Repression, Grievances, Mobilization and Rebellion: A New Test of Gurr’s Model of Ethnopolitical Rebellion

Abstract
Throughout the 1990s Ted Robert Gurr developed and refined a model of ethnopolitical rebellion built around four key determinants—identity, incentives, capacity and opportunities. Lindström and Moore (1995), Gurr and Moore (1997), and Moore and Gurr (1998) have argued that the explanation Gurr proposes actually implies an interactive model in which these four factors, along with rebellion and repression, work interdependently to determine levels of rebellious ethnic conflict. In this study I utilize a three-stage least squares estimator to test the ability of this interactive model to explain the magnitude of ethnopolitical rebellion in the seventeen regions of Spain from 1977-1996. The use of an original event data set with enhanced indicators allows for the first test of Gurr’s interactive model not based on the Minorities at Risk project, while the cross-temporal design facilitates the first full test of the model’s democracy-rebellion linkages. This test demonstrates even stronger overall support for the theoretical model than previous analyses, which had failed to find evidence for the direct influence of grievances on rebellion, of democratization and repression on mobilization, and of democracy on repression. An important deviation from Gurr’s model is the finding that three of the proposed indicators of deprivation—relative regional GDP, education, and regional autonomy—were found to have the opposite impact from that intended. Implications of these findings are explored in depth.