STATE REPRESSION AND POLITICAL ORDER

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■ **Abstract**   State repression includes harassment, surveillance/spying, bans, arrests,
torture, and mass killing by government agents and/or affiliates within their territorial
jurisdiction. Over the past 40 years, the systematic study of state repression has grown
considerably. The development of this work, however, has been uneven. Though unified
in their focus on the problem of order (i.e., trying to ascertain how political author-
ities wield coercive power amid potential and actual domestic challengers), different
scholars tend to emphasize distinct aspects of the topic. Consequently, a great deal
of progress has been made in specific areas but others have lagged behind. In this
review, I attempt to identify the dominant traditions in the repression literature, the
core empirical findings, and some persisting puzzles.

INTRODUCTION

Genocide, torture, mass arrests, the outlawing of political organizations, book ban-
ning, and domestic spying have been around (in one form or another) since the
founding of the nation-state. The particular magnitude or combination of activities
used by authorities might vary across time, space, and context, but there is always
some repressive behavior being applied. Given the duration of this practice, the
vast numbers of its victims, the range of legal, political, and religious restrictions
condemning such activity, the many social movements and human rights organi-
zations dedicated to the elimination of this behavior, and the centrality of relevant
action to some of the most prominent ideas and political figures in human his-
tory, it is surprising that so little systematic attention has been given to the topic
of state repression. To date, researchers have paid far more attention to the evils
done against governments (and citizens) by dissidents, rebels, and terrorists than
to the evils done by presidents, the police, military, secret service, national guard,
and death squads against those within their territorial jurisdiction. This article
reviews the quantitative literature dedicated to the study of state repression and
human rights violation. It identifies the general orientation of this work, the core
empirical findings, persisting puzzles, and some directions for future inquiry.

As conceived, repression research is fundamentally concerned with why and
how political authorities use coercive power domestically amid potential and

existing challenges and challengers. Only specific aspects of this topic have been examined thoroughly. For example, the provocative influence of dissident/insurgent activity and the pacifying influence of political democracy form the core subject of the research program. Other aspects are directly related to the central focus of the research but are undertheorized and inconsistent in their influence, such as the role of diverse economic characteristics. Some important aspects are largely peripheral to the core research program and tend to be ignored, such as international influences that are consistently discussed by policy makers, activists, and ordinary citizens as a way to end or significantly reduce state repression. Regardless of its limitations, however, the latest turn in repression research represents an important shift in the literature, for it provides insight into important theoretical and practical issues of conflict management and human rights policy/activism (previously unaddressed), while providing a bridge to another area of political science which is important if the study of repression and human rights is to continue to grow and further develop insight.

UNDERSTANDING REPRESSION

What is state repression? By most accounts, repression involves the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institutions (Goldstein 1978, p. xxvii). Like other forms of coercion, repressive behavior relies on threats and intimidation to compel targets, but it does not concern itself with all coercive applications (e.g., deterrence of violent crime and theft). Rather, it deals with applications of state power that violate First Amendment–type rights, due process in the enforcement and adjudication of law, and personal integrity or security.

First Amendment–type rights include (Goldstein 1978, pp. xxx–xxxi):

- Freedom of speech, assembly, and travel. Freedom of the press up to a very narrowly defined "clear and present danger" point, regardless of the views communicated.
- Freedom of association and belief without governmental reprisal, obloquy, or investigation unless clearly connected with possible violations of existing laws.
- The general freedom to boycott, peacefully picket, or strike without suffering criminal or civil penalties.

Due process transgressions involve violations of "generally accepted standards of police action and judicial and administrative behavior related to the political beliefs of the person involved" (Goldstein 1978, p. xxxi). Personal integrity rights are those concerned with individual survival and security, such as freedom from torture, "disappearance," imprisonment, extrajudicial execution, and mass killing.

The definition of repression employed here is important not only for what it includes but also for what it excludes. For example, the definition does not consider the deleterious after-effects of particular structural characteristics experienced over long periods of time, such as the inequitable distribution of resources (Galtung's "structural violence"). The definition does not consider what are referred to as second-generation (economic, social, and cultural privileges) and third-generation rights (the right to peace and a clean environment). The definition does not specify that a behavioral threat must exist, as in the case of "protest policing" (e.g., Earl 2003), nor does it specify that a law or norm must be violated, like with regard to "human rights violations" (e.g., Poe & Tate 1994). The definition does not specify the particular ends to which repressive action is put, nor how successfully authorities achieve the following objectives—topics that should be subjects of investigation in themselves: (*a*) setting general limits within which citizens can act; (*b*) controlling or eliminating specific challenges (real or imagined) to existing political leaders, institutions, and/or practices; and (*c*) facilitating movement in a particular direction—e.g., a preferred strategy of development or ideological orientation. My conception encompasses a wide variety of coercive efforts employed by political authorities to influence those within their territorial jurisdiction: overt and covert; violent and nonviolent; state, state-sponsored (e.g., militias), and state-affiliated (e.g., death squads); successful and unsuccessful. Many researchers do not adopt such an approach, but I believe that this is a critical error for two reasons: (*a*) These more focused efforts ignore the fact that governments select from the full repertoire of coercive activities highlighted above, and (*b*) these more focused efforts miss the underlying similarities that exist across the diverse forms of repressive behavior. I now turn to these.

CONFIGURING THE STUDY OF STATE REPRESSION

Over the past 40 years, a thriving research program has emerged around repressive behavior. This research attempts to explain the type of activity employed, the frequency of its use, and the magnitude or scope of its application. Below, I outline the framework generally applied to this topic as well as the units of observation, sources, and data used for the examination of derived hypotheses. I then address the core empirical findings and puzzles that exist within this work.

Theoretical Orientations

Following developments in the rest of political science, the theoretical orientation of most researchers of repression has evolved from a hard structuralism to a soft rationalism. Drawing on the arguments of diverse political theorists and historians, at the outset of this work, it was believed that state repression was derivative of particular political-economic systems. In this view, when a specific context existed (e.g., economic underdevelopment, autocracy, overpopulation, or external conflict), repressive behavior would be applied. During the 1950s through the

1970s, state coercion was viewed as something of a pathology—an action or set of actions that political leaders were simply compelled to take because of some system deficiency. These particular forms of state activity were employed by those who were unable or unwilling to govern their nation-states in any other way; in a sense, political order was either possessed or not possessed.

For example, at this early stage of research, closed, unresponsive, paranoia-inducing governments run by a few individuals (i.e., autocracies) were the primary focus of analysis because these systems were believed to use repression in an effort to protect leaders as well as elites who were otherwise incapable of staying in power. In contrast, democracies (governments that are open, responsive, and accommodating) were heralded as the least repressive because it was assumed that these political systems had at their disposal diverse methods of influence or control, thereby reducing the leaders' need and willingness to engage in relevant behavior. Similarly, economic underdevelopment or exploitative trade relations were expected to prompt conflict among societal members, necessitating repressive measures to contain such conflict. In contrast, developed and nonexploitative trade relations were expected to resolve societal difficulty, thus precluding the necessity for coercive action.

Later researchers (continuing up to the present) constructed conceptual models that more explicitly included decision makers and the process by which they deliberate about relevant policies (Dallin & Breslauer 1970, Duvall & Stohl 1988, Gartner & Regan 1996, Lichbach 1984, Moore 2000, Shellman 2006, Simon 1994, Walter 1969). In this framework, political leaders carefully weigh the costs and benefits of coercive action. They also consider the alternative mechanisms for maintaining control, as well as the probabilities of successful application. When benefits exceed costs, alternatives are not viewed favorably, and there is a high probability of success, repressive action is anticipated. When costs exceed benefits, alternatives exist, and the probability of success is low, no or little repression is expected. Interestingly, the researchers affiliated with this work examine the same variables as their predecessors: economic development, autocracy, overpopulation, and political conflict.

Units of Observation

To investigate the distinct components of the decision calculus identified above and how they are influenced by diverse behavioral as well as contextual factors, repression scholars have generally taken two approaches to data collection. Some compile information on discrete events, identifying how many times authorities arrest or execute citizens and impose curfews (Ball et al. 1999, Davenport & Stam 2003, Taylor & Jodice 1983). Other researchers place events into discrete categories that represent some measure of repressive lethality and/or scope (Gurr 1993, Poe & Tate 1994, Shellman 2006, Valentino et al. 2004). Rather than trying to identify exactly how many times an event occurred, these scholars identify how much something has taken place as well as other characteristics that could

not simultaneously be addressed within an event count. They ask, for example, how many individuals were sanctioned and by how many different repressive techniques, how lethal were the different activities applied, and how long did the after-effect endure? The former approach is useful because it is more closely attuned to the dynamic elements of state-dissident interactions (i.e., how repression and dissent are actually experienced). The latter approach is useful because it allows a more holistic/encompassing approach to relevant behavior incorporating diverse characteristics at the same time.

SOURCES   The information used to create datasets on repression can be divided by the categories identified above. For example, those interested in events have typically used newspapers. In many respects, the use of these sources makes sense, for it is commonly believed that they pay attention to the activities undertaken by authorities and especially those actions that were newsworthy (i.e., controversial, large-scale, bizarre, or violent). The selection also makes sense because many of the researchers who use newspapers are specifically interested in behavior that targeted protestors engaged in antistate activity—a controversial and newsworthy topic (Taylor & Jodice 1983). However, the perceptions about newspaper-generated data are not quite accurate (Davenport & Ball 2002, Jackman & Boyd 1979, Sommer & Scarritt 1999). Subjecting these data to a battery of statistical examinations, researchers have identified three problems. First, there are "threshold" effects: Only events above a certain level of significance receive coverage, because they appeal to a larger market and cost less to cover than smaller events (McCarthy et al. 1996, Taylor & Jodice 1983). Second, there are "fatigue" effects: Only events of short duration receive coverage, in an effort to hold costs down (Gerner & Schrodt 1996). Third, there are "newshole" effects: Coverage is determined by the amount of available space within the pages of a newspaper (Honig et al. 1991). The use of newswires (Bond et al. 1997, Francisco 2000) and local sources (Oliver & Myers 1999) overcomes many of these problems, but several remain.

In an effort to more completely identify the level of human rights violation, other scholars rely on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are more specifically focused on repressive behavior and that use a different approach to discover "who did what to whom." Specifically, they use human rights reports and government records compiled from eyewitness accounts (Ball et al. 1999, Davenport & Stam 2003, Gibney & Dalton 1996, Poe & Tate 1994, Restrepo et al. 2004). The information contained in these sources has proven extremely useful because unlike news organizations, they are directly and exclusively interested in state coercion. Toward these ends, relevant organizations have well-developed networks of communication both within and across countries. This directly aids them in overcoming many of the difficulties identified above.

However, the use of human rights NGO and government records has unexpectedly led to a different problem. These sources provide no information about the behavior of ordinary citizens or those specifically challenging the state. This is problematic because one of the principal explanations for repressive behavior

concerns nonstate political conflict (i.e., protest behavior and civil unrest). Measures for these activities end up still relying on newspaper accounts. What is needed is something equivalent to the human rights–oriented NGO but with an interest in dissent and insurgency. Such information is frequently provided by governments (like the U.S. records on Iraqi dissident activity), but the question remains whether these event catalogs are accurate and to what extent they are used for purposes beyond identifying who did what to whom.

An alternative source is surveys of former insurgent combatants (Humphreys & Weinstein 2004, 2006) and government agents (Davenport & Stam 2003, Kalyvas 2006). Here, individuals who have been victimized by or fighting against repression, as well as those directly engaged in state coercive behavior, are asked questions about who did what to whom (and why). Though useful for generating information about what authorities did, the utility of this approach is limited for many of the issues pursued by repression scholars. For example, surveys are not likely to generate detailed event sequences across time and space, hindering the ability to gauge change in the approach to political order. They are more likely to be concentrated on specific times and places. Even if individuals can remember what occurred, it is unclear why they would talk about what they did, especially in the case of government actions. Additionally, to verify the testimonies, one would need to develop a very sophisticated method of fact-checking and cross-referencing (Ball 1996)—something that few scholars are prepared to do or interested in doing.

DATASETS   Drawing on these different concepts of relevant activity and source material, numerous databases on state repression have been created. Essentially, three distinct types exist related to the geographic scope of the effort.

In the dominant orientation, the focus is global (Bollen 1986, Bond et al. 1997, Cingranelli & Richards 2004, Fein 1995, Gibney & Dalton 1996, Gurr 1993, Harff 2003, Hathaway 2002, Henderson 1991, Karatnycky 1999, Krain 1997, Mitchell & McCormick 1988, Poe & Tate 1994, Taylor & Jodice 1983, Valentino et al. 2004). Here, effort is extended to identify and explain state repressive behavior within all or most countries of the world, generally by the nation-year. There are some differences with regard to the type of behavior highlighted. Some researchers focus on only one type of repression; e.g., Taylor & Jodice focus on negative sanctions, Harff on genocide/politicide, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program on "one-sided" state violence, Hathaway on torture. Some focus on a wide variety of activities placed together in some index: e.g., Gibney & Dalton, Poe & Tate, Mitchell & McCormick, and Cingranelli & Richards. Other researchers focus on a wide variety of activities but disaggregate the components so that individuals could combine them as they see fit (Cingranelli & Richards 2004). Still others do not focus on political violence explicitly but allow the occurrence of this behavior to influence their coding of other repressive activity (e.g., Freedom House).

Several researchers focus on specific geographic regions, e.g., Duff et al. (1976) on Latin America and Francisco (2005) on Europe, or a subset of countries based on some criteria (e.g., Davis & Moore 1995). By reducing the number of

countries under examination, these scholars have endeavored to disaggregate space (identifying states, cities, and villages), time (identifying year, month, and day), actors (identifying perpetrators and victims), and actions (identifying categories of action, frequency, objectives, outcomes, and so forth).

A growing number of researchers focus on single countries: e.g., Columbia (Restrepo et al. 2004), El Salvador (Ball 2006), France (Tilly 1995), Germany (Koopmans 1995), Greece (Kalyvas 2006), Guatemala (Ball et al. 1999, Davenport & Ball 2002), Kosovo (Ball 2006), Rwanda (Davenport & Stam 2003), Sri Lanka (Ball 2006), and the United States (Davenport 2005, Earl et al. 2004, Gibson 1988). These efforts have provided the greatest degree of disaggregation across both space and time, allowing analyses of who did what to whom by community, neighborhood, village, and city as well as by quarter, month, week, day, and hour. Because these efforts are the most recent, they have not yet influenced existing research (i.e., how we think about as well as study the topic of interest), but they do represent the next generation of repression research (discussed below).

WHAT WE DO AND DO NOT KNOW

The results of existing quantitative investigations are somewhat mixed. On the one hand, certain findings, reflecting the subfield's central interest in political order and how it is established and maintained, are consistent and uncontroversial but reveal some important lapses that future work needs to address. On the other hand, some findings, largely disconnected from the core interests of the subfield, are varied and highly contested, revealing the necessity for additional attention. I discuss four examples below—two core findings and two peripheral findings.

Core Finding I: The Law of Coercive Responsiveness

By far the most long-standing and stable influence on state repression concerns political conflict. Dating back to, at least, Kautilya in India during the fourth century (particularly Book IV in the *Arthashastra*) or, more familiar to those in the West, Niccolo Machiavelli in Italy during the late 1400s and early 1500s or Thomas Hobbes in England during the late 1500s and early 1600s, it has been commonly thought that governing authorities should respond with repression to behavior that threatens the political system, government personnel, the economy, or the lives, beliefs, and livelihoods of those within their territorial jurisdiction. Quiescence is a major benefit to political authorities, supporting the extraction of taxes, the creation of wealth, and a major part of their legitimacy as a protector. Considering different time periods and countries, as well as a wide variety of measurements for both conflict and repression, every statistical investigation of the subject has found a positive influence. When challenges to the status quo take place, authorities generally employ some form of repressive action to counter or eliminate the behavioral threat; in short, there appears to be a "Law of Coercive Responsiveness."

The consistency of this finding is quite astonishing in a discipline where very few relationships withstand close scrutiny. The consistency is also impressive given the fact that when the causal arrow is reversed and one considers research that investigates the influence of repressive behavior on dissent (exploring one of the core aspects of collective action theory regarding the importance of costs), the results are highly inconsistent. Sometimes the impact of repression on dissent is negative (Hibbs 1973); sometimes it is positive (Francisco 1996, Lichbach & Gurr 1981, Ziegenhagen 1986); sometimes it is represented by an inverted U-shape (Muller 1985); sometimes it is alternatively negative or positive (Gupta & Venieris 1981, Moore 1998, Rasler 1996); and sometimes it is nonexistent (Gurr & Moore 1997). Both findings viewed together I refer to as the "Punishment Puzzle."

Although the stability of the impact of dissent on repression is important, it is also crucial to point out that several limitations of this work call out for additional investigation. These are identified below.

DEEPENING THE THREAT HYPOTHESIS   First, although it is clear that authorities respond to behavioral threats with repression, it is not clear how this process works. What do authorities perceive? What precisely do they respond to—death, property damage, wildly unorthodox behavior, or the magnitude, frequency, and location of challenging activity (Davenport 1995)? Do mass and/or elite attitudes matter, and if so, at which part(s) of the process and in what way (Gibson 1988)? We simply do not know.

At present, researchers treat behavioral challenges as though they were straight-forward, but they are not. After 9/11, for instance, many U.S. political officials and coercive agents (local, state, and federal police, the National Guard, the intelligence community, and the military) dealt with dissident behavior of almost any kind (and on any topic) in a highly aggressive manner, but was this increased hostility uniformly experienced around the United States? Was the policing of protest in New Jersey influenced in the same manner as in New Mexico or Iowa? Related to this, the response to the initial behavioral threat has now been institutionalized into law as well as into diverse organizational practices. At what point, however, does the resonance of the threat dissipate? If government repressiveness persists despite reductions in actual behavior and popular perceptions of fear, does this lead to the delegitimation of state action, prompting calls for the removal of associated political leaders (Davis 2007)? If not, why not? Finally, although almost all scholars have highlighted the importance of behavioral challenges, it is clearly the case that ideas/beliefs also play a role. Drawing on a distinction made by Gamson (1975)—later taken up by Gartner & Regan (1996) as well as Regan & Henderson (2002)—we should find that authorities are more likely to respond to dissent with repression when challengers wish to displace current political leaders and/or the political-economic system. Such a consideration explains the disparity between the behavioral challenge of the American communist party from the 1930s and 1960s (which was by most accounts quite tame) and the significant repressive effort waged against them (which was by most accounts quite severe). These

relationships have received some attention, but there is a clear need to integrate such issues into existing research more centrally.

BEYOND STICKS, STONES, AND SEVERING LIMBS   Second, whereas the state's coercive response to dissent has been considered extensively, the use of alternative mechanisms of control in the face of political conflict and the role of repression in the government's repertoire have not been examined extensively (for exceptions see Gamson 1975, Krain 1997). Such an analysis is important, for as Weber and others (e.g., those in the power literature) have suggested, authorities have many strategies available—coercion, normative persuasion, material or symbolic benefits, neglect, etc.—that could be used to address behavioral challenges and establish or maintain political order. At present, an unwritten division of labor appears to exist: Scholars concerned with civil liberties, protest policing, human rights violations, and genocide/politicide focus on repression, while scholars interested in rhetoric, communication, and propaganda focus on persuasion, and scholars concerned with selective incentives, wages, bribes, oil profits, and welfare systems focus on material benefits. Clearly, however, there is some overlap. As U.S. political authorities were contemplating the Wagner Act and improving the material conditions of American workers in the mid 1930s, they were busily purging the labor movement of the most radical elements (Goldstein 1978). Similarly, during the McCarthy "Red Scare," U.S. officials were more likely to employ the House Un-American Activities Committee to denounce communists/communism or provoke the activities of diverse nongovernment actors than to engage in mass arrests with state police or the National Guard. These strategic issues are clearly worthy of additional consideration, for they lead to very different understandings about what takes place. Indeed, if normative efforts are having an impact, but we are focused on repression (or vice versa), then we would misunderstand what occurred—confusing replacement with reduction.

(Re)CONSIDERING THE PUNISHMENT PUZZLE   Third, we must begin to focus on the implications of the imbalanced findings within the dissent-repression nexus. For example, why do authorities continue to apply repressive action despite mixed effectiveness at behavioral control? Under what circumstances can dissidents decrease state coercion? Under what conditions can authorities reduce dissent? These questions have never been examined in a rigorous manner. There is clearly a need for such an effort because researchers, policy makers, journalists, and ordinary citizens have begun to speculate about these relationships in places such as Iraq, without any consideration of the past 40 years of systematic investigation dedicated to this topic.

What does this work have to offer? Several points are worthy of mention. For instance, in the context of Iraq, existing research on repression is consistent with the fact that increased counterinsurgency enhanced the scope, magnitude, and frequency of insurgent attacks as repressive behavior led to tactical adaptation (Lichbach 1984, Moore 1998), as well as the incorporation of more militant cohorts over the course of the state-dissident interaction (Zwerman & Steinhoff 2005).

Furthermore, the authors of existing research would not be surprised that despite the increase in insurgency, counterinsurgent efforts continued unabated, because once momentum develops around a policy, it is difficult to disrupt. What would not fit within prior research is the attempted use of democracy to control challenging behavior (appealing to the mind over the mine, as it were), and the fact that pursuing counterinsurgency and political democratization ("bullets and ballots") at the same time appears to undermine both efforts (Davenport 2007).

Perhaps the most prominent academic illustration of what mistakes can result from ignoring the repression literature in general and the punishment puzzle in particular is within the work of Fearon & Laitin (2003). According to this research, civil war is most likely to emerge when structural conditions are "right"—i.e., when "small, lightly armed bands practicing guerilla warfare from rural base areas" (Fearon & Laitin 2003, p. 79) can survive government efforts at counterinsurgency and protest policing. When is this most likely? Fearon & Laitin (2003, pp. 79–82) argue that state repressive capability is undermined when the economy is poor, the population is high, there is mountainous terrain, there is noncontiguous territory, and political life is fragile. Under these circumstances, and only under these circumstances, can rural-based insurgency resist state repressive efforts, become a successful military strategy, and produce civil war.

This approach is directly relevant to the current discussion of repression and its role in maintaining political order because it explicitly invokes a concept of repressive "ineffectiveness" (an inability to diminish challenging behavior through repression). Unfortunately, there is no empirical basis for such a concept. There have never been any analyses of the conditions under which governments effectively eliminate or reduce dissent; there have only been empirical investigations that reveal that occasionally repression increases and/or decreases the activity of state challengers (i.e., that state coercive efforts are respectively ineffective and/or effective). Whether repression is more or less likely to reduce proto-insurgency or any other form of dissident activity, and if so under what conditions, are open empirical questions. Explicit consideration of the punishment puzzle and its integration into studies of civil war would thus go a long way in advancing our understanding of political processes.

Core Finding II: The Domestic Democratic Peace

Reflecting less the factors that compel authorities to apply repression than those that impede this activity, another long-standing interest of scholars concerns the impact of political democracy. As conceived, the influence is straightforward:

1. Democratic institutions are believed to increase the costs of using repressive behavior because, if state actions are deemed inappropriate, authorities can be voted out of office.

2. Individuals in democracies generally accept specific values regarding passivity, toleration, communication, and deliberation—values that are challenged and undermined by the use of repression.

3. Democracies provide an alternative mechanism of control through participation and contestation. They also weaken the justification for coercive activity by reducing the likelihood for human conflict and facilitating the conveyance of grievances.

Subjecting the relationship between democracy and repression to extensive analysis (across time, space, measurements, and methodological techniques), almost all studies find that democratic political institutions and activities decrease state repressive behavior. Consequently, there is support for what is commonly referred to as a "domestic democratic peace" (Davenport 2007), mirroring the finding of international relations scholars (Russett 1993).

Not all agree, however, with the basic argument and not all empirical findings are supportive. For example, some suggest that there is "more murder in the middle" (Fein 1995, Regan & Henderson 2002). They find that full autocracies and democracies apply relatively low amounts of repression (with the latter being the least coercive), whereas mixed and transitional regimes, which combine elements of autocracy and democracy, are the most coercive. In more recent work, Davenport & Armstrong (2004) as well as Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005) find that the relationship between democracy and repression has been misspecified and that a threshold effect is a more accurate characterization. Here, it is argued that until the highest values of "democraticness" are reached, state coercive behavior is not influenced by regime type, but above this threshold (at the highest values of the measure), repression is diminished. Movement up the scale of democracy does not in itself mean that coercive behavior is reduced; only certain changes pacify repressive action. The peace proposition is further challenged because research reveals that different aspects of democratic government have distinct influences on coercive behavior (Davenport 2004). In particular, the level of democracy (high placement on a continuum of democraticness) decreases civil liberties restriction and personal integrity violation whereas democratization (movement up a continuum of democraticness) increases both forms of repression (especially state-sponsored restrictions). The road to political openness is thus paved with political coercion but the arrival is generally pacific. These findings reveal that we must be extremely diligent about identifying how casual mechanisms function as well as under what conditions they hold.

Although the stability of the impact of democracy on repression is important to identify, it is again crucial to point out that several limitations of this work call out for additional investigation. These are identified below.

FROM BULLETS TO BALLOTS AND BACK AGAIN   Although it is part of the 40-year tradition of conflict studies, the investigation of democracy's influence on state coercive behavior is not widely known among political scientists or the mass public. Indeed, this work has largely been overshadowed by research done in international relations on the influence of democracy on interstate war, as well as by work in comparative politics concerned with the influence of reduced repression

("liberalization") on democratization (Wood 2000). The reasons for this are straight-forward.

The emphasis on the former is largely rooted in the greater cohesion of scholars interested in interstate war and the erroneous belief that war has claimed more lives than state repression, thus making any insight provided on the topic worthy of merit. By most estimates, state coercive behavior has claimed more lives than any other form of political conflict—especially in recent history (Rummel 1997). The emphasis on liberalization over state coercive action is largely explained by the importance generally given to democracy relative to other topics in comparative politics. Within this work, repression is crucial but in a different way than that employed above. For example, it is commonly believed that when autocratic leaders relax the sanctions imposed on citizens, they free them up to challenge existing political leaders, institutions, and practices. Perceiving the opportunity, individuals and organizations engage in behavior that challenges the status quo, forcing those in authority to pay attention. In addition, once leaders have weakened the government's willingness and capability to use repression (by relaxing sanctions), they are more likely to negotiate, further increasing the likelihood of regime change. Interestingly, these insights have been exclusively qualitative and historical in nature; despite the importance of repressive behavior within some of the most prominent theories on the topic, there is no consideration of state coercion in any quantitative investigation of democratization (Epstein et al. 2006, Lipset 1959).

The relevance of repression to democracy and democratization has been ignored for other reasons as well. For example, some scholars believe that repressive behavior is an aspect of democracy (Beetham 1999) and that therefore the relationship between the two cannot be examined. There are at least three problems with this view. First, it ignores the fact that throughout history individuals have looked to political democracy as a resolution to state coercion; indeed, some of the most famous revolutions (e.g., the American and French), social movements (e.g., the anti-apartheid movements), and attempts at political development (e.g., Japan and Germany after World War II as well as Rwanda after 1994) had the pacification of state behavior as one of their main objectives. Second, this argument ignores the large amount of evidence that increased democracy does not always move in sync with reduced repression. Aside from the obvious examples of ancient Greece and the United States during slavery, there has been extensive discussion of so-called "illiberal democracies" (Zakaria 1997). The third objection to such a claim is that scholars should endeavor to unpack concepts such as democracy so that they allow themselves the space to investigate important aftereffects and causes of relevant political phenomena (Adcock & Collier 2001), relationships that would be ignored if we conflated and "overstretched" concepts.

PEACE BY PIECE: DISAGGREGATING THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRACY   Another important concern related to the domestic democratic peace is the identification of exactly what it is about political systems that influences state coercion. Within most research relevant to the topic, scholars use aggregate indicators. For example, to

operationalize democracy, the Polity index developed by Gurr and associates is frequently used (Gurr 1974). This measure combines diverse aspects of a political system (e.g., executive constraints, openness of executive recruitment, the competitiveness of participation, etc.). To operationalize repression, the personal integrity measure developed by Gibney & Dalton (1996) and popularized by Poe & Tate (1994) is frequently employed—another indicator that combines diverse types of state behavior, such as mass killing and imprisonment. Examining relationships with these measures, what we derive is a general understanding of how system type (broadly conceived) influences repressive behavior (also broadly conceived). This is useful for some audiences and some purposes but not others. For example, if policy makers, activists, and ordinary citizens were interested in implementing some democratic change in an effort to reduce the most lethal forms of state repression, but they could only invest in a limited number of modifications, most research would be essentially useless. For scholars asking if the same democratic characteristic influenced diverse forms of repressive behavior in a similar manner, again existing research would be essentially useless.

With these issues in mind, several scholars have endeavored to disaggregate both democracy and repression to discover the most profitable combinations. Regarding democracy, researchers have examined the influence of elections (Davenport 1997, Richards 1999), constitutional structure (Davenport 1996, Keith 2002), executive constraints (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005, Davenport 2004), regime change (Davenport 1999, Zanger 2000), and political participation weighted by competition (Davenport & Armstrong 2004, Poe & Tate 1994). A great many types of repression have been examined as well, including negative sanctions and civil liberties restrictions (Davenport 1995, King 1998), personal integrity violations (Poe & Tate 1994, Zanger 2000), torture (Hathaway 2002), genocide/politicide (e.g., Krain 1997, Harff 2003), and combinations of these categories (Davenport 2004). Much of the disaggregation of repressive behavior has been unintentional, emerging from the distinct but overlapping emphases identified above.

As for the relative importance of distinct forms of democracy on distinct types of state coercive behavior, research is still somewhat underdeveloped. A recent study of mine explored the influence of executive constraints on a combination of civil liberties and personal integrity violations, the results of which are discussed above. In a similar vein, Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2005) considered the influence of diverse aspects of democracy (disaggregating the Polity measure into its component parts) on personal integrity violations. The outcome of this work is consistent with my study in that among the democratic components examined, executive constraints have the greatest pacifying influence.

Additional research in this direction would be useful in influencing scholarship, advocacy, and public policy, as there are several combinations of democracy and repression that have not been explored. Such information is crucial because it would enable us to discern which aspects of democratic governments reduce which types of human rights violation [for the most comprehensive effort see Davenport (2007)]. It is also clear from existing research that more attention needs to be

given to the conditions under which the domestic democratic peace does not hold. Arguing that democracy is more likely to serve as a deterrent to undesirable public policy when mechanisms such as elections directly link the political leader to the behavior that citizens wish to modify, Powell (2000) reveals an important limitation of the peace proposition. For example, without the connection between repressive actions and actors on the one hand, as well as democratic sanctions on the other, government officials would not fear being removed from office and, in this context, democracy would not function in the way that scholars theorize and activists as well as citizens hope. This is directly relevant to research on state repression, for it reveals that all aspects of democracy are not, by definition, likely to reduce coercive action (Davenport 2007)—in short, it reveals that the domestic democratic peace is not bulletproof.

Having discussed the two core findings of the repression literature, I now turn to two findings that have been less central but nevertheless have been and will continue to be important.

Peripheral Finding I: Economic Indeterminacy

The influence of the domestic and international economy on repressive behavior has been examined in some of the most prominent theoretical work in comparative politics and international relations. Although the significance of the economy is straightforward, what is interesting is the lack of discussion it receives. Glancing at this research, one repeatedly comes across measures of gross national product (GNP) or some other operationalization intended to capture distinct components of economic development (e.g., energy consumption per capita) in every model estimated. But one does not find a detailed discussion of why economic development wields an influence or why GNP measures this feature adequately. This is problematic in repression research, as in the civil war literature, because the influence of GNP is consistently negative; poorer countries tend to repress more. The precise reason for the finding, however, is unclear. Some argue that fewer resources enhance the need for coercive behavior by increasing societal grievances and limiting the authority's ability to use alternative mechanisms of political control. Others argue that fewer resources make repressive action less efficient, therefore increasing the need for state activity (e.g., Fearon & Laitin 2003).

In contrast to the stable effect of domestic economic factors, the influence of external factors such as "globalization" has been quite unstable. Several authors have found a positive effect of trade on state repression, supporting the argument of dependency/dependencia that political authorities use coercive behavior in an effort to protect profitable as well as exploitative economic relationships (London & Williams 1988). Others have found a positive relationship (again supporting dependency/dependencia theory) but only within particular contexts. For example, Mitchell & McCormick (1988) find that extensive trade and investment are associated with increasing some forms of human rights abuse but that the relationship between these variables and state repression disappears when they control for population size. Some find that external economic interactions reduce state

repression, supporting a liberal tradition (Meyer 1996). Still others have found no effect at all (Smith et al. 1999).

More explicitly drawing on theories and methodological techniques developed in international relations, three recent studies have expanded the domain of inquiry into the economic ties–human rights question beyond previous analyses (Apodaca 2001, Hafner-Burton 2005a, Richards et al. 2001). Differing from the works identified above, these studies uniformly support the liberal position; Hafner-Burton (2005a), however, raises a great many questions about the research undertaken here.

Apodaca (2001, p. 292) looks at the impact of both trade and investment on human rights for a broad group of developing nations and transitional economies of Eastern Europe during the period 1990–1996. Although she finds that trade reduces repression, the limited nature of her spatial and temporal domain makes it difficult for us to generalize to a broader set of cases. Similarly, Richards et al. (2001) focus on developing states and only for selected years: 1981, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, and 1995. They report that investment improves human rights (i.e., it decreases repression), but again, our ability to generalize the results is hindered by the research design.

Hafner-Burton (2005a) overcomes many of the limitations of earlier work by investigating a greater variety of measurements for economic globalization with a database of 177 countries from 1976 to 2000. Appropriately criticizing prior literature for undertheorizing the causal mechanisms underlying different operationalizations as well as competitively evaluating the robustness of different indicators, she identifies that the most consistent finding involves foreign direct investment [gross FDI and FDI net inflows (% GDP)] and specifically that greater investment reduces the coerciveness of political leaders. Other measures of economic engagement are less stable across analyses (i.e., across political-economic contexts and diverse model specifications).

Though an important improvement on prior research, this work leaves repression scholars in the same situation as civil war researchers, trying to understand exactly what GNP tells us about, respectively, repressive capability or rebellious incentives. As identified by Hafner-Burton (2005a, p. 681), the causal mechanisms underlying the globalization–human rights relationship are varied. In assessing the impact of economic ties on state repression,

> [s]ome argue that market liberalization boosts economic development, thereby promoting human rights through long-term growth (Apodaca 2001; Poe & Tate 1994). Others argue that globalization creates middle-class constituents that come to demand greater protection of their fundamental rights, changing governments' policies through representation (Richards, Gelleny & Sacko 2001; Meyer 1996). Still others suggest that globalization produces greater political stability through growth in living standards, thereby reducing the need to employ acts of repression (Gelleny & McCoy 1999).

In reviewing the empirical work on the topic, one struggles to understand what a score on an FDI measure actually tells us about markets, the development of middle-class politics, or constituent demands. This is very different from the

situation with regard to measurements of domestic conflict and democracy and the impact of these variables on repression, for they have received much more attention, development, and cross-validation. Before we can comprehend relationships, therefore, we need to examine these macro-level processes and indicators in greater detail to comprehend how they do or do not represent what was intended.

Peripheral Finding II: International Agreements

One of the least developed and newest findings in the literature arises from the efforts of a few international relations scholars to understand why states use political repression and (continuing the normative emphasis within the literature) what can be done to reduce or eliminate it. This research has introduced new and important theoretical insights as well as explanatory variables, but it tends to ignore or underemphasize the core aspects of the research identified above. Thus, it neglects many issues deemed important to the study of establishing and maintaining political order.

For example, Hathaway (2002) explores the influence of signing human rights treaties on state repression in 166 countries over 40 years. Consistent with existing literature, Hathaway expects that if governments sign a human rights treaty, they will be less inclined to violate human rights, because breaking the treaty could prompt sanctions from external actors or lead to some other costly repercussions. When examining the relationship between treaty ratification and repression, however, Hathaway finds that ratifying a treaty does not in and of itself reduce state coercive activity. Indeed, in line with existing research (Davenport & Armstrong 2004, Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005), Hathaway maintains that what appears to matter more than treaty ratification is the development of political democracy, for democratic governments are the ratifiers that are least likely to coerce their citizens. Of course, this work begs the question of what is actually doing the work (international or domestic factors), but it does reveal that it might be quite fruitful to explore interactions between the two realms.

Similar to Hathaway, Hafner-Burton (2005b) explores the influence of international agreements on domestic human rights practices. Specifically, she argues that through persuasion and (more importantly) coercion, international law can alter the decision-making calculation of political leaders, shifting them away from repressive action by making it more costly. Examining 177 countries from 1972 to 2002, Hafner-Burton finds her argument generally supported; governments that have agreements with "hard" standards and clear enforcement mechanisms are much less likely to repress their citizens.

Once more, however, this research reveals that greater consideration of the core elements of the repression literature would be useful. For example, although Hafner-Burton repeatedly states that government leaders employ repression in an attempt to maintain domestic order (a major benefit for authorities), there is no measure of this within the analysis. Such a concern is particularly important given the unexplained stability of state coercive action over time. Something must account for the "stickiness" identified by Hafner-Burton. Existing literature points

to the behavioral threats that are directed against political leaders as well as the democratic threshold above which state coercion is pacified, neither of which is considered.

Proper contextualization and model specification are important in repression research because in order to comprehend the importance of international as well as domestic factors, we need a more thorough consideration of both the domestic and international realms (including the most appropriate measurements as well as the most valid and up-to-date specifications of causal relationships). Scholars will need to keep abreast of developments in distinct fields. This is never easy—especially in a growing field of research that stretches across subfields and disciplines—but it is clearly useful for the further development of our understanding of state coercive action.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Within this chapter, I have attempted a general overview of the quantitative social science literature on repressive behavior. This involved a discussion of common points of emphasis, theoretical orientation, data and source material, core empirical findings, and some interesting puzzles that have emerged. To conclude, I briefly outline the most productive topics for further investigation: theoretical refinement, disaggregation of the units of analysis, and integration of repression scholarship into other lines of inquiry.

Refinement

The first topic that requires more detailed attention is the theoretical explanation for why repression takes place. A standard cost-benefit analysis motivates much of the work in this area, but very little attention has been given to the appropriateness of this framework. For example, what are the "benefits" of repression? Why do authorities believe that repressive action will lead them to their objectives, and does repression actually produce intended benefits? The answers are not clear. One explanation for state repression is that authorities use it to stay in power, but the literature contains not one systematic investigation of this proposition. Similarly, although authorities are supposed to use repression in order to extract resources and protect specific exploitative as well as profitable relationships, neither of these motives has been examined rigorously. Other components of the theoretical model require similar treatment. For example, it is often claimed that governments use repressive action as long as there are limited costs involved. But what is a cost that is unacceptable to a political leader predisposed to repressive behavior? The degree of wealth generated by society is frequently viewed as a cost because repression drains available resources, but this presumes an understanding of how expensive state coercion is, as well as an understanding of how much individuals and organizations will be willing to sacrifice to the government. Neither of these has been assessed in any rigorous manner.

Disaggregation

The second topic that requires consideration is the disaggregation of repressive behavior across time, space, and types of activity. Such an approach is not only essential for gauging the robustness of the propositions developed in this literature but also allows us to explore other arguments that have previously been ignored. In particular, three issues are of interest.

Most researchers employ data aggregated to the nation-year in an effort to understand causal relationships. Spatially, this is problematic because only specific parts of a country might be involved in relevant behavior and aggregation presumes a certain degree of coordination among coercive agents that might not exist. If dissent in one part of the country is not identified by state authorities (or is ignored) and repressive action is directed toward a different challenging group, nation-year aggregations would mischaracterize relationships. Disaggregation is specifically useful if we expect governments to respond to different challenges with distinct repressive strategies. To identify substate variation, however, the data need to be collected as well as analyzed at the lower levels of aggregation.

Temporally, the nation-year is problematic because how quickly repressive agents respond to different behavioral and structural cues is an empirical question. For instance, after a terrorist attack or protest (in a specific location) the state's response may be slow or fast. The particulars of this response may reflect the weakness of the government relative to specific challengers or the structure of the coercive apparatus and its relative effectiveness. Responsiveness may provide crucial information about the effort being put forward by authorities. Nation-year aggregations hide such information. Shifting the unit of analysis away from the higher aggregation levels also proves useful because as in the case of Moore (1998), who investigates "turns," the lower-level aggregation informs us about the degree of contentiousness within state-dissident interactions by highlighting the frequency of the interactions between the two actors. In the Moore study, when the number of "turns" increases, contentiousness is enhanced. When one side engages in uninterrupted activity for a while, however, this tells us something completely different about the conflict (i.e., it is more stable or more likely to generate common understandings or predictions).

The third type of disaggregation that should be of interest to repression scholars concerns distinct types of repression. For the most part, earlier examinations focused on negative sanctions and restrictions on political-civil liberties. Later researchers largely shifted their attention to violations of personal integrity. This division is problematic because both forms of repression are used by authorities against those within their territorial jurisdiction. By ignoring combinations in state responses, as well as ignoring more covert forms of activity such as physical and electronic surveillance and agents provocateur (Cunningham 2004, Davenport 2005), we end up with a distorted view of what takes place. To better comprehend repressive action and the factors that lead to it, therefore, we must adopt a much broader conception of relevant behaviors and then bring them all together.

Integration

At present, state repression is seldom considered outside of conflict studies, law, human rights, and political theory and philosophy. It is not really integrated into most areas of interest to political scientists. A subset of scholars are interested in the reasons for variation in coercive behavior, but the implications of repression for other political, social, and economic phenomena are not considered—at least not in any sustained manner. This is intriguing because state coercion, as it is intimately connected with issues of political order, has been one of the major areas of concern for political theorists, strategists, and activists as well as ordinary citizens for hundreds of years. Neglecting repression hinders our understanding not only of repression itself but also of other topics. A brief example will suffice to illustrate the point.

Regarding alternative mechanisms of influence other than repression, democracy is frequently identified by theorists, but when this system characteristic is employed in empirical analyses, it is normally viewed as a cost. There have simply been no considerations of normative power and very few considerations of material power in studies of repression (e.g., Gamson 1975, Krain 1997). The failure to consider coercive behavior with other forms of state influence has hindered not only the study of repression but also the study of the alternatives. When does repression work? When is normative and/or material power unable to replace repression as a mechanism of control? Are certain forms of repression less likely to be replaced by alternative forms of state power? Are the different forms of influence generated at similar paces as well as under different circumstances? How does imbalance in accumulation across techniques (if any) influence the application of the different forms? At present, we simply do not know. Repressive action has been largely separated from the agendas of most social scientists, away from topics such as state-building, democracy/democratization, economic (under) development, cooptation and public opinion—areas where historically and theoretically it had been central. The study of repression thus reveals an interesting paradox for the current generation: While living in a world that stresses the interconnection and dissolution of older political units such as states, scholars, activists, politicians, and ordinary citizens interested in coercive government activity are consistently attempting to refocus attention back onto relevant actors.

Clearly, the sensitivity to such issues may change. As events such as 9/11, Abu Ghraib, and the "war against terrorism" have (re)introduced repression to social scientists—although normally discussed under the headings of civil liberties, protest policing, and counterterrorism—we can only hope that there will be a sustained and widespread effort to address, comprehend, and end this behavior. At the same time, we must acknowledge that most of our theories in political science do not consider or allow for state repressive behavior, and most of the time we appear to be interested in protecting sovereign authority, not questioning it. Concepts such as autocracy, "rogue" or "failed" states, "illiberal" democracy, states of emergency, and counterinsurgency might provide diverse ways to approach the

topic, but in many respects these are merely the exceptional moments. These need to be considered alongside less exceptional times, places, and contexts (e.g., within democracies and during periods with no behavioral challenges). Only then will we be able to understand exactly why state repressive behavior is used, how it functions, and how it influences the lives within its reach. Only then will we get to the root of state repression and limit its harmful effects.

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