ABSTRACT

Measuring protests and rebellions staged by minority groups relates directly to the civil unrest of a country. Scholars have used civil unrest to study the volatility of democracies in relation to how intense conflict becomes and what type of regime the government ascribes to (e.g., democracy, authoritarian, etc). However, no research has disaggregated protest and rebellion data to study the frequency of unrest in these varying regimes. Based on a review of the literature, it was hypothesized that countries transitioning into democracy will have a higher frequency of rebellion due to their instability. Additionally, fully democratic states will theoretically have a higher frequency of protests since they provide a median for peaceful protest. To test the hypothesis, three different categories of democracies were identified: transitional democracies, consolidating democracies, and consolidated democracies. Transitional democracies have recently adopted democratic qualities after being authoritarian; consolidating democracies are moving toward being completely democratic; and consolidated democracies are fully democratic. The analysis found the frequency of protests is not significantly different between the three different categories; therefore, it disproved part of our hypothesis. Rebellions in transitional and consolidating democracies are significantly different, with more rebellions occurring in less democratic countries. It is concluded that transitional democracies have potentially destabilizing factors with respect to violent rebellions.

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHTS

Benjamin MacWilliams is a junior Government and Politics major. For the past year he has been researching ethnic protest and rebellion using the Minorities at Risk (MAR) and Minorities at Risk Organizational Behavior (MAROB) data sets. Currently, he is interning with MAROB, a joint project of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) and the START, researching violent ethnic organizations in the Middle East. This summer, Benjamin will be attending the American University in Dubai as a William Jefferson Clinton Scholar. After graduating, Benjamin hopes to study Arabic in Egypt and then go to law school.

Dan Murphy is a double degree candidate for Criminology and Criminal Justice and French with a minor in Terrorist Studies. From interning for diverse positions within the criminal justice system and federal government, he has gained a broad understanding of various government organizations. Early experience with the police and prison systems in Arizona sparked an interest in the treatment of minorities in the criminal justice system and the repeat-offender cycle. As a College Park Scholars Public Leadership student, his interest in the subject expanded to include minority communities around the world. Studying abroad in France during the spring 2009 semester provided a new occidental perspective on minority communities. Working with the START center on the Minorities at Risk dataset is a result of these previous experiences.