

Freedom under *Fire*

Repression, Context and the Fragility of the Domestic Democratic Peace

Christian Davenport

**University of Maryland
cdsafecomm@aol.com**

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Abstract

For forty years research has supported the claim that political democracy decreases state repression – the so-called “domestic democratic peace.” This work has not only generated scholarly attention but it is now the cornerstone of President George W. Bush’s “War against Tyranny.” Several weaknesses exist within prior literature, however, which lead me to conclude that the democratic peace within the domestic context is somewhat less straightforward than we initially anticipated. For example, examining 137 countries from 1976 to 1996, I find that: 1) while certain aspects of democracy (measures of competition/participation and executive constraints) influence repression in the expected manner, some do not (suffrage and the number of veto players); 2) the pacifying influence of democracy on repressive behavior is increased in the context of interstate war, decreased in the context of violent dissent and mixed in the context of civil war; and 3) regional democratic contexts are not as strongly supportive as one would anticipate. While there is a domestic democratic peace, therefore, it is clearly not the cure-all, universally applied mechanism of pacification that it is commonly believed to be.

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During President George W. Bush's inaugural speech in 2005, he identified that the citizens of the world were in grave danger. As he stated,

(f)or as long as whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny – prone to ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder – violence will gather, and multiply in destructive power, and cross the most defended borders, and raise a mortal threat (Bush 2005, 1).

To counter this situation, his suggestion was clear:

The survival in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world (Bush 2005, 1).

Declaring a “War on Tyranny,” he then stated that

the policy of the United States (will be) to seek and support the growth of democratic governments and movements in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world (Bush 2005, 1).

Although appearing to signal a new turn for American foreign policy, this actually follows a long-standing argument maintained within US and Western policymaking (e.g., the Community of Democracies 2001), NGO and academic circles; commonly referred to as the “domestic democratic peace” (Rummel 1985; 1997; Davenport 1996; 1999; 2004; Krain and Myers 1997; Hegre et al. 1998; Zanger 2000) the logic of this argument is simple: political democracy decreases state repression. While research has generally supported this argument (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 1999; 2004; Poe et al. 1999) and thus Bush's policy, existing work is limited in many ways, which hinders our ability to understand the wisdom of such an approach to coercive pacification.

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For example, measures of democracy employed within the literature are either highly aggregated, combining different elements together (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Davenport 1995; Poe et al. 1999; Zanger 2000), or they focus on only a few aspects of democracy: e.g., elections (Davenport 1997; Richards 1999), constitutional provisions (Davenport 1996; Keith 2002), executive constraints (Davenport 2004) or political participation (e.g., Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport and Armstrong 2004). Both strategies hinder our understanding of the relationship between democracy and repression for they are alternatively too vague or too specific; this does not provide much guidance for those that need to implement particular policies, with finite resources. Additionally, to date, all investigations have been of direct effects. This is problematic because it might be more appropriate to evaluate the interactive effect of democracy with different forms of political conflict – both intrastate as well as interstate (Iraq provides a recent and very pressing example of both). Such an examination would be important for it appears to be a common situation in the world: many societies are democratizing amidst some form of conflict (e.g., Iraq and Rwanda). Additionally, such an examination would provide the strongest test of the domestic democratic peace proposition. Indeed, if democracy can reduce repressive behavior despite the presence of conflict, this says a great deal about how powerful the relationship is and how widely/strongly this should be supported as a strategy of pacification. If democracy cannot reduce repression in the face of conflict behavior, however, then this identifies an important limitation of the peace proposition and it compels those interested with reducing repressive behavior to seek out and adopt other strategies. Toward the end of achieving better understanding of the democracy-repression nexus, I examine the interactions of democracy with violent political dissent as well as civil and interstate war.

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Within this paper, I review the existing literature on state repression as it relates to the peace proposition. Here, I also discuss specific limitations within this work. In the second section, I provide information about the data employed within the analysis and the methodological technique used to examine relationships. The third section provides the empirical results. Previewing my findings, I identify that different aspects of democracy consistently wield negative influences on state repression (i.e., decreasing its lethality). Interestingly, measure of mass participation and representation generally decrease repression more than measures of executive constraints and veto points. Despite these negative influences, however, political conflict frequently overwhelms democratic pacification. For example, when states confront violent dissent, all democratic variables diminish in their negative influence; in contrast, when states are engaged in civil war, influences across democratic characteristics vary and when states are engaged in interstate war pacifying influences are improved. While Bush's policy is reasonable, therefore it is not universal. The paper concludes with suggestions for how this research should change in the future.

Stopping the Violence

For approximately 40 years, research has been trying to understand what accounts for variation in state repression – diverse strategies employed by political authorities against those within their territorial jurisdiction that either restricts civil and political liberties or violates personal integrity; the former includes mass arrests and limitations on freedom of expression or assembly, while the latter refers to torture, disappearance and mass killing. Unlike many areas of research within the social sciences, the findings in this area have been generally consistent across time, space and methodology. Several variables increase repression in every single case: dissent, lagged repression, military influence and leftist orientation (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Mitchell and

McCormick 1988; Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 1995). Two variables consistently decrease repressive behavior: political democracy and economic development (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Poe and Tate 1994; Krain 1997; Poe et al. 1999; Zanger 2000; Keith 2002; Davenport and Armstrong 2004). Finally, several variables are less clear about how they influence the dependent variable: e.g., trade dependence has been found to increase repression (e.g., Ziegenhagen 1986; Carleton 1989; Pion-Berlin 1989; Davenport 1995), increase repression but only within particular contexts (e.g., Kowalewski 1989; Alfatooni and Allen 1991) as well as have no influence at all (e.g., Timberlake and Williams 1984; Rothgeb 1989; Henderson 1996).

These findings are important for they generally support the arguments made in other areas that political democracy and economic development, especially after World War II, have generally resulted in a shift away from political conflict (e.g., Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Sarkees et al 2003). In this context, Bush's "War against Tyranny" and his resolutions to perhaps one of the oldest of human problems make sense.

At the same time, recent research into the domestic democratic peace challenges this policy in numerous ways. Three are worthy of attention.

It's a Long Hard Road to Peace. First, in an article published last year, Davenport and Armstrong (2004) revealed that only those countries at the highest levels of democracy decreased state repressive behavior; all other regimes were equally as likely to arrest, torture and kill their citizens. Although democracy diminished repression, therefore, pacification only occurs at the very end of the political continuum, thus proving to be a difficult feat to achieve and not a particularly useful policy for all but a few.

Not all Roads lead to the Same Location. The second challenge concerns the fact that current research tends to investigate democracy in the aggregate or in very specific forms. The

former is not useful for policymakers, NGOs and social movements, for it is not likely that they can influence all aspects of a political system at once. Having finite resources and relatively short time horizons, these actors would likely prefer a more focused effort. The latter is not useful because it is not likely that all aspects of democracy would perform at the same levels of effectiveness. Such an orientation would lead us to acknowledge that the most useful analyses would explore the widest range of democratic characteristics: such an investigation is never undertaken as only one or two receive attention within any one study.

The issue of democratic characteristics is also important because of what it tells us about state repression. As discussed in the literature, the main reason why democracy decreases repressive behavior is that it increases the costs of engaging (Dahl 1971; Franks 1989) and that it provides an alternative mechanism for control (Dallin and Breslauer 1970). Diverse aspects of democracy, however, have different influences across these dimensions (e.g., Davenport 2004).

For example, several aspects of democracy concern mass participation (e.g., the act of voting, the percentage of individuals that turn out and the diversity of the political parties obtaining representation). In this context, authorities withhold/ withdraw from repression because they fear losing their political position (e.g., being voted out of office) and/or losing popular legitimacy (e.g., being supported while in office). These I refer to as measures of “Voice.” In contrast, several aspects of democracy concern those situations where actors within as well as outside of government can block the power of political authorities – referred to as measures of “Veto.” Here, authorities withhold/withdraw from using repressive behavior because they are unable to engage in relevant behavior without resistance/direct punishment and/or engendering difficulties with pursuing other objectives. These mechanisms are very different and they guide those interested in reducing state repression in very strict directions. For

instance, Voice would lead individuals to focus on the mass citizenry, whereas Veto would lead individuals to focus on the structure of political institutions or on key decision-makers.

Unfortunately, however, existing research ignores these differences and thus we do not know which relationships are most important.

The Road is less important Than the Neighborhood. The third challenge concerns the fact that existing investigations of the influence of democracy on repression ignore context: e.g., surrounding political systems and conflict behavior. This is important for, at present, individuals believed that democracy is able to function as a mechanism of pacification regardless of where systems are and what other forces exist within as well outside of the relevant territorial domain. The present situation in Iraq reveals the general problems with such a perception. For many, it appears that democracy will not be able to reduce repressive behavior because of hostile neighbors and domestic insurgency. In this context, security dilemmas and issues of “law and order” hold democratic pacification hostage. Despite the importance of such contextual factors, however, neither has been examined within the literature. We thus know essentially nothing about how well democracy is able to function as a mechanism of peace within less than ideal circumstances.

Data and Methods

In an effort to address existing limitations within the literature and in an effort to gauge the fragility of the domestic democratic peace, I examine 137 countries from 1976 to 1996 drawn from diverse datasets. I provide this information below, followed by a discussion of the methodological technique employed.

State Repression

When contemplating the operationalization of this variable, I sought indicators that: 1) provided global coverage over a relatively large amount of time and most countries of the world, 2) were reliable as well as valid, 3) were generally familiar to those interested in the topic, and 4) captured the different types of repressive behavior. Two measures proved to be ideal for these purposes.

Political Restrictions. One repressive strategy consistently used by governments involves constraints on mass political behavior. Here, authorities employ a wide range of techniques as they attempt to interfere with the ability of citizens to enjoy specific rights and/or to mobilize in a collective manner. To measure this activity, I use the “civil liberties” indicator developed by Freedom House (Karatnycky 1999). Although initially criticized because of limitations and inaccuracies with general coding protocols (or lack thereof) and after undergoing a substantive restructuring,¹ this data source is now quite frequently used; indeed, concerning the more recent literature,² it is by far the most widely utilized measure for civil liberties.³

As designed, the Freedom House measure has seven values. At the low end of this scale, a score of “1,” there are countries that “come closest to the ideals expressed in Freedom House’s civil liberties checklist,⁴ including freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion” (Karatnycky 1999, 551). At the high end of the scale, a score of “7,” there are countries where there is “virtually no freedom” (Karatnycky 1999, 552). The former includes countries such as the United States, Trinidad between 1987 and 1993, and Japan from 1976 to 1990, the latter includes countries such as the Congo (Kinshasa) during the period between 1982 and 1988.

State-Sponsored Violence. Another repressive strategy used by political authorities to control their population involves the use of physical torture and/or elimination of citizens.

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Concerning the measurement of this concept, I use the indicator of “personal integrity violation” (known as the Political Terror Scale) conceived by numerous scholars (e.g., Stohl and Carleton 1985; Gibney et al. 1992) and updated as well as popularized by Steve Poe and C. Neal Tate (1994) and diverse colleagues (Poe et al. 1999; Zanger 2000; Keith 2002).⁵

Derived from a systematic coding of Amnesty International and State Department country reports, the measure has five values, addressing activities such as political imprisonment, execution, disappearances, and torture. The indicator itself ranges from a score of “1” where under a “secure rule of law, people are not imprisoned for their views, torture is rare or exceptional... (and) political murders are extremely infrequent” (Poe et al. [1999, 297]), to “5” where “murders and disappearances are a common part of life... expanded to the whole population (Poe et al. [1999, 297]). Examples of the former include the United States, Venezuela 1977 and 1981, and Senegal 1976-1981, examples of the latter include Haiti 1991, Sudan 1988, Rwanda 1994-1996 and China 1989.⁶

In line with earlier research (Davenport 2004), I overlay the two measures presented above and place them into nine categories to construct my dependent variable. Specifically, I use information provided by the two data projects in order to identify low, medium, and high values. In the case of Freedom House, the categories include 1 and 2 for the lowest levels of restriction, 3, 4, and 5 for the moderate/middle-range applications, and 6 and 7 for the highest levels. Across the same categories, the values for the Political Terror Scale include 1 and 2 for the lowest levels of violation, 3 for the moderate application, and 4 and 5 for the highest levels. Table 1 provides the different combinations as well as a few illustrative examples.

Table 1. Alternative Strategies of State Repression

		Political Terror Scale Dimension		
		No/Low Killing	Medium Levels of Killing	High Levels of Killing
Civil Liberties Dimension	No/Low Restrictions	1. Examples: Argentina 1984 and 1986-89, India 1977-79, France (N=659; 23%)	4. Examples: Angola 1976, Chile 1990-92 (N=19; 0%)	7. Examples: Philippines 1986, South Africa 1995-96 (N=45; 1%)
	Medium Levels of Restriction	2. Examples: Bulgaria 1990-92, Mexico 1976 and 1983 (N=603; 21%)	5. Examples: Haiti 1979, South Korea 1977, Sudan 1979 (N=398; 13%)	8. Examples: India 1985, Nicaragua 1979 (N=235; 8%)
	High Levels of Restriction	3. Examples: Bulgaria 1979-80, Ghana 1984-88, Qatar 1992-96 (N=312; 10%)	6. Examples: Burundi 1986, Cambodia 1978-81, Cuba 1976 (N=284; 9%)	9. Examples: China 1989, Guatemala 1980-84, Rwanda 1994-96 (N=302; 10%)

Legend: "N" = number of cases.

According to the degree of lethality maintained within the repressive strategy, I assigned values for the dependent variables (noted in each cell). Thus, the least repressive category (where both restrictions and violence were low or non-existent) is labeled 1, the second least repressive strategy (where violence was low but restrictions were at moderate levels) is labeled

2, and so on until category 9, where both restrictions and violence were high. This schema represents my assumption that authorities would increase restrictions before escalating violence, as they would perceive the latter to be politically more costly - provoking domestic and international pressure to change the repressive practice and leading to a loss of legitimacy across the same audiences. This sequence of restrictions preceding violence clearly reflects what is deemed important to those subject to these activities (citizens), those who seek to protect individuals from such behavior (human rights NGOs), and documents drafted to guide state behavior toward more pacific treatment of citizens (international law).

It is readily apparent from Table 1 that during the third wave most political authorities are pacific in nature and fall into the lowest category (1). Interestingly, states rarely use low levels of restriction in combination with either moderate (category 4) or higher degrees of violence (category 7). This is not the case with regard to low-levels of violence, however, which are frequently combined with both moderate (category 2) and high degrees of restriction (category 3).

Measuring Democracy. In attempting to address diverse aspects of political democracy relevant to coercive pacification, I offer a distinct conceptualization of components and explicitly focus upon the actors (elites and masses) and the mechanisms of influence involved (participation, competition, and “checks and balances”). Specifically, I use four measures of democracy. Two indicators capture different components of mass-oriented democratic behavior (called *Voice*): (1) the legal right to participate (suffrage) and (2) actual participation and the degree of competitiveness in the electoral system. Two indicators address different components of elite-oriented democratic behavior (called *Veto*): (3) general constraints on the executive and (4) a relatively strict conception of *Veto Players*. This reconfiguration maintains the general

orientation identified within the literature, but it also permits an explicit evaluation of distinct theoretical arguments.

According to existing research, both components of democracy considered here should influence state repression. In the case of *Voice*, it is expected that when citizens participate in the political system in a meaningful way (e.g., when they have the right to vote, when they vote in large numbers and when diverse interests receive representation), authorities would be less inclined to use repressive behavior because they could be removed from office by politically engaged citizens who oppose such a policy. In the case of *Veto*, it is believed that when the actions of political authorities can be blocked or countered in some way (e.g., when diverse restrictions can be placed on authorities and when specific limitations exist within very precise domains such as the legislature), they will be less likely to engage in repression because this would likely be controversial and have a deleterious impact on the constituency of one of the actors with oversight power and/or *Veto* capability. I discuss each below.

The consideration of these two dimensions and four indicators also makes sense not only for theoretical discussions about democratic government but also because democratization efforts frequently focus upon them. In other words, when individuals and organizations think about creating democratic processes, they focus on the issues discussed here. Obviously, *Voice* is more commonplace than *Veto*, but both components are relevant. For example, it has generally been taken as a given since 1976 that democracy involves universal suffrage. Indeed, this tends to be one of the first things modified when countries move toward democracy. The development of electoral participation – referred to as electoralism - has received a tremendous amount of attention from scholars, policymakers and NGOs. In contrast, discussions about the competitiveness of the political system are not widely discussed outside of academic circles.

The establishment of executive constraints and *Veto* players/points receive comparatively less attention.

Voice

Suffrage. As measured by Bollen (1998) and Paxton et al. (2003), this objective indicator identifies the percentage of the population enfranchised or, more specifically, “the proportion of the adult population that has the right to vote in national elections” (Paxton et al. 2003, 94). As they continue,

[t]he Suffrage score we create measures the percentage of the adult population [twenty or older] who are eligible to vote in a given year and ranges from 0 percent [zero franchise] to 100 percent [universal suffrage]. Franchise age below twenty years does not lead to higher percentages. (pp. 94-95)

For a more detailed discussion, I refer individuals to the literature concerning this specific research effort as well as the project web page.⁷

Competition and Participation. To investigate the impact of actual electoral behavior (another objective measure of democracy), I use the variables collected and released by Vanhanen (2000). In line with an earlier study of mine (Davenport and Armstrong 2004), I chose

to use the construction [of the Vanhanen measure] suggested by Gates et al. (2003), based mostly on the participation measure. [As designed] [w]hen competition is greater or equal to 30%, then the participation measure is left alone. When competition is less than 30% participation is multiplied by $\frac{1}{3}$. (This down-weights) participation in low-competition environments. (pp. 21-22).⁸

Veto

Executive Constraints. The other dimension of democratic governance believed to be important for repression concerns *Veto*. This refers to situations in which diverse sociopolitical actors can monitor, modify, or halt government action or proposed action. Existing literature suggests that hindering political authorities in this way makes them less likely to engage in contentious activity such as state repression. As discretion lies at the core of this activity, accountability and oversight are expected to reduce such behavior significantly.

In one effort to identify this regime characteristic systematically, I employ the subjective measure of *Executive Constraints* developed by Ted Gurr and associates (Gurr 1974; Marshall and Jagers 2000).⁹ Specifically, this categorical variable comprises a seven-point scale. The first value (1) represents a situation of “unlimited authority.”¹⁰ Here, “there are no regular limitations on the executive’s actions” (Marshall and Jagers 2000, 21); examples include Guatemala 1982-84; Rwanda 1976-92; and Iran 1976-78). The last value (7) represents a situation where accountability groups are able to counteract the executive completely or initiate decisions on their own; examples here include the U.S. 1976-96; Haiti 1996; Chile 1989-96; Hungary 1990-96.

Veto Players. The next measure is similar to the last variable but it more explicitly draws a connection with scholarship on *Veto Players* and *Veto Points* (e.g., Immergut 1992; Tsebelis 1995). Additionally, it offers a more specific operationalization. As Kaiser (1997) maintains:

[v]eto points are neither physical entities, as Tsebelis’ notion of ‘institutional Veto Players’ seems to imply, nor a mere metaphor. They are “points of strategic uncertainty where decisions may be overturned” . . . or at least modified.

Therefore actors who want to ensure that they can influence decisions in a political arena (i.e., limit, change or eliminate them when deemed necessary) will strive to establish Veto points. (p. 437)

For my interests, this concept is ideal. Within situations where players/points exist, political authorities would be more hesitant to engage in activity potentially resisted during the decision-making process or following implementation. Repression clearly falls within these parameters.

In line with this logic, I employ a measure called “Checks” developed by Keefer (2002). Viewed as the best measure of its kind, for both OECD and developing countries (Keefer and Stasavage 2003), this 0 to 16 measure¹¹

has the advantage of being based on objective criteria and of capturing the existence of coalition governments or divided control of two chambers in a bicameral system . . . More generally, the measure is based on a formula that first counts the number of Veto Players, based on whether the executive and legislative chamber(s) are controlled by different parties in presidential systems and on the number of parties in the government coalition for parliamentary system [as described in greater detail in []]. The index is then modified to take account of the fact that certain electoral rules (closed list vs. open list) affect the cohesiveness of governing coalitions. (p. 415)

The index is also modified according to the degree of ideological distance between the opposition and executive party (Keefer 2002, 4).¹²

Table 2 provides a summary table for all of the democracy measures employed in the analysis.

Table 2. General Overview of Democratic Characteristics

Variable	Nation-Years	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Suffrage	2779	76.59	40.41	0	100
Shift in Suffrage from t-1 to t	2648	77.37	39.89	0	100
Competition/Participation	2803	21.54	28.66	0	100
Shift in Competition/Participation from t-1 to t	2669	.79	6.86	-73.34	81.03
Executive Constraints	2732	3.86	2.40	1	7
Shift in Executive Constraints from t-1 to t	2378	.02	2.47	-6	6
Veto Players	2857	2.17	1.53	1	6
Shift in Veto Players from t-1 to t	2722	.00	1.66	-5	5

Context

Inextricably connected with the assessment of democracy are other factors. I examine the impact of two rival explanations for repressive activity: political order and economic modernization. Discussed in detail in prior research (Davenport 1995; 2004), my presentation here will be brief.

Measuring Political Disorder. Over the last thirty years diverse scholars have focused on the problem of order within modern societies (e.g., Wrong 1979; Blalock 1989; Liska 1992), particularly on how government authorities use state repression in order to deal with challenges (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Davenport 1995). The basic logic is rather simplistic. As expected, social order (quiescence, obedience, and active political support) is preferred to social disorder (mass unrest). When challenges are posed to the status quo and when prior strategies of government have been coercive in nature, then those in authority extend efforts at stabilization and suppression (e.g., they apply counterinsurgency and protest policing). Repression serves two

objectives that reside at the core of the political order argument. First, historically, it appears to be an effective means of maintaining social control in a wide variety of contexts, times, and places. Second, the state is prepared and, indeed, built for the application of repression, as it largely wields exclusive control over the means of coercion. In line with this, protest increases state repression in every investigation of the topic.

Within existing literature, measures for political disorder have taken roughly two forms: individuals have examined the frequency of events, such as the number of times that protest occurs (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Davenport 1995a; King 1998) or the type of events, such as violent as opposed to nonviolent behavior (e.g., Ziegenhagen 1986; Davenport 1995a). Although variables generally concern lower-level conflict behavior taking place within the country of interest, there has recently also been some attention given to civil and interstate war (e.g., Poe and Tate 1994). These variables have consistently influenced repression in a manner consistent with the political disorder argument.

Additionally, the influence of another variable has been largely supportive of the political order argument – lagged repression. Here, again, in every investigation of the topic, lagged repression increases subsequent repressive activity: once adopted and institutionalized repressive solutions to societal problems continue in their application (Gurr 1986a, 160).

Following from this discussion, I employ the following variables to operationalize political disorder: 1) violent domestic conflict - guerilla warfare and riots as measured by Banks (1999) – scored as 1 when either is present and 0 when they are not; 2) civil and interstate war as measured by the Correlates of War project (Singer and Small 1994) – scored as a 1 when either is present and 0 when they are not; and 3) regional violent domestic conflict as well as civil and interstate war in an effort to gauge the impact of conflictual neighborhoods as indicated by the

mean of each activity listed in 1 and 2. In addition, I consider measures of lagged repression and regional repressive activity. These require a bit more explanation than the variables just identified.

Measuring Lagged Repression. Generally, researchers simply lag the dependent variable and include this as an independent variable within estimated equations. If the dependent variable is “ordinal enough” that one cannot assume its categories are evenly spaced (thereby legitimizing the use of OLS regression), however, then how could one justify making that assumption about the same measure when using it as an independent variable? In following, I created dummy variables for each of the k categories of repression, and include $k-1$ of them as independent variables.

Measuring Regional Repression. Had I decided on the continuous operationalization of lagged repression, an appropriate measure of regional repression would be the regional mean of repression. As this is was not the case, there are a number of other reasonable solutions to the problem. After exploring various options, I decided to use the median value of repression.

Measuring Economic Modernization. A second explanation for state repressive behavior used consistently within the literature comes from modernization theory (e.g., Lipset 1959; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994). Largely following other research in comparative politics and international relations, measures for economic modernization have been consistent. Most researchers have used some indicator of GNP (e.g., Poe and Tate 1994) or energy consumption (e.g., Davenport 1995a). Whatever the measure used, however, the results are essentially the same: higher values decrease the likelihood of repressive activity. Some disagree with this and suggest that it is not simply the condition of the economy that is important for evaluating conditions and alternative mechanisms of control, but also the size of the need that must be met,

proxied by the size of the population (e.g., Henderson 1991; Poe and Tate 1994). Here, the argument is that larger populations maintain a larger number of needs and thus the more needs a society has, the more needs there are requiring satisfaction. Repression is relevant in this case, because as the size of the unmet need increases so does the application of coercion in order to keep the situation from disrupting law and order. Similar to the findings of strictly economic characteristics, empirical research on this point has been supportive and consistent. I employ the following variables to operationalize this argument: the log of total population size and per capita GNP provided in Poe et al. (1998).

Ordered Probit

Within the existing repression literature, ordinary least squares regression is commonly used to assess causal relationships (e.g., Hibbs 1973; Henderson 1991; Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 1995; 1999; Poe et al 1999; Zanger 2000). Richards (1999), among others, maintains that this might not be appropriate when an ordinal dependent variable such as the one discussed in this study is employed (a nine-category combination of violent repression and political restrictions). In these contexts, ordered probit is more appropriate (e.g., Long 1997).¹³

These models are relevant for they permit estimation of the probability that nation-years will fall into a specific category of human rights violations. Specifically, the analysis estimates the coefficients corresponding to each of my independent variables and estimates the threshold parameters separating adjacent categories of repressive combinations. Estimates provide the underlying probability that states fall within a particular category (1-9), based in part on the explanatory factors included in the model and, in part, on the unobserved factors influencing the distribution of states on the repression measure provided above.

There is an added benefit of using this methodological technique. Observing “cut points” for each model, one can assess the threshold parameters between categories of the ordinal variable (Long 1997, 118-19). This provides us with information about the continuous nature of the dependent variable and additionally about the appropriateness of other methodological techniques (in this case OLS regression). As designed, if thresholds are about the same distance apart, then it is reasonable to assume that the measure was continuous and that OLS regression would be appropriate. If thresholds are not evenly spaced, however (as was consistently identified in this study), then it is not reasonable to use other approaches.

When utilizing this technique, however, one must be aware of the specific problems that plague the analysis of panel data. Consequently, for example, to address the fact that observations are likely independent across countries but not within them, I use the Huber/White/Sandwich estimator of variance when estimating models. This allows us to obtain robust standard errors. Additionally, the use of a lagged dependent variable not only permits us to assess the importance of political order for subsequent state repressive activity but it allows us to address any temporal dependencies within the data.¹⁴

Seeking to understand and communicate how different explanatory factors influence the diverse categories of repression (across equations), I calculate the predicted probabilities of achieving a particular combination of restrictive and violent repressive behavior, given a movement in a specific independent variable from its minimum to maximum value. When these are calculated, all other variables are held constant at their medians.

An important difference between this approach and others (such as OLS) concerns the interpretation of the results. As frequently noted within statistical textbooks, statistical tables are not efficient for communicating and/or understanding causal influences on ordinal measures.

Since impacts move over a range of values in these models (in this case, from 1 through 9), this information is not well communicated within a table. This is important, for expectations vary across values of the dependent variable. For instance, we would not expect democracy to influence all categories of the dependent variable negatively.¹⁵ Instead, we would expect positive influences on lower values of repression, with democracy increasing the likelihood of achieving the lower repressive categories. Related to this, we would also expect negative influences on the higher values of repression, with democracy decreasing the likelihood of achieving the most repressive categories.

There are two possibilities for how democracy would function in this framework. On the one hand, a strict test of the domestic democratic peace argument would be that democracy increases the likelihood of achieving category 1 repression (where both restriction and violence are low) while decreasing the likelihood of achieving all the other categories. On the other hand, another version of the argument (a less strict test) would stipulate that democracy increases the likelihood of achieving the lowest categories (e.g., 1 and 2) but decreases the likelihood of observing higher categories.

The flexibility in estimation is especially useful when we anticipate that nonlinear relationships might exist. For example, in a recent article of mine (Davenport and Armstrong 2004), it was found that democracy influenced repression in a nonlinear fashion. Specifically, we found that at lower levels of democracy (measured by a cumulative polity index created by Polity as well as the modified version of Vanhanen's Competition/Participation indicator), there was substantively no influence on repression. Relatively high values of democracy, however, diminish repressive behavior. While the approach adopted here does not allow me to assess the varied influence of democracy across the full range of democracy at each value of the measure, it

does allow me to assess the varied influence of democracy on diverse forms (values) of state repression.

Within this approach, a strictly linear relationship would move progressively from one type of influence to another (e.g., from negative to positive across the nine values of the dependent variable).¹⁶ If nonlinearities existed, we would observe an unsteady slow transition across the nine values of the dependent variable or some bizarre pattern (e.g., where the influence on categories 1, 2, and 3 are negative; 4 and 5 are positive; and 6 through 9 are negative).

Findings

Below, I report on models where each form of conflict is interacted with the statistically significant characteristics of democracy identified above but viewed one at a time (Table 1). As discussed above, consulting results provided in statistical tables is limited for our purposes and thus I employ figures identifying changes in predicted probability for each form of conflict.

Table 1. Full Interactive Models for Different Conflict Contexts

	Violence	Civil War	Interstate War
Violence	0.153 (0.112)	0.364** (0.000)	0.363** (0.000)
Civil War	0.768** (0.000)	0.341 (0.064)	0.759** (0.000)
Interstate War	0.336** (0.003)	0.313** (0.007)	0.363 (0.144)
Competition/Participation	-0.014** (0.000)	-0.013** (0.000)	-0.013** (0.000)
Competition/Participation * Conflict	0.005 (0.201)	-0.011 (0.256)	-0.050 (0.552)
Regional Competition/Participation		0.006 (0.074)	0.008* (0.011)
Regional Comp/Part * Conflict		0.028** (0.002)	0.004 (0.842)
Executive Constraints=2	-0.168 (0.105)	-0.224* (0.011)	-0.253** (0.004)
Executive Constraints=3	-0.310** (0.000)	-0.261** (0.000)	-0.228** (0.001)
Executive Constraints=4	-0.275 (0.259)	0.039 (0.838)	0.015 (0.932)

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Executive Constraints=5	-0.456** (0.001)	-0.501** (0.000)	-0.489** (0.000)
Executive Constraints=6	-0.304 (0.107)	-0.322* (0.021)	-0.342** (0.009)
Executive Constraints=7	-0.679** (0.000)	-0.618** (0.000)	-0.574** (0.000)
Executive Constraints=2 * Conflict	-0.122 (0.478)	-0.205 (0.460)	-0.057 (0.860)
Executive Constraints=3 * Conflict	0.322* (0.021)	0.450 (0.079)	0.181 (0.500)
Executive Constraints=4 * Conflict	0.693 (0.050)	0.180 (0.733)	
Executive Constraints=5 * Conflict	0.013 (0.950)	0.173 (0.664)	
Executive Constraints=6 * Conflict	0.063 (0.807)	0.092 (0.811)	
Executive Constraints=7 * Conflict	0.374 (0.093)	0.628 (0.105)	
Regional Executive Constraints=3			-0.056 (0.433)
Regional Exec Constraints=3 * Conflict			-1.091** (0.003)
Regional Veto Players=4	0.559** (0.000)	0.434** (0.000)	0.314** (0.007)
Regional Veto Players=4 * Conflict	-0.170 (0.331)	-0.620 (0.101)	

* $p < 0.05$, p-values in parentheses, N=2557

Other variables were omitted in the interest of space (Population, GNP, etc.), but were in equations

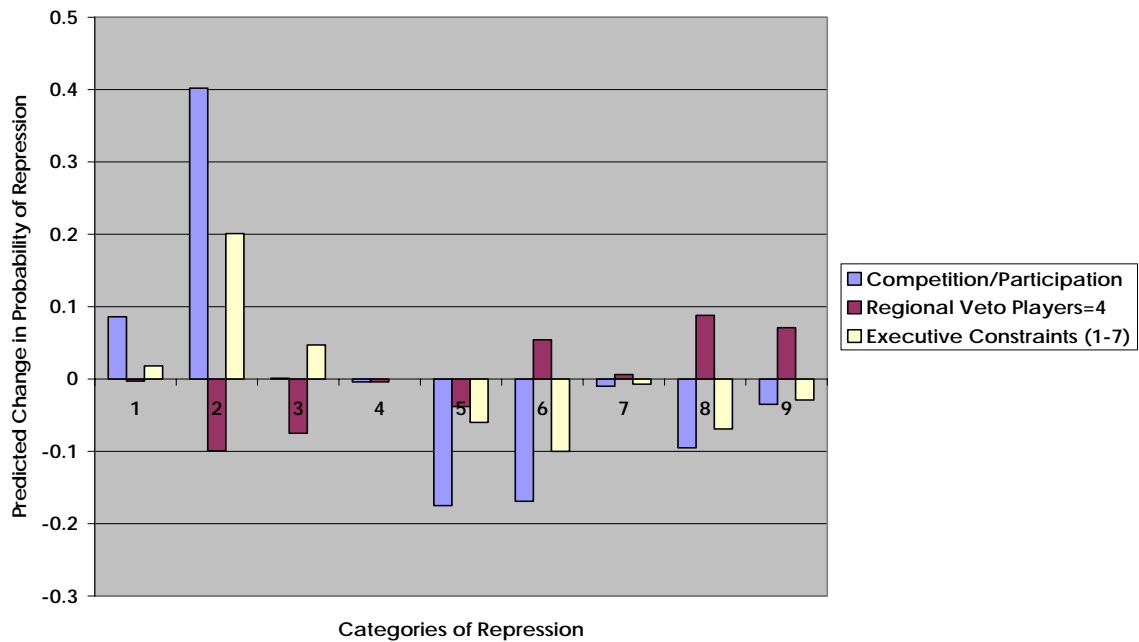
Interactions Concerning Violent Dissent

When the interactive influence of this form of conflict and the different aspects of political democracy are considered, the findings are generally consistent. When examining violent dissent, three interactions are statistically significant: *Competition/Participation*, *Executive Constraints*, and regional *Veto Players* (at level 4). The causal influences themselves are mixed with regard to their support of the democratic peace.

For example, when violent dissent is absent (Figure 1), the results are generally supportive of the domestic democratic peace. *Competition/Participation* neatly approximates the more lenient version of the pacification argument as it increases the probability of attaining lower-level repressive activity (categories 1 and 2) and decreases the likelihood of attaining

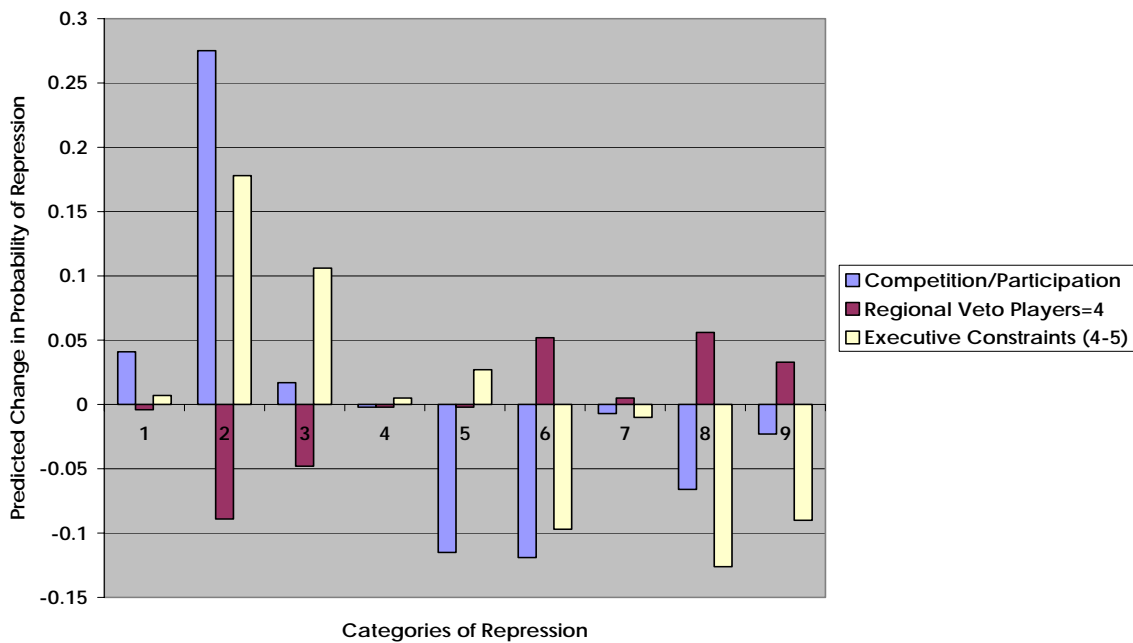
higher-level repression (categories 4 through 9). The influence of *Executive Constraints* is generally similar to *Competition/Participation* but the former increases the predicted probability of achieving category 3 repression. While the relationships are comparable across these two democratic characteristics in terms of direction, the magnitude of influence for *Competition/Participation* is nearly twice that of *Executive Constraints*; Thus the predicted probability of achieving category 2 repression (where restrictions are moderate and killing is low), reaches 40% when *Competition/Participation* is moved from its minimum to its maximum but this impact is only 20% when *Executive Constraints* are moved in the same manner. Interestingly, while both variables decrease the more lethal forms of repression, the magnitude of influence diminishes as the degree of lethality increases – all the while sustaining the hierarchy of influences between the two democratic characteristics. While certain aspects of democracy decreases repression, therefore, the impact tends to weaken as the strategy of repression becomes more severe.

Figure 1. Interactive Model in the Absence of Violent Dissent



Results disclose that regional democracy tends to work in a manner opposite from the two characteristics just discussed. Specifically, regional *Veto Players* decreases the predicted probability of achieving the lowest category of repression, while increasing the likelihood of achieving the highest. The negative influence in category five is the exception. Relatively constrained executives in the neighborhood tend to increase the degree of repression applied within regions but the influences are small.

Figure 2. Interactive Model during Violent Dissent



Evaluating different aspects democracy when violent dissent is present, one can see quite clearly that while the general shapes of the relationship are retained, the magnitude of influences is reduced by nearly half. When violent dissent takes place, the strength of democratic pacification weakens. The specific influences are again important to discuss.

First, the impact of *Competition/Participation* is still greater than *Executive Constraints* in most categories of repression (1, 2, 5 and 6) but the magnitude of difference decreases.

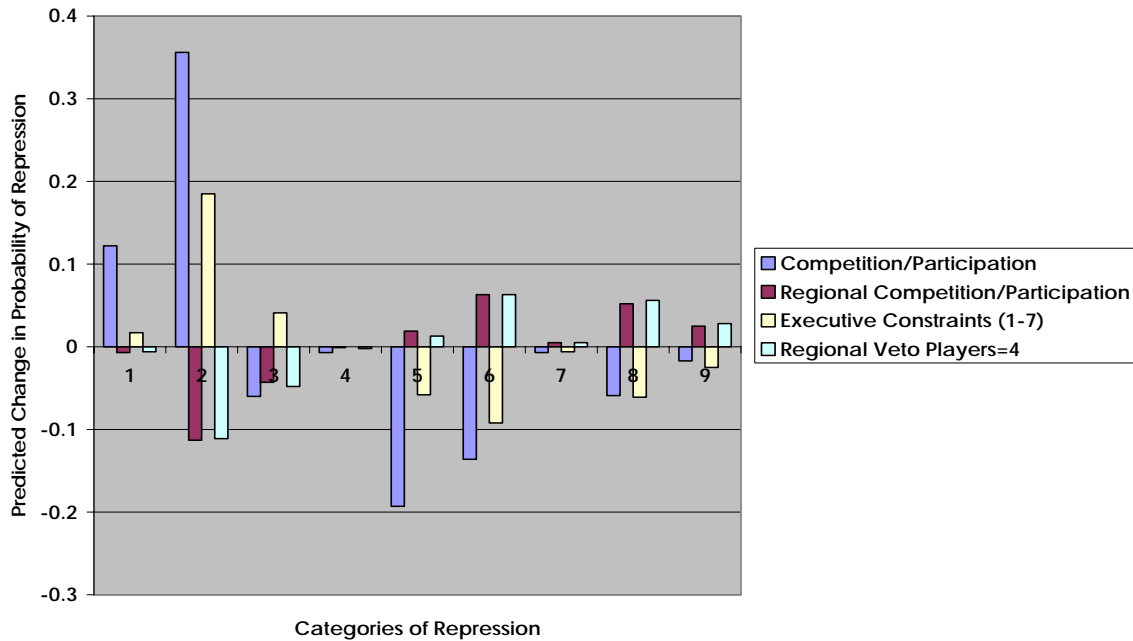
Amidst periods of conflict, the effectiveness of *Executive Constraints* relative to

Competition/Participation as a mechanism of pacification is increased. Second, the impact of *Executive Constraints* on middle-range values of repression (categories 4 and 5) is now positive but minimal. Here, *Executive Constraints* no longer approximates a weak version of the domestic democratic peace but rather it reveals that even relatively constrained political leaders will resort to moderate levels of repression when challenged. Third, I find that at the highest levels of repression the impact of *Executive Constraints* exceeds *Competition/Participation*. If one were interested in diminishing the predicted probability of highly lethal activity when violent dissent took place, then increasing the constraints placed on the executive would be important. This having been said, the influence would still be minimal.

Interactions Concerning Civil War

Viewing the results from the model where the most violent form of domestic conflict is considered (Figures 3 and 4), mixed findings again emerge with regard to the success of the domestic democratic peace. Again, supporting the democratic peace, in the absence of civil war one finds the same basic structure identified in the last analysis. Here, *Voice* and *Veto* still increase the likelihood of the least repressive categories while decreasing the likelihood of more moderate and highly lethal forms of repression. Additionally, we find that again regional *Veto Players* has the opposite effect. Finally, results disclose that regional *Competition/Participation* exhibits the same influence as regional *Veto Players* at almost exactly the same level of influence.

Figure 3. Interactive Model in the Absence of Civil War

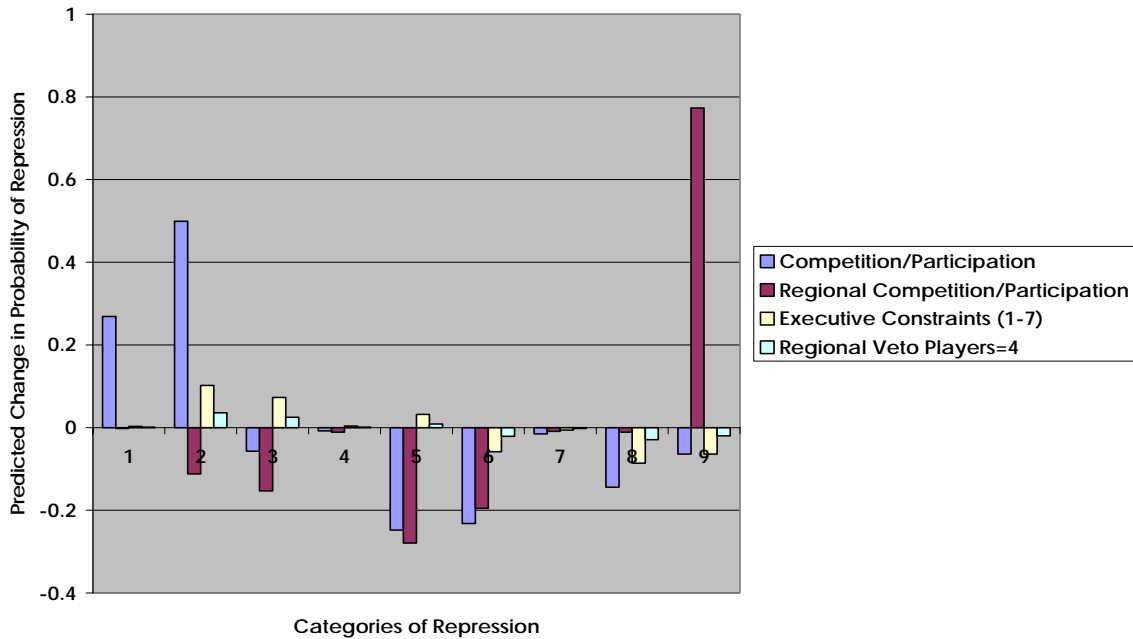


During civil war, we see some significant differences across the four statistically significant variables. In the case of *Competition/Participation*, the domestic democratic peace finds support as the impact on predicted probabilities across the various strategies of repression increases. Thus, the positive influence of this aspect of democracy on categories 1 and 2 is enhanced; during large-scale domestic conflict states with increased *Competition/Participation* are even more likely to use lower-level forms of state repression. Additionally, under the same context, states with increased *Competition/Participation* are even less likely to employ more lethal forms of state repression. In contrast, again under the same circumstances, the influence of *Executive Constraints* decreases in repressive categories 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Moreover, the influence of *Executive Constraints* changes from negative to positive (but marginal) within the middle range values of repression. Differing from violent dissent, amidst civil war, the negative influence of *Competition/Participation* increases at the highest level of repression relative to the influence wielded by *Executive Constraints*.

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With regard to regional *Competition/Participation*, when civil war takes place the influence on state repression changes significantly. In this case, the predicted probability of achieving the least repressive categories (1 and 2) diminish even further; in other words, as regional *Competition/Participation* increases from its minimum to its maximum the likelihood of achieving low-level repressive behavior decreases (strengthening the effect in the absence of civil war). The negative influence on repressive categories three and four diminishes further as well. Within middle-range values of repression (5) up to one of the highest levels (8), the influence changes from that revealed when civil war was not underway. In these contexts, directly in line with the expectations of the domestic democratic peace, regional democratic characteristics decrease the likelihood of achieving more lethal forms of repressive behavior. At the most lethal forms of state repression, however, the predicted probability of achieving this strategy increases to nearly 80%. When civil war takes place and regional *Competition/Participation* increases from its minimum to its maximum, the likelihood of observing the highest level of state repression is dramatically increased.

Figure 4. Interactive Model during Civil War



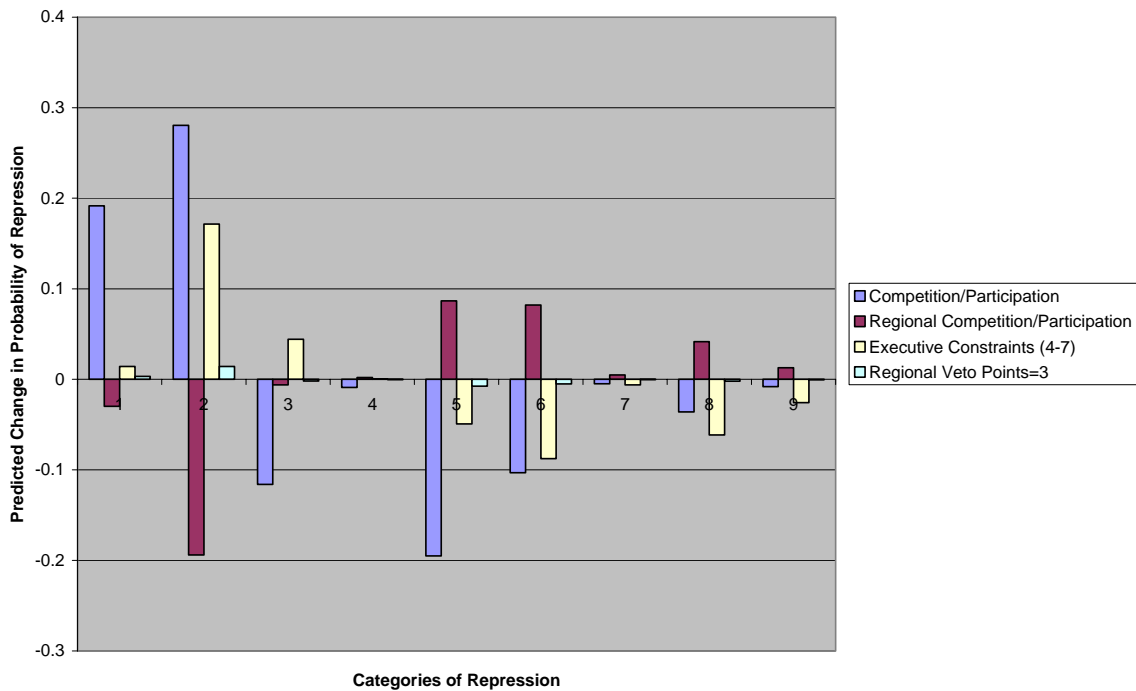
In many respects, civil war alters and/or eliminates the impact of regional *Veto Players*. Amidst large-scale domestic conflagrations, the predicted probabilities of this variable, influencing lower-level forms of repression, increases, but the likelihood of observing higher forms diminishes. This is in line with the domestic democratic peace but the influences are substantively unimportant.

Interactions Concerning Interstate War

When there is no interstate war, *Competition/Participation* again increases the probability of achieving the least repressive categories while decreasing the likelihood of attaining higher ones. The influence of *Executive Constraints* is similar but generally lower in magnitude and positive in repressive category 3 (where it increases the likelihood of observing this strategy – albeit marginally). *Regional Competition/Participation* again decreases the predicted probability of observing repressive categories 1-3 but increases the probability of observing 5-9. The only difference here from other models is that the magnitude of influences is greater in the lower

categories (1 and 2) and in category 5 but lower as the degree of lethality increases. Finally, in the absence of interstate war, regional *Veto Players* are statistically significant in their influence, largely following *Executive Constraints* but the magnitude of influence is marginal in importance.

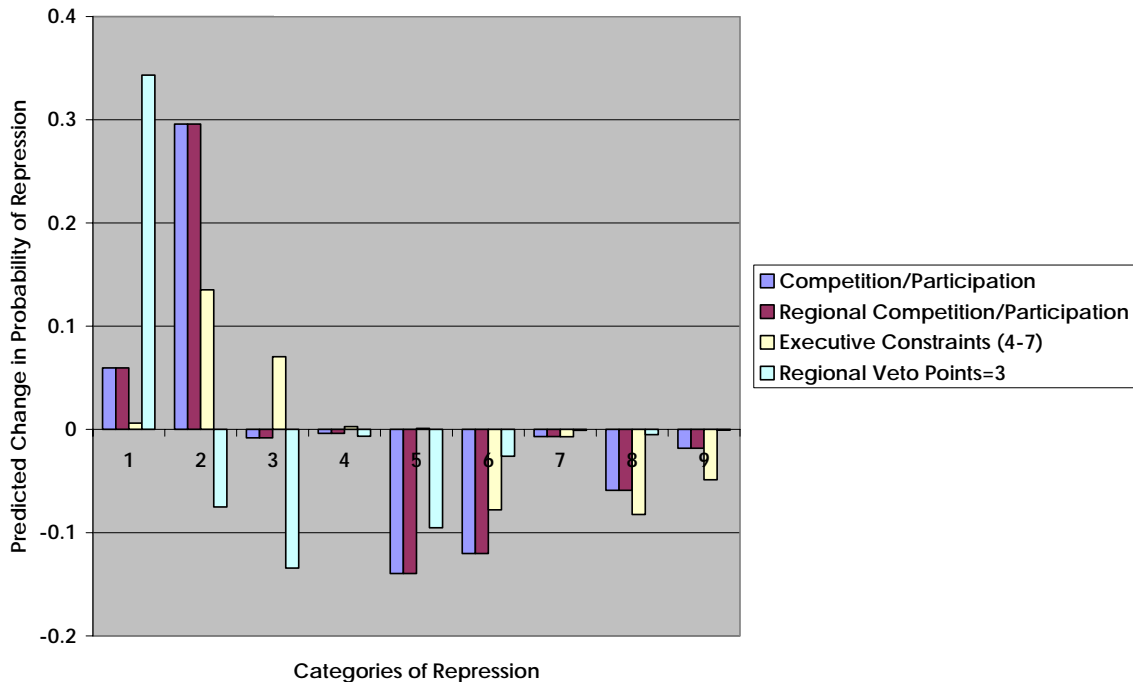
Figure 5. Interactive Model in the Absence of Interstate War



Amidst interstate war, the relationships changes, generally in favor of the domestic democratic peace. During these periods, the influence of *Competition/Participation* decreases in the least repressive categories as well as the third, but increases in the second. With regard to more lethal forms of repression, war decreases the negative influence of *Competition/Participation* in category 5 but increases its negative influence in categories 6 through 9. Amidst interstate conflict, the pacifying influence of this aspect of *Voice* decreases in the lower-level forms of repression but increases in the higher-level forms. Similarly, war decreases the influence of *Executive Constraints* in categories 2 and 6 but increases the influence in categories 1, 3, 7, 8 and 9. Differing from earlier analyses and in line with the democratic peace, amidst

war regional *Competition/Participation* increases the attainment of repressive categories 1 and 2 but decreases the attainment of categories 3 through 9 – reaching the greatest influence in category five and declining afterward. Also differing from earlier analysis but again in line with the democratic peace, regional *Veto Players* increase the attainment of repressive category 1 but decrease all others – reaching its greatest influence in category 3 and declining afterward (until category 7 and above at which point this variable wields no substantively important influence).

Figure 6. Interactive Model during Interstate War



Conclusion

This paper was prompted by two factors: 1) the compelling argument put forward by the Bush administration regarding their “War against Tyranny” and the important pacifying role that political democracy is expected to have on state repression within this policy (Bush 2005), and 2) the general consistency of quantitative research with regard to the negative (i.e., pacifying) influence of democracy on repressive behavior, commonly referred to as the domestic

democratic peace. Unfortunately, the neglect of specific issues within existing research undermines confidence in this policy and the empirical findings. To address these limitations, this paper examined two related issues. First, I considered a wider variety of democratic characteristics than is typically addressed within the literature. Second, I explored the interaction of these different characteristics with diverse aspects of political conflict (violent dissent as well as civil and interstate war) as well as regional democratic characteristics in an effort to understand the fragility of the domestic democratic peace. Three insights emerge from my investigation of 137 countries from 1976 to 1996.

First, I find that *Competition/Participation* is more likely to function in line with the democratic peace proposition compared to *Executive Constraints*, *Veto Players* and *Suffrage* – the last two were statistically insignificant in all examinations. From my analyses, *Competition/Participation* is generally more capable of increasing the application of lower-level repressive behavior while decreasing the application of more lethal strategies. Interestingly, *Executive Constraints* were more effective at reducing the adoption of more lethal techniques. Second, results disclose that diverse forms of conflict alter the pacifying influence of democracy but in different ways. For example, violent dissent (riots and guerilla warfare) decreases the influence of all democratic characteristics. In contrast, civil war produces mixed results. In these contexts, the pacifying influence of *Competition/Participation* increases but the pacifying influence of *Executive Constraint* is diminished. In situations of war, most democratic characteristics improve in their capacity to reduce state repression. Third, the influence of regional democratic characteristics was generally favorable to the democratic peace but it was not consistent. For example, across examinations these variables generally supported the democratic peace, except

amidst violent dissent and with regard to one category of repression during civil war, which yielded the single highest impact of all relationships found within the investigation. Fourth,

What does this research lead us to conclude about the prospects of the current “War against Tyranny” and the existing work on the domestic democratic peace? The main conclusion is simple: while democracy is a reasonable strategy that can reduce state repression, this strategy is not without its limitations. For example, it is not clear why different forms of conflict wield differential impacts on the pacifying influence of democracy. Why does violent dissent weaken diverse democratic characteristics uniformly, while civil war produces mixed influences and interstate war tends to strengthen the domestic democratic peace? Why are democratic neighborhoods somewhat imbalanced with regard to their influences? These issues need investigation and they suggest that what we need is a more nuanced, more flexible understanding of how democracy influences state repression – a multi-track democratic peace, if you will. It is toward these nuances that future research should turn. The “War against Tyranny” may be waged through democratic governments and movements around the world but the effectiveness of such a policy will invariably be determined by the capacity to ascertain exactly when one aspect of democracy should be developed as opposed to another and when it will not make any difference what one does insofar as it concerns the development of democratic institutions and behavior.

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¹ For example, McCamant 1981; Scoble and Wiseberg 1981; Bollen 1986, 85-86; Goldstein 1986, 620; Poe and Tate 1994; Cingranelli and Richards 1999; Munck and Verkuilen 2000, 24.

² For example, peruse almost any issue of the *Journal of Democracy*.

³ The Freedom House measure has recently been used as an indicator of political democracy, but it was initially used and essentially created to measure state repression and human rights (e.g., McCamant 1981, 132; Goldstein 1986, 620; Stohl et al. 1986, 599). Indeed, the U.S. State Department used it to develop its own human rights status reports (Scoble and Wiseberg 1981, 152); and Gastil (the creator of the measure) identifies that what they do at the organization is comparable to the work of other human rights organizations such as Amnesty International (Gastil, cited in Scoble and Wiseberg 1981, 162). According to Gastil, “Civil rights are the rights of the individual against the state, rights to free expression, to a fair trial; they are what most of us mean by freedom” (Gastil 1973, 5). The measure thus captures an outcome of a political process and allows one to evaluate whether or not a particular nation-state is “free” (i.e., not repressed in a negative rights manner). This does not capture the process by which one could achieve freedom, i.e., political democracy as conceived by Dahl, Schumpeter, and others.

⁴ The information used to create this measure is derived from a survey in which of “a broad range of international sources of information (are consulted), including both foreign and domestic news reports, NGO publications, think tank and academic analyses, and individual professional contacts” (Karatnycky 1999, 546).

⁵ This data went to 1993 but through personal correspondence with the creators, I was able to obtain data through 1996. Following standard procedure, I employ the State Department data using the Amnesty International data to fill missing values.

⁶ Both of the measures identified above have been discussed numerous times with regard to their validity and reliability, and thus I will not go into too much detail here. For Freedom House, see McCamant 1981, 32; Bollen 1986, 85-86; Goldstein 1986, 620; Stohl et al. 1986, 599; Munck and Verkuilen 2000, 24; for the Political Terror Scale measure from Poe and Tate (1994) see, Poe et al. 1988.

⁷ The web page for this project can be found at the following locations: www.soc.sbs.ohio-state.edu/pmp/ or www.unc.edu/~bollen/. The data themselves have not been used frequently because they just became available. This type of indicator has never been used within a study of state repression.

⁸ This (0 to 100) measure privileges the competition component of electoral participation but hedges it by the proportion of the population (more than 30 percent) enfranchised.

⁹ Quite frequently, these data have been used within political science and sociology but it is also that case that it has used within the specific area of research of concern to this study. Indeed, many have suggested that executive constraints is the most frequently employed indicator of political democracy in the social sciences (e.g., Jagers and Gurr 1995, 470; Ward 2002, 49).

¹⁰ In this situation, constitutional restrictions on executive action are ignored, no legislative assembly exists, and decrees are repeatedly used as the means to govern.

¹¹ This measure does not allow us to address the variety of *Veto* points discussed by Kaiser (1997, 436): (e.g., consociational, delegatory, expert and legislative), for it does not address the intended effects on the decision-making process of the measure provided. Instead, it focuses on the structure of the government similar to the *Suffrage* variable discussed above. Additionally, I have not logged the variable in line with Keefer and Stasavage (2003) for existing theory does not suggest that unequal weight should be given to the one unit change from 1 to 2 as opposed to 3 to 4 or 5 to 6. In line with my earlier research with Armstrong (2004), some of these differences are examined, but the expectations of such an investigation are speculative.

¹² This measure has received increasing attention in the last few years (Keefer and Stasavage 2003) but within the area of state repression, it has never been used.

¹³ discussions of ordered analysis, see Zavoina and McElvey (1975) and Greene (2000).

¹⁴ At present, there are no ways to estimate ordered probit models with a more rigorous estimation and correction for time-serial problems.

¹⁵ Similarly, we would not expect a variable to be positively related across all categories if this was the type of influence that was anticipated (e.g., with regard to a variable like protest).

¹⁶ This assumes that the distance between values was even.