**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).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). We include autonomy lose in the past two years. For historical grievances, we include autonomy losses dating back to 1800. Thus, in total, we have three indicators: recent political exclusion, lost autonomy in the past two years, and historical autonomy dating back to 1800.

**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.

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. To capture these dynamics, we include indicators for democracy, **federalism,** and **territorial autonomy**.

**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. Resources mobilization indicators include transnational linkages such as co-ethnic kin across borders which 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.

**Joint 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 joint and interaction 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 joint models that systematically combine elements from each of the three core theoretical frameworks: **grievances, political opportunity, and resource mobilization.**

Specifically, we generate joint models that combine **political opportunity with grievances, political opportunity with resource mobilization**,and **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.

As controls, we also include Population (log), GDP per capita (log), Noncontiguity*,* Number of Relevant Groups, Group Size, Time since last claim (For stage 1). Time Since last escalation (For stage 2) for all models.

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