sporadic terrorism, local rebellions, as well as small, intermediate, and large scale activity. The inclusion of rebellion that is less organized and intense than full-fledged civil war allows us to expand on Hegre’s theory and apply it to more generalized unrest.

EXPANDING ON GURR’S ANALYSIS OF PROTEST

In regards to the protest variable, our theory builds on Gurr’s hypothesis “that institutionalized democracy facilitates non-violent communal protest” [2]. While we agree with Gurr, our theory investigates whether or not a correlation exists between regime type and the frequency of protest. By disaggregating the Minorities at Risk protest variable into a monthly reading, we are able to assess whether this hypotheses expands beyond the mere incidence of protest and includes frequency. We argue that if Gurr’s findings are indeed accurate and consolidated democracies facilitate non-violent protest, a positive correlation between increasing polity scores and frequency of protest should exist.

An analysis of the disaggregated Minorities at Risk protest and rebellion variables will shed light on our theory that there is a correlation between a country’s polity score and the frequency of unrest in the form of both rebellion and protest. As such, the empirical conclusions we draw will be narrowly focused. A discussion of other potential factors in unrest is simply outside of the scope of our analysis. Whereas Gurr measured many variables in relation to minority unrest, our analysis and theory only seek to add depth to Gurr’s study of the correlation between levels of democracy and communal protest.

HYPOTHESIS

Despite the number of empirical studies that have been done about the relationship between regime type and incidence of unrest, the data that we have collected allows us to provide new insight and analysis. The first observation we have made is that in studying unrest, it is important to distinguish between protests and rebellions. Making this distinction, as opposed to merely gauging the frequency of general unrest, allows us to formulate a more focused hypothesis and, potentially, draw more meaningful conclusions. Secondly, our argument centers on the idea that the frequency of protests and rebellions can be just as important for scholars and policy makers to study as the intensity or mere incidence of unrest. From these two distinctions, we theorized that transitional democracies will experience a higher frequency of rebellions. This hypotheses applies Hegre’s theory that transitional regimes “possess inherent contradictions as a result of being neither democratic nor autocratic” [1] to the frequency of rebellion, arguing that those contradictions create an environment that is conducive to higher levels of violent activity. If transitional regimes possess certain elements that make incidents of rebellion more likely, it follows that this can be measured in the data by a higher frequency of rebellion in these countries. In regards to protest, we theorize that consolidated democracies will experience a higher frequency of protest because of the relative openness of society as compared to consolidating and nominally democratic states. If this theory holds, the frequency of protest should decrease as one looks at progressively less democratic states.

Apart from the distinctions we make between protest and rebellion as well as intensity and frequency, our theory rests on the notion that there is a correlation between regime type and the frequency of protests and rebellions. In order for our data to provide meaningful analysis of this complex issue, we must first prove that any correlation that does exist is statistically significant. If we are unable to prove the statistical significance of this correlation, further work will have to be done to find any possible linkages.

OPERATIONALIZATION

To measure the level of democracy, each country is ranked annually by a score between zero and ten. A country with a score of zero means it is nominally democratic with some authoritarian traits, and countries with a score of ten are purely democratic [6]. The independent variable of frequency of conflict is split into two measurements: protests and rebellions. Both of these are actions that are directed toward the government, but rebellions have a violent characteristic that is generally not present in a protest. Transitional democracies should be observed to have a significantly greater frequency of conflict incidents since they are less stable. A pressing rival hypothesis to our paper is the null hypothesis that there simply is no significant difference between non-violent and violent conflict in relation to democratic regime type. This rival hypothesis is personified by the previous literature’s refusal to acknowledge this distinction.

It is important to note that the dependent variable of conflict incidents (and likewise their frequencies) is measured by opposition to a government that comes from minority groups within the country. Conflict is a result of coercion which is typically toward minorities of the country. Tatu Vanheanen argues that people align themselves politically based on shared kinship and support one another accordingly [3]; from this we concluded that a government controlled by the majority will tend to oppress the minority groups in the country. Therefore, to better comprehend where the civil unrest originates, our study uses data that accounts for minority uprisings and grievances as the primary cause for civil unrest.

DATA AND METHODS

The analysis was done using the Minorities at Risk data set. This data identified minority groups from around the world and coded different variables of the groups annually. Two of these variables are the intensity of rebellions (violent attacks against the government) and intensity of protests (non-violent demonstrations against the government). Since the data was aggregated annually, it was not possible to determine if multiple incidents of rebellions or protests had occurred in one year by the same minority group. For example, in Nigeria during the 2005 calendar year, the Ijaw rebelled and protested twice,