The Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) Core Dataset 2018[1]

The EPR Core Dataset 2018 is an updated and extended version of the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR-ETH) dataset Version 2, covering the time period from 1946 to 2017. It provides annual data on politically relevant ethnic groups, their relative sizes as a share of the total population, and their access to executive state power in all countries of the world with a population of at least 250,000 and where ethnicity has been politicized.

1 Citation

When using this dataset in your research, please cite the following publication:

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2 Changes to previous versions

2.1 Changes from EPR 2014 to EPR 2018

EPR 2018 extends the temporal scope of the data by four years from 2013 to 2017. The last year of the current data is coded according to the January-1st rule (see below). Also, this version includes all countries that pass the threshold of 250,000 inhabitants, corresponding to the Gleditsch and Ward (1999) list of independent states.[2]

2.2 Changes from EPR-ETH Version 2 to EPR 2014

First of all, EPR 2014 extends the temporal scope of the data by four years from 2009 to 2013. In addition, some errors in the old codings were corrected based on new evidence. Finally, EPR 2014 introduces a new, two-level notion of state power that explicitly distinguishes between access to power at the level of the central state and political power at the regional

[1]This document was originally written by Manuel Vogt (ETH Zürich) and is currently maintained by Seraina Rüegger (ETH Zürich, ruegger@icr.gess.ethz.ch).

[2]Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede and Michael D. Ward. 1999. "Interstate System Membership: A Revised List of the Independent States since 1816." International Interactions 25 (4): 393-413. The newly included countries are Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brunei, Cape Verde, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Iceland, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Qatar, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Tibet and Zanzibar.

level. This means that regional autonomy is now coded both for groups that are excluded at the national level and for included groups in a power-sharing regime.

2.3 Changes from EPR Version 1.1. to EPR-ETH Version 2

EPR-ETH Version 2 lowered the threshold for inclusion of countries. While Version 1.1 included all sovereign states with a population of at least 1 million and a surface area of at least 500,000 square kilometers as of 2005, EPR-ETH covers all sovereign states with a population, in 1990, of at least 500,000.[3] This led to the inclusion of a series of new countries into the dataset.[4] The main change to the previous version concerns the time frame. All country codings were updated from the year 2005 to 2009. Additionally, some errors in the old codings were corrected based on new evidence.

3 Data collection

EPR Version 1.1 was composed on the basis of an online expert survey under the label Expert Survey of Ethnic Groups (ESEG). Nearly one hundred country and regional experts were asked to identify the ethnic categories most salient for national politics in each country. Thus, our coders composed a list of all politically relevant ethnic groups (as defined below) in a country, irrespective of their size. As explicated below, EPR's flexible framework allows this group list to change over time in order to account for possible shifts of the most relevant ethnic cleavages within a country. Each country coding was then reviewed and evaluated by the EPR Management Committee and in region-specific workshops to ensure inter-coder reliability and global consistency in the implementation of the coding rules. In some cases of disagreements, additional country experts were consulted. The three subsequent update processes followed the same basic principles.

[3]EPR-ETH includes occupied territories which are de-facto controlled by another state and counts them as part of the occupying state. This is the case, for example, with the Gaza Strip and West Bank in Israel, Western Sahara in Morocco, Namibia in South Africa before 1990, etc. Overseas colonies, however, were not included.

[4]The newly included countries are Bahrain, Bhutan, Cyprus, Djibouti, Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, and Singapore.

4 Definitions and general coding procedure

Our list of countries, as well as their periods of existence, is based on the independent-states dataset by Gleditsch and Ward. Following the Weberian tradition, we define ethnicity as a subjectively experienced sense of commonality based on a belief in common ancestry and shared culture.[5] Different markers may be used to indicate such shared ancestry and culture: common language, similar phenotypical features, adherence to the same faith, and so on. Our definition of ethnicity thus includes ethnolinguistic, ethnoreligious, and ethnosomatic (or "racial") groups, but not tribes and clans that conceive of ancestry in genealogical terms, nor regions that do not define commonality on the basis of shared ancestry. An ethnic group is politically relevant if either at least one significant political actor claims to represent the interests of that group in the national political arena or if group members are systematically and intentionally discriminated against in the domain of public politics. "Significant" political actor refers to a political organization (not necessarily a party) that is active in the national political arena. Discrimination is defined as political exclusion directly targeted at an ethnic community. Indirect discrimination, for example disadvantages in the educational or economic sphere, is not included in this definition. The group lists of EPR do not take into account non-citizens, such as migrant workers. The only exceptions to this rule are nomadic people with a long-standing presence in the pertinent country (like the Roma in France, Italy, Spain, and many other countries), as well as "stranded" populations of former states who lost their citizenship in a successor state (like Russians in Estonia, and Latvia). EPR provides time-variant codings of both the list of politically relevant ethnic groups and the power status classification. Thus, the 1946 to 2017 period was divided into different sub-periods reflecting such changes in a country's ethno-political constellation. New periods were introduced in a country when any of the following four events occurred:

- A change in the list of the politically relevant ethnic groups in a country; for example, when an existing group becomes irrelevant or a new group emerges as politically relevant.[6]

[5] Weber, Max. 1976[1922]. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr.

[6] In certain cases also the level of identity may change. For example, ethnic groups may split into different, politically relevant sub-groups or, reversely, lower-level ethnic identities may become politically relevant as parts of an overarching umbrella category. A typical example of this process is the case of South Africa. Whereas the Apartheid system drew the politically relevant boundaries between different racial groups, ethnolinguistic differences within the group of black Africans (for example, between Xhosa and Zulu) have become increasingly important in post-Apartheid South Africa.

- A change of the power status of any of the country's groups at the level of the central state.[7]
- A change in the coding of regional autonomy for any of the country's groups.
- A significant change in the size of any of the groups. This refers to major changes in a group's relative size for particular reasons, such as mass emigration, population exchange, or genocide.

EPR takes January 1st of each year as the reference date for all codings. Hence, the coding of each year always reflects the situation on January 1st of that year.[8] The January-1st rule does not apply to a country's first year of independence. Instead, the coding of the first independence year always reflects the situation on the first day of independence.[9]

5 Coding access to state power at the national level

All politically relevant ethnic groups were categorized according to the degree of access to central state power by those who claimed to represent them.[10] State power refers to executive power only, disregarding access to legislative and judicial institutions. Depending on where political power is effectively exercised, this can be the presidency, the cabinet, and senior posts in the administration in democratic regimes; the army command in military dictatorships; or the ruling party leadership in one-party states.[11] Coders were asked to focus on groups' absolute access to power, rather than on their under- or overrepresentation relative to demographic size. EPR measures power access with a roughly ordinal scale composed of three main categories, depending on whether a group controls power alone, shares power with other ethnic groups, or is excluded from executive state power. Each of these three main categories is divided into several sub-categories:

[7] Only major power shifts with substantial changes of group representation in the country's leadership were taken into account, disregarding temporary changes, such as cabinet reshuffles or the promotion of certain officer groups in the army.

[8] For example, if due to a military coup in May 1979, an ethnic group in a given country changes from junior to senior partner, the new EPR period would start in 1980.

[9] For instance, if a country becomes independent on June 1, 1991, the country is included in the EPR dataset as of 1991, with the coding of that year reflecting the situation on the first day of independence (June 1).

[10] We also list groups that became irrelevant. We do not record groups a) that never sought political representation at the national level or never were discriminated, b) before they gain political relevance or c) after they emigrated. In countries where ethnicity is not politicized we list the largest group as irrelevant, such as the Germans in Germany.

[11] During times of state collapse, that involve total disintegration of state institutions, we cannot code access to government, for instance in Liberia or Sierra Leone in the 1990s.

- The group rules alone:
  - **Monopoly**: Elite members hold monopoly power in the executive to the exclusion of members of all other ethnic groups.
  - **Dominance**: Elite members of the group hold dominant power in the executive but there is some limited inclusion of "token" members of other groups who however do not have real influence on decision making.
- The group shares power:
  - **Senior Partner**: Representatives of the group participate as senior partners in a formal or informal power-sharing arrangement. By power sharing, we mean any arrangement that divides executive power among leaders who claim to represent particular ethnic groups and who have real influence on political decision making.
  - **Junior Partner**: Representatives participate as junior partners in government.[12]
- The group is excluded:
  - **Powerless**: Elite representatives hold no political power (or do not have influence on decision making) at the national level of executive power - although without being explicitly discriminated against.
  - **Discrimination**: Group members are subjected to active, intentional, and targeted discrimination by the state, with the intent of excluding them from political power. Such active discrimination can be either formal or informal, but always refers to the domain of public politics (excluding discrimination in the socio-economic sphere).
  - **Self-exclusion**: The special category of self-exclusion applies to groups that have excluded themselves from central state power, in the sense that they control a particular territory of the state which they have declared independent from the central government.[13]

6 Coding access to state power at the regional level

In addition to the national power variable, EPR measures access to executive power at the regional level with a separate regional autonomy variable. In previous versions of EPR,

[12]The choice between senior and junior partner depends on the group's absolute influence in the executive - that is, irrespective of group size -, measured by the number and importance of the positions controlled by group members.

[13]This category was labeled "separatist autonomy" in previous EPR versions.

regional autonomy status was coded as a subcategory of exclusion at the national level. However, this coding scheme does not allow identifying those groups that are both included at the national level and enjoy regional autonomy. To solve this problem, the current version disentangles the regional level of political power from power access to the state's executive. Groups that only have access to power at the sub-state level are coded as "powerless" at the national level. Included groups in a power-sharing regime (that is, those coded as "senior partner" or "junior partner") may or may not simultaneously enjoy regional autonomy.[14] For a group to be coded as regionally autonomous, two conditions must be jointly satisfied:

1. There is a meaningful and active regional executive organ of some type that operates below the state level (for example, the departmental, provincial, or district level) but above the local administrative level.
2. Group representation is not token: group members exert actual influence on the decisions of this entity and their representatives act in line with the group's local interests. The term "meaningful" here refers to executive organs that carry out core competencies of the state, involving, for example, cultural rights (language and education) and/or significant economic autonomy (for example, the right to levy taxes, or very substantial spending autonomy).

The second condition also implies that a given regional entity must have de facto (as opposed to mere de jure) political power. Federal states, such as Switzerland or India, are the most typical (but not the only) such systems of regional autonomy. The Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq is another example of meaningful political power at the sub-state level. In contrast, the regional administrative subdivisions in many Central and Eastern European countries do not possess any political or fiscal powers and thus cannot be considered meaningful political decision-making bodies. Furthermore, non-territorial forms of autonomy (such as the recently established minority councils in Serbia) do not fall under this definition of regional autonomy. All groups coded with "self-exclusion" at the national level of state power are automatically coded as having regional autonomy. We assume the two conditions described above to be fulfilled in these cases.

[14]The autonomy dimension is not coded for "monopoly" and "dominant" groups since their political interests are assumed to be sufficiently represented at the level of the central state.