these South Ossetian-related MIDs occurred after 2004 when the authoritarianism increased in Russia and Georgia and was consolidated in South Ossetia.

These two case studies lend support to the theoretical premises of this dissertation. Theoretically, I argue that the civil conflict within the parent state generates a conflict opportunity between the parent state and an external state. If the level of democracy of all the actors in the triad decreases, their willingness to fight increases. In a comparative perspective, in both cases there is a process of secessionism stemming from a nationalist movement. Also in both cases, the nationalist movements fought for and succeeded in establishing a *de facto* state, which is capable of governing itself despite its lack of international recognition. In both cases, there is a minority group that is divided across the borders of another state. In other words, the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq are shared minorities as the Ossetians in Russia and Georgia. Similarly in both cases, the level of democracy is very low when the secessionist movements started and the parent states have been authoritarian for a very long time. Thus, the comparison of these cases support the notion that liberal democratic values are important to protect

minorities from discrimination and to avoid alienation of people so that they are motivated to establish a *de facto* state.

Furthermore, in both cases the size of the winning coalition matters for the decision to fight: in autocracies like Iraq and Georgia, private goods are more important than public goods for the autocratic leaders. Similarly in the external states, Russia and Turkey, public goods were not prioritized in their authoritarian periods. Finally, in both the Kurdish and South Ossetian cases, there is conflict when all the actors are not democracies. However, in the Kurdish case there is an increasing trend in the level of democracy of all three actors while in the South Ossetian case, there is a declining trend in the level of democracy of the actors.

An implication of these findings is the support the cases provide for Bueno de Mesquita's selectorate theory (1999; 2003). Since the governments come to power by elections in democracies, they have to provide public goods effectively in order to stay in office for the next term. Conversely, non-democratic governments do not need as much public support. Instead, they provide private goods for privileged groups in order to maintain their dominant position. Thus, two democratic governments are reluctant to go to war with one another because costs of war diminish the share of public goods in the budget. In conformity with the selectorate theory, for inter-state military conflict to occur, states should be willing to exploit the opportunities that communal strife and *de facto* states create. The cases examined in Chapter 4 and 5 show that if the parent and the external state are not democratic, they are more likely to experience MIDs. Furthermore, MIDs, which are related to the *de facto* states, are more likely to occur, if parent state, external state and *de facto* state are not triadically democratic.

This finding implies that the presence of the Kurdistan Regional Government will constantly be an opportunity for conflict between Turkey and Iraq as long as it exists. However, for KRG not to produce an inter-state dispute, the democracy level of Turkey, Iraq and KRG should simultaneously increase. In 2009, Turkey and Iraq experienced no disputes due to the relative democratization of Iraq and KRG. If the democratization process continues in the parties of the triad, Turkey and Iraq will not have the will to utilize the conflict opportunities stemming from the *de facto* KRG.

On the other hand, authoritarianism has been rising in Russia, Georgia and South Ossetia. That is to say, there are less institutional restraints over the willingness of decision makers to exploit the conflict opportunities stemming from the *de facto* South Ossetian state. Thus, Russia and Georgia are more likely to experience conflicts because of the issue of South Ossetia if these polities do not aim to effectively provide public goods. In other words, the most important implication of the research is that consolidated democracies have usually too much to lose when they fight against another state because of an issue created by a *de facto* state.

In conclusion, the policy implications of this research may be useful for the sides of conflictual triads composed of parent states, external states and *de facto states*. Moreover, this research has shown that international relations scholars still need to tackle the issues such as conflict and cooperation related to *de facto* states.

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