



April 2013

### Why They Rise Up, or Not: A Study of Linguistic Minorities and Ethnic-National Mobilization

Yelei Kong '13

Illinois Wesleyan University, [ykong@iwu.edu](mailto:ykong@iwu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica>



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Kong, Yelei '13 (2013) "Why They Rise Up, or Not: A Study of Linguistic Minorities and Ethnic-National Mobilization," *Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 18

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica/vol18/iss1/7>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by editorial board of Res Publica and the Political Science Department at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

---

## Why They Rise Up, or Not: A Study of Linguistic Minorities and Ethnic-National Mobilization

### Abstract

Most theories of nationalism focus on majority nationalism and do not provide an adequate explanation of the inaction of most ethnic minorities. This paper adopts the political process model from social movement theory to study the factors that prompt linguistic minorities to mobilization on ethno-national grounds. Using a large-N statistical model with data drawn from the Minority at Risk database, the results indicate that the higher capacity, the more opportunity for action, and the better the issue is framed, the more likely linguistic minorities would mobilize.

## WHY THEY RISE UP, OR NOT: A STUDY OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND ETHNIC-NATIONAL MOBILIZATION

Yelei Kong

**Abstract:** *Most theories of nationalism focus on majority nationalism and do not provide an adequate explanation of the inaction of most ethnic minorities. This paper adopts the political process model from social movement theory to study the factors that prompt linguistic minorities to mobilization on ethno-national grounds. Using a large-N statistical model with data drawn from the Minority at Risk database, the results indicate that the higher capacity, the more opportunity for action, and the better the issue is framed, the more likely linguistic minorities would mobilize.*

### INTRODUCTION

Ever since the French revolution in the 18th century, scholars have recognized nationalism as a global phenomenon. Nevertheless, the origin and development of nationalism remain subjects of heated theoretical debate and empirical dispute. Although historians have fairly documented the path of the most visible nationalist movements, the inaction of many others has gone unnoticed.

This paper examines the factors that influence ethno-national mobilization among linguistic minorities. Language and religion are among the most salient factors that can trigger a nationalist movement. This is not surprising, since nationalism is a movement based on cultural claims. Compared to economic wellbeing or political status, linguistic traits and religious choices are essential to one's identity.<sup>1</sup> Because of the inherent link between language and ethnicity,<sup>2</sup> this research focuses on minority groups defined by language. The emphasis is on minority nationalism, a sub-field of nationalism studies that can be best understood from cross-disciplinary studies.

If each linguistic group is considered as a distinctive nation, then there are too few spaces in the world today to accommodate each nation with a state.<sup>3</sup> According to Gellner's calculation, there are 8,000 different languages on earth and currently 200 states. If we "pretend that we have four times that number of reasonably effective nationalism on earth, in other words, 800 of them," this will still "give us only one effective nationalism for ten potential ones!"<sup>4</sup> Thus, the question arises: why do some resort to a nationalist movement, while others do not.

To answer this question, a preliminary review of the current theories is required. The following discussion combines the mainstream theories on ethnic nationalism with social movement theory models to analyze the dynamics of ethno-national mobilization of linguistic minorities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kymlicka 1996

<sup>2</sup> Gellner 1983; Argenter 2002

<sup>3</sup> Gellner 1983

<sup>4</sup> Gellner 1983, 45

## LANGUAGE AND NATIONALISM

Theorists tend to view nationalism as either a cultural phenomenon rooted in history or a constructed product during the modern era.<sup>5</sup> Benedict Anderson is the leading representative of the second view and arguably the founder of constructivism. His landmark 1983 work *Imagined Communities* challenged the first belief that national myth was ancient and cultural. He revealed how the concept was manufactured by the literate class and refined through the interaction between the elite and the people. In fact, the modern nation could only be imagined since the stretched territory and sheer size of populations made intragroup intimacy and recognition impossible.

Another important camp of nationalism studies is the modernists, headed by Ernest Gellner. They argue that the process of modernization brought nationalism into existence both in the interest of the state and as a political principle. Nationalism is simply not a Sleeping Beauty awaiting the kiss of modernism.<sup>6</sup> Despite theoretical disagreements, most scholars agree on the essential role language plays in ethnic identity formation.<sup>7</sup> Whereas Anderson focuses on the uniform use of literary language as the foundation for an imagined community, Gellner stresses the congruence between political and cultural boundaries in a monolingual state. It is “through that language, encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave [that], pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed.”<sup>8</sup>

It is a consensus among theorists that language defines group boundaries, whether literal or imagined; however, they seldom address the issue of minority nationalism. Majority nationalism is usually either a revolution against a dominant class (e.g. the French middle class against the aristocrats) or a movement against a foreign power (e.g. the post colonialist movement in Africa). In both cases, the nationalists have a relative majority base that challenges the ruling class or foreign power. However, in the case of minority nationalism, the disadvantaged language group is pitted against the majority. Although some linguistic minorities can also argue for the principle of the congruence of political and ethnic boundaries, they are inherently in a weaker position to do so. In fact, most ethno-national minorities never rise up; they never assert their linguistic identities as a foundation for political independence or autonomy within the majority nation-states. The existing literature is therefore inadequate to address the question of what drives ethno-national mobilization among language minorities.

Part of the problem lies in the inherent difficulty in studying non-actions. Political scientists, like scientists in general, are studying the casual relationships in the world. Where X happened, they search for what factors cause X and how they produce X. But, when X does not happen, the absence

---

<sup>5</sup> Motyl 2002

<sup>6</sup> Beiner 1999

<sup>7</sup> Gellner 1983; Argenter 2002; Anderson 1983; Jung 1987

<sup>8</sup> Anderson 1983

of the X-causing factor may not be sufficient to establish causality. With a large-N statistical study, it is possible to approach the question in a different way. Instead of asking what prevents some minorities from mobilizing, the focus should be on what factors influence their decision to mobilize on nationalist ground, and if they do, how their level of movement is affected by various independent factors. In the end, although the question cannot be answered definitively, evidence can be shown that the degree and quality of certain factors can make a linguistic minority either more or less likely to develop an ethno-national movement.

### SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

Ethno-national mobilization represents a form of social movement. As social movements tend to involve a special sector of the society, their participants are usually only a minority of the population. Therefore, social movement theories are particularly suited for the study of minority nationalism.

Behind most social movement theories today is the rational choice theory. It assumes that individuals are rational actors who weigh benefits and cost before taking an action.<sup>9</sup> People join a movement in the hope of gaining something more than they would potentially lose. The utilitarianism assumption is simple, yet very influential in the thinking of most social scientists. In a field study done in Ghana, Laitin used game theory to illustrate individual choices in language selection.<sup>10</sup> The local Ghanaian parents could choose to send their children to either a school taught in the indigenous language or a school taught in English. Laitin finds that the choices were not entirely based on economic gain. Local honor and external acceptance were equally influential as economic pay-offs.<sup>11</sup>

Besides rational choice theory, there are three other major theories on social movement: relative deprivation, resource mobilization, and consciousness construction. The first two stress the structural aspects to explain social movement, whereas the last one takes a cultural approach.

Relative deprivation focuses on “situations producing individual-level stress or discontent as a major cause of social movement development.”<sup>12</sup> These unsatisfying conditions are usually the result of social stratification or injustice. The “frustration-aggression hypothesis” predicts that as discontent increases, the possibility of social movement increases as well. Shifting the focus from the underlying motivation to the necessary resources for mobilization, social scientists have developed resource mobilization theory. This current mainstream theory emphasizes the ability of the starters to motivate individuals, gain access to power, mobilize social resources and utilize political and

---

<sup>9</sup> Hechter 1996

<sup>10</sup> Laitin 1993

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Kerbo 1982, 646

economic structures to promote certain objectives.<sup>13</sup> In essence, resource mobilization theorists consider “structure as relatively stable features of a movement’s environment that influence action by shaping opportunities,”<sup>14</sup> and “attempt to demonstrate empirically that individual behaviors are channeled by a series of structural constraints.”<sup>15</sup>

In recent years, scholars have started to rely on the “cultural formations” in social movement theory. This “consciousness construction” theory focuses on “how social movements generate and are affected by the construction of meaning, consciousness raising, the manipulation of symbols, and collective identities.”<sup>16</sup> However, not all theorists take a diametrical view between structural and cultural approaches. Myra Marx Ferree suggests that “individuals should be regarded as members of a community whose interests reflect their structural locations.”<sup>17</sup> As scholars have explained, it is not just the particular issue that is important, but also how it is framed.<sup>18</sup>

The four theories described above provide useful lenses through which to examine social movements, but critics have pointed out theoretical flaws and empirical difficulties in applying them. As implied by rational choice theory, blocked social mobility would lead to nationalist movement. For example, education is a universal channel for upward social mobility, and people with higher education can expect more financial rewards than others. Thus, when college graduates find their career paths blocked for ethnic reasons, they should be more likely to mobilize. In fact, “this emphasis on the cultural elements of nationalism places intellectuals, in effect those most able to revive, stimulate and diffuse cultural artifacts, at the forefront of any national movement.”<sup>19</sup> However, data has shown otherwise. Although decreased opportunities among the intellectuals have been believed to be the causes of Irish nationalism in the early twentieth century and the Canadian nationalism in the 1970s, the data has shown that job markets for them were actually expanding, not shrinking.<sup>20</sup>

Besides empirical invalidity, rational choice theory also failed to explain extreme acts of ethnic violence, like suicide bombers, when the benefits were little and the costs were too high. Thus it was viewed as ineffective to explain non-economic activities.<sup>21</sup> In order to reconcile this conflict, Varshney introduced the distinction between instrumental rationality and value rationality. Whereas the former is a “strict cost-benefit analysis,”<sup>22</sup> the latter relies on the conscience and perception of

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Giugni 1998, 372

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 367

<sup>16</sup> Giugni 1998

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 365-375

<sup>18</sup> Giugni 1998; Cormier 2003; Cederman and Girardin 2007

<sup>19</sup> Cormier 2003, 529

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Hechter 1996

<sup>22</sup> Varshney 2003, 86

the good of the people, independent of the prospect of material or immediate gain. By expanding the definition of rationality, the rational choice theory was able to explain a broader scope of movement.

Critics have also found two problems with relative deprivation theory. The first one is its inability to identify the specific conditions that cause grievance.<sup>23</sup> Another problem is that since discontents are behind all movements, relative deprivation theory cannot explain why a lower level of frustration may cause mobilization and where a higher one does not.<sup>24</sup> Cormier's study of blocked mobility is such an example. Although the deprivation model is intuitively reasonable, empirically it has led to few discoveries.

By using the resource mobilization model, theorists have been able to locate the fundamental causes of many social movements. However, they faced serious challenges as well. The first is the free-rider problem. When one could benefit from a movement without joining it, one might choose not to participate at all.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, resource mobilization fails to address how people are dissuaded from free-riding. The second problem is essentially the strength of relative deprivation theory. Historically, many social movements occurred without significant structural changes in society and typically they were the result of mass grievance.<sup>26</sup> Thus, a movement could gain momentum before resources became available.

#### THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The relative deprivation, resource mobilization, and consciousness construction theories all view social movement formation from different perspectives: grievance-driven action, resource-utilization, and issue formation, respectively. By extracting the central element from each of these theories, some scholars have proposed a more comprehensive theory: the political process model.<sup>27</sup> Its three components are mobilizing structure, political opportunity structure, and cultural framing. Mobilizing structure is an internal resource that includes "informal networks, preexisting institutional structures, and formal organization."<sup>28</sup> Political opportunity structure refers to the outside political environment that provides incentive for action. And cultural framing refers to the bridge connecting the internal and external structure, or "the shared meanings and definitions that people bring to their situation."<sup>29</sup>

In a sense, the political process theory is a combination of capacity, opportunity, and constructed ideas. In the past, nationalist theorists have also addressed similar issues of existing

---

<sup>23</sup> Kerbo 1982

<sup>24</sup> Cederman and Girardin 2007

<sup>25</sup> Kerbo 1982

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Morris 2000

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 446

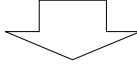
<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

network, current situation, and issue formation.<sup>30</sup> Existing network refers to the strength of minority group vis-à-vis the majority, the institutional structure of community, and formal organizations within the ethnic group. Current situation is their political status within the state they reside, treatment by the majority, and incentives for action. Issue formation explains how the elites construct the meaning of their situation, frame collective identities, and manipulate symbols. Table 1 below summarizes the application of political process model to the study of minority nationalist movement.

**Table 1:** Applying Political Process Model to Minority Nationalist Movement

Political Process Model		
Mobilizing Structure	Opportunity Structure	Cultural Framing



Minority Nationalist Movement		
<b>Internal Capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength of the minority group</li> <li>• Institutional structure</li> <li>• Formal organization</li> </ul>	<b>External Opportunity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political status in the state</li> <li>• Treatment by majority</li> <li>• International environment</li> </ul>	<b>Issue Formation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of meanings</li> <li>• Collective identities</li> <li>• Manipulation of symbols</li> </ul>

This model allows for a better study of minority nationalist movements because it gives a more inclusive analysis of the mobilization process. It incorporates both the internal and the external structure, without leaving aside the cultural perspective of nationalism. However, its critics point to the limited assumption of the prior occurrence of political opportunity for movement.<sup>31</sup> By stressing structural necessity, it neglects the importance of agency and how action could create favorable conditions for movement. While the criticism is well-grounded, the problem of the alternative is still empirical validation. It is easy to recognize how individual initiatives influence the movement, but difficult to prove the causal link. Thus, albeit its limitations, the political process model offers the best means available to study minority nationalism. According to this model, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1) The more internal capacity the minority possesses, the more likely they will mobilize on ethno-national grounds.

<sup>30</sup> Gellner 1983; Anderson 1983

<sup>31</sup> Morris 2000



H2) The more external opportunity the minority has, the more likely they will mobilize on ethno-national grounds.

H3) The better the issue is framed, the more likely the linguistic minorities will mobilize on ethno-national grounds.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to test these hypotheses in the broadest possible perspective, this research employs a large-N statistical model using the latest data (2006) from the Minority at Risk (MAR) database. MAR contains standardized data on the status and conflict of more than 283 ethnic groups with a population of at least 500,000. It is the most exhaustive and most commonly cited database on ethnic mobilization among scholars. Apart from the fact that it is the most comprehensive database available, it is selected for another important reason. The MAR also codes language, custom, religion, and other distinctive characteristics of each minority group. This is extremely helpful, because often language and religion intertwine and their cleavages overlap each other. In cases where linguistic and religious cleavages overlap, it would be difficult to empirically testify which one is the major cause of nationalism and by what degree. Luckily, MAR allows one to choose only linguistic minorities for more control and thus adds validity to the examination. In the dataset, LANG is the measure for different language group and it is coded from 0-2. 0 represents linguistic assimilation with the plurality group, 1 that a group speaks multiple languages and at least one different from the plurality group, and 2 that a group speaks primarily one language different from the plurality group. Only cases with a LANG score of 2 are selected, ruling out all but 48 cases. Bivariate correlation and OLS regression models are both used to test the hypotheses.

While the LANG measurement allows one to distinguish linguistic minorities from other minorities, some scholars have criticized its measures as inadequate.<sup>32</sup> In MAR, language difference is measured by language distance – “the genetic relationship of languages that share a common ancestor” – without considering the actual difficulty of learning the language and concrete social impact of such difference.<sup>33</sup> Mabry argued that “the most important political characteristic of any language community in contact with another is the relative social and political status of their two (or more) languages.”<sup>34</sup> While this paper does not consider the linguistic difference as a *cause* of ethnic conflict, it is worth addressing Mabry’s criticism. Although LANG may not be a measure of actual difference, it is a good indication that there is a significant difference. A value of 2 in LANG means that the minority language is not intelligible to the majority and vice versa. Therefore, it is safe to assume there is a linguistic barrier and to a great extent, a cultural division between the two. Since

---

<sup>32</sup> Cederman and Girardin 2007; Mabry 2011

<sup>33</sup> Mabry 2011

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 203

language occupies a central position in the formation of ethnicity as it is the essential medium of communication and preservation of national culture,<sup>35</sup> linguistic difference almost always leads to cultural difference. Because of the strong link between language and culture, the selection based on LANG produces a set of cases where minorities are *actually* different from the majority in terms of culture. Therefore, other factors<sup>36</sup> that might affect the ethnic mobilization of minorities can be eliminated and one can focus on how factors in the political process model affect ethnic mobilization of linguistic minorities.

#### OPERATIONALIZING THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The dependent variable for this study is ethnic mobilization. In MAR, there are a few measures that are directly related to this: protest (0-5), rebellion (0-7), and separatism index (0-3). They are recoded into an index of ethnic mobilization (IEM).  $IEM = (Protest / 5) * 20\% + (Rebellion / 7) * 35\% + (Separatism / 3) * 45\%$ . Since IEM is a continuum, from non-violent protest at one end and separation at the other, each measure is assigned different weight. First, each measure is divided by its scale in order to make them comparable to each other. Then, separatism is weighted the heaviest here because it is the most extreme form of political nationalism. Protest is weighted the least due to its non-violent nature. In the end, rebellion is weighted higher than protest due to its use of violence and lower than separatism since the measure does not necessarily specify the ultimate level of political demand for the rebels. In total, IEM ranges from 0 to 1.

#### OPERATIONALIZING THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The three independent variables are internal capacity, external opportunity, and issue formation. To operationalize them, five proxy measures are chosen from MAR, group spatial distribution (GROUPCON) for capacity, political autonomy (AUTLOST) for opportunity and political (POLGR), economic (ECGR) and cultural (CULGR) grievance for issue formation.

##### *Group Spatial Distribution as a Proxy for Capacity*

According to political process theory, capacity includes networks, institutions and organizations within an ethnic community. While their strength is difficult to measure and compare across communities, the spatial distribution of population might be a good indication of their efficacy. The concentration of the population matters because only with a large share and concentrated population can a minority be able to construct a self-sustainable political system – “sufficiently large and institutionally complete.”<sup>37</sup> Generally, the more concentrated a minority is, the stronger ties they would have, since it is easier to communicate and establish relationships. Although

<sup>35</sup> Argenter 2002

<sup>36</sup> For example, in the MAR database, BELIEF measures the religious differences between the minority group and the majority. Among the cases selected here, Pearson’s correlation result show no significant correlation (.696 level) between BELIEF and the EMI, the measure for dependent variable here.

<sup>37</sup> Kymlicka 2003, 40

technology has made long-distance connection relatively easy and affordable, when it comes to action, a concentrated group is inherently better suited than a dispersed one. Since the question which concerns us is the relationship between capacity and mobilization, not capacity itself per se, spatial distribution is a good proxy measure for group capacity. In MAR, group spatial distribution is coded under GOUPCON from 0 to 3, 0 for widely dispersed, 1 for primarily urban or minority in one region, 2 for majority in one region, others dispersed, and 3 for concentrated in one region.

*Political Autonomy as a Proxy for Opportunity*

Opportunity refers to the external “political environment that provides incentives for people to undertake collective action.”<sup>38</sup> In MAR, one measure is the index of lost political autonomy based on year of autonomy loss, magnitude of change and group status prior to loss of autonomy. The score ranges from 0 to 6, and the higher the score, the greater autonomy the minority has enjoyed in the past and the more recent such power has been taken away from them. Scholars have found that path dependence is a strong factor in ethnic conflict.<sup>39</sup> If a minority has been involved in an ethnic conflict, it is more likely to have more ethnic violence in the future than those who did not have such experience. Similarly, if a minority had enjoyed relative autonomy in the past, they would be more inclined to rise up than those who had never had such privileges. Also, because of their previous independence or autonomy, the external environment or the majorities would be more sympathetic and acceptive to their demand. Therefore, the index of lost political autonomy can be a good measure for external political opportunity.

*Grievance as a Proxy for Issue Formation*

Among the three variables, issue formation is the most troublesome to measure. The efficacy of issue formation not only depends on how the issue is interpreted by the leader, but also how it is accepted by the masses. Both are subjective standards. In MAR, political, economic and cultural grievances are measured by the *highest* level articulated by group leaders or observed by third parties. In fact, the codebook explicitly states that if the majority of the people demonstrate lower levels of grievance and radicals expressed higher levels, the higher score will be coded for this ethnic group. Although this measure is not an exact estimation of grievances, this touches on some elements of issue framing. One important aspect of issue framing is that how it is framed is more important than the actual grievance. Naturally, the leader has an incentive to exaggerate the issue in order to incite popular sentiment. In this perspective, the higher grievance coded by MAR, the more likely the populace will take action. Even though it does not address all features of issue formation, the grievance measure indicates one way issue formation could affect ethnic mobilization. In this paper,

---

<sup>38</sup> Morris 2000, 446

<sup>39</sup> Cederman and Girardin 2007

the political, economic and cultural grievances are recoded into an index of grievance which is an aggregate score of the three, ranging from 0 to 8.

### ANALYSIS

#### *The Significance of EMI Index*

In the Minority at Risk database, 282 ethnic groups are recorded. Only minorities with a LANG score of two<sup>40</sup> are selected for this study, yielding 48 cases across 36 countries.<sup>41</sup> Table 2 summarizes the distribution of dependent variable measures.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Dependent Variables

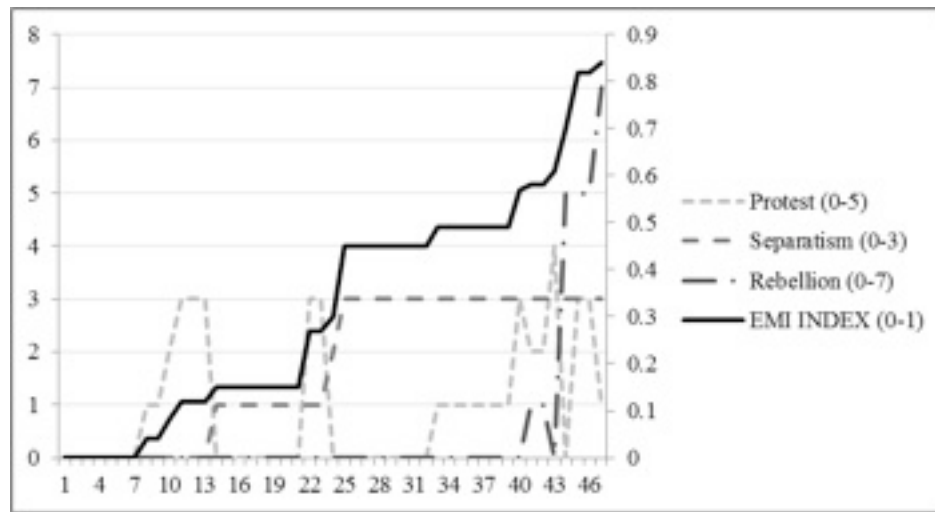
	Protest (0-5)	Separatism (0-3)	Rebellion (0-7)	<b>EMI Index (0-1)</b>
Average	0.92	1.69	0.51	<b>0.32</b>
Standard Deviation	1.22	1.34	1.57	<b>0.25</b>
Min	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Max	4	3	7	<b>0.84</b>
Mode (number)	0 (26)	3 (23)	0 (41)	<b>0.15 (8)</b>

N=48 for Protest and Separatism, N=47 for Rebellion and EMI Index

It is apparent from the table that separatism is the most significant among the three measures from MAR with an average score of 1.69. Nearly half of the cases have the highest score of 3. On the other side, average scores for protest and rebellion are relatively low, 0.92 and 0.51 respectively. Also, their modes are both 0, indicating that inactivity is common. Based on these three, the EMI index has a score range from 0 to 0.84 and an average score of 0.32. As EMI index reflects the continuum of the nationalist movement, its strength can be shown as its correlation with the rest of the measures and this relationship is graphically represented in Figure 1.

<sup>40</sup> In the MAR codebook, LANG score means that “group speaks primarily one language, different from plurality group: Plurality of group speaks the same language AND it is different from plurality group language (e.g., Kurds in Turkey or Iraq).”

<sup>41</sup> Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burma, Croatia, Cyprus, Dem. Rep. of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guinea, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yugoslavia (Serbia), Zimbabwe.

**Figure 1:** Relationship between Protest, Separatism, Rebellion, EMI index

N=47

The increase of EMI accompanies the increasing scores of separatism and rebellion. In cases where only protest score is high, EMI is relatively low, reflecting the non-violent and less intensive nationalist movement. Whereas all three measures are high towards the end of the cases, EMI increases significantly as well, representing the violent and intensive mobilization of minorities. Therefore, EMI index is a reliable measure of ethno-nationalist mobilization as its distribution follows the theoretical assumption.

#### *Correlation Check on Independent variables*

Before examining the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables, it worth making sure that there is no internal correlation between the independent variables. Table 3 below shows the correlations between the three, and none of them have any significant relationship with each other.

**Table 3:** Pearson's Correlations for independent variables

		Group Spatial Distribution	Political Autonomy	Total Grievance
Group Spatial Distribution	Pearson Correlation	1	.096	.215
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.257	.071
Political Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.096	1	.158
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.257		.142
Total Grievance	Pearson Correlation	.215	.158	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.071	.142	

N=48

### Testing Hypotheses

In order to test the bivariate relationships between each independent variable with ethno-national mobilization, Table 4 reposts the results of Pearson's bivariate correlations.

**Table 4:** Pearson's Correlations for Ethno-national Mobilization Index (EMI)

	Ethno-nationalist Mobilization Index	
H1. Group spatial distribution	Pearson Correlation	.386**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.004
H2. Political Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.274*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.031
H3. Total Grievance	Pearson Correlation	.758**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000

N=47

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

According to the hypothesis, the higher capacity the minority possesses, the more likely they would mobilize on ethno-national ground. With group spatial distribution as a proxy measure for higher capacity, Table 3 validates the existence of such correlation. Nearly 40% of data confirmed this relationship.

For the second hypothesis, that the more external opportunity the minority has, the more likely they would mobilize on ethno-national grounds, the correlation is weaker. Its value is only .274 and is significant at the .031 level. Part of the reason for this weak relationship probably lies in the skewed value distribution of political autonomy since two-thirds of the cases have a relatively low score, either 0 or 1 on a scale of 0 to 5. With so many cases on the lower end, the relatively insignificant result is understandable. The strongest evidence is for the third hypothesis: the better the issue is framed, the more likely linguistic minorities will mobilize. The proxy measure, total grievance, has a .758 correlation value with the EMI index and is significant at the .000 level. Although such a high value is surprising, the strong relationship is anticipated. After all, ethno-national mobilization is a political movement and political grievance is particularly influential among the minorities examined here. Therefore, the initial correlations confirm all three hypotheses.

**Table 5:** OLS Regression for Ethno-national Mobilization Index (EMI)

	Standardized Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Significance
Group Spatial Distribution	.022	.197	.043
Political Autonomy	.018	.159	.093
Total Grievance	.011	.688	.000

N=47

From Table 5, it is obvious that total grievance is still the most influential. Explaining nearly 70% of the variance in EMI, it remains significant at the .000 level. Group spatial distribution comes second, with a beta score of .197 and significance at the .05 level. Political autonomy is the least significant, explaining only 15.9% of the cases and is significant only at the .1 level. However, political autonomy nearly became irrelevant when group spatial distribution and total grievance are held constant. As demonstrated above, the majority of the variance in ethno-national mobilization can be accounted for by the framing of grievances. The more political grievances are articulated within a linguistic minority, the more likely they will move along the mobilization scale towards manifested nationalist movement and even violence.

Clearly, the third hypothesis is supported most strongly by the data. This finding also ties back to and confirms the strength of classic relative deprivation theory which emphasizes grievances experienced by the minority as the single most important motivation for mobilization. Thus, the intuitive assumption of the relationship is verified here. But this proxy measure only covers a small portion of issue framing. Future studies should address the empirical difficulty of measuring idea construction to validate the hypothesis more comprehensively. Group spatial distribution is also significant in the result, and this indicates that concentrated minority groups do have a higher tendency to mobilize, again reflecting the importance of capacity. Further, capacity probably directly links to issue framing: the higher the capacity, the better the minority will be able to frame their grievances. Comparatively, political autonomy is the least influential factor here, although skewed data accounts for some of its result as two-thirds of the cases scored either a 0 or 1 on the political autonomy scale. Most importantly, past political autonomy only captures one part of the opportunity structure. Other aspects, such as international relief or sudden political change, are not incorporated in this measure.

### CONCLUSION

By using a statistical model with data drawn from the Minority at Risk database, the overall results of this study support the political process theory, which states that capacity, opportunity, and constructed ideas together influence the ethnic mobilization of minorities. The positive relationship between spatial distribution and nationalist movement is not surprising. After all, the most visible separatist movements in the world today are found among regionally concentrated minorities, such as the Canadian Quebecois, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, and Kurdish people in Iraq. Political opportunity is a weaker factor because of the inherent limitation of the proxy measure used here. Empirically, there are many examples showing that the lifting of political pressure does lead to an upsurge of nationalist movement. On the eve of the Soviet dissolution, many republics began to manifest their nationalist claims as soon as Gorbachev gave them the option of political autonomy. However, the difficulties lie in how to measure outside political opportunities. Similar problems also challenge the most

significant findings here: the more exaggerated the grievance, the more likely linguistic minorities are to mobilize. Hence the next step would be how to measure issue formation and compare one manipulation to another. Also, a closer examination of how the three factors influence the process of mobilization should be carried out in a structured, focused case comparison. Therefore, both a study of refined measurement and a detailed examination of a few of the cases selected here will be the primary goals of future study.



## REFERENCES

- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined communities*, Anonymous. New York: Verso.
- Argenter, Joan A. 2002. "Language and Nationalism in Europe by Stephen Barbour; Cathie Carmichael Review by: Joan A. Argenter." *Language in Society* 31 (5) (Nov.): 796-800.
- Beiner, Ronald, ed. 1999. *Theorizing nationalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, and Luc Girardin. 2007. "Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity Onto Nationalist Insurgencies." *American Political Science Review* 101 (1) (02): 173-85.
- Cormier, Jeffrey J. 2003. "Blocked Mobility and the Rise of Cultural Nationalism: A Reassessment." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 16 (4) (Summer): 525-49.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and nationalism*, Anonymous. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Giugni, Marco G. 1998. "Structure and Culture in Social Movement Theory." *Sociological Forum* 13 (2) (June): 365-75.
- Hechter, Michael. 1996. "Ethnicity and Rational Choice Theory." In *Ethnicity*, eds. John Hutchinson, Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 90-98.
- Jung, Hwa Yol. 1987. "Book Review Essay: Language and Politics." *Political Psychology* 8 (3) (Sep.): 477-84.
- Kerbo, Harold R. 1982. "Movements of "Crisis" and Movements of "Affluence": A Critique of Deprivation and Resource Mobilization Theories." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 26 (4) (Dec.): 645-63.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1996. *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*, Anonymous Anonymous . USA: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will, and Alan Patten, eds. *Language Rights and Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Laitin, David D. 1993. "The Game Theory of Language Regimes." *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale De Science Politique* 14 (3, The Emergent World Language System. Le système linguistique mondial en formation) (Jul.): 227-39.
- Mabry, Tristan James. 2011. "Language and Conflict." *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale De Science Politique* 32 (2) (MARCH): 189-207.
- Minorities at Risk Project. (2009) "Minorities at Risk Dataset." College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Retrieved from <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/> on: [November 2, 2012]
- Morris, Aldon. 2000. "Reflections on Social Movement Theory: Criticisms and Proposals." *Contemporary Sociology* 29 (3) (May): 445-54.

Motyl, Alexander J. 2002. "Imagined Communities, Rational Choosers, Invented Ethnicities."

*Comparative Politics* 34 (2) (Jan.): 233-50.

Varshney, A. 2003. "Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality." *Perspectives on Politics*, 1(1), 85-99.