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# The Weight of the Past: Exploring Lagged Determinants of Political Repression

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The present article investigates contemporaneous and lagged effects of democracy, coercive capacity, and political conflict on repressive behavior. As designed, 51 countries from 1948 to 1982 are examined with an Almon distributed lag model on yearly data (N = 1820). From the empirical investigation, both short- and long-term relationships are found to be significantly related to the rate at which censorship and political restrictions are applied. Past values of democracy are found to affect repression negatively for five years and past values of dissident behavior are found to affect repression positively for seven years. I conclude that a relatively complex memory structure, encompassing both short- and long-term explanations, must be employed when one attempts to understand why states use repressive behavior.

Numerous studies maintain that causal determinants of political repression have contemporaneous effects on the rate at which negative sanctions are applied (Hibbs 1973; Duvall and Shamir 1980; Ziegenhagen 1986; Davis and Ward 1990; Poe and Tate 1994). Proponents of this view believe that explanatory factors for repression yield statistically significant and noticeable changes within one iteration of the unit of analysis (usually conceived of as the nation-year). Other studies maintain that causal determinants of repression have no substantive impact at all when viewed contemporaneously (Duvall and Stohl 1983; Gurr 1986a; 1986b; Goldstein 1983; Petras 1986; Mitchell and McCormick 1988). On the contrary, these studies suggest that explanatory

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Repression is defined as government regulatory action directed against those challenging existing power relationships. This is similar to Goldstein's definition (1978, 1983) where, "(p)olitical repression consists of government action which grossly discriminates against persons or organizations viewed as presenting a fundamental challenge to existing power relationships or key government policies, because of their perceived political beliefs (1978: xvi). To decrease redundancy within the text "repression" will be used interchangeably with "repressive behavior" and "negative sanctions."

factors exhibit their effects in a delayed fashion and that the use of negative sanctions is changed slowly and cumulatively over time.

The two positions just identified are extremely important to the literature on repressive behavior because they reveal very different decision-making processes and because they influence our understanding of the causal relationships involved. In the first perspective, the decision-making process is rather simplistic and only those factors that are immediately apparent to the regime are considered important. To understand variance in repression here we need only survey the current political-economic environment for relevant influences such as system type, economic development, and so forth. From the other perspective, the use of memory is invoked and a more complex decision-making process is indicated. In this case, those who make the decision to use negative sanctions are not believed to be driven by factors that are immediately apparent to them, but they are believed to be driven by factors that are removed from immediate experience (i.e., t-1, t-2,...t-n).

Which relationship and decision-making process is more accurate in capturing the dynamics involved when governments decide to repress? This is precisely the subject of the present analysis. Observing 51 countries from 1948 to 1982, I examine the impact of both contemporaneous and lagged relationships on the rate at which negative sanctions are applied. The study itself is divided into four components.

First, I present the argument for why we should expect there to be different effects of certain variables on political repression. The focus here is the decision-making process involved when negative sanctions are used as well as the results of previous empirical research. The second component of the analysis presents an Almon distributed lag model in order to examine the hypothesized causal linkages. After detailing the fundamental components of this strategy (its basic logic and structure), I discuss the reasons for employing it as well as the limitations that are confronted when it is used. An empirical analysis of the proposed hypotheses is conducted within the third component of the study. At this point, statistically significant relationships are identified as well as support or refutation for the various hypotheses themselves. The conclusion addresses the implications of the derived findings. This section directly addresses how the results of this analysis better enable us to understand the use of political repression across both time and space.

# EXPLORING DIFFERENT EXPLANATIONS FOR WHY STATES USE NEGATIVE SANCTIONS

From the literature, it is clear that both contemporaneous and lagged explanations have been used to account for repressive behavior. While this diversity has enhanced our understanding of negative sanctions and why they are

applied, it has also confused the subject matter because it is not clear which perspective is more appropriate for representing the dynamics involved. Indeed, it is not clear whether or not contemporaneous effects, lagged effects, or both are relevant to explaining variance in political repression.

Fundamentally, I believe that part of the problem has been a lack of attention paid to the repressive decision-making process. There has been little effort put forth to understand the way in which those who decide to use political repression are influenced by different aspects of the political economy. This is especially the case with regard to empirical investigations which tend to ignore the issue altogether.

The use of repressive behavior is generally explained from two distinct perspectives: rational choice<sup>2</sup> (Stohl and Lopez 1983; Lichbach 1987; Karklins and Petersen 1993) and habituation<sup>3</sup> (Gurr 1986b; Ziegenhagen 1986; Hoover and Kowalewski 1992). From the rational choice view, individuals within the regime employ a decision calculus to maximize the likelihood of successful behavioral regulation (i.e., decreasing political conflict). To accomplish this task, several things within their immediate environment are assessed: (1) various components of the political economy (the type of political system, the preparedness of the coercive apparatus, economic development etc.); (2) the characteristics of the challengers themselves (their ideological position, their organizational size, etc.); (3) the challenger's behavior (the type of activity used, its frequency, etc.); (4) the availability of different regulatory strategies (i.e., repression, accommodation); and (5) the preparedness as well as influence of the organizations affiliated with the different regulatory strategies. The actual decision calculus itself is conducted in order to identify whether or not the existing political-economic context is favorable to the use of repression. Simply, if favorable conditions outweigh unfavorable ones, repression will be used and if unfavorable conditions exceed the favorable conditions, then repression will not be employed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> As Mason and Krane (1989: 178) state, "(t)he usual assumptions and caveats concerning rational choice theory hold here. We simply assume that actors choose from among available alternatives that course of action (or inaction) which, to the best of their knowledge, most enhances their own well-being, however conceived. In choosing, they discount each alternative in accordance with some subjective estimate of the likelihood of that outcome and then choose the one with the greatest expected utility. In accordance with the revealed preference approach, there is no need to presume that (repressive decision-makers) actually make the calculations posited in the theory, only that they behave as if they did.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> By "habituation" I am referring to a situation where decision-makers rely upon previously established rules to guide their behavior (this could also be labeled "cybernetic"). Here, they are not expected to conduct repeated cost/benefit analyses. Instead, they are expected to defer to previous experience and standard operating procedures.

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The habituation perspective presents a very different view of the repressive decision-making process. Here, it is maintained that governments are less able and less willing to conduct a dispassionate cost/benefit analysis in their decision to employ negative sanctions and that decision-makers are more inclined to follow standard operating procedure and emotional responses to what has taken place before. With regard to the expected causal relationship to repression, we find that when forces that favor the use of this behavior have been established over time (institutions, beliefs, etc.) and previous challenges to the regime have been significant (thus igniting emotional responses to them), the use of negative sanctions is deemed more likely. When these forces have not been established and previous challenges have not been significant, however, the use of repressive behavior is less of a possibility.

Despite the usefulness of these two perspectives what is perhaps most problematic about them is that they each exclude consideration of the other because of the causal relationships they expect. As a consequence, empirical investigations guided by this literature have failed to examine both types of relationships at the same time. Indeed, what we have are two distinct lines of inquiry "talking past" one another.

Not all theorists follow in this tradition. Gurr (1986b; 153), for one, has suggested that

(the choice to use repression) does not imply a narrow commitment to a macroeconomic or rational choice framework such as those used by Jackson et al. (1978) and Lichbach (1987). The . . . framework (that should be used) is an expanded one that accommodates the effects of non- or quasi-rational factors in the calculus of coercion. In particular, the motivational roles of anger and reaction to threat must be incorporated [see Gurr (1970)], and also the effect of normative commitments based on peoples' historical experience and ideological convictions.

I wish to follow in this direction. Specifically, I wish to add a third perspective to the literature and propose a decision-making process that allows for both perspectives to play a role. This I label the *synthetic* approach. From this view, decision-makers would not only survey the immediate political-economic environment for factors that make the use of repression more or less likely, but they would also be influenced by their memory of and emotional responses to their historical experience.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the decision to use political repression at time t is placed into a more comprehensive context where deci-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The word "compellance" refers to those forces of habit that are developed over time. I do not consider a more intricate version of the rational choice model because I do not have adequate data about challenging groups (i.e., their size and their ideological position). I do consider their actual behavior, however.

sion-makers are believed to be aware of what is taking place contemporaneously as well as what has taken place before (at time t-1, t-2...t-n). Such a combination is supported by numerous authors as well (Goldstein 1978; Blalock 1989).

It should be clearly understood that not all independent variables are expected to exhibit these relatively complex effects on the use of repressive behavior. Indeed, only three variables appear to be relevant. These include system type (democracy), coercive capacity and political conflict. Each will be discussed below as I explore the manner in which they affect political repression both immediately and over time.

# System Type

The first variable that is believed to affect political repression in the manner suggested above is system type, specifically the level of democratization.<sup>5</sup> The relationship of this system type to repression is generally attributed to two factors. First, it is widely believed that democratic governments stress "compromise in conflict and participation and responsiveness in relations between rulers and ruled, traits that are inconsistent with reliance on violence (or restrictiveness) as an instrument of rule . . ." (Gurr 1986a: 58). From this view, one would expect increases in the presence of democracy to decrease repressive behavior, reflecting the values of the political system in place. This position is shared by several authors (Hibbs 1973; Ziegenhagen 1986; Henderson 1991; Huntington 1991; Cingranelli 1992).

The second causal effect addresses the institutions of democracy (i.e., legislatures and political parties) and the role they play within the repressive decision-making process (Gurr 1986a: 58; Duvall and Stohl 1983: 248; Goldstein 1978, 1983). As hypothesized, when democratic institutions are present and their involvement in the actual functioning of the polity is significant, the impulse to use repression is diminished. This is because caucuses and elections provide alternative means of controlling political behavior, and the organizations affiliated with these policies (parties and lobbyists) are enhanced in their status, thus retarding the influence of other organizations that might prefer to use repressive behavior, i.e., the coercive apparatus. When democratic institutions are not present and their involvement with the actual functioning of the political system is minimal, however, there would be less of an impulse to govern by non-repressive means and the coercive apparatus would have a better chance to influence the government's decision-making process. Within this context, one would expect the use of negative sanctions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Democracy here refers to the degree to which popular interests are articulated and aggregated into the government decision-making process.

to be more likely given that there are fewer factors (i.e., democratic values and institutions) to prevent its emergence.

In terms of the particular interest of this study the relative "quickness" with which values and institutions impact political repression is the most important issue. In the short term (the rational choice perspective), governments are expected to change their repressive practices immediately in accordance with the current structure of the regime in place (Ziegenhagen 1986; Henderson 1991; Cingranelli 1992; Poe and Tate 1994). Here, both democratic values and institutions exhibit their effects on negative sanctions within one iteration of the unit of analysis. Huntington (1991), however, suggests that democratic values and institutions affect government behavior over time. From this perspective, directly in line with the habituation argument, the use of political repression would not be affected by the structure of the regime at time t. Rather, it would be affected by government structure in a delayed fashion (at time t-1, t-2...t-n) as the underlying principles of democratic governance and the basic instruments of its operation come into being.

In line with my synthetic approach, I also entertain the possibility that both of these hypotheses play a role in affecting the use of political repression. In this context, the decision-making process is affected by both short- and long-term patterns in democratization as the regime not only considers its current situation, but also the "weight" of the past.

Empirical analyses that use democracy to account for variance in repressive behavior have been conducted several times (Ziegenhagen 1986; Henderson 1991; Cingranelli 1992; Poe and Tate 1994). From the results of these analyses, it is generally found that the level of democratization decreases the use of repressive behavior. This finding is consistently identified despite considerable amounts of variance in measurement and applied methodology.

These studies are found to be rather limited, however, in terms of their consideration of alternative relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Only the short-term view (the rational choice) has been addressed and no systematic investigation of non-contemporaneous effects (i.e., the long-term or habituation view) has ever been undertaken. Existing empirical analyses, therefore, provide only a limited version of the democratization argument, reducing the effect to a contemporaneous one. As suggested earlier, this may not properly represent the causal impact of this variable for it is possible that there is a long-term effect where democratic values and institutions slowly change government repressive practices.

# Coercive Capacity

Another variable believed to have short- as well as long-term effects on political repression is coercive capacity. Coercive capacity refers to human and tech-

nological resources available to the "agents of repression": i.e., those who actually employ the negative sanctions themselves. Drawn from numerous scholars in the areas of civil-military relations and military professionalization, three hypotheses are relevant to the present discussion.

In the short term, high values of coercive capacity are expected to increase the rate at which negative sanctions are applied (Hibbs 1973; Thee 1977; Randle 1981; Ziegenhagen 1986; Davenport 1995a). This causal effect is attributed to two factors: (1) the perceived readiness to use repressive behavior, gauged by military preparedness, alters the confidence of the regime in employing this regulatory strategy, and (2) the relative importance of this organization allows it to push forward the policies that benefit its members. Consequently, when resources for the coercive apparatus were few, then the regime would be less confident in calling upon this organization to apply repressive behavior and it would be less likely influenced by the organization. If, on the other hand, substantial resources were held by the coercive apparatus, then one would expect the regime to be more confident in the organization's abilities and more likely influenced by the organization itself. Here, we would expect the rate of repressive action to be increased.

Considering long-term patterns of coercive capacity, the relationship identified above is simply placed into historical context. From this view, rather than the regime deciding to use negative sanctions based upon the status of the coercive apparatus at time t, it is expected that they would look back over time (t-n) in order to gauge how prepared this organization has been in the past and also how much influence they might bring to bear on the repressive decision-making process (Lasswell 1941, DeSwann 1977, Randle 1981; Walker and Lang 1988). As hypothesized, if the resources of the coercive apparatus have been relatively significant over time (t-1, t-2...t-n), then the use of repression is expected to increase at time t, indicating enhanced preparedness and organizational influence. If the organization's resources have been rela-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> As conceived, once repression has been applied and coercive structures are put in place, some form of "law of instrument" goes into effect (Gurr 1986a). Within the midst of this law, the agent of repression seeks to protect and expand their activities as well as their ability to direct policy. This effort is expressed through lobbying of and collusion with the political system which, because of the agent's particular area of expertise, is increasingly made reliant upon its services. The presence of this organization over time is important to the use of political repression because it directly impacts the likelihood that this behavior would be applied. Specifically, as the presence of the agents of repression persist, it is expected that the use of negative sanctions would directly be enhanced. Discussed by numerous authors (Laswell 1941, DeSwann 1977, Thee 1977; Randle 1981; Walker and Lang 1988), this identifies the organization's influence over specific government policies and reveals the overall importance the organization plays in governance as well.

tively low over time, on the other hand, then the application of repression should decrease, conveying less preparedness as well as reduced organizational influence.

A third hypothesis combines the two previous hypotheses. Employing the synthetic approach, here the regime considers the existing preparedness of the coercive apparatus in addition to existing trends in this particular characteristic over a specific period of time. On the basis of this information the decision to apply political repression (or not to) would be made. The same relationships are expected in terms of causal direction: i.e., increased preparedness and influence contemporaneously and over time increases the likelihood that political repression would be applied and decreased preparedness and influence has the opposite effect.

Three empirical investigations of this causal linkage have been conducted, each varying the measurements for important variables as well as the method of analysis (Hibbs 1973; Ziegenhagen 1986; Davenport 1995a). In all three studies the relationship between coercive capacity and the use of repression was found to be positive. The perceived preparedness of the "agents of repression" is found to increase directly the rate at which negative sanctions are applied.

Similar to the situation with democracy, I find that this relationship has not been subjected to analysis beyond a contemporaneous effect. The impact of past values of coercive capacity have not been identified as an important explanatory factor relevant to subsequent uses of political repression. Again, this is regrettable for the effect of prior organizational preparedness and influence has often been used to account for variance in repressive behavior (Lasswell 1941; Huntington 1964; Thee 1977; Randle 1981).

#### Political Conflict

The last explanatory variable identified concerns political conflict. As found here, there are three different types of effects on political repression that are hypothesized. The first hypothesis, in line with the short-term perspective (rational choice), suggests that regimes immediately respond to domestic threats and that they use negative sanctions as a means of decreasing the political challenge presented (Hibbs 1973; Duvall and Shamir 1980; Ziegenhagen 1986; Davis and Ward 1990; Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 1995b). This corresponds to the contemporaneous view principally because political conflict and negative sanctions both occur within the same iteration of the unit of analysis.

The long-term (habituation) perspective maintains that regimes do not respond to current values of political conflict when they decide to use political repression. Rather, proponents of this view suggest that decision-makers remember their previous experiences with dissident behavior and they mobilize their resources (both monetary and human resources) for repressive behavior over time in an effort to control these domestic challenges in the future (Tilly 1978; Goldstein 1978; Blalock 1989; Hoover and Kowalewski 1992: 151)<sup>7</sup> In this case, repression is not viewed as a short-term government policy, devoid of historical experience. On the contrary, it is seen as a long-term policy output, the logic of which is derived from previous state-challenger interactions.

A third hypothesis (drawn from the synthetic approach) combines these two perspectives and suggests that repression is simultaneously effected by both short- and long-term trends in political conflict. Here, a relatively complex memory structure is revealed where regimes observe current challenges from the populous (at time t) as well as previous challenges (at time t-1, t-2...tn). It is expected that when current and past political conflict are relatively high, the use of repressive behavior increases. When current as well as past political conflict are relatively low, however, then the use of negative sanctions is decreased.

Empirical investigations of this causal relationship have been quite numerous (Hibbs 1973; Duvall and Shamir 1980; Ziegenhagen 1986; Davis and Ward 1990; Cingranelli 1992; Poe and Tate 1994). From these analyses, support has been found for the hypothesized positive relationship in every case. This is important because it reveals consistently that regimes are found to attempt behavioral regulation regardless of political-economic context, applied measures or empirical methodology. For those concerned with examining the relationship between conflict and repression simultaneously within the short and the long term, however, little work has been done. Most authors in this area consider only the current manifestation of dissent to be relevant to understanding the current use of negative sanctions. In a few analyses the contemporaneous argument is not accepted and several studies investigate the linkage between conflict and repression where conflict is lagged one year (Muller 1985, Alfatooni and Allen 1991)<sup>8</sup> or three years (Duvall and Shamir

Related to this Goldstein (1983: 200) notes that "the states that experienced the most severe upheavals in 1848 (in France, Germany, Italy, and the Austrian Empire) afterwards (saw) the most severe reactions (repressive responses), while the regions that were relatively undisturbed in 1848 (Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands) generally escaped severe repression afterwards." This continued a pattern of the 1820s and the 1830s where the fear of re-emerging rebellion compelled governments throughout Europe to apply political repression in an attempt to obtain or sustain domestic quiescence. The relationship is not merely one of recent historical experience.

<sup>8</sup> Muller (1985) uses deaths by collective protest to measure political conflict. Alfatooni and Allen (1991) employ the more commonplace summation of political demonstrations, strikes, and riots.

1980). We thus do find that a different perspective has been given some attention, albeit to a limited degree.

Although the results of these analyses generally support the contention that previous dissent is positively related to later uses of repressive behavior and researchers can be somewhat favorably disposed to believe in the importance of lagged determinants. It must be acknowledged that there is no reason to believe that a one- or a three-year lag is particularly important to the study of this behavioral linkage. Indeed, there is nothing significant about a one- or three-year time frame, other than the fact that it can easily be incorporated into an empirical examination. Any study of this relationship should consider alternative lag structures. This issue is addressed further below.

# Directions for Research

The existing literature is immensely valuable to analyses of political repression. Previous studies have provided a relatively standard list of explanatory variables: i.e., the type of political system, the amount of domestic conflict, the level of economic development, attributes of the coercive apparatus and dependency. Moreover, despite varying operationalizations, each variable has found at least one measurement that is consistently applied to represent it. I use these same controls and measurements in this analysis, thus continuing in this tradition.

Perhaps equally as important for the present study, it has also been shown that the existing literature does not consider all relevant hypotheses. Specifically, the authors do not consider short- and long-term relationships simultaneously and thus they cannot comment on the rational choice versus habituation debate. Furthermore, the only non-contemporaneous effects that were addressed provided no explanation for why the particular lags were selected, nor did they provide information about whether or not alternative lag structures were investigated. In light of these limitations, I extend the research in this area and examine the contemporaneous and lagged effects of three variables commonly used to explain variance in political repression. These include democracy, coercive capacity and political conflict.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> They impose a three-year lag, weighting each observation so the third has the least impact and the first one has the greatest impact.

Many other factors receive less attention: changes in the size of population (Henderson 1991; Poe and Tate 1994), societal integration (Duff and McCammant 1976) and colonial affiliation (Mitchell and McCormick 1988; Poe and Tate 1994).

<sup>11</sup> The exclusive attention to these three variables is derived from the existing literature. The causal relationships are most clearly articulated and most frequently discussed.

#### EMPIRICALLY ANALYZING CAUSAL DETERMINANTS OF POLITICAL REPRESSION

# Applied Methodology

Investigating contemporaneous and lagged effects across both time and space are not easily conducted with standard OLS methods of analysis. This particular strategy is inadequate for two reasons. First, there is a general difficulty confronted with regard to autocorrelation and heteroschedasticity (Gujarati 1978, Mcleary and Hay 1980, Stimson 1985). Second, one cannot always tell how many lags should be applied and thus each one is incorporated in an ad hoc fashion. This issue becomes problematic because as more and more lags are incorporated into the equation, more degrees of freedom are lost.

To contend with these difficulties, I employ a twofold strategy to examine the proposed hypotheses. First, an ARIMA model is used with country dummies to identify and control for any pattern of autocorrelation that may exist within the data. Second, I employ the comparative test designed by Kristen Monroe (1981)<sup>12</sup> for the examination of different lag structures with an Almon distributed lag model. Using this twofold strategy, several problems are resolved: (1) heteroschedasticity is dealt with by controlling for the differential effects exhibited from unit to unit; (2) the number of lags investigated is not a problem since one is able to examine several different models simultaneously; and (3) the loss of degrees of freedom does not occur because of the use of Lagrangian interpolation coefficients (for a more thorough discussion see Monroe 1981, Gujarati 1978: 534-41).<sup>13</sup>

Similar to most methodological strategies the present technique is not without its difficulties. As designed, in order to estimate an Almon distributed lag model, information about the shape of the lag structure must be provided (i.e., is it linear or some curvilinear function?) in addition to the particular amount of time the relationship being examined is delayed (i.e., how many lags are employed?). Since researchers must rely upon a priori knowledge of both factors, there is always a potential for misrepresentation of the causal relationships. The present examination is no exception to this dilemma and thus the findings discussed here must be regarded as exploratory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> This draws on the work of Shirley Almon (1965).

This feature is one of the most attractive attributes of the empirical strategy. By allowing the polynomial to represent the lag structure, I collapse the actual number of variables within the equation (i.e., not including variables for each lag) and estimate constructed variables from the polynomial instead of the original independent variables. Extending the time of the lag, therefore, I do not introduce additional missing cases for the lagged variable and I can investigate as long a time period as is deemed necessary.

For the analysis, I use a pooled cross-sectional time-series design to examine 51 countries from 1948 through 1982 (N = 1820). The unit of analysis is the nation-year. In line with the strategy designed by Monroe (1981), three hypotheses are investigated across three sets of equations. Each model investigates a different relationship between the dependent and independent variables. From the comparison of these equations I should be able to determine which one most accurately represents the causal linkages involved. If contemporaneous effects are found significant and lagged effects are not, then I will conclude that the short-term (rational choice) view is more appropriate in representing the relationships involved and that a simple decision-making process is at work. If lagged effects are found to be significant, however, and short-term effects are not, then I will conclude that the long-term (habituation) view is more appropriate and that a complex decision-making process is functioning. Finally, if both contemporaneous and lagged effects are found significant, then (in line with the synthetic approach) I will conclude that an even more sophisticated and complex memory structure is involved as well as a complex decision-making process.

The first equation considered is the *Instantaneous Response Model*. This equation allows me to examine the proposition that causal effects are present only within a given year. In this case, repression would be functionally related to current values of democracy, coercive capacity, conflict, dependency and economic development. Note that in this equation, as well as those that follow, economic development and dependency serve as controls whose effect is expected to take place within the same unit of analysis.<sup>14</sup>

The second equation is the *Simple Lagged Model*. This explores the possibility that governments are affected by certain aspects of the political-economy lagged one time period. Here, the expected relationship between repression and the three variables of interest is delayed one year. It should be clear that this model only addresses a more extended version of the short-term perspective however. For a consideration of more long-term relationships, I estimate one more equation.

<sup>14</sup> This follows the current state of the literature as there has been no thorough discussion of lagged effects for these variables. With regard to their causal effect on the dependent variable, economic development is expected to decrease political repression because it improves the underlying economic situation within society. By doing this economic development makes the situation less contentious as there is theoretically more income to "go around" within society and less need to protect the distribution of resources. Dependency, on the other hand, is expected to increase repressive behavior. Principally, this is explained by the fact that dependent states are less likely to be concerned with how it treats its citizenry and are more concerned with securing a decent climate for investment (Petras 1986; Lopez and Stohl 1989). In an attempt to achieve this objective as well as allow any economic exploitation to continue, political repression is applied.

The third, and last, equation examines an *Almon Distributed Lag Model*. Here, I investigate the effect of the previous ten years with a first degree polynomial. This equation examines the hypothesis that government decision-makers are influenced by the last 10 years of historical experience with democracy, coercive capacity, and political conflict. A decade was used to analyze lagged effects over a relatively significant amount of time into the past. <sup>15</sup> The use of the first degree polynomial was employed so that the lag structure itself would be linear in form, increasing or decreasing in a straight line, as opposed to some other relationship that increased or decreased in a cyclical pattern as one moved further back in time. <sup>16</sup>

#### Data

To measure the dependent variable, repression, I use Taylor and Jodice's (1983) indicator of negative sanctions.<sup>17</sup> This variable includes both censorship (i.e.,

<sup>15</sup> Extending back further would perhaps unduly tax the dataset itself as only 34 observations are made for each country.

This decision was based upon the existing literature for there are no suggestions that non-linear relationships exist. Alternative polynomials were investigated but they revealed no appreciable difference from the results reported here. With regard to my investigation of political conflict and its effect on repressive behavior, I also examined monthly data. At this level of analysis I explored a first degree polynomial and a 36-month time lag. This allowed me to see whether or not conflict events experienced previously exhibit any effect on repression and also how long these effects persist. Consideration of this unit of analysis also allowed me to gauge whether or not yearly aggregations are justifiable units of analysis a position usually assumed within empirical investigations of repressive behavior. I found that the results were similar and that yearly aggregations were appropriate. These results are available from the author.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The subject of much discussion (see the Human Rights Quarterly 1986, volume 8), I have utilized this operationalization for three reasons. First, there is more reliability for these measures across both time and space than political executions, torture, or detentions for which it is more difficult to obtain accurate. Second, a decent amount of variance in application exists across all subjects. This improves our ability to employ empirical strategies such as regression analysis. Third, as the rate of government responsiveness is of interest and not the general amount of restrictiveness/permissiveness allowed by the political system, this measure is much more appropriate than some "standard-based" measure such as Freedom House or Amnesty International Country reports. With regard to a particular criticism of this data by Brockett (1992) two comments are in order. First, Brockett's criticism of Taylor and Jodice focuses on a measure of domestic political violence (i.e., anti-systemic political conflict) not state repression. Second, he focuses on one of the attributes of the Taylor and Jodice data about which the authors themselves present skepticism. In fact, because of the authors concern with the reliability of "politically sensitive" variables I do not employ their measure of political executions; another measure of repression.

intimidation and limitation of the popular media) as well as restrictions (i.e., intimidation and limitation of the politically relevant behavior of individuals and organizations). The variable itself is expressed as a natural log (after adding one to the base value).<sup>18</sup>

Democratization is operationalized using Gurr's (1989) democracy variable. This measure takes into account several factors including: the competitiveness of political participation, the openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and the constraints placed on the chief executive. Use of this measure follows a path similar to that established by Cutright (1963) and Bollen (1983) as well as several authors within the area of international relations (Maoz and Abdolali 1989; Russett 1993).

Coercive capacity is measured by defense expenditures relative to total expenditures. Taken from Banks (1992), this captures the overall preparedness and influence of the agents of repression. This particular attribute has received a great deal of attention from numerous scholars addressing the military's effect on repressive behavior (Laswell 1941, 1962; Huntington 1964, Randle 1981, Walker and Lang 1988, Hanneman and Steinbeck 1990; Davenport 1995a). My use of this indicator continues in this tradition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Observing the distribution of political repression across different nation-states over time, it was found that a few countries had very high rates of application while some had rates that were very low. Estimating both logged and natural metrics, the logged equations provided a better fit. The pattern of the structural coefficients are similar however. I thus have a significant amount of confidence in the results themselves. This practice has been well discussed in Yang et al. (1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> In previous studies I have used Banks' (1992) political polyarchy variable. Given the analysis of Burkhart and Lewis-Beck (1994), however, I have opted for the alternative operationalization.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> A case can be made that military forces do not involve themselves in political repression because this is generally the domain of the police. I believe that this position is inaccurate on three grounds. First, it ignores that very often the military is used for domestic surveillance and to suppress domestic unrest (Thee 1977; Stohl 1980; Randle 1981; Jensen 1991; Talbert 1991). This has been the case in the first as well as the third world. In the U.S. case after the bombing in Oklahoma City a renewed effort has been made to allow the military greater participation in domestic surveillance. Second, the assumption of different domains of influence ignores the fact that death squads, vigilante groups and political police draw their members from the military itself (Petras 1986; Churchill and Vander Wall 1990). Third, it ignores the fact that both the police and the military are trained in the same manner and intimately involved with political repression at various stages (Bramstedt 1945; Sloan 1984: 86; Van den Berghe 1990), rendering any attempt to distinguish them very difficult. I thus retain the use of the military but acknowledge that a more refined measurement is desirable.

Political conflict is measured by a composite index of three individual events: political strikes, student strikes, and protest demonstrations.<sup>21</sup> Collected from Taylor and Jodice (1983), these events are observed and aggregated in the same manner as they repression variable.<sup>22</sup>

Energy consumption per capita is used to measure economic development (Banks 1992). Although GNP per capita has been employed in numerous studies (Alker and Russet 1964, Hibbs 1973, Dye and Ziegler 1988), I use the alternative measure since the analysis of Summers and Heston (1988) identified this variable as being highly unreliable. Further supporting my selection, energy consumption has recently been employed within numerous investigations of repressive behavior (Henderson 1991, Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 1995a; 1995b).

The final control variable is dependency. Amidst several possibilities,<sup>23</sup> I use Taylor and Jodice's (1983) measure of export specialization to operationalize this variable. Specialization is calculated by examining the degree to which export commodities (agricultural, industrial, and service sectors) fall into a small number of categories.<sup>24</sup> As conceptualized, when the number of categories decreases, the amount of dependency that a given state has with the global economy increases. When the number of categories increases, however, the amount of dependency decreases.

<sup>21</sup> This additive index has been applied quite frequently within the literature. Two alternatives were considered but I decided not to employ them. The first option, deaths by collective protest (put forth by Muller 1985) was not employed because of the numerous difficulties with the measure: (1) protest may be non-violent (Alfatooni and Allen 1991); (2) political deaths may be due to individual cases of political dissent and not collective action (Alfatooni and Allen 1991); and (3) it is unclear whether or not a high number of deaths is simply a reflection of the coercive apparatus or dissidents' ineffectiveness rather than some indicator of protest effort. The second strategy, that of employing factor analysis and selecting the most representative variable, was not used because this strategy discards too much information.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Generally researchers use the yearly aggregated data set but I have employed the daily data set for it encompasses a greater variety of repressive events. The new variable thus contains more information. It is correlated at .23 with the yearly event variable.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> For example, OECD investment has been applied (Timberlake and Williams 1984) as well as Snyder and Kick's (1979) block model which combines: trade flows, treaty memberships, military intervention and diplomatic relations. These are not used because they disregard important aspects of the domestic economy, specifically the condition of disarticulation. Additionally, they were only available for a few years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> As data existed for the years 1950 to 1975, by five-year intervals, missing years had to be interpolated.

#### **EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

In following the twofold strategy discussed above, the first step taken in the analysis was to use an ARIMA model and identify any pattern of autocorrelation that exists within the data. Although ARIMA processes may take many different forms (Mcleary and Hay 1980), I was clearly able to identify a first-order autoregressive process, a classic AR(1). Using the Yule-Walker method to rectify this problem.<sup>25</sup> I moved to the second component of the empirical investigation, Monroe's (1981) three equation comparative analysis.

As found, the basic model (equation 1 as well as the reduced version of the model in equation 2) performs quite well in that it explains 50 percent of the variance in repressive behavior. Democracy, political conflict and dependency are all statistically significant at the .01 level and in the expected direction. Democracy is found to affect the dependent variable negatively, revealing that those regimes concerned with interest aggregation and articulation are less inclined to use censorship and political restrictions. Conflict and dependency, on the other hand, are found to increase repressive behavior. This suggests that when challenged by domestic unrest and when directly influenced by external economic relations, the regime is more inclined to use repressive behavior. This directly supports the existing literature and increases my confidence in the derived results.

The effects of coercive capacity and economic development are not found to be important to political repression; i.e., they both are statistically insignificant. Although this refutes the hypotheses identified earlier, upon reviewing the literature, it is not surprising that these two variables have the effect that they do. Previous research (Davenport 1995a) has shown that the relationship of the coercive apparatus to repression might be more complex than how

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Considering another approach, I also investigate estimates of the equations with the strategy proposed by Beck (1991). Suggesting that the methodological strategy GLS-ARMA (similar to the one applied here) consistently underestimates standard errors, Beck (1991) maintains that this practice is inappropriate. To examine this possibility, I estimated the proposed equations with OLS, a lagged dependent variable and country dummies. This controls for autocorrelation, heteroschedasticity as well as the problem of underestimated standard errors. Fundamentally, I do not find that there is a significant difference in the results. I have provided the GLS-ARMA technique within the text because this has been the most often applied strategy within the literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Estimating the squared residuals over time I identify several potentially influential cases (i.e., outliers). Setting these observations to the mean of the sample and re-examining the equation, there was no substantive difference in the results found. This was also the case when I deleted the potentially influential cases and re-examined the equation. The same findings are also obtained when the other equations investigated are analyzed in the same manner.

 $\equiv$  Table 1
Empirical Results for the Contemporaneous Response Model (N = 1820)

Equation #	1	2
Intercept	3.13(.54)**	2.38(.38)**
Democracy	18(.03)**	17(.02)**
Coercive Capacity	24(.94)	_
Political Conflict	02(.00)**	.02(.00)**
Economic Development	00(.00)	_
Dependency	.10(.03)**	.11(. 2
$\mathbb{R}^2$	49	50

<sup>\* =</sup> Statistical significance at .1 level;

it is portrayed here.<sup>27</sup> By not allowing for this possibility the relationship might not have the opportunity to reveal itself. With regard to economic development, the insignificance of this variable is quite understandable given its marginal significance but substantive unimportance identified within other studies (Henderson 1991; Poe and Tate 1994; Davenport 1995a; 1995b).<sup>28</sup>

Having addressed the familiar contemporaneous argument and the effect of different independent variables, I now move to explore whether or not previous values of democracy, coercive capacity and dissident behavior are important to subsequent uses of censorship and political restrictions. Considering the results of equation 3, I find that several variables are statistically significant at levels relatively comparable to equation 2. The amount of explained variance equals 48 percent—a slight decrease from the contemporaneous model. Moreover, all of the causal effects are in the expected direction.

Similar to equations 1 and 2, the contemporaneous effect of dependency is still present. Evidently, international economic factors are still important to the repressive decision-making process even when the impact of lagged determinants is included. With reference to the particular issue of one-year delayed

<sup>\*\* =</sup> Statistical significance at .05 level;

<sup>() =</sup> standard errors; parameter estimates are unstandardized coefficients.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Specifically, interactive effects were examined with democracy and dependency. I could not do this here because of the Almon model and because of a high degree of multicollinearity that was identified when lagged determinants were considered over time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Generally, economic development is identified as important in terms of statistical significance (at both the .05 or .1 level). At the same time, however, its parameter estimate never achieves a substantively important value (i.e., one above zero). This tends to render its impact negligible.

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■ TABLE 2 EMPIRICAL RESULTS FOR THE SIMPLE LAGGED RESPONSE MODEL (N = 1768)

Equation #	3	
Intercept	1.48(.38)**	
Lagged (Democracy)	06(.02)**	
Lagged(Political Conflict)	.01(.00)**	
Dependency	.11(.02)**	
R <sup>2</sup>	48	

<sup>\* =</sup> Statistical significance at .1 level;

effects, both democracy and dissident behavior are found to be statistically significant (again at the .01 level). I conclude from this that previous experiences with democracy and conflict are directly relevant for explaining variance in political repression when viewed the following year. It should be noted that these effects are less than that identified for current values of dependency as well as that identified for the contemporaneous effects of these variables obtained in equation 1 and 2. This change in findings reveals two things; (1) certain independent variables impact repressive behavior differently depending upon when they are considered, and (2) past values of democracy and political conflict affect repression differently than present values.

While these results allow us to speculate favorably upon the importance and structure of lagged determinants, the question still remains about artificially imposing a lag structure. Indeed, we are still led to ask if factors beyond one year (in the past) are relevant to the application of repressive behavior, when they are considered simultaneously with contemporaneous effects, and exactly how far back in the past are these factors relevant? To address these questions, I consider the Almon distributed lag model.

From the results of equations 4 and 5, one can see that the amount of explained variance stays the same as the basic model (equation 2), at 50 percent. Statistical significance is still exhibited by dependency and the causal effect of this variable is in the expected positive direction. Most important for this discussion, however, is the distributed lags themselves.

As found, first order polynomials for democracy and political conflict are statistically significant in their effect on repressive behavior for several years and in the anticipated direction. These findings are important because they not only illustrate that a relatively complex relationship exists between certain independent variables and political repression (in line with the synthetic ap-

<sup>\*\* =</sup> Statistical significance at.05 level;

<sup>() =</sup> Standard errors; parameter estimates are unstandardized coefficients.

■ Table 3
Empirical Results for the Almon Distributed Lag Model (N=1820)

Equation #	4	5
Intercept	1.62(.43)**	1.62(.43)**
Democracy	02(.0l)**	02(.0l)**
(Contemporaneous Democracy)		
Democracy	.08(.00)**	.08(.00)**
(First Order Polynomial)		
Coercive Capacity	.47(.56)	_
(Contemporaneous Effect)		
Coercive Capacity	.10(.30)	-
(First Order Polynomial)		
Political Conflict	.03(.00)**	.03(.00)**
(Contemporaneous Effect)		
Political Conflict	02(.00)	02(.00)**
(First Order Polynomial)		
Dependency	.11(.02)**	.11(.02)**
D)	7.0	<b>5</b> 0
R <sup>2</sup>	50	50

<sup>\* =</sup> Statistical significance at .1 level;

parameter estimates are unstandardized coefficients.

proach), but they also reveal that the relationships emerge slowly and cumulatively over time. To understand the causal effects more precisely consider the following table.

Viewing the cumulative value of democracy across different lags, government's historical experience with democratization (i.e., its values and institutions) is found negatively to affect repression for about six years in the past, reaching its highest impact in the fourth year (-.15).<sup>29</sup> The contemporaneous argument is still supported. Repressive practices are reduced by democracy immediately within one year (-.09). At the same time, however, it is also important to note that the effect grows marginally and slowly as the particular regime characteristic is considered over time; i.e., over five years. This suggests (tentatively at least) two things. First, "medium" term traditions in democracy are extremely relevant for changing patterns in the use of repressive behavior in a negative direction. Indeed, it suggests that the longer a democratic system is in place (all other things being held constant), the higher

<sup>\*\* =</sup> Statistical significance at .05 level;

<sup>( ) =</sup> standard errors:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> In this case, the same cumulative impact is also exhibited in the fifth, sixth, and seventh year, after which time the effect decreased.

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■ Table 4 Lag Distribution for Democracy

Variable(LV)	Parameter Value	Cumulative Value	T Ratio	
Democracy(0)	040		4.90	
Democracy(l)	040	090	-4.85	
Democracy(2)	032	120	-4.73	
Democracy (3)	024	140	-4.46	
Democracy(4)	016	150	-3.81	
Democracy(5)	008	150	-2.34	
Democracy(6)	.000	150	.01	
Democracy(7)	.000	150	2.02	
Democracy(8)	.008	140	3.13	
Democracy(9)	.010	120	3.71	
Democracy(10)	.030	090	4.03	

LAG DISTRIBUTION FOR POLITICAL CONFLICT

Variable(Lag)	Parameter Value	Cumulative Value	T Ratio
Conflict(0)	.024		8.28
Conflict(l)	.021	.045	8.31
Conflict(2)	.018	.063	8.20
Conflict(3)	.015	.078	7.82
Conflict(4)	.012	.090	7.02
Conflict(5)	.010	.100	5.69
Conflict(6)	.007	.100	3.99
Conflict(7)	.004	.110	2.25
Conflict(8)	.001	.110	.74
Conflict(9)	001	.110	46
Conflict(10)	003	.100	-1.38

the likelihood that censorship and political restrictions will be reduced. Second, the results disclose that the effect of democracy is less important as we move to consider longer periods of time, for example a decade.<sup>30</sup> One interpretation that might be drawn from this is that it is less important to decision-makers how long a particular country experiences high levels of democracy (in terms of long-term patterns in democratization), than what it has experienced in the last few years.

The relationship to political conflict (identified within the table) also proves to be quite informative for the repressive decision-making process. Observing the cumulative impact of this behavior over a ten year period, I find that "political memories" of decision-makers keep this behavior policy relevant for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> I did not go back any further because I felt that this would be asking too much from the data.

seven years after its initial occurrence. Specifically, after an event of political conflict has taken place at time t it immediately influences the government to use repressive behavior. At time t-1, t-2, etc., the same event continues to affect decision-makers, further provoking the use of censorship and political restrictions for about seven years. The delayed effect is particularly important because its cumulative effect (.11) is actually more substantial than the contemporaneous one (.04). The finding therefore directly supports the argument that repression should be viewed as a counter-movement, initiated and sustained over time (Gurr 1986a, 1986b; Duvall and Stohl 1983, as well as Hoover and Kowalewski 1992).

#### Conclusion

From the empirical analysis it has been shown that previous historical experience with different independent variables is important for understanding at what rate negative sanctions will be applied. Exclusive concern with contemporaneous (rational choice) explanations, therefore, has been found to oversimplify and misrepresent the effect of certain independent variables. Indeed, the most important finding of this study is that a relatively complex memory structure that combines short- as well as long-term explanations must be considered in order properly to understand the use of censorship and political restrictions (what I label the synthetic approach). Only then would we be able to model and understand properly what is taking place within the repressive decision-making process.

With regard to the specific results, political repression was found to be influenced by three factors in the short term (i.e., at time t). These included: democracy, political conflict, and dependency. Following from the results, negative sanctions are expected to increase when democracy is low, and when political challenges by dissidents and dependency is high. The use of repressive behavior was also found to be affected by two factors somewhat removed from immediate experience (i.e., at t-1, t-2...t-n). These included democratization, which is politically relevant for five years in the past, and political conflict, which is politically relevant for seven years in the past. Here, we find that negative sanctions are affected by the structure of the political system because it develops over time and also by the historical experience the regime has had with previous dissident behavior.

This analysis has only taken a first step in trying to understand the way in which governments decide to use political repression. It has revealed, quite clearly, the complexity of the issue and the need for further investigations of the subject matter. Particularly, I believe three questions are worthy of additional analysis:

(1) What is it about the most recent years experience with democratization that renders them so important to the use of political repression?

- (2) Are newly established democracies as likely as fully established democracies to exhibit the same types of relationships (i.e., being responsiveness to different lagged independent variables)?
- (3) Are all conflict events weighted equally by the regime when they are considered later or are some given more attention than others?

Addressing these questions, further developing upon the empirical analysis conducted here, I believe our knowledge of political repression would improve a great deal as to why this behavior is applied across time and across space. Indeed, addressing these questions, our understanding of domestic political processes in general would also improve. Perhaps then we could dismiss McCammant's (1984: 11) well-cited comment that "(o)ne searches in vain through the thousands of articles and books written by political scientists, political sociologists, economists, and anthropologists for references to the awful and bloody deeds of governments and for explanations of how and why these deeds are done." Perhaps then we could comprehend, more efficiently, what affects citizen's political and civil rights.

# APPENDIX A. COUNTRY LIST

24) Haiti	47) Syria
25) Honduras	48) Thailand
26) Indonesia	49) Turkey
27) Iran	50) USSR
28) Iraq	51) United States
29) Italy	
30) Jordan	
31) Lebanon	
32) Mexico	
33) Netherlands	
34) Nicaragua	
35) New Zealand	
36) Norway	
37) Philippines	
38) Poland	
39) Portugal	
40) Romania	
41) Saudi Arabia	
42) South Africa	
43) Spain	
44) Sri Lanka	
45) Sweden	
46) Switzerland	
	25) Honduras 26) Indonesia 27) Iran 28) Iraq 29) Italy 30) Jordan 31) Lebanon 32) Mexico 33) Netherlands 34) Nicaragua 35) New Zealand 36) Norway 37) Philippines 38) Poland 39) Portugal 40) Romania 41) Saudi Arabia 42) South Africa 43) Spain 44) Sri Lanka 45) Sweden

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