

# Building societal support in post-revolutionary regimes

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Under what conditions do first post-revolutionary governments build support? Post-revolutionary governments often face some contender group(s) that they had been fighting during the revolutionary period. This contender group continues to challenge the government even after the contentious period officially ends. Facing a contender puts the government's capacity to establish order to a test. On the other hand, the contender-government conflict takes place in society. Both the government and contenders vie for citizens' support. Citizens respond to interactions between the government and contenders by supporting either or neither of the parties. In order to sustain order, the government needs to win more support than contenders. Does the level of diversity in society make it easier or harder for these governments to build support? How does diversity affect the contender-government conflict, if ever? This paper examines the process whereby post-revolutionary governments that face a contender group build societal support. Using agent based modeling (ABM), I test the hypothesis that higher levels of diversity makes it harder for the government to win citizens' support at the expense of contenders. Findings show that diversity has an independent effect on government-contender interactions.

## Government, Contenders, and Society

Establishing order for post-revolutionary governments is no easy task. Most of such governments face resistance by some contender group. These governments have to defeat regime contenders in order to build order (Goldstone, Rueschemeyer, & Mahoney, 2003; Gurr, 1988; Huntington, 1968, pp. 269–270). While violence is an option, building societal support proves vital for preserving order in the long run (Slater, 2009). In other words, post-revolutionary governments have to win citizens' support to sustain order. The problem is contenders compete with governments for societal support. Fighting contenders gets easier to the extent that governments garner more

support than contenders, for this struggle will seem more legitimate and there will be less potential contenders to recruit. Hence, interactions with society affect the government-contenders relationship. In order to account for this dynamic, I place government-contender interactions within society.

Regime literature conceptualizes government-contender interactions as a bargaining process whose outcome depends on the balance of power between parties (J. J. Linz & Stepan, 1996; O'Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986; Weingast, 1997). Society plays part in the bargaining process but often as a monolithic actor. In one strand of the literature, society appears as lower classes whose economic interests contradict interests of ruling elites (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2001; Boix, 2003, 2003; Rosendorff, 2001; Zak & Feng, 2003). By virtue of sharing common economic interests, these lower classes demand lower taxes or more redistribution from elites; they revolt if demands are not met. By defining groups with respect to economic interests, this conceptualization ignores the presence of subgroups that might have been formed with respect to noneconomic interests. It further assumes lower classes as a unitary actor that acts together, whereas in reality political and ideational preferences hinder collective action. For instance, in interwar Western Europe, there were anarcho-syndicalists, socialist and Christian democrat trade unions (Berman, 2006); in contemporary Turkey, there are the chamber of businessmen and the chamber of Muslim businessmen. Thus, because preferences are not merely economic, societal actors do not always act in harmony.

In the alternative version of the bargaining approach, society or societal groups are defined with respect to political interests (Casper & Taylor, 1996; Colomer, 2000; P. J. J. Linz & Stepan, 1978; O'Donnell et al., 1986; Przeworski, 1991, 2005; Weingast, 1997). This literature relaxes the unitary actor assumption, defining factions within elites and challengers, e.g. "hardliners" and "softliners" (Colomer, 2000; O'Donnell et al., 1986; Przeworski, 1991, 2005), "semi-loyal" and "disloyal" opposition (P. J. J. Linz & Stepan, 1978), "opposition elites" vs. "masses" (Casper & Taylor, 1996), or "group A" and "group B" (Weingast, 1997). Whether a given elite (lower class) faction sticks with

elites (lower classes) or cooperates with lower classes (elites) determines regime outcome. The major contribution of these studies is to recognize factions within society. However, preferences are still limited to a single dimension. According to Ziblatt, regime dynamics are too complicated to be explained by a single ordering principle like voting or executive accountability. Regimes take shape with respect to an array of preferences (Ziblatt, 2006, pp. 333–34).

Identities affect perceptions of the world and others, and therefore preferences. In this capacity, identities generate behavioral outcomes (Chandra, 2012; Wendt, 1999). We know from the literature on ethnicity that politicized identities induce an independent effect on regime outcome (O’Leary, Lustick, & Callaghy, 2001; Tullberg & Tullberg, 1997). When politicized, identities might create polarization in society and threaten order (Horowitz, 2000; I. S. Lustick, Miodownik, & Eidelson, 2004; Sambanis, 2000). To account for the effect on identities on regimes, I disaggregate society with respect to their preferences on identity. According to constructivism, individuals possess multiple identities of which they activate or deactivate some based on their interactions with their environment. Individuals might also acquire new identities and discard others (Chandra, 2012). Building on constructivism, I assume that societal actors possess a repertoire of identities, which they update based on their interactions with the environment. I also define the position of the government and contenders as identities that compete with one another. Society may embrace the government or contender identity, or neither. To put it differently, the government and contender identities compete with other identities in society as well as with each other. Against this backdrop, I reiterate my research question: How does the diversity of identities in society affect government-contenders interactions? Does high diversity make it easier or harder for the government to disseminate its identity?

Government-contenders interactions could be analyzed with formal models, where society could figure as a faction. However, assuming fluid identities and adaptive agents poses analytic challenges to such a research design. Formal models are not appropriate to account for dynamic processes that feature environmental effects.

Alternatively, one could conduct a comparative case study by varying the level of diversity. Qualitative studies have the advantage of amassing rich contextual data with which to analyze some contentious process (George & Bennett, 2005). However, because they tend to have few cases and so many variables, qualitative studies build on necessary and sufficient causes and make 'hard causality' arguments (Mahoney, 2007). Consequently, qualitative studies tend to stress contingencies. One limitation is that because the data is too-context specific, this method cannot consider several alternative trajectories and histories. Lustick et al. (I. Lustick, 2002; I. S. Lustick et al., 2004), I use ABM to test the effect of diversity in an interactive environment. ABM is theoretically more appropriate for my purposes, since I am interested in studying dynamic and adaptive processes. ABM accounts for adaptive systems by building update mechanisms in models (Axelrod, 1997; Holland, 1992). Agents behave according to certain rules, which includes updating preferences based on interactions with neighbors. This design ensures that all parties in the environment affect system dynamics regardless of whether they are a direct party to some conflict (Miller & Page, 2007). In addition, ABM offers the possibility to examine several trajectories and rerun histories, which makes them a powerful technique to explore 'what if' questions (I. S. Lustick & Miodownik, 2009). The ability to work with large datasets and treat several counterfactuals allows for producing generalizable results.

### Research design

The background scenario for this model goes as follows: The group that now is the government was fighting some antagonist group that now constitutes contenders. Upon defeating its rival, this group formed the government and now is in power. Contenders have not given up; they challenge the government by trying to win citizens' support at the expense of the government. The simulation starts at this point.

In order to study the effect of diversity, I assume that neither the government nor contenders have the majority in society. Also, both of these parties are of equal size at the onset. I set the percentage of government and contender agents to 20% each.

That is, of the entire set of agents, some randomly selected 20% are government/contender agents. I make this assumption in order to control for the impacts that power disparity might generate. This assumption derives from empirical observations. There are cases where of two antagonist groups of equal size, one rose in power and the other became the challenger. The government suppressed the challenger thanks to the ability to access the state infrastructure, e.g. the Young Turks and counterrevolutionaries in the Ottoman Empire between 1908 and 1913, and the *légitimiste*, *orléaniste*, *bonapartiste* and republican groups under the Third French Republic between 1871 and 1875 (Hanioğlu, 1995; Hanson, 2010; McDaniel, 1991). I explain below how I incorporate state infrastructure into the model.

In a landscape populated by 2602 cells, I define three agent types, government agents, contender agents, and citizens. Government agents include the government and bureaucrats that execute the government's policies. These agents bear only the 'government' identity (coded as "0"), representing regime values, which they may never lose or change. Contender agents represent anti-regime groups. Like government agents, they only have one identity, the 'contender' identity representing some alternative set of regime values (coded as "1"); contender identity can never be lost or changed. I set the repertoire of government and contender agents to a fixed identity, because I want to model polarization. Following McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, I define "polarization as the widening of sociopolitical space between claimants in a contentious episode and the gravitation of previously uncommitted or moderate actors toward one, the other, or both extremes" (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001, p. 322). In real life, both government and contender agents have parochial identities and these alternative identities affect their interactions with society. For simplicity purposes, I ignore the impact that parochial identities of these agents might induce on consolidation.

Government and contender agents are 'special' in that they have an organizational network that allows them to assert and export their identities more powerfully than citizens. Theoretically, government agents access the "state's infrastructural power" through which they undertake activities like policing or

propaganda (Mann, 1986). The state infrastructure also enables government agents to collect information on citizens, contender groups, and each other. The network of contender agents, too, provides organizational resources, but these resources should be modest compared to what the state infrastructure offers. Therefore, I set government agents' influence higher than contender groups' (3 vs. 2). On the other hand, the government network is supposedly wider than contenders' network. I assume that government agents can connect to other government agents within a radius of 20 cells and that contender agents can connect to other contender agents within a radius of 3 cells.

Citizens are agents that have a large repertoire containing a random selection of parochial identities, which might or might not contain the government and contender identities. Citizens are adaptive to their environment, i.e. if some identity other than theirs is dominant they may (a) activate on the dominant identity if it is already in their repertoire, (b) acquire the dominant identity if it is not in their repertoire (which requires greater environmental than option (a)), and (c) acquire and activate on the dominant identity if environmental pressures become so high to make them add and change their current identity at once. In this model, citizens are not organized. Thus, they generate the least influence in their environment (their influence level is 1). Also, they can only get information about agents that are in their immediate surrounding, i.e. within a radius of 1. These settings are meant to create a context of polarization where the newly established government and contenders compete for citizens' support, and that the only variable is the level of diversity in society.

I vary the level of diversity between 10 and 30. Specifically, I run 100 experiments for each of the following diversity levels: 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30. In all these runs, I measure the number of government and contender agents, the overall number of identities, and the tension between existing identities. Here, tension captures how much an agent's identity differs from its neighbors. High tension indicates high diversity in the environment; lower tension means lower diversity. Following Lustick et al., I operationalize tension by randomly assigning biases to identities. That is, some

identities are favored (indicated by a positive bias); others have stigma (indicated by a negative bias) (I. S. Lustick, Alcorn, Garces, & Ruvinsky, 2012; I. S. Lustick et al., 2004). Also, I randomize the seed so as to ensure randomness.

I set a variable called 'the ratio' to measure the relative size of government supporters to contender supporters. A ratio greater or equal than 2 suggests that government supporters outnumber contender supporters. Thus, the government may maintain political order. If between 1 and 1.5, the ratio indicates that contender supporters remain considerably large even if there are more government supporters. If between 1.5 and 2, the ratio means that the government is surpassing contenders in winning support. Below 1, the ratio suggests that contender supporters outnumber government supporters. In other words, the government has difficulty maintaining political order.

## Results

I ran 100 histories by randomizing the seed for each diversity level. Table I summarizes the findings on the numbers of contender supporters, government supporters and tension. The mean and median for government supporters are very close. The mean for contender supporters is somewhat above the median, meaning that the distribution of contender supporters is left skewed. The fact that government supporters outnumbered contender supporters in most cases suggests that on average the government was more successful in winning citizens. I plotted contender supporters vs. government supporters to see how these variables co-vary.

**Table I**

**The number of supporters of the opposition**

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
529	604	686	724.6	801	1290

**The number of government supporters**

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
439	1078	1324	1302	1531	1953

**Total Tension**

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
10140	12512	13787	14047	15310	22116

Figure I

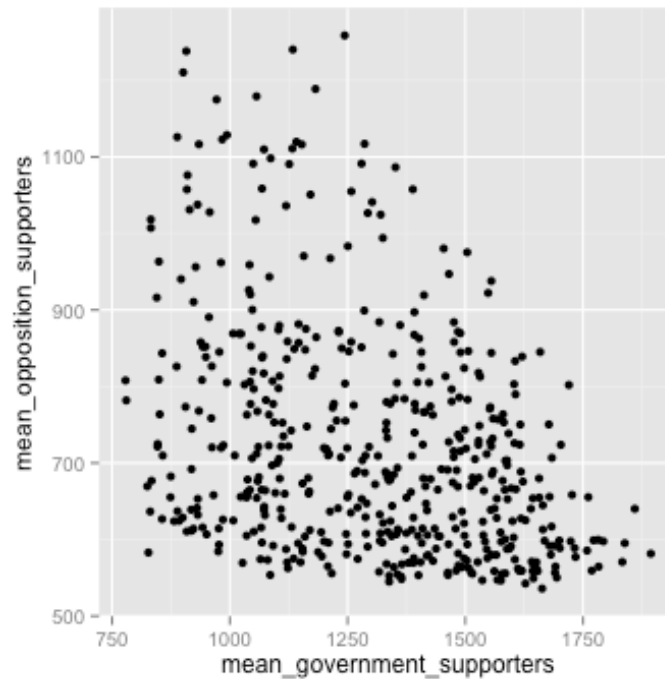


Figure II

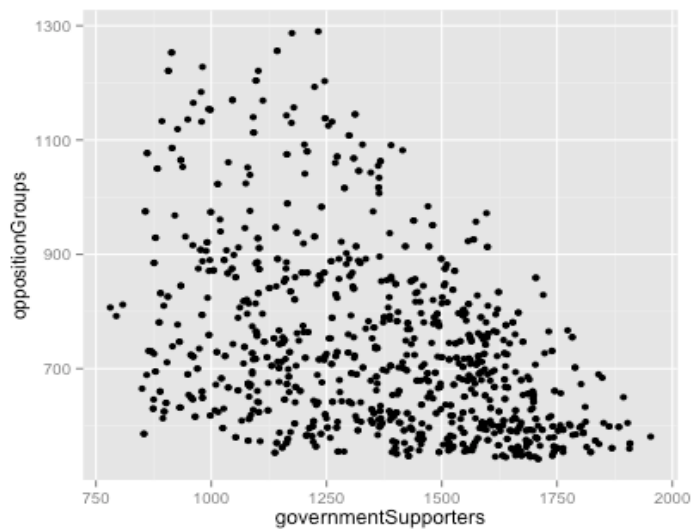
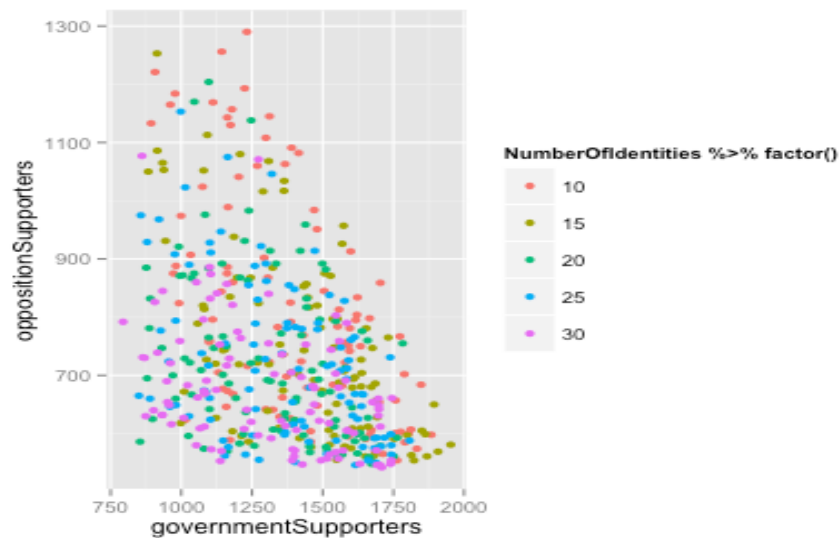


Figure I shows the means values for all time steps; Figure II displays the overall number of government and contender supporters at the last time steps of all simulations. In Figure I, contender supporters seem more numerous than government supporters. In a few instances, these groups have about equal size (see the right hand side of the



figure). In Figure II, we see cases where the average size of government and contender supporters is roughly equal, but the cases where state supporters outnumber contender supporters are more frequent. What happens is, at the onset, contenders has more supporters, but over time, the state becomes dominant. On the other hand, we also observe cases where both the number of contender and government supporters are low. In Figure III, I examine this relationship with respect to diversity.

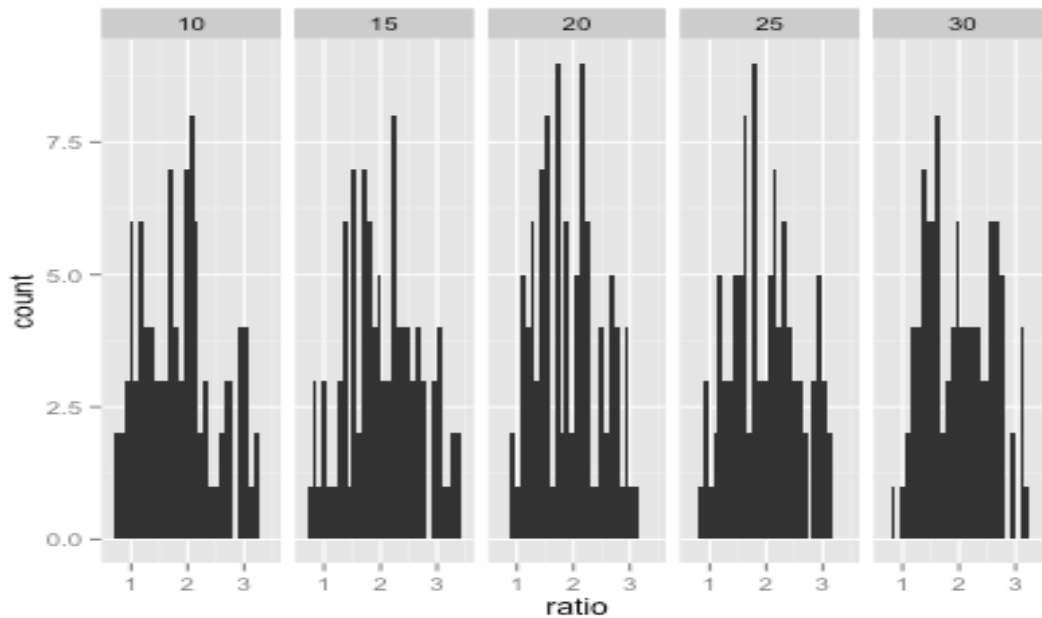
**Figure III**



According to Figure III, the cases where contender supporters have a greater or equal size than government supporters are associated with lower diversity levels, particularly the levels 10 and 15. In contrast, the cases where government supporters outnumber contender supporters are associated with higher diversity levels (25 and 30). At the level 20, the relationship between contender and government supporters looks somewhat random. This means that the government becomes more effective in dominating contenders when diversity increases. We might entertain the hypothesis that the government's success in defeating contenders has to do with its greater influence. On the other hand, the lower left cells contain cases where both government and contender supporters have a modest size, which suggests that some other identity dominates. Interestingly, these cases are also associated with higher levels of diversity (20, 25, 30). Thus, diversity makes it harder for both the government and contender to win support, while also making it easier for the government to surpass contenders. To

establish whether diversity generates this impact, I plotted the ratio of government supporters to contender supporters by diversity levels, and the mean ratio by diversity.

Figure IV



According to Figure IV, the number of cases where the ratio drops below 1 is the highest at the level 10. This number decreases as diversity increases, being the smallest at the level 30. These findings provide support to the working hypothesis that lower levels of diversity make it difficult for the government to surpass contender supporters. On the other hand, this finding also indicates that the government and contender identities are losing the completion against parochial identities. Interestingly, however, the levels 10 and 15 are also associated with the cases where the ratio rises above 3, meaning that the government undercuts support for contenders. Moreover, the level 30 is the context where we observe the fewest cases of the ratio going above 3. When diversity scores 15, 20, 25, and 30, the ratio tends to fall between 2 and 3. At the level 10, the ratio is mostly clustered between 1 and 2 and its distribution is skewed towards 1. The ratio becomes closer to 2 at when diversity ranks 25 or 15. At level 20, the ratio has more or less a random distribution. These findings reinforce the finding that diversity might both advantage the government vis-à-vis contenders and make it difficult for it to win citizens.

Figure V

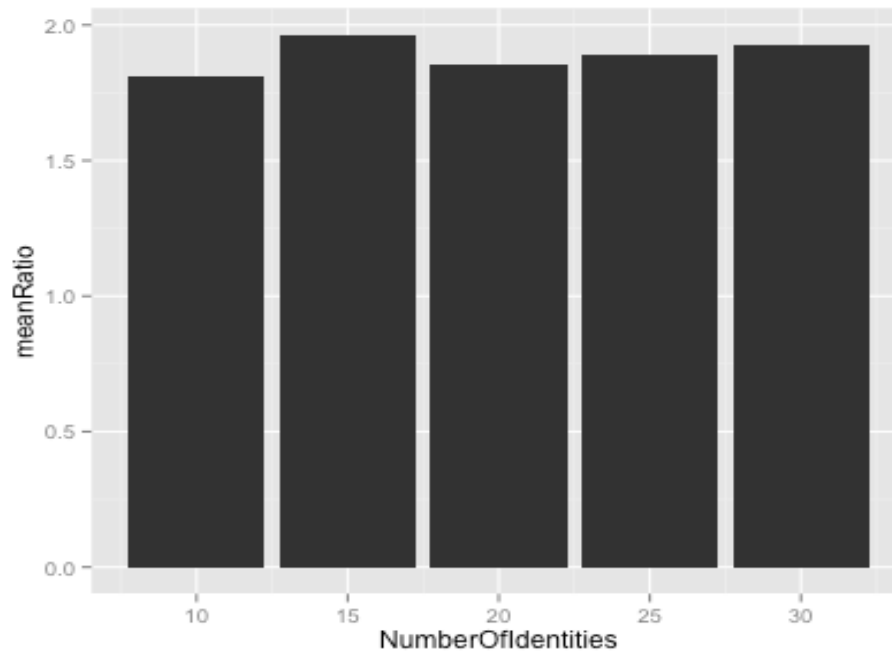


Figure V compares the mean ratio across diversity levels. On average, the ratio is somewhere between 1.5 and 2 at all diversity levels. This pattern reaffirms that the government is more successful in building citizens' support than contenders. Also, the ratio slightly increases across diversity levels with the exception of the level 15 where it suddenly peaks.

So what is the story? These findings provide further proof to the fact that diversity helps the government at the expense of contenders. That said, a ratio around 1.5 indicates that there is still a considerable group of contender supporters. We cannot therefore conclude that the government has built the political order. Importantly, the scenarios where government supporters have about a slightly larger size than contender supporters are the most recurrent ones. These situations illustrate a political order in the making, where there is polarization between the government and contender identities. How does society factor in?

If citizens do not take side (thus sticking to their parochial identities), the number of both government and contender supporters get low. Yet, these cases are rare, i.e. this is not a likely scenario. If citizens pick a side, there are there are possible scenarios. The most likely scenario is the one in which slightly more citizens support the

government. This is when the ratio falls between 1.5 and 2. The second most likely scenario is support for the government is twice or more three times greater than support for contenders (as indicated by the ratio rising above 2). The least likely scenario is the one where contender supporters outnumber government supporters. Thus, diversity makes an effect on government-contender interactions. On the other hand, these results might veil the effect of the state infrastructure. Next, I simulate a context where the government and contender have equal influence levels.

### A government with a weak statecraft

In this series of simulations, the background scenario is the same. I only assume that the statecraft is weak. This scenario could be likened to the early stages of state building. Hence, the government and contender have the same influence level.

Interestingly, summary statistics look almost no different than in the first experiment where the statecraft was stronger. Again, the government is on average more successful in building support than contenders. The mean of contender supporters rose from 724.6 only to 726.2, the change in the mean of government supporters was just -2. Thus, having a weaker state infrastructure makes no significant effect on government-contender interactions.

**Table II**

#### **The number of opposition groups**

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
534	605	690	726.2	806	1315

#### **The number of government supporters**

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
439	1082	1313	1300	1532	1908

#### **Total Tension**

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
10170	12480	13800	14040	15270	22120

To see the variation in the mean values, I plotted the mean of contender supporters vs. the mean of government supporters first for all time steps, then only for the last time steps. According to Figure VI and VII, the relationship between government supporters

and contender supporters is the same as before. Again, there are a few cases where contenders take over, and where both government and contender supporters are low.

Figure VI

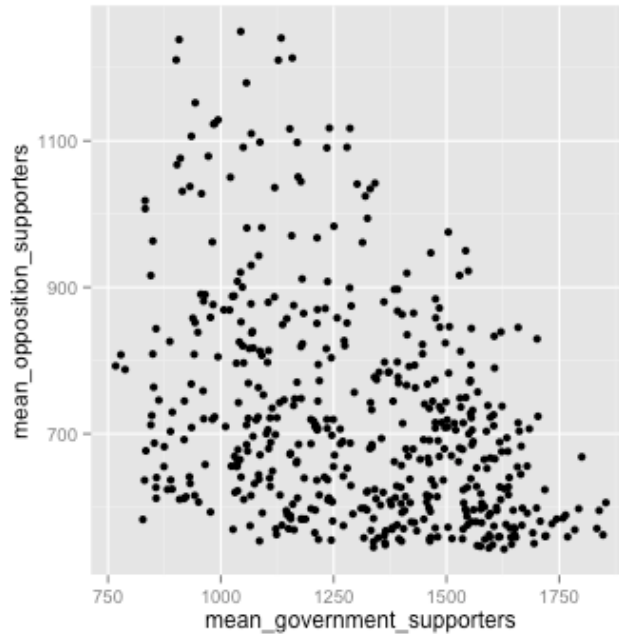
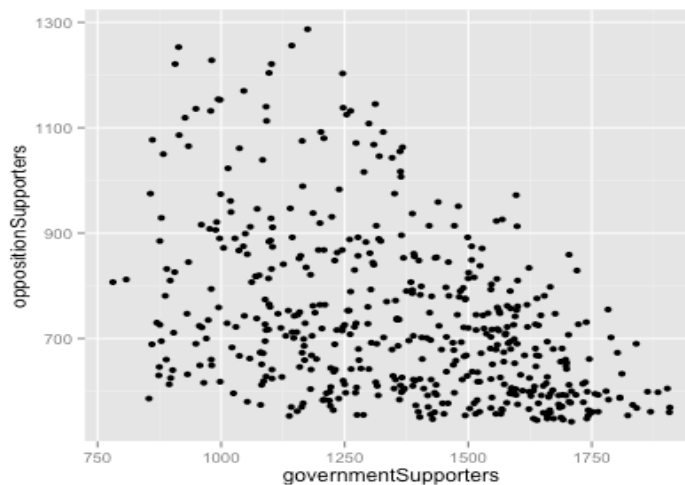


Figure VII



Similarly, the distribution of the means of government and contender supporters over all time steps (Figure VII) and the distribution of government and contender supporters at the last time steps do not differ from the ones from the first experiment. Figure IX shows the break down the distribution of government and contender supporters at the last time steps by diversity. Again, higher diversity levels

are associated with the cases where government supporters outnumber contender supporters. At lower diversity levels, contender supporters have a greater or equal size than government supporters. At the level 20, the distribution of the numbers of contender and government supporters is random.

Figure IX

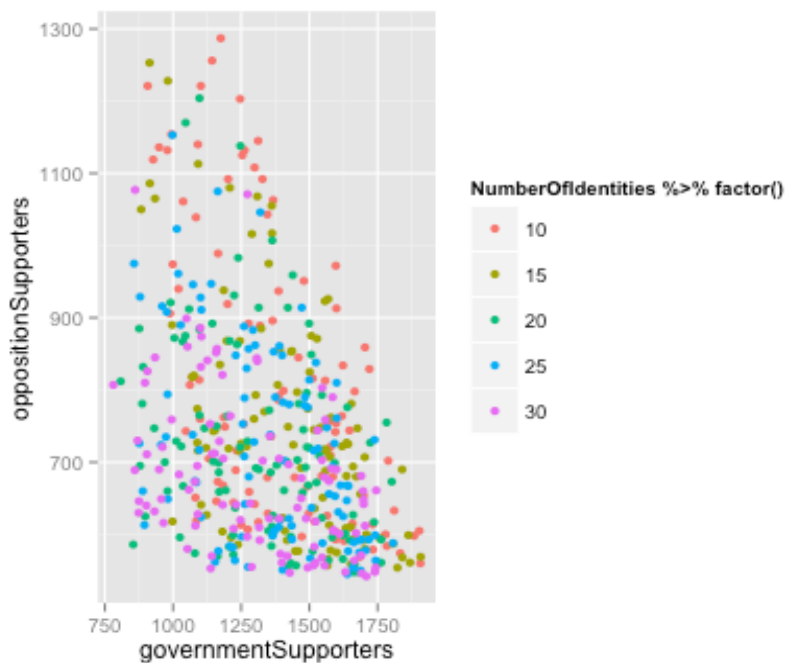
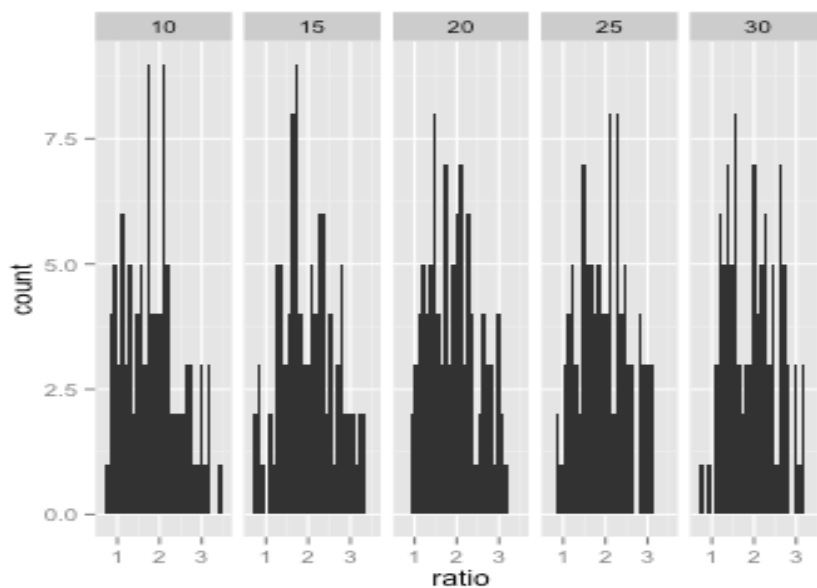


Figure X



The histogram of the ratio by diversity displays the same general trend as the first experiment. That is, government supporters outnumber contender supporters are associated with higher diversity levels. The differences are as follows: There are fewer cases where contender supporters outnumber government supporters, and the ratio is above 3. On the other hand, we observe more cases where the ratio falls between 1 and 2. Thus, a stronger statecraft does not make much of difference for the government-contender interactions.

### Discussion

This study has a number of limitations, which calls for further simulations. First, I made the strong assumption that the government and contender have one immutable identity. In reality, these actors, like others, have a repertoire that they update based on interactions. If government and contender agents are militant, interactions with the environment will not have much of an effect on their behavior. If not, these actors should be as adaptive as citizens. Thus, one next step is to relax this assumption by allowing a certain percentage of government and contender agents to be non-militant. By varying this percentage, one could examine whether and how commitment to identities affects the process.

Second, I set the initial size of government and contender agents to 20%. This percentage should be varies to see the effect of power balance between these parties. Similarly, varying the network size and influence levels would put the hypothesis to a further test.

Third, I limited the number of contenders to one. The next level is to vary the number of contender group to see whether competition between contenders improves the government's ability to draw societal support, if ever.

### Conclusion

This study examined the dynamics of building societal support in a society where a post-revolutionary government faces a contender group. Simulations provided two key

findings: On the one hand, higher levels of diversity make it easier for the government to win citizens' support at the expense of contenders. On the other hand, higher levels of diversity make it difficult for both the government and contenders to build support, because they have to compete with more parochial identities. This finding falls in line with the existing argument in the literature that web-like societies resist the penetrative attempts of states (Migdal, 1988). Parochial identities do compete with the identity promoted by the regime. Therefore, it is vital for the government to defeat alternative centers of loyalty in order to consolidate regime identity (Slater, 2009, 2010). State infrastructure is essential in disseminating regime identity (Althusser, 2013; Mann, 1986). My study did not find have much of an effect on this process, but increasing the influence of government agents might reveal proof to this argument.

The simulations identified three possible scenarios. In the most likely one, more citizens support the government, but a considerable group of contenders remain. In the second most likely scenario, support for the government is twice or more three times greater than support for contenders (as indicated by the ratio rising above 2). The least likely scenario is the one in which contender supporters outnumber government supporters. Overall, I find that diversity makes an independent effect on government-contender interactions. Despite its shortcomings, this study contributes to the literature by testing diversity as an independent variable and revealing its causal effect on government-contender interactions.



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