**Appendix -A**

This document provides a comprehensive discussions and justifications on choosing our indicators for each model presented in the paper.

The study of conflict escalation and political violence, particularly in the context of civil wars and of self-determination movements, has long been animated by three central theoretical debates: the role of grievances, resources, and that of political opportunity structures. In the coming sections, we briefly provide a review of assumptions and mechanisms proposed by each theoretical frameworks and introduce our indicators for the theoretical models evaluated in the paper.

**Grievance-Based Explanations**

Classic work in conflict studies (Gurr 1970; Horowitz 1985) identifies perceived injustice—especially ethnic, political, and economic discrimination—as a key driver of both nonviolent and violent mobilization. Building on this, more recent research highlights the roles of political exclusion and lost autonomy in fueling conflict. Cederman et al. (2010, 2015) and Saxton and Benson (2006) find strong links between exclusion, autonomy loss, and the onset of ethnic or separatist violence. Others, such as Cunningham (2013b), Siroky and Cuffe (2015), and Sorens (2012), show that these grievances are also tied to secessionist demands. Political exclusion undermines legitimacy by denying groups governance by co-ethnics and often coincides with material inequality (Cederman, et al. 2010). Lost autonomy, meanwhile, can provoke resentment and aspirations for renewed self-rule (Hechter 2000; Siroky 2015). These grievances help resolve collective action dilemmas (Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug 2013), enhance in-group cohesion (Gurr 2000), and increase willingness to resist (Young 2019; Nugent 2020).

While both political exclusion and lost autonomy are often viewed as nonviolent forms of group-level targeting, there is no scholarly consensus on whether the grievances they produce increase the likelihood of both nonviolent mobilization and subsequent violent escalation. Gurr (1970) and others have long argued that grievances can heighten the risk of escalation. Supporting this, Sambanis and Germann (2021) find that political exclusion significantly predicts the escalation of self-determination claims to violence, though its effect on the initial emergence of nonviolent claims is weaker. In contrast, Bartusevičius and Gleditsch (2019) caution against overestimating grievance-based explanations, showing that while exclusion and discrimination correlate with the emergence of political incompatibilities, they are less predictive of violent escalation. However, their findings—based on country-level data and including both ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts—may obscure important group-specific dynamics (Sambanis & Germann 2021), suggesting that grievances may still matter under certain conditions.

Grievance-based theories remain influential beyond civil war research, particularly in studies of protest and self-determination movements. Chenoweth and Ulfelder (2017), for example, show that political exclusion can trigger nonviolent mass mobilization. While such studies offer valuable insights into how exclusion and autonomy loss drive self-determination claims, they often rely on traditional methods and stop short of systematically testing theoretical claims through predictive approaches. To address this gap, our study adopts a grievance-based framework that incorporates both political exclusion—defined as the absence of group representation in national governance—and autonomy loss, understood as the revocation or erosion of territorial self-rule (Germann & Sambanis 2021).

We model these variables across two stages of self-determination conflict: the emergence of nonviolent claims and their escalation into violence. To capture temporal variation in grievances, we construct separate models for historical and recent grievances. This distinction reflects the idea that recency amplifies mobilizing potential, as recent state actions tend to provoke more immediate and intense responses (Snow et al. 1998). In particular, recent autonomy retractions are expected to be especially salient in fueling both nonviolent and violent mobilization (Cederman et al. 2015; Petersen 2002; Siroky 2015). Accordingly, our historical grievances model includes exclusions and autonomy losses dating back to 1800, while the recent model focuses on events within the past two years.

**Political Opportunities**

Unlike grievance-based theories, the political opportunity tradition—advanced by scholars such as Tilly, Fearon and Laitin (2003), and Collier and Hoeffler (2004)—emphasizes that grievances alone, however widespread, are insufficient to explain violent conflict. Instead, structural conditions that lower the costs, risks, or barriers to mobilization are seen as central. From this perspective, actors strategically assess their environment, and violence becomes more likely when state weakness, shifting alliances, or institutional openness create favorable conditions for rebellion (McAdam 2001; Fearon and Laitin 2003).

Political opportunities are dynamic and evolve with changes in state behavior or institutional arrangements. Mobilization is thus not merely a response to injustice, but to a context in which mobilization appears feasible and potentially effective. Scholars have identified several indicators of such opportunities, but in this study, we adopt a parsimonious approach. We focus on regime type—particularly levels of democracy—as a key factor influencing mobilization capacity. As Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) note, while authoritarian regimes generally suppress dissent, variation across regime types can significantly shape opportunities for collective action.

Scholars have emphasized the temporal dimensions of political opportunity structures, noting that historical context shapes the strategic environment for mobilization. The post–Cold War era, in particular, is seen as more conducive to nonviolent collective action. The decline of superpower backing for armed insurgencies, alongside increased international support for democratization and civil resistance, has arguably enhanced the legitimacy and feasibility of nonviolent strategies (Chenoweth & Stephan 2011; Kalyvas 2010). To account for this shift, we include a Cold War indicator to capture temporal variation in opportunity structures.

Another key dimension concerns federalism and regional autonomy. Some scholars argue that granting autonomy to ethnic groups can inadvertently encourage separatist mobilization by legitimizing group boundaries and empowering regional elites (Brubaker 1996; Bunce & Watts 2005; Cornell 2002; Snyder 2000). Others contend that decentralization can stabilize diverse societies by institutionalizing self-rule and reducing incentives for violence (Gurr 2000; Hechter 2000; Lijphart 1985). However, the evidence is mixed. Critics highlight the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, arguing that ethnofederalism can entrench divisions and provide institutional resources for secessionist agendas (Snyder 2000; Chapman & Roeder 2007; Elkins & Sides 2007). More recently, Cederman et al. (2015) offer a nuanced view, suggesting that while autonomy alone may be insufficient, its pacifying effect is enhanced when paired with meaningful inclusion in national power-sharing institutions.

Additional features of the political opportunity structure include **noncontiguity**—the physical separation of group territories from the state core—which is associated with a greater likelihood of insurgency (Fearon & Laitin 2003), and the **number of relevant groups** within a country, which can shape opportunity structures for rebellion (Walter 2006). To capture these dynamics, we include indicators for **federalism** and **territorial autonomy**, measuring whether a group operates within a federal system and whether it holds regional self-rule in a demographically dominant region. These institutional arrangements help assess whether such concessions facilitate self-determination mobilization or influence escalation to violence.

**Resource-Based Explanations**

Beyond grievances and political opportunities, resource mobilization theory emphasizes the strategic role of material, human, and demographic assets in enabling collective action. Leaders of self-determination movements weigh the feasibility of mobilization—violent or nonviolent—based on their resource base. Group size is especially critical: larger populations offer broader recruitment pools, greater capacity for sustained campaigns, and a stronger base for organizing resistance. This is particularly relevant for nonviolent uprisings, where broad participation is essential (DeNardo 1985; Chenoweth & Stephan 2011).

Transnational linkages also enhance mobilization potential. Co-ethnic kin across borders may provide not only symbolic support but also material aid, safe havens, and logistical assistance. For instance, after the Kurdish movement’s defeat in 1975, Iraqi Kurdish elites regrouped in Iran's Kurdish region, highlighting how kin networks can offer strategic depth. Such linkages are especially consequential in border regions, where external sanctuary can sustain resistance and escalate conflicts.In addition, we include incorporate indicators of resource availability, including **mountainous terrain** and **hydrocarbon reserves**—factors commonly associated with both the emergence and sustainability of self-determination campaigns.

**Interaction Models**

While grievance-based, political opportunity, and resource-based frameworks each offer valuable insights, scholars increasingly recognize that these factors do not operate in isolation. Instead, it is often their intersection that shapes the trajectory of self-determination movements. Lindemann and Wimmer (2018), for example, demonstrate that both grievances—particularly those rooted in indiscriminate state violence—and structural opportunities jointly influence whether high-risk ethnic groups escalate to armed conflict. Building on this insight, we construct a series of interaction models that systematically combine elements from each of the three core theoretical frameworks: **grievances, political opportunity, and resource mobilization.**

Specifically, we generate interaction models that combine **political opportunity with historical grievances, political opportunity with recent grievances,** and other pairings such as **resource mobilization with historical grievances**,andrecent **grievances with resource mobilization**. These combinations allow us to evaluate not only the individual but also the joint explanatory and predictive power of these frameworks across both stages of conflict.We also include GDP per capita and population for all models across both stages.

Moreover, our approach addresses key limitations in existing scholarship. Many previous studies are ambiguous about which phase of conflict their models are best suited to explain—whether the onset of nonviolent claims, the transition to violence, or both. Few provide a coherent theory of escalation or systematically assess whether the same mechanisms predict both stages. By testing combinations of theoretical approaches across distinct phases of self-determination conflict, our study contributes to a more comprehensive and phase-specific understanding of conflict dynamics.

**References**

Bartusevičius, Henrikas, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2019. A Two-Stage Approach to Civil Conflict: Contested Incompatibilities and Armed Violence. International Organization 73 (1):225–48.

Brubaker, R. (1996). Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe. Cambridge University Press.

Bunce, V. (1999). Subversive institutions: The design and the destruction of socialism and the state. Cambridge University Press.

Bunce, V., & Watts, S. (2005). Managing diversity and sustaining democracy: Ethnofederal versus unitary states in the postcommunist world. Sustainable peace: Power and democracy after civil wars, 133-158.

**Cederman, L.-E., Gleditsch, K. S., & Buhaug, H.** (2013). Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War. Cambridge University Press.

**Cederman, L.-E., Wimmer, A., & Min, B.** (2010). Why do ethnic groups rebel? World Politics, 62(1), 87–119.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Simon Hug, Andreas Schädel, and Julian Wucherpfennig. 2015. Territorial Autonomy in the Shadow of Future Conflict: Too Little, Too Late? American Political Science Review 109 (2):354–70.

Chapman, T., & Roeder, P. G. (2007). Partition as a solution to wars of nationalism: The importance of institutions. American Political Science Review, 101(4), 677-691.

Chenoweth, E., & Stephan, M. J. (2011). Why civil resistance works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict. Columbia University Press.

Chenoweth, Erica, and Jay Ulfelder. 2017. Can Structural Conditions Explain the Onset of Nonviolent Uprisings? Journal of Conflict Resolution 61 (2):298–324.

Christin, T., & Hug, S. (2012). Federalism, the geographic location of groups, and conflict. Conflict Management and Peace Science, 29(1), 93-122.

Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. Greed and Grievance in Civil War. Oxford Economic Papers 56 (4):563–95.

Cornell, S. E. (2002). Autonomy as a source of conflict: Caucasian conflicts in theoretical perspective. World politics, 54(2), 245-276.

Cunningham, Kathleen Gallagher. 2013a. Actor Fragmentation and Civil War Bargaining: How Internal Divisions Generate Civil Conflict. American Journal of Political Science 57 (3):659–72.

DeNardo, J. (2014). Power in numbers: The political strategy of protest and rebellion. Princeton University Press.

Elkins, Z., & Sides, J. (2007). Can institutions build unity in multiethnic states?. American Political Science Review, 101(4), 693-708.

Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. American Political Science Review 97 (1):75–90.

Germann, M., & Sambanis, N. (2021). Political exclusion, lost autonomy, and escalating conflict over self-determination. International Organization, 75(1), 178-203.

Grigoryan, A. (2012). Ethnofederalism, separatism, and conflict: what have we learned from the Soviet and Yugoslav experiences?. International Political Science Review, 33(5), 520-538.

Gurr, Ted Robert. 2000a. "Ethnic Warfare on the Wane." Foreign Affairs 79(3):52-65.

**Gurr, Ted. R.** (1970). Why Men Rebel. Princeton University Press.

**Gurr, Ted. R.** (2000). Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century. United States Institute of Peace Press.

Hale, H. E. (2008). The foundations of ethnic politics: Separatism of states and nations in Eurasia and the world. Cambridge University Press.

Hechter, Michael. 2000. Containing Nationalism. Oxford University Press.

Hechter,Michael. 2000. Containing Nationalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. Ethnic Groups in Conflict. University of California Press.

Kalyvas, S. N., & Balcells, L. (2010). International system and technologies of rebellion: How the end of the Cold War shaped internal conflict. American Political Science Review, 104(3), 415-429.

Lijphart,Arend. 1985. "Non-Majoritarian Democracy:A Comparison of Federaland Consociational Theories."Publius:TheJournal ofFederalism15(2):3-15.

Lindemann, S., & Wimmer, A. (2018). Repression and refuge: Why only some politically excluded ethnic groups rebel. Journal of Peace Research, 55(3), 305-319.

McAdam, Doug, Sidney G. Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. Dynamics of Contention. Cambridge University Press.

McGarry, J., & O'Leary, B. (2009). Must pluri-national federations fail?. Ethnopolitics, 8(1), 5-25.

Nugent, Elizabeth. 2020. The Psychology of Repression and Polarization. World Politics 72 (2):291–334.

Petersen, Roger Dale. 2002. Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth- Century Eastern Europe. Cambridge University Press.

Saxton, Gregory D., and Michelle A. Benson. 2006. Structure, Politics, and Action: An Integrated Model of Nationalist Protest and Rebellion. Nationalism and Ethnic Politics 12 (2):137–75.

Siroky, David S., and John Cuffe. 2015. Lost Autonomy, Nationalism and Separatism. Comparative Political Studies 48 (1):3–34.

Snow, David A., Daniel M. Cress, Liam Downey, and Andrew W. Jones. 1998. Disrupting the “Quotidian”: Reconceptualizing the Relationship Between Breakdown and the Emergence of Collective Action. Mobilization 3 (1):1–22.

Snyder,Jack. 2000. From Voting toViolence: Democratizationand Nationalist Conflict. New York:Norton.

Sorens, Jason. 2012. Secessionism: Identity, Interest, and Strategy. McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Tilly, Charles. 1978. From Mobilization to Revolution. Addison-Wesley.

Walter, B. F. (2006). Building reputation: Why governments fight some separatists but not others. *American Journal of Political Science*, *50*(2), 313-330.

Young, Lauren. 2019. The Psychology of State Repression: Fear and Dissent Decisions in Zimbabwe.American Political Science Review 113 (1):140–55.